2019 – TIME FOR INNOVATIONS THROUGH COLLABORATIONS

Dear Reader,

At very outset, I wish all our readers and pharmaceutical scientists a very Happy New Year. 2019 is dawning on the Indian research community in general and all pharmaceutical research professionals in particular. The Prime Minister has come up with “JAI VIGYAN” and “JAI ANUSANDHAN” in support of scientific research. This strengthens the call under Article 51A of Fundamental duties under the Constitution of India for developing a Scientific Temper... and the spirit of enquiry.

The year of ‘Innovation’ for the Indian Pharma Industry is here. All the infrastructure and logistics to support these innovations are falling in place. There is increased awareness for Industry-Academia partnership in pharmaceutical research. The Research institutes and Universities are coming forward with enthusiasm for aligning with industry projects. The new Director General of CSIR, India, Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, (CSIR being one of the largest research networks globally), is already spearheading the initiative for collaborative research with industry. At the Chemical Industry Meet program organized at his behest, on 17th January 2019 at NCL, Pune, Dr. Mande, the new DG, jointly with Dr. Ashwini Nangia, Director of NCL and Dr. Chandrasekhar, Director, IICT called for joint research projects with Industry for New Technologies, for existing markets as well as new markets, along with upgradation of existing technologies for new markets. An appeal was also made to the MSME sector to come forth with their requirements of ‘problem solving’ research projects, with a promise of shorter completion time lines and friendlier terms.

Of late, Universities and technology-oriented colleges are realising the scope for improved funding by protecting innovations and licensing them for commercialization. More importantly, RUSA – Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan – has attracted the attention of aspiring academic institutions on an all-India basis, for government funding for innovative research and patent protection. Encouraging research and education is a fundamental objective of RUSA. NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) and UGC are also emphasizing on the role of innovation in higher learning institutions. All said and done, it is heartening to note that 2019 is dawning and emerging with a lot of hope and positive outlook for innovative pharma research and patenting along with publishing in research journals like Indian Drugs. With a very large number of molecules going off patents, there is increasing scope for “non-infringing process developments with defensive patent protection” to overcome and work around secondary patents and related process patents which expire later. Biosimilar opportunities are also opening up immensely in view of the spate of patent expiries for “MABs”.

Need for undertaking collaborative research and building multifunctional teams between chemistry, pharmacy, pharmacology, clinical and IPR departments has never

been so high, especially in view of the immense opportunities for commercialization of research outcomes and generation of funding for ongoing research through licensing and technology transfers.

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About the Editor

Dr. Gopakumar G. Nair is a Ph.D in Organic Chemistry (1966) from National Chemical Laboratory, Pune (Pune University). He was a Post-Doctoral fellow at IIT Bombay, Powai (1967) before joining the Pharma Industry. He was Director of Bombay Drug House P. Ltd., later Chairman of BDH Industries Ltd. as well as CMD of Bombay Drugs & Pharma Ltd., which was merged with Strides Arcolab Ltd. in 2001. Dr. Nair served IDMA as office bearer for many years from 1972 onwards and was Chairman of various Committees for nearly 4 decades. He was the President of IDMA in 1999/2000. Currently, Dr. Nair is the Chairman of the IPR Committee in IDMA.

Having moved into the Intellectual Property field, he was the Dean of IIPS (Institute of Intellectual Property Studies) at Hyderabad in 2001/2002. Later, he set up his own boutique IP firm, Gopakumar Nair Associates, as well as Gnanlex Hermeneutics Pvt. Ltd., having done his L. L. B. from Mumbai University. He is also CEO of Patent Gurukul and President of Bharat Education Society, Kurla, Mumbai, managing many educational institutions in and around Mumbai.

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