

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:231
ANSWERED ON:06.02.2014
INNOVATION AT GRASSROOT LEVEL
Karunakaran Shri P.

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has created any structure/organization to nurture innovations at the grassroot level and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the National Innovation Foundation has recorded a large number of innovations at the grassroot level, touching the lives of the poor in the rural sector;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the National Research Development Corporation is acting as a window for such innovations including the processes patented by laboratories under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT AS REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 231 FOR 06.02.2014 REGARDING "INNOVATION AT GRASSROOT LEVEL"

(a) Yes Madam. India has been able to establish a structure to nurture the innovation system at the grassroots level.

The National Innovation Foundation-India (NIF), has been setup by Department of Science and Technology, Government of India as a national initiative to support grassroots technological innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge. Its mission is to help India become a creative and knowledge based society by extending institutional space for grassroots technological innovators. Through collaborations with R&D institutions, NIF helps in getting these innovations validated and converting them into value added technologies/products.

National Innovation Council (NInC) constituted by the government has taken up various initiatives focusing on developing appropriate models and frameworks which will have a positive impact on the lives of the citizens especially people in the lower half of the economic pyramid. These include Formation of State and Sectorial Innovation Councils; Initiatives for MSME Growth and India Inclusive Innovation Fund.

The India Inclusive Innovation Fund (IIIF), launched by National Innovation Council (NInC) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) seeks to combine innovation and the dynamism of enterprise to solve the problems of citizens at the base of the economic pyramid in India. The Fund, with initial corpus of Rs. 500 crore, will be invested in innovative ventures that are measurable, sustainable and therefore profitable to address social needs of our less privileged citizens in areas such as healthcare, food, nutrition, agriculture, education / skill development, energy, water, sanitation, employment generation, etc.

(b) & (c): Yes Madam, NIF covers the entire gamut of the activities from scouting and documentation of grassroots innovations and traditional knowledge, to value addition, intellectual property protection, business development, commercialization and social diffusion.

NIF in collaboration with public sector R&D institutions and private design firms added value in over 500 grassroots innovations. NIF has filed 637 patents in the name of grassroots innovators in addition to 14 design registration of innovative products. Applications for twenty one farmer's developed plant varieties have been filed by NIF.

NIF helps innovators in getting due reward for their innovations and ensures that such innovations are spread widely through commercial and non-commercial channels generating incentives for them.

NIF also provides risk capital to start innovation based enterprises through the Micro Venture Innovation Fund (MVIF) setup with the support of SIDBI. MVIF has provided risk capital of Rs. 378 Lakhs to 189 projects, which are at different stages of incubation. NIF has

been able to commercialize products across countries in six continents apart from being successful in materializing seventy cases of technology licensing to eighty licensees with the help of partner agencies.

NIF is focusing in open source technologies, which can be used for people to people dissemination under open innovation framework for generation of employment and reduction in cost. Under the 'Grassroots Technological Innovation Acquisition Fund (GTIAF)', NIF has acquired the rights of about seventy grassroots innovations.

(d) & (e): Yes Madam. National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) is engaged in licensing, transfer and commercialization of technologies and innovations to enterprises, which are assigned by research institutions (including the laboratories of CSIR), universities and individuals. For example, patented process technology for solar powered electrically operated rickshaw (Soleckshaw), developed at CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI), Durgapur has been licensed by NRDC to industry.

NRDC is providing financial and technical assistance not only to scientists and researchers working in universities, R&D institutions but also to individuals working in different fields for patenting their inventions. The complete expenditure right from filing and prosecution of the patent applications till the grant of the patents is borne by NRDC. NRDC has provided assistance for filing of 372 patent applications during the last five years (2008-13). A number of new processes/products, which have been assigned by various inventors to NRDC have been commercialized in India by NRDC. NRDC has signed 157 license agreements for various processes during the last five years. NRDC is also providing techno- commercial support to help the inventors for further development and commercialization of their processes/products.

NRDC is promoting technologies that are particularly suited to local needs. Efforts are being made to reduce the drudgery of women in their daily lives, to provide literacy aids, safe drinking water, low cost housing, sanitation, better agricultural implements and post-harvest technologies, solar pumps, heaters, solar cookers and solar dryers, cement from paddy husk ash and to provide employment by the utilisations of farm wastes.