

Report on One-Day Workshop on Design Thinking, Critical Thinking & Innovation Design

The Department of MBA at St. Philomena's College (Autonomous), Mysore, in association with the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) and IQAC, organized a one-day workshop on Design Thinking, Critical Thinking & Innovation Design for MBA students. The workshop aimed to give students practical exposure to structured problem-solving, analytical reasoning, and innovative thinking that are essential for future managers and leaders.

Around forty seven MBA students actively participated in the workshop. The session was conducted by Ms. Kavana Kumar, faculty from Wadiyar Centre for Architecture. The program was inaugurated in the presence of the Principal Dr. Ravi J.D. Saldanha, IQAC Coordinator Mr. A Thomas Gunaseelan, and MBA faculty members Dr. Sadia Tabassum, Dr. Emille Sureka, and Dr. Shilpa, who encouraged students to make the best use of the learning opportunity.

The workshop began with an engaging introduction to the concept of Design Thinking as a structured and human-centered approach to problem solving. Ms. Kavana Kumar explained the five important stages of Design Thinking – Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test – and emphasized that innovation begins with understanding people and their real needs.

Students were then divided into ten groups, which were further organized into two sets of five groups each. Each set followed a circular rotation method. In this process, one group's work was passed to the next group at every stage, allowing different teams to build upon ideas created by others. This activity helped students understand how innovation grows through collaboration and continuous improvement.

During the Empathize stage, students focused on understanding the feelings, needs, and challenges of specific groups of people. In the Define stage, the next group framed clear and meaningful problem statements based on these insights. In the Ideate stage, students generated creative solutions. The Prototype stage involved creating rough solution models, and finally, the Test stage evaluated the practicality and usefulness of the ideas.

After lunch, each group presented their solutions. Students explained how their ideas developed across stages, what challenges they faced, and how teamwork improved their solutions. This presentation session improved confidence, communication skills, and the ability to justify decisions with logical reasoning.

The workshop then moved into critical thinking exercises. Students were shown visual and situational cases that required observation, reasoning, and interpretation. These exercises trained students to question assumptions, analyze evidence, and make thoughtful decisions.

The workshop strongly highlighted that innovation is not just about creativity, but about a disciplined process of understanding, experimenting, and improving ideas. Students learned that true innovation begins with empathy—understanding customer needs before trying to solve them. The Define stage showed the importance of identifying the real problem. The Ideation phase showed how teamwork improves ideas. Prototype and Test stages demonstrated innovation as a cycle of trial, feedback, and refinement.

Overall, the workshop helped students understand that innovation in management involves empathy, clarity, creativity, testing, teamwork, and logical decision-making. These skills are essential for future managers and leaders.

The one-day workshop was an enriching learning experience for MBA students. It enhanced their creativity, analytical ability, teamwork, and presentation skills, and encouraged an innovative mindset among students.

