

Research to Revenue: How Indian Universities Can Drive Innovation

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Tagline: *Transforming Research into Innovation, Enterprise, and National Growth*

Brief Bio about the Round Table

India has emerged as one of the world's largest higher education ecosystems, with over **1,200 universities, more than 45,000 colleges**, and nearly **44 million students**. Every year, thousands of research papers, dissertations, and innovative ideas are generated across Indian campuses. However, only a small fraction of this research translates into commercially viable products, patents, startups, or industry-led innovations.

Globally, leading institutions such as **MIT, Stanford University, the University of Cambridge, and the National University of Singapore** have demonstrated that universities can become engines of economic development by converting research into intellectual property, technology transfer, startups, and high-impact enterprises.

India possesses immense intellectual capital, but the challenge lies in bridging the gap between **research and commercialization**.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Research Foundation (NRF), Startup India, Atal Innovation Mission, and several government initiatives have laid the foundation for creating innovation-driven campuses. Yet, stronger collaboration among academia, industry, investors, and policymakers is essential to unlock the true economic value of research.

This ICTRD Virtual Round Table will bring together vice chancellors, researchers, policymakers, startup founders, investors, industry leaders, and innovation experts to deliberate on how Indian universities can evolve from centres of knowledge creation to engines of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

Why Do It?

India is rapidly transitioning towards a knowledge-driven economy where innovation is expected to become one of the biggest contributors to national growth.

Despite producing world-class talent,

- India contributes nearly **5% of global research publications**, yet commercialization remains limited.
- Less than **10% of academic research** finds meaningful industrial application.
- Most university innovations never reach the market due to weak industry collaboration, funding constraints, and limited technology transfer mechanisms.

As India works towards becoming a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**, universities must move beyond publishing research to creating products, companies, and technologies that solve societal challenges.

How Will ICTRD Benefit?

Hosting this round table will further strengthen ICTRD's position as a national thought leader in education, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

It will:

- Position ICTRD as a catalyst for industry-academia collaboration.
- Create partnerships between universities, startups, industries, and investors.
- Generate actionable recommendations for research commercialization.
- Support ICTRD's vision of building innovation-led ecosystems across India.
- Lay the foundation for future policy papers, innovation reports, and collaborative projects.

Why Research Commercialisation Matters for India?

The world's largest economies are increasingly driven by innovation rather than natural resources.

Countries such as the United States, Germany, Israel, South Korea, and Singapore have demonstrated that universities play a central role in economic transformation.

Research commercialisation contributes to:

- Creation of deep-tech startups
- Higher patent generation
- Increased foreign investments
- Job creation
- Industry competitiveness
- Technology exports
- Societal impact through affordable innovations

For India, university-led innovation represents one of the greatest untapped opportunities to become a global innovation leader.

The future of India's economy will depend not only on how much research is conducted—but on how much research creates value.

Current Landscape

India has made significant progress in strengthening its innovation ecosystem.

Some notable achievements include:

- India ranks among the **Top 40 countries in the Global Innovation Index**.
- India has become the **3rd largest startup ecosystem** globally.
- More than **170,000 startups** have been recognised under Startup India.
- Over **10,000 patents** are granted annually to Indian innovators.
- More than **700 incubation centres** now operate across educational institutions.

Yet,

- Industry-funded university research remains comparatively low.
- Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) are limited.
- Research-to-market conversion continues to be a major challenge.

This round table seeks to explore how these gaps can be addressed.

Key Focus Areas

1. Building Entrepreneurial Universities: Creating campuses that nurture innovation alongside academics.

2. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships for joint R&D, internships, live projects, and product development.

3. Research Commercialisation: Moving ideas from laboratories to the marketplace.

4. Technology Transfer & Intellectual Property: Improving patenting, licensing, and technology transfer mechanisms.

5. Incubation & Startup Ecosystems: Role of incubation centres, accelerators, angel investors, and venture capital.

6. Funding Innovation: Government grants, CSR, venture funding, and research financing.

7. Faculty & Student Entrepreneurship: Creating a culture where researchers become innovators and founders.

8. Global Best Practices: Learning from successful innovation universities across the world.

Draft Questions for Panelists

1. Why does India produce significant research but relatively few globally successful university startups?
2. How can universities strengthen collaboration with industry?
3. Should research funding be linked with commercialization outcomes?
4. What policy reforms are needed to encourage university innovation?
5. How can intellectual property awareness improve among students and faculty?
6. What role should incubation centres play in translating research into enterprises?
7. How can investors become more engaged with university innovations?
8. Which international university innovation models should India adopt?
9. How can Tier-II and Tier-III universities become innovation hubs?
10. What role will AI and emerging technologies play in future academic research?

Expected Outcomes

- Strategic roadmap for research commercialization.
- Recommendations to strengthen university innovation ecosystems.
- Enhanced industry-academia collaboration.
- Increased awareness around patents, licensing, and entrepreneurship.
- New partnerships among universities, startups, investors, and policymakers.
- Positioning ICTRD as a national platform for innovation-led higher education reforms.