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SELF-RELIANCE IS THE CALL OF THE DAY

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call in all its entirety. Apart from exposing the fault lines of our present times, it has made apparent the importance of being self-reliant as the world grapples with the unprecedented outcomes of the ongoing pandemic. Being self-reliant or Atmanirbhar, emerged as a much-needed prerequisite for the growth and sustenance of the economy.

To be 'Atmanirbhar,' India really needs to create avenues to scale up its entrepreneurial fervor at varied levels. Well, another aspect that has occurred alongside this need, is that India shines on the front of skills and talent but lacks awareness, mainly at the grassroots, especially on the ways of channelizing these capabilities into commercial gains. It is important to bring about such awareness and knowledge in society at large. And, this is achievable through training, counseling, and mentoring support.

On the positive side, in the past decade, the advent and growth of start-ups have created an upbeat outlook for enterprise creation in India. Entrepreneurship is now considered a viable career. However, awareness about enterprise creation is limited to mostly urban pockets or educational hubs.

The concept is yet to trickle down to the grassroots where there is immense potential. Typically, these areas are home to many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) that form the backbone of India's manufacturing sector. However, the sector has been severely impacted by the pandemic across the country. It is important to not only instill confidence in the sector but also help develop a mechanism wherein they can face similar challenges.

Skill training

Irrespective of whether a business is new or old, they will always benefit from new skills and exposure to ideas. Skill training helps entrepreneurs to establish their own strategies to make their businesses self-reliant and generate local employment opportunities. It also helps them to create better linkages with their markets and stakeholders. Training and capacity building programs help in creating micro-entrepreneurs at rural levels. Many individuals in rural areas are self-employed but lack the means to scale up their respective ventures. However, with training and guidance, they can learn to innovate and adapt

to the changing environment. By combining the elements of industry exposure, academic rigor, and consistent guidance, a conducive ecosystem can be created for entrepreneurs - big or small.

For example, Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), a sub-scheme of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, aims to create sustainable self-employment and find opportunities for youths along with promoting entrepreneur networking. Under SVEP, micro-enterprises and youth entrepreneurs are being provided training and adequate business skills to ensure their long-term survival and growth.

The program promotes micro-entrepreneurship by creating an ecosystem in which these micro-entrepreneurs flourish and sustain in the long run. Hence, skill development is one of the key components for the growth of micro-enterprises in India. Skill development, would ensure the expansion of their operations and also improve their viability through better margins and higher volume.

Developing Trainers

It has been observed that entrepreneurs need confidence-building exercises even after they have taken up the entrepreneurial path. This requires enterprising persons who would not only motivate but lead them until their objective is met. Moreover, it has been established that a trainer is crucial to the creation and management of a business. Inputs on opportunity counseling, market survey and project report, managerial guidance, and the pedagogy get well implemented with the involvement of a trainer. Given the current situation, it is really important to strengthen the fundamentals of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurs who have been mentored or trained by professionals tend to have a higher success rate. The COVID crises have proved that entrepreneurship education is right in picking up prominence in the last few years and is an important aspect of enterprise creation and innovation. The students and trainees of EDII's programs turned innovative during these times of crises and evolved instead of crumbling under pressure. They testified how entrepreneurs with the right training are better equipped to recognize and make the most of emerging opportunities. [H](#)