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Education

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● ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

Self-reliant universities

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PM NARENDRA MODI-LED government started the initiative of Atmanirbhar Bharat with a motive to address the basic issue of abysmally low market demand and economic slowdown induced by the Covid-19 crisis. The thrust is to make India self-reliant and resilient in both normal and crises times. Educational institutes started focusing on thinking out of the box to meet the challenges of the digital revolution and embracing entrepreneurship, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills as part of the academic experience as well as creating cultures where innovative thinking is nurtured.

The challenge didn't end here. Universities are also planning adequate steps to prepare all students for a rapidly changing job market and to make them industry-ready and self-reliant. They must ensure that talent from the diverse, global community has access to opportunities in the new era of digitisation. Since Atmanirbhar Bharat has become a mantra for everyone, universities are urging students to showcase their talent by developing Indian apps in different categories under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge.

Here's how educational institutes in India are becoming self-reliant:

Adding new dimension to the incubator and entrepreneurship model: In the pre-Covid-19 era, academic institutions had put attention on training their students in skills that are required in larger



companies. But with Atmanirbhar Bharat the initiative has brought the country's focus to MSMEs, one of the key driving forces towards self-sufficiency. MSMEs constitute 80% of the workforce. Ignoring this sector would be a lost opportunity. In developing nations, MSMEs have engaged with academia by investing in research and innovation—a relationship that benefits both institutions and industry. Students need to be trained accordingly for jobs that will be in demand in the future.

Innovation as the objective: Universities have taken up the challenge of finding innovative solutions to the problems raised by Covid-19. With the help of AI and IoT, universities are working to transform a village into a smart city so that the resi-

dents of the village can also avail of all the facilities that will enable them to grow.

Making employment sustainable: It is inevitable for the industry to rely on academia to access and train the kind of talent required to thrive in the future workplace and to ensure life-long learning. It has been estimated that over 12 million Indians get job-ready every year, but the sad part is that not everyone is well acquainted with the needs of the company. Our institutes must follow the 'experiential university' model, which might be one of the answers to the challenge of a highly developed education system.

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