

Summary Report of Discussion in the Meeting on matters relating to State Innovation Council (SInC), Tamil Nadu under the Chairpersonship of Mr. S. Krishnan, Principal Secretary, Dept of Planning, Co-ordination and Special Initiatives on 29th October, 2013.

The State of Tamil Nadu is yet to form the State Innovation Council. In response to our request made through a number of letters, including the recent one written by Dr. Sam Pitroda, Chairman, National Innovation Council addressed to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State, and subsequent follow-up with Chief Secretary and the Principal Secretary, Dept. of Planning, Coordination and Special Initiatives, the interactive meeting was held on 29th October, 2013. The matters relating to innovation are dealt with by the Dept. of Planning of the State Govt.

2. The meeting was chaired by **Mr. S. Krishnan, Principal Secretary, Dept of Plg, Coord and Spl. Initiatives**. The Additional Chief Secretaries, Agriculture Production Commissioner, Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of Finance, Higher Education, Industries, Home, School Education, Rural Development, Revenue & Panchayati Raj, and IT Departments of the State attended the meeting among others. **The NInC was represented by Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the NinC Mentor and Ms Veena Upadhyaya, Expert, National Innovation Council. The CII was represented by Mr. Anjan Das, Executive Director, CII, Head Office, New Delhi**

2.1 **The NInC Mentor, and the undersigned met Ms. Sheela Balakrishnan, Chief Secretary, State Govt. Of Tamil Nadu along with Mr. S. Krishnan, Pr. Secy, Planning & Coordination** before the holding of the formal meeting. **The CS** apprised about the host of innovation-driven initiatives taken by the State of Tamil Nadu under the inspiring leadership of the State' Hon'ble Chief Minister Ms Jayalalitha. A copy of the State's Vision 2023 in which the Chapter captioned 'Growth Strategies' enunciates among other strategies, making TN a Knowledge and Innovation-hub, was handed over. On behalf of NInC, **the Mentor** said that the platform of SInC will ensure continuous consolidation and convergence of the concerns for innovation across the sectors, and institutionalize the same in the State's planning and budgetary processes. Ms Veena Upadhyaya, **Expert, NInC** stated that the uniqueness of the SInC lies in the fact that it is a semi-governmental forum, and envisages association of not only the governmental sector egg-heads but also of the most creative and thinking minds and versatile professionals and as such the deliberations and decisions represent the quintessence of cross-sectoral caliber for the good of society. It also leads to inter-disciplinary symbiotic ties which is the crux of innovation. In the context of the District Innovation Fund administered by the Ministry of Finance, GOI, the SInC also emerges as the intermediate tier between the Planning Commission's concerns for the role of inclusive innovation, and the District level Committee under the chairpersonship of the District Magistrate for implementation of the said concerns.

2.2 It was further informed that over all 28 States and UTs had formed the SInCs and UTInCs so far, and quite a few like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab and H.P. had taken significant steps to realize the agenda. Considering the lead taken by the State of Tamil Nadu in its march on the path of innovation, the State could emerge as the role model by setting higher benchmarks for itself, and by assuming the role of a sort of 'prima donna' for the nation as a whole in the field of innovation-led growth and development. **The CS** said that they will keep the positive aspects in favour of the formation of the proposed platform in view while taking a decision on the constitution of the SInC. A copy of the NInC's Report to the People 2012, and a copy of the D.O. letter dated 22nd October, 2013 addressed to the CS with a request for formulation of the Innovation Action plan (IAP) for the Twelfth Five Year Plan period were handed over to the CS.

3. During the Meeting, **Mr. S. Krishnan, Principal Secretary, Dept of Planning & Coordination** welcomed the participants, and informed about the innovative steps taken in the areas of nutrition, urban governance, road construction and healthcare. He informed that the State has created a State Innovation Fund with an amount of Rs. 50-60 crores, and the guidelines for the same have also been formulated. **Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the Member of NInC, and the NInC Mentor for Tamil Nadu** said that he was greatly impressed by the State's Vision 2023 and it was indeed laudable and was worthy of emulation. The idea is not to get into shenanigans nor proselytize the thinking but to mutually reinforce and synergise the concepts and their implementation to carry forward the innovation agenda with greater vigour and acceleration.

3.1 **The Expert, NInC** in her initial remarks, continuing with the tenor of discussion with the CS, focused on providing the *raison d'être* for formation of SInC in the State. It was thought appropriate to dilate on this aspect with a degree of vehemence as that had emerged as an area of skepticism on earlier occasion. The Expert, NInC adduced the following grounds for establishment of the SInC:

(i) The key function of the SInC will be creation of innovation eco-system. Disaggregating the concept of innovation eco-system, the undersigned said that it requires performance of five tasks namely, creation of policy framework at the macro level; provision of platforms for collaboration among various institutions; ICT connectivity; fostering innovation in the field of education; and setting up a system of incentives and rewards for innovation.

