

SIC-GRIPP: Empowering Rural Entrepreneurs to Build Sustainable Communities

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Suzuki Innovation Centre (SIC) was jointly established by Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan (SMC), and IITH in February 2022. SIC has a mission to build an open innovation platform to stimulate the Japanese entrepreneurial spirit and to encourage broad stakeholders to take on ambitious challenges and explore new frontiers in India. We believe that India is now rapidly transforming into one of the world's most dynamic and energetic places for innovation. SIC aims to leverage this transformation by creating an open innovation platform through the following principles.

However, the reality is that the biggest population lies in rural areas, and the greatest innovation often comes from there. SIC recognized this and launched the Grassroots Innovations Pilot Project (GRIPP) jointly with the Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) in October 2022.

GRIPP is an acceleration program to scale up the grassroots entrepreneurs in an ethical manner. GRIPP provides a platform for connecting rural innovators, technology experts, and business experts in order to accelerate the growth of rural innovators.



GRIPP's main activities include identifying grassroots entrepreneurs who improve rural households' quality of life, establishing an ecosystem of mentorship, resources, and capital to accelerate their growth, and creating forward and backward links for rural enterprises to achieve a self-sufficient society in rural areas.

Grassroots innovators typically reside in rural areas and are passionately working to solve local problems with unique and feasible solutions. These innovators have a deep understanding of the problems faced by their communities and are using their knowledge to make a positive impact.



MoU signing between IITH and Suzuki, Feb 2022



#1 ENGAGE: Involving India and Japan in the circle of partnership for universities, startups, and industries from India and Japan to connect.

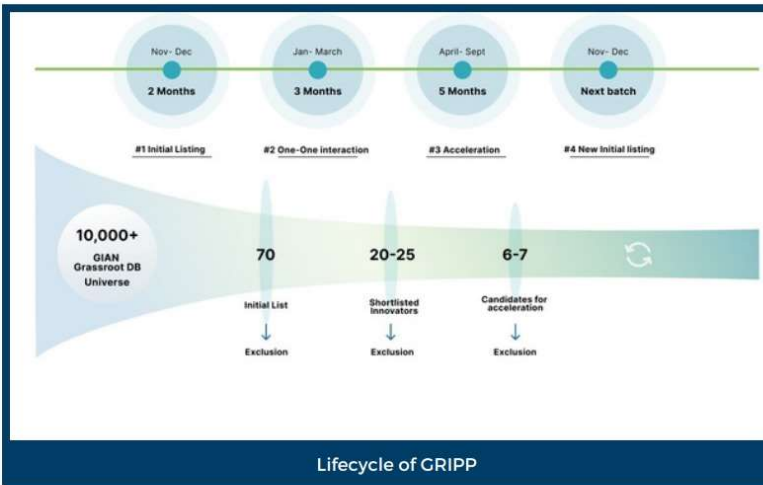
#2 EXCHANGE: Catalysing mutual learning through interaction between human resources and skill development between India and Japan.

#3 INNOVATE: Promoting innovation in the domains of rural development, sustainability, mobility, and carbon neutrality.

Among them, we would like to share one highlighted project this time. Our supply chain project will be shared by the Design department in this newsletter, so please check it out.

GRIPP (Grassroots Innovations Pilot Project)

Innovation has always been considered the domain of the privileged and urban areas.



The collaboration partner, GIAN organization (Gujarat Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network), is working with us to identify and scout grassroots innovations. GIAN is the first incubator of grassroots innovations, founded in 1997 in India. Their database contains over 10,000 grassroots innovators and 70 high-impact innovations in rural areas have been shared with GRIPP. GRIPP had shortlisted 20 innovations. GRIPP has visited these innovators, met with them in person, and listened to their life, how the invention idea came to their mind, and how passionate they are to change their villagers' lives.

Based on these one-on-one interactions with the 20 innovators, 6 innovators have been selected for the acceleration program. The program will provide handholding support to these rural entrepreneurs to connect with the market, find suppliers, and access the latest technology to enhance their productivity and competitiveness.

In order to ensure that these entrepreneurs have access to the latest technology, GRIPP, in collaboration with domain experts in IITH, aims to empower these innovators with the tools they need to transform their local communities and make a positive impact on the world.

Example of innovations supported by SIC-GRIPP:

Sanjay Tilwa, a farmer's son from Gujarat, India, invented the 'Multipurpose Groundnut Digger' to tackle labor shortages during groundnut harvesting. The tool helps speed up the process, which is critical due to the risk of rain during the harvest season. The same machine can be used for other root crops like turmeric and garlic.

GRIPP supports Mr Sanjay Tilwa in expanding his customer base and increasing sales by establishing distribution and finance partnerships. We aim to improve operating economics and reduce production costs while maintaining the highest standards of quality.

Paddy Transplanter:

Mr Nishi Biswas from Bhopal invented the 'Paddy Transplanter' to reduce the labour-intensive process of transplant-ation and to mitigate drudgery, especially for women in rice transplantation. Weighing 20 kg and with a pulling force capacity of 2kg, the machine is suitable for single-person operation.

To scale up Mr Nishi's product, GRIPP provides support in connecting him to farmers for user feedback to improve the machine's design and efficiency, reducing production cost, and devising effective go-to-market strategies. GRIPP also assists in establishing a distributor network to support him in selling his current stock.

To achieve these, GRIPP will work with IITH's design department to refine the machine's design based on user feedback, with an emphasis on boosting competitive features, ergonomics, and efficiency.

SIC believes that rural entrepreneurs have the potential to create a positive impact on the community and drive economic growth. GRIPP keeps working to make the future of rural entrepreneurship in India bright.



Mr Nishi Biswas from Bhopal invented the 'Paddy Transplanter'



Mr Sanjay demonstrating his machine at his workshop, Rajkot

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Rural Innovator
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