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ICMR to promote best indigenous TB detection kits

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DBT and ICMR, ministry of health and family welfare (MOH & FW) have taken the lead for promoting "Indigenous diagnostic technologies for diagnosis of TB and MDR/XDR-TB" developed by Indian scientists or companies.

Under this joint initiative, an 'Expert Group' has been constituted under chairmanship of secretary of DHR and DG, ICMR which evaluates the potential TB diagnostic kit and till now, a total of six meetings have been held and two diagnostic tests have been shortlisted for validation. The aim of these meetings is to connect the companies to the Government as public private partners between the Government, academic institutions and industry.

The ICMR has asked the scientists, companies and the researchers working in this area to send the details of their diagnostic kit(s) in the given format to ICMR. The researchers and companies can work on developing cheap, point of care test with molecular technologies for use in programs in PHC's, CHC level, in district microscopy centers under RNTCP. The technology that picks up the maximum number of mutations and provides a result in one day and is cost effective would be preferred.

As per ICMR's circular, "There is a need for better kits for the detection of TB-MDR/XDR TB under the program. There are various indigenous technologies developed by Indian scientists for detection of MDR/XDR TB and these technologies are in advanced stages of development and need support and partnerships from government and industry to enable commercialization. It is important to identify the best technologies based on defined parameters and then pick them up for commercialization without losing time. The objective of this initiative is to learn the status of Indian indigenous technologies developed by Indian researchers and discuss the way forward so that these can be made available or commercialized for larger use."

"It is the time to push Indian technologies forward and the government is committed to provide financial support for the validation of these technologies in a collaborative manner. MOH and FW will extend full support to take these technologies forward if they are ready, cost effective and are found to be suitable for use in the program as per the recommendations of the committee. The funds for external validation would be provided by DBT/ICMR/DHR and the external validation would be carried out in a multicentric manner," concluded ICMR.

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