



Essar Foundation Focuses on Skill Building

- Deepak Arora, CEO, Essar Foundation, India

The pace of transformation in India is more rapid than any other time in history, especially so in rural areas. Over the years, in rural India, gradual shifts in employment away from agriculture contributed much more to poverty reduction. This naturally built the case not only for skill development in market relevant fields but also for sustained improvement in traditional livelihoods. A job and a livelihood for every Indian is a dream that is gradually heading towards reality, with the industry and government joining hands actively in taking Indian economy to sustained growth. 'Skill India', has thus come to become one of the biggest mandates to fulfil. Consequently, Essar focuses a lot of its energies on skill building and integrated agriculture development.

Essar Foundation is the vehicle through which Essar Steel is doing its bit to contribute to nation building, not only in partnering in the ongoing missions, but also through creation of shared value as a way to progress. A foray of schemes and campaigns launched in recent times that have swept the nation towards progress, are being executed in mission mode. Forward looking, extensive and visionary, these national schemes and campaigns like Swachh Bharat and Make in India have begun instilling a collective spirit among the citizens and institutions across the country. Essar Foundation's dedicated behaviour change initiatives along with proliferation of toilets and menstrual hygiene products is how contributing to Swachh Bharat has intensified over the years. Even in remote villages of Dantewada, women Self Help Groups have been successfully shattering myths around menstruation practices and promoting the use of sanitary napkins among girls and women.

The idea of 'Digital India' is an equally ambitious scheme looking at digital empowerment of India in a big way. Digitally empowering initiatives like iLabss (interactive lab for soft skill development) and e-learning labs for English and personality enhancement across states have been trying to do just that.

Just as Essar has built itself on the foundation of entrepreneurship, the Foundation is instilling the same life blood into

the young. Employability and skill programmes have borne fruit in all locations. We have since doubled the number of young people we have been reaching out through skill and digital empowerment projects.

Essar has been conducting skill training programmes in a variety of market relevant trades at village level through its flagship training hubs / centers called Essar Lok Vikas Kendras (ELVK). These centers have been imparting skill development trainings to the village women in trades like dress designing & garment manufacturing, beauty/salon services, handicrafts, etc. These women have not only received skill training, they have been imparted entrepreneurship skills and practical tips towards starting an enterprise. Essar Lok Vikas Kendras (ELVKs) managed by Essar Foundation focus on enhancing employability and improving vocational skills among people. ELVKs are operating successfully in Gujarat, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, benefitting hundreds of women, men and youth through intensive skilling and entrepreneurship facilitation.

In the past years, several high-potential and high-impact initiatives have been launched and proliferated especially in the arena of health and livelihoods. Essar Foundation has



Health

- Preventive and Curative care
- Community Health Centres
- Mobile Health Vans
- Specialized health camps
- Telemedicine

Skill Development & Livelihoods

- Specialized skill training
- Entrepreneurship for Women and Youth
- Advanced Technology (Welding Center)

Education

- Comprehensive School improvement Program
- Career guidance & scholarships
- Sports development (Sports Nursery)



collaborated with New Civil Hospital, Surat to set up the Gujarat's first Hemophilia Care Centre, which was inaugurated in April 2015 in New Civil hospital, Surat. The services have further been enhanced through the state-of-the-art facilities and service mechanism. This is one of the very few such facilities in the country that's specially catering to patients with Hemophilia, which largely include children.

Essar Foundation's presence in eight states and 13 districts, our relationship with communities in 500 villages has grown stronger over the years. Having worked with over 4,50,000 community participants through robust partnerships especially with district administration, Panchayats and community organisations over last year, Essar's CSR programmes have grounded themselves on the path of sustainability.

The Foundation's work reaches out to its key stakeholders through its education, health, livelihoods, community infrastructure & environment related initiatives, each carving its own niche in its area of influence. Contributions towards nation building

missions like Swachh Bharat have been intensified over the years, with thousands of household and school toilets being constructed across villages in Gujarat, West Bengal & Odisha, more so in collaboration with the local governments to ensure sustainability & coherence. Similarly, for missions like Digital India fully-equipped modern digital labs for schools and technical institutions have been creating waves of excitement among the aspiring children and youth.



Essar takes CSR as an extension of its broad vision for nation building... with Essar Foundation as an arm to reach out to the most unreached, and a machinery to deliver the best in service of rural communities, with whom Essar coexists. Even with geographical remoteness and challenging circumstances at hand, the Foundation teams have been able to execute to their best and most innovatively. Whether it is about delivering healthcare access to displaced villages in remote Malkangiri, or nurturing first generation women entrepreneurs in Dantewada... the CSR initiatives designed strategically for these places ensure the most significant results within the given resources. Essar Foundation has been at the forefront of breakthrough innovations and use of technology. Whether it is developing the first ever model Anganwadi, or creating state-of-the-art Hemophilia care centre in Gujarat, whether it is about using Telemedicine for eye care in Odisha or the first ever Health ATM in Chhattisgarh, new grounds are being broken in making technology work for the poorest, and resources being created in the most underserved areas.

Essar Foundation has also been at the forefront of knowledge creation and sharing when it comes to CSR dialogue in India. Through flagship initiative 'Knowledge Series', the best minds on sustainability, CSR practices and sector experts are regularly coming together to share insights for a neutral learning exercise for a range of players within CSR space such as government bodies, corporates, NGOs & academia. With every initiative meant for rural development, Essar Foundation is consistently setting progressive benchmarks in bringing about positive change and partnering in the process of nation building.