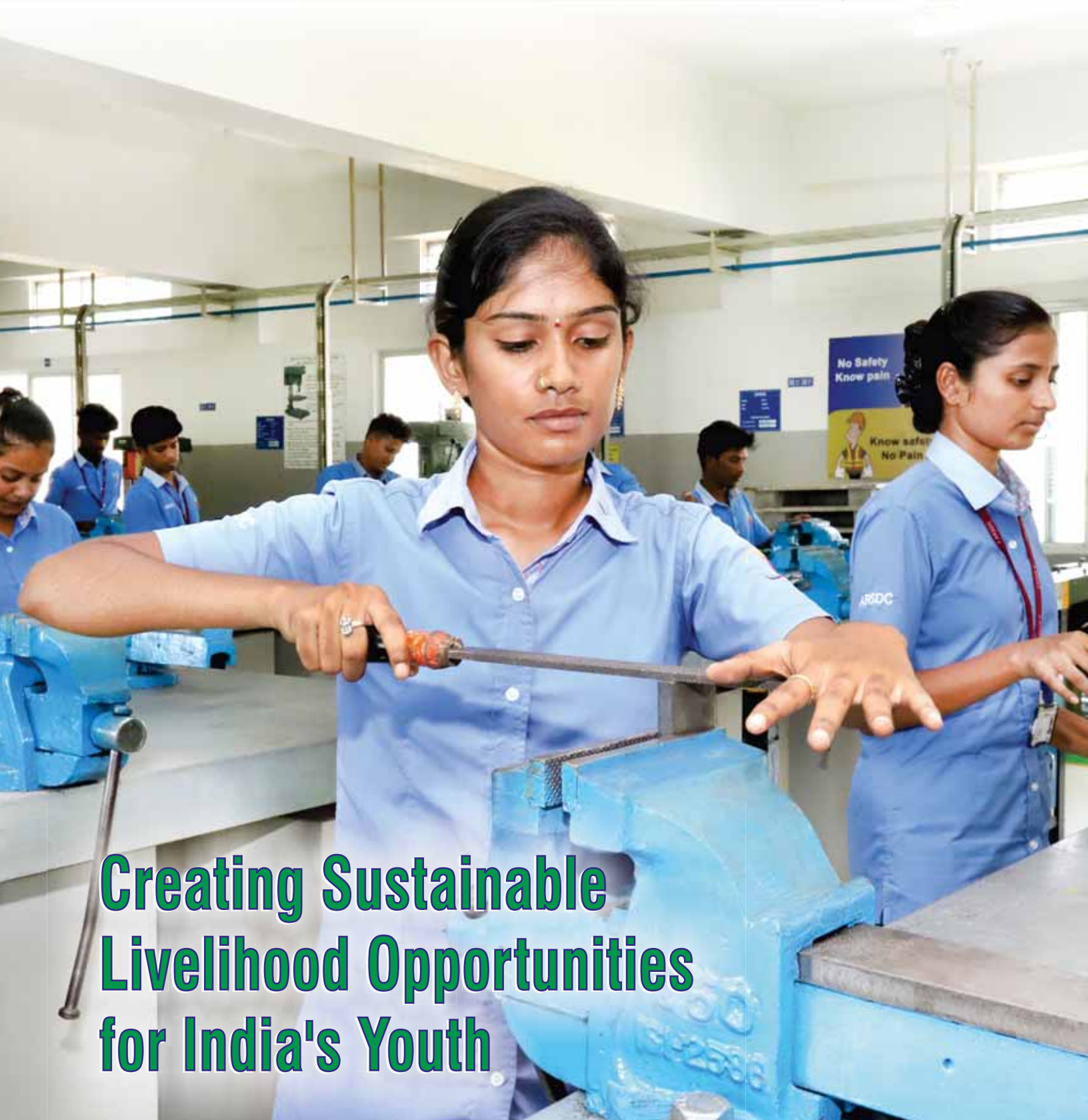


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CSR *Mandate*

Enabling Sustainability



**Creating Sustainable
Livelihood Opportunities
for India's Youth**

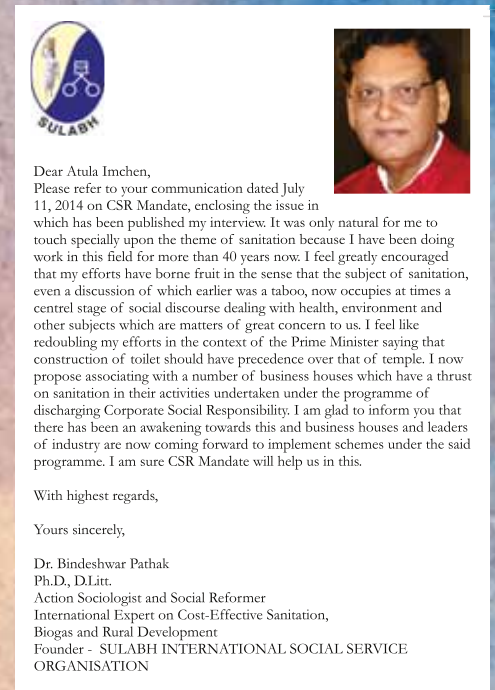
Recognition

The role and contributions of CSR Mandate in bringing to the fore the initiatives of Corporate India and NGOs has resulted in the magazine being awarded the

**ICE Awards 2016 and
CSR Community Initiative Awards 2016**



Accolades



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F OREWORD



Dear Readers,

Agriculture is still the prime source of livelihood in India. It plays a vital role in the country's economy. India has the second-largest agricultural land in the world. About 60 per cent of rural Indian households derive their livelihood from agriculture.

Since India depends on its farmers for their daily sustenance, much concentration and focus must be rendered to this greatest source of livelihood and sustenance provider. We have observed that many city-bred and farmer-turned-entrepreneurs are turning farming activities into practicable business operations by providing other farmers and local small landholders farm inputs to move beyond subsistence agriculture and generate a sustainable income from agriculture. It is also important that the younger generation is apprised of the viability of this livelihood as most of them are not even aware of the high stakes of investing in this activity. It will help reduce unemployment and utilise the country's productive workforce. When more of our young generation is involved, we will see an increase in food security and a stronger economy and the rural communities will stand to gain in the long run.

With most of India living in rural areas and with the diversity existing in each State, we, therefore, see numerous indigenous groups spanning the length and breadth of this country. They are involved in hunting, fishing, shifting cultivation, or gathering food and forest products. These groups also need special skills and training to enhance their existing occupations, like weaving, basketry, woodcarving, or small-scale industries to upgrade their livelihood strategies.

As I travel to work every day, I often encounter daily-wage labourers comprising of men, women, and young children carrying their tiffins, tools, and the little belongings they have to and from their work sites. A majority of them are migrant labourers who do not have any official papers to prove their work history. This population is indeed a huge one, but even though they are the ones that help build the infrastructure in our cities and towns, they are ignored, marginalised, and treated very poorly by the very people whose lives have been made easier and more comfortable due to their hard work, come rain or shine. Let us introspect: How can we help improve their livelihoods? Is anyone reaching out to them?

With the world advancing by leaps and bounds in technology, we also see an increased need for training our youth in this vast field. We also need to give credit where credit is due. Numerous corporations have been doing their part in imparting knowledge and training to many young people who lack the foundational skills they need to succeed. Yet, with the burgeoning population, there is still much more to do in this area. Other areas of employment - healthcare, finance, engineering, and the service industry, are still desired occupations that require skilling so this generation can improve their livelihoods and future.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Swaroop', with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Kamaljit Swaroop
Vice Chairperson



Dear Readers,

In Act 4, Scene I of *The Merchant of Venice*, written by William Shakespeare between 1596-98, Shylock, the protagonist, uttered these words that resonate so well even till this present age – “You take my life when you take the means whereby I live”.

What options are left when one's livelihood is taken away, or when one struggles to find a decent means of livelihood? The hardest part is seeing your family deprived of basic necessities like proper shelter, food, education, or the simplest of medical care. One does feel robbed of dignity when one has to be at someone's mercy to survive.

Livelihoods are essential to the circle of life. Humans across borders need it to sustain and support themselves and their families. The nation itself benefits greatly when its citizens are involved in sustainable livelihood. It is also important to note that the economic prosperity of a nation also opens doors for an array of livelihood choices for people to choose from.

How does the Government or Corporates involved in CSR activities help provide such opportunities for the millions of desperate and hungry lives? We have, over the years, been highlighting the various initiatives undertaken by Corporates, NGOs, Foundations, Civil Society, and even passionate individuals who want to better the lives of their fellowmen in myriad ways. We have seen the impact and are gratified that countless lives across India are positively affected by these benevolent gestures. Yet, since ours is a country with the second-largest population in the world, the results sure look unsatisfactory. Truth be told, there are still many Everests to climb regarding this matter.

I was deeply struck by this part mentioned in one of the articles in this issue: "Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more prone to restrictions when it comes to aspirations — either they are prevented from dreaming big because they do not have the means to achieve their goals, or, they have no idea of the range of career paths available to them". It is vital, therefore, that this young population of students be accorded help and are well-guided so they know the best options for them. They are the hope of the future as they can steer the economy towards growth when they receive a proper foundation in education, skilling, and training.

We trust this issue of the magazine will enrich and impact your life. We want you to know that we value your feedback. You can share your thoughts by emailing me at: atula.imchen@gmail.com

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Atula Imchen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Atula Imchen

Editor



Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Vocational Training a Must for Building Future-Ready, Inclusive Workforce

India is one of the world's youngest countries, with over half its population under 30 years of age. With an expected addition of 183 million people to the workforce by 2050(1), it is a formidable source of global labour demands. However, the primary challenges the country faces are youth unemployment and unemployability. This is evident through studies such as the Periodic Labour Force Survey which found that the youth unemployment rate between April and June 2021 was 25.5 per cent in the 15-29 age group. Some recent reports and anecdotal evidence have highlighted how graduates and youth with higher education cannot find jobs that match their academic levels. This is due to the rapidly changing technologies across industries that create a demand for a skilled workforce and further open up avenues for job creation. In such a scenario, vocational training and education have a significant role to play in bridging the gap between education and employment.



Phiroze D. Lam

“

Emerging technologies, especially digital, Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics and automation, are not just creating jobs but also transforming human interactions and experiences. This has implications for both – courses for technology-based skills and integrating tech applications in traditional courses. Vocational programmes must keep abreast of emerging and future job roles and be prepared to offer appropriate courses. An entire ecosystem needs to be created for this purpose

”

How skill training and development programmes need to evolve keeping in mind the emerging technologies

Emerging technologies, especially digital, Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics and automation, are not just creating jobs but also transforming human interactions and experiences. This has implications for both – courses for technology-based skills and integrating tech applications in traditional courses. Vocational programmes must keep abreast of emerging and future job roles and be prepared to offer appropriate courses. An entire ecosystem needs to be created for this purpose. As consumers and creators of technology, industries have a vital role to play in informing skill providers about emerging technologies, their applications, and demand in terms of skills required. The curriculum for vocational skills, therefore, must be guided by the industry.

Vocational training programmes must integrate skilling that imparts a deeper

understanding of a trainee's role as a provider and consumer of technology. Such integration is necessary, as once trainees graduate from the course, they must be able to identify opportunities they can leverage for their career growth and find platforms they can utilise. Trainees who take the self-employment route must understand the evolving expectations of their consumer base and utilise channels for better service delivery. Over the last few years, we have witnessed how mobile-based applications have revolutionised the way services are accessed by people.

The pandemic has disrupted the means through which education is imparted. Several educational institutions leveraged digital and online platforms to connect with their students during the lockdown. Even post lockdown and re-opening of educational institutions, the online instruction method has remained. Vocational training institutes must also prepare for incorporating digital and online instruction enabling distance education, especially during



“

With a renewed focus on skill development through the Government's Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme, numerous Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Vocational Training Centres were set up across several States. This has helped create a massive, decentralised infrastructure for skill development which can be leveraged through multi-stakeholder collaborations to reach a large number of youth from diverse backgrounds

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contingencies. Further, emerging technologies like mobile-based augmented reality can be explored to enhance the learning experience by integrating interactive and digital elements in delivering instruction.

Leveraging multi-stakeholder collaborations and existing infrastructure to reach a larger number of youths

Scaling up vocational training in India is a tall task. Delivering quality training to the youth must consider the socio-economic and geographic diversity of the country. The youth cannot be seen as a homogenous demographic. There are various considerations such as geographic location, gender, disability, and digital access that must be accounted for when scaling up programmes. Overcoming these challenges would be nearly impossible without the involvement of multiple stakeholders.



With a renewed focus on skill development through the Government's Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme, numerous Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and Vocational Training Centres were set up across several States. This has helped create a massive, decentralised infrastructure for skill development which can be leveraged through multi-stakeholder collaborations to reach a large number of youth from diverse backgrounds.

A major benefit of collaborative efforts is that they bring in expertise from various sectors. They help form networks, strengthen the courses and help address underlying issues which are barriers to inclusion in skill development

programmes. Non-government organisations can create pathways to include marginalised persons in vocational skills programmes. The key is to recognise the myriad of existing capabilities various stakeholders have to offer and how to leverage them to encourage skill development.

Philanthropic bodies like Pirojsha Godrej Foundation (PGF) help NGOs to create programmes and initiatives based on their knowledge of the communities they serve. By providing funds not tied to specific programmes, philanthropies can help build organisational capacities and enable solutions for a gamut of intersecting issues which underserved communities face. PGF beneficiaries have been making strides in this



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For a long time, employment was divided between white-collar and blue-collar jobs and the class divide that comes with this distinction. Jobs depending on academic education versus jobs requiring hands-on skills are now merging. Purely academic education is now not the sole guarantee for obtaining a job or good earnings. The advent of technology and the impetus they have given to alternate career paths have firmly cemented skill building as necessary for growth and development

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direction. Pratham Education Initiative, for instance, has a vocational training programme for youths from



economically disadvantaged backgrounds that provides them with employable skills, while Teach For India runs on a model where their fellows get a hands-on experience in teaching and learning the nuances of pedagogy and improving the quality of education. An interesting aspect of building capacities rather than specific programmes is also seen in the research and advocacy work these organisations perform. The Council on Energy, Environment and Water researched how the transition to green energy would create jobs for which future skills would be required. Therefore, philanthropic support to organisations can ensure a variety of vocational skills

programmes and enable organisations to leverage their expertise to provide insights on skill development as an intersection of other pressing issues.

A natural extension of skill development programmes would be to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups in the workplace. Several corporations are taking proactive steps to ensure such inclusion in their workplaces and communicating the same to the youth. Programmes for women and persons with disabilities are some of the inclusions which are imperative for holistic nation-building.

Conclusion

For a long time, employment was divided between white-collar and blue-collar jobs and the class divide that comes with this distinction. Jobs depending on academic education versus jobs requiring hands-on skills are now merging. Purely academic education is now not the sole guarantee for obtaining a job or good earnings. The advent of technology and the impetus they have given to alternate career paths have firmly cemented skill building as necessary for growth and development. With 13 million people entering the workforce each year, India has a huge demographic dividend. Vocational skills supported by the country's institutions are the means to leverage this advantage. ■

Phiroze D. Lam is the Head of the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation.





Skilling Young Minds Essential for a Transformed Future

“Whoever holds the talent, holds the future”- a saying of great significance, especially in a progressive community whose growth vastly depends on the quality of its masses. India's economic growth and global status are going through a pressing need for a skilled youth community. Interestingly, India has a big pool of young working population that is waiting for structured guidance. This population can do wonders for themselves and the country if led in the right direction and granted skilling opportunities.

As per the 2018 report by NCAER, India's overall workforce is around 468 million. Approximately, 92 per cent of this workforce belonged to the informal sector, whereas around 31 per cent were illiterate, 13 per cent had primary education, 6 per cent were college graduates, about 2 per cent of the workforce had formal vocational training, and only 9 per cent had non-formal vocational training. The daunting data give a clearer insight into India's alarmingly severe shortage of a well-trained workforce.

The current statistics suggest that only 10 per cent of the fresh graduates are employable, and the rest of the 90 per cent

lack the eligible skills required to be hired by the Corporates. India's GDP is growing at a great rate of around 6-8 per cent, but job creation is yet to catch up to it. The Government of India has come up with multiple initiatives like “Skill India”, “Make in India”, “Start-up India”, and so on, to accelerate employment and entrepreneurship among the country's youth. The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship aims to upskill the youth on a large scale with speed and high standards to achieve its vision to establish a Skilled India.

These initiatives are being aided by its functional departments, such as the Directorate General of Training (DGT),



May Yang

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The NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) skill gap analysis study identified eleven sectors requiring skill development training through reputed training partners having a multi-state footprint. These sectors are beauty and wellness, ICT, banking and accounting, construction, painting, automotive repairs, security, garment making & fashion designing, retail, telecom, and hospitality

”

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and 38 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) as well as 33 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs/ NSTI(w), around 15,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) under DGT and 187 training partners registered with NSDC. The Ministry also intends to work with the existing network of Skill Development centres, universities, and other alliances in the field. Further,



collaborations with relevant Central Ministries, State governments, international organisations, industry and NGOs have been initiated for multi-level engagement and more impactful implementation of skill development efforts. The partnership scale indicates the massive structure and potential of their nationwide skill development plan.

While it succeeded in achieving its skilling targets with around 1.07 crore youth trained by January 2021 under the Skill India Mission, there is still scope for strengthening the district machinery for effective skill training implementation.

The NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) skill gap analysis study identified eleven sectors requiring skill development training through reputed training partners having a multi-state footprint. These sectors are beauty and wellness, ICT, banking and accounting, construction, painting, automotive repairs, security, garment making & fashion designing, retail, telecom, and



hospitality. Among these, seven sectors are in high demand of skill up-gradation according to the study carried out by Manpower Group: Education, Health, and Government (76 per cent), IT and Technology (76 per cent), Manufacturing (76 per cent), Banking and Finance (75 per cent), Wholesale and Retail Trade (75 per cent), Restaurants and Hotels (74 per cent), and Construction (72 per cent). India is targeting to enhance livelihood opportunities through proper college infrastructure, and such colleges focus on unique features to improve employment prospects. The target is to create:

- Skill development facilities under one roof.
- Short-term, market-oriented and demand-driven modular skill development courses.
- Multi-skilling, multi-entry and exit, and linkages to future up-gradation opportunities.
- Fewer entry barriers – educational qualifications, transportation, loss of wages, the problem of language, fees.
- Youth mobilisation.
- Residential facility.
- Assistance for post-training placement.





