



MoE's
INNOVATION CELL
(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)



Department of
School Education & Literacy
Ministry of Education, Govt. of India



REPORT: AICTE Regional Mentoring Session (Day 1)

Event: Three-Day Boot Camp | School Innovation Contest

Date: 28th January 2026

Venue: New Horizon College of Engineering (NHCE), Bangalore

1. Executive Summary

The inaugural day successfully launched the boot camp with **131 participating teams** (teachers and students from 51 schools), setting a strong motivational and foundational tone. The **State Inauguration** featured an inspiring address by Chief Guest Mr. Rajashekar Ethiraju (Director - Technology, Verizon), alongside dignitaries from NHCE, Wadhvani Foundation, and AICTE, emphasizing the critical role of teachers in early-stage innovation and mindset transformation aligned with NEP 2020. Core sessions led by Wadhvani Foundation mentors (Mrs. Geetha Sanjay and Dr. S. Srividhya) introduced **design thinking frameworks** through interactive exercises (Journeys 1 & 2), enabling teams to map real-world school problems and identify user-centric innovation gaps. The afternoon focused on **problem statement refinement** via case studies and opportunity framing, followed by a **Customer Discovery Lab** with personas and interview simulations to validate assumptions early. The day concluded with an overview of national innovation initiatives (DoSEL, MoE) and guided visits to NHCE's Incubation Centre and Center of Excellence, providing practical exposure to academic-to-industrial transitions.

Key Impact: Participants gained foundational clarity, reduced hesitation toward structured innovation processes, and visualized real-world application pathways. High engagement was evident in group activities and campus tours, with comprehensive photo documentation (including AI backdrop group shots) capturing the energetic start.

2. Session-Wise Detailed Proceedings

A. Inaugural Ceremony (09:30 AM – 10:00 AM)

The event commenced with the **State Inauguration** at the NHCE Auditorium.

- **Chief Guest:** Mr. Rajashekar Ethiraju (Director - Tech, Verizon).
- **Key Dignitaries:**
 - NHCE:** Mr. Dhermesh Manghnani (President, NHEI), Dr. Manjunatha (Principal), Mr. Surya Prakash (Registrar), Dr. R.J. Anandhi (Dean-Academics), Dr. Revathi V (Dean R&D), Mr. Mukul Manohar (Associate Head-IIE).
 - Wadhvani:** Mrs. Geetha Sanjay, Dr. S. Srividhya, Program Facilitator / Mentor
 - AICTE:** Mr. Sam Jaikumar S, Manager (IP& Technology Transfer)

- **Highlights:** The speakers emphasized the importance of early-stage innovation in schools and the strategic role of teachers as mentors.

B. Design Thinking Foundations: Identifying Gaps in your Innovation Journey - 1

- **Time:** 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
- **Venue:** Library
- **Facilitators:** Wadhwani Foundation (Dr. S. Srividhya, Mrs. Geetha Sanjay)
- **Approach:** Experiential, interactive introduction to design thinking framework focused on empathy and gap identification.
- **Activity:** Guided exercises (Journey 1) – mapping real-world school problems, brainstorming user needs, identifying innovation gaps.
- **Outcome:** Teams gained initial clarity on user-centric problem spotting; shifted from vague ideas to structured observation.

C. Tea Break

- **Time:** 11:30 AM – 11:45 AM

D. Design Thinking Foundations: Identifying Gaps in your Innovation Journey - 2

- **Time:** 11:45 AM – 01:00 PM
- **Venue:** Library
- **Facilitators:** Wadhwani Foundation
- **Approach:** Build on Journey 1 with deeper exploration and group sharing.
- **Activity:** Continued exercises (Journey 2) – refining gap maps, peer discussions, facilitator feedback.
- **Outcome:** Stronger understanding of empathy-driven innovation; teams ready for problem refinement.

E. Lunch Break

- **Time:** 01:00 PM – 01:45 PM

F. Fine-tuning the Problem Statement: Case Study Approach and Opportunity Framing

- **Time:** 01:45 PM – 03:00 PM
- **Venue:** Library
- **Facilitators:** Wadhwani Foundation
- **Approach:** Analytical and iterative refinement using real examples to ensure problems are actionable and user-focused.
- **Activity:** Case study analysis, opportunity framing filters, group refinement of problem statements, mentor-guided revisions.
- **Outcome:** Teams transformed vague ideas into clear, validated problem statements aligned with real needs.

G. Tea Break

- **Time:** 03:00 PM – 03:15 PM

H. Customer Discovery Lab: Personas and Interview Simulation

- **Time:** 03:15 PM – 04:15 PM
- **Venue:** Library
- **Facilitators:** Wadhwani Foundation
- **Approach:** Hands-on validation to test assumptions through simulated user interactions.
- **Activity:** Creation of user personas, role-play interviews, simulation of customer discovery conversations.
- **Outcome:** Participants learned to validate ideas early; reduced risk of building unwanted solutions.

I. Innovation Initiatives of DoSEL, MOE

- **Time:** 04:15 PM – 04:45 PM
- **Venue:** Library
- **Facilitators:** Wadhwani Foundation
- **Approach:** Policy-contextual linking of local efforts to national programs.
- **Activity:** Presentation and discussion on government innovation schemes, funding, and support structures.
- **Outcome:** Participants understood ecosystem support; motivated to align school projects with national priorities.

J. Innovation in Action – Visit to Incubation Centre / Centre of Excellence

- **Time:** 04:45 PM – 06:30 PM
- **Venue:** NHCE CoE labs
- **Facilitators:** NHCE teams
- **Approach:** Experiential exposure bridging academic ideas to real-world application.
- **Activity:** Guided tours of labs/incubation centre, interaction with setups and live projects.
- **Outcome:** Visualized career paths; inspired practical mindset for school innovations.

3. Photo Highlights:

In accordance with the guidelines, all session photos, including the mandatory AI backdrop group photos and speaker captures, have been documented.

Group Photo: A group photograph of participants and officials has been taken



- **Inauguration & Dignitaries:** Photos reflecting the presence of Chief Guest Mr.Rajashekarana Ethiraju and NHCE leadership.



- **Technical Workshops:** Documentation of participants working on "Opportunity Framing" in the Library and Auditorium.





- Candid shots of participants during the COE/Incubation Center visits.



4. Download Links

You can access the full repository of high-resolution photos and the session documents via the link below.

[Day 1 Photos Link](#)