

CONFERENCE ON PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC INTERVENTIONS FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA THROUGH CSR

29 May 2018, Mumbai: Promoting science and scientific rationale can address major contemporary challenges of economic growth and social transformation in societies. **Commerce, Industry and Civil Aviation Minister, Mr. Suresh Prabhu**, suggested that corporates could meaningfully channelize CSR funds through scientific interventions and collaborate with NGOs for reaching out to the needy sections of society.



Inaugurating the conference on ‘Promoting Scientific Interventions for Transforming India through CSR’ organised by FICCI in association with Vijnana Bharathi (Vibha), Mr. Prabhu said that science is the driving force for socio-economic development in a resource-scarce country like India. It is therefore imperative to usher in scientific innovations for the good of the people. Underlining the importance of science for society, Mr. Prabhu said CSR should be construed as ‘Corporate Scientific Relationship’ as such an approach was the way forward to solving the multifarious problems of the country.

NITI Aayog Member, Dr. V. K. Saraswat, pointed out that “If we have to really make an economic impact through S&T and improve our position in Global Innovation Index of 60 out of 143, we have to alter our S&T Innovation eco-system.” This, he said, would require global leadership in science, engineering, technology, manufacturing, and innovation.

He emphasized the need for excellence directed basic research, applied research including pre-competitive applied research, particularly in critical technologies and in R&D-led technology development and innovation. Dr. Saraswat said that there is a need to focus on many sectors of exceptional national importance where the market is unlikely to produce the desirable outcome on its own. These include alternative clean energy sources, design & Make in India, defence and aerospace and IT-enabled healthcare services.



Secretary General of FICCI, Mr. Dilip Cheny, said FICCI has been working very closely with economists, business leaders, social scientists and innovators for designing and

developing solutions for public good. FICCI's Millennium Alliance is one such inclusive platform which leverages Indian creativity, expertise, and resources to identify and scale innovative solutions being developed and tested in India to address development challenges to benefit base of the pyramid populations across India and the world.

Mr. A. Jayakumar, Secretary General, Vibha, stated that his organization had identified 1000 associates in 18 states which work with the community through science and technological interventions. The effort is to connect science with these organisations to impart efficiency and effectiveness in their operations.

Mr. N P Rajive, Executive Director, Vibha Vani, gave a presentation on the methodology of implementation of the focal themes of the government and how corporates could participate for successful implementation of their CSR projects.

To contribute effectively to the innovative economy and capitalize on the growing opportunities of globalization, India's young workforce must develop skills that are more market-driven. Science and technology-based innovation drives long term economic growth, competitiveness, and quality-of-life improvements. Succeeding in this area is impossible without a workforce educated in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). We have to strengthen STEM education in schools to develop those skills necessary for the development of India.

Apart from education, businesses need to constantly reinvent and innovate to find solutions to global challenges. Thus it is in the interest of businesses to support the cause of scientific and technological innovations through their CSR, be it by supporting STEM education in schools, or supporting youth skilling programmes or incubation centres. There are many opportunities to seize.

Elaborating on the theme, the inaugural was followed by exclusive sessions on "Sharing of Grassroot level innovations" and "Intervention by Corporates at grassroot through CSR: Need and success stories" which had



presentations from senior fraternity of **Dalmia Bharat Enterprises Ltd., ONGC, Jubilant Life Sciences Limited** and NGOs such as **AFARM, Midas Touch, SNEHA**.

The conference was attended by over 100 participants from government, corporates and civil society.