“ Besides the government, IT industrialists and entrepreneurs are eagerly contributing to developing new-age skills. Last year, about 800,000 people were reskilled, compared to about 600,000 the year before. The \$191 billion Indian IT industry spends about 1-1.5 per cent on reskilling employees. With skill development, people can work effectively and be successful in whatever they do. There can be increased chances of promotions, and individuals can experience a lift in their careers

”

The Government of India is doing exceptionally well in sustainable growth and work opportunities for the non-literate and semi-literate youth population. Vocational education is primarily non-academic and offers practical training and skills required to pursue a desired occupation. There is a broad scope for the growing importance and impact of vocational courses, and now many students are exploring the less traditional, alternative options in the vocational space. Such skills provide students with courses directly aligned to jobs in a chosen profession or a skilled trade. The Directorate General of Training (DGT), under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), is implementing long-duration vocational and skilling courses through Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) ranging from one or two years and covering many economic sectors so they can provide skilled workforce to the industry and self-employment of youth.

As per Coursera's latest Global Skills Report (GSR) 2022, Indian learners are focusing on building technology skills.

With strong proficiency in key tech skills like cloud computing, theoretical computer science, and web development, India ranked 56th globally in the domain compared to 66th rank last year. Among all economies surveyed, India is the only region where IT skills (65 per cent) and web development (64 per cent) took precedence over soft skills (62 per cent).

With new forms of work such as hybrid models, employability is heavily reliant on upskilling to meet the demands of a knowledge-oriented economy.

Besides the government, IT industrialists and entrepreneurs are eagerly contributing to developing new-age



skills. Last year, about 800,000 people were reskilled, compared to about 600,000 the year before. The \$191 billion Indian IT industry spends about 1-1.5 per cent on reskilling employees. With skill development, people can work effectively and be successful in whatever they do. There can be increased chances of promotions, and individuals can experience a lift in their careers.

Companies such as Infosys, Wipro, Accenture, and Zensar Technologies, among others, have embarked on a massive upskilling drive to ensure their workforce in India is ready for the next-level jobs. They impart training in cloud technology, artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, cyber security, Internet of Things (IoT), user experience (UX) and digital networking, among others.

NASSCOM highlighted the need for more talent with the right skills to build a strong infrastructure, as service companies have become a business imperative post-COVID. Witnessing the massive demand, the reskilling target they had set for five years may have to be

completed in two years.

Staying relevant is the key to sustenance in this changing ecosystem, and a flexible mindset will help any industry and technology reach its zenith. Training and courses among the existing employees are a great way to introduce them to learning new things that boost the knowledge and confidence of the employees and that impact a growth mindset among them.

Mentorship programmes are making a significant and favourable change in the Corporates in enhancing the overall skillset and growth. Such programmes create a platform for seniors and industry veterans to share their knowledge with aspiring junior employees to provide them with a good understanding of the industry. The knowledge transfer evokes more confidence in future leaders. It also leads the company to a sustainable knowledge hierarchy to enlighten newcomers and business prospects. Mentorship programmes help in strategic plans, enhance growth mindset, and support the leaders to be the guides and advisors for the existing employees and

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The long-term impact of upskilling will be seen through the youth becoming valued resources with a deeper understanding of the industry and the ability to contribute to the community and become dignified accountable citizens. Apart from that, quality of life is positively impacted to improve the overall economic structure of the country. So undoubtedly, the skilled young population of India is the real asset of massive economic growth and an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will lead India to socio-economic sustainability on the global map

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the new joiners to help them explore their full potential.

India is also taking the next step by collaborating with other countries to accelerate skills, techniques, and knowledge to compete with the global standard. The long-term impact of upskilling will be seen through the youth becoming valued resources with a deeper understanding of the industry and the ability to contribute to the community and become dignified accountable citizens. Apart from that, quality of life is positively impacted to improve the overall economic structure of the country. So undoubtedly, the skilled young population of India is the real asset of massive economic growth and an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will lead India to socio-economic sustainability on the global map. ■

May Yang is the Managing Director of Synechron.



The Need for Corporates to Focus on Integrated Community Development

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has changed drastically in the past decade. What started as a voluntary initiative by several companies has now become obligatory. Most organisations view CSR as an integral part of the business as it shapes the brand perception that leads to employee, customer and investor retention.

Gone are the days when CSR was a part of a long checklist to showcase in the annual reports. Companies have now recognised the importance of CSR and are incorporating integrated initiatives that make a real difference to communities around them. CSR initiatives are and should focus on the sustainable transformation of society. To do so, it is crucial to consider the holistic community development approach. These kinds of initiatives enable opportunities, protection and prosperity of the community. The key principles that corporates focus on are proper community development, including effective and culturally relevant community consultations and building trust among the company, community members and other stakeholders. A growing number of corporates understand the importance of contributing to India's socioeconomic

development. They aim to bring positive change by doing meaningful work to significantly benefit underprivileged sections of society.

Areas that corporates can focus on to bring about a significant change:

Education: Education is the basic right of any individual, but even now, there are many rural areas where primary education remains a luxury. Millions of children attend government-run schools however, only a portion succeed in



Ratish Jha

finishing their schooling because of poor infrastructure, lack of sanitation facilities, learning materials, unsafe drinking water facilities, etc. Problems like these result in a high rate of

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While contributing to any school or institution, corporates must be cognizant that only constructing classrooms or providing water purifiers would not solve the issues. It is vital to analyse what is keeping children away from attending school. Analyses show that simple infrastructure issues like proper seating arrangement and sanitation facilities (especially for female students) can be prime reasons for low attendance

”

absenteeism and school dropouts. Corporates recognise these problems, and many have contributed towards education in their CSR mandates. When we discuss integrated community development in the education sector, we must consider various aspects that will make any institute or school an ideal place to learn.

While contributing to any school or



institution, corporates must be cognizant that only constructing classrooms or providing water purifiers would not solve the issues. It is vital to analyse what is keeping children away from attending school. Analyses show that simple infrastructure issues like proper seating arrangement and sanitation facilities (especially for female students) can be prime reasons for low attendance. Basic well-furnished classrooms, outdoor grills for safety, and well-maintained toilet facilities with a water supply can contribute significantly to bringing children back to classrooms. Every school must have a high-quality water

purifier to provide access to safe drinking water, leading to a decrease in instances of water-borne diseases. The world is moving towards digitalisation, and a complete set of eLearning solutions projectors, computers and smart class hard disks must be available to the school to facilitate smart education. While there are talks about education for all, this far-fetched dream will only be realistic once the private sector companies come together and work towards it as a team.

Skill Development: Children belonging to economically disadvantaged households face the highest vulnerability. While several corporates initiate and



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Healthcare is a global agenda, and every citizen must have access to better medical facilities. The complexity of global health concerns is escalating rapidly. There is a lack of global funding to address these issues. While resources are limited, health requires constant attention. It is essential to develop universal, sustainable healthcare systems, and there are various areas where corporates can focus to do so

”

provide the infrastructure, the focus should also be on giving these children technical know-how. Language enhancement training, IT training, art and craft workshops, youth leadership training programmes, vocational skill development programmes, etc., can be organised for skill development. Efforts will be fruitful only when the students can utilise them fully. Another aspect of this can be when companies sponsor children with exceptional skills, for example, children who excel in sports and encourage them to participate in international tournaments. This can give them a global platform to be noticed and carve a niche for themselves.

Rural Infrastructural Development:

Several corporates have shown interest in the infrastructure development of rural areas by constructing sanitation facilities. They have identified that toilet construction will not solve the problem of sanitation. They have addressed this at the grassroots level by providing a proper water supply and drainage system. Another challenge faced is the maintenance of these facilities. Thus, promoting toilet etiquette and healthy habits becomes unavoidable.



Health and Hygiene: Healthcare is a global agenda, and every citizen must have access to better medical facilities.



The complexity of global health concerns is escalating rapidly. There is a lack of global funding to address these issues. While resources are limited, health requires constant attention. It is essential to develop universal, sustainable healthcare systems, and there are various areas where corporates can focus to do so.

Preventive healthcare significantly enhances the health, happiness, and productivity of a community. It includes a variety of public health initiatives with an emphasis on disease prevention, wellness promotion, and system strengthening. Another area where corporates must focus is on addressing women's health and hygiene issues. They can organise awareness training where they share insights on the difficulties faced during the menstrual cycle and how one can overcome them. Medical services, medical allied services, diet supply services and ambulance services will make a relative change in the healthcare facilities.

It is important to consider all the pieces of the puzzle that lead to a better society and well-being. Working in isolation on a single issue will not resolve the larger development objective. An integrated community development brings transformation to every section of society, directly and indirectly impacting the living standard of the community, and affecting economic stability, health conditions and literacy. Corporates can contribute to sustainability while simultaneously increasing their brand credibility amongst stakeholders. They can be the main catalysts for holistic community development when they work towards a common goal - building the social-economic development of the nation. ■

Ratish Jha is the President of HR at Hikal Ltd. He has an enriching experience in talent management, culture change management, capability building, learning and OD interventions, performance management, capability building, employee relations, employee engagement and retention programmes.



Amara Raja Skill Development Centre: Skilling Rural India for Make in India

Soon, about half of India's population will be under 28 years old, making it the youngest nation. This poses both opportunities and challenges - opportunities of having a formally skilled, productive population and the challenges of channelising and utilising the competency of these young citizens. A young population can steer the economy towards growth only if provided with the proper foundation of education, skilling, and training.



Satish R



K V Ravi Kumar

An unskilled or under-skilled youth poses a hindrance to the development of the economy. As per reports, only 2.3 per cent of India's workforce is currently formally trained, comparably lesser than other developed economies. This shortage is more prevalent in rural than in urban areas. As per 2017-18 statistics, about 93.7 per cent of youth in rural India have not received any vocational training. The WEF also stated that only 25 per cent of Indian professionals are employment worthy in the organised sector.

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With seven companies encompassing 16 businesses, we are constantly looking for a skilled workforce. Our units are spread across different villages in the Chittoor district. We are keen on providing non-migratory job opportunities to the local youth. We are also aware that there is a skill gap across industries and a visible mismatch between the requirements and availability of the talent pool. There is a dire need for initiatives to create and polish the required skill set of the youth. This would provide people with employment opportunities and help industries and society at large

”

Rural Workforce

The rural economy is the country's backbone as almost three-fourths of its population resides in villages. Yet, employment opportunities in this region are confined to agriculture and its allied sector. While it is true that agriculture is the mainstay in these areas, over the last few years, many industrial and manufacturing companies are venturing into these areas due to the various economic and sustainable employment benefits they offer.

However, the biggest hindrance faced by these companies is the availability of skilled workforce – technical and non-technical. A skilled rural workforce will contribute immensely to the local economy, encourage reverse migration and develop a non-migratory workforce locally. As part of its Skill India Mission,

the Government of India has devised many such schemes and programmes to address the skill gap, but private players must also take equal responsibility to make a dual impact. This will be a win-win situation for sustainable business models that believe in training an industry-ready skilled workforce and providing livelihood in rural areas.

Amara Raja Group's CSR Commitment

Our core purpose at the Amara Raja Group is to transform and improve the quality of life by building institutions that provide better access to better opportunities. Since our inception in 1984, we have been delivering high social impact in all our businesses and communities around us.

“To be an entrepreneur is to be a social worker,” believes Amara Raja's Founder-Chairman, Dr Ramachandra Galla, who moved back to his roots in Chittoor from the United States to make his vision a reality.

We started social development and contributions much before CSR contributions were mandated for organisations in India. We set up Rajanna Trust, a registered NGO, to channel our contributions towards social responsibility in the fields of Education, Skills Development, Health, Environment Resource Management, Food and Agriculture, Employment, Women's Development & Empowerment, and more.

Skilling Rural India via ARSDC

With seven companies encompassing 16 businesses, we are constantly looking for

A Bright Future Awaits M Lakshmi



I am 18 years old. I belong to a small village in the Chittoor district. After completing Class X at SPHS High School, Paipalli, I had to discontinue my studies due to financial constraints. I was keen on attaining some technical skills so I can get a respectable job. That was when one of my relatives told me about ARSDC. I immediately applied and joined the 23rd batch in August 2022. My father is a driver, and my mother is a housewife. I have a younger brother. After completing my course, I want to support him in his studies. I dream of joining the Amara Raja Group.

a skilled workforce. Our units are spread across different villages in the Chittoor district. We are keen on providing non-migratory job opportunities to the local youth. We are also aware that there is a skill gap across industries and a visible mismatch between the requirements and availability of the talent pool. There is a dire need for initiatives to create and polish the required skill set of the youth. This would provide people with





employment opportunities and help industries and society at large.

Keeping all of this in mind, we set up the Amara Raja Skill Development Centre (ARSDC), under the aegis of Rajanna

Trust, in 2014 in Petamitta, Andhra Pradesh, to focus on skilling rural India.

The Centre's core objective is to provide systematic technical and non-technical training to people from rural India and help them acquire life and job skills. The second objective is to minimise the talent gap in society by providing training per the ever-changing business/work environment in industrial and allied sectors.

Multi-Skill Technician Course

At ARSDC, we offer a Government-approved course under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and provide certificates in Welding Operator-cum-Multi Skill Technician. The course equips rural youth with multi-skills and follows a practical-oriented training methodology with 70 per cent practical learning and 30 per cent theory-based learning.

We developed the entire curriculum with inputs from the industry and the Electronics Sector Skills Council of India (ESSCI) to bridge the skill gap. The curriculum focuses on skill development, personality development, and enhancing employability.

The Centre has state-of-the-art facilities - a computer lab, fitting shop, library, drawing hall, electronics lab, electrical lab, machine shop, electrical wiring lab, welding lab, PLC lab, and an advanced pneumatic lab. We provide trainees with free education throughout the course. They also receive a stipend during their On-the-Job Training (OJT).

The duration of the course is 24 months, consisting of three months of residential in the ARSDC campus and the remaining 21 months of On-the-Job Training (OJT) in the different AR Group Companies with a 5+1 pattern – a dual system of training where trainees come to ARSDC for continuous assessment, once a week.

The first three months include food and accommodation, safety shoes, uniforms, and study materials. We then provide subsidised food and accommodation for the next 21 months, subject to availability. Students undergo special training in the industry during the second

E Gangothri is Skilled for a Purpose



I was born in Palamaneru village in the Chittoor district. I am from a farming family. I completed my Intermediate from Sai Sree Chaitanya Junior College, Palamaneru. I always had a penchant to be technically skilled so I can get a job in a reputed company. When I learned about Amara Raja Skill Development Centre, I knew this was the right place for me. I belong to the 23rd batch of ARSDC. My goal is to become a manager in the Group.

phase (nine months). In the third phase (12 months), they learn skills from the industry, increase their capability of working on machines and enhance their skills in analysing every process.

Admission intake is done every month. Candidates are selected based on basic knowledge, the right attitude, aptitude, and physical fitness. As automation changes the way industries work, our training programmes provide training across different skill sets. This makes the students job-ready and qualified for any department, industry, or field of work. The minimum and maximum age to apply for the course is 16 years and 25



years, respectively. The minimum qualification is 10th pass/fail or, Inter pass/fail.

On-the-Job Training

During the On-the-Job Training (OJT) period, the students can work on two specialised subjects. They get a stipend and are provided free uniforms, safety shoes, food, accommodation and transportation facility at a concessional rate. They also get an opportunity to learn additional skills and be tutored by industry specialists.

While students undergo OJT, our ARSDC and Shop Floor Supervisory Staff assess their discipline, attitude, learning ability,



and performance at their respective workplaces regarding our initiatives. Every month, HR executives send their feedback after assessing the performance of the students in the industry.

Outreach Programmes

We use different outreach programmes to recruit trainees, including reaching out to various government schools and social welfare residential schools, NGOs, and media awareness. Our employees conduct sensitisation programmes in villages in Rayalaseema district and surrounding areas about the various benefits our Centre offers. We also tie up with various NGOs working in the education space who regularly visit our Centre. They then disseminate information about ARSDC among the student community.

Most trainees are from the two Telugu-speaking States – Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The medium of instruction is in English and Telugu. We also get a few students from Karnataka, Odisha, and others.

Facilities and Co-Curricular Activities

Our skill development centre also houses a hygienic, safe, world-class hostel and dining facility. There are separate hostels for girls and boys that can accommodate around 800 students at a time. The girls' hostel can accommodate 240 members, while the boys' hostel houses 540 members. The dining area maintains the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene and provides nutritious and well-balanced meals to the students.

We believe that a sound body is vital for a sound mind. This is why we focus extensively on extra-curricular activities for our students. We help them practice discipline and be conscious of safety

“During the On-the-Job Training (OJT) period, the students can work on two specialised subjects. They get a stipend and are provided free uniforms, safety shoes, food, accommodation and transportation facility at a concessional rate. They also get an opportunity to learn additional skills and be tutored by industry specialists. While students undergo OJT, our ARSDC and Shop Floor Supervisory Staff assess their discipline, attitude, learning ability, and performance at their respective workplaces regarding our initiatives. Every month, HR executives send their feedback after assessing the performance of the students in the industry

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ARSDC is a Compass for D Pavan



I completed my schooling at Mangal Vidyalayam, under the Amara Raja Educational Society, which is part of the Rajanna Trust. The school showed me the right direction in my career. I always wanted to work at the Amara Raja Group as it is my second home. I have completed my 24-month course at ARSDC. I am all set to join the Amara Raja Group.



protocols from day one of their training programme. In addition, we highly emphasise sports, games, and other activities for physical fitness and holistic development and activities like music and cultural programmes.

