

## **Update on Karnataka State Innovation Council-related Meeting**

The State Innovation Council (SInC)-related Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Shri R.V. Deshpande, the Hon'ble Minister for Higher and Technical Education and Tourism, State Govt. of Karnataka on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2013. Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the NInC Mentor, Mr. Keerthi Laal Kala, Consultant (for the MSME Clusters) Ms. Bindeshwary, Sr. Research Officer (in-charge of the Karnataka State at the Consultant/Sr. RO level), and Ms Veena Upadhyaya, Expert, NInC participated in the Meeting. The Chairman, Karnataka State Council, CII, Mr. Soumitra Bhattacharya (Joint Managing Director, BOSCH) had attended on behalf of the CII. Prof. Khincha, Chairman of the Karnataka State Innovation Council (KSInC), Dr. Rajneesh Goel, Pr. Secy. Higher and Technical Education, Mr. Jitendra Singh, OSD, Dept. Of IT, and other officers of the Higher Education and Technical Education Depts also attended.

1.1 The Pr. Secretary/Secretaries of the other Depts could not attend due to certain official exigencies.

1.2 The NInC Mentor, the Chairman, KSInC, the Pr. Secy, Higher and Technical Education, the undersigned and other colleagues from NInC called on the Chief Secretary Mr. S.V. Ranganath after the formal meeting, and had a fruitful exchange of ideas with him for over half an hour.

1.3 The KSInC had been set up on 1.06.2011 and was in existence till March, 2013. The KSInC was earlier anchored in the State Knowledge Commission which has now been wound up. The proposal for reconstitution of the SInC is under consideration and the file is with the CS. The anchoring is now proposed to be vested in the Peoples Education Society with Dr. Kavi Mahesh, Prof. of Computer Science, Centre for Knowledge Analytics and Ontological Engineering, as the Member-Secretary. As at present, the KSInC has emerged as the best-performing SInC so far, and was one of the three SInCs that had been invited to make a presentation to the NInC in its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

2. **The Hon'ble Minister**, who has earlier held the Industries Department for long, is deeply committed to the cause of innovation, and is credited with pioneering a number of innovation-driven initiatives in the field of Higher and Technical Education. **In his opening remarks, he said that they had made a provision of Rs. 05 crores in the Visweswarya Technical University (VTU) for encouraging innovation among the students in the University and the colleges affiliated to the University. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State Sri Siddaramaiah, in his Budget Speech for the FY 2013-14 presented on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2013, had specifically mentioned about the setting up of Innovation Clubs in all Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics. He had further assured that a network of Mentors would be created and web**

**portal would be developed. A copy of the Budget document was handed over to us.** He said that the State Govt. recognised fully the need for systematic skills-development among the youth, and for preparing an exhaustive database of the technical graduates of the State for ensuring their quality employment.

3. **Prof Khincha, the present Chairman, and also proposed to be the Chairman of the proposed to be reconstituted SInC,** provided the details of their main achievements so far. He recounted these as stated below:

(i) The State had teamed up with the Techpedia.in portal of Prof. Anil Gupta to create the database of project reports based on innovative ideas.

(ii) The Council had started the idea of Town Hall meetings to cast the net wider and obtain the people's ideas for improvement in the civic governance.

(iii) The Youth Enterprise Program had been started in collaboration with the Intel; more than 100 students were covered at a time. A group of 05 students was constituted for mobilisation of ideas, ideation, creation of Business Model, and pitching for funds from the angel investors.

(iv) The Ignite Program had been started six months back in which the policy-makers meet the innovation experts for a brain-storming.

(v) The SInC had been instrumental in creation of 09 Clusters in the field of Bio-medicals to bring the doctors and engineers together on a platform for effecting improvements in the manufacture of the medical equipments.

(vi) The SInC has promoted formation of Innovation Warehouse, a repository of the Project Reports, ideas for entrepreneurship, liaison with angel investors and industry. NIC supports in maintenance of the Warehouse.

