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The name of the journal KAVAKA *is a Sanskrit word which means Fungus.*

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From the Editor's Desk

Since its establishment in the year 1973, the Mycological Society of India (MSI) has championed the cause of advancing fungal research and building a vibrant community of mycologists pan India. Through its official journal, KAVAKA, the society has provided a scholarly platform to showcase novel mycological discoveries, celebrate fungal diversity, and highlight their role as indispensable allies in ecosystems, agriculture, and human health. With this third issue of Volume 61 of KAVAKA, we once again bring together a collection of research articles that demonstrate the length, breadth, and relevance of mycological research in India.

Today, as global challenges such as climate change, soil degradation, and plastic pollution loom large, the study of fungi offers both inspiration and solutions. Serving as nature's master stewards, fungi are not only the custodians of ecological balance but also pioneers in adapting to anthropogenic pressures. In this context, the first article in this issue, *Isolation and Identification of Plastic Degrading Fungi from Bangalore, Karnataka, India,* exemplifies fungal resilience and explores fungal capacity to tackle the alarming problem of plastic waste, thereby offering hope for sustainable bioremediation strategies. From these novel applications, we move into the realm of taxonomy with the subsequent study on *Ganoderma tropicum* from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala*,* which not only records this species on a new host, *Artocarpus hirsutus*, but also reiterates the importance and relevance of molecular phylogeny in understanding fungal identities and host associations.

The symbiotic dimension of fungi is dealt with in an article on influence of AMF inoculants on bio-morphological traits of *Jatropha curcas*, a medicinal multipurpose shrub, reminding us of the potential of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in improving plant vigour, particularly in species of biofuel relevance. This theme is expanded further in the contribution on arbuscular mycorrhizal diversity across plant types in urban habitat of Ahmedabad, which reveals how even within city landscapes, fungi sustain biodiversity, offering lessons for ecological restoration and conservation.

Equally compelling is the chemical dimension of fungal life. The article on antifungal activity of secondary metabolites from endophytic fungi of *Epidendrum radicans* sheds light on the treasure trove of fungal metabolites and their potential applications in crop protection and medicine. Complementing this is the investigation into various carbon and nitrogen sources and their influence on field fungi, which brings into focus the physiological adaptability of fungi and how their growth dynamics are shaped by nutrient availability.

Taxonomic explorations, too, find strong representation in this issue. The detailed morphological and phylogenetic account of *Strobilomyces glabriceps* from Arunachal Pradesh enriches our knowledge of Indian Boletaceae, while the survey of macrofungal diversity in the Aravalli mountain range of Rajasthan illustrates the significance of regional inventories in mapping fungal biodiversity hotspots across the country. Extending the scope beyond fungi alone, the subsequent article on *Streptomyces alkaliphilus* from the Thar desert rhizosphere highlights an actinobacterial ally with plant growth-promoting and antifungal traits, demonstrating yet again that soil microorganisms function as an intricate network of mutualists and defenders. The issue concludes with a broad perspective piece on the impact of Indian

edible and medicinal mushrooms on human health, which ties together ecological knowledge with applied benefits, highlighting the role of mushrooms not only as functional foods but also as therapeutic resources.

Together, these contributions paint a vivid picture of the wealth of fungal science in India, ranging from taxonomy to biotechnology and from ecosystem diversity to human health. They remind us why scholarly publications like KAVAKA are vital, as not only do they capture the pulse of current research but also preserve scientific heritage and stimulate dialogue across disciplines. In sharing this issue, on behalf of MSI, we reaffirm our collective commitment towards strengthening our understanding of fungi as the true custodians of ecosystems and as allies in our journey toward a sustainable future.

We conclude this issue with a sense of gratitude, thanking all the contributors and reviewers for their efforts in enriching this issue of KAVAKA. We warmly encourage researchers, both established and emerging, to share their work through this journal, helping us to advance and share the varied facets of fungal science.

Best wishes

30th September 2025

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