

ICT could help small sector take giant leap



Mr. J Crasta, President, FKCCI addressing the seminar. On the dais, from left, Mr. Sivaram Krishnan, General Manager, Global Consulting Services IBM; Mr. D Seetharam, Chairman, Southern Region, MAIT; Mr. Aravind Jannu, Managing Director, Keonics and Director-IT & BT, Government of Karnataka; Mr. Venkat Kedlaya, Immediate Past Chairman(SR), MAIT; and Mr. M C Dinesh, President, KASSIA.

A national seminar on "Small and Medium Enterprises: Growth Engine for India - Leveraging intrinsic strengths of ICT for refueling growth in SME Sector" was held on 11 February 2010 in Bangalore.

The seminar was supported by FIEO, BCIC, CEHA, FKCCI, KASSIA and NSIC and organized by MAIT under the aegis of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India. The primary objective of this event was to spread the technological advances among SMEs and help them manage their complex IT needs to reduce their operational costs and increase efficiency. It also provided a common platform for both the SMEs and lead technology providers in the country and discussed strategies for driving business growth with right IT adoption.

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the Indian economy. In order to remain competi-

tive, the SMEs in India need to be modernized through infusion of better and appropriate technology. It is estimated that the SMEs in the country are set to spend over \$8 to 10 billion in 2010-11 to ramp up their IT infrastructure.

In his inaugural address, Mr Aravind Jannu, IAS, Managing Director of the state electronics enterprise, KEONICS and Director - IT & BT, said new IT parks in places like Shimoga, Mysore and Gulbarga, would soon open up the hinterland to opportunities in cutting edge industry.

In his industry remarks, Mr J Crasta, President, FKCCI pointed out that many entrepreneurs lack exposure to the latest technology and do not possess the required skills in marketing and management strategy, knowledge of domestic and international market conditions, special schemes introduced by the Government and other agencies etc. Though the SMEs are being encouraged to

start new ventures, many entrepreneurs require additional support and guidance in all walks of business to achieve success in their endeavors. He further added that the small and medium enterprises (to which are now added the smaller-than-small, micro industries) in fact provide employment to 2.2 million persons in Karnataka alone compared with just 400,000 in the large and medium sector. "There are 3.5 million SMEs out there in India - a tenth of them in Karnataka," he pointed out.

In his remarks, MC Dinesh, President of the Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association pointed out that less than 12 percent of the SMEs in the state have computers and almost all of them use them just for accounting and word processing. He pointed out to the huge opportunity in IT enabling the operations of this sector - provided tools like ERP and CRM were not made too costly. The association hopes to sign up with agencies that



A view of the audience.

will bring affordable cloud computing services to its members.

In his keynote address, Mr Sivaram Krishnan, General Manager

of IBM's Global Consulting Services division, wondered why disparate centres of the same industry – like Ludhiana and Tiruppur in hosiery – should not be linked by a network of

shared innovation. "What we need is not the rear view but a headlight that looks ahead," he added.

The round table included contributions from Mr Sriram Rajan, Country Manager, SMB, IBM India, Mr Himanshu Seth, Country Manager, Partner Lead Business & Channel Marketing, HP India, Mr Argha Basu, Vice President Global Data Products, Bharti Airtel, Mr Mignesh Parekh, General Manager of Cluster Pulse, Ms Uma Reddy, President, Consortium of Electronic Industries of Karnataka (CLIK) and Mr Anand Parthasarathy, Editor, IndiaTechOnline.

Attendees were about 75 including Mr Aravind Jannu, IAS, Managing Director, KEONICS & Director – IT & BT, Government of Karnataka, and Prof S Sadagopan, Founder-Director of the Indian Institute of Information Technology – Bangalore. ■



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