

**Sixth Annual General Body Meeting
Indian National Young Academy of Sciences (INYAS)
February 18-21, 2021**

Indian National Young Academy of Sciences (INYAS) is the India's first and only young scientists recognized academy which was founded in December 2014 with a vision to promote Science education and networking among Young Scientists.

The sixth annual general body meeting of INYAS had a total of 5 sessions over a span of 4 days on a virtual platform. First time, two sessions of INYAS GBM were open to all. On the first day, in the first public lecture, **Dr. Shekhar C. Mande**, Secretary DSIR and Director General, CSIR elaborated the role of innovations from CSIR laboratories for mitigating COVID-19. He briefed that as a response to COVID-19 pandemic, CSIR labs adopted a five-pronged strategy to tackle the challenge in form of surveillance, diagnosis, drugs, hospital assistive devices, and ensuring supply chain. Dr. Mande said that the successful partnership of industry/start-ups with academia and support from political leadership has established the credibility of science to the society in these challenging times. He also stressed upon reaching out to the common man, school students to build faith in Indian Science as well as motivate younger generation to science career. He also accoladed the sincere efforts of INYAS in this direction. Lastly, he made a call to younger people to work towards high quality international journals from India and promote Indian journal with strong editorial/reviewing practices. To this Dr. Chandra, Chair INYAS informed about INYAS initiative in this direction and committed to work towards improvement in this direction.

This public lecture was followed by a comprehensive panel discussion on the Integration of State S&T councils with Central Science Organizations, the topic being of critical importance for science community in India, as moderated by **Dr. Gitanjali Yadav**, Member, INYAS. The panelists represented both centre and State S&T agencies; **Dr. Arabinda Mitra**, Scientific Secretary, Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA), Govt of India, **Ms. Mugdha Sinha**, IAS, Secretary, DST Rajasthan, **Dr. Ajit Rangnekar**, Director RICH-HCC Telangana and **Dr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma**, Chairperson, INYAS. Dr. Mitra emphasized how the Office of the PSA has always taken the lead in enhancing and enabling partnerships between the three pillars of science: Industry, Academia and Innovators. During the pandemic, his team facilitated this even further by means of initiating Industry led S&T Cluster development, development of the STI Policy, and most recently, the National Research Foundation. His view was that young scientists of INYAS and India's 31 State/UT based S&T Councils have to be integrated in all these efforts for the nation to develop. Ms. Mugdha Sinha underlined that central funds for the councils cover organisational structures rather than for research, and main focus of State councils has been outreach, support of Students and technology dissemination. Dr. Rangnekar focused on the importance of scientists to the nation, and how the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad-Hyderabad City Cluster (RICH-HCC) has emerged as a successful collaboration at the State and central interface in India's newest state of Telangana. At this point, Dr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma stressed upon how INYAS is perfectly poised to

