

## WELCOME ADDRESS, 66<sup>TH</sup> CSIR FOUNDATION DAY, NCL, PUNE

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Friends,

I have great pleasure in welcoming Dr. T. Ramasami, to NCL, formally, as today's Chief Guest on the occasion of the 66<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of CSIR.

It is a momentous occasion on account of many reasons. CSIR Completes one more year of its glorious journey. As the largest publicly funded research enterprise in the world, CSIR is constantly seeking to redefine its mission and goals. CSIR is also one of the most talked about organization today, some arising out of envy and some arising genuinely out of concerns as to where CSIR "fits in" in the Nation's Innovation System. Are we a mission oriented S&T organization like ISRO, DAE, DRDO? Are we a knowledge producing institution like a research university? Are we a contract research organization for industry? Are we supposed to find affordable solutions to the problems of the vast millions of Indians who are at the bottom of the economic pyramid? Or is it just a haven, for scientists to excel in one's narrow areas of research with a view to gain peer recognitions and win coveted honours?

How do we differentiate ourselves and create a niche? Is there a crisis of identity?

There are serious questions which get often asked in the corridors of the government, in industry, amongst our scientific leaders and peers. If CSIR has to retain it identify and flourish as an organization, it needs to find credible answers to these questions. CSIR's past is truly acknowledged as one of the pioneering initiatives of independent India. In my opinion, its future requires redefinition.

To address these issues, there can be no better person than Dr. Ramasami. Dr. Ramasami has had a 360° view of the S&T landscape of India. As a scientist in CSIR, as a Director of a mission oriented laboratory, Central Leather Research Institute, briefly as acting DG-CSIR and as Secretary to the Government of India, Department of S&T, a position that makes him the Chief Scientific Officer of this nation. There is no one more suited to address the issues that I have alluded to earlier.

Dr. Ramasami needs no introduction to the scientific community. He is a die-hard CSIR product, a B.Tech in Leather Technology from CLRI. He pursued his Ph.D at Leeds University, UK and post-doctoral fellowship in Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA in inorganic chemistry and returned to his alma mater to commence his scientific journey. He led CLRI from the front for over a decade making it an indispensable institution and partner in the growth of the Indian Leather industry. His contributions to Leather industry are what legends are made of.

While accomplishing all this, Dr. Ramasami continued to make seminal contributions to inorganic and bio-inorganic chemistry, especially the chemistry of chromium. He is a recipient of SS Bhatnagar prize and Fellows of all the learned academics of sciences. His life must inspire our young scientists. He is a living embodiment of the dictum that there is no disconnect or dichotomy between a scientist's ability to excel in science and at the same time contribute to societal and industrial research and development. In my opinion he represents the best of CSIR.

Dr. Ramasami has also been a dear friend, a wonderful host for many years at Chennai, where both of us have shared many quiet dinners and conversation. He has been a very frequent visitor to NCL. He has been a very frequent visitor to NCL. He knows us inside out, our strengths and weaknesses, which he has shared with me with great frankness. His penchant for numbers and statistics is legendary. You can hardly win an argument with him, because he has all the numbers and figures in his head!

In 2002, when I had the first opportunity to preside over the CSIR Foundation Day Celebration I announced that we will celebrate this day every year by honoring "Builders of CSIR". Today's speaker is not just a builder of CSIR. To me he represents its very foundation!

As my own career in CSIR rides into a sunset, I am privileged to welcome him formally to NCL. He accepted my invitation with great promptness and enthusiasm, in spite of his very busy schedules. I am grateful to him for this gesture.

May, I welcome Dr. Ramasami to deliver the 66<sup>th</sup> CSIR Foundation Day Lecture titled "CSIR in the Emerging S&T Landscape of India".