

# An excellent start in collaborative research

India is dominated by the services sector for years; manufacturing has been receiving welcome attention in recent years. The IIT - Madras Research Park provides high quality infrastructure for companies to set up their research and development base.



*The proposed view of the interior of the IIT-M Research Park.  
Inset: Dr Sandhya Shekhar, CEO of the research park.*

It's **TWELVE STOREY** tall, situated in a vibrant 423,000 sq.ft campus and at the heart of the IT corridor - the IIT Madras Research Park. This park is exclusive to IIT - M, the first of its kind in India. The idea was conceived years ago, but it came to shape in 2007 and started operations beginning this year thanks to the IIT - M Director, M S Ananth. The research park model is very popular in countries abroad.

For development needs sharp research focus and this park facilitates such a focus.



*An overview of the research park*

India is dominated by the services sector; manufacturing has been receiving welcome attention in recent years. Only if the R&D efforts strengthen can the country innovate and create products. Developed countries spend a lot on R&D, India is increasing its attention to R &D and has the potential to emerge a formidable R&D hub.

The IIT - Madras Research Park provides high quality infrastructure for companies to set up their R&D base. The park provides a collaborative relationship between clients and IIT-M. There are 34 companies that have already started functioning already. These include BHEL, Caterpillar, Cognizant, Goodearth Maritime, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Elxsi ... Few more companies are to set up their R & D centres at this Park soon.

There are many undergraduate and graduate students of IIT - M who have already started working with the companies and are equally excited to be involved in this. With world class facilities available here, it is definitely a learning ground for them. These facilities are not only accessible to IITians, but are open to other students as well.

The entire research park is built on the structure of creating and improving ecosystems where innovations thrive. This will have a snow balling effect. It is where the academic fraternity and the industry merge to make viable economic products.

The IIT Park is funded by Ministry of Human Resources, bank loans and advances from companies who have set up shop. Says Dr Sandhya Shekhar, CEO: "both the state and the Central governments have been benevolent in supporting us. The government secretaries have also been very helpful. The process of translating the concept to completion was long; happily it is a reality today," said Shekar.

There are close to a thousand research parks in the world. Though India has many hitech institutions, she did not catalyse the setting up of many research parks. With IIT - Madras Research Park, one can hope to see more such coming up in the country.

**-Apoorva Sripathi and  
Nandita Raman**