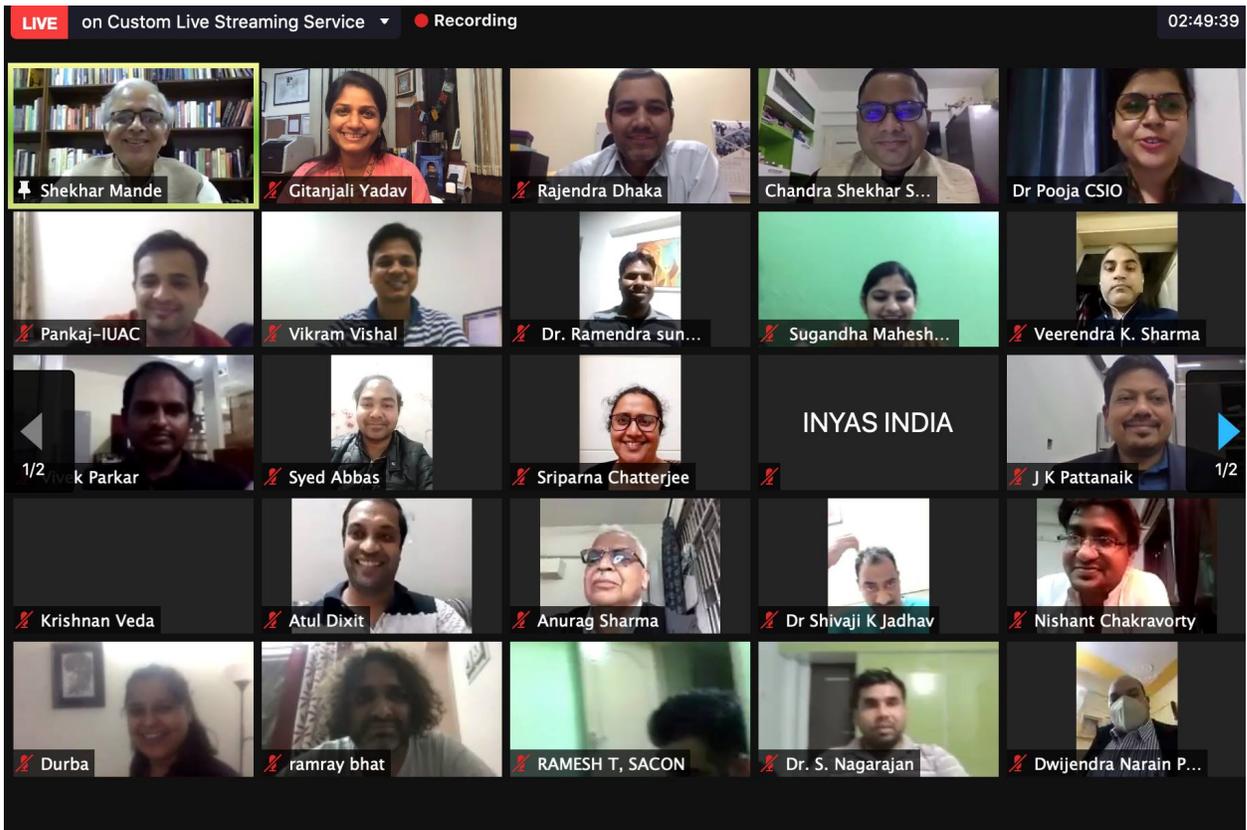
create a change by working together with local science communities and central agencies. As a representative of one of India's most highly funded and globally recognized central science organizations (IIT), Dr. Sharma further explained the need for technical manpower at central R&D Labs to enabling the opening up and making R&D facilities/expertise available to remote labs/universities/people from States for further capacity building in Science & Technology to realize the goal of self-reliant India.

Second day of the GBM was only for its members where 24 new members as selected from 296 applications were formally inducted and 2016 batch of members were given a farewell. In this year's cohort, through 24 members, 15 new organizations are added to INYAS map pan-India. Notably, there is a nearly 30% representation of women scientists among new members. At this occasion, **Prof. Devang Khakhar**, Vice president, INSA and former director of IIT Bombay appreciated the efforts of INYAs to bring a change in society towards building scientific temperament.

