



Indian Institute of Technology Madras
Office of Alumni and Corporate Relations

CELEBRATING THE GENEROSITY OF

*Dr. Gururaj Deshpande and
Smt. Jaishree Deshpande*

Impact Of Your Giving In 2024





Prof. Kamakoti Veezhinathan Director, IITM

Greetings!

IIT Madras continues to retain her top position for the eighth consecutive year, in the National Institute Ranking Framework, thanks to the world-class research, unwavering dedication and creative mindset of its faculty and students. The contribution and support of Alumni and well-wishers like you have crucially helped this standing and stature. Our achievements in research, education, innovation, and entrepreneurship have also earned us the recognition of an 'Institute of Eminence' as well as the top position in the Atal Innovation Ranking from the Government of India.

IIT Madras is making an indelible mark in promoting and providing education to students from the length and breadth of India to areas beyond Indian territory, through her initiatives in rural developmental educational programs, international, interdisciplinary M.Tech courses, and online diploma courses. The popularity and reach of our online courses can be gauged by the fact that around 25000 students in ages ranging from 17 to 82, have enrolled for these courses across national boundaries, and about 30% are from rural India. The institute, in a first-ever initiative by an IIT, has consolidated its position on the world map by establishing her international campus in Zanzibar, Africa where about 45 students have been admitted to different programs.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are ingrained in all our endeavours – our ambitious ventures in rocket and space explorations, the development of lab-grown diamonds, hyperloop, the Brain Research Centre etc, are a testimony to this. The start-up ecosphere is also a reflection of this spirit, wherein last year, 70 startups came to fruition, successfully nurtured by our centres of excellence, the Centre for Innovation, Nirmaan – the pre-incubator, the Incubation Cell, technology centres such as 'IITM-Pravartak' at the IIT Madras Research Park and others. This year, our target is to incubate at least a 100 Start-ups in various sectors. It is expected that at least 20% of the passing out students will be proud CXOs of their own ventures! The year 2023 also saw 221 national and 105 international patents from our Institute and we are looking to closing this current financial year with 366 patents, to account for 'a patent a day'.

Towards promoting inter-disciplinary research and exploring new frontiers, a Department of Medical Sciences and Technology was launched in May 2023, a School of Sustainability in Oct 2023, a Department of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence in Nov 2023 and a new Interdisciplinary Dual Degree program on Quantitative Finance in Dec 2023 through the synergy of the departments of Management Studies, Computer Science and Engineering and Mathematics. Our School of Sustainability has signed MoUs for collaborations with Tel Aviv University, Israel and Technische Universität Dresden, Germany, with the aim of being recognized as a leader for sustainability teaching and research in the global south.

Lofty ambitions and achievements are impossible without the deep-rooted faith and support of alumni and well-wishers like yourself. We are indebted to you for your bountiful, impactful contributions and the faith reposed on us. On behalf of IIT Madras, I express my deepest gratitude for continuing to strengthen the Institute. Together with your support, we are confident of building an IIT Madras that is more inclusive, diverse, and seized of tomorrow's needs to be nationally and globally relevant.

Thank you!



Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula Dean, Alumni & Corporate Relations, IITM

Greetings from the Office of Alumni and Corporate Relations!

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the unwavering support you continue to provide to IIT Madras. Your generosity is the cornerstone of our success, and we are truly grateful for your commitment to the causes that are important to the students and faculty of IIT Madras. This report is a testament to the profound impact your contributions have had –by transforming the lives of students, supporting research, augmenting Institute infrastructure, enhancing learning or through supporting other myriad causes. Your trust in us propels our ambitions, and we are committed to ensuring that your donations are utilized to their fullest potential.

