

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Seminar on IPR-Technology and Finance for MSMEs

CII Invited Gujarat Technological University to share its successful model of Innovation Sankuls at the Seminar

MSMEs hold a major part of the industrial contribution to the growth engine of India and Gujarat. More than 2 lac SMEs spreading over 72 active industry clusters are playing crucial role in the economy of Gujarat which is a leading state in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship. CII arranged a daylong seminar on IPR-Technology and Finance for MSMEs and invited Gujarat Technological University (GTU) to share its frugal and sustainable model of innovation for MSMEs involving its faculties/students/MSMEs and university authorities.

Mr. Rakesh Sharma, Mr. Kishore Makwana, Mr. Padmin Buch, MD, GITCO and Mr. Hiranmay Mahanta, MD Techpedia (on behalf of GTU Innovation Council) participated during the panel discussion. Mr. Mahanta shared the efforts at GTU Innovation Council under the leadership of Honorable VC, GTU, Prof Akshai Aggarwal and voluntary contributions from Techpedia. The participants/audience were curious to know about the frugal model of innovation where lakhs of students and faculties are coming together to solve the problems of MSMEs across the 72 industry clusters.

Mr. Padmin Buch, MD GITCO shared the bottom up efforts required for IPR and cited the concrete efforts made at 25 Innovation sankuls and envisaged that if every University takes on such measures as it has been taken to train 2000 plus faculties in IPR at GTU, it will bring outstanding results for MSMEs and academic ecosystems within a couple of years. He shared that filing of 100 patents based on solutions developed by students after interacting with MSMEs during industrial shodh yatras is early sign of progress towards the larger goal.

Mr. Makwana and Mr. Sharma shared their insights from the point of view of MSMEs and tapping of innovations within MSMEs as some time even the SMEs do not know the practiced innovations at shop floor. **Here they wished that nearby academic establishment will play crucial role if academic lab and industrial requirements come closure.** They shared that most

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of MSMEs are lacking idea about the key USP of the academic labs and hence not able to leverage the academic excellence in full swing.

Mr. Mahanta shared that in some of the Sankuls of GTU this need has been well addressed and as an outcome of this SMEs had started not only outsourcing their challenges to students but extending hands for co-creation based innovation process.

Responding to the query Mr. Buch agreed that suitable policies are not in place to support early stage support for IPR for students and faculties. Industrial representatives shared that very less public policies are in place which can really cater the need of the young students if they wish to file patents based on the novelty of their innovations.

Mr. Mahanta shared that given a frugal system support with resource inputs, more than 500 patents can be filed only from 25 Innovation Clusters of GTU Innovation Council. He mentioned that there has been significant change in the mindset pertaining to IPR by strong efforts within University. Students, MSMEs and faculties are now coming together to jointly deal with the IP aspect of innovations based on the industry defined projects/IDPs which are being done during final year projects. While Mr. Mahanta shared that the model has been a benchmark in its segment of helping SMEs in innovating, participants were curious to know about the incentive systems which may make it scalable and sustainable. He shared that by bringing in academic credit system for motivating students for doing more real life projects has been a disruptive measure which helped bringing in interest and setting culture of innovation . **It was well appreciated that given the university taking such measures if MSMEs come to front row towards shaking hands in these efforts it will further galvanize the efforts.**

All the participants in this session brainstormed on the agenda and came to the following conclusions:

1. The exercise of industrial shodh yatras will help in locating technical challenges of MSMEs who in general cannot afford R&D system. This will also help the MSMEs to locate their existing key practices and codify them in a scientific manner.
2. By laterally linking the best practices of MSMEs within industries in a particular cluster may increase productivity of the whole of the industry cluster and the R&D and innovation cost will go down.

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3. If more and more SMEs bank upon the university labs and HR, the labs will automatically become a learning hub. **This will increase the innovation index of the cluster, setting new benchmark.** Industry may bring in new insights for solving latest challenges whereas students may bring in disruptive insights for cracking those individual challenges of SMEs or collective challenges of any particular industry cluster.
4. It was recommended by everybody that SMEs must share the credit/IP while benefiting from the university based Innovation process so that the links become stronger and sustainable.

Mr. Mahanta shared the contextual IPR policies which is in the process of implementation where students/guides/MSMEs & other contributors can come together to co-create and share their inputs/outputs based on contribution.

Participants wished that national policy makers and public departments must take a note of these inclusive efforts which is not only on paper but also in practice at Gujarat Technological University. This could be an insight for all other University based Innovation process catering to significant needs of MSMEs and economy of our country.

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