

# How Gujarat gave fresh impetus to entrepreneurship

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**Ahmedabad:** In the 1970s, the state government's technician scheme with 100% finance and without collateral to promote small business ventures failed to take off. While there were many takers for it, the high failure rate made it unsustainable.

What followed was the first exercise to understand what works for businesses and why. While Gujarat has been known for its business acumen and wealth generation for centuries, the exercise raised an interesting question: Can business or entrepreneurship be 'taught'?

A book chronicling 40 years of Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) tries to answer this question.

Dr Sunil Shukla, the director general of the institute, said that the exercise laid the foundation of entrepreneurship education in the state. The programme by the state government, with multiple sta-

keholders, gave Gujarat trained entrepreneurs with the participants, largely owner-managers, turning their knowledge into successful ventures.

Vinod Agarwal, an Ahmedabad-based businessman and former CII Gujarat chairman, said that the late 1980s saw trained entrepreneurs starting their ventures in Gujarat with knowledge about international law and financing. S S Modi, a former GIDC official said, "Business clusters began taking shape in south Gujarat and Saurashtra. The 1991 reforms brought in another dimension with the domestic market opening up for global companies, whereas from the 2000s, one can see the shift towards services from conventional manufacturing," he said.

"Earlier, the entrepreneurs were in their late 30s with industry exposure. Today, college students in their 20s are launching startups. Financing has also become relatively easier."