

We need to examine knowledge chain to see how S&T will lead to *Atmanirbhar Bharat*: DST Secretary at Rajasthan STRIDE Virtual Summit

Professor Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India stressed on the need to examine and strengthen the knowledge chain end- to- end to see how Science & Technology will lead to *Atmanirbhar Bharat* while speaking at the Rajasthan STRIDE Virtual Conclave an initiative by the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of Rajasthan organized on 30th May 2020.

“Since there is a call for Atmanirbhar Bharat or self- reliance, it has to be responded with global quality. To become self-reliant, we have to build up on the strengths of India, which are its R&D, Design, workforce, huge markets, demographic dividend, its diversity, and data,” he said.

Focusing on Science, Society and Self-reliance, Professor Sharma, touched upon the learnings from the COVID-19 crisis. “In the last two months, great things have happened in terms of bringing solutions for COVID-19, be it designing world-class ventilators or new diagnostic methods. All this has happened because of a clear and present understanding of our needs & priorities and a problem-centric approach which involved both academia and industry as partners. We can build on our strengths and the lessons of COVID-19 with speed and scale by strongly connecting our knowledge generation systems with knowledge consumption for the benefit of both.” he said.

Speaking about how DST is tackling emerging challenges like Sustainable Development, rise of intelligent machines, Industry 4.0, that will remain important in all foreseeable future, Professor Sharma added, “DST has already launched a mission on Cyber-Physical Systems worth 3660 crores with a focus on the convergence of different branches of technologies such as communication, computing, Artificial Intelligence, autonomous machines, etc. A mission on Quantum Technology & Devices worth 8,000 crores is being formulated.”

He stressed on the importance of Scientific Social Responsibility in connecting Science with the Society. “This has been implemented in Science and Engineering Research Board a DST body, on a limited scale and policy on it is underway to be notified,” he pointed out.

Talking about Transfer of Technology in reaching the benefits of science to society, he said, “Technology Transfer is all about connects between Industry and Academia and willingness to work with others. Lots are happening in this area. Institutions like Indian Institutes of Technologies are working in this direction.”

Highlighting DST’s investment in Agri-startups, he said, “Agriculture is a vast domain in terms of opportunities. DST alone has supported around 120 incubators with over 3000 tech startups, including several hundred in agriculture and allied areas like water, soil, mapping, sensors, and actuators. Both the number of incubators and the startups have rapidly doubled in the last 5 years.”