'Communication skills & hands-on experience critical'

TECHNOVATE MADHYA PRADESH CONCLAVE

Madhya Pradesh winners of Technovate for India ideathon, with Jones Joseph, COO, and Ajeesh Satheesan, CMO, Talrop, last week in Indore

MADHYA PRADESH WINNERS OF IDEATHON

WINNER
Indore Institute of Management & Research
Lalit Panchal, Ishika Sharma, Adarsh Jain

1ST RUNNER-UP
Lakshmi Narain College of Technology
Kartikey Namedev, Gourav Yadev, Mayur Soni

2ND RUNNER-UP
Lakshmi Narain College of Technology & Excellence: Adarsh Kathriya, Manya Kukreja, Rohit Tudu

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Vinita Rathi's Systango is an example of how widespread India's talent base is. Vinita built the company out of Indore, after a five-year stint with Goldman Sachs in London. She co-founded it with her husband Nilesh. It is today a publicly traded digital engineering services company, predominantly working for international clients, and having a presence in the US and UK.

Vinita was our chief guest at the Madhya Pradesh edition of Technovate for India, a joint initiative by TOI and startup ecosystem builder Talrop. And she had some inspiring words for the large number of students she addressed.

"There is no better time than now to embark on an entrepreneurial journey, with hard work and belief in the transformative power of emerging technologies," she said. "If we can do it, so can everyone else."

Highlighting her company's early embrace of blockchain and AI, Vinita said AI will play a crucial role in enhancing business efficiencies and reshaping job roles over the next five years.

"By 2020, we had already begun leveraging AI for business applications. AI will be a game-changer, enhancing efficiency and enabling smarter, data-driven decision-making in businesses across industries. I believe that in five years AI will contribute to at least 50% of software development, and human

> 66 Industries must not wait until students graduate but should engage with them early through internships, mentorship programmes, and collaborative projects. It is very important to have a co-creative technological ecosystem, where academia and industry work in tandem to solve complex real-world problems.
> **Suhas Joshi** | PROF & DIRECTOR, IIT INDORE

> 66 Building strong networks both in personal and professional spheres and having the right support system is crucial for success. Honesty, integrity, and dignity are the foundations of my leadership approach, and these values have played a significant role in my achievements.
> **Vinita Rathi** | CEO, SYSTANGO

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input will be essential for adding real value," she said.

She underscored to students the importance of communication skills and hands-on experience, advocating for greater involvement in real-world applications, hackathons, and internships to prepare for the tech industry.

'ALL MUST ACQUIRE AI KNOWLEDGE'

Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have left an indelible mark on society by transforming India's technological and entrepreneurial landscape, said Suhas Joshi, professor and director of IIT Indore. He underscored the critical role of academia in fostering innovation and technological growth in the country.

Joshi noted the achievements of IIT Indore alumni, such as Jwalant Shah, whose solid waste management startup Swaaha is making a significant impact in the US, and Gaurav Parchani, a pioneer in medical device innovation.

He emphasised the need for localised technological interventions, urging academia to address regional and societal challenges through R&D.

To bridge the placement gap, he advocated for industry-backed research initiatives and mentorship programmes in educational institutions. Joshi also highlighted IIT Indore's academic framework designed to nurture innovation and entrepreneurship. The institution's 'Makerspace' initiative introduces first-year students to hands-on skills, including mechanical processes, 3D printing, and programming.

Joshi stressed that all students, regardless of their specialisation, should acquire fundamental AI and machine learning (ML) knowledge.

"You must be able to articulate your thoughts clearly. Hands-on experience is equally important. Many students graduate without having built projects. In the UK, even middle-school students are writing code," she said.