



Dr. Jitendra Singh Calls for Wider Awareness about Rs 1 Lakh Crore RDI Fund Among Stakeholders to Ensure Right Beneficiaries Avail of Support

Greater Outreach Needed to Ensure RDI Fund Reaches Technology and Research Stakeholders and Contributes to National Economic Growth

Technology Development Board Must Evolve as a Strategic Enabler of India's Future Technology Sectors: Dr. Jitendra Singh

Posted On: 01 SEP 2026 4:35PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh today called for greater awareness and outreach about Rs 1 Lakh Crore “Research, Development and Innovation Fund” (RDI Fund) among stakeholders so that the right kind of applicants understand its purpose, eligibility and the process for availing support.

Addressing the 30th Foundation Day of the Technology Development Board (TDB), Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the focus should be on creating awareness about the spirit behind the RDI Fund, the stakeholders and companies eligible for support, and how they can avail of the funding. He observed that the large number of applications being received also indicated a need for greater clarity and outreach about the purpose of the Fund.

The Minister said that thousands of applications are being received, including from applicants who do not appear to understand the nature and purpose of the RDI Fund. He cautioned against the perception that the Fund is simply another source of finance or a conventional loan facility, stressing the need to ensure that there is no misunderstanding about the funding process.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the RDI Fund is intended to support technology development and research in a manner that contributes to the progress of science and research and makes these activities part of the overall growth of the national economy. He called for efforts to ensure that stakeholders understand the spirit and intended purpose of the Fund so that its benefits reach the appropriate beneficiaries.

The Minister emphasised that the funding process is already transparent and has proper safeguards in place, even though the government is open to suggestions for further safeguards wherever feasible. He said, there is scope to further increase outreach and awareness. He said that better awareness would help the right kind of people avail of the support in the interest of scientific and research progress and its contribution to national economic growth.

Referring to the role of TDB, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the Board must also play a role in educating those for whom such initiatives are meant. He stressed that while technology and policy frameworks are changing rapidly, the mindset of stakeholders also needs to change accordingly.

The Minister said that TDB was created with the vision of ensuring that technologies do not remain confined to laboratories but are translated into products, solutions and enterprises that can bring ease of living to citizens, provide livelihoods and contribute to the overall economy of the country. He said that the occasion of the 30th Foundation Day was an opportunity to look back at how far this spirit had been carried forward.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that over the last 12 years this spirit had been vindicated and credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with placing science, technology and innovation high on the government agenda. He described the period as a decade of scientific renaissance in the country, highlighting achievements in science and technology and India's ability to deliver cost-effective successes.

Emphasising the importance of changing mindsets, the Minister said that continuous learning and curiosity would be essential to keeping pace with rapid technological developments. He stressed that stakeholders must make the best use of the enabling environment provided by policymakers.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also highlighted the growth of the start-up ecosystem and called for prevailing myths about entrepreneurship to be dispelled. He noted that start-ups are not confined to Bengaluru or Hyderabad, that more than 50 per cent are from smaller towns, and that entrepreneurship is not necessarily restricted to young people. He also highlighted the participation of women in the ecosystem.

The Minister underlined the importance of openness to private-sector participation and said that this approach had been followed in sectors including space, biotechnology and the nuclear sector. He stressed that resource pooling and integration among institutions and stakeholders are important for strengthening the ecosystem.

Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated TDB's role in supporting the journey from laboratory to market and noted that the Board had, in practice, extended support beyond narrowly defined domains. He referred to examples including Skyroot and BotLab, and said that moving beyond a conventional bureaucratic approach had enabled TDB to become an important part of the emerging technology ecosystem.

The Minister also highlighted the need for a culture of philanthropy in research. He said that funding research that ultimately contributes to the well-being of mankind should also be recognised as a form of worship and called for such a culture to be created.

Looking ahead, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that TDB should support technology development both in the early phase and at the later stage. He noted that the RDI Fund is offering support at a later stage at TRL4 level and that TDB is the first to roll out its proposals.

He said that TDB has set up a model of public-private transition and technology self-reliance which could become an important pillar of India's economy and contribute not only to India but also to the Global South. He further observed that strengthening India's technological capabilities would also strengthen the country's geopolitical status in the Global South and across the world.

The Minister said that the first thirty years of TDB were about building the bridge between the laboratory and the market, while the next thirty years should focus on building global technology champions from India. The accompanying address similarly emphasised the need to move from ideas to innovation, from innovation to industry and towards a truly developed India by 2047.

Dr. Jitendra Singh extended his good wishes to TDB and called for the institution to continue building on its role in technology development, public-private transition and technology self-reliance.



(Release ID: 2305508) Visitor Counter : 667

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