Message from the Head, Department of Biomedical Engineering

In this year 2020, the global pandemic of COVID-19 marked a new era in healthcare delivery in India. While praising the efforts for frontline workers, it was clearly evident that the guarantee of a proper health system is not the sole responsibility of medical professionals or doctors, but a combined effort of all of us, who either provides, manages, or maintains the healthcare system. There appears to be equal responsibility not only by doctors and nurses at one end but also by the consumers of healthcare as every individual. Educating everyone about a pandemic was utmost importance at the beginning in a lock-down state, where a mask was added to the normal wardrobe of any person or handwashing was an added ritual every time we visit outside.

With this unique problem, we have understood 3 things for our country. First, healthcare-related inventions need due importance compared to any other field and it needs to happen locally where it intends to serve for humankind. Second, in India the majority of the biomedical products are still imported from abroad though our market has huge potential. Third, normal Indian persons, in general, think imported products are of better quality than Indian made products when it comes to healthcare needs.

Of course, these sentences cannot be generalized, and we still need to have lots of debate in a different context. However, this is high time we must tackle the situation nicely to avoid our future dependency on others. Therefore, the government started many concepts like "Make in India", "Atmanirbhar India" and so on. Ultimately, it is not the Govt., but it is our responsibility to make it happen in India. To address the important issue, at IITH in a combined effort, many important decisions were taken. First, a new BTech in Biomedical Engineering at IIT level started for the first time at IITH in India. The sole responsibility is to make the human resources to directly address the biomedical problems. Second, for the last few years, the Center of Healthcare Entrepreneurship (CfHE) at IITH has shown an array of indigenous innovations for Indian healthcare needs which makes a global presence with many awards and accolades. It was further strengthened by introducing MTech in Medical Device Innovation at IITH. Third, several projects and courses were started with direct collaboration with the renowned hospitals in Hyderabad. Students are required to visit hospitals and learn about medical physiology as if they were in a medical school to foresee and lead future innovations.

To conclude, as a community we need to bridge the diverse cultures or departments and merge them in a welcome manner to make the biomedical innovations. The biomedical innovations require a strong "We" approach than "I" approach of various subject areas coming together. The current issue of KirIITH focusses the tip of the iceberg innovations already happened, while a number of ideas are generated at IITH community. As a department head, I would like to request all readers to think and debate how can each of them contribute to the noble cause for a better and healthy future of India.

Jai Hind!!

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