

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A KEY TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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Youth entrepreneurship and start-ups

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hard to work properly in a group. Yet, almost 30-35 percent of a graduate's life is group work. And more than 70 percent of real-life work is done in groups. And group work skills are crucial in a start-up, where the flexible nature of the job and daily challenges mean that to succeed, there needs to be a very good understanding among the small group of employees that make up the company.

Modifying the curriculum is comparatively easier than changing the way people think. Either due to the stress of the curriculum, or due to social norms and comparison, the majority of parents in our country consistently remind their school going children to study harder and score higher in their exams. But such stress to get good marks and to top their classes leave kids with not enough free time to explore their talents, one of them being their entrepreneurial mindset. A mind consistently under pressure to get a set of

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answers correct will not be able to think outside the box and come up with creative ideas. Besides a modification in the curriculum, we need our parents to understand the importance of developing the creative side of their children. More so now than ever before, they need to take inspiration from Shukumar Roy's famous poem Sholo Anai Miche, the moral of which does apply regardless of all education, as lack of basic survival skills might lead to all other skills being worthless. So, parents need to understand that it will help their children immensely to have skills outside of the classroom, and need to encourage from home, the

drive to develop these skills.

In fact, both the curriculum modification and understanding by parents need to move hand in hand to encourage youth entrepreneurship. Both together can ensure that there are opportunities for school kids to exhibit their innovative and creative skills and for them to come up with business ideas and even start their journeys as young entrepreneurs.

Going back to the problems faced by start-ups over the last few years, the last one mentioned was public and private support. Over the last few years, start-ups in Bangladesh did enjoy a good deal of support from government bod-

ies, especially the ICT ministry. At present the ICT ministry has a programme—Start-up Bangladesh—which is operating with the goal of empowering IT related start-ups to succeed and scale up. With the partnership of Grameenphone, they have launched some batches of GP Accelerator programme, an incubation programme which selects a few potential ideas and teams and help them go to the market with an MVP.

Besides GP Accelerator, Start-up Bangladesh also have their own workspace where they offer training programmes for start-ups. Besides, very recently they have launched Tiger Cage,

a programme like Shark Tank, only without the funding as an outcome. But still, such programmes will help a potentially good start-up get its model evaluated thoroughly and get a validation by business experts about their idea and business model. And such validation might also help these start-ups secure funds to scale up. But there is always room for more. All these activities have been concentrated by one government office, but such an admirable drive needs to be present throughout the whole business support infrastructure of the government, from the process of registering a business, to getting funds to all other infrastructure supports.

Another role for the government would be to create a level of stability in the market in order for new ideas and companies to survive. Another very important requirement for any start-up that is based on innovation is the protection of Intellectual Property Rights, so that another party cannot just copy an innovation and gain from it. Such events will discourage efforts to innovate.

Last, but not the least, there needs to be integration between Start-up Bangladesh and other ministries, such as the Education Ministry, to modify curriculums and encourage youth entrepreneurship.

In the private sector as well, there has been a few instances of support for the growth of start-ups. One example already mentioned was that of GP Accelerator. Shared workspaces have also been created for start-ups to set up offices. Moar, located in Banani 11, is an excellent example of such a shared workspace. EMK centre has also offered many workshops and aids in creating the necessary start-up ecosystem. SD Asia, Toru, BYLC and many other organisations have also been helping to nurture start-up founders, help train start-up teams, etc.

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