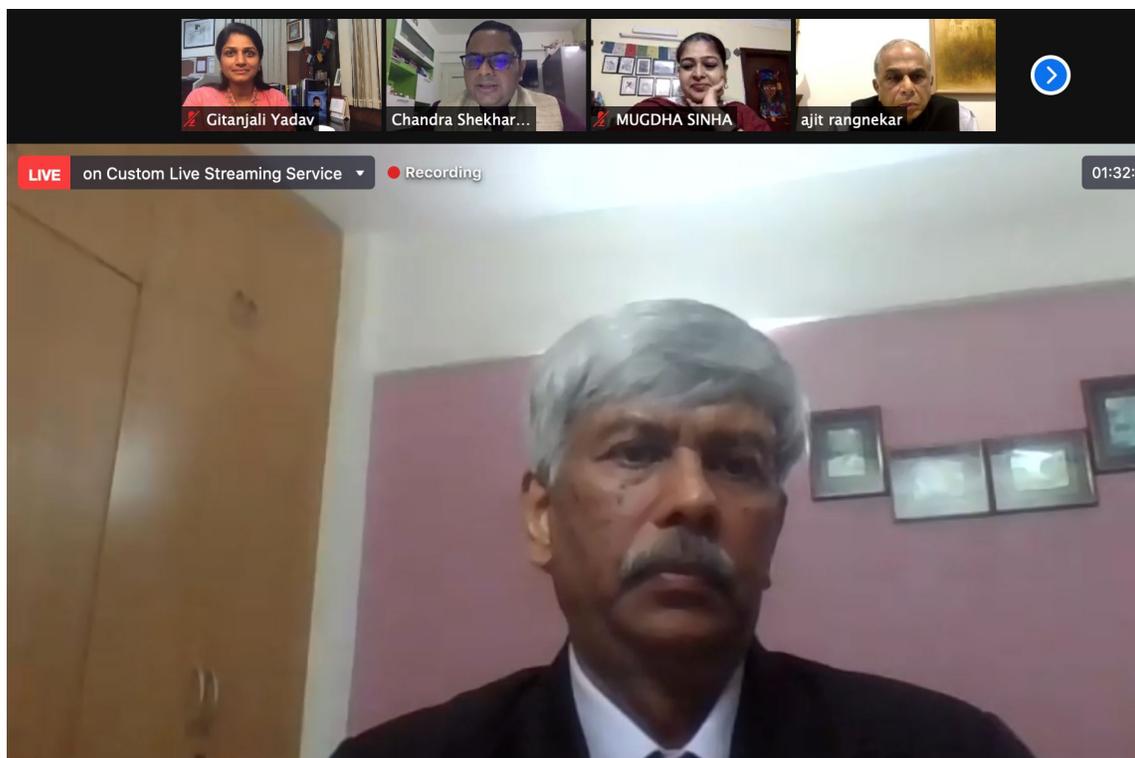
A major highlight of this year's annual GBM was a technical symposium on Infectious diseases. The highlight of the session was vaccine biology and COVID-19 vaccine. In this regard a very elaborate and an extremely informative talk was delivered by **Dr. Shahid Jameel**, Director, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University, Sonapat, a well known virologist of the country. Dr. Jameel explained what vaccines are, how they work and the various vaccine engineering platforms available for designing a vaccine. He further extended his talk towards COVID-19 vaccines. Due to the ongoing pandemic and various misinformation and scepticism existing about COVID-19 vaccines, diverse types of questions were put forward by the audience and the same were very clearly explained by Dr. Jameel. This session was a part of vaccine awareness program of INYAS and also the first talk of a new webinar series called as 'GYANTEEKA'. Literal meaning of GYANTEEKA is knowledge (GYAN) about vaccine (TEEKA). As the country progresses towards mass immunizations to manage COVID-19, as a group of young scientists, INYAS has also stepped forward in encouraging people to help in execution of the immunizations by addressing the misconceptions, myths and misinformation. Aligning with Dr. Shahid Jameel's talk INYAS member, **Dr. Upasana Ray** who is also a virologist from CSIR-IICB, Kolkata discussed about the role of India towards vaccine diplomacy. She emphasized on various diplomatic dialogues and operations undertaken by India to help other countries with the vaccine supplies. The session was further enriched by enlightening talks by four other INYAS members **Dr. Dhiraj Kumar** from ICGEB, **Dr. Niti Kumar** from CSIR-CDRI, **Dr. Surajit Bhattacharjee** from Tripura University and **Dr. Sanhita Roy** from LV Prasad Eye Institute on diverse infectious diseases.

In the final session on 21st February, INYAS members organized multiple brainstorming sessions to make the strategy for future roadmap. Members elected their new core committee. **Dr. Chandra Shekhar Sharma**, Chairperson, INYAS and Associate Professor at IIT Hyderabad in his final address to all the members summarized the new initiatives INYAS has taken in last one year for capacity building and gender inclusiveness in STEM. He called upon

all INYAS members to be the change and transform the society with their dedicated efforts as their social responsibility. Dr. Sharma highlighted that election of 5 women scientists in a 9-members apex decision making national core committee shows the commitment of INYAS for women empowerment and encouragement for the leadership role among women members of INYAS. Dr. Sharma announced that INYAS will be focusing on mass awareness campaign on Covid1-9 vaccination soon for next few months and will engage all sections of the society for a wider impact. A four day long annual GBM ended on a successful note with emotions of joining and bid adieu, gratitude to all fellow, guidance from peers, hope to do more and commitment to serve.



Dr. Shekhar Mande with other INYAS members during sixth annual GBM of INYAS



Dr. Arabinda Mitra, Scientific Secretary, Office PSA during panel discussion during sixth annual GBM of INYAS



Dr. Shekhar C Mande, Director General CSIR addressing sixth annual GBM of INYAS



Dr. Shahid Jameel giving an inaugural GYANTEEKA webinar during sixth annual GBM of INYAS

Important links:

Full program: <https://inyas.in/gbm-2021/>

YouTube link of Public Lecture 1 and panel discussion: <https://youtu.be/gCWOR27WKKE>

YouTube link of Public Lecture 2 and technical symposium on Infectious Diseases: <https://youtu.be/wIf837hvVpY>