



## UNIVERSITY OF LADAKH

On November 5th, 2024, the University of Ladakh, in collaboration with IISc Bengaluru, hosted the 6th episode of **SAMAVESHA** — *Uniting Minds and Igniting Innovation*, a one-day conference aimed at exploring the initiatives, advancements, and opportunities provided by the **I-STEM** platform. I-STEM (Indian Science, Technology, and Engineering Facilities Map) is a national digital platform developed by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, designed to facilitate access to scientific infrastructure and research equipment, fostering collaboration and resource sharing across institutions.

The event was held in the Conference Hall of the Leh Campus, University of Ladakh, and took place in two sessions. The inaugural session began at 10:00 AM, with a welcome address by Dr. Mohd. Hussain, Dean of Science at the University of Ladakh. Dr. Hussain warmly welcomed the guests, particularly the I-STEM team, and thanked them for choosing the University of Ladakh as the venue for the first-ever **SAMAVESHA** episode in North India. He expressed gratitude to Prof. S.K. Mehta, Vice Chancellor, University of Ladakh, for his consistent support and guidance in organizing such events in the University.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Harilal Bhaskar, National Coordinator and Chief Operating Officer of I-STEM at IISc Bengaluru. Dr. Bhaskar provided insights into the importance of resource sharing within the I-STEM framework. He emphasized that I-STEM helps enhance scientific output by minimizing redundancy in resource investment and optimizing equipment utilization. He introduced the various features available on the platform, including access to free software and the ability to book research equipment across the country. Dr. Bhaskar also highlighted the job opportunities the initiative will create, such as for maintenance engineers and equipment operators, and its potential to support start-ups by providing access to cutting-edge research tools. He also discussed the active role of AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) in supporting I-STEM.

Following the keynote, Dr. Subrat Sharma, Dean of Research at the University of Ladakh, shared his thoughts on the I-STEM program and its far-reaching impact, particularly in fields like agriculture and resource management. Dr. Sharma also acknowledged the contributions of the Honourable Vice Chancellor, Prof. S.K. Mehta for establishing state-of-the-art laboratories on the campus, which have greatly enhanced the university's research and development capabilities.

The technical session, which began at 2:00 PM, was led by Mr. Narmdeshwar Pandey, Functional Manager at IISc Bengaluru. Mr. Pandey guided the participants through the I-STEM portal's features, demonstrating how to register, book equipment, and list institutional resources. He explained the processes for updating user profiles, making equipment booking requests, and managing booking schedules. He also addressed common questions related to equipment allocation and payment, providing clear guidelines for I-STEM users, including those from industry, start-ups, and academia. Additionally, Mr. Pandey conducted a live demonstration of how to upload equipment details to the portal and how institutions can register and list their facilities for wider use.

The conference culminated in a quiz competition, which involved teams from the Leh Campus, Government Polytechnic College Leh, and the School of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Leh. The Geology Department from the Leh Campus, University of Ladakh, emerged as the winner of the competition. Following this, prizes and mementos were distributed to the winners.

The program was attended by 125 participants, including faculty, scholars, and students from both the Leh and Kargil campuses of the University of Ladakh, as well as from the School of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Leh, and Government Polytechnic College Leh.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Miss Dolma, Dr. Amjad Hussain, and Dr. Nilza Otzal, who expressed gratitude to the guests, speakers, and participants for their contributions and active engagement.



