Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Academia:
AIC Mahindra organised Faculty Development Programme (FDP) to equip faculty to nurture innovation

Hyderabad, xxx | AIC Mahindra, Mahindra University, in collaboration with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC), successfully conducted the Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on Entrepreneurship and Innovation from 18th to 22nd March 2025. The programme brought together 50 educators and incubation professionals from various higher education institutions, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to mentor and support student innovation projects and start-up ventures.

The program was inaugurated in the presence of **Dr Bheema Reddy (Manager, SCRO, AICTE & MoE Innovation Cell), Dr Anadi Pandey (Dean, School of Management), Dr Rajkumar Phatate (Head, Centre of Entrepreneurship and Innovation), Dr B. K Chakravarthy (Dean, School of Design Innovation), Mr. Ismail Akbani (CEO, AIC Mahindra and PI)**, and **Sreeparna Chowdhury (Incubation Manager and Co-PI)**.

Participants engaged in expert-led sessions covering key aspects of entrepreneurship, including problem identification, market research, lean start-up methodology, financial planning, intellectual property protection, start-up mentorship, and investor pitching. A standout feature of the program was a visit to T-Works, India's largest prototyping centre, providing hands-on exposure to innovation in action.

Ismail Akbani, CEO of AIC Mahindra, said, *"Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among educators is crucial to nurturing innovation at the grassroots level. Through initiatives such as the Faculty Development Programme, we aim to empower faculty members with the tools and perspectives needed to support student-led innovations and start-up ventures, ultimately contributing to India's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem."*

The sessions were conducted by eminent faculty and industry experts, **including Mr. Yogesh Brahmankar (Innovation Director, MIC); Prof. Prasad Teegalapally (Professor of Student Start-ups, IIM Mumbai);** and **Mr. Yaseen Shareef (NSRCEL, IIM Bangalore).**

The Faculty Development Programme (FDP) enabled faculty members to develop actionable strategies for integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into their teaching methodologies and institutional frameworks. The initiative underscored AIC Mahindra, Mahindra University's commitment to strengthening the academic ecosystem's role in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. By empowering educators with the right tools and perspectives, the programme aims to create a lasting impact on student- and faculty-led innovations and start up development in India.

AIC Mahindra e-Hub Foundation is the Atal Incubation Centre established by Mahindra University and supported by the Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Government of India. The incubator employs a stage-wise intervention approach to help start-ups throughout their journey. It provides extensive assistance, including mentoring, financial aid, intellectual property support, networking opportunities, office and co-working spaces, software tools, and access to Mahindra University's technological infrastructure, such as the Maker Lab, Robotics Lab, EV Lab, Supercomputer Lab, and Life Science Labs.

About Mahindra University:

Mahindra University, Hyderabad (India), is a multi-disciplinary university. It works towards "Educating future citizens for and of a better world". It is envisioned to be a private University that will play a significant role in driving quality improvements and innovation in higher education in the coming years. Mahindra University will focus on generating new knowledge through engagement in cutting-edge research, creating a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, and undertaking collaborative projects with industry and other academic institutions. The University is backed by Mahindra Educational Institutions (MEI), a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra Ltd., the flagship IT company of the Mahindra Group, a US $20.3 billion industrial entity that employs more than 2,56,000 employees across 100 countries.