

iRISE ECR Capacity Building Workshop

The iRISE Early Career Researcher (ECR) Capacity Building Workshop was held from January 29 to 31, 2025, at St. Joseph's University, Bangalore, Karnataka. Organized by St. Joseph's Research Institute in association with DST, India, the British Council, RSC, IISER Pune, and Tata Technologies, the workshop aimed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and professional development of early career researchers. This comprehensive event brought together experts, mentors, and participants from diverse academic backgrounds to facilitate learning, networking, and collaboration.

The primary objectives of the workshop were to equip early career researchers with essential research skills, provide insights into funding opportunities and grant writing, foster collaboration and interdisciplinary research, and enhance leadership and career development skills. The event was meticulously structured into several key sessions, each focusing on a specific aspect of capacity building.

The workshop commenced with an opening session that included a prayer led by PhD students from St. Joseph's Research Institute, followed by the traditional lighting of the lamp by dignitaries. Dr. Rita Pal, Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry, delivered the welcome address. Prof. Harinath Chakrapani from the Department of Chemistry, IISER Pune, who also serves as a Senior Technical Officer at IISER Pune, provided an overview of the workshop's objectives and expectations.

The first day of the workshop featured two key sessions. The first session, "Navigating the Transition: From Academia to Industry Leadership - Essential Traits for Success," was delivered by Dr. Anuradda Ganesh. Held on January 29, 2025, this informative session provided valuable insights into the essential traits required for success in transitioning from academia to industry. Dr. Ganesh shared her expertise, discussing key skills and her professional journey. The session was highly interactive, with a Q&A segment that allowed participants to engage actively, clarify doubts, and gain deeper insights. The well-structured and insightful nature of the event significantly benefited all attendees, equipping them with practical knowledge and strategies to navigate their career paths effectively.

The second session, "Creating and Delivering Effective Presentations: Substance, Style, and Some Secrets," was conducted by Ms. Anita Nagarajan, a Communications and Editing Consultant and Educator. She discussed the challenges faced during presentations and emphasized the importance of making them powerful, effective, and impactful. Ms. Nagarajan highlighted the need for thorough groundwork before presenting and stressed the importance of authenticity, flexibility, and suitability of content for engaging audiences. The session covered key aspects such as purpose, resume-building, expressing empathy, effective communication, and storytelling techniques to persuade audiences.

On the second day, the theme of "Innovation and Entrepreneurship" was explored through talks by Mr. Milind Choudhary, Founder and CEO of Welnnovate Biosolutions Pvt. Ltd., and Mr.

Ashutosh Prachand, Director of Leidenfrost Innovations Pvt. Ltd. Both speakers discussed the critical process of problem identification, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing between symptoms and root causes. They outlined techniques for systematic problem analysis, including distinguishing essential goals from non-essential ones and using PESTLE analysis. A key takeaway from the session was the phrase: "A problem well-defined is a problem half-solved," underscoring the importance of thoroughly identifying issues before attempting solutions.

The discussion also covered the difference between problem talkers, who dwell on problems without resolution, and solution talkers, who actively seek ways to address challenges. The session concluded with an insightful discussion on monetization and the transformation of research into valuable products, leaving participants with the inspiring thought: "Bridges lead the way to unexplored lands."

On January 31st, two insightful sessions were conducted. At 9:00 AM, Ms. Prachi Pasalkar, a Senior Technical Officer, delivered a talk on "Perspectives on Teaching, Learning, and Pedagogy," providing effective methods and strategies for education. Later, at 11:30 AM, Dr. Swetavalli Raghavan, Head of Innovation, Strategy, and Government Affairs at the Royal Society of Chemistry, led a session on "Criteria for Research," offering valuable insights into research evaluation. Both sessions were impactful and well-received by participants.

The workshop concluded with a closing session that summarized key takeaways, collected participant feedback, and provided recommendations for future events. The main takeaways from the workshop included a deeper understanding of research methodologies and best practices, practical insights into grant writing and funding opportunities, enhanced networking and interdisciplinary research opportunities, and the development of essential leadership and career-building skills.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the interactive and insightful nature of the sessions. Recommendations for future workshops included extending the duration for more in-depth discussions, incorporating more hands-on activities and case studies, and providing follow-up mentorship and support programs.

In conclusion, the iRISE ECR Capacity Building Workshop successfully achieved its objectives by equipping early career researchers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and networks to advance their academic and professional careers. The event served as a valuable platform for learning, collaboration, and future research opportunities.

For the Images of the iRISE ECR Capacity Building Workshop, kindly refer to the Photo Gallery:

<https://www.sju.edu.in/gallery/118>