

## CSIR should mobilize its potential in a structured manner: Dr Harsh Vardhan

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There is a greater need for synergy for research activities as similar activities are going on at various places without these participants knowing about it. He called for introspection to set things right. The union minister of science and technology and vice president, CSIR, Dr Harsh Vardhan on September 26, on the occasion of CSIR Foundation Day has said that the entire potential of CSIR should now be mobilized in a structured manner to solve various problems of the country.

The minister of state for science and technology, Mr Y S Chowdary lamented that there is a gap between the common man and the scientific community, which "needs to be bridged at the earliest". Science in India is more "scientists centric" rather than "dealing with national priorities" and if the scientific community does not act swiftly, it will "lose trust of people". He said there is possibility for creating technology spinoffs in our country for making it a knowledge economy.

Mr Y S Chowdary had also distributed scientifically improved seeds to farmers from various parts of the country. Later Dr Harsh Vardhan as a part of the awards ceremony gave away CSIR Young Scientists awards, G N Ramachandran Gold medals for excellence in Biological Sciences and Technology for 2014 & 2015 and CSIR Technology Awards 2015.

#### Details of Technology Awards are as follows:

CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP), Lucknow won the Technology Award for Life Sciences for development of improved varieties and promotion of cultivation of medicinally important Aswagandha for improving the economy of small and marginal farmers in Semi-Arid Tropical (SAT) regions of Deccan Plateau in association with teams at CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow; CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow and CSIR-IICB, Kolkata. The developed Aswagandha varieties coupled with effective extension activities increased the area under cultivation and improved the quality of life of more than 6300 small and marginal farmers (53 clusters in five districts) in the SAT regions of the Deccan plateau by raising their income more than two folds in comparison to the conventional crops.

CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL), Pune won the award for Physical Sciences including engineering for developing solid catalyst and continuous process for biodiesel process. CSIR-NCL has developed a greener method for

biodiesel production, which employs a proprietary, solid, reusable, acid catalyst and a continuous fixed-bed process. Unlike the conventional method, CSIR-NCL process converts a variety of inedible oils and animal fat into biodiesel in high yields and greater selectivity. The process has been licensed to Benefuel Inc., USA. CSIR recognizes the contribution of Benefuel Inc., USA for pilot plant erection, operation and commercialization of the technology.

CSIR-Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute (CSIR-CGCRI), Kolkata and CSIR- Central Leather Research Institute (CSIR-CLRI), Chennai have jointly won the award for Innovation.

CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP), Dehradun and CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), Bengaluru have jointly won the award for Most Significant CSIR Technology of the Plan Period.

CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory (CSIR-NML), Jamshedpur has won the award for significantly enhancing the business and markets for its knowledgebase base.