Session on Startups, Ideas, and the Straw Man Approach	
Date: 5-11-2025	**Venue: Seminar Hall, RVIM, Bangalore.**
Time: 11.30 am to 1.30 pm	**Resource Person: Dr. Saji Varghese, Christ University, Bangalore**
No. of Participants: 100	**Event Coordinators: Dr. Rashmi Shetty & Prof. Anitha BM D'Silva, Dr. Uma Sharma**

A thought-provoking session was conducted by **Dr. Saji Varghese** for MBA students at RV College of Management, focusing on startups, entrepreneurial ideas, and the application of the **straw man approach** in early-stage venture development. The session emphasized structured thinking, assumption testing, and learning-driven entrepreneurship rather than idea perfection.

The objectives of the session were:

- To expose students to practical startup thinking and ideation frameworks
- To introduce the straw man concept as a tool for early-stage idea validation
- To help students break down startup ideas into testable assumptions
- To encourage iterative learning and feedback-based refinement

Entrepreneurial Perspective of Dr. Saji Varghese

Prof. Saji Varghese shared insights based on his experience with startups and innovation-led initiatives. He highlighted that successful ventures are built not merely on ideas, but on a deep understanding of problems, customers, and execution realities. Students were encouraged to view entrepreneurship as a disciplined learning process rather than a linear success journey.

Understanding the Straw Man Approach

The straw man was explained as a **deliberately simplified, first-cut version of a startup idea**. It captures assumptions related to the problem, customer, solution, and business model, with the intent of inviting critique and validation rather than defending the idea.

Key components discussed included:

- **Problem Definition:** Identifying a real, significant problem
- **Target Customer:** Clearly defining who faces the problem
- **Proposed Solution:** A basic, non-polished solution outline
- **Value Proposition:** Why the solution matters
- **Revenue Logic:** Who pays and why
- **Key Assumptions:** What must be tested and validated

Application to Startup Ideas

Through discussions and examples, Prof. Saji Varghese demonstrated how straw man models help founders avoid early-stage biases. Students were encouraged to treat ideas as hypotheses, actively seek feedback, and pivot based on insights gained from real-world validation.

Student Engagement

The session was highly interactive, with students questioning assumptions, presenting initial ideas, and critically evaluating each other's straw man models. This helped them recognize

common startup pitfalls such as unclear customer focus, overconfidence in solutions, and weak value propositions.

Key Takeaways

- Startups begin with assumptions, not certainty
- A straw man converts abstract ideas into structured thinking
- Feedback is more valuable than early perfection
- Learning and iteration are core to entrepreneurial success

Conclusion

The session by Prof. Saji Varghese provided students with a practical framework to approach entrepreneurship thoughtfully and systematically. By emphasizing the straw man approach, the session reinforced the importance of clarity, experimentation, and continuous learning in building sustainable startups.

PHOTO GALLERY:

Pic 1



Pic 2

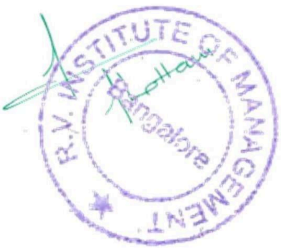


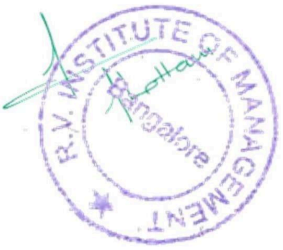
Pic 3



Pic 4




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