

## **WEE Mentorship workshop opens new vistas for women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs from a broad spectrum of areas were introduced to different opportunities offered by the government that they could use to develop their ventures at a mentorship programme organised by the WEE (Women Entrepreneurship and Empowerment) Foundation at IIT Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

A total of 30 women entrepreneurs had come together at the initiation of this year's mentorship programme, which includes interactions with mentors, entrepreneurs and investors conducted on alternate Sundays as well as visits to incubation centres.

The spectrum of their businesses was broad like education, apparel industry, natural soap products, healthcare, handicraft, online marketing, and so on. The women entrepreneurs also discussed their challenges and opportunities. Technology and market support are the main concern of these entrepreneurs.

Business Management Plan, Business Communication and Critical success factors of business were taught to the women entrepreneurs at the first session. "Reality Test, Competitive Test and Value test are three important tests a business model should undergo before you go for entrepreneurship," emphasised Dr Anita Tripathy Lal who was mentoring the women entrepreneurs.



"Programmes like these give a reassurance and guidance to women like us who start their business without any technical knowledge," said Meghna Gandhi who describes herself as a Mompreneur who is actively balancing the role of mom and that of an entrepreneur. She runs a startup in the apparel industry by the name Ribboncandy. "Discovering new markets, knowledge

about mentorship are the takeaways from this programme,” she added hoping to gain in terms of business plan knowledge.

Nisha Jain Grover who runs Vatsalya legacy an Education venture said, “I have learnt the importance of having a trademark ready and also how to pitch for business”. She plans to revisit her financial plan and get herself a trademark registered after the workshop she added.

Dr Kalpana Arora from Centre for Technology and Development, a core group of SEED Division whose enterprise produces natural soap pointed out, “I now understand the importance of a business plan, and I aim to use my knowledge in the class to write a business plan”. She plans to revisit her business plan and try to improve it.

“WEE has mentored more than 100 startups led by women entrepreneurs so far. The mentorship programme has imparted training to more than 10000 rural women in smokeless Chulha, affordable sanitary napkins, bee hiving, organic farming, handicrafts and other art forms”, said Aparna Saroagi, chairperson of the WEE Foundation.

“We want to create a culture where women empower themselves and help in empowering other women through cooperatives and self-help groups which can contribute to Start up India and Make in India,” she added.

Himanshu Malik Co Head Invest India under AGNI programme, one of the 9 missions of PMO also mentored the women and taught them how to pitch their business plan to investors what investors would look forward to.

WEE Foundation is India’s First of its kind social national initiative by IIT Delhi and supported by Department of Science of Technology to strengthen women entrepreneurship in the country and promote an ecosystem that enables creation and sustenance of such enterprises by women. The mentorship programme by WEE Foundation also connects entrepreneurs to potential investors and buyers for their products so that they can take their business idea to a financially sustainable enterprise.

WEE intends to focus and ignite a fire amongst women ranging from a college going student to a middle aged housewife to embrace entrepreneurship as a viable, fulfilling career option.