



DSIR-CRTDH on Affordable Healthcare at IIT Kharagpur enters sustainable phase, strengthens lab-to-market translation and last-mile healthcare delivery

Secretary, DSIR and Director General, CSIR, Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi, inaugurates sustainable phase of the Hub

Hub has facilitated over 20 technology transfers and supported commercialisation of affordable medical technologies

Rural health workers trained under the Hub take affordable diagnostic technologies to underserved communities

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The Sustainable Phase of the Common Research and Technology Development Hub (CRTDH) on Affordable Healthcare at IIT Kharagpur was inaugurated today by Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi, Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), at the Ben Gupta Auditorium, IIT Kharagpur.

Established in 2019 under the CRTDH Scheme of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, the CRTDH on Affordable Healthcare has successfully completed its initial grant-supported phase and has transitioned into a sustainable phase. The Hub is now operating as a self-sustaining national facility for affordable healthcare technology development and translation, meeting its operational costs through user fees, industry sponsorships and translational partnerships, while continuing to provide infrastructure and technical support to innovators. The facility will continue to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure, technical expertise, and technology development support to MSMEs, startups, innovators, and other stakeholders. The transition of the CRTDH to a self-sustaining model marks an important milestone in strengthening industry-academia collaboration, technology translation, and innovation-led healthcare solutions, while ensuring the continued availability of shared research and technology development infrastructure. The programme was organised as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of IIT Kharagpur.

Chief guest of the event, Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi, Secretary, DSIR and DG, CSIR, in her address emphasised the role of DSIR and the network of CRTDHs in enabling MSMEs, start-ups and individual innovators to strengthen indigenous capability in medical technology. She said that the continued functioning of a CRTDH beyond the period of DSIR support demonstrates the intended outcome of the programme i.e. to serve industry and innovators in a self-sustaining mode. She emphasised that wider

utilisation of these facilities would contribute to strengthening the country's indigenous technological capabilities, advancing self-reliance in medical device technologies, and supporting the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for Viksit Bharat 2047.

On this occasion, Dr. (Mrs.) Kalaiselvi visited the CRTDH wet and dry laboratories and the THRIVE Centre along with Prof. Suman Chakraborty, Director, IIT Kharagpur, (Principal Investigator, CRTDH) and DSIR officials. Dr. (Mrs.) N. Kalaiselvi planted a sapling on the IIT Kharagpur campus, symbolising the beginning of the sustainable phase of the DSIR-CRTDH at IIT Kharagpur and reaffirming the commitment towards its continued growth, sustainability, and long-term contribution to innovation and technology development.

Presenting the journey of the Hub from 2019 to 2026, Prof. Suman Chakraborty highlighted the importance of frugal innovation in addressing the constraints faced in real-world healthcare delivery. He stated that designing technologies for use in settings without sophisticated infrastructure and by frontline health workers requires engineering solutions that are robust and accessible. Operating from a 5,000-square-foot facility, the CRTDH has facilitated over 20 technology transfers, many already commercialised, and has partnered with clinical and non-governmental organisations to establish rural health units to support the deployment of affordable healthcare technologies through rural health units.

During the MSME Voices session, enterprises mentored by the CRTDH shared their experiences while translating laboratory prototypes into commercial products. The participating enterprises were felicitated by the Chief Guest and the Director, IIT Kharagpur. Fifteen frontline health workers from remote villages, including the Sundarbans and Birbhum, shared their experiences of deploying affordable diagnostic technologies at the community level. Trained and certified under the Hub's skilling programmes, in line with the objectives of Skill India, these health workers are now operating rural health units alongside the health delivery structures under the National Health Mission. Through these units, the trained health workers support screening, referral and follow-up services for communities where access to diagnostic facilities remains limited or intermittent.

Dr. Vipin Shukla, Scientist 'G' and Head of the CRTDH Scheme of DSIR, whose guidance has been instrumental in the development of the CRTDH initiative, was also acknowledged on the occasion. Dr. Ranjeet Bairwa, Scientist 'F' and Member Secretary – CRTDH, DSIR, and Dr. Kailash Petkar, Scientist 'D', DSIR, who closely monitored the implementation of the project, were also present during the event and participated in the proceedings. Continued association of the DSIR-CRTDH team with the project was duly acknowledged, followed by a screening of the CRTDH film.

The proceedings highlighted the convergence of frugal technology, local skilling and public health delivery as an important pathway for achieving the objectives of Viksit Bharat to the last mile. The initiative demonstrates how self-reliance in medical devices, employment opportunities for rural youth and equitable access to healthcare can be addressed through an integrated innovation and delivery ecosystem. At the end, the DSIR officials were felicitated by the Director, IIT, Kharagpur. The proceedings were coordinated by Mr. Sohom Banerjee, Project Manager, CRTDH, IIT Kharagpur.

Approximately 200 participants attended the program, including Senior Officers of DSIR, delegates from chambers of commerce and MSME associations, officials of Government MSME development institutions, MSMEs, start-ups, innovators, clinical partners, rural health workers, faculties, researchers, and students of the Institute. Technologies developed at the CRTDH and products commercialised by partner enterprises were exhibited during the event, providing an opportunity for participants to interact with the innovators.





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Teammates

Prof. Dr. Satadal Saha, Prof. Soumen Das, Prof. T. K. Maiti, Prof. Arindam Mondal, Prof. Jyotirmoy Chatterjee, Prof. Aditya Bandopadhyay, Drs. Pal & Paul (GNDSR)

Dr. Shantimoy Kar, Dr. Victor Pokras, Dr. Rahul Agrawal, Dr. Arka Shrivastava, Dr. Sudip Chattopadhyay, Dr. Arnab Sarkar, Dr. Ranabir Dey, Dr. Pratiti Mandal, Dr. Sujay Kumar Biswas, Dr. Sampad Laha, Dr. Anjali, Dr. Abhinav Malik

Subhamoy Chatterjee, Biswadeep Roy

Vinay Manaswi, Shikhar Patel,

Soham Banerjee,

SmartQR Technologies







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