

IIT Indore Awarded ANRF-PAIR Grant to Drive Innovation in Sustainability, Healthcare, and Materials

In a remarkable stride for India's higher education and research ecosystem, the **Indian Institute of Technology Indore (IIT Indore)** has been chosen as one of only seven elite institutions nationwide to receive the prestigious **Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR)** grant of 100 Crore, awarded by the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**.

This highly competitive distinction follows an intensive national selection process that considered top institutions based on the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). Among 30 premier hubs initially shortlisted, each paired with several "spoke" institutions, only seven—including three IITs, one NIT, IISc Bangalore, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and the University of Hyderabad—were ultimately selected to receive this esteemed research support. This places IIT Indore in the league of India's most accomplished and impactful research institutions, reaffirming its leadership in innovation and science.

Under this initiative, IIT Indore will serve as the **hub institution** for a newly launched collaborative research network titled **SAKSHAM – Scientific Advancements in Knowledge for Sustainability, Healthcare, and Materials**. Operating under a mentorship-based hub-and-spoke framework, the network comprises six partner institutions: Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (Indore), Vikram University (Ujjain), IIIT Bhopal, Bundelkhand University, NIT Kurukshetra, and RTM Nagpur University.

The **SAKSHAM network** will unify 165 faculty members across 56 departments from the seven institutions to pursue interdisciplinary research aligned with national priorities. The network will focus on three key thematic areas: **Advanced Materials**, **Environmental Sustainability** and **Health and Medical Technologies**—critical domains that align with India's strategic scientific goals.

The proposal from IIT Indore was prepared and presented with continuous guidance and supervision of Prof. Suhas Joshi, Director, IIT Indore. The key people involved in this project are **Prof. Abhirup Datta**, Dean, Research and Development, IIT Indore and serving as the Project Director for ANRF PAIR project; **Prof. Shailesh Kundalwal** leading the theme of Advanced Materials; **Prof. Sharad Gupta** focusing on Health & Medical Technologies and **Dr. Debayan Sarkar** responsible for Environmental Sustainability. Additionally, dedicated faculty teams from the partner institutions contributed to the proposal's robust and multidisciplinary vision, laying the foundation for impactful collaboration.

The ANRF-PAIR initiative, launched under the guidance of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and shaped by the principles of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aims to reduce disparities in research capacity across Indian institutions. By fostering mentorship-driven partnerships, it empowers institutions with emerging research potential through collaboration with top-tier hubs. The program also seeks to build sustainable R&D ecosystems through capacity building, resource sharing, research training, and infrastructure development.

Congratulating the entire team for this major achievement, **Prof. Suhas Joshi**, Director of IIT Indore, remarked, *"This grant is a testament to IIT Indore's dedication to advancing interdisciplinary research and creating transformative academic partnerships. Through the SAKSHAM network, we aspire to nurture a collaborative, inclusive, and globally competitive research ecosystem that addresses real-world challenges."*

Prof. Abhirup Datta, Dean, R&D at IIT Indore, shared, *"This initiative highlights IIT Indore's commitment to inclusive academic advancement. We will work closely with our spoke institutions to strengthen their research planning, proposal development, and infrastructural growth, ultimately enhancing their national and international research visibility."*

This recognition brings not only substantial research funding but also positions IIT Indore as a central force in driving impactful, future-facing research from India. With the SAKSHAM network, IIT Indore is set to catalyze innovation, mentor emerging institutions, and accelerate the country's progress toward becoming a global leader in science and technology. With this grant, IIT Indore takes a new role to nurture the growth of research and innovation in Central India and beyond.