

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3219
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09TH AUGUST, 2024**

NATIONAL INNOVATION FOUNDATION

3219. SHRI KOTA SRINIVASA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to identify and encourage Innovators working in public healthcare sector;
- (b) whether details of the total number of people identified/being identified for the said purpose is available with the Government, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any efforts are being made to link them with Make in India Programme and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has launched National Healthcare Innovation Portal and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government supports research for validation of claims of herbal healers with National Innovation Foundation and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a): (i) With regards to public healthcare, the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) - India, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India scouts and supports the *outstanding traditional knowledge* sourced from their holders, both individuals and communities, irrespective of their locations even at the last mile, and carry out their scientific validation with the support of various partner Institutions in the Public sector and expert organizations in the Private sector. Additionally, NIF also incubates *grassroots innovations* from common people including the ideas given by creative children which at times also include healthcare medical devices as one of the domain areas of the idea or innovation being scouted.

(ii) National Healthcare Innovations Portal (NHInP) was launched in 2015 where States/UTs can upload their good practices and innovations. Institutional framework for Assessment of Health Product innovation under NHInP which entails details of Product Innovation- its definition, principles, exclusion/inclusion criteria, and process flow for evaluation and uptake of innovation is available at:

(iii) *MedTech Mitra Initiative* is a joint initiative of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), and was launched as a ‘highway’ for hand-holding the medical device & diagnostic innovators. This initiative is aimed towards fostering indigenous development of safe & quality products making them affordable & accessible to all.

(iv) SPARSH programme (*Social Innovation programme* for Products Affordable & Relevant to Societal Health) is an initiative of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Section 8 company of Department of Biotechnology (DBT). It is aimed at promoting development of innovative solutions to society’s pressing problems through biotechnological approaches. The BIRAC SPARSH fellows get a fellowship of INR 50,000 for 18 months in addition to a one-time mini-kick start grant of INR 5 lakhs per fellow for developing Minimum Viable Product.

(b): (i) NIF maintains a list of people from whom both the (a) Outstanding Traditional Knowledge and (b) Innovations in the field of healthcare / medical devices have been sourced and also of the entities through which the said technology is disseminated either through social or a commercial channel.

(ii) The list of the BIRAC-supported innovators/entrepreneurs is available at BIRAC Website <https://www.birac.nic.in/>. More than 100 functional prototypes have been developed, 150-plus fellowships have been awarded to young innovators, over 100 startups have been created under the SPARSH scheme.

(iii) 250 Innovators have approached ICMR for seeking guidance under MedTech Mitra for guidance on regulatory strategy, clinical validation and uptake of new products etc.

(c): (i) ICMR has adopted a multi-pronged approach to develop indigenous technologies as per ‘Make-in-India’ program. This includes setting up of Medical Device and Diagnostic Mission Secretariat (MDMS) at ICMR Headquarters for fostering development of ‘Make-in-India’ technologies in the Medical device sector. ICMR is also hand-holding IITs for research and development by setting up Centres of Excellence (CoEs) at 7 IITs across the country in synergy with the requirement of the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres and Public Health programs of Government of India for major public health impact.

(ii) Some of the Outstanding Traditional Knowledge and innovations in the field of healthcare/medical devices supported by National Innovation Foundation has been taken up for commercialization by the entrepreneurs within the country which boosts Make in India Initiative.

(iii) BIRAC has been nurturing innovation ecosystem so that Biotech Industry, Startup companies can develop affordable, accessible Made in India products for India and for the world. There are about 800+ products made by BIRAC supported biotech startup companies that have reached market (<https://biotechinnovations.com>). In addition, DBT/ BIRAC’s Fund of funds – ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURS (AcE) initiative has supported about 100 startups to raise Private venture capital of INR 4000+ Cr under Make In India program. Make In India microsite within BIRAC’s website provides linking information on state promotional policies for Make In India.

(d): The National Healthcare Innovations Portal (NHInP), housed in National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) has been launched to serve as a platform in the public domain, facilitating the collection and dissemination of replicable good practices and innovations. This portal acts as a gateway for integrating innovations into mainstream healthcare, with the potential to drive transformative improvements in

healthcare delivery by expediting the adoption of successful innovations across programs, processes, and products.

(e): (i) Many of the indigenous practices preserved and scientifically evaluated via National Innovation Foundation (NIF) have proven useful to common people and generated significant social impact locally.

(ii) In terms of example, the Scientific validation activities for Human Health practices are undertaken by NIF for ailments viz., Joint health, Diabetes, Blood pressure, Osteoporosis, Cataract, Cancer, Dermatology, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Bronchial asthma, Epilepsy or Convulsion, Oral care, Obesity, Wellness and Endurance of vital organ protection etc.

(iii) These activities were implemented with the support of scientific institutions such as All India Institute of Medical Sciences [AIIMS], New Delhi; Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, CSIR - Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow; ICMR- Jalma Institute of Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial diseases, Agra; ICMR - National Institute of Malaria Research, New Delhi, etc. NIF has also collaborated with different Pharmacy Institutes.

(iv) As a part of supporting herbal healers, NIF also files patents in the name of herbal healers. Till date a total of 279 patents have been filed in relation to Human Health technologies, and out of it 131 have been granted.
