

COVER STORY

SHE'S GOT THAT 'INNO' SPARK!

Rated the best in the change ARIIA 2020, Warangal's SR Innovation Exchange, or SRiX, is the hub for innovation that Tier-II and Tier-III incubators should aspire to replicate in their own way. This is their story

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Check out this cool course
 The university also has the SRiX School of Entrepreneurship (SRiXSE) that offers an AICTE-approved two-year management course in MBA-EX (Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Venture Development), which is sought after

When you are just starting to fly
 IIE Labs Innovation to Entrepreneurship Lab is their three-month virtual pre-incubation programme that helps innovators build relevant skills, connect with mentors and provide the tools and resources one would need to take steps to the next level

1.1K
 The number of likes SRiX has today

With you, right through everything
 Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE) 2.0 is for aspiring technical start-ups who are looking to enter the market. From idea to market, support is offered to them at all stages of their journey. This is for 12 months

1
 SRiX Innovation Fellowship programme is one-year-long

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Give your ideas SRiX appeal!



SR Innovation Exchange at Warangal proves to be a safe haven for all those start-ups that are looking for strong mentorship. This is how Sreedevi Devireddy is taking it to the next level, discovers Seema Rajpal

A momentous occasion
 Sreedevi Devireddy with K T Rama Rao, Minister of MAA&D, Hyderabad and T&D of Telangana during the official inauguration of SR Innovation Exchange (SRiX) on March 5, 2018

They entered into a pact with IIT's Coarbitrated University to provide start-ups with business development and academic expertise

They launched Open Skills Catalyst 1.0, a pre-incubation programme for companies in the AI and ML space

Jenovix 2.0 was endorsed by SRiX for student innovators who dream of creating something new and innovative

They got involved with IIT Hyderabad to offer XELERATE, a three-month acceleration programme

They entered into partnership with IIT Hyderabad to offer incubation for women entrepreneurs

One of the first five private ventures declared by Telangana government

The number of evaluation books for the incubation programme at SRiX

Only with their support Devireddy also credit to SR University's A Vardha Reddy, Director and A Manjusha Reddy, Secretary-Coordination for leaving the vision to encourage the formation of SRiX

Let's just define it right now

"If you genuinely have the passion for solving problems that are starting you right in the face, then you definitely have the potential to be a disruptor," says Devireddy. She encourages one and all to think out of the box

ON CAMPUS



When we say Warangal, we are pretty sure your mind instantly conjures up the glorious image of the Thousand Pillar Temple or the Kakatiya Kala Thoranam, which serves as the emblem of Telangana State, both iconic synonymous with the city. But what we think is Warangal, which was originally the capital of the great Kakatiya dynasty, is soon going to be synonymous with innovation and entrepreneurship as well. At least the corporation has been laid in the form of SR Innovation Exchange (SRiX), an incubator though it has evolved to be much more than that at SR University (formerly SR Engineering College), the same 140-acre educational institution that climbed right to the top of the table in the category of Private Institutions in the All India Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA 2020). There is no doubt about the fact that SRiX has had a significant role to play when it comes to achieving this feat.

When it was time to start
 Helmed by the former executive director of IIE Hyderabad, Sreedevi Devireddy, the state-of-the-art facility that is SRiX was inaugurated on March 5, 2018 by Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development, K T Rama Rao. Before you wonder where so special about the incubator, let us address the question. Sponsored by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, and overwatched by Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) and AICTE, as well as the Technology Business Incubator (TBI) has roomy work spaces, a well-equipped IoT workshop, marketplace and prototyping facilities as well. They have supported over 33 start-ups till date from Gurugram, Bengaluru and other cities, which is just a three-hour drive away from Warangal. "The opportunities that we have in the metro should ideally be available across the country. This is one way to enable innovation anywhere and eventually, even just a step to migration," says Devireddy, the CEO of SRiX.

This two-floor massive building stands tall and proud, and indeed, is the glory of SR University, but before it was built, the dynamo Devireddy needed to have exactly what was needed. In a bid to understand, the National Entrepreneurship Awards found the faculty of Savitri Narayan Mission and the incubators at IIT Madras and IIT Bombay. But she did not stop there. Be-

short drive away and, honestly, I don't miss it much. And as far as the innovations go, all it takes is for them to visit us and they are convinced," she explains. The mentor pool and the support that they offer, from legal, accountancy and even filing for IPR, all this is enough to convince any founder that they will never walk alone if they shake hands with SRiX. She hopes that initiatives like these will help youngsters from running away to Hyderabad and Bengaluru. Speaking of youngsters, she informs us that they are very focused on nurturing student entrepreneurs, hence, they have as many as eight student start-ups incubated with them and have supported more than 220 student innovators in the past 2 years.

For you, dear disruptors
 Since Devireddy wants to disrupt the notion of an incubator, the former entrepreneur has a word of advice for the other disruptors, or those who want to be one, especially in the context of the ongoing pandemic. "A disruptor is the one who rethinks assumptions to identify creative opportunities. For some time now, many start-up ideas were considered disrupting and they were doing good business too. Corona has killed them out. But if you are a true blue disruptor, no one can stop you," affirms the innovation evangelist. A silver to the rule, the basics, the entrepreneurial perseverance reminds us that research and knowing your market is paramount to laying the right groundwork for your start-up. From starting her career as a student adviser to spending 22 years in various organisations, Devireddy feels like, "I have been juggling so far and search and research is my life to run." What the Prime of Telangana 2019 awarded means is that she has miles to go before she sleeps and she intends to take SRiX with her.

Warangal has no airport which puts it at a locational disadvantage. So how did Devireddy, who identifies herself as a hardcore Hyderabad, manage to shift to Khadija Nagarum (a city known to have been carved from a single stone) and how does she ensure that SRiX also continues to attract budding innovators? "Well, Hyderabad is a



UNDER SRiX'S WINGS, THEY FLOURISH

An innovator needs to be focused and have some peace of mind for it. Warangal can provide both Sreedevi Devireddy

Running on a full battery
 The future is electric and all eyes are well. BMC Energy will have a huge role to play in it. Virtually incubated at SRiX, this start-up started in 2019 to build battery charging stations so that vehicles can simply swap instead of waiting to charge their EVs. "Since we are a product-driven company, our focus is hardware. There are few incubators with a focus on IoT and hardware and SRiX is one of them," says 29-year-old Arun Sengul, chairman of BMC Energy, who founded the start-up with Gautham Maheshwari. The pre-orders have begun and they're looking to launch next year.

Try it before you fly
 If you could by that, sending out that you saw online before buying it? Thanks Innovation Charities can make it happen. Their AR-enabled 3D avatar enables you to try on clothes before you put your money on it. Founded by Mohan Prasad and Tapan Hande (IIT Bombay), the virtual trial room is called Wonder SRiX, where they are virtually avatars, connected them to innovators and organised feedback sessions. "We have signed up with several platforms and are in the process of updating their inventory by the first week of September, we will go live with the first virtual trial and by mid-October, we will be live on five platforms," he says.

SEE THIS: Neha Pawar & Tapan Hande