(ii) The SInC will be a platform of convergence where all the multi-sectoral and cross-sectoral innovations will be collated and consolidated. The diffused and discursive efforts can thus be systematized and converged, and become imbibed in the system. This platform will give the requisite breadth and depth to the concerns for innovation. It will allow a comprehensive and a sort of 360 degree approach to the subject and not leave it confined to limited sectors.

(iii) It will lead to the institutionalisation and internalisation of the culture of innovation in the planning and budgetary process of the State, and become their integral part across the sectors.

(iv) The SInC will be an intermediate tier between the NInC/national level entity and the District Innovation Fund (DIF) which has been created following the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission. Under this Scheme, an amount of Rs. 1 crore has been earmarked for each district in the country for innovative works. The State of Tamil Nadu, which has 32 districts, will be getting Rs. 32 crores between the period 2011 and 2015 from the Ministry of Finance. The SInC may be the natural choice for formulation of guidelines for the innovation-based projects and for mentoring and steering the selection of projects to be funded by the DIF.

(v) The SInC is intended to be a quasi-governmental forum. She requested the State Govt. to associate representatives of academic institutions e.g. Directors of NIT, Engineering Colleges, Medical Institutions, representatives of civil society, industry, and progressive agriculturists/horticulturists, depending on the sectors identified for innovation agenda as per the needs of the people of the State.

(vi) The platform of SInC can create a climate conducive to overcoming of the risk-aversion. Innovation naturally involves taking a degree of risk, and it becomes imperative to promote an element of risk-friendliness among the civil-servants and decision-makers at large through this forum.

(vii) This forum will also help in revisiting the regulatory regimes and promotional mechanisms with a view to facilitating their being innovation-friendly.

3.2 She further suggested that Depts of S&T and of HRD may be designated as the nodal Depts of the SInC as they are the engines of innovation, while the Dept. of Planning & Coordination acts as the overarching facilitating Dept. The State Innovation Council may also consider setting up some sectoral sub-committees in such areas as are accorded high priority, and associate the best brains in the country with these sub-committees for the most innovative solutions.

3.3 The Expert, NInC dwelt on the national level initiatives taken by the NInC. She suggested that the State of Tamil Nadu may take up documentation of the existing innovative practices; opening of the web portal on state's innovations and best practices at the State, national and global levels; start the initiatives like Tod-Fod-Jod (i.e Disassemble-Reassemble-Repurpose the gadgets and gizmos), and State Innovation Scholarships to reward the problem-solving innovations; and selection of an industrial cluster for improvement of the quality and productivity. Attention was drawn to the pilot project of the NInC in Krishnagiri for the mango-pulp processing units where in collaboration with the two CSIR labs namely, FTRI and NIIST, a number of process-related improvements had been carried out, resulting in enormous cost-effectiveness and betterment of the wage level of the workers.

4. During the extensive discussion, **the following points** emerged:

(i) The Tamil Nadu Technology Development and Promotion Center, an autonomous body under the chairmanship of Dr. Ramasami, Secretary, Science and Technology, and jointly set up by the State Govt. of Tamil Nadu and the CII, can help identify the MSME industrial cluster and set up the Cluster Innovation Center for improvement of the quality and productivity of the cluster, along the lines as done for the Krishnagiri Mango-pulp processing units by the NInC as part of its seven pilot projects.

(Mr. Anjan Das, ED, CII)

(ii) The State has been making an extensive use of IT in the field of agriculture. Innovative ways have been developed to bridge the gap between the lab and the land. Computer connectivity has been provided to every Panchayat; information kiosks have been set up for the benefit of the farmers; and agricultural extension work is being carried out by mobile telephony. From area-based approach, the State has moved onto individual farming approach. The rice productivity per hectare is the highest in the State. Diversification is accorded the highest priority; accent is on propagation of intensification of pulses and leguminous crops intensification. Under Precision Farming, the cultivation of vegetables and fruits is receiving impetus. The export of bananas G-9 variety from the State to the Middle East has seen an upswing.

(Agriculture Production Commissioner)

(iii) A substantial delegation in the favour of hospitals has taken place for the benefit of the people. A self-sustaining Corpus Fund has been created out of the Insurance Fund. In cases of high-cost surgeries, Rs. 1.5 lakhs is paid from out of Insurance and Rs. 22.5 lakhs from the Corpus so created. There is a decision to give a fillip to the Indian system of medicine. Rs 50 crores has been allocated for the R&D labs for the Indian system of medicine.

