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# From IIT to Amrita University; here are institutions where Cisco will set up innovation labs

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This goal is aligned to Cisco's global vision of impacting 1 billion lives worldwide by 2025 through digital solutions. (Reuters)

US-based tech giant Cisco today said it is setting up a network of 'Cisco thingQbator' labs in five academic institutions in India, aimed at enhancing digital skills development and entrepreneurship among the student community. The Internet of Things (IoT) makerspaces or innovation labs are being set up in collaboration with the Nasscom Foundation and will enable students to get hands on with technology and conceive digital solutions to solve local problems, Cisco Senior Vice President (IT) and CIO (International) V C Gopalratnam told reporters here at the Cisco India Summit 2018.

He added that the five academic institutions chosen for setting up these 'thingQbator' makerspaces are Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, (IIITMK), Kerala, IIT-BHU Varanasi, Amrita University Coimbatore, Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women- Delhi and Trident Academy of Technology Bhubaneswar.

Gopalratnam said the company is undertaking various initiatives and programmes in the country that will "positively impact 50 million beneficiaries in India by 2025". "This goal is aligned to Cisco's global vision of impacting 1 billion lives worldwide by 2025 through digital solutions," he added.

He explained that the company — which has over 10,000 people in India — is engaged with the government and community organisations in the country in various areas like education, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability. "We are also supporting N/Core, an incubator for social sector startups, to launch N/Core tech – an exclusive track focussed on incubating early-stage non-profits that leverage digital technology to positively impact society," Gopalratnam said.

N/Core tech will primarily focus on incubating companies that are developing solutions in the areas of critical human needs, education, and economic empowerment, he added.

"Cisco will support up to 20 organisations during the first year in two cohorts. Each selected startup will receive an innovation grant of Rs 10 lakh. In addition, the startup will have access to a set of mentors and technology experts from Cisco along with N/Core partners," he explained.