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Is innovative research heading towards the right direction?

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There are definitely many challenges faced during the entire protocol of translating innovative ideas.



A question was recently asked by the Science and Technology Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan, stating that how much of the innovative research is actually reaching the end users. This concern raised quite a few eyebrows at the BIRAC Innovators Conclave in New Delhi, where Dr. Harsh Vardhan was present to inaugurate the ceremony.

The minister expressed his views on the fact that in India the budget for science and technology is a fraction of what it is in developed countries. “For at least 30-40 years we have been asking for improvements in budgets now even from my own government”, he said.

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a public sector undertaking of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) had recently organised a two-day Innovators Conclave at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The theme for the conclave was BIRAC Bio-Innovations: Propelling the Bio-economy.

The summit was accompanied by an innovation fair that was organised to showcase the work of 65 innovators who were supported by the BIRAC.

BIRAC has been actively involved in providing a platform for many startups with innovative ideas. But are all the innovations reaching their destination?

Dr. Renu Swarup, Managing Director, BIRAC, said, “There are definitely many challenges faced during the entire protocol of translating innovative ideas. In the healthcare segment, a lot of clinical validation needs to be done. Before taking the product from the laboratory to the end user, the regulatory side needs to be addressed. This surely takes a lot of time. At BIRAC, we take the market demand into consideration and then fine tune everything”.

Tuscano Equipments from Chennai was recognised for their work in the area of healthcare device and diagnostics at the BIRAC event. Kannan Neelakanta, Managing Director, Tuscano Equipments Pvt. Ltd. spoke in detail about the challenges faced for developing a product out of a new research. “There are many hurdles faced during the entire process. It might be at the level of clinical validation, regulatory protocols, market demands and so on. At times, a research idea gets rejected if there is no related product demand coming from the market. If the research idea gets accepted, then the problem might arise at the clinical validation level. The CTRI (Clinical Trials Registry- India) works in accordance with WHO (World Health Organisation). So the whole approval procedure takes a lot of time. Then there are often obstacles faced while going through the procedures at few government hospitals, for undergoing clinical trials. It can become a tiresome jouney”.

In line with this, Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Former Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre said, “The whole process of translating an idea into a product is very long and challenging. There is a need to build a barrier- free ecosystem for this. The innovator should get resources and physical support. Whatever gaps exist, they should be effectively addressed. Efforts have to be made in order to convert the prototype into a product”.

India is definitely doing excellent research and innovation but the whole sector needs more exploration and a better systematic approach. Innovation is challenging and a conducive development process is required to efficiently transform ideas into profitable growth.