



Workshop on “Capacity Augmentation for the Core Support Groups of SEED Division, DST

Development Alternatives (DA) participated in the Capacity Augmentation Workshop for the Core Supported Groups (CSGs) under the Science for Equity, Empowerment and Development (SEED) Division of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India from 20-22 January, 2020. The workshop was organised by Centre for Technology Alternatives for Rural Areas (CTARA), IIT Bombay.

The event brought together 27 CSGs, and experts from across India to share their work, and it also provided a platform to exhibit their innovative products and technologies through poster presentations. During the inaugural session, the participants were welcomed by Satis Agnihotri, Head, CTARA, and the thoughts behind the workshop were shared by Sunil Agarwal, Scientist E, SEED Division, DST. Soumen Maity, Assistant Vice President, DA Group presented on “Technology Incubation: Scaling Up and Scaling Out” and shared DA Group’s experience with the participants.

The three-day event, consisting of presentations and discussions, focused on augmenting the capacities of the participants by introducing them to various applications of existing and emerging technologies that could be integrated into their work to accelerate impact.

The topics included Data Base Management; Mapping Techniques in Social Sector; Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning; Block Chain; Nano Technologies; Embedded Systems and Robotics; Spoken Tutorial; Involving technology in Agro-processing for small scale enterprises; Scale up relay race:

Identification, Proof of concept, Pilot trials, Incubation and Start Up; Natural Resources Planning; Digital Fabrication and Make in India.

A working session was organised for the participants to work with data collection, analysis and data interpretation using the interactive web-based GIS of Census India. As part of the exercise, each CSG selected a geography (village, block, district, state) and applied various features and the census data available on the portal to analyse and interpret an issue (drinking water, literacy, energy etc.) of their interest. The findings on the issue were shared with other participants through presentations.

A panel discussion was held on the topic “Technology driven Smart Village”. The panelists included Debapriya Dutta, Head, SEED Division, DST, Satis Agnihotri, Head, CTARA, IIT Bombay and Expert Committee Members of the DST. As part of the deliberations, various CSGs and external experts shared their understanding and experience of Smart Villages. Alka Upadhyaya IAS, Additional Secretary, MoRD & DG-CAPART, addressed the participants and assured her full support to take forward the work of Smart Villages. She also stressed on building inter-ministerial synergies for convergence and taking the work of CSGs to scale.

On third day of the event, a special half-day session was held to review the progress of DST supported projects, and also consider new project proposals. During the session, Technology Acceleration Platform for Rural Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (TAP-RISE) – Design Phase, a SEED Division supported project, was reviewed and the proposal for the next phase was presented before the DST Expert Committee members. The project proposal was presented by Shrashtant Patara, Sr. Vice President, DA Group, Yogesh Kulkarni, Executive Director, Vigyan Ashram (implementation partner) and Kanika Verma, Programme Director, DA Group.

The platform facilitated exchange of knowledge and experiences, and networking opportunities with participants from all over India for collaboration.