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COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

Riding on 80 Years Legacy

Looking to the Future



HAVING worked for more than three decades in an organisation that is completing eight decades of its existence, it's a proud feeling to hear and recount stories about this great organisation. And there are stories aplenty that define the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), an organisation that has always been at the helm of Indian science.

There is the oft-repeated story of the 1970s when multinational companies held monopoly over the manufacture of infant baby food derived from cow milk. They refused to set up factories to produce it in India as the milk from buffaloes (consumed majorly in India) had too much fat and it was difficult to develop an easily digestible baby food from it. CSIR's Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) took up the challenge and developed baby food from buffalo milk, later widely marketed as Amulspray Instant Milk Food. This development was also instrumental in ushering in the milk revolution in the country.

Then there's the story of the 1980s, when the US refused to supply a Cray supercomputer to India because it feared India would use it for military and not research purposes. Not to be cowed down, scientists from CSIR's National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) created Flosolver, India's first parallel computer, which went on to be used in research in fluid dynamics and aeronautics. Its success triggered other successful parallel computing projects in the country such as PARAM.

In the area of petroleum processing too, a near cartel situation was prevailing worldwide. CSIR, in association with its industrial partners, helped to break the stranglehold, having successfully developed processes that are now commercially adopted by several Indian refineries and plants.

A similar story was repeated in the case of zeolite catalysts, used in producing bulk chemicals and petrochemicals. The technology for manufacturing zeolites was a closely guarded secret of multinationals. But only until scientists from CSIR's National Chemical Laboratory decided to break the cartel. Not only did they develop the technology, the country soon achieved self-sufficiency in this field saving precious foreign exchange. The cheaper, safer, longer-lasting zeolite technology was even transferred out of India...to multinationals!

As CSIR celebrates 80 years of its existence, the CSIR fraternity hopes to be part of many more such exciting stories in the years to come. On this occasion, *Science Reporter* is proud to put together this special issue which brings to our readers an overview of the immense contributions of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research during the past 80 years.

Science Reporter is indeed honoured and highly encouraged by a special message by Dr N. Kalaiselvi, the Director General, CSIR. We also thank all the former Director Generals of CSIR who have recounted their experiences in this issue and also offered valuable insights into the path that CSIR should tread in its quest to provide innovative S&T technologies and solutions for the country and the world.

Hasan Jawaid Khan

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