

## **The first CSIR Award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development**

The CSIR Award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development has been instituted from this year (2006) to recognize those S&T innovations that have helped transform the lives of rural people or alleviated the drudgery of the rural people or have helped in generation of employment. Only successful S&T innovations that have been implemented at ground level are considered for the award.

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh gave away the CSIR Award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development at the elegant function at Vigyan Bhawan. The Award went to the Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Chennai.

The award was given to CLRI in recognition of its contributions for designing, developing and delivering effectively, several critical technologies, impacting positively the livelihood of a large number of people engaged in the Indian leather sector.

CLRI has made several S&T innovations, which are suited to village micro-enterprise sector. A basket of critical technologies of socio-economic relevance to nearly 1.4 million people engaged directly in rural leather sector has been designed, developed and delivered effectively. These technologies include innovative methods for recovery and fuller utilization of carcasses of fallen animals in villages, improved vegetable tanning and standardized production of open type ethnic footwear (Kohlapuri). The main connecting feature of S&T innovations of CLRI is in rendering the relatively small economies of scale associated with low investment capacities of village micro-enterprises.

The design intervention in Athani region for quality production of ethnic footwear has made a difference to the rural economy of the region. The technology packages developed and delivered by CLRI in a large number of locations in the country are in practice and serve as models for replication of these S&T innovations for rural development. The missionary zeal of CLRI in delivering the technology packages is unique.

While announcing the Award, Dr R A Mashelkar, remembered the contributions of Dr T. Ramasami, former Director, CLRI and currently, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

The award carries a cash prize, a shield and a citation.

Dr A. B. Mandal, Acting Director, CLRI and Dr S. Naidu accepted the award on behalf of Team-CLRI.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Mandal said that CLRI was honoured to receive the first CSIR Award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development. His reminiscences took the audience back in time to the early days of CLRI when Sir C. V. Raman had paid a visit to CLRI. Sir Raman had asked about the kind of research CLRI could do and the erstwhile Director of CLRI was quick to point out that the shoes of the distinguished visitor were made of leather—the result of high science.

Dr Mandal concluded by saying, “We rededicate ourselves to carry forward the mandate. The success of CLRI is the success of CSIR and thus, the country.”