

## PREMIER LEAGUE

By Niyati Rana | May 6, 2015, 02.00 AM IST

### Free IIT-JEE Coaching DVD

[www.kaysonseducation.co.in](http://www.kaysonseducation.co.in) - 300 Hrs of Lectures By Top IITians.

Ads by Google



When 23-year-old Mayur Sondarva, a native of Bantva near Junagadh, was hired as the security guard at Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, little did he know that the institution's prowess to excel would rub off on him too. After his eight-hour duty, he would attend IIT-Gn's special programme to hone the business skills of grassroots entrepreneurs. Today, after two years at the institute and armed with lessons in conducting business, Mayur has started a cafe and snacks counter at IIT-Gn itself.

He now proudly introduces himself as an entrepreneur groomed by one of the best institutions in the country. From Rs 10,000 he used to earn every month as the guard, his monthly income has gone up by four times. The programme called NEEV (Nurture and Empower Entrepreneurial Ventures), aims to help many like Mayur who aspire to run their own business but do not have the expertise, funds or understanding to start and sustain one. "When I heard about NEEV, I knew I wanted to pursue it. There were people who discouraged me and advised me against attending classes, saying it was a waste of time.

But I wanted to start my own printing press," he said. However, after guidance by mentors at IIT-Gn and I-create Bangalore, Mayur drew up a business plan only to realise he did not have enough funds to start a press. And that is when the institute officials realised that the campus required a cafe cum snacks counter. The officials first approached NEEV participants and shortlisted two candidates interested in running the cafe. Mayur was finally chosen to start the cafe at Shed 2. As soon as he started his business, he invited his brother and cousin to join him.

He also employed his friend as the cook. The cafe dishes out samosa, alu vada, bread pakoda, Maggi and other snacks. What started out of a meagre investment, now supports four families. Mayur has not quit the guard's job; he runs the cafe after his night duty. "Earlier, they used to call me 'bhaiya'. Now they call me Mayur. Apart from the standard menu, I also make special delicacies according to the tastes of faculty members and students," said Mayur. With IIT-Gn set to shift its new campus to Palaj, Mayur will

also shift his business there.

Other NEEV participants will also test business opportunities on campus — Rajesh Patel, 45, a transportation contractor with the institute, plans to start a departmental store on campus while Rohit Patel, 33, a driver who runs cabs for the institute, plans to start a food stall selling methi gola and tea. "There will be not less than 1,500 people on the new campus. Since it is located on the outskirts of the city, people will require a departmental store so that they do not have to go to Ahmedabad for their monthly grocery. I have put in a word with the authorities and I am also making a mobile application using which people can place orders," said Rajesh.

NEEV coordinator Saumya Harish said the programme has more than 33 participants, majority from among IIT-Gn staff and spouses of faculty members. "The programme is meant for lay people who do not understand business fundas, but want to learn them and run their own business. In the five-day programme, we explain to them how to chalk out a business plan by calculating investment and price range of products. The plan is then analysed by mentors based in Bangalore and modifications are made accordingly," she said.

The course module also focuses on grooming, communication and presentation skills apart from other skills that help in enhancing business. Interestingly, two other NEEV participants, Swati Verma and Shraddha Jain, wives of IIT-Gn faculty members, are keen on starting a domestic-help service for Palaj campus residents. "The business idea comes from the problems we face in everyday life. We have been living on IIT-Gn campus for quite some time but have not been able to find a maid who works satisfactorily and takes less leave. So we thought of fixing the problem," said Jain.

The services they plan to provide include cleaning and moping, washing clothes, utensils and special festival cleaning and post-event cleaning. The duo has already started ground work and are reaching out to women in Palaj and nearby villages. "We have found about five women who are interested in our business. As per our model, 80 per cent of the earnings will go to the maid and 20 per cent will remain with us. We will eventually be using the money to train maids and giving them cellphones. We will also conduct monthly sessions to understand their problems and address the same," said Jain.