Employment Opportunities

In the past few years, we have offered 100 per cent employment in our AR Group companies to those who completed the course. On average, we see about 70 per cent of trainees join our Group companies on a need basis while the remaining take up opportunities in other industries closer to their villages or



some set up their enterprises.

Our Centre also encourages trainees to work on live projects to stimulate creative thinking and independence.

Future Plans

The Amara Raja Skill Development Centre has seen huge success and impacted the lives of many young people and their families. The economic status of many trainees has moved up, and in some cases, from ultra-poor to decent living. A few trainees are employed in Dubai, UAE, etc., apart from pursuing further education.

There are numerous inquiries and traction regarding our course, making it a challenge to accommodate everyone. To

address the growing needs of the rural youth and contribute further to the skilling initiative, we are all set to open another skill development centre in a year or two. Construction work for the same is already in progress. SDC-2 will provide training for specific trades like construction, Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing (MEP), and electronics.

As a growing conglomerate always on the lookout for skilled workers, we also train our students in the latest technologies and prepare them for future advances in the field. ■

Satish R is the Head of CSR at the Amara Raja Group of Companies.

K V Ravi Kumar is the Dean at the Amara Raja Skill Development Centre.





Skilling and Livelihood Opportunities for India's Youth

Skill development is considered one of the critical aspects of job creation in India. India has a unique demographic advantage with more than 60 per cent of the population being in the young age group. But to get dividends from such a large workforce, improvement in employability is required. The pandemic triggered a recession. To survive the pandemic, everyone had to reskill with new and effective working techniques to adapt to the new way of working. Due to the ongoing circumstances, companies have started hunting for applicants with additional training that our school system has been unable to supply.

In India, more than 54 per cent of the population is under 25, and more than 62 per cent of the population is in the working age group of 15–59. However, only 2 per cent of the population is formally skilled, says a report by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Employers have stated that a skill shortage has led to challenges in filling job openings. We must focus on skilling, upskilling and reskilling to continue to provide job opportunities for the workforce.

Industry forecast predicts that India will add 28 million new technology jobs by 2025. The (GSR) Global Skills Report for 2022 highlights the crucial need for

Indian learners to close the critical skills gap, particularly in data science, to prevent this digital potential from becoming a missed opportunity. Indian students' data science abilities are still lacking behind as India drops by 12 rankings and receives poor marks for fundamental and specialised data science abilities, including data management (22 per cent), statistical programming (14 per cent), and data visualisation (10 per cent). Machine learning and cloud computing remain India's strongest domain competency and technical skills.

Business, technology and data science are three of the most sought-after skill sets driving employment in the digital



Raj Das



economy, according to a report by Coursera that uses data from 100 million students. According to the survey, India's technical proficiency levels increased from 38 to 46 per cent, boosting its standing by six points.

As one of the youngest nations where the average youth is 29 years, India has the potential to convert this pool of young population into human capital, provided quick attention is given to skilling and education. The scheme initiatives focus on creating a space for promoting the talents of youths and creating job opportunities for them.



Some of the schemes and initiatives introduced by the Indian Government to skill the Indian youth are:

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The objective is to enable Indian youths to take up industry-relevant skill training to help them secure a better livelihood.



Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE): This is a World Bank-assisted Government of India project to improve the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and apprenticeships.



Vocational Training Programme for Women: This project provides vocational trades that particularly suit women. In addition to the existing 11 institutes, eight new national training institutes have been set up in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Bihar, Goa, Telangana and Jammu & Kashmir to enhance the



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skill training facilities for women in India.

Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP): A Ministry of Skill Development, with loan assistance from the World Bank, this project aims to improve short-term skill training qualitatively and quantitatively through strengthening institutions, bringing in better market connectivity and inclusion of marginalised sections of society.



India International Skill Centres (IISCs): The Government of India is keen to bridge the global labour shortage in the coming years by reaping the demographic dividend of the young Indian labour force. To meet this objective, the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), under the Skill India Mission,



has set up India International Skill Centre (IISC) to provide skill training and certification benchmarked to international standards.

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Self Reliant India) campaign is the vision of a new India envisaged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. The



aim is to make the country and its citizens independent and self-reliant in all senses. The Government has taken several bold reforms such as supply chain reforms for agriculture, rational tax systems, simple and clear laws, capable human resources and a strong financial system as per the campaign.

Large corporations in India are also contributing to preparing the young for the future.

Examples of CSR initiatives undertaken by some companies to empower the youth:

- ICICI Academy for Skills is the flagship initiative by ICICI Foundation to provide underserved youth with industry-specific employment opportunities and skillsets. The Academy provides vocational training courses, communication skills and financial literacy in over 27 centres across India.
- Skills for Market Training (SMART) is a flagship CSR programme undertaken by Tech Mahindra in employability. There are over 100 centres at 11 locations across India, including SMART+ centres for people with disabilities and SMART-T centres for training in technical trades.



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- The Youth Employment Programme of Tata Consultancy Services aims to increase the employability of women from rural colleges and unemployed graduates, particularly from socially and economically disadvantaged groups.
- Microsoft provides training regarding the fundamentals of security, compliance and identity with four accredited certification courses to create a workforce ready to serve the cybersecurity landscape and make it accessible and affordable to all.

With appropriate skill development, one can get better jobs with better salaries. Skilled employees would offer better outcomes and more productivity. These will help employees have a better standard of living. Skill development at the grassroots level for the youth will help the economy and attract foreign investments. An individual can develop his/her skills and set up a business, thereby increasing the scope for employment in India. ■

Raj Das is the Global Co-Founder & CEO of Hirect India.



Responsibilities of Corporates Towards Sustainability

The term 'sustainability' has become an oft-repeated term nowadays. We also see much information, news, and trends across print and online media platforms about it. Over time, sustainability has evolved as a new approach to doing business. While the environment and society have always been one of the focus areas of business houses, the objective then was 'something good to do'. This term has also matured over the past four to five decades from philanthropy, corporate responsibility, corporate accountability, sustainability, ESG (Environment, Social, Governance), etc.



Ajit Habbu

Fundamentally, in every stage, Corporates or business houses have increased their responsibility drastically

towards the environment, climate change, and society. In the recent decade, the non-financial performance of

businesses is gaining almost similar importance as their financial performance. Investors seek to invest in

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While multiple global frameworks provide opportunities for Corporates to pick and choose the most relevant, most significant, and most adaptable framework for their operations for reporting their financial and non-financial performance, it is also important to stitch together the contributions toward common global goals. This is achieved by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs). There are 17 identified and focused Sustainable Development Goals that are shared by corporate houses, and multiple initiatives are implemented to contribute to them

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more responsible businesses rather than only in the most profitable businesses. These expectations have brought the sustainability agenda into an organisation's boardroom. We now see CXOs spending much time on the subject, initiatives, and their impact.

The sustainability journey of a corporate begins with the identification of material issues for the company, i.e., answering basic questions such as 'what matters for us?' Materiality assessment represents an organisation's most significant impact on the economy, environment, and people or society. Answers to the questions are evaluated, analysed, and prioritised at the highest level. To meet the mitigation plans for the above impacts, a corporate derives sustainability goals, initiates



multiple initiatives and programmes and implements them year-round. To provide a structured approach and reporting mechanism, we also have many globally accepted frameworks which can be adopted by the organisation for understanding and reporting the organisation's performance towards sustainable development. Some of the most used frameworks include Global

Reporting Initiative (GRI), Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), Integrated Reporting (IR), Science Based Targets, Net Zero, Circularity, etc.

While multiple global frameworks provide opportunities for Corporates to pick and choose the most relevant, most significant, and most adaptable framework for their operations for



reporting their financial and non-financial performance, it is also important to stitch together the contributions toward common global goals. This is achieved by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs). There are 17 identified and focused Sustainable Development Goals that are shared by corporate houses, and multiple initiatives are implemented to contribute to them. These SDGs are No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goals.

To strengthen contributions towards

SDGs, we also have laws and regulations on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India. India became the first country to bring government regulations on corporate expenditures that help a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and society.

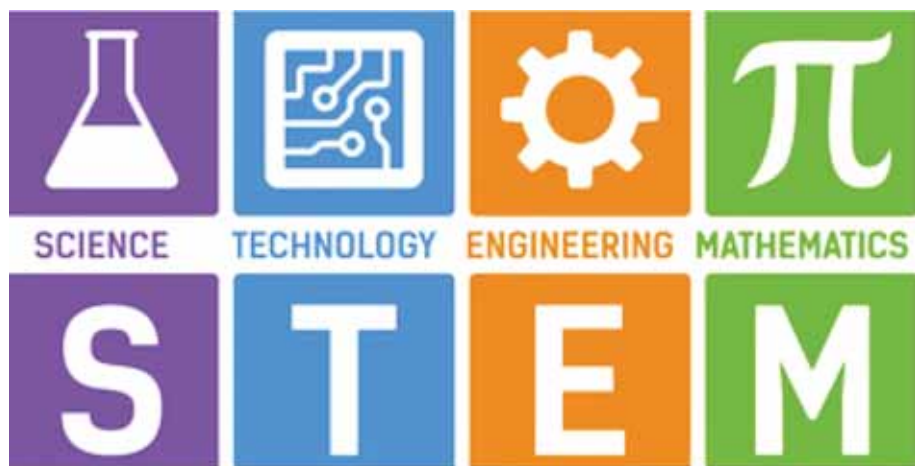
The Companies Act 2013 provides comprehensive guidelines, do's and don'ts for eligible Corporates on their CSR endeavours. It provides an opportunity to steer the spending of funds in areas of national priority, identified and amended regularly as part of Scheduled VII Focus Areas. These focus areas cover a wide spectrum of issues such as health, poverty, education, gender equality, sports, culture, technology incubation, rural development, disaster relief, etc. Some of the other significant aspects of the laws and regulations include the formation of the Company's CSR Policy, creating a CXO/Board-level Committee, providing

“While the trends in the regulatory amendments in the past three to five years show increased accountability towards Corporates, it also provides an opportunity for them to create long-term, sustainable programmes and reporting standards which attract investors' and stakeholders' attention and ultimately help businesses grow. Analysing some of the reports and information, we see that Corporates are adopting sustainability focus areas basis their areas of expertise and experience, giving them the best opportunity to leverage their strengths for solving environmental and societal issues

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guidelines on minimum funds to be spent, monitoring and reporting the financials and impacts of the CSR programmes, etc. While the trends in the regulatory amendments in the past three to five years show increased accountability towards Corporates, it also provides an opportunity for them to create long-term, sustainable programmes and reporting standards which attract investors' and stakeholders' attention and ultimately help businesses grow.

Analysing some of the reports and information, we see that Corporates are adopting sustainability focus areas basis their areas of expertise and experience, giving them the best opportunity to leverage their strengths for solving environmental and societal issues. Some



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Corporates are introducing innovative ways of implementing sustainability projects like creating collaborations with like-minded organisations, leveraging their expertise and experience, and designing a comprehensive programme by addressing the problem statements wherein an industrial approach of high efficiency is brought in the social projects, identifying exact problem statements by doing deep research, adoption of technologies in implementation, e.g. digital, remote engagement, etc., real stakeholder consultation on the ground, creating innovative and out-of-the-box projects, and bringing an overall fresh approach in initiatives and projects which eventually become self-sustainable and scalable, creating multifold and systemic impacts

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of the most adopted sustainability trends under the environment domain include energy efficiency, energy conservation, emission reduction, environmental compliances, water conservation, water recycling, waste reduction, and recycling methods, etc. Adopting newer technologies, renewable energy mix, and reducing fossil fuel-based energy utilisation are the most prevalent trends. Further, as part of the social domain, education is the most common focus area



where multiple initiatives such as digitisation of classrooms and educational content, promotion of STEM education, mobile science labs, tinkering and robotics labs, computer science and coding training, etc., are implemented. Women's empowerment is another focus area under which scholarships are provided for meritorious girls from low-income families for school education, graduation, and post-graduation education purposes. Corporations also provide training and skill development in many areas to enable women to generate or seek employment or start their businesses. They also take up holistic rural development projects addressing long-standing issues of rural India, such as education, health, agricultural yield, water conservation/harvesting, and livelihood initiatives.

In an age of quick turnarounds in global sustainability trends, investor and stakeholder expectations, regulations, voluntary mechanisms, and national commitments, Corporates also encounter challenges in implementing their sustainability strategies and plans. To mention a few, the recent regulations in the CSR domain bring in increased compliances that require strict adherence, improvement in reporting standards from project implementation partners, e.g., working on social return on

investment (SRoI), impact matrix, outputs vs outcomes, etc., need and lack of experienced and expert resources at the Corporates and NGOs with knowledge on global trends, meeting management expectations at Corporates vis-à-vis low success rate in social projects, and ensuring project sustainability post-withdrawal of Corporates from the social projects.

To meet these challenges, Corporates are introducing innovative ways of implementing sustainability projects like creating collaborations with like-minded organisations, leveraging their expertise and experience, and designing a comprehensive programme by addressing the problem statements wherein an industrial approach of high efficiency is brought in the social projects, identifying exact problem statements by doing deep research, adoption of technologies in implementation, e.g. digital, remote engagement, etc., real stakeholder consultation on the ground, creating innovative and out-of-the-box projects, and bringing an overall fresh approach in initiatives and projects which eventually become self-sustainable and scalable, creating multifold and systemic impacts. ■

Ajit Habbu is the Manager of Corporate Sustainability at Tata Technologies Limited.



Cyient's Skill Centres: Raising a Skilled and Competent Workforce

Developing one's skills is regarded as a crucial component of job generation. Lack of sufficient education and training limits people's prospects for self-advancement by preventing them from accessing well-paying employment. It eventually stops them from having a significant impact on economic progress. Appropriate education and training are, therefore, essential for dismantling the ecosystem of poverty. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), jobs in India are diminishing as the unemployment rate crept to nearly 7.8 per cent in June 2020. This rate is significantly greater than anything observed in the nation during the previous three decades. While unemployment rates increased in most countries in 2020, the rate in India was higher than that of the majority of emerging economies, including Bangladesh (5.3 per cent), Mexico (4.7 per cent), and Vietnam (2.3 per cent).

With one of the highest unemployment rates and widespread poverty in Asia, India needs to take a long, hard look at what unemployment looks like, where it exists to combat it, and the poverty that results. A skilled workforce is crucial for the success of recently launched national missions like

Make in India, Digital India, Smart Cities, etc. To highlight the importance of skill development, the Government of India set up the Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2014 to coordinate with other ministries and departments to achieve the goals of the Skill India Mission



Krishna Deevi



which aim to skill 40 crores by the end of 2022.

A person's aptitude, competency, proficiency, and talent to complete a specific job or task is known as their skill. It might be either naturally possessed or slowly developed over time. It may be non-technical skills that signify one's

traits and attributes or technical skills honed with education/training and experience.

A person may possess non-technical skills even though they have no direct relation to their specific job role. These abilities, often known as soft skills, are more closely related to character traits and routines than technical proficiency. Non-technical abilities may increase productivity and help create a productive workplace.

Technical skills are specialised knowledge and proficiency needed to carry out particular activities and use specific tools and programmes in practical settings. Almost every sector and industry, from IT and business administration to healthcare and education, need a wide range of technical abilities.

Employers seek employees with technical and non-technical skills so that

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Employers seek employees with technical and non-technical skills so that necessary jobs are completed effectively and efficiently inside their organisation. It became apparent in recent years that students graduating from their academic programmes lack the requisite skills to meet industry expectations. While many acknowledge skilling young unemployed students in the 18-25 age group, very few will discuss the need to reskill/skill the large proportion of unemployed Indians between the ages of 24 and 60. Individuals, organisations, and governments need to focus on skilling this age group; vocational skilling courses can be very beneficial here

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While many acknowledge skilling young unemployed students in the 18-25 age group, very few will discuss the need to reskill/skill the large proportion of unemployed Indians between the ages of 24 and 60. Individuals, organisations, and governments need to focus on skilling this age group; vocational skilling courses can be very beneficial here.

Skills development is urgently needed to





close the skills gap and make the potential workforce industry-ready. Technology innovations and disruptions significantly impact the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the workplace. The workforce must be continuously updated, upskilled, and upgraded to keep up with the rate of change, otherwise, they will quickly become obscure, obsolete, and ultimately excluded from their workplace or rejected when seeking new employment prospects. This effort to stop extinction and elimination stems from the focus on skill development to get the workforce ready for the future.

According to the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), skills are classified into four levels based on the degree and duration of the training required.

Level 1 - Semi-skilled: Refers to skills acquired through short-term courses, focused interventions, and on-the-job training.

Level 2 - Skilled: Refers to skills specific to the occupation and acquired through technical or vocational training.

Level 3 - Highly skilled: Refers to skills



involved in highly technical or commercial level operations and acquired through degrees, diplomas, and post-graduate education.

Level 4 - Highly skilled with specialisation: Refers to the skills with high specialisation involving research and design acquired through a doctorate or many years of work experience in a

specific sector or area.

Sensing the need to contribute to the skilled workforce and provide livelihoods to millions in the country, we at Cyient constituted Cyient Foundation in 2002 to empower citizens and communities through our focused CSR initiatives. Each initiative is carefully chosen based on the likelihood that these interventions would have a long-lasting



We established the Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre and Cyient IT/ITES Skill Centres in and around Hyderabad and the Ranga Reddy District of Telangana. All courses offered by CUMSC and IT/ITES Skill Centres are free. One of the main criteria for selecting beneficiaries is the local preference for the low-income community earning less than Rs 75K per annum



Job and Financial Stability

Twenty-three-year-old Syed Sara Tabassum's father is an auto driver. Her mother is a homemaker. Tabassum was unable to find a job despite completing her education. She longed to be financially independent. She came to know about the free courses offered at the Cyient IT/ITES Centre. She joined the 16th Batch at Swarna Bharathi Trust. She learnt AutoCAD, GIS, and Soft Skills. Tabassum's dream came true when she completed the course. She is now working for a reputed company, is financially independent and supports her family.

Syed Sara Tabassum



and sustainable impact. From education to skilling and health to social innovation and community development, the impact tends to have a multiplier effect across several integrated touchpoints.

To leverage synergies, optimise resources, and deliver impact, our community initiatives are rooted in the philosophy of Empowering Tomorrow Together.

