

DBT-NCCS Scientist has been elected to the Executive Board of the ICSP

Dr. Yogesh Shouche, scientist at Department of Biotechnology's National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), Pune, has been elected to the Executive Board of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP). He is the only Indian scientist on the Executive Board that will become functional from 1st September, 2020. The ICSP is the international body that defines the system, and determines the rules for naming and grouping prokaryotes. Prokaryotes are microorganisms that lack a nucleus and other cellular components that are membrane-bound. These include bacteria and archaea; the latter constitute a group of ancient microorganisms that are similar to, but separate from bacteria, and that are usually found in extreme environmental conditions where most other organisms cannot survive.

Scientists predict that the vast majority of the micro-organisms, from the trillion microbial species estimated to inhabit the earth, are yet to be discovered. It is not surprising therefore, that ever so often, microbiologists who study prokaryotes from various ecosystems, find new microbes that were hitherto unknown. Once these are discovered, a specific standardized protocol is followed to appropriately group them with reference to the known microbes, and to give them scientific names (called taxonomy and nomenclature).

The ICSP plays a vital role in providing a uniform taxonomic framework, which is followed by scientists who study prokaryotes across the world. For a newly discovered prokaryote to be officially accepted as a novel microorganism by the scientific community, certain rules laid down by the ICSP for grouping and naming need to be followed. Further, a description of this new microbe and its proposed name need to be published in the International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology (IJSEM), the official scientific journal of the ICSP. Being elected to the Executive Board of the ICSP is testimony Dr. Shouche's extensive experience and expertise in the field of microbial taxonomy. The discovery of several new microbes by his research group at DBT-NCCS has resulted in around 50 research publications in the IJSEM. His research in microbiology spans about three decades, and encompasses diverse areas, including microbial taxonomy, microbial ecology, and the human microbiome in health and disease. He also heads the world's largest individual microbial culture collection at the DBT-NCCS, called the National Centre for Microbial Resources (NCMR).

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