

## 'I was not taken seriously till I made the prototype'

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When Namrata Diwakar revealed that she had a business idea to make vetiver (khus) curtains that will not only cool your house during summers but also repel mosquitoes, she was discouraged by almost everyone. The pharmacy graduate was already working with a private firm, so nobody considered the venture more than a 'hobby project'. It wasn't until she made a prototype that her husband saw merit behind the idea and backed her to the hilt.

"The idea was simple but effective: Instead of vetiver mats that is sprinkled with water to ensure a cool breeze during summers, I thought of turning a fabric made of vetiver and other aromatic crops into curtains that will also keep mosquitoes away. When I told my close ones about it, they did not think I was serious about it or was ready to devote my energy to it," she recounts. However, once she had her husband on board, things started rolling fast. Incubated at EDII's Cra-



Priyadarshini S  
(above);  
Namrata  
Diwakar



dle, the start-up has raised Rs 35 lakh in funding. The promoters participated in Expo 2020 at Dubai where they got good response.

"The biggest challenge is to keep faith in oneself. We have already filed patent for the process as it is eco-friendly and will create job opportunities for weavers," she says.

Another startup at Cradle is Wet Acre which is founded by Priyadarshini S, a native of Tamil Nadu and the daughter of a farmer. "While we are at prototype stage with successful lab experiments, the core idea is irrigation by condensation," she says.

Her idea uses atmospheric water to irrigate crops through hygroscopic structures that can absorb atmospheric moisture.