

## IIT Delhi Launches Grassroots Innovation Programme for Students

New Delhi, June 30<sup>th</sup> (India Science Wire): The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Government of India, Prof K. Vijay Raghavan launched 'Grassroots Innovation Programme (GRIP)' for students, an initiative by IIT Delhi under which the Institute students will work on finding novel solutions to grassroots societal problems identified by them from rural and semi-urban areas, including the communities they come from.

Lauding the initiative launched by IIT Delhi, Prof K. Vijay Raghavan expressed hope that GRIP will result in the development of several innovative solutions for society.

Activities proposed as a part of this new initiative includes Social Immersion, a programme in which group of students will visit communities located in smaller towns and villages to immerse in social environments for a substantial time (one week to months) to study, understand and identify local needs and challenges, which can be addressed by the students when they return to the Institute campus.

"The immersion programme provides an opportunity for students to put themselves in the shoes of end-users and to co-create solutions which are likely to succeed. This programme also acts as a pipeline of ideas, which students and student teams can address as a part of semester-long design and innovation courses already available to them," said Prof. PVM Rao, Head, Department of Design, IIT Delhi who is coordinating the initiative.

Another component of the GRIP initiative includes Grassroots Innovation Programme in which students and student teams will be allowed to work on semester-long or year-long projects on finding novel solutions to grassroots problems identified by them.

The needs/problems on which students are expected to work can be from one of the two routes: Students or student teams have identified the problem/need and validated it as a part of prior social immersion programme. Secondly, IIT Delhi student(s) who come from diverse regions of the country, identify problems/challenges being faced in their local communities (in their villages, towns and semi-urban settings).

The GRIP initiative will provide physical, intellectual, and financial resources to the students to carry out these projects. To implement the above programmes, existing courses and schemes of the Institute will be leveraged. In this way students will have an opportunity to earn academic credits for their efforts. The programme can synergize with other programmes of the Institute, which include UBA, RUTAG, NSS, ENACTUS, etc.

"There are many students who have shown interest in addressing the unmet needs in their own neighbourhoods. Further, students are enthusiastic to participate in proposing and validating novel solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved. The GRIP initiative is aimed at providing resources to the students who want to help the society by solving its problems," said Prof V. Ramgopal Rao, Director, IIT Delhi.

IIT Delhi and Honey Bee Network (HBN), a volunteer based network that seeks innovative ideas and traditional knowledge produced at the grassroots level by individuals and communities and

disseminates them to the wider ecosystem, have joined hands to groom students as torchbearers of social and grassroots innovation through GRIP programme.

Prof. Anil K. Gupta, Coordinator of Honey Bee Network said, “For the GRIP initiative, the Honey Bee Network will act as one of the facilitators to connect IIT Delhi students and faculty with local communities and environments.”

He further said that the social immersion and shodh-yatras will give an opportunity for students to learn from grassroots innovators and also to add value to their efforts. Students who do immersion in earlier years will have additional opportunity to address some of the needs identified by them as their course projects. (India Science Wire)

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