

# IIT-Hyderabad Lads Create Social Innovations

By V Nirupa Sathya Sree Published: 24th April 2016 03:46 AM Last Updated: 24th April 2016 03:46 AM



Bamboo homes designed for Tribals. (Right) Seemanth Chourey. | EXPRESS photo

**HYDERABAD:** With so many universities and institutes in Hyderabad, it has become a common thing to see students coming out with some latest innovations and apps. But, very rarely do we get to see social innovations which have the ability to change people's lives.

Realising the importance of social innovations, the design department of Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H) is encouraging its students to take up social projects that would make a difference and the newly-formed batch, with its first batch itself, came out with some amazing projects.

While one student came up with a prototype to make handy Braille writer to help visually-impaired students to make some quick notes, another student co-designed houses for tribal people so that they can get the feeling of their traditional house.

## **Bamboo Homes for Tribals**

Explaining about his project, Seemanth Chourey, who is currently doing his Masters in Design from IIT-H, said, “In my third semester I visited Chintoor in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and got in touch with people belonging to the Konda Reddy community. There I noticed that the houses built under government schemes were useless to them because those houses did not conform to their lifestyle or needs. They treat them as a concrete box and are even afraid to go inside. Most of them are using the houses for storage purpose.

“Traditionally, bamboo and mud are used in building their houses but government housing schemes use concrete and fly ash bricks. Instead of fly ash bricks, we used mud bricks and bamboo in walls, ceiling and floor so that it will be more traditional. I have helped them build a model house so that they can replicate it.

“The government wants to build them pucca houses and these people want to live in bamboo houses. With this design, both the concerns will be addressed.”

But the houses co-designed by Seemanth Chourey need to be approved by the Centre and only then can the project be implemented. “Earlier, somehow I convinced the officer overseeing the project and built a model house. However, she was transferred as her term was over and now the new officer is not showing any interest to take the necessary approvals,” Chourey said.

## **Handy Braille Writer**

“In one of the classes I realised that the visually-impaired do not have writing aids to take some quick notes as the available Braille machines are big and can’t be used unless they have a table and a place to sit. So, I decided to develop a product which is portable and easy to use,” said Shakti Prasad, who came up with an idea to design a handy Braille writer.

“Inspiration came for the regular stapler and my handy Braille writer will more or less look like the same. It will be priced at ` 100 and can be used by any kind of visually-challenged person. At the top it will have a needle to punch and the bottom can be used to hold the device,” he explained.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Giving an insight into the work of Department of Design, Prof Neelkantan, assistant professor, design department of IIT-H, said, “As part of the curriculum, students are supposed to do semester project and in our very first year many students picked up things related to society and the ones that would be helpful in improving the social status of the people. Design as a discipline itself is people-oriented and hopefully with such independent projects students make a difference.”

*Source: The New Indian Express*

*Date: 25 April 2016 09:33 AM*

*Link: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/IIT-Hyderabad-Lads-Create-Social-Innovations/2016/04/24/article3396979.ece>*