

CSIR-IICT: Strives for self-reliance in pharma sector

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New Delhi, Aug 10 (India Science Wire): In the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the pharmaceutical industries and the academic institutions are more eager than ever to collaborate. In an important development, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) and Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers have joined hands to embolden India's efforts of self-reliance in pharma sector.

The announcement came following an appeal of Dr P D Vaghela, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals (DOP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers urging CSIR-IICT to champion industry-academia partnership, while speaking on the occasion of the 77th Foundation day celebration of IICT.

Dr Vaghela invited IICT help DOP to establish Centres of Excellence in bulk-drug research in three National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) institutes, identified for the purpose. He also requested Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and CSIR-IICT in particular to play a dominant role in preparing a comprehensive Research and Development policy for the pharmaceutical sector.

Currently, critically important KSMs (Key Starting Materials) and APIs (Active Pharma Ingredients) are mostly imported. DOP will come forward to support CSIR-IICT in developing and transferring indigenous technologies for some of these materials. Dr Vaghela emphasized that the need of the hour is to reduce the dependence on imports of critical chemicals, and expects CSIR-IICT to take significant role in making India self-reliant in pharmaceutical sector.

The department is planning to allot Rs 1000 crores to develop pharma parks in various states. The companies setting up their units in these parks will be eligible for incentives from the state and central governments. Dr Vaghela felt the need of seamless procedures required in providing skilled staff, scientists, academia-industry relationship for a continuous research in the country. Such a process can make pharma products competitive and reduce the dependence on imports. "DOP will look upon Institutes like CSIR-IICT in helping the State governments develop common utilities like, Steam generation, analytical facilities, pilot plants etc" said Dr Vaghela

Dr Shekhar C. Mande, Director General, CSIR said that industry-academia relationship is very important and CSIR will extend all possible collaboration in making India an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by actively participating in R & D Programmes and in building industry-academia relationships. (India Science Wire)

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