Setting Up of Innovation Clubs

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In order to be at the frontier of scientific discovery and invention, the students as well as the teachess in the school technical institutes and universities should be encouraged to think anti-conventional and develop ability to look beyond their discipline. In fact, colleges and universities can play a key role in providing a fertile ground for cultivation of world-changing, innovative and entrepreneurial ideas. For this purpose, there is a need for creating a culture of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the schools, Colleges, technical and engineering institutes across the country.

This kind of organizational culture will not only stimulate the creativity and innovation among the students and teachers, but it will accelerate the transition of research and innovation from the lab to the field and market place. It will also encourage closure interaction and cooperation between industry, field and academia for overall growth and development of the nation.

Power of India

It is rightly said that *"everything begins with an idea."* Henry Ford says that *"the air is full of ideas. They are knocking you in the head all the time. You only have to know what you want, then forget it, and go about your business. Suddenly, the idea will come through. It was there all the time."* Ideas are continuously generated in our minds. Initially most of the ideas seem to be foolish and absurd. In fact according to Albert Einstein, *"If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it."* For promoting the culture of innovation, the college and universities should provide a conducive environment for exchanging the ideas, among the students and faculty. Roosevelt says that *"great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events and small mind discuss people."* Discussing ideas itself indicates the greatness of the minds i.e. the students and faculty. Thus, the students coming up with any kind of new and innovative idea or innovation should be encouraged and be discussed regularly on a platform.

Need of Innovation Clubs

Now, in view of the present initiatives of Government of India like Make in India, Startup India, Digital India etc, the role of education sector becomes more important to harness the creative potential of the large young population of the country. Moreover, the inclusion of large number of manufacturing industry and IT industry have generated a huge demand for quality and skilled manpower in the country. As a matter of fact, in the present age of competitions and technologically fast growing society, our youth particularly the students needs to be futuristic and innovative. For that purpose besides technological empowerment of the students, they need to be encouraged to be entrepreneurs and innovators. Through this coloumn effort will be made to describe ways and means to foster the culture of innovation in schools and colleges. Setting up of innovation clubs in schools and colleges could be the best platform to discuss ideas and thus promote the culture of innovation in schools and colleges.

Setting Up Innovation Club

Hon'ble President of India as well as the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister have also asked all the central Universities and institutes to constitute Innovation Clubs. The Ministry of HRD under its scheme Avishkar has also directed the schools to set up innovation clubs. Similarly the NITI Ayog has also launched a scheme to set up Atal Tinkering Labs in the selected schools. In view of this the technical colleges and universities have formulated Innovation Clubs. In fact, such types of innovation clubs should be formed in all the schools, colleges, universities and institutes. Formation of Innovation Clubs will not only help in creating a culture of innovation, but it will also create a conducive environment for the teachers and students to do innovations.

Who can be the Member of Innovation Club?

To begning with Innovation clubs may comprise of imaginative students, teachers and other interested staff members of the school. Later on other students and teachers may also be involved in the activities of Innovation Clubs.

What Can be the Objectives of the Club?

Besides generating awareness about creativity and innovations among the students and teachers the basic objectives of the Innovation Clubs could be as follows:

- to identify and promote the grass-root level innovations by the faculty as well as the students; to provide a platform to share new and innovative ideas,
- to support and nurture the innovators both intellectually and financially, and
- to create a network of innovators and thus creating a culture of innovation in the schools, colleges and university.

What Can be the Activities of the Club?

In order to meet the objectives of the Innovation Club, a verity of activities can be organized on regular basis. The innovation club may organize periodic meetings of the club members to generate new ideas and identify innovations by students, faculty, and other staff of the school, college, university. In addition to it, other students, teachers and staff members may be invited to share their innovative ideas and skills and showcase their innovative products and processes in the form of semirars and conferasces. The club may also organize awareness campaign and various types of competitions like quiz, debates, posters, etc on creativity and innovations within schools/college/university. In fact, it can prove to be a very good platform to the students, faculty and staff to be engaged in the innovative activities and programmes related to institutes.

In order to publicize the news and views on innovations taking place within the schools and colleges as well as outside them, it may be a good idea to publish such information in the form a magazine or newsletter on innovation on a periodic basis, say monthly or quarterly. Such periodicals may be brought out in the printed form or even in the electronic form. In will not only encourage students to document their innovations and innovative ideas, but it will be a good means of disseminating their ideas.

The innovation clubs can act as effective mean of sharing ideas, mutual learning, networking, mentorship and creativity. The culture of sharing ideas will certainly cultivate the culture of innovation in the schools and colleges.

In this context, George Bernard Shaw has rightly said that *"If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples, then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas."*

So, let us create a platform in the form of Innovation Club in all schools, colleges and institutes to integrate innovation in our education system.

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"When all think alike, then no one is thinking?

—Walter Lippmen