

Response to BBC news on Indian inventor who lives in penury by Amarnath Tewary, March 3, 2008

The news does not reveal all the facts comprehensively. Correspondent could have easily ascertained the facts by contacting NIF. There is also a possibility that some of the views of Md Saidullah ji have been taken out of context and thus may create misgivings in popular mind about the role and responsibilities of NIF.

FACTS:

National Innovation Foundation received several entries about various innovations of Md Saidullah from Shri Azhar Hussair Ansari, Scout NIF in October 2001 with inadequate information. By early 2002, all the supporting documents were received. The entries including "Amphibious bicycle" were thus included in the third national campaign of NIF. Md. Saidullah ji received the Life Time Achievement Award at the hands of then President of India, in third Award function of NIF, 2004.

It is incorrect that NIF took away his bicycle. In fact he was helped for developing a prototype of amphibious cycles for a) demonstration at the Award function, and also later at different exhibitions to b) estimate demand and c) create visibility of his innovation. He was given the support of Rs. 16000/= in August 2004.

Why patent could not be applied:

While it is true that Saidullah Ji had developed this cycle a very long time ago and had published designs and its features in various newspapers, there were also many patents already granted for the similar innovation before his entry was received in NIF database. The Prior Art Search report published in India Innovates, Third National Award Book, in 2005.

Prior Art & IPR protection: - "US document number 4092945 discloses a cycle powered floatation device. Patent number 5803774 describes an integrated system for water and road but requires wheel to be removed for use in water. There are small companies such as Pedal-Paddle (<http://www.pedal-paddle.com>), which have developed amphibious cycles but the cost difference is huge. As against Rs 6,000 for Shri Saidullah's cycle, the US model is between Rs. 45,000 to Rs 50,000. Similar ideas have also originated in different parts of the country and the world. From India, Shri Dwarka Chouraisya, (1985-86) and Paul Stephen Alexander (1994) have also developed amphibious cycles". (source: - India Innovates, Third National Award Book, National Innovation Foundation, 2005, isbn: 81-87160-19-5, Ahmedabad: SRISTI Innovations)

Given such prior art, filing patent was not possible. Given a series of innovations developed by Saidullah Ji, he richly deserved the honour.

Apart from this, NIF also extended its help in publicizing the innovation, "Amphibious bicycle" through various means viz. HoneyBee newsletter, NIF CD, NIF website etc. Discovery channel prominently profiled Shri Saidullah in a series of innovations in India for which he was also paid an honorarium of Rs. 10,000 by the channel. Shri Saidullah was also nominated by NIF Wall Street Journal's Asia Innovation Award in 2005 and, BBC, Newsweek and Shell's World Challenge Competition 2006 by NIF.

Seeing the creativity and innovative temperament of Md. Saidullah, NIF not only gave him Life Time Achievement Award of Rs. 1 Lakh, but also supported him for product development of his other innovations (See table 1) . NIF

also awarded innovation fellowship in October 2006 to Md. Saidullah (fellowship@Rs.6000/- per month) for one year. Which was again extended for another one year in January 2008 for another year. He has not yet availed of the amount till he finalises the use of this fellowship.

Table: 1, The financial support provided to Shri Saidullah from NIF

S. No.	Purpose	Date	Amount (Rs.)
1.	Innovation fellowship (Nov 2006 to Sep 2007)	3 Jan, 2007	66,000
2.	Product development & fellowship for Oct 06	15 Nov, 2006	41,000
3.	Product Development: human operated electricity generation	4 Jan, 2006	3,500
4.	National award	Jan, 2005	1,00000
5.	MVIF support for prototype development for demonstration at NIF	18 Aug, 2004	16,000
Total			2,26,500

This is true that NIF, after its best efforts couldn't commercialise the bicycles as no entrepreneur showed interest in this worthy technology. A presentation was made at the Ludhiana Management Association meeting chaired by Mr Munjal. MD of one of the largest manufacturers of cycles in India, but in vain. Md. Saidullah ji, though sometime is genuinely upset with NIF because NIF could not create livelihood

opportunities for him, given indifferent response of the market. He does maintain active touch and good will towards NIF, as communicated by him on phone today.

Mr Saidullah maintains his faith in NIF's earnestness to explore better opportunities for his technologies. His technologies have also been displayed at NIF web site so as to attract potential entrepreneurs for the same. Likewise, his must be one of the technologies most publicised by NIF in majority of the meetings.

It is obvious from above mentioned facts that NIF has been trying consistently to contribute to development and diffusion of Saidullah ji's innovations but then markets have their own way to resend. Little can be done about that with limited resources available with NIF.

Criticism and comments are welcome.

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