With this backdrop and gauging the objective of achieving long-term, holistic development of communities, we established the Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre and Cyient IT/ITES Skill Centres in and around Hyderabad and the Ranga Reddy District of Telangana.

All courses offered by CUMSC and IT/ITES Skill Centres are free. One of the main criteria for selecting beneficiaries is the local preference for the low-income community earning less than Rs 75K per annum.

Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre (CUMSC)

This is our flagship initiative developed in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The Telangana Government allocated land in one of the largest urban slums of Serilingampally Mandal, Telangana. The Foundation built a state-of-the-art skill centre in line with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) guidelines.

The Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre



(CUMSC) has a total built-up area of 5396 sq ft.. It focus more on vocational skills lik Tailoring, Bakery & Confectionery, Beauty & Wellness, Retailing & Food Processing, and Bedside Care Assistants. These courses



will help the non-IT literates to attain jobs in manufacturing, retailing, hospitality and healthcare.

Another important feature at CUMSC is the Digital Literacy Centre where we provide IT literacy to non-IT literates in the community. It is accessible to school children and their parents. We follow the L1 and L2 Training Modules for Adult Literacy to make Digital India. We use the following course from NDLM.

L1—This module's duration is 40 hours. This basic level of IT Literacy Training includes how to use the computer, basic operating system, Basic MS Office Tools,





computer education about devices, and also how to use other digital devices like smartphones and applications.

L2—The duration of this course is 60 hours. In addition to the basic level IT Literacy programme, we train the trainees on how to effectively use eGovernance, operate internet search engines, use Google, internet browsing and understand the various government schemes, emailing skills like sending, receiving and reading the emails received.

We also have a CRÈCHE to support underprivileged women during their work hours by taking care of their children.

CUMSC has pioneered a collective action model for bringing about a large-scale social transformation across the Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy District. It enables the government, corporates, non-profits, and citizens to come together for the common purpose of social development.

Our Cyient community mobilisation team reaches out to the urban slums of Serilingampally Mandal and slums in other parts of Hyderabad to bring them on board for various skilling programmes. The Centre is crucial in providing participants with the tools they need to become self-employed or find long-term skilled employment. We also help trainees who have completed the training to get placed in relevant organisations through our industry connections.



A Tailored Story

38-year-old CH Samarajyam was a domestic helper for more than 15 years. Her salary and her husband's meagre income as an auto driver were insufficient to support the family, preventing them from providing their daughters with a good education. Samarajyam enrolled at the Cyient Skill Centre Tailoring Programme through her community. She was welcomed and warmly received by the Centre Coordinator. She felt at home on campus. After completing a three-month training programme, Samarajyam found a job at an alteration desk at a textile shopping mall, earning Rs 12,000/- per month. She could now support her family and provide good education to her daughters.

CH Samarajyam



Community members aged between 16 and 60 years wishing to acquire these skills can also access these programmes. Our Foundation also encourages school children and their parents to enrol in the training.

Cyient IT/ITES Skill Development Centre

We established this Centre in association with Swarna Bharat Trust - Hyderabad Chapter - in 2017. The objective is to enable a platform between academia and industry to enhance the employability quotient of youths in Telangana.

The Skill Centre initiated action to address the underutilisation of the talent pool produced by Telangana. We target unemployed Mechanical/Electrical/Computers (excluding Civil) students

and non-engineering degree graduates in Science, Maths, and Computers from various colleges.

Along with Swarna Bharat Trust - Hyderabad Chapter, we identify beneficiaries from various unemployed diploma holders and non-engineering graduate colleges in Narayankhed, Sangareddy, Mahaboob Nagar, Warangal, Nalgonda, and Medak Districts of Telangana.

Every three months, we provide 50 (25 boys and 25 girls) unemployed diploma holders and graduates per batch with high-quality training programmes to equip them with IT/ITES industry-relevant skills.

The three-month intensive classroom



Determination Pays

Chikali Anitha, 22, was singlehandedly raised by her mother as she lost her father when she was a child. Her mother worked as a housemaid in three households to support herself and her daughter. Despite this, they did not have enough to support themselves. Anitha even had to forgo her studies due to financial hardships. She did not give up on herself and her future. She decided to help her mother financially by searching for a source of livelihood. She enrolled at the Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre (CUMSC) and joined the Beauty & Wellness Training Programme. She was deeply encouraged as she received full support from the Foundation and the CUMSC faculty. After completing the course, Anitha began working as a freelance beautician. She now earns a good income to support herself and her mother.

Chikali Anitha



“

Our company has a background in designing systems and solving complex problems. Through Cyient Foundation, we bring in several experiences and deploy technology-based solutions to ensure the existing skill development ecosystem is more effective

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training features topics like:

1. Personal Impact Skills

- English Speaking, Soft Skills, Personality Development and Interviews Preparation.

2. Organisation Impact Skills

- Ethical Behaviour, Conflict Resolution & Collaboration, Team Building and Team Management.

3. Technical Skills

- Computer literacy and in-depth understanding of operating systems.
- MS Office and Date Entry Operator training.

- GIS Tools and Mapping Technics.
- Auto CAD and Design Tools.
- Presentation Skills.

It is important to note here that all these courses at the Digital Literacy Centre and IT/ITES Skill Centre are primarily taught in the classroom with computers. The GIS Tools/Mapping Techniques/Auto CAD Course which is taught at the IT/ITES Skill Centre is the software used for design engineering to design maps, etc. It is a unique course which is specifically industry-relevant.

Our company has a background in designing systems and solving complex problems. Through Cyient Foundation, we bring in several experiences and

deploy technology-based solutions to ensure the existing skill development ecosystem is more effective.

We provide free food and accommodation to all the candidates pursuing training in the IT/ITES Skill Centre. We also have two qualified full-time training faculty to train the candidates, an assessment officer, and one community mobiliser.

In all fairness, conducting these programmes is not a walk in the park. Some of the key challenges are:

- Lack of proper infrastructure facilities for skill training.
- Mobilisation - Mobilising individuals to enrol for the courses is challenging.
- Scalability - The progress of the initiatives is slow.
- Skills mismatch between the industry and educational institutions.
- Lack of focus on non-technical skills.

Both the Cyient Centres adopt the following scientific methods in addressing the challenges:

- Decentralised and locally-driven skill development initiatives.





- 17 per cent of men/women have low-paying jobs.
- 12 per cent of men/women work in nearby companies as sanitation/ cleaning staff through agencies with less pay.

Impact of Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre (CUMSC)

We have helped increase the monthly earnings of BPL communities to at least Rs 5000 and developed environmentally-friendly communities by reducing plastic

- Creating awareness and mobilisation.
- Creating capacities/ infrastructure.
- Integration, mobility, and transition.
- Greater industry linkage.

Below are the various steps we follow to build rapport with the communities and families:

Step 1: With support from the implementation partner and community head, our staff reaches out to all the individuals living in the urban slums and requests them to attend a counselling session.

Step 2: During the counselling session, the Counsellor talks to the family head, assess their income source and explains the importance of having sustainable income and dignity of labour.

Step 3: Enrol the candidates on courses based on their interests.

With support from our partners, we surveyed the urban slums and learned the following facts/information:

- Over 75 per cent of urban slum women (girls) in the age group 14 to 45 are working as domestic maids around the community, in nearby apartments and small companies. The rest (25 per cent) are homemakers struggling for income sources.
- 45 per cent of men/women work in small shops or establishments as cleaners/ sweepers, etc.



Shashi Kiran



Earning Bread for His Family

Shashi Kiran's father is an auto driver, and his mother is a homemaker. He has a younger brother and sister. The family struggles financially due to their father's meagre income. He had completed his Class XII but could not continue further. With his commitment to improving the family's income and providing better education to his siblings, Shashi joined the Cyient Urban Micro Skill Centre's (CUMSC) Bakery and Confectionery Course. He worked extremely hard and learned many technical skills related to baking. He is now a chef in a bakery earning a good salary, enabling him to support his brother and sister in their studies.

usage and promoting cloth and paper bags. Our CUMSC women stitched 36,580 cloth and paper bags and developed products for sale at the District Collector Office, Ranga Reddy, Telangana.

Since it functioned in the first week of March 2019, we have trained over 2500 unemployed urban women and youth on five skill modules. Over 2150 unemployed women/youth have gained access to sustainable living.

in and around Telangana in 17 batches and 449 of them have job placements.

We have trained over 46 per cent of girls/women and provided them employment.

Ninety-five per cent of the trained and certified candidates are employed in various IT/ITES companies, including Cyient.

We have helped our trainees gain

S.N.	Course Name	FY20-21 (3 Batches)			FY21-22 (3 Batches)			TOTAL
1	Tailoring	74	75	72	74	78	76	449
2	Retailing & Food Processing	63	61	66	64	65	61	380
3	Beauty & Wellness	59	63	60	58	55	53	348
4	Bakery & Confectionary	56	57	55	53	52	51	324
5	Bedside Care	48	45	47	302	305	259	1006
	Total	300	301	300	551	555	500	2507

S.N.	Skill Training/ Module	No. of Trainees	Percentage (Women)	Employed	Percentage (Employment)	Avg. Monthly Income
	Course Name					
1	Tailoring	449	100%	386	86%	11,500/-
2	Retailing	380	82%	304	80%	9,500/-
3	Beauty	348	100%	267	76%	10,200/-
4	Bakery	324	86%	265	81%	8,800/-
5	Bedside Care	1006	100%	945	94%	10,500/-

Impact of Cyient IT/ITES Skill Centre

We have trained 556 unemployed youths

sustainable income of over Rs 2.5 Lakhs per annum.



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We at Cyient Foundation will continue to run the programmes to empower unemployed youth, women and men to gain a sustainable living, promote the dignity of labour, and make them self-reliant. We will replicate this successful model across other mandals and districts of Telangana and locations where Cyient has its operations and facilities in India

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We are deeply encouraged and revitalised to keep giving our best to young people needing a helping hand. It also warms our hearts when we witness how they succeed in life thanks to our programmes.

Here are a few examples of what success and hope look like:

We at Cyient Foundation will continue to run the programmes to empower unemployed youth, women and men to gain a sustainable living, promote the dignity of labour, and make them self-reliant. We will replicate this successful model across other mandals and districts of Telangana and locations where Cyient has its operations and facilities in India. ■

Krishna Deevi is a Senior Director of CSR Programmes, Cyient Limited.



Ashok Leyland: Providing Skills to Keep the Country Moving Safely and Smoothly

The Indian economy's key pillar is the transportation and logistics sector. It comprises the fundamentals of our delivery, ranging from essentials to luxury. The crucial link in this transportation system is the driver. With ongoing advancements in the industry and new technologies in automobiles, there is a rising need to concentrate on their training. Today, the commercial vehicle industry is the key component of the GDP and a reliable indicator of the nation's economic health. However, the sad reality is that trucks were involved in 61 per cent of all road accidents and 58 per cent of all road accidents as secondary factors, according to a study of NH-8A by the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI), New Delhi.

India accounts for 11 per cent of all accidents while having only 1 per cent of the world's vehicles. According to estimates, road accidents cost India 3-5 per cent of its GDP. Road accidents in India have so far harmed almost 1.3 million individuals, and a survey from the

World Bank reveals that 44 per cent of the accidents affected rural households and 11 per cent urban ones.

The obligation of the Government and fleet owners to hire drivers skilled and trained in operating a heavy commercial



Sanjeev Kumar

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We at Ashok Leyland have made significant investments to create training facilities as we recognise the need for driver's education on several fronts, including technology, safety, and traffic laws. Our driver training institutes have two goals: to educate current drivers on safe driving practices and new technologies and to assist in giving the underprivileged community access to employment in a field that needs qualified and experienced drivers. In addition, our institutes play a significant role in creating awareness regarding road safety through awareness campaigns in association with the RTO, the traffic police at road junctions, transport hubs, and various institutions

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vehicle grows exponentially as the industry gradually transforms into one driven by technology; as road infrastructure improves; as speed limits on highways and expressways rise; as engine capacity and top speeds of vehicles also trend upward. As the expansion of the sector and the rise in both commercial and passenger vehicles have resulted in a lack of drivers, driver training institutes are becoming immensely important, and they are making efforts to overcome these challenges.

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We established our first Driver Training Institute in Namakkal, Tamil Nadu, in 1995, after realising the value of driver education, particularly for commercial vehicles. It spans 25 acres and includes a 15-acre driving range and a huge structure with accommodation for numerous classrooms. Since then, we



have opened 11 more centres across India and educated over 18 lakh drivers.

We provide two main courses – Fresher and Refresher Course. Depending on the type of course and skills, the courses range from one day to three months. A typical programme consists of basic skills development, including the Ashok Leyland Signature 18-Point Skill Pack that consists of the following manoeuvres.

1. Starting, Moving and Stopping Practice
2. Clutch Pedal Control Practice
3. Gear Up and Gear Down Practice
4. Steering Wheel Handling
5. Accelerator Pedal Handling
6. Foot Brake Pedal and Hand-Brake Lever Handling
7. U-Turn, 3-Point Turn and 5-Point Turn
8. Reversing and Turning (RH & LH)
9. S-Bend and 8-Bend (Forward and Reverse)
10. Parking – Angular, Perpendicular, Parallel Parking
11. Emergency Stopping Practice
12. Stopping and Following Distance
13. Push Start Practice
14. IPDE (Identify, Predict, Decide, Execute) Practice
15. MSM/PSL (Mirror-Signal-Manoeuvre/Position- Speed-Look) Practice
16. Stopping Vehicle Without Brake Practice
17. Practices in Bends, Cornering
18. Parking in Slope Practice and 3-Point Turn in Slope

We can annually train about 37,200 (1,200 freshers and 36,000 refreshers)



drivers. Through superior driving techniques, our scientific approach at driver training schools seeks to help new drivers achieve low-accident rates, long car/aggregate life, and higher operational economics.

We ensure that the students are exposed to different driving circumstances in our cutting-edge training facilities, including nighttime driving, elevated highways,

and 8-shape turns. We teach the driver trainees the driving simulator at the start of the programme, which gives them benchmark-driving skills as quickly as feasible. Road management is one of the many driving-related topics we focus on. The programme includes instruction in defensive driving, fuel efficiency, and even vehicle repairs and upkeep.

The training tracks are equipped with electronic signals, road signs, markings and streetlights for night driving – the main aspects of highway driving. It is evident from the layout of the test roads that all the skills needed for efficient driving are kept in mind while designing the track. The four-lane road, six-lane road, parking yard, junctions, crossings, three-point turn, kutcha (off-road) roads and five-point turn roads reproduce real road conditions.

Some of the configurations include 12-meter buses, 20 ft. tractor-trailers, 40 ft. tractor-trailers, multi-axle vehicles and vehicles fitted with front engine, rear engine, manual steering, power steering, constant mesh gearbox, synchromesh gearbox and air suspension. The basic fresher programme trains trainees in different vehicles for one to three months.

We ensure the trainee drivers receive training not only for safe driving but also in managing the stress and demands that come with working in the tough field of logistics, which includes long working hours. We offer classes on Yoga, Stress



Management, First Aid, Firefighting Training and awareness about lifestyle diseases like BP, sugar, etc.

We have trained and helped employ 8,100 people in the freshers' course while 1,70,000 people refreshed their training



The goal is to aid marginalised youth in obtaining the necessary training to find employment in a burgeoning sector. Different groups of trainees are either self-enrolled or mobilised through the sponsored initiatives of the Government and corporations. Our funded programmes focus on people living below the poverty line and in the tribal belts. Training of women drivers is currently receiving more attention. Additionally, our institutes aid in training drivers for various STUs, the military and private businesses



and knowledge on new technology through the refreshers course in FY 2022. We are glad to share that our institute has trained 1,055 women. They are now financially independent and gainfully employed.

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With more focus on training women drivers, especially for buses, the Delhi Government has collaborated with our institute at Burari to train 180 women for DTC buses.

We have successfully trained 89 women drivers on HMV Driving. The third batch is in progress. Some of the trained women drivers are now employed by DTC, while other trainees are undergoing the recruitment process for other companies.



The fees charged for the training are nominal compared to the training, experience, and infrastructure provided and based on the Fresher and Refresher duration of the programme and the usage of hostel facilities at the institutes. We offer eligible candidates scholarship courses under various schemes run by the State and the Central Governments, a few among them being the Grameen Kaushalya Yojana or DDU-GKY, Government of Odisha Employment Mission, Tribal Welfare Funds by the Forest Department, Western Coalfields, etc. Apart from the Government, private companies like Bridgestone, Hindustan Zinc, IOCL, and fleet owners offer eligible candidates enrolling for DTI courses. Under the sponsorship scheme, the sponsoring agency pays the course fee to the institutes.

For freshers, we have the Central Government sponsoring the Star Initiative Programme, a skill development programme of NSDC and ASDC. The Government provides Rs 15,000 per person, which includes providing them with a license.

Our primary objective is to assist the drivers in getting jobs. We also offer job assistance to the driver trainees to help them find lucrative employment with Ashok Leyland customers. We hold employment fairs and invite fleet operators to interview candidates within

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We at Ashok Leyland want to continue our efforts to train more people, with particular emphasis on trainees from marginalised backgrounds so we can offer them a skill for employment and a source of income
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the DTC campus. We also collaborate with eCommerce companies like Lets Transport, Ashra Technologies, VRL, Sai Transport, etc., to hire LMV drivers for last-mile connections.

We at Ashok Leyland want to continue our efforts to train more people, with particular emphasis on trainees from marginalised backgrounds so we can offer them a skill for employment and a source of income. ■

Sanjeev Kumar is the Head of MHCV at Ashok Leyland.



Crafting Sustainable Livelihoods: Women Weavers of Manipur Weave Strings of Success

Weaving is an integral part of many tribes and communities in India. In the North East region of India, weaving has a unique traditional value as each tribe has specific designs and patterns unique to their community. The women weavers of this region have established a rich textile tradition that is now well recognised and famous across the globe. Today, these women weavers are not just breadwinners for their families but are running successful businesses and contributing towards making the country Atmanirbhar Bharat.

