

DBT- NCCS adds feathers to its cap

New Delhi, Nov 04: DBT-National Centre for Cell Science (DBT-NCCS) in Pune, an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India has added a couple of feathers to its cap with two of its top scientists winning laurels. Dr. Yogesh Shouche has been elected as Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and Dr. Om Prakash Sharma as Chair of the Subcommittee on Methanoarchaea of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP).

Through research that spans over almost three decades, Dr. Shouche has made noteworthy and significant contributions to the field of microbiology, microbial ecology and taxonomy, and in more recent times, research on the Indian human microbiome in health and disease. He is also in charge of the world's largest individual collection of microorganisms, the NCCS Centre of Excellence - National Centre for Microbial Resource (NCCS-NCMR).

Dr. Om Prakash Sharma is a Project Scientist at the NCCS Centre of Excellence, National Centre for Microbial Resource (NCCS-NCMR). He and the team at NCCS-NCMR have been working on formulating a set of minimal standards for the taxonomic classification of a type of microorganisms called methanogens, that grow in the absence of oxygen and produce methane. The latter characteristic of these microbes is leveraged for the production of biogas as a fuel though, on the flip side, the activities of these microorganisms may sometimes prove undesirable, since they can grow in natural areas that have little no oxygen, such as marsh lands, and release methane gas into the atmosphere. These organisms are therefore a focus of several microbiological studies, including those carried out by Dr. Om Prakash and the team at the NCCS-NCMR.

The ICSP is a committee under the Bacteriology and Applied Microbiology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS). It is the body that oversees the naming of microorganisms called prokaryotes, and determines the rules by which prokaryotes are named. Its Judicial Commission issues Opinions concerning taxonomic matters, revisions to the Bacteriological Code, etc.

Members of the committees and sub-committees of the ICSP include experts from across the globe, including US universities, the Chinese Academy of Science, the Russian collection of microbes, Japanese institutes, and Germany, France and Korea.

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