(vii) Among other ideas promoted by the SInC are the identification of the Innovation Champions; application of the parameter of STEEPLE ( Social, Technical, Environmental, Economic, Public-good, Legal and Ethical) Test to a given innovation-based enterprise; concept of excubation vis-a-vis incubation. The word 'Excubation' carrying the connotation of trying out an idea on a small scale and ramping it up as has been done by the Augustya International Foundation. An essential pre-requisite of excubation is the willingness to overcome the fear of failure.

(viii) Karnataka has teamed up synergistically with Google in respect of its website innovationkarnataka.in, and with Techpedia and Intel in respect of some of its important initiatives. The SInC is also planning to have Sustainable Innovation Workshop on 21.09.13, and a Workshop on innovations in Enrgy and Water sectors on 19.09.13.

(ix) Karnataka is a Member of the Creativity World Forum (CWF), and is proposing to host the next meeting of the CWF.

4. **Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the NInC Mentor** called upon the SInC to democratize innovations, and underlined the width of the scope of the term 'innovation'. The degree of success in pioneering the innovation-led growth is a function of committed leadership, discipline, and the extent of reach to the people. He expressed his admiration for the remarkable commitment of the Hon'ble Minister Shri R.V. Deshpande for the cause of innovation in the field of education. He underlined the need for enlarging the number of activities taken up by the KSIInC so far, and expand to additional areas. He suggested that a matrix be drawn up for the purpose of drawing up the Innovation Action Plan of the State, with a well-thought out grid of verticals and horizontals. The verticals may be populated with sectors with Agriculture, identified MSME sectors like Silk industry for instance, Adult Education, and Skilling. The State may accord priority to nurturing of MSME clusters, and setting up of Karnataka Inclusive Innovation Fund.

5. **Mr. Soumitra Bhattacharya, the CII representative** called for further bridging of the gap between the industry and academia. The students passing out very often are not high on the suitability index of employment. There is a need to develop in them the right kind of soft and hard skills, based on the market needs.

6. **The Expert, NInC ( Veena upadhyaya)** complimented the State Govt. for creation of a conducive innovation eco-system, and for emerging as a good role-model for the other States. She called for acquiring greater width and breadth, along with the sector-specific depth (as in the sector of education), and identify the people's needs in other sectors e.g. better waste management and transport systems in the field of urban administration; better practices and varieties for water-stressed crops; MSME clusters; Karnataka Inclusive Innovation Fund; ICT in Judicial System; introduction of State Innovation Scholarships in Schools, and integration of Tod-Fod-Jod in the co-curriculum on an ongoing basis. I also called for developing an organic link between the SInC and the District Innovation Fund. The imperative of formulation of the Innovation Action Plan latest by January end, 2014 was underlined.

7. **Mr. Keerthi L. Kala, Consultant, NInC** provided details of the Krishnagiri Cluster in Tamil Nadu and the Brassware Cluster in Moradabad, U.P.. He also informed about the proposed setting up of the Cluster Growth Cell in the Ministry of MSME, GOI level. A similar initiative is expected from the State Industries Dept. Considering the innovation-conducive environment of the State, the State Industries Dept may take up training of the officers of the Industries Depts. at the national level.

8. Subsequently a meeting was held with **Mr. S.V. Ranganath, CS, Karnataka.** He expressed his whole-hearted support for the innovation agenda in the State. He was requested by the undersigned to associate the Planning Dept also with the SInC as a Facilitating Dept to ensure the enlargement of the SInC's activities across other sectors as well, and to internalise the innovation agenda in the planning and budgetary process of the State. While agreeing to the suggestion, he informed that the State had taken the initiative to incorporate the promotion of innovation by the civil servants as a parameter of assessment in the proforma of Result Framework Document (RFD), and that it carried a weightage of 10-15 points on a scale of 100. It was a very welcome revelation and will be conveyed to other States for appropriate emulation. He agreed to put his team of officers on preparation of the Innovation Action Plan (IAP), and accomplish the task by mid-October. It was decided to have the first discussion on the framework of the IAP on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 13 in which Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the NInC Mentor also agreed to participate.

Veena Upadhyaya,  
Expert, NInC  
24.09.2013