At Maitram village of Imphal West, Manipur, the hum of daily life is punctuated by the clickety-clack of wooden handlooms. "It is a part of our custom that women learn to weave. Most of our communities have our traditional attires too. However, in our household, we view weaving as a continuation of our tradition rather than as a business

proposition. This is a traditional skill we learned as young girls in our village. We never thought that it can be an income source," says Susheela, a mother of two.

Susheela never dreamt of earning her livelihood through weaving until her husband was afflicted with paralysis and succumbed to it the same year. She had spent the family's savings for his



Jim Kasom



treatment. She was devastated as her finances took a nosedive, but she was determined to provide the best for her children.

Susheela approached members of the

women's community. They guided her to apply for a loom from World Vision India, an NGO working for children and supporting women through livelihood assistance. She was ecstatic when they approved her request and presented her



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The textile industry is the second largest source of employment, after agriculture.

Out of the 38.47 lakh adult weavers and allied workers in India, 78 per cent are female, and 22 per cent are male.

Weaving is a major source of livelihood for most rural tribal women in industrially-dearth States of North East India. Adult women weavers from the region constitute 49 per cent of total adult women weavers in India.

In the subsequent Handloom Census, there is an increase in the number of such women-headed households. For North East India, the first census accounted for 14.6 lakh households, with women involved in weaving, while the third census accounted for 15.1 lakh such households

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with a loom. Seven years have passed since that red-letter day, and weaving has become the family's main source of livelihood.

The textile industry is the second largest source of employment, after agriculture. Out of the 38.47 lakh adult weavers and allied workers in India, 78 per cent are female, and 22 per cent are male. Weaving is a major source of livelihood for most rural tribal women in industrially-dearth States of North East India. Adult women weavers from the region constitute 49 per cent of total adult women weavers in India. In the subsequent Handloom Census, there is an increase in the number of such women-headed households. For North East India, the first census accounted for 14.6 lakh households, with women



involved in weaving, while the third census accounted for 15.1 lakh such households.

Susheela passed on her weaving skills to her daughter. To empower and help her daughter with livelihood opportunities, she bought her a loom. Susheela then converted her extended verandah into a room to accommodate the two looms. The weaving business helped mother and daughter earn around Rs 20,000 per month. It elevated the family's fortune and improved their standard of living. "I paid for my children's education and supported my family with this," says Susheela, gently patting her precious loom.

Susheela is part of the Leima Self-Help Group. The Group has ten members, and they voluntarily contribute money each month. They can borrow money from it during an emergency. It is a boon for the members. Leima SHG is part of the Mekola Society, comprising women weavers, and formed collectively by 32 Self Help Groups (SHGs). It was registered under the Manipur Co-operative Society Registration Act

1976 on December 11, 2019. Each member contributed Rs 500 for the registration fee. "We sell our woven materials to the Mekola Society even during the lockdown when there were not many buyers. The amount we received from the sale helped sustained us during the trying times," Susheela added.

During the pandemic, the middlemen tried to take advantage of the desperate situation faced by the weavers. They pressured them to sell their products for a much lesser price. Seeing this, the Society began buying the products directly from the weavers at the pre-pandemic price and took care of them. "We have tie-ups with a few handloom showrooms in Imphal city, and we sell the products directly to them. During the



lockdown, we stocked up the phanek (traditional wrap-around) and phi (stall). Once the lockdown was relaxed, we started our business as usual. Although we did not earn a profit margin, we did not let our women weavers down. We took care of them during the crisis," recalls Kenobala, President of the Mekola Society.

Susheela and her children owe everything to the loom. It has become the symbol of hope and resilience in their toughest times. During the hard-hitting pandemic, they were able to earn and rebuild their dreams. "My son could not work during the lockdown. Daily wage jobs were irregular. The loom cushioned us from the fallout arising due to the pandemic. We were able to survive the darkest period of the past two years," concludes Susheela.

If Susheela is known for her determination, 40-year-old Jamuna is known for her perseverance. Jamuna is a widow with two sons. She is afflicted with polio, but it did not deter her from living an independent life after her sons got married. In 2020, her health condition deteriorated. She could not continue her roadside eatery shop nor venture out of the house anymore. Out of desperation, she started a small business that would become her livelihood and succour.

Jamuna learned to weave from her younger sister years back, and this skill came to her rescue at the most vulnerable time of her life. Jamuna reels in the cocoon with her left hand and runs her palm over an earthen pot with her right hand. She uses very few resources and equipment to spin silk thread from the cocoons. It has become her only source of livelihood. "I am very happy (to have this trade) since I cannot work like a normal





person," Jamuna says. She further elaborates on her skill: "Weaving is not just a physical and mental task. One must also put one's heart into it. If the yarn gets tangled, it has to be unfurled with patience and love."

As part of World Vision India's COVID Adjusted Strategy for Livelihood, Jamuna received 3.7 kgs of cocoon worth Rs 5000. It was heaven-sent as she was at her wit's end regarding her livelihood and survival. She spun the silk threads using traditional methods - boil the cocoon, let it cool down and then use an earthen pot to spin yarn from it. Though it is a tedious process, this handspun yarn is more expensive and much sought after. She earned a tidy profit of Rs 1200 from every kilogram of the cocoon.

World Vision India has set up 139 All Women Self-Help Groups in Imphal. It is working among 9815 families with 34,483 people in the Imphal West District. As of March 2022, around 25,300 families have benefitted through livelihood assistance from the NGO.

Handloom and textile is the largest cottage industry in Manipur and the second-highest employer next to agriculture. Manipur is the second-largest handloom producer in India after Assam. According to the All India Handloom Census 2019-2020, Ministry of Textile, Government of India,



Manipur ranks third with 2.1 lakh weaver households (a third of whom are in the cooperative fold) among the four States that account for 18 lakh weaver households in India. The other States are Assam with 10.9 lakhs, West Bengal with 3.4 lakhs, and Tamil Nadu with 1.7 lakhs. An interesting fact to note is that 94 per cent of weavers in Manipur are women.

Many women in Imphal West are now exploring this traditional art of weaving and yarning as a source of livelihood, resulting in the growth of many self-help groups with better access to microcredits. These women are even providing jobs to other women within their community.

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Many women in Imphal West are now exploring this traditional art of weaving and yarning as a source of livelihood, resulting in the growth of many self-help groups with better access to microcredits. These women are even providing jobs to other women within their community. They travel for exhibitions and shows, further increasing their range of exposure and network

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Seeing their mothers' resilience, determination and success, young girls in the community are encouraged to carve out career options for themselves, hoping for continued enhancement in livelihood options and eventually achieving economic independence. ■

Jim Kasom is the Communication Officer at World Vision India.



Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Opportunities Through Bee Keeping

The youth unemployment rate in India is on the rise, and the pandemic further worsened the jobs crisis. In the April to June Quarter of 2021, the youth unemployment rate stood at 25.5 per cent for the age group of 15 to 29 as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey. On the one hand, our youth dreams of jobs and employment, while on the other hand, due to low skills and lack of mentorship, gainful employment remains a pipe dream, increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Skilling is thus an important component of the nation's growth story and helps ensure no one is left behind in being gainfully employed. World Youth Skills Day is celebrated every year to mark the “strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship”.



Namrata Khanna

With nearly 40 per cent of the Indian population aged 13 to 35 years (defined as youth in the National Youth Policy), such skilling programmes help empower those left out of the employment circle. The National Skill Development Corp India (NSDC) was set up as a one-of-its-kind Public Private Partnership to catalyse the skills landscape in India.

Mentoring support is crucial for the success of programmes like Startup India that require support for training, finances and networking needed for the youth to start ventures on their own. Many such programmes are taken up under CSR activities by India Inc. too.

The storm of unicorns created post-pandemic catapulted India into an

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Through a beekeeper training programme, one can learn the skills required to set up a honey manufacturing unit. There is a need to create specific training programmes on the technical aspects of bee-keeping and how to market and create a demand for other products like beeswax, propolis, flower pollen, bee pollen, and royal jelly. Bee farming or apiculture requires adequate moisture to produce a good, golden haul

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enterprising nation. In the Observer Research Foundation and the World Economic Forum's joint study, “Young India at Work – A Survey of Youth Aspirations”, nearly 38 per cent of youth selected entrepreneurship as their preferred work mode.

However, if we look at the top (successful start-ups) and the bottom of entrepreneurial talent (food carts, etc), it is a story of lopsided growth. In a country where 12 million graduates are added every year, a huge opportunity exists between the two ends of the spectrum – between techpreneurs launching start-ups and the small businesses that give employment to the semi-literate. It is the MSME sector, the country's largest employer, that contributes nearly 30 per cent to the country's GDP, which holds a huge potential.

Rising Appeal of Apiculture

According to IBEF, the food processing industry - one of the largest industries in India - accounts for food, agriculture and allied activities remains immune to market changes. Food was the only segment not dented during the lockdowns; even food deliveries made megabucks in contactless times.

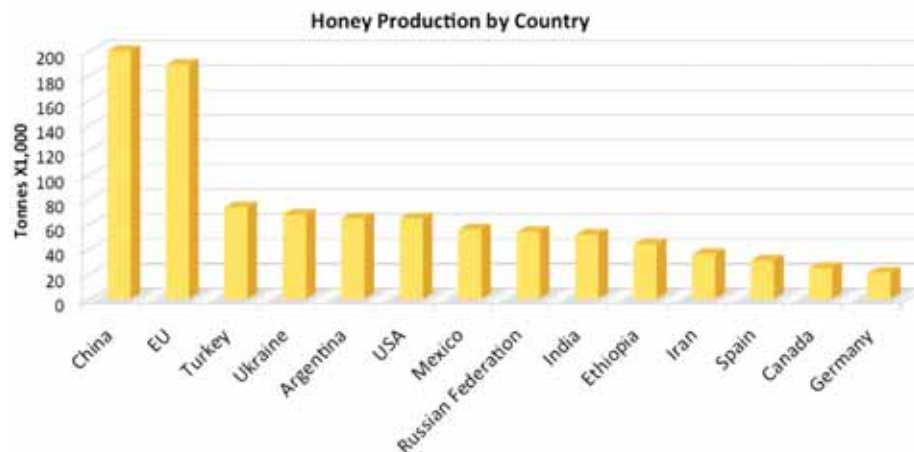


Moreover, with interest in nutrition peaking due to the pandemic, people are now more conscious of healthy food and sustainable living. For instance, during the pandemic, honey witnessed a positive demand; with the Ministry of AYUSH recommending it as a home remedy in preventive care and dealing with cough-related symptoms among COVID patients. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) recommend beekeeping as a sustainable, environment-friendly activity since it provides nutritional, economic, and ecological balance. Bees are among the best-known pollinators and need a boost to save our forests and agricultural wealth. Honey bees make multiple visits to the same flower until they get all the nectar and pollen out of it. Pollen attached to bees passes between plants, pollinating them. Thanks to bees, we

enjoy a range of food, from mangoes to apples. Many farmers rely on bee colonies to pollinate their plants.

The honey produced at bee farms is exported to the USA, UK, France, Italy, Spain and Japan. In 2020, India exported \$87.2M of honey, becoming the ninth-largest exporter of honey in the world. The honey market peaked in 2020, with a total valuation of Rs 17.29 billion. Facing strong tailwinds due to its huge therapeutic properties, the market is expected to reach Rs 38.3 billion by 2027, exhibiting a CAGR of 10.31 per cent during 2022-2027, according to an IMARC study. Thus, bee farming is a highly lucrative venture, sustaining economies and our plant wealth.

Apart from its therapeutic use for cough and allergies, honey is a natural humectant, a gentle exfoliant, and has





antimicrobial, antifungal and antibacterial properties. Other products of the bee hives are pollen, bee venom, propolis, royal jelly and honeycomb. Each product from the honey bee is immensely useful, having curative, palliative and preventive properties.

Training Programmes

Through a beekeeper training programme, one can learn the skills required to set up a honey manufacturing unit. There is a need to create specific training programmes on the technical aspects of bee-keeping and how to market and create a demand for other products like beeswax, propolis, flower pollen, bee pollen, and royal jelly. Bee farming or apiculture requires adequate moisture to produce a good, golden haul.

Skill development or mentorship programmes for beekeeping include business management practices, niche skills like bee handling, nutrition, bee movement, observation and maintenance of machinery, and so on. To set up a home business, one would need regulatory compliances like registration, trade licence, FSSAI licence, BIS certification, and an import-export code, if there are plans to export.

Bee farming is usually carried out in open



manufacturing process requires opening the hive frame, extracting honey, filtering, packaging and then marketing/sales and promotion.

Success Stories

There are many success stories of Indian beekeepers, among agriculture communities, marginalised sections, forest dwellers, etc., who have found it worthwhile to harvest bees.

Apoorva BV - the Bee Man of India - has carved a successful career in the beekeeping profession. The mechanical engineer who hails from Chitradurga was fascinated by the meticulous activities of





honey bees and their role in conservation so he decided to become a professional beekeeper 13 years ago. His company, Honeyday Bee Farms' annual turnover is over Rs 2 Crore. Through his charitable trust, The Hive, he conducts workshops and training sessions and supports bee farmers in selling bee products. Apoorva also works towards sensitising urban folks about rock bees that nest in balconies of high-rise apartments, creating awareness against violent methods of bee-hive removal.

Honey has given the sweet taste of success to many marginalised communities. Many Santhal tribal women in South Bihar, for example, have transformed their lives, and during the pandemic, formed the Banka Madhu Farmers Producer Organisation to supply seven tonnes of honey to various markets in the country. Such bee farmers thus improve their food and economic security.

Sustainable Livelihood

Bees are the world's best and largest source of pollination; beekeeping thus provides sustainable livelihoods during the off-season for agricultural

communities and growth in alternate methods to boost incomes. To provide a booster shot to Sweet Revolution, which aims to increase honey production, the Government of India launched the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission. Under this, bee-keepers are given subsidies, training, equipment, etc., to skill themselves and get a headstart to becoming active bee-keepers. Among farming communities, scientific beekeeping can yield an additional income and growth of 20-80 per cent, depending on the crop and season. Krishi Vigyan Kendras, too, undertake training programmes for beekeeping to provide women, rural unemployed youth and forest communities with employment. In one of his Mann Ki Baat programmes, Prime Minister Modi lauded some bee-keepers who started apiculture from scratch and are now running successful businesses. He spoke about the role of beekeeping in the economy and its help to double farmers' incomes. He exhorted the youth to take this up as a profession and take advantage of the various government initiatives where skilling activities in apiculture are needed to uplift the vulnerable sections of the population.

In India, Skill India Programme launched by the Government in 2015 aims to train over 40 crore Indians by the end of this year. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the Government's flagship skill development scheme. Rural youth who are 18 years and above, with a minimum qualification of Class V, can take up skilling activities under the Skill Development of Rural Youth scheme. Many other programmes focus on Skilling India like the Rozgar Melas, Capacity Building Scheme, Udaan, India International Skill Centres (IISCs), and so on. Similarly, the Mentoring India Programme started in 2017, provides training for SMEs. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship which coordinates Skill Development efforts across the country are planning to create 5000 Skill Hubs across the education and skill ecosystem to mainstream vocational education. ■

Namrata Khanna is the Director of Indian Honey Alliance.



Lupin's Legacy: Building a Better Tomorrow

Success is not just defined by sales and profits but also by the impact one can make on the world and the people around them.

To transform these thoughts into actions, Dr Desh Bandhu Gupta established the Lupin Human Welfare & Research Foundation (LHWRF) to provide a sustainable, replicable, and continually evolving model of holistic rural development in India. In our journey of over three decades, we have touched the lives of people in over 5000 villages spread across 23 districts of nine States.

At Lupin, we work in four thematic areas – Economic Progress, Social Improvement, Infrastructure Development and Natural Resource Management – encompassing a 360-degree programme of development for rural communities.

We undertake economic development activities in agriculture, animal husbandry, women empowerment, and rural industries. Our social anchors



Tushara Shankar

include health and education, while infrastructure and natural resource development are the drivers of growth for the backward regions where we operate. Recently, we took a new strategic approach toward working not only on livelihoods but also on lives (healthcare).

The Vision

Dr Gupta believed that Lupin is among



the privileged few companies with the fundamentals in place to shape a better future for society, build a better tomorrow and make the world a healthier and happier place. We do not see this as a “good-to-have” but rather as a “must-have”.

We envision the Indian village of the future not only as being economically prosperous but also as a centre of social prosperity. We work to consciously integrate various stakeholders who can make a genuine, lasting difference - from corporates and planners to technologists and development-oriented organisations.

We aim to provide an alternative model of rural development that is sustainable, replicable, and ever-evolving, essentially empowering underprivileged and marginalised sections of society and providing basic infrastructure and a balanced ecological base to villages.

Flagship Initiatives

Our LHWRF Skill Development and Livelihood programme focuses on below-poverty-line (BPL) families in



Our LHWRF Skill Development and Livelihood programme focuses on below-poverty-line (BPL) families in rural areas to enhance their socio-economic status. Through a family-centred approach, we initiate measures that enable them to break the cycle of poverty. Skill deficiency, particularly in rural India, is a major hurdle in realising the demographic dividend for the country. Skill training enables a quantum jump in incomes for individuals and families



rural areas to enhance their socio-economic status. Through a family-centred approach, we initiate measures that enable them to break the cycle of poverty. Skill deficiency, particularly in rural India, is a major hurdle in realising the demographic dividend for the country. Skill training enables a quantum jump in incomes for individuals and families.

We understand that each community may have its unique requirements. Thus, we work towards creating a differentiation that would help bring about a change at the grassroots level. Our implementation

model begins with a needs-based assessment across our villages. Participatory rural appraisal exercises such as baseline surveys, social mapping, focus group discussions, meetings with village leaders, and transects help us ascertain the genuine requirements of the villages.

Key drivers of economic development are structured as long-term programmes and interventions in agriculture, animal husbandry, women empowerment, and rural industries. We work extensively with various government and non-government partners, international development agencies, and like-minded philanthropic organisations to mobilise additional resources and extend our reach to several more isolated and underserved populations. These include landless tribal communities, members of scheduled castes, and minority populations in target geographies.

