

ICMR CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
Indian Council of Medical Research
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Press Release

**Ghulam Nabi Azad advocates acceleration of
translational research by ICMR**

New Delhi, 15 Nov. – ‘India cannot wait indefinitely for development of new technologies for health that are urgently required for tackling various diseases effecting the people of country,’ observed Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad while addressing a galaxy of top scientists at India Islamic Cultural Centre on the occasion of the inauguration of the Centenary celebrations of Indian Council of Medical Research, the premier medical research body in the country. He added that ICMR has not only to put in special efforts on translational programs but also to create in a holistic manner a milieu for innovative research similar to the times in ancient India when Sushruta and Charak, the renowned surgeon and physician could think originally.

Mr.S.Gandhiselvan, Minister of State for H&FW recalled the immense contributions of ICMR in generating new knowledge about tuberculosis, leprosy, malaria and filaria by ICMR’s several mission based Institutes dotting the landscape of the country at strategic locations but also urged to intensify efforts to translate the already identified and developed technologies by ICMR and agencies like Defence Research & Developed Organization (DRDO) to early use by our national programs for control of vector borne diseases. He specifically observed that ICMR and its nationwide network of Institutes has not only done commendable work on several vector borne diseases, bacterial, parasitic and viral infections, nutrition related aspects, cancer, genetics, blood disorders, human reproduction and occupational health but also maintained respect for traditional medicine and herbal remedies. Both the ministers congratulated the ICMR fraternity for completion of one hundred years of its dedicated service to the nation and assured support that would further energise the health research community.

On this impressive day, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad released three ICMR publications viz. ‘Phytochemical Reference Standards of Selected Indian Medicinal Plants’, INSEARCH – ‘Indian Study on epidemiology of Asthma, Respiratory Symptoms and Chronic Bronchitis’ and ‘Nutrient Requirements & Recommended Dietary Allowances for Indians-2010’ in addition to a set of DVDs containing full text in pdf format of Indian Journal of Medical research from 1913 to 2010.

Dr. C.Gopalan, formerly Director General of ICMR and President of the Nutrition Foundation of India, in his keynote address urged not to depend upon commercially sold synthetic nutrients but recommended judicious use of available food items of the country having regional varieties essential to control malnutrition and for attainment of the larger objective of food security.

As challenges in nutritional security become formidable the nation should not only re-set the priorities on the nutritional front but also involve school children, mothers and other agencies in spreading the message of adhering to traditional foods of the country. Dr. M.S.Swaminathan, the renowned agricultural scientist reiterated in his Foundation Day lecture that due to climatic changes when the crop productivity may be seriously challenged, we must develop strategies well in time and also think of 'anticipatory research' to combat the problems arising due to chronic as well as transient hunger. For the future, we need to take up horticultural operations on a bigger scale than now to raise nutritionally relevant fruit crops that may become a more secure option towards food security ensuring at the same time that lost enthusiasm of the farmers of the nation is brought back. Unless farmers are offered improved and cost-effective post-harvesting technologies innovative market access and state supported commercial opportunities malnutrition cannot be banished from the country. He emphasized involvement of farming communities with new and sustainable vision to meet the challenge of food security that may ensure better health for the people of the nation.

'Health research for marginalized communities continues to be a priority for ICMR', observed Dr. Vishwa Mohan Katoch, Secretary in the Health Research Department and Director-General, ICMR who assured that 'the Council will maintain its focus on marginalized communities and diseases of poverty. Dr. Katoch indicated about start of new fellowship programs, strengthen international partnerships in health research and synergise collaborative research with other scientific departments of the government.

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