

**Address by Shri V.K. Agarwal, President, FISME**

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On behalf of the MSME community and my association FISME, I thank the organizers of Indian Science Congress for this opportunity to say a few words.

Science embodies perpetual quest for ever new knowledge. It is universally accepted that civilization is where it is, due to the practitioners of science who have been pushing the frontiers of human development through the millennia.

We are living in exciting times. Every field of human interest is witnessing progress. To mention just a few – be it in renewable energy or nano technologies, material sciences, life sciences, gene sequencing, light replacing electrons in computing; the list goes on and on. Innumerable discoveries are taking place downstream too based on disruptive scientific researches. The time being taken to convert a scientific discovery into useful product-service and then to its commercialization is fast reducing. So is the speed at which things are becoming obsolete.

We must admit we are lagging behind not only the developed but many emerging countries when it comes to bringing out new products or products of globally distinctive quality and features. If we have to forge ahead and make a mark, we the Indian entrepreneurs will need to constantly update ourselves of the scientific developments taking place all around and be ready to seize the emerging opportunities. Unfortunately so far, the Indian industry has not given due attention to R&D. Enough resources have not been ploughed and expenditure in research not treated a long term investment; sourcing of know how from foreign firms has been preferred over indigenous development. The Indian corporate -with just a few exceptions- have also not shown much interest in supporting non business non government initiatives for science by way of liberal grants. As a result most of the resources we find deployed in the field, are government funded.

Thanks to the foresight of our post independence national leaders, a good base for scientific research is available in the country in form of CSIR labs and other institutes; which however needs to be built upon to contemporary global standards.



*Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME)*

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In the backdrop of the growing scientific and industrial developments in other countries it should be a matter of serious concern to us that very little exchange of knowledge is taking place between our centres of learning and the Indian industry particularly the MSMEs. Perhaps a much closer interaction is now imperative and the only panacea to improve conditions of vast majority of our population and to meet the aspirations of growing middle class of India. How the silos can be connected and regular dialogue promoted between the two is a challenge that needs to be addressed on top priority. Just a few thoughts in this regard.

A well thought out national plan needs to be evolved with the objective of creating a smooth flow of ideas, information and knowledge. Operationalizing such an initiative will require deep commitment of the principal stakeholders particularly the scientific institutions and their practitioners, the MSMEs and the governments. Once a common understanding is reached, the MSME representative bodies can get on with the task of sensitizing their constituents to the needs of becoming aware of the researches and of the value in interacting with the centres/institutes of learning. The MSME associations will also have to catalogue the resources of different centres for showcasing their latent value to the enterprises. The government must take the lead, recognize and support the initiatives and build an institutional mechanism in collaboration with the other two stakeholders to ensure continuity of the efforts. The objectives, scope, structure and processes can be finalized by the three actors after taking the existing mechanism if any, into account.

The 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan has greatly stressed the need to acquire technology and depth, if the manufacturing is to fulfill its mandate of creating 100m jobs in the country.

I exhort my entrepreneur friends to give maximum attention to keeping themselves abreast of new developments related to their field and to think of identifying and accessing the knowledge available with the scientists in the labs and institutes. I also request the scientific community to find out ways to communicate with MSMEs in order to extend them the benefit of their knowledge.

Together, let us collaborate to take the country forward at a rapid pace!

Thankyou.

