

IIIT-Delhi Hosts AICTE Faculty Development Program on Emerging Technologies

IIIT-Delhi, in collaboration with the **AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy**, recently hosted an intensive Faculty Development Program (FDP) on Emerging Technologies, bringing together a powerhouse of entrepreneurial wisdom, innovation, and problem-solving. The five-day program was designed to equip faculty members with practical tools, methodologies, and insights to integrate innovation and entrepreneurship into academic ecosystems.

Prof. Ranjan Bose, Director of IIIT-Delhi, inaugurated the event with inspiring remarks, setting the tone for insightful discussions and hands-on learning. *He stated, "Entrepreneurship is the bridge between knowledge and measurable impact, achieved by translating research into real-world solutions. Through this Faculty Development Program, IIIT-Delhi aims to instill an innovation-driven mindset among participating faculty members, break internal silos, and enable higher education institutions to become centers for problem-solving and technological leadership."* **Prof. Pankaj Vajpayee**, Dean of Corporate Relations and Entrepreneurship at IIIT-Delhi, highlighted the importance of nurturing a dynamic startup ecosystem. Dr. Alok Nikhil Jha led engaging sessions, incorporating case studies to provide deeper insights. The event emphasized entrepreneurial thinking, with **Alok Srivastava** advocating for innovation-driven mindsets and **Dr. V.K. Arora** promotes a problem-centric approach to entrepreneurship.

The program featured interactive ideation sessions and workshops led by **Dr. Anuj Grover**, fostering creative problem-solving methodologies. Participants explored Lean Startup principles with **Abhinav Ramaria**, gaining an understanding of validated learning, rapid experimentation, and the build-measure-learn feedback loop. **Dr. Anmol Srivastava** introduced Design Thinking methodologies, emphasizing empathy-driven problem-solving and iterative design. **Rahul Pandey** guided attendees through the Value Proposition Canvas, helping them align business offerings with customer needs for a stronger product-market fit.

One of the highlights of the event was the inspiring journey of **Aditi Bhutia Madan** (widely known as *The Momo Mami* from *Shark Tank*), who shared her experiences in customer discovery and scaling a business. **Neha Misra** simplified the complexities of startup finance, while **Ashish Jain** led a hands-on session on the Business Model Canvas, equipping participants with structured frameworks for business planning. **Hitashi Garg** provided critical insights into go-to-market strategies, ensuring startups are well-prepared for market entry and growth.

A visit to the **IIIT-Delhi Incubation Center**, which has impacted **81 startups** in total, led by **Navin Gaur**, gave attendees a firsthand understanding of the startup support ecosystem, including acceleration programs, mentorship, and funding opportunities. **Dr. V.K. Arora**, CEO of **IGDTUW Anveshan Foundation**, reinforced the importance of deeply understanding challenges, as impactful innovation is rooted in empathy and problem-solving.

As the program progressed, participants delved into Intellectual Property (IP) for startups, faculty and student entrepreneurship, AI-driven ventures, and the role of Centers of Excellence

(CoEs) in fostering institutional innovation. **Satish Kumar**, Assistant Director, **Ministry of MSME**, shared insights on patents and intellectual property rights, highlighting their significance in securing competitive advantages for startups. **Mukul**, founder of **Scrap Uncle** and an **IIIT-Delhi alumnus**, shared his entrepreneurial journey, while **Dr. Pravesh Biyani**, Associate Professor and founder of **Chartr**, emphasized the importance of faculty-led entrepreneurship and research commercialization.

Behavioral finance in entrepreneurship was another key focus, with **Pankaj Vajpayee** introducing cognitive biases that affect decision-making in startup environments. [Quote from **Pankaj Vajpayee** to be added]. **Dr. Anuj Grover** explored how CoEs and academic labs can be leveraged to drive innovation, urging faculty to take leadership roles in establishing innovation hubs. **Dr. Alok Nikhil Jha** concluded the session with an interactive discussion on pivoting strategies, perseverance, and elevator pitch case studies.

The final day of the FDP was an intensive culmination of insights, case studies, and real-world applications, emphasizing research translation, faculty-led ventures, and strategic ecosystem development. Participants attended the inauguration of the **IIIT-Delhi E-Summit 2025** before engaging in a session on *Demystifying Equity*, facilitated by **Dr. Alok Nikhil Jha**. This session explored equity structuring among founders, investors, and team members, highlighting the implications of cap table decisions in early-stage ventures.

Shibananda Dash, Director at **Munjal-Birmingham Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MBCIE)** and CEO of **Ludhiana Angel Network**, led an insightful discussion on strategic ecosystem development, focusing on entrepreneurial communication, stakeholder management, and mindset shifts required for faculty-driven innovation. **Prof. Ramesh Loganathan**, Professor of Practice at **IIIT Hyderabad** and Board Member at **IIITD Innovation and Incubation Center**, shared a roadmap for converting academic research into commercially viable ventures, drawing from **IIIT-H's** experience in technology licensing, research-led startups, and institutional innovation centers.

Market validation was another crucial theme, with **Dr. Alok Nikhil Jha** conducting an interactive session on customer identification and validation. Participants engaged in live exercises, demonstrating the importance of user interviews and persona-building for refining product-market fit. **Sonali Jha**, Founder & CEO of **Cunomial**, followed with a session on *Product Pricing Strategies*, emphasizing customer value perception, pricing models for SaaS and B2B ventures, and aligning pricing with market segmentation and growth stages.

To apply the learnings in a practical setting, the program culminated in a business model development and pitching session. Participants presented their ideas in groups, receiving valuable feedback from industry experts, including **Imran Yusuf** (COO of **Electropreneur Park**), **Sonali Jha**, and **Dr. Alok Nikhil Jha**. Faculty members also discussed plans for strengthening the startup ecosystem in their respective institutions.

The program concluded with final reflections by **Pankaj Vajpayee**, who expressed gratitude to the speakers and participants. A feedback session highlighted the program's success, with participants requesting extended durations for future editions, follow-up mentoring, and pitch refinement workshops. The announcement of a next touchpoint in **April 2025** reinforced the commitment to long-term engagement and support.

The FDP successfully blended strategy, market readiness, research translation, and stakeholder engagement, equipping faculty members with the tools and confidence to drive entrepreneurship from within their institutions. More than just an event, this initiative focused on capacity building and fostering an innovation-driven academic culture, ensuring that faculty members are well-equipped to guide their students and institutions towards impactful entrepreneurial endeavors.