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Firm plans training centre for dropouts

- Mumbai-based venture to focus on providing permanent jobs & developing entrepreneurs

SAURAV BORA



Participants in the training programme. Picture courtesy: Pipal Tree

Guwahati, May 30: A Mumbai-based vocational skills training firm is planning to set up a centre in Assam to train school dropouts from villages and absorb them in construction firms across the country.

In the next four months, Pipal Tree Ventures Pvt Ltd will conduct surveys in rural areas of Assam to assess the demand and identify a location for its first centre in the Northeast.

"First, our team will visit Assam for scouting an ideal location to set up a residential training centre for school dropouts in the next six months before exploring opportunities in the rest of the Northeast," the co-founder and chief executive officer of Pipal Tree Ventures, Santosh Parulekar, told **The Telegraph** today.

The firm, which has been providing vocational training to school dropouts for the past nine years, currently runs 20 such centres across Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It trains more than 6,000 youths every year.

"Our main focus is to build a self-sustainable model for skills training in the construction domain. We want to provide permanent jobs to the students trained by us. Some students also become trainers with Pipal Tree after four years," Parulekar said.

The Northeast, including Meghalaya and Manipur, still grapples with the problem of unemployment.

Surveys have found the school-dropout rate to be very high in Kamrup and Goalpara districts and in the tea garden areas of Assam.

Pipal Tree executes projects for large construction companies such as Tata Housing, Godrej, Shapoorji, L&T, Simplex and Lodha among others.



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It has around 2,500 workers in construction sites.

"We also focus on developing women entrepreneurs in agriculture and allied fields, which include goat farming and sericulture. Currently, we are training 100 women from Telangana in goat farming and providing them funds to set up farms. We plan to develop 1,000 such entrepreneurs in the next three to five years," he said.

The firm also plans to train women in Assam in agriculture-allied industry to develop a self sustainable model. "For this, we are working closely with the Northeast chapter of Ficci Ladies Organisation, along with other organisations, to understand the local dynamics. Based on the outcome, we plan to initiate women entrepreneurship programmes in the Northeast," Parulekar said.

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