Over the years, we have primarily focused on building sustainable livelihood opportunities and triggering economic growth in some of the most backward and underdeveloped districts.

Focus

We provide skill training and credit support for livelihood security among vulnerable sections and work towards skill development and wage employment for livelihood security. By helping to establish and strengthen rural enterprises, we enable communities with diverse livelihood options. We also work towards equipping rural service providers to help increase their incomes and generate employment. We also prioritise the



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We established multi-skill training centres at various locations to provide training in multiple trades. The programmes primarily equip young men and women to set up new enterprises or gain employment for skills in demand. The trades where we provide training are exhaustive and as per NSDC guidelines. The training and subsequent assistance aim to generate farm, off-farm and non-farm livelihood avenues within the village or in nearby townships. For wage-based employment, we impart training on the trades in demand, both locally and in distant cities

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revival and strengthening of rural artisanship and work towards increased livelihood options for artisan communities.

We take special efforts in our adopted areas to identify, introduce and establish trades or vocations that can provide multiple livelihood options to people within the village itself.

The programmes have resulted in the following benefits for the communities:

1. Increased wage and self-employment among the youth and women.
2. Increase in skills leading to incremental income levels (per day rate) of trained persons.
3. Workers or job seekers turn entrepreneurs through skill, credit and market support.
4. Greater livelihood options for the landless, women and youth within

and in their village vicinity.

5. Conservation of traditional art as well as generation of employment through it.

6. Reduction in distress migration from rural to urban areas.

Apart from the farm and farm-allied livelihoods, non-farm vocations were established, nurtured and strengthened over time. This mix of different livelihood activities has increased options for livelihood for artisans, farmers, and the underprivileged in the villages where we work.

Initiatives

Multi-Skill Training Centres

We established multi-skill training centres at various locations to provide training in multiple trades. The programmes primarily equip young men and women to set up new enterprises or gain employment for skills in demand.

The trades where we provide training are exhaustive and as per NSDC guidelines. The training and subsequent assistance aim to generate farm, off-farm and non-farm livelihood avenues within the village or in nearby townships. For wage-based employment, we impart training on the trades in demand, both locally and in distant cities.

We cover a wide range of skilled trades and entrepreneurial activities Some of



the non-farm-based programmes we run through multi-skill training centres across locations are computer literacy, data entry operator, mobile repairing, security guard, housekeeping attendant, electrician, masonry and concrete work, chauffeur/taxi driver, four-wheeler driving, tailoring, garment making, beauty parlour, welding and fabrication, food and beverage service-steward, and medical attendant.

We also provide computer training (MS Office, Data Entry & Tally) in partnership and affiliation with competent bodies like the NSDC or State SDCs at our different LHWRP Skill Training Centres - a prerequisite qualification for multiple educational courses and government jobs. These are short-term courses (from one to nine months) designed per NSDC guidelines. Each batch consists of 20-30 trainees. The minimum educational qualification required for these vocational training programmes is Class X passed. We conduct these programmes in multiple locations across India.

The skill development programmes are run at the village level through participant selection drives to identify, shortlist and select primary beneficiaries among the youth, women, and farmers. While selecting beneficiaries, we give



special attention to participants who need it the most, especially marginalised, landless, and minority households. In addition, there are prerequisites for beneficiary selection for each trade and skill. This ensures the formation of a homogenous batch with similar academic and technical qualifications. Secondly, location-specific prioritisation of trades and customisation during the beneficiary selection process ensures that the programme reaches out to the most marginalised and underserved communities.

Across various traditional vocations, skill transfer and technological upgrading can make all the difference in

terms of returns or tapping distant urban markets. Hence, we adopted a strategy of providing appropriate skills and cost-effective, high-impact technologies to rural entrepreneurs. This has transformed vocations like shoe making, bangle making and many others.

Our skill training is followed by placement assistance, handholding and mentorship for setting up self-enterprises. This micro enterprise development for income generation is achieved through building credit and market linkages.

In addition, we implement several farm-based skill training and upgradation per geographic needs and requirements. Some skill trades promoted at specific locations are commercial livestock development, including dairy farming, goat rearing and poultry, bee-keeping, food processing, tulsi mala making, clay-based tawa making, etc.

Several rural service providers such as barbers, masons, cobblers, plumbers, motorcycle mechanics and electricians can operate efficiently and earn more, empowering them to transform from workers to masters through the training and specially-designed toolkits we provide.

Around 75 per cent of the candidates trained entered the workforce and started income generation through jobs in relevant industries, micro-enterprises and self-employment.

Garment Hubs

We have established many garment hubs in the villages we operate. We provide training for garment designing and making, Arya Maggam (southern embroidery) training and support for purchasing tailoring machines.



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For self-employment support, we assist trainees with toolkits, sewing machines, and access to institutional credit to set up their enterprises. We also provide critical micro-enterprise development support and handholding to participants, boosting their confidence and resolving any teething issues.

We promote several group enterprises as part of the micro-enterprise development effort.

We have reached out to more than 42,000 youth, women, and farmers, benefiting them through job placement and self-employment support

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In Tarapur, the success of the garment manufacturing unit has led to an affiliation with some elite brands in India.

Reviving Traditional Artisanship

Our Foundation also supports the revival and preservation of traditional artisanship. This helps provide a decent



livelihood to communities traditionally engaged in those occupations.

Enabling Self Employment

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their enterprises. We also provide critical micro-enterprise development support and handholding to participants, boosting their confidence and resolving any teething issues. We promote several group enterprises as part of the micro-enterprise development effort. We have reached out to more than 42,000 youth, women, and farmers, benefiting them through job placement and self-employment support. The average additional income earned by participants involved in micro-enterprise is Rs 60,000, whereas, among youth employed in trades such as unarmed security guards, drivers, medical assistants, food and beverage assistance, etc., the income is more than Rs 1,20,000.

Success Stories

After training from LHWRF, Brijesh Bhargav from Khanua village started a small business. She currently employs over 35 women from her village in her floor mat business. She uses handmade cloth and jute to make the mats with unique designs that appeal to both urban and rural customers. She sells these floor mats at local craft fairs, Saras Fair, Delhi Haat, IITF exhibitions, etc. During times of high demand, she employs other women from sixteen SHGs in her village



and provides them with self-employment opportunities. The business allows Brijesh to earn between Rs 25,000 and 30,000 per month. Her enterprise enables women to earn between Rs 10,000 and 15,000.

Similarly, Suman Singh, a single mother with two children, started her own tailoring business 20 years ago. She was appointed as a sewing centre trainer when LHWRF began working in her village. Eventually, she trained several young girls in sewing, but they were not yet ready to become independent entrepreneurs. With the support of LHWRF, Suman started a small garment production business. Over 35 women are currently involved in the business, earning a respectable income of over Rs 10,000. Today, they even supply clothing to some of the big brands. Women in Bharatpur look up to Suman for inspiration when making important decisions to ensure their well-being and that of their families.



Aligning with Societal Needs

We implement our programmes with government bodies; in line with flagship

initiatives and missions launched by the Government of India. This congruence is instrumental in ensuring the continuity and sustainability of projects as the Government shall continue efforts for skill building even after the project concludes. In addition, we have established technical and knowledge partnerships with various agriculture universities, including IIT Delhi, to leverage our resources and technical expertise. Using such models, the Bharatpur Skill Development Centre established unique courses for bangle and clay tawa making, among others, driven by technology transfer and leveraging of intellectual resources.

The programmes have brought about



multiple changes on the socio-economic front for the beneficiary community. There is a notable increase in income, reduced migration, access to financial services, acquisition of new skill sets and increased sharing of occupational knowledge among the community members, especially youth, women and farmers.

Replicating Success

Gaining insights from skill development programmes implemented in Bharatpur and Dhule clusters, we have replicated various programmes in other geographies. We at LHWRP are committed to skill development. We have invested more than Rs 8.33 Crores towards skill development initiatives from 2019-2022. It has also established various strategic partnerships by regularly mobilising additional funds and resources for the cause.

Impact Points

Here are some of the critical impact standpoints generated from the programme:

- Out of the total trained participants from the skill development programme, over 75 per cent of participants are involved in income generation activities post-training, being placed at jobs, self-employed or involved in micro-enterprises.
- Around 40 per cent of skill development programme participants establish microenterprises by accessing institutional credit.
- More than 75 per cent of participants are involved in income-generation activities.
- Group enterprises have emerged at the cluster level after the skill development programme, providing self-employment to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the programme.

The Way Ahead

In the coming five years, the skill development programme shall evolve as a lighthouse initiative for rural empowerment and social inclusion. Our team is making systematic efforts to cover more participants and generate economic



growth opportunities for the most marginalised sectors, especially women and youth from tribal, backward communities and minorities. In addition to ensuring participation, we will emphasise developing an enabling ecosystem for youth and women entrepreneurs at the cluster level and empowering them to lead the local skill ecosystem.

We will focus on strengthening our skill development programme through the following:

- The standard course curriculum for all trades as per guidelines of NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation).
- Targeting participants from impoverished families who are serious about pursuing a career in the space.
- Training centres to optimise infrastructure.

- Introducing systems for participant enrolment with baseline information to be used to measure outcomes after completion of the training. Introduced pre-and post-tests to capture the quality and effectiveness of the training.

Secondly, to improve the skilling for green jobs, we will develop more courses to promote a green economy, solar energy, micro irrigation, affordable housing and backwards-forward linkages with agriculture.

One of the most crucial learnings generated from the programme is the alignment to the skill gap or demand from local industries. This is imperative for the success of any skill development programme and it has ensured successful placements and the generation of local self-employment at the grassroots level. ■

Tushara Shankar is the Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Lupin Limited



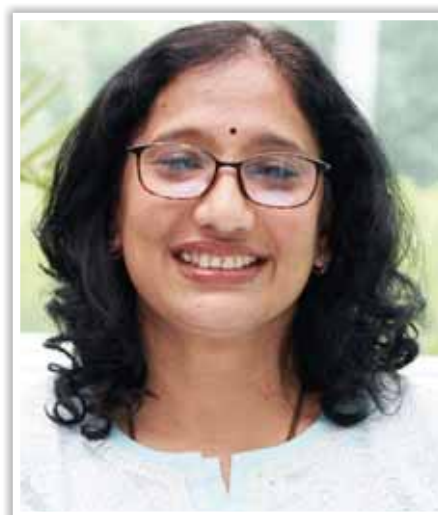
Moving in the Right Direction: Godrej & Boyce Disha Skilling Initiatives

Skill development is a crucial topic of discussion regarding its significance in enhancing the employability of the workforce. Youths constitute a majority of India's vast population, thereby highlighting the need for us to consider their importance as a significant skilled workforce yet untapped by our country. As per a report by World Bank, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) reduced from 46 per cent in 2020 to 40 per cent in 2022. While the drop could be attributed to the pandemic and the lockdown, the numbers, to begin with, were still low. The India Skills Report 2022 finds that only one in ten graduates are employable. Thus, to move toward a skill-based education system, we have to make the youths career-ready from an early stage and prepare them with a combination of skills that makes them a good fit for jobs or encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Empowering the Workforce

While the need for vocational training was apparent even in the 1990s, the 12th

Five Year Plan (2012–2017) initiated the necessary framework to ensure that skill development programmes align with the demands of the markets. The



Ashwini Deodeshmukh

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Currently active in 18 States, our Disha Skill Development Initiative is involved in areas such as services trades, interior trades, construction, and manufacturing and includes skills like refrigeration and air conditioning, retail sales services, carpentry, solar technician trades, locks technician, masonry, false ceiling, plumbing and many more. The duration of the different courses ranges from two to twenty-four months. The minimum qualification for manufacturing-related trades is Class X. We, however, enrol candidates who have cleared the eighth standard for some of the trades

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Government of India recognised the importance of skill development in 2015-16 when they launched the Skill India Mission to provide industry-relevant skill training to millions of Indian youths. During its pilot phase, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) benefited 1.07 crore youths between 2016 and 2020. School dropouts and unemployed youth were provided with skills through short-term courses, skill certification, and various other industry approaches.

The Skill India Mission also galvanised the setting up of Industrial Training Institutes across the country, creating a massive infrastructure of hands-on training for the youth in different parts of the country. The ready infrastructure has also provided a unique opportunity for

corporations and NGOs to collaborate to launch skill development courses.

Most In-Demand Skills in India

Skill development today is driven by emerging technology across sectors. One needs to have basic skills in software applications, even for jobs where core competencies are different. Soft skills and basic knowledge of software applications like word processors, spreadsheets, presentations, etc., are now needed in almost every sphere. According to the India Skills Report 2022, communication skills, social media, data analytics & interpretation, and critical thinking are some of the skills in high demand.

Thirteen million youths in India join the workforce every year. The demographic dividend can be leveraged if these youths are skilled enough to be employed. Unemployment issues can be resolved by building employable skills and creating more jobs.

Disha Skill Development

As a manufacturing company, multiple trades align with the products we at



Godrej & Boyce create and the processes we use. Our Disha Skill Development Initiative launched in 2011, provides solutions by enhancing employability and promoting self-employment. We adopted it as our flagship initiative to provide employable skills to the workforce utilising the core expertise of our organisation. We were mindful that we should be able to provide expertise from our core competencies to skill the youth. We began with training the youth in trades related to our businesses. The skills included are sales, service, rural entrepreneurship, construction, manufacturing, and technical training.

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Disha Digital Skilling

The 4.0 industry revolution has put emerging technologies at the core of manufacturing. They are not only used for manufacturing products but also to streamline industrial processes. The future workspace will primarily utilise automation and artificial intelligence for better productivity and efficiency. Further, in other spheres of life, technology has disrupted how human activities are conducted – from communicating with one another to administering activities like shopping or booking tickets; everything has a considerable digital component. This



Our Digital Skilling Initiative features a range of courses like robotics and automation, business analytics and dashboarding, digital marketing, and eCommerce.

While the former two programmes targeted engineering students, digital marketing and eCommerce will be open to all young graduates.

We also have a component designed to train the trainers – i.e., trainers and instructors at various Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the country, thereby enhancing their capacities. We are working on short-term programmes of four to eight weeks for digital skills.

These programmes target engineering students, ITI students, and graduates



brings to the fore the requirement for people conversant with these technologies and those who can analyse complex information and break it down to facilitate decision-making in businesses.

In the manufacturing industry, in-demand skills include understanding automation, robotics, and IoT (Internet of Things). In February 2022, we launched the Digital Skilling Initiative as a part of Disha. This initiative aims to create a future-ready workforce keeping in mind the upcoming skills required across industries. We offer digital skills to young graduates who have completed engineering and other technical degrees from colleges in Tier 2 and 3 cities. It is necessary to provide young graduates with skills and exposure to real-life applications. It is of utmost importance that corporations collaborate with public institutions to bring in the expertise of skill development and a diverse pool of resources to their initiatives and set a

better path for trainees.

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Success Stories



Abdul Rajack, a RAC trainee from Bhubaneswar, Odisha, already had a refrigerator and AC repair business before enrolling for the advanced course of RAC at Gram

Tarang in 2018. He wanted to gain theoretical knowledge and enhance his understanding of his trade. After completing the course, Abdul established himself as a competent RAC professional in his area and set up his store and workshop, which gained a steady flow of regular clients. He says that it was because of the training and knowledge gained during the course that he could go forward with this venture and build something of his own.

Govind Rajbhar and his parents are from a little village in Uttar Pradesh. He studied till Class X but had to abandon his studies as his parents, who are manual labourers, could not afford his school fees. He left school in 2011 and came to Mumbai searching for work. He started working as a helper in a company at Vikhroli, where he earned Rs.150/- per day, enabling him

to take care of his most basic needs. His friend who works as a grinder in Godrej told him about the Godrej Disha Skilling programme. This prompted Govind to enrol in the Disha programme in 2013. He completed 45 days of training in welding. He was then transferred to Plant 15 at Godrej & Boyce for advanced training in welding where he passed the radiography test. In 2014, he was inducted into Plant 15 as a welder. He soon learned all the technical skills in welding from 2G to 6G and gas cutting. Today, he is an expert welder employed in Plant 15.



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Impact

According to a survey we conducted amongst Disha trainees from Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Odisha, 76 per cent of respondents have secured full-time jobs and are

working in their specialised trades. The percentage of trainees securing full-time jobs varied across States. We observed that placement numbers were 67 per cent in Maharashtra, 61 per cent in Gujarat, 78 per cent in Delhi, 90 per cent in Odisha, and 96 per cent in Karnataka. In addition, 10 per cent of trainees managed to get part-time jobs. Gainful employment has helped improve their family's financial stability, spurring them to work towards development indicators like better education, healthcare and housing facilities.

Since its inception, our Disha Skilling Initiative has trained around 1.59 lakh youths in manufacturing-related trades. We have, to date, achieved six plus times return on investment through it. Our Digital Skilling programme is operational in Mumbai, Pune, and Aurangabad in Maharashtra, and in Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Since the course was initiated a few months back, we are still in the process of scaling it up to include various Tier 2 and 3 cities.

Our Roadmap

We anticipate training 50,000 more youths in manufacturing-centric trades by 2025. We intend to explore further manufacturing-centric digital courses and increase our reach to include more Tier 2 and 3 cities across the country. Looking at the current boom in eCommerce and the need to increase last-mile delivery efficiency, we are actively looking at starting courses for warehousing and logistic sectors. ■

Ashwini Deodeshmukh is the Head of CSR & Sustainability Reporting at Godrej & Boyce.

Embassy Group: Skill Development a Boon for the Youth and the Nation

Skill development is a vital means of empowering the youth with a secure future. With over 12 million people joining the Indian workforce annually, the employment rate hit a record low of 36.40 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, and it is still struggling to pick up. Unsurprisingly, the urban poor has found it the most challenging to bounce back from pandemic-related tribulations.

India is one of the youngest nations in the world. More than 62 per cent of the population comprises the working age group; with more than 54 per cent below 25 years of age. We are at a juncture with opportunities for the Government and corporates to collaborate in developing and supporting the next generation. Closing gaps in the educational journey of underprivileged students and moulding an upskilled workforce will go a long way towards contributing to the growth of the Indian economy.

