



Fostering Grampreneurship can transform aspirational rural India: Vice President

Addresses International Mentoring Summit

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that fostering Grampreneurship can transform aspirational rural India. He was addressing the International Mentoring Summit with the theme 'Mentoring Young Grampreneurs for Inclusive Growth', on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST), here today. His Royal Highness Prince Charles and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that rural India is rapidly changing and the rural youth too are well informed, are eager to learn, have an entrepreneurial spirit, and quite often even global aspirations. He further said that the present Government has been tirelessly working to promote inclusive growth, to make India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Policies like Start-up India and Atal Innovation Mission are geared to support the start-up environment, he added.

The Vice President said that the aim of the National Urban Livelihoods Mission was to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities. He further said that the core belief is that the poor are entrepreneurial and have innate desire to come out of poverty. The challenge is to unleash their capabilities to generate meaningful and sustainable livelihoods, he added.

The Vice President said that the constraints like access to credit, advantages of technology, marketing support need to be addressed and the BYST model of mentoring can play a significant role in the growth of entrepreneurial culture. He further said that the challenge is to encourage more youth to make the choice of becoming entrepreneurs, rather than be job-seekers. Many more opportunities for decent livelihoods must be created rapidly in the rural areas, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"It is my pleasure to join you for the International Mentoring Summit on Mentoring Young GrampreneursTM for Inclusive Growth' on the occasion of BYST's Silver Jubilee and to address, especially, the grass root entrepreneurs who have joined us from all over the country, industry mentors and all other supporters of the entrepreneurial eco-system.

I was delighted to learn that HRH was the inspiration to Ms. Lakshmi to start the youth entrepreneurship programme in India for the underprivileged youth. This program seems to have been modelled after the Prince's Trust programme in UK. We appreciate the fact that HRH has been playing a stellar role and keeping abreast of the progress made by BYST as is evident from the fact that this is his fifth visit to BYST during the last 25 years.

I had the pleasure of attending, earlier this year, the Inaugural International Mentoring Summit conducted by BYST at Rashtrapati Bhavan and to unveil the logo of the flagship programme of BYST - Mentoring IndiaTM.

In today's conference, it is heartening to see a "meeting of the minds" of young people, particularly those from underserved communities and the experienced and experts in business - sharing experiences and exchanging valuable lessons.

I understand, BYST provides a facilitative environment to our rural youth, who have received limited education, have started working early in life and are struggling on the poverty line.

Rural India is rapidly changing. The rural youth too are well informed, are eager to learn, have an entrepreneurial spirit, and quite often even global aspirations.

Creating a facilitative eco-system for rural entrepreneurship is very important. Mentoring is a crucial part of this eco-system.

The present Govt. has been tirelessly working to promote inclusive growth, to make India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Policies like Start-up India and Atal Innovation Mission are geared to support the start-up environment.

During my earlier tenure as Minister of Urban Development, we had modified the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM). The aim was to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities. The core belief of National Urban Livelihoods Mission is that the poor are entrepreneurial and have innate desire to come out of poverty. The challenge is to unleash their capabilities to generate meaningful and sustainable livelihoods.

The constraints like access to credit, advantages of technology, marketing support need to be addressed and I think BYST model of mentoring can play a significant role in the growth of entrepreneurial culture.

Over the last twenty five years, BYST has given wings to rural youth and enabled them to become entrepreneurs. This is the group with greater aspirations but limited opportunities. They are a group that needs guidance and encouragement.

I am delighted to know that BYST is playing a unique and important role by providing mentoring to the entrepreneurs whether they are competing with the industry giants in the metros or difficult rural hinterland of Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

When I hear that BYST entrepreneurs have been winning national and international awards, I can see that they have broken through a whole range of barriers. They are making a tremendous success of their business primarily due to the steady support of their mentors.

I congratulate the winning entrepreneurs and mentors of the BYST Silver Jubilee Awards today.

These are truly excellent examples of the efficacy of mentoring.

Encouraging entrepreneurship in young people is an important way of harnessing their enthusiasm, energy and ambition to contribute to economic development. Fostering Grampreneurship can transform aspirational rural India.

The challenge is to encourage more youth to make the choice of becoming entrepreneurs, rather than be job-seekers. Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) is a successful example of this paradigm. Many more opportunities for decent livelihoods must be created rapidly in the rural areas.

Lakhs of youth emerge from various Govt. Sponsored Entrepreneurship Development Programmes or EDP. However, for them to apply their skills, develop further and fulfil their potential, they need sustained support, guidance, counselling and timely advice. In short, they require "Mentoring".

In the absence of quality mentoring, the youth find themselves lacking focus and direction to channel their skills and become successful entrepreneurs. The nurturing and follow up support provided by mentors during the crucial first years of operation of a new business is critical. This support can often make the difference between abject failure and spectacular success.

This is where Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) has excelled with its proven model of mentoring 'bottom of the pyramid' entrepreneurs, and provide the vital link in the entire chain of entrepreneur support system. The theme of today's summit is, therefore, very aptly titled "mentoring young grampreneurs for inclusive growth".

Both the public and private sectors have to play a catalytic role in further developing such an eco-system. I can see immense scope and possible intervention of Corporate Social Responsibility funding to support the unique mentor movement in order to create successful entrepreneurs.

Finally, I congratulate BYST for completing 25 years in the service of youth entrepreneurship development through mentoring and handholding support. I wish this organization many more years of excellent work in creating a new generation of rural entrepreneurs.

Thank you. Jai Hind."

KSD/BK

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