

# IIM-powered course for entrepreneurs from Maoist-hit district

The Management Development Programme (MDP) was an initiative devised by Lohardaga district's Deputy Commissioner Krishna Prasad Waghmare.

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Participants attend a Management Development Programme crash course on marketing and business skills.

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A girl who recently passed her class 12 exams, and her mother, deliberate the links between production cost, quality, competition and a lack of profit in connection with their at-home mustard oil business; a woman in her 30s, part of a self-help group, is guided on how to negotiate the right price for her jute products; a man in his 40s discusses his dairy business's new tagline – '*Jeevan Dhaara doodh: Furti ka raaz, Jeevan Dhara ke saath*' (Jeevan Dhaara milk: The secret behind agility, with Jeevan Dhaara).

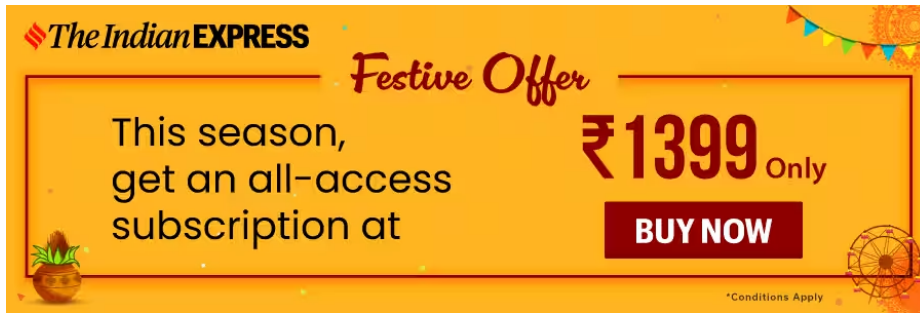
These were some of the scenes that played out at a Rural Self Employment Training Centre in a Maoist-affected district in the heart of Jharkhand, where, between September 11 and September 20, emerging entrepreneurs based in villages got a crash course on marketing and business skills from top B-school professors.

The Management Development Programme (MDP) was an initiative devised by Lohardaga district's Deputy Commissioner Krishna Prasad Waghmare, who, with the help of the Niti Aayog Prize money allocated to aspirational districts, organised 10 days of classes taken by IIM Ranchi professors at the training centre in Lohardaga town.

The classes were in Hindi to ensure that the 30 participants could fully engage with and grasp the wide range of topics covered, including market research, product positioning, branding, pricing strategies, and digital marketing, among others.

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“Earlier, I never knew what IIM was. But now I have a dream for my own children to study at an IIM,” said Holika Devi, an artisan who attended the programme.

An advertisement for The Indian Express featuring a festive theme. The background is orange with decorative elements like a string of colorful bunting flags at the top right and a small pot with a plant on the left. The text reads: "The Indian EXPRESS Festive Offer This season, get an all-access subscription at ₹1399 Only BUY NOW". A small "Conditions Apply" note is visible at the bottom right of the ad area.

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Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Deepak Kumar Srivastava, the director of IIM Ranchi, said the programme was a testament to the institution’s commitment to Jharkhand. “At IIM Ranchi, we believe in global orientation and local responsiveness, and this MDP is one of the ways through which we can support local communities. The programme will equip...[rural entrepreneurs] to expand their businesses and create a positive impact on the local economy,” he said.

Among these rural entrepreneurs is Jitendra Turi, who came up with the tagline for his product, Jeevan Dhara milk, during one of the classes. Turi, a farmer, and two of his partners attended the training programme to learn how to run a dairy business since they were set to get cows from the district administration under a government scheme.

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In class, they got a lecture on various brands’ advertisements, and were encouraged to devise their own tagline that resonates with their customers.

“I have no experience in business, but after attending the classes, I have realised that we will not make much profit just by selling milk. We learned that profit can be made through value-added products, such as ghee or paneer,” Turi said.

Tripti Sahu and her mother Rekha Devi have long been struggling to make their mustard oil business profitable. During a class on pricing strategy, the mother-daughter duo told the class that they sell the oil at Rs 150-160 litre when the cost of making it, including labour, comes to more than that. Sahu lamented that competitors often compromised on quality to sell oil at cheaper rates.