In a world evolving rapidly in science and technology, we have set ambitious goals for ourselves. Your enduring enthusiasm and support provide fillip to our efforts. IIT Madras stands as a beacon of diversity, sustainability, innovation and research excellence. While we have transformed over the years, our commitment to being a premier institute in the country and abroad, remains steadfast, attracting the brightest minds from across the globe. I cordially invite you to visit the campus, witness first-hand the salutary impact of your contributions, and observe the Institute's growth and evolution over the years.

Your generous gifts have made an incredible difference in our Institute's aspirations – Thank you!

Your continued partnership is invaluable as we navigate the exciting journey ahead, shaping the future of India and the world together.

GOPALAKRISHNAN DESHPANDE CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GDC Launched in 2017, The Gopalakrishnan-Deshpande Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (GDC) is designed to give thought leadership and networking impetus to help build entrepreneurial systems and processes in STEM universities across India. GDC has been funded by grants from three illustrious alumni: Dr. Gururaj Deshpande, Mrs. Jaishree Deshpande and Mr. 'Kris' Gopalakrishnan.



4TH ANNUAL GDC SYMPOSIUM – HIGHLIGHTS

GDC held its 4th Annual Symposium on 24th January 2024 at IIT Madras. The Symposium was a milestone in many ways. First, being the 4th annual Symposium in six years of GDC's existence (the Symposium could not be held for two years during COVID-19), it firmly established the cadence of having an annual milestone event for GDC, highlighting our growth and contributions to the Indian startup ecosystem. Second, the participant attendance and the Symposium's format were novel, featuring keynotes, panel discussions, chat shows, and an exhibition of startups on the sidelines. Third, the symposium attracted many outstation participants, a pleasant departure from the previous editions. All in all, the diversity and enthusiasm of the participants for engaging with the distinguished speakers in formal and informal sessions of the Symposium are factors that we at GDC feel delighted with.

This year's new addition to the Symposium's format was an exhibition on the sidelines featuring 14 select GDC alumni startups. The exhibition was a huge hit, evident from the time spent on passionate discussions by the Chief guest and other dignitaries with the founders of the startups. The audience was particularly impressed by the technological depth, diversity of the domains and the innovative business models of these startups. The startups were thrilled to have the captive attention of such a select gathering of policymakers and industry leaders and succeeded in making significant connections with important stakeholders. The experiment of organising a startup exhibition alongside the Symposium proved successful and will be a feature for future iterations of the GDC symposium.

The Symposium's deliberations built upon last year's theme of GDC 2.0 and focused on the next steps in "Igniting the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Academia".

The session by the Chief Guest, Dr Abhay Karandikar, Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, was particularly engaging for its openness and focus on 'outcome-oriented action' and 'action-oriented suggestions'. Dr. Karandikar dwelt on DST's new and existing initiatives in the background of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) launch by the Government of India, emphasizing the importance of applied and translational research. He highlighted the National Initiative for Development and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) program

and the planned transformation consolidation of all such programs under the ANRF umbrella. Dr Karandikar's talk conveyed the message that the government was aiming for an era of innovative and disruptive innovations through the initiatives of the ANRF that would transform the R&D landscape of the country. The Q&A with Dr Karandikar spilt over into extra time, leaving the audience asking for more.

Dr Gururaj Deshpande's session set out a clear vision for the larger startup ecosystem in India and how it can be a game changer for the nation if appropriately nurtured. He reiterated the call for a cultural shift within universities and underlined the importance of recognising successful entrepreneurs and encouraging multidisciplinary collaborations.



Dr. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary - Department of Science & Technology, Government of India with Dr. Gururaj Deshpande, Co-founder, GDC and Mr. Raghuttama Rao, CEO, GDC at the Startup Showcase

The audience was touched by Mr. Kris Gopalakrishnan (travelling overseas), who despite being in an inconvenient time zone and facing inclement weather, joined the symposium. Kris stressed the need for a precise alignment of action and outcomes, emphasising the need for India to build its economy on intellectual property through a systematic approach. He opined that as India transitions in the future towards becoming a developed economy, its growth engines will inevitably arise from products and technologies based on intellectual property that which will solve complex societal challenges, create wealth for investors, and form part of the new organisations that will define India in the future.

Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula, Dean of Alumni & Corporate Relations at IIT Madras, highlighted the progress of the Entrepreneurial ecosystem at IIT Madras and how the institute has, over the years, built up the various pieces of the jigsaw through the support of Alumni and other well-wishers. Prof. Panchagnula traced the roots of GDC and its transformative impact over the years. His metaphor of a startup's journey being akin to a succession of a hurdles race aptly captured the realities of a startup life. By highlighting IIT Madras's success in alumni relations, entrepreneurship, and research, Prof. Mahesh encouraged the replication of similar ecosystems nationwide for widespread societal benefit.

Prof. Krishnan Balasubramanian, Professor-in-charge of GDC, said that the proportion of research translating into deep-tech startups that can solve complex societal problems in India is much lower than the potential. One of the primary reasons for this is the need for more awareness about an entrepreneurial mindset and business thinking in academia, which prevented many faculty and researchers from transitioning their research to the market through startups. Prof. Krishnan said that in working with 350+ startup teams from academia over the past five years, GDC has established a practical framework for enabling this transition to operate at scale.



*Keynote Address by
Dr. Abhay Karandikar*



Panellists: L to R: Dr Taslimarif Saiyed, CEO & Director, C-CAMP, Bengaluru, Prof. Sudhir Varadarajan, Associate Professor- IIIT(DM), Kancheepuram; Program Director - Program on Capacity Building on Design & Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Education and Prof. PV Madhusudhan Rao, Professor of Mechanical Engineering & Design; Dean – Alumni Relations, IIT Delhi

In other sessions, GDC highlighted its progress over the last six years, starting with a single program and now having four tested and well-established mainline programs: I-NDUCT, I-NCUBATE, I-NSPIRE, and I-GNITE that address the different requirements of startups at different points of their evolution. GDC cut its teeth in entrepreneurship training based on initial training from NSF experts, which the GDC team has subsequently developed and fine-tuned to Indian requirements. The range of GDC's Programs can now address the diverse needs of a startup across the different stages of its journey from lab to the market.

Looking to the future, GDC unveiled a road map for scaling its reach and impact by 10X over the next five years by creating a hub-and-spoke model through university partners offering GDC's programs based on a robust and proven design, curriculum, content, and pedagogy.

The panel discussion with leaders from some of the most outstanding university TBIs brought out forth diverse perspectives, including the need for a fundamental shift in the pedagogical approach towards application-oriented learning and a more robust mentoring approach for utilizing science to commercialise and solve problems.

Team GDC looks forward to working on the Symposium's learnings and welcoming all the participants and delegates at the 5th Annual GDC Symposium in 2025.



Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula, Dean, Alumni & Corporate Relations, IIT Madras delivering a talk on the Role of Innovation & Entrepreneurship in IIT Madras

Prof. Krishnan Balasubramanian, Institute and Chair Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Madras and Mr. Rajiv Jain, COO, GDC, during an interactive session on Scaling a Lab to Market Movement in India



GDC Startups Showcase



Visitors at the Startup Showcase

*We Are Grateful To You
and Your Family*

**DR. GURURAJ DESHPANDE AND
SMT. JAISHREE DESHPANDE**

Thank you for your sustained generosity to IIT Madras over the years. Contributors such as yourself enable our students and Professors to dream big and work towards a better and brighter future. We hope you are proud of your relations with IIT Madras and how it has remained steadfastly committed to academic and research excellence. You and your family have been instrumental in facilitating this significant growth.

Our efforts to nurture the culture of academic excellence that is the hallmark of IIT Madras - quality education, cutting-edge research, and unfettered creativity shall continue. We are privileged and humbled to have you and your family walking with us along this trail. We wish you and your family the best always in all walks of life!



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