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Meet Gordhan Patel, the Indian Edison in US

Parth Shastri,TNN | Jan 5, 2015, 05.17 AM IST

AHMEDABAD: When Gordhan Patel, 73, received the Edison Patent Award for 2013, it was a fitting recognition, as akin to the prolific US inventor Patel's work spans disciplines and has received around 100 patents.

Born in Manund, a village in Patan district, Patel went to Vallabh Vidyanagar for his PhD. With his acclaimed work in crystallization of polymers, he got an opportunity for post-doctoral research at the UK and later the US. He got US citizenship and got associated with major laboratories for cutting-edge research.

He founded JP Laboratories that has 41 patents and 38 pending ones across the globe. Patel had got 40 patents for his earlier employer Allied Signal. Among the honours, Patel's simple but effective SIRAD technology to ascertain the amount of radiation in surroundings using the colour-changing strip had won the Frost and Sullivan Award for Innovation in Technology.

The strip was developed by Patel specifically as terror-fighting device post 9/11 amidst fear of terrorists using 'dirty bomb' emanating radioactivity. It was widely used by authorities post Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011. Apart from US and European countries, Israel has recently acquired the dosimeters, said Patel.

He had earlier made his name for developing colour-changing stickers for a number of parameters. It could tell whether the equipments at hospital are sterilized, whether the packed food is good to eat or whether a syringe is good to use for nanotechnology. His most ambitious project to date was to develop artificial blood, a liquid without colour or blood group, which had to be abandoned due to lack of funding.

Invited as a guest speaker at the last Vibrant Gujarat summit to share his experience with disruptive innovation dealing with very high-risk business, Patel for the past few years has concentrated his energies on finding economical and faster ways of glass-lining metal reactors and pipes. Such reactors are used for synthesis of chemicals and drugs. He says that the novel method of heating metal and melting glass would change the century-old process of such fusion.