There remain myriad challenges facing India in bridging this skill disparity, including:

- Mobilisation: There is low participation from vocational education students, particularly

women. The outlook for this sector is still incredibly traditional.

- Private-public collaboration: For skill development models to succeed, they need to be able to scale with the buy-in from different stakeholders. Without



Shaina Ganapathy

participation from the corporate sector, progress will continue to be slow.

- Lack of infrastructure: There is a lack of sufficient infrastructure to support this huge demand for skilled labour, besides a dearth of skilled trainers.

Offering Alternative Career Paths

At the very core of these challenges is the current education system. With oft-outdated infrastructure, a lack of teaching-learning materials and sufficient teachers, government schools and other schools targeted at children from lower-income backgrounds struggle to prepare graduates for a post-schooling world. This is where corporates, through Corporate Social Responsibility, can collaborate with the Government to provide students with an environment conducive to learning through the infusion of educational interventions, social and emotional learning support, scholarships, mentorship, vocational assistance, and more. These interventions will go a long way towards creating a stronger foundation for students to succeed in employment.

We at Embassy Group began our support of government schools in 2012. We provide government school students with a safe learning environment for skill development through holistic educational interventions. Innovative learning support in English, Math, Life Skills and Sports is integrated into the school schedule and enhanced by

engaging in extra-curricular activities ranging from educational trips and summer camps to talent development and inter-school competitions.

Our company's holistic plan target upskilling students from low-income households, which will land them on better career paths. To create a strong network of connecting students to opportunities after they pass out of school, we, along with our NGO partner, Colours of Life, founded an alumni programme called the Colours of Life Academy (COLA) in 2017. COLA was meant for students who have graduated or left Embassy-adopted government schools but would like assistance in terms of fees for higher studies, extra tuition, mentorship, and career guidance.

Under this programme, we partnered with Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology to provide educational opportunities to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds under the Embassy Scholars Programme. They are more prone to restrictions when it comes to aspirations — either they are prevented from dreaming big because they do not have the means to achieve their goals, or they have no idea of the range of career paths available to them. This initiative aims to provide an array of alternative livelihood opportunities to students from government schools and boost their exposure to the arts. It also fulfils ours, and that of Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology's mission of inclusive vocational education.

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“I am from Baiyapanahalli in Bangalore. I am studying at Srishti under the undergraduate contemporary art practice. My father sold bangles and, before that, tea. He passed away from unfortunate health problems. My mother is the only parent left for our five siblings. Over the years, she worked hard to ensure that we



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With the enormous challenge ahead of us to achieve the nation's targets for skilling our growing youth population through quality programmes, we need to engender further collaboration between the private and public sectors, allowing both parties to leverage each other's expertise.

Companies have the manpower and knowledge to understand various sectorial needs; it is not enough to only skill our young people, but there needs to be an understanding of the kinds of jobs that can accommodate them

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all studied up till the tenth grade," says Gautham, an Embassy Scholar at Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology. He is an inspiration to the children in his neighbourhood and aspiring artists who believed they could never do their higher studies in art.

"My name is Gokul. I am doing creative manufacturing, designing products and accessories. In six to eight months from now, I want to join a firm as an assistant



designer, work as a freelancer, plan for a start-up and apply for my Master's degree. I want to take on these four things because Srishti has taught me to multitask." Gokul is a former Embassy Scholar at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology. He is now brimming with confidence and waiting for the opportunity to take on the real world. He feels that the scholarship programme can help so many students who never got the break he did.

Changing Perceptions of Blue-Collar Industries

With the enormous challenge ahead of us to achieve the nation's targets for skilling our growing youth population through quality programmes, we need to engender further collaboration between the private and public sectors, allowing both parties to leverage each other's expertise. Companies have the manpower and knowledge to understand various sectorial needs; it is not enough to only skill our young people, but there needs to be an understanding of the kinds of jobs that can accommodate them. The private sector stands to benefit from the availability of skilled manpower, allowing them to become more future-ready with a more effective and productive workforce. It is, therefore, in the best interest of corporations to prioritise building productivity amongst the working-age population across industries.

Corporates have the potential to deliver quality programmes, either through partnering with vocational centres or creating their own; under CSR. Companies can then absorb these students into their workforce once fully trained. We launched a Facility Management (FM) Skilling programme, curated by our Service Facility Wing - TCFM (Technique Control Facility Management), and Mentric Solutions to enhance employment opportunities for government school students and arm them with the skills and knowledge to join the workforce. This specialised programme is for students who have passed out of our Group's adopted



government schools in Bangalore.

The FM Skilling programme aims to bridge the skill gap through Mentric ALL (Mentric's Learning Management portal) and offline training. Students also receive assessments on their learning journey through their customised rubrics, get equipped with relevant practical knowledge, and receive soft skills and job readiness training. After completing a four-month training course from the state-of-the-art practical training centre customised by TCFM, the upskilled students are awarded well-paying jobs in TCFM and other partner organisations.

The fast-growing FM sector in India requires educated and skilled youth. Since this sector largely contributes to the blue-collar workforce employment, we

saw this as our responsibility as a leading IFM organisation to provide opportunities to our youth. The aim is to reaffirm that FM is a great career choice with enormous scope for growth. Through this programme, we hope to develop and help the next generation of blue-collar employees contribute to the growth of the Indian economy through our upskilled workforce and close any gaps in the educational journey of underprivileged students.

"After joining this training [programme] I have learned a lot of new things. It helped me enhance and improve my skills, my behaviour, and my attitude. The trainers are amazing and teach us very well," said Raziya Banu, an FM skill development trainee.

Providing Skills for a Sustainable Livelihood

We also launched another skill development initiative aimed at government school alumni, underprivileged youth, and their families. To encourage various skill-based initiatives, along with NGO partners – The Anonymous Indian Charitable Trust (TAICT) and YuvaLok Foundation, we unveiled a new Skill Development Centre earlier this year. The new centre at Tarahunise, North Bangalore, with vocational training programmes, intends to develop sustainable livelihood skills for government school alumni and their families.

Aimed at combatting the challenge of pandemic-induced unemployment and a lack of job readiness, the Centre provides numerous courses and programmes. One of the courses offered is a six-month



tailoring programme called "Threads of Life" that will equip trainees with the skills and certification required to join a garment factory or start a small tailoring business of their own, providing a sustainable income. Upon completion of the course, participants receive their own sewing machines. Apart from this, trainees will also attend workshops on health, nutrition, and other soft skills that will help build their careers and be useful in any job or field they choose.

Sam Rajshekhar, Founder & Executive Director, YuvaLok Foundation, said, "Our aim is to make sure that every individual from the State is well equipped and trained with sustainable livelihood skills. With this agenda in mind, our Foundation, along with Embassy, introduced a new development centre to support underprivileged people with appropriate training and build on their skill sets. The current programme will help in fostering skill development in these times and in the coming future too."

Sandhya, a trainee from the Threads of Life programme, added: "I was always very keen to learn tailoring and was looking for an opportunity. This is the right time for me to learn, start earning and support my family. I also have a dream to support poor families by helping them through this way."



“

Thanks to the Skill India Mission 2015, there is ample opportunity for companies to seriously think about how they can aid in bridging our country's growing skill gap. The impact will not take place without public-private partnerships. By engaging with the Government and implementing agencies, corporates can contribute to much-needed training programmes that will benefit the nation's growth

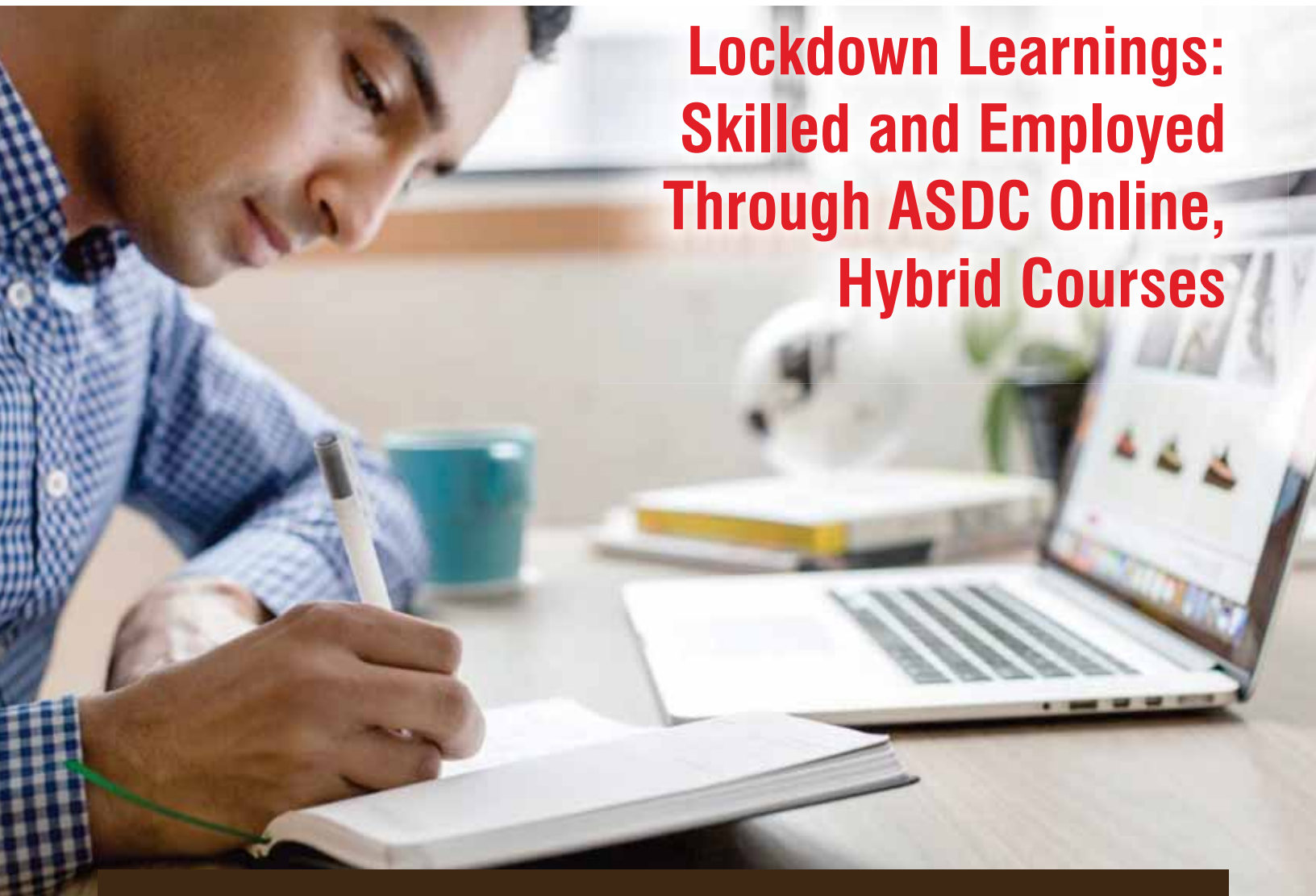
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As we look towards the future, we have increased our focus on extending support for students after they leave government schools. We believe that investing in skill development programmes and training youth with the best knowledge and expertise will pave the way for individuals who lack sufficient resources for learning. As a responsible corporate, we will continue to focus on programmes that will facilitate skill development in India and overall youth training. These programmes, curated with the support from our NGO partners, will support our nation's efforts to drive inclusive growth, creating greater social equity and opportunities for all. ■

Shaina Ganapathy is the Head of Community Outreach, Embassy Group.

Lockdown Learnings: Skilled and Employed Through ASDC Online, Hybrid Courses



When the pandemic hit in March 2020, uncertainty and lockdown kept everyone under temporary imprisonment. It was all the more difficult for those on the cusp of their careers. The pandemic threw a damper on what was supposed to be their crowning moment.

For someone like Gyati Nakhate, a resident of Gondia in Maharashtra, the onset of the pandemic threw her plans in a tizzy. A B.Com graduate from N.M.D. College, Gondia, Gyati's career plans came to a standstill. Instead of wasting her time experimenting with the different exotic dishes in the kitchen and yoga mats like the rest of the world, she decided she would not sit idly and wait for the pandemic to blow over. Adani Skill Development Centre (ASDC) came to her rescue. She enrolled in one of the courses on offer – the Domestic Data Entry Operator course - at ASDC to learn new skills, pursue her interests and advance her career.

“I'm glad I fared well in both the theory and practical exams. I was





awarded a certificate from NSDC, validating the successful completion of my training. Immediately after the course, I got a job as a data entry operator with Cogent Services (D2H Videocon) in Gujarat,” says Gyati, who now earns a salary of Rs 10,000 per month.

Fellow college alumnus and Gondia resident Sagar Bangre, too, made the most of the lockdown period, thanks to ASDC. He took up the Domestic Data Entry Operator course, which prepared him to work on data entry for various industries and enabled him to understand the concept of Information Technology, the Basics of Computers, and Data Entry. The course involved modules on Introduction to IT & Computers, Data Entry & Typing Skills, Exploring Microsoft Office Applications, Data Entry Services,



Work Management, Maintain Health, Safety & Security at Work Environment, and Employability & Entrepreneurship Skills.

The story of Amit Khobragade, from Lakhegaon village in the Gondia district, is also similar. He was deeply disappointed after failing to bag a job after completing his Class XII in 2016. The 2020 lockdown made things worse. At his friend's insistence, he enrolled in a Welding Technician Hybrid course at ASDC in Tiroda. Now employed with Tarini Steel Pvt. Ltd. in Pune as a machine operator, he earns Rs 11,000/- per month. Amit is grateful that ASDC helped him upskill during the lockdown period and gave his career a new lease on life.



Echoing similar sentiments, Roshan Tumsare from Manora village, Gondia



district says, “The Welding Technician course happened to me at a time when lockdown made me really frustrated. It was an opportunity for me to learn something new and I also got a job at Parmatma Welding Workshop in my home village after completing the course.”

ASDC offers 75 courses at its 30 centres in 15 cities across India. It has made a difference to over a lakh youth so far. And this is what its mission is - to create a transformative educational experience for candidates by bridging the industry skill gap and creating a collaborative environment open to the free exchange of ideas, where research, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship can flourish with a sustainable livelihood. ■

Contributed by: ASDC



Ed-tech Breaking Barriers to Literacy for Girls in India

The COVID-19 pandemic thrust teachers and students into the largest educational experiment the world has ever seen. The lockdowns compelled teachers to embrace technology and challenged students to learn online. This paradigm shift in education had a positive ripple effect on girl students in India and the world. Over 750 million girls and young women have been part of this global experiment, and evidence suggests that this shift to online learning could positively impact girls' education.

Ed-tech companies in India like BYJU'S are revolutionising how education is perceived and bringing several positive changes by making education accessible to everyone. Most girls tend to drop out due to inaccessible educational facilities. However, with education available to them in the palm of their hands, they are overcoming various challenges and excelling in the academic and co-curricular achievements they are passionate about.

Let us meet some of these young achievers.



Rajni excelled in her academics, particularly during her 10th board exams, graduating with an amazing 81 per cent. She is originally from Bihar and now resides in Bengaluru with her parents, while her other three siblings remain in Bihar due to the family's precarious financial situation. Rajni encountered difficulties in continuing her schooling

once the lockdown was announced in 2020. This was when she met Right to Live, a Karnataka-based NGO that introduced her to BYJU's Education for All. Despite numerous obstacles, she continued her studies and completed her 10th examinations with distinction because of BYJU'S high-quality learning materials. Among her many accomplishments, she has played Kabbadi for her school at the district level. Her story is inspiring in many ways. Despite having limited resources, she did not give up on her dreams. She ensured that she continued to excel in her studies, dreaming big in life and making the most of the opportunities available.

Vedika Kulkarni is an excellent student who has already determined her future ambitions. In April 2022, she was ranked first in the Maharashtra Talent Search Examination (MTS Jalgaon). She also received a silver medal in the Junior IAS Competition Maharashtra in 2021-22. A few of her achievements include clearing the first stage in the Dr Homi Bhabha Balvaidnyanik Competition 2021-22, conducted by Greater Bombay Science Teachers' Association. She secured the 14th rank in Maharashtra Pre-Upper Primary Scholarship Rank, cleared BYJU'S Discovery School Super League 1st Stage 2021-22, and achieved the 717th rank in UIMO and the 700th international rank in NSTSE.



Saraswathi CP is a Government Girls High School student who excelled in her 10th Boards. She was able to understand the ideas taught to her thanks to BYJU's 'Education for All' social impact initiative and 'Right to Live', a Karnataka-based NGO. "I discovered BYJU's on the internet as a tool that would improve my schooling significantly since I was not taking any additional coaching. They helped me



by making the study material more understandable. I want to use BYJU'S Education for All and Right to Live programmes to further my education and establish a good name for my parents and family members by becoming a banker when I grow up," says Saraswathi. Her favourite subjects are English, Social Science, and Kannada.



Prerna Shet is a Sirsi student who has made her State and country proud by winning a slew of gold medals in badminton at the national and international levels. She most recently brought honour to the country when she won gold at the 19th International School

Federation (ISF) Games in Normandy, France. She took to badminton at the tender age of five. I started playing badminton as I was watching my sister play the sport. I picked up the basics of the sport from my previous coach, Ravindra Shanbag. I then worked on my skills under Manjunath Petkar. I want to bring more laurels to the country," said a beaming Prerna.



Anica Jaish is a State-level volleyball player and the leader of her team which recently won gold in the A tal Trophy competition in Udupi, Karnataka. Anica has always been a curious child, and her curiosity

pushed her to learn more, whether it is about schoolwork or sports. She has competed in a few State-level volleyball competitions and is currently training for her forthcoming tournament, Khelo India. Anica has been playing volleyball since she was in the 4th Standard. A student at Milagres English School, Udupi, she has an active interest in academics and sports. However, due to sports travel and tournaments, she had to skip her classes quite often, which impacted her learning graph. Seeing this, her parents enrolled her with BYJU'S to provide a personalised learning experience at her convenience. With BYJU'S, Anica can balance her sports practice and study sessions with equal interest and dedication.



