



NCL scientist V Premnath talking to a group of entrepreneurs –RAHUL CHANDAWARKAR.DNA

‘Can we manufacture a sanitary napkin for Rs2?’

First NCL Technology Showcase off to flying start

Rahul Chandawarkar

NCL Technology Showcase — the first interaction between industry and scientists organised by the Venture Center of the NCL Innovation Park on Friday — got off to a flying start as both groups debated the question, ‘Can we manufacture a sanitary napkin for just Rs2?’ among many others.

A total of 40 entrepreneurs, largely from Pune and some from Mumbai, who attended the one day seminar held on the NCL Innovation Park premises, were acquainted with the NCL’s technological capabilities in the fields of super absorbing polymers, membranes, silicones and microcapsules.

According to NCL Innovation Park founding director V Premnath, the sanitary napkin question was raised recently by Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) director general Samir Brahmachari as a part of his ‘CSIR 800 programme’.

The sanitary napkin question came up for a discussion during the session on super absorbing polymers, when Premnath posed it to the entrepreneurs and scientists attending the seminar. NCL scientist MV Badiger from the polymer sciences department said the only way the price of sanitary napkins could be reduced was if

Govt funding options for entrepreneurs

NCL Innovation Park’s Venture Center has created a useful funding database that lists the various governmental funding sources for technology start-ups. More information about this database is available on <http://venturecenter.co.in/funding/funding.php>

The three important sources of funding from the government that the Venture Center facilitates are as follows:

Department of Science & Technology’s (DST) Technopreneur Promotion Programme (Tepp): Rs75,000-Rs45 lakh

Ministry of Medium and Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) Scheme: Rs6 lakh

Technology Development Board (TDB) Seed Fund Scheme: Venture Center can fund up to Rs25 lakh for start-ups

natural products like tamarind seed powder was used to replace the costly acrylic polymers used presently to manufacture the napkins.

Premnath said, “It is a good business opportunity, but scientists and entrepreneurs need to innovate the product.”

Rahul Pathak, the director of

Aqua Plus that manufacturers membranes, pointed out that women in Indian villages were more comfortable using sanitary napkins that were made from cloth and are washable.

“We need to explore solutions in the field of polymer sciences which can help us produce reusable sanitary napkins and diapers.”

Speaking to DNA on low-cost diapers, V Premnath said, “If you want to manufacture a recyclable diaper, a clever idea is needed. The salts from the urine tend to destroy the acrylic polymers. We need to find a way to keep the salts out.”

Pathak, who has been touring the UK, said, “The linkage between scientists and small entrepreneurs is extremely strong in the UK. This gap needs to be bridged in India. I think today’s NCL technology showcase was a step in the right direction.”

The discussion on NCL technologies like membranes, microcapsules and silicones also generated a lot of interest. There was much debate when Automotive Robotics president Rajeev Ranadive wanted to know if it was possible to manufacture a transparent roof for a car which was heat resistant. There was a discussion on an internationally manufactured filtration water bottle and a filtration straw.

Vinay Agrawal, the president of Biopore Surgicals, the company that launched a series of ocular and maxillo facial implants by using NCL technology, made a presentation to the participants. Agrawal complimented the NCL team for their social orientation and dedication.