

“YES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY TAUGHT”

Dr Sunil Shukla, Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) leverages his extensive experience to share his views on how agropreneurship has much scope

By D Tejaswi



Trained entrepreneurs realize how not to shelve plans in crisis but begin small on a small budget, move up step by step -- capitalizing on creative and innovative thinking

Q. Could you please project the growth of Agri-tech landscape for an Indian Entrepreneur?

With a major proportion of the Indian population still engaged in agriculture, we need to ensure that the sector’s contribution to GDP grows manifold.

This will be possible only when the hardwork and labour that goes into it, matches the outcome. We need to ensure viability and feasibility of career in this sector which only technology and innovations can guarantee. Usage of technology in agriculture can lead to increase in productivity, efficiency and

output, and this trend is poised to grow. As per NASSCOM report on agritech 2019, Agritech can be applied across the agricultural value chain and can be in the form of a product, a service or an application. A student interested in the sector has options galore:

The NASSCOM Report on Agritech 2019 lists out Startups Technologies Impacting Agricultural Value Chain

Inputs / Knowledge	Harvesting and Transport	Processing & Storage	Distribution, Packaging & Handling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting agriculture inputs directly on phone • Weather forecast through weather apps • Decision support solution for farmers like selling crops at appropriate rates • Pest Management Solution and Nutritional Management Solution AI based sowing advisories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSM Mobile controlled motor • Hi tech irrigation systems like drip, sprinkler etc. • Auto Steering Tractors powered by GPS • Crop Counting Machines • Machine-learning algorithms to differentiate between weeds and crops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine based Imaging technology to sort based on color, size, type, etc. • Wireless sensor to monitor crops connected with smartphone • Measuring grains moisture content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web and mobile applications to sell directly farm products • Price forecasting model to prevent inflation • Dynamic product pricing • Online marketplace for grain • Using data to track a supply chain

Q. What does the year 2025 look from here in terms of technology in Agriculture?

The scenario is upbeat. Today’s youth is highly innovative and keen to reform the sector by deploying modern technology. More and more start up enthusiasts,

trained in entrepreneurship, are coming up with technologies that can transform agricultural practices in India and making it as a lucrative option.

Q. What are the predicaments or challenges that most of the agropreneurs go through? How

can it be mitigated?

While lack of infrastructure, transportation and market networks have been persistent problems, minimal use of technologies, such as, artificial intelligence; geo-tagging, satellite monitoring, precision farming, big data

analytics, etc. are not letting the sector attain its full potential. Technology needs to be strengthened.

Q. What role does the EDII play in supporting the Agri-tech entrepreneurs? Please elaborate.

In addition to Skill Development Training Programmes EDII also focusses on agri-entrepreneurship as a part of its 2-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship. The Institute trains, counsels and mentors interested students to come up with bankable project Report by the end of two years.

Q. Does EDII offer any financial assistance or scholarship to encourage students taking up the mantle of entrepreneurship?

EDII has introduced Milestone based learning to enable students to achieve stepping stones in their entrepreneurial journey. The students can undertake this while still pursuing their course at EDII. The Institute also provides seed funding to successful milestone bonus point achievers for setting up new ventures.

Q. Are there any student exchange programs for recently passed out students, aiming to turn as entrepreneurs?

Our two year course Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship is an application-oriented course which involves regular field visits, student exchanges and interaction with entrepreneurs to enable students to see the practical aspect of things.

Q. Do you have any motivational message for Indian students who aim to be entrepreneurs?

Before taking the plunge into entrepreneurship, a potential entrepreneur must understand the significance of extensively researching

the business opportunity that they opt for, to fit it in the economic scenario. Generally budget is also a constraint for most young enthusiasts; which is where training in entrepreneurship becomes important. Trained entrepreneurs realize how not to shelve plans in crises but begin small on a small budget, move up step by step capitalizing on creative and innovative thinking. So go ahead, learn and make it big.

Q. What is the overall placement scenario for a student finishing his graduation in Agriculture? Please, shed some light.

The objective of EDII's programmes is to train and mentor students to set up their own enterprises and hence we hand hold them, after the training, so that they achieve the objective of setting up their unit. 78% of EDII alumni have chosen entrepreneurial career.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to share?

Let me add that entrepreneurship can be successfully taught like any other discipline. It is now well accepted the world over that 'Entrepreneurs are not just born; they can also be created through well conceived education and training interventions'. This is now a global phenomenon. Considering the advantages that emanate, international universities are today offering full-fledged courses on entrepreneurship. Even in India, several prestigious institutions such as the IIMs, Indian School of Business have incorporated entrepreneurship inputs as a part of their curricula.

The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad has been offering an AICTE approved 2-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship, with specializations in New Venture Creation, Family Business Management and Social Entrepreneurship. The pedagogy is application-oriented with

EDII students in agropreneurship

- **Swapnil Srivastav** floated a Start-up named 'Organic MP' has been awarded with the Krishi Bhushan Award 2017.



- **Sameer Allavadi** owns a business unit named Utkarsh Agrotech, located at Surat. He is a producer and supplier of banana tissue culture plants and papaya plants. Besides, he is a manufacturer and trader of chemical, natural, organic and biological fertilizers and pesticides. Samir also runs a Gir cow gaushala with 52 cows. He also worked as inspector for certified organic farming.



- **Nagarjun Khushwaha** is a director of Harsidhi Biotech (India) Pvt Limited. It is an Agro Biotech Company that manufactures environment friendly bio and organic Fertilizers and Pesticides. The student even got covered in a leading national daily.



innovative aspects of EDII Gurukul; EDII Launchpad and Milestone based learning. The Institute also houses a contemporary incubator which is supported by Dept of Science and Technology, Govt of India. H