ATL has made students think about solutions: Ramanan

Govt not interested in CSR funds for taking up devpt: Sharma

HUBBALLI: Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) Director Ramanan Ramanathan has stated that the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is playing a key role in creating scientific temper and cultivating innovation among students in the schools.

Speaking at a session on ‘Building New India, An Era of Entrepreneurs’ at the Development Dialogue organised by the Deshpande Foundation at Hubballi Sandbox here on Sunday, Ramanan said, the main objective of ATL was to help school children to get familiar with the latest technology, and encourage them to identify problems in their surroundings.

“We want the students to think of a solution for problems they are facing in day-to-day life,” he said.

He said, there are nearly 300 ATLS across Karnataka. He claimed that 14 ATLS in Dharwad district are making students think and talk about innovation. Such tendencies were not common among school children in the past. The initial success has prompted the AIM to set up more ATLS taking the total number to 5,441 in the country, of which 2,500 have become functional till date. Besides, of 101 incubators, 31 are operational, