

NAVPRAVARTAN: A STARTUP ZONE IN CHANPATIA, WEST CHAMPARAN

In a nutshell: Turning the COVID-19 adversity into opportunity by providing innovative solutions to the returnee migrants.

Nodal agency: District administration, West Champaran (Bettiah), Bihar

The unavoidable lockdowns and travel ban that was imposed globally during COVID-19 were seen as a necessity to tackle the pandemic. Among the populace, the migrant returnees were found to be one of the most vulnerable groups in this lockdown, as their livelihoods came to a complete standstill. The pandemic brought about a situation of 'reverse migration' in which people returned to their native place from their place of employment. For decades, going to other States for better economic prospects has been a way of life for residents of West Champaran district. Hence, this district also received many returnees who had the pressing need to head back home during the unprecedented crisis.

Launched in May 2020 and with support from the Bihar government 'Zila Audyogik Navpravartan Yojana', Navpravartan startup zone, Chanpatia provided an innovative solution to the plight of returnees who faced grave financial and psychosocial crises during this time. Through this initiative, the district administration ensured the economic growth of the region through measures like bulk production model using latest technologies, generating employment, nurturing entrepreneurial ecosystem, and providing an efficient public service delivery system, leading eventually to the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

There was no such existing setup or industry to provide employment and to re-integrate the returnees in West Champaran district. The administration undertook the task of skill profiling each returnee and preparing a digital database, formed Udyami Mitra Mandals, deployed an officer of district administration as single point of contact (SPOC) to each Udyami. Further, it created a plug and play model by taking warehouses and tweaking the existing schemes to create Navpravartan startup zone.

The idea was to tap into the potential of the varied skill pool of the workers to provide employment solutions that were closer to home. This startup zone houses 57 returnees' production units and items worth more than ₹ 15 crore have already been sold in and outside India. The startup zone churns out a host of different products, from shirts, lowers, tracksuits, jackets, saree, lehnga, suits, sanitary pads, and footwear, to steel utensils and cricket bats.

Impact

- The Navpravartan startup zone has provided an innovative solution to the plight of the returnee migrants who were anxious about their uncertain future. These returnees have grown from migrant workers to owners.
- Developed as production manufacturing hub: So far 57 entrepreneurs have been allotted space under Chanpatia startup zone. While 141 other entrepreneurs are in line for allotment of seats.

- They have sold their items within and outside India as well, with orders coming in from Brazil and South Africa.
- Led to creation of thousands of direct and indirect employments in the home district.
- Since the zone is in their district, the returnee migrants have saved money on rent for accommodation. They also can enjoy their local culture while spending time with family.
- Women have also been able to get employment, and contribute to the economic upliftment of their families.
- The zone has created a startup ecosystem, whereby more startups established by youth have sprung within and around the zone.

Challenges:

Initially, banks were reluctant to provide loans to returnees. Weekly meetings with the banks and organizing regular loan mela resulted in sanctioning of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) loans in record time.

Rewards and recognition

Shri Kundan Kumar, District Magistrate, West Champaran, received the prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2021 for setting up Navpravartan startup zone. The initiative has also been covered by various media channels.

Scale-up

There are plans for scaling up the programme, and other such startup zones are being created. Due to space constraints at the Navpravartan startup zone, there is a need to expand it to other parts of the district. For scaling up the ecosystem already developed and for getting ideas from the interested entrepreneurs, the District Registration & Counselling Centre, West Champaran has been designated as a one point facility for counselling,



Startup zone in Chanpatia