

Strategic Management Forum Conference 2022 at IRMA

The Strategic Management Forum (SMF) was founded in 1997 with the aim to be a platform and resource center to develop and disseminate knowledge, concepts, skills, and practices pertaining to Strategic Management. The overall theme of the conference was “Rebuilding Organisations: Strategic Conversations for a Post-Pandemic World”. This year the SMF conference was organised at Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) from 21 to 23 December, 2022 where Development Alternatives (DA) presented four papers. Much of the research presented was around the work DA has done in different projects and the organisational experience of being a social enterprise.

The first paper presented was by Mr Shrashtant Patara, Ms Supriya Shukla, and Ms Muskan Chawla, titled ‘Unleashing Grassroots Entrepreneurship Through Collaborative Institutional Ecosystems’. The paper highlighted the need for district-level platforms for stakeholders and partners working in the entrepreneurship space to collaborate, such as the District Entrepreneurship (DEC) platform.

This was followed by a paper presentation by Ms Kanika Verma, Ms Chand Bardewa, and Mr Debasis Ray on ‘Mainstreaming Inclusive Entrepreneurship for Job Creation and Local Economic Development’. The paper postulated the need to study the migrating population from the village and how they impact entrepreneurship in their village either as role models or by returning to start new businesses that could create local jobs. New business opportunities, which are based on contextual solutions that are emerging in co-creation with the community, can develop impact at scale.

The next presentation was on the paper by Dr Arun Kumar, Ms Prema Gera, and Mr Shivankar Mohan on ‘Scaling Social Innovation: The Role of Hybrid Organisations’. It explored how hybrid organisations within the Social & Solidarity Economy (SSE) can better deal with crises by promoting the community’s agency in the multifaceted impact of their social and economic lives while also balancing the dual challenges of profitability and survivability of the organisation.



Mr Shrashtant Patara presenting at the Conference

Ms Saundharya Khanna presented a paper on ‘Sustainability Assessment of Local Green Enterprises: A Study of Enterprise Clusters under SFURTI Scheme’, co-authored by Mr Sudhir Sah, Mr Mohak Gupta, and Ms Aparajita Amita Mathew. The paper shared the major findings in developing a framework for assessing enterprise clusters. Apart from these, Kiran Limaye from NMIMS, Inir Pinheiro from Grassroots, and Shubha Khadke from IRMA iSEED also presented their papers based on the Work4Progress methodology, processes, and learnings.

Overall, the four papers elicited recognition from the audience that Inclusive entrepreneurship and Coalition can be major leverage points in the system to create impact at scale.

Shrashtant Patara’s Interaction with IRMA students



Mr Shrashtant Patara interacting with IRMA students

In a Village Fieldwork Segment (VFS) Charcha on 'Perspectives on Sustainability and Rural Development' with the management students at IRMA, Mr Shrashtant Patara, CEO, Development Alternatives shared his journey and experiences from joining DA 35 years back and how the organisation evolved over the years. During the

discussion, he encouraged students to explore the concept of systems thinking and elaborated on its importance for rural development programmes.

"Systems thinking is very crucial to enrich our perceptions so that we know where to poke the system for effective results," he shared. He also talked about transitioning from "problem-solution" frame towards "strengths-initiatives" approach in rural development work.