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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

As we stand at the crossroads of the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Mycological Society of India (MSI), it is with immense pleasure and heartfelt exhilaration that I unveil the fourth issue of Volume 61 of KAVAKA. I also extend my warmest felicitations to all participants of the National Conference on "**FUNGI for BHARAT, i.e., Fungi for Better Health, Agriculture, Remediation, and Technology**."

The world of fungi, majestic in mystery and profound in function, serves as a powerful ecological force, linking hosts, competitors, and antagonists across multiple levels of biological organization, thereby driving overall ecosystem functioning. Once discounted merely as decomposers, these versatile organisms are now recognized as champions of sustainability, restoration, and technological innovation. With their remarkable metabolic diversity and adaptability, fungi stand at the forefront of efforts toward a resilient and eco-conscious future.

As we celebrate over five decades of MSI's commitment to advancing mycology in India and beyond, I take this opportunity to extend profound gratitude to our team of KAVAKA, whose commitment towards mycology form the marrow of this journal. In the same spirit, I sincerely hope that 52nd Annual meeting of MSI conflated with the National Conference on "FUNGI for BHARAT" at the Department of Botany, University of Delhi, inspires innovative ideas and reinforces our collective efforts to harness the potential of fungi for the larger good.

This conference celebrates the renaissance of fungal research, offering a timely platform for academics, scientists, scholars, and students to trade ideas, foster collaborations, and explore the enormous potential of fungi in agriculture, remediation, medicine, and biotechnology. The theme of this year's conference, *"FUNGI FOR BHARAT – Fungi for Better Health, Agriculture, Remediation, and Technology,"* holistically captures the multifaceted significance of fungi in shaping a sustainable and self-reliant future. From health to environment, agriculture to industry, fungi continue to illuminate diverse paths toward progress and planetary well-being. In the domain of health, fungi have gifted humankind some of its most remarkable discoveries –antibiotics to immunosuppressants, anticancer and antidiabetic compounds– all of which have revolutionized modern medicine and reaffirmed the role of fungi as nature's alchemists**.**

In agriculture, fungi emerge as promising allies of plants, nurturing the soil through mycorrhizal symbiosis and endophytic associations that enhance nutrient uptake, ameliorate stress tolerance, and fortify crops naturally. Through these multifaceted roles, fungi guide humanity towards an era of eco-conscious and climate-resilient agriculture, perfectly aligned with the vision of a 'greener and sustainable Bharat'. Equally vital is the contribution of fungi to environmental remediation, where their unique enzymatic machinery enables the detoxification of pollutants, heavy metals, plastics, and hydrocarbons. In the Industries, fungi have become living factories of innovation, producing enzymes, organic acids, pigments, and biomaterials that are redefining sustainability across sectors, from textiles and packaging to renewable energy and pharmaceuticals. Taken together, fungi indeed can be seen as the torchbearers of bio-revolution, positioned at the intersection of biology, technology, and sustainable development. Thus, the thematic essence of the conference is not merely an academic slogan but a clarion call to harness fungal potential for national and global well-being.

As KAVAKA continues to champion the frontiers of fungal research, it is heartening to witness mycology's transformation into a discipline that touches the very core of human and planetary well-being. This conference, with its unifying theme and collective intellect, stands as a celebration of curiosity, collaboration, and creativity, a confluence where ideas take root and the future of fungal science flourishes.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of KAVAKA, and in my capacity as the Convenor of this conference, I take great pride in welcoming this brilliant constellation of scholars and enthusiasts. May this gathering ignite new visions, inspire novel discoveries, and strengthen our shared resolve to harness the power of fungi for the health of humanity and the harmony of our planet.

Best wishes

30 November 2025

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