

## **THE INNOVATIONS AND ADVANCES RECENTLY REGISTERED BY C DIT**

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What came first? The chicken or the egg? Like this there is another intractable question. What came first, the word or act? St. John began his apocalyptic gospel by declaring that the word came first. Of course, he meant by word not just utterance but idea. Where do ideas come from. ? Mao Tse Dong answered: “Ideas do not fall from the skies, but spring from action” Inorder not to loose one’s way in the blind alley of the chicken versus egg metaphor, let us amalgamate the two concepts of idea and action into ‘performance’ a synthesis of both.

The comprehensive concept of performance is crucial in human life and progress, especially in the field of training and production. Unlike non human beings humans produce means of livelihood and culture with preplanned blueprint guided by experiences of previous generations and new ideas formed by newer and newer actions. It is because of this truth that both Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi, though they differed on a variety of subjects, agreed on the crucial question of education through productive practice. Gandhi called for education through craft. Though Gandhi’s ideal productive practice was through Charka and Tahkli, Marx wanted the modern technology to take over. But both of them were unanimous on the question of performance as a media of education.

I was reminded of these basic questions when I attended the annual retreat of Centre for Development of Imaging Technology on 27<sup>th</sup> March. There one after another came forward to explain their experience, success and failures in their respective departments of work. The C DIT does not use the word ‘department’. Instead for each group engaged in a particular activity they have a team in which the junior and senior, highly educated and less educated are all equals in a joint endeavour. Even the Director and Registrar, the leading functionaries of the C DIT may also find themselves as equal partners in one or more teams.

A casual look at the subjects handled by different teams is itself a little daunting. Education Informatics, Visual Communication Group, New Media, Optical Image Processing, Course Directorate, Web Services, Software Development and Open Source Technology are enough to give us a glimpse of the scope and sweep of the programmes undertaken by the C DIT. The get-togethers like the retreat and exchange of ideas and experience helps to overcome the all to familiar dangers of overspecialization so common in hitech endeavours and infuse in the practitioners a sense of inter disciplinary outlook. The original project report of the C DIT approved by the Kerala council of Ministers in a joint sitting with the then director contained provisions to avoid the dangers of narrow over specializations - between science and humanities, art and craft, technology and science, theory and practice. But it is only now under the present administration that the C DIT has translated that seminal idea into its day to day style and programme. The work of the different teams and the inter mingling of members from different teams not only affirm the

truth of Gandhi's and Marx's Vision but also setup a model for our entire educational and industrial system to emulate. Though I am quite sceptical of such a model being emulated by the conventional institutions of learning with a heavy load of conservative ideas pulling them back, the pattern needs to be explored and explained for the sake of innovation and reform.

Another important point which emerges from the deliberations of the retreat at the Technopark is the possibility of this far-ranging programmes finding its own resources for reinvestment and expansion. In these days when the governments progressively retreat from social and educational responsibilities the C DIT puts up a model which can fill the vacuum created by the governments abdication. By integrating our entire education system with the productive (both physical and mental) apparatus of the society education can be made self supporting and relevant. Today the dichotomy between the ideas and actions, education and production makes education irrelevant for the society at large. Educated youth find their services unwanted and superfluous. On all these questions the C DIT, though comparatively small and not widely known institution has many things and insights to offer. I congratulate the administration the staff and members of the C DIT for these new and hopeful advances they have made during the last 3 years. I wish the C DIT and its members many new successes in future.

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