

‘Entrepreneurship Development Institute to focus on start-ups in coming years’

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EDII Director Dr Sunil Shukla (file pic)

Ahmedabad, Nov 4:

The Ahmedabad-based Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) was set up in 1983 as an autonomous and non-profit catalyst to facilitate the emergence of competent first generation entrepreneurs and the transition of existing SMEs into growth-oriented enterprises through entrepreneurship, education, training, research and institution-building. EDII was sponsored by IDBI Bank Ltd, IFCI Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd and State Bank of India.

The premier institute has since emerged as an international resource centre facilitating various facets of entrepreneurship development. Besides having entrepreneurship development centres in 12 states across India, it is now going overseas in a big way.

Excerpts from an interview with EDII Director Dr Sunil Shukla:

How many foreign delegates have been trained by EDII in the past decade?

Over 5,000 delegates from various countries have been trained at EDII in the last 10 years or so. We conduct various training programmes of six to eight weeks' duration. At any point of time, we have nearly 100 foreign students. At present, they include nearly 30 from China as well. Annually, we train about 400 foreign students across 15 programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. In recognition of its international achievements, the United

Nations Economic and Political Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), Bangkok, Thailand, has declared EDII as a Centre of Excellence.

How has EDII reached out to other countries in the recent past and what are its plans to increase its footprint abroad?

The Vienna-based United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) has set up its first overseas centre at EDII. And we have already established entrepreneurship development centres in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. We will shortly open one in Uzbekistan as infrastructure, faculty and other requirements to commence operations are in place there. In 2017, we plan to open centres in Rwanda, Namibia and Zambia, to be followed by two more in Africa.

At present what are the focus areas of EDII?

We are currently focusing on (1) Entrepreneurship education and research; (2) Micro-enterprises, micro-finance and sustainable livelihood; (3) SMEs and business development services; (4) Cluster competitiveness, growth and technology; (5) social entrepreneurship and CSR and (6) Women entrepreneurship and gender studies. In the near future, we will focus on creating and assisting more start-ups with emphasis on innovation, technology and global competitiveness. EDII has set up its own Technology Business Incubator named as the Centre for Advancing and Launching Enterprises (CrAdLE).

Is the institute also encouraging women entrepreneurship?

Of course. We are training nearly 1,000 women per annum in entrepreneurship through over 40 programmes in association with different partners across India and around a third of them actually turn entrepreneurs.

How have Indians keen on entrepreneurship training responded to EDII's efforts?

We are currently engaged in creating a database of all our alumni. EDII has an alumni base of nearly 1,500 students who have passed out from the full-time PG course. About 70 per cent of them run their own businesses. EDII has created over one lakh entrepreneurs in the last three decades through its own programmes/ courses or its association with other institutions spread across India.

What has been the response from students of Gujarat, which is seen as an entrepreneurship-friendly state?

About 40-45 per cent of EDII students are from Gujarat, 20-30 per cent from the neighbouring states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the remaining from the rest of India. Of the students from Gujarat, about 60 per cent have a background in family business and many of them go back to their family business. But some of them start their own enterprises instead of going back to their family business.

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