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CII joins hands with NGO to create more entrepreneurs

Staff Reporter

These entrepreneurs will aid rural empowerment

CHENNAI: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is partnering with Hand in Hand, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works among women's self-help groups (SHGs), to help create more entrepreneurs to aid in rural empowerment.

A Memorandum of Understanding was exchanged by CII president R. Seshasayee and Hand in Hand's Chief Executive Officer Kalpana Shankar at a seminar on "Rural Empowerment — Entrepreneurial Skill Development" on Thursday.

The partnership hopes to create and train 1,500 entrepreneurs this year, and scale it up to 10,000 over the next three years. In the first phase, CII will analyse the markets, identify economically feasible enterprises for Hand in Hand's SHGs and support four medium size enterprises in Kancheepuram district: a bakery, a paper cup manufacturer, a sanitary napkin manufacturer and a retail business.

It will assist in training, market linkages, raw material sourcing and hand hold start-ups till they are commercially established.

Dr. Shankar hopes that CII's initiative will have a "ripple effect," and promote more entrepreneurial projects among SHGs across the State.

Mr. Seshasayee made it clear that empowering rural India is not just a function of the corporate social responsibility departments of India Inc. Rather, "it makes business sense... to develop a rural market," he said. He called on banks to be more innovative and flexible when they lend to SHGs and rural entrepreneurs.

"Rural credit can't be disbursed on the basis of assets, but [on the basis of] creative marketable ideas," he said.

Representatives from NGOs, SHGs and corporate groups participated in the seminar, exchanging best practices on micro finance, mentoring and the role of public sector banks and NGOs.

CII also released a manual for micro-entrepreneurs, which stresses the importance of SHGs in developing entrepreneurs, and covers the entire process from basic procedures to the latest trends in marketing and management.

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