(Mr. Radhakrishnan, Pr. Secy, Health)

(iv) Under the Innovation agenda, skill development merits to be an area of absolute priority. There is an acknowledged need for Technology Incubation Centers. There is a significant scope for innovation in MSMEs in the fields of leather, textiles and construction sector. With the environmental laws becoming stricter, there is a great need for innovation in building materials, and development of alternative materials to the traditional materials of cement and sand. The State has derived benefit from R&D collaboration with the Auroville Ashram at Puducherry. The Tamil Nadu Technology development and Promotion Center (TNTDPC) should provide a platform for international collaborations. The need to tap the talent available within the Indian diaspora by arranging virtual classroom lectures with them was also emphasized.

(Mr. Shankar, Pr. Secy Industries)

(v) Tamil Nadu is the only State to introduce the trimester-based system of assessment in schools. The emphasis is on activity-based learning. Self-help Groups are organized for the mothers of the school-going students. An elaborate MIS has been prepared for the school-going children, and each child has been assigned a unique ID along with Adhaar No. This facilitates inter-school migration, and does away with the requirement of school-leaving Transfer Certificate. Satellite-based module of English teaching has produced excellent results.

(Ms Savita, Secretary, School Education)

(vi) One of the notable innovations has been the networking of libraries among the institutions of higher learning.

(Spl. Secretary, Higher Education)

(vii) The importance of keeping the innovation portal updated, and of introduction of a module on innovation in colleges was underlined.

(Ms Anita Praveen, Pr. Secy, Administrative Reforms and Training)

(viii) Two institutions are rendering valuable service in bridging the gap between institutions and industry; these are namely, Tamil Nadu Computing Academy, and ICT Academy.

(Mr. T.K. Chauhan, Secretary, IT)

(ix) A number of innovations have been introduced in the conventional sectors of Revenue and Panchayati Raj. Attention was drawn to an innovation entitled 'AMMA' i.e. Assure Maximized Services to the Marginalised People. It involves visits to the villages, and resolution of the problems of the people at their doorsteps. Under this initiative, 37 lakh petitions have been handled in the last six months. All the villages have been visited during this period.

There should be an enhanced focus on innovation in the areas of revenue and rural development as that will bring the maximum relief to the sections at the Bottom of the Pyramid.

Three districts in the State are now e-districts. The e-Centres here meet the varied demands of the people, ranging from the issue of domicile and income certificates to registered lease deeds/pattas of lands.

It will be useful if NInC sector-wise documentation and indexing of the best practices in public governance, and uploads them on its portal/website.

(Mr. Gagan Singh Bedi, Pr. Secretary, Revenue & Panchayati Raj)

(x) All the courts in the State, except the 105 recently opened courts have been computerized under the e-Court Mission Mode Project. All the Prosecution Officers have been given laptops and all criminal laws have been updated on the computers. The Law Colleges in

the State are running 120 evening shifts. Mahila Courts have been set up for speedy trial of cases of women's harassment and molestation and women Prosecution Officers have been appointed to deal with such cases. Special courts have been set up for dealing with cases of land grabbing and motor accidents outside the conventional courts for expeditious trial of the cases. Special attention is being paid to providing early relief to the accident victims through a network of Accident Relief Centers which are run jointly by the Home and Health Depts for immediate medical care to emergency cases. Besides Lok Adalats have been set up for alternative dispute resolution. There is no appeal against the decision of the Lok Adalats. Nearly 200 cases have been resolved through such Courts.

A number of measures have been taken for the modernisation of the police force. A special mention was made of the exercise of the installation of digital meters in autorickshaws on a campaign basis for which an amount of Rs. 80/ crores has been allocated (**Pr. Secretary, Home**)

5. In the light of the discussions held, **the following decisions** were taken:

(i) The formation of the SInC will be considered as an executive committee under the chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary. It will be anchored in the State Dept. of Planning, Coordination and Special Initiatives; the Depts of S&T and Education may be the nodal agencies. It will also have creative and innovative scientists, academicians, professionals in engineering, medicine and management as Members.

In view of the fact that the State has already made significant advances on the path of innovation, it will strive to set still higher benchmarks and emerge as the role-model for the rest of the country in using the engine of innovation for inclusive growth and development.

(ii) Among the low-hanging fruits, the State will consider the documentation of the innovations made so far in various fields; opening of a web-portal on innovations; implementation of the initiative of Tod-Fod-Jod in schools; introduction of the State Innovation Scholarship Scheme; and a possible enlargement of the ambit of the purposes for which the State Innovation Fund may be used. The contents of the proposal for establishment of the National Innovation Scholarship Scheme, Tod-Fod-Jod and creation of the India Innovation Inclusive Fund by the NInC, and pending the Cabinet's approval may be kept in view. Copy of the TFJ was handed over to the Secretary, School Education. Identification of 1-2 MSME industrial clusters along the lines of Krishnagiri in the State cluster will also be considered.

(iii) The Innovation Action Plan (IAP) for the Twelfth Five Year Plan period will be formulated by January, 2014.

(iv) NInC will consider sector-wise documentation and indexing of the best practices in public governance, and uploads them on its portal/website

6. The Meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