Stuti Kulkarni has set 11 records in inline skating while also mastering hula hoops. She is also an academic champion. Stuti has many record-breaking feats, including the quickest 100-metres on inline skates while spinning three hula hoops

for 23.45 seconds in 2021. She is featured in the Limca Book of Records in 2020 and the Asia Book of Records, among others. When she started spinning hula hoops as a hobby at just four years old, she decided to master the art by watching YouTube

tutorials. When she was eight years old, she took up inline skating and combined both passions. Young Stuti is an inspiration to many and aims to pave her way at the international level.

Guneet Kaur Uberoi is a State-level shot put player who won a silver medal in the Chhattisgarh State Level School Games held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. An enthusiastic kid since her younger days, Guneet's passion to excel always pushes her to learn more, be it studies or sports. She



has participated in several State-level shot-put tournaments and is a recognised entrepreneur. Along with excelling in sports, Guneet has another feather to her cap – she is a reputed professional baker and goes by the name, Buddy Baker. The young enthusiast is breaking all barriers and is determined to achieve her dreams. Guneet has been playing shot-put since the 6th Standard. Currently, she represents the sport at the State level and has won many accolades at the city and district levels. A student of N.H. Goel World School, Raipur, Guneet is passionate about academics and sports. To balance both, she enrolled with BYJU'S to enable personalised learning at her convenience. With BYJU'S, Guneet can balance her sports practice, which includes a rigorous schedule every day, and her study sessions with equal interest and dedication.

Yathiksha BM from Mysuru, Karnataka, secured a gold medal at the national level for a fencing competition organised in her city. A student of St. Rosello Central School, this young learner aims to skyrocket her dreams and excel in this niche sport.



Rising to the challenge, Yathiksha has achieved excellent results and ranked first, overall, in Mysuru. She started training for fencing at the age of 14 and decided to master this sport through various tutorials and coaching by her mentors. She is also a trained gymnast and loves cycling in her free time. Seeing her determination and grit, her mentor recommended she pursue fencing, and there was no looking back after that. Self-driven, Yathiksha is an inspiration to many. She aims to pave her way toward being a successful fencing champion at the national level.

These girls exemplify that while being a girl comes with its set of challenges, nothing can stop them from achieving their full potential. These unsung heroes are slowly transforming the face of the country, and a little nudge goes a long way in ensuring that they achieve their dreams and build a future they can call their own.

Contributed by:
BYJU'S

Bridgestone India: Winners of 2nd Edition of Mobility Social Impact Awards Announced



Bridgestone India announced the winners of the 2nd edition of Mobility Social Impact Awards. These awards identify, recognise and promote mobility innovations through advanced technologies and solutions in the field of social advancement. The winners took home a total prize money of Rs 30 Lakhs in the three categories.

The Awards have three focus areas: Accessible, Safe and Smart mobility solutions. Innovative ideas that provide better accessibility to healthcare and nutrition, livelihoods, education and social inclusion is one area. Second is to assess safe mobility solutions that enhance safety and inclusion bridging the present gender gap, disaster mitigation and increase road safety. Thirdly, smart mobility solutions that yield positive social impact eliminating poverty, promote biodiversity conservation and development of our rural communities.

“Bridgestone aims to positively impact the way people live, move, work and

play. Mobility plays a key role in a nation's development and thereby has a significant impact on society. With these awards, we aim to recognise those who employ sustainable mobility solutions in the service of communities thereby improving the quality of life. Being a global leader in mobility solutions, we understand what it takes to create innovative solutions and simultaneously aid to the needs of diverse communities. The winners of Bridgestone Mobility social impact awards are a testament to this and we are honoured to recognise such innovators,” said Parag Satpute, Managing Director, Bridgestone India.

Mentors Foundation, Tasgaon, Maharashtra is the winner for their “Two Wheels of Hope - Bicycle Bank project” which has been developed to solve distance and mobility challenges faced by girl students in rural areas to reach schools. Also, the project solved the problem of access of healthcare services. An ASHA (Accredited Social Healthcare Activist) worker is allocated for every

1,000 families, and access to these families is only done by walking the distance. With Two Wheels of Hope, ASHA workers are now able to reach out to the families well in time.

The first runner up is Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK), Hasaribagh, Jharkhand for their initiatives on restoring eyesight free of cost for rural underprivileged citizens with avoidable blindness, thus restoring their mobility, social life, and livelihood.

The second runner up is the Centre for Rural Development, Guwahati, Assam, for their project “Rickshaw Bank” which provides a means of self-employment to rickshaw pullers by offering a “rent-to-own” financing option to purchase an innovative newly designed rickshaw “DIP-BAHAN” (originally designed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati) that is lighter in weight, has an improved centre of gravity, contains more luggage space, and has a canopy to cover both puller and passengers.

The jury comprised of Dr Sudha Kothari, Founder & Managing Trustee, Chaitanya, Arindam Lahiri - CEO at Automotive Skills Development Council – India, Prashant Ranjan Verma General Secretary, National Association for the Blind, Dr Lidwin Dias, Principal, College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai. Bridgestone India, was represented on the jury by Apurv Choubey, Chief Human Resource Officer and Rajarshi Moitra Chief Commercial Officer.

Awardees were felicitated at the event attended by Lila Poonawalla as Chief Guest and Shankar Venkateshwaran, a renowned expert on ESG and Responsible Business, as the keynote speaker, among other dignitaries from corporates, NGOs and Government and local administration.



Experian and Srujna Charitable Trust to Uplift Lower Income Women with Financial Literacy Skills



As part of United for Financial Health, Experian's global corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, 50,000 lower-income women could improve their quality of life by gaining financial literacy and management skills through Project Laxmi, a financial literacy programme run by Srujna Charitable Trust, which empowers women impacted by poverty.

Experian, the world's leading global information services company, has worked with Srujna Charitable Trust for the last two years through various charitable projects in India. The United for Financial Health global CSR initiative aims to support millions of people marginalised by COVID-19 globally by offering tangible ways to improve financial health and aid on the road to recovery.

By working with non-profit organisations (NPOs) worldwide to provide tools and resources to educate

and uplift consumers, Experian has made 52 million connections with people through United for Financial Health in 2021 and reached 87 million people since its launch in 2020. Experian's goal is to make 100 million connections by 2024. In the first year of United for Financial Health's launch in APAC, Experian reached 382,777 people through a digital literacy online quiz and competition by partnering with a non-profit, Enrich, in Hong Kong recently.

Neeraj Dhawan, Country Manager, Experian India, says, "We are delighted to be continuing the positive work we are doing with Srujna Charitable Trust and partnering with them as part of Experian's United for Financial Health global CSR initiative. As the world's largest credit bureau, Experian is in a unique position to help people in India



improve their financial health. We are committed to driving financial inclusion by providing tools and knowledge, particularly for marginalised segments of society. By equipping people with fundamental skills such as financial management, they could improve their lives substantially. We are looking forward to working with Srujna Charitable Trust to support our community."

Jyotika Bhatia, CEO & Co-founder of Srujna Charitable Trust, adds: "We built Srujna Charitable Trust to change the lives of many women, who were unable to improve the quality of their lives despite earning money. Without financial literacy, many of these women did not



know how to manage their finances or handed it over to others to do so. Financial literacy education for women impacted by poverty has been a dream project for Srujna and with the support of Experian we are able to bring it to life. Doing social impact work on-ground is only possible with the backup provided by well-wishers and we are grateful for everything that Experian and their team have done."

Srujna Charitable Trust's financial literacy programme helps participants learn the importance of personal finance management and equip them with tangible tools to set them up for success. These include access to ready-reckoner rates, reference videos, financial planners, and if needed, bank accounts. By encouraging a habit of saving and investing, participants can transform their lives and safeguard their future by learning to save for their children's education, retirement, or plan for a rainy day. ■

Herbalife and United Way Bengaluru Implement a Series of Integrated Rural Development Programmes at Wayanad's Noolpuzha

Herbalife Nutrition Ltd., United Way of Bengaluru (UWBe), and the Noolpuzha Gram Panchayat have come together with a vision to ensure integrated development of the Noolpuzha Gram Panchayat, Wayanad's second largest tribal belt.

This integrated rural development programme called 'Rural Rising', is a flagship intervention of UWBe, built on a 'convergence model' where the programme is implemented in aspirational districts and remote areas in various geographies in alignment with government schemes and implemented in partnership with government and private partners. NITI Aayog has identified districts in each State as aspirational districts and a clear framework has been given on which the districts need to work. Wayanad is one of the aspirational districts in Kerala, and UWBe through the Rural Rising initiative aims to support the Government in achieving the



milestones. This is a landmark project in demonstrating effective Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) in the development of communities.

The multi-year Rural Rising programme in Noolpuzha Gram Panchayat (GP) addresses five key areas based on the need assessment-enhancement of children's nutrition; quality of engagement with children in Anganwadi Centres through the Born Learning

Campaign (BLC) of UWBe; strengthening schools to retain and attract students from tribal hamlets; supporting the livelihood of women in Self Help Groups (SHGs) and skill development of youth in the areas of intervention.

"Extending one's mind and hand together to the downtrodden is amazing and the need of the day. Health of the children and women in the tribal hamlets





is a matter of serious concern. Herbalife Nutrition and United Way Bengaluru are determined to implement innovative and active intervention to fulfill the need of health and nutrition and Early Childhood Care and Education. The intervention by Herbalife Nutrition and the United Way Bengaluru in Noolpuzha Panchayath of Wayanad District is absolutely meaningful and appreciable," said T. Hafsaath, DPO, ICDS, Wayanad.

Most children with malnutrition in Wayanad have been reported from tribal communities. Children and women suffer from nutrition deficiency and anaemia due to a lack of a proper and balanced diet. The Rural Rising intervention ensures the availability of cooked meals thrice a day, six days a week, to children enrolled in four Anganwadi Centres, to begin with, at Noolpuzha.

Low attendance of students in schools and Anganwadi Centres have been another concerning issue. To make schools attractive and welcoming, play areas will be set up in two schools - Govt Lower Primary School, Muthanga, and Sri Jaya Aided Lower Primary School, catering to 250 students. In addition, two Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with new facilities and infrastructure support to make the centres safe and conducive for children in line with the

ICDS guidelines. Additionally, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers will be trained on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) curriculum and pedagogy.

The intervention is closely working with the Jilla Mission of Wayanad. Three hundred executive members of registered SHGs in Noolpuzha GP are provided training in entrepreneurship development. Specific livelihood interventions are provided to other SHGs. Interventions ranging from providing grinding equipment to set up of a grocery store are planned for various SHGs. To support the locals engaging in honey collection, eighty honey collectors will be supported with honey harvesting kits containing modernised tools to help increase their productivity and ensure safety. Apart from these, skilling programmes are provided to special people from the 'BUDS' Centre to help them generate income and live with dignity. Overall, about 650 SHG members will be directly benefitted from the livelihood interventions.

Sports is recognised as a powerful medium to instill positive social skills, leadership qualities, self-awareness, and creativity. For the well-being of community youth and to help them utilise their time judiciously, the sports centres are equipped with different types

of sports equipment and books for the youth and children of the community.

"Herbalife is committed to helping tackle the global challenges of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Through our 'Nutrition for Zero Hunger initiative', we are focused on building community to reduce food insecurity, increase access to healthy food, and provide nutritional education to eliminate malnutrition among the tribal population. The Rural Rising intervention from United Way of Bengaluru is an excellent opportunity for us to reach out to the tribal communities in Wayanad, an aspirational district and as identified by Niti Aayog. We are glad to collaborate with United Way Bengaluru and look forward to a long-term engagement," said Amit Khanna, Country Head of Herbalife Nutrition India.

"Aligned to the UN Sustainable Goals and connected to Mission Antyodaya, this multi-year intervention has been shaped with coherent and measurable yearly milestones, built on a partnership model where the responsibility of village-level development will be shared by all the key stakeholders making this programme sustainable," said Rajesh Krishnan, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Bengaluru. ■

NASSCOM Foundation and Gen Empowered 200 Women Agri-preneurs with Digital Skills to Fulfill Their Entrepreneurial Aspirations

Laying a strong foundation to empower rural women entrepreneurs in the digital economy, NASSCOM Foundation and Gen, a global company dedicated to powering Digital Freedom through its trusted Cyber Safety brands including Norton, Avast, LifeLock and Avira, have successfully trained women entrepreneurs in Latur and Osmanabad districts in Maharashtra. The initiative was to digitally upskill over 200 women agri and agri-allied entrepreneurs to enable them to participate in the digital economy. Ninety-nine per cent of women entrepreneurs trained under the project are now able to use digital communication tools to boost their businesses and 100 per cent of the women entrepreneurs have been successfully skilled in digital adoption thereby, giving them enormous opportunities to thrive through technology.

The project being executed by their grassroots partner, Swayam Shiksham Prayog (SSP), has helped narrow the gender gap in accessing digital technology and has also supported the digital empowerment of rural women. The training has provided opportunities to women entrepreneurs to have market linkages, and knowledge of various government schemes and also to establish, maintain and accelerate their businesses in agriculture, dairy farming, and more.

A report by Bain and Company reveals that COVID-19 has affected almost 73 per cent of women-run enterprises in India, while the revenue of nearly 20 per cent of female entrepreneurs dwindled to zero. Recent research by MicroSave Consulting also highlights that as many as 82 per cent of female-owned micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)



reported a decrease in their income, compared to 72 per cent of male-owned enterprises. They faced greater restrictions that made them unsustainable, including decreasing demand, lack of knowledge of digital technologies, rising costs of inputs, inability to access markets, and an increased burden of care work at home, among other factors.

Nidhi Bhasin, CEO of NASSCOM Foundation said, “Gender disparity in economic participation remains significantly high and deeply embedded in our social fabric. That said, we have seen first-hand how technology fosters inclusion by creating equity in opportunities. It is a catalyst that enables women to become economically active, particularly in this ever-evolving digital world. As we work towards that goal, we are honoured to collaborate with Gen to empower women agri-preneurs by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt and participate meaningfully in the digital economy.”

Kim Allman, Head of Corporate Responsibility at Gen said, “We are here to help women unlock new possibilities for the future through technology. In collaboration with NASSCOM

Foundation, we are providing access to resources to help close the gender gap and give women the tools they need to thrive in today's digital world.”

Trishala Ramesh Mane, an entrepreneur from Latur, said, “I was doing quite well in my businesses, but had very limited knowledge of a smartphone and did not know how to use it to expand my business. After the training, I could make and receive calls, read WhatsApp messages, and watch YouTube videos to enhance my business. I even got the opportunity to understand about the various Government schemes. The training has enormously helped me learn basic to advanced smartphone features and digital platforms, applications in improving my business aspects, and gain confidence through the newly acquired skills.”

Digital transformation is an enduring journey. However, through initiatives like these, women entrepreneurs are being supported with digital knowledge, and educated on online channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube critical for their development and growth and required to advance in the digital economy

Quick Heal's Arogya Yan Enables Healthcare for 20,000 People of Barpeta, Assam

Inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Quick Heal, the leading cybersecurity service provider through its CSR initiative donated 'Arogya Yan', a fully equipped medical van, to the rural community in Barpeta, Assam.

In collaboration with Srijan Ek Soch, a local NGO, this initiative aims at making basic treatment and necessary testing accessible for the marginalised. The special handing over ceremony was attended by Geeta Shree, ADM, Barpeta, Disha Shrivastava, CEO, Srijan Ek Soch, Anupama Katkar, Chairperson, Quick Heal Foundation along with the guest of honour, Bikram Jyoti Das, a visually-impaired mountaineer who recently made a successful climb to Everest Base Camp.

This state-of-the-art fully equipped medical van enables more than 20,000 people, who earlier walked between 10-30 km to access primary healthcare amenities, at their doorsteps. This service is further expected to spread awareness

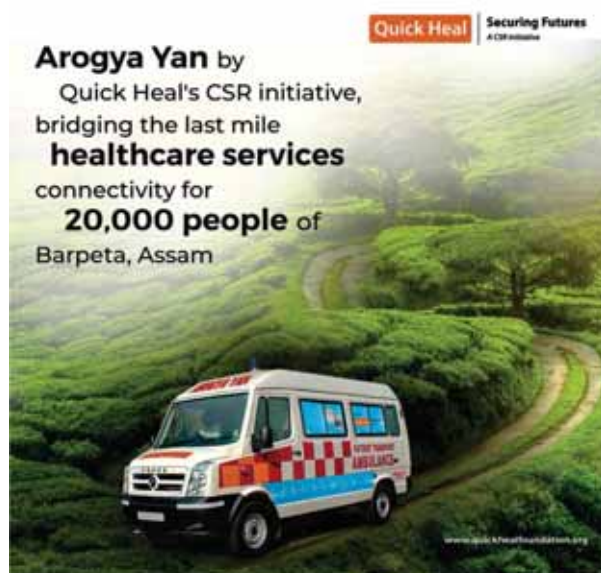


amongst the beneficiaries around the various government schemes that aim at promoting public welfare and better health.

seven States touching more than 3.5 lakh people. And, through this contribution in Barpeta, Assam, we are delighted to have enabled 20,000 people of these remote villages to access quality primary healthcare services at their doorsteps.”

Speaking on the occasion, Disha Shrivastava, CEO of Srijan Ek Soch said, “Promoting healthcare and education are the intrinsic part of Srijan's core values, and we are grateful to Quick Heal Foundation for assisting us with the state-of-the-art mobile vans facility called Arogya Yan. With the collaboration, we are covering 20 villages in Assam to reach the remotest areas of our Socio Economic Development Centre in Barpeta district region to make primary healthcare accessible, while also working towards increasing school enrolment and lowering dropout rates.”

Present on the occasion, Anupama Katkar, Chairperson of Quick Heal Foundation and Chief of Operational Excellence, Quick Heal Technologies Limited, said, “Quick Heal's CSR mission 'Securing Futures' is one that is both forward-looking, and sustainable. Arogya Yan is our endeavour to reaching those who are miles away from receiving proper medical treatment at the time of need. Our state-of-the-art fully equipped medical vans cover more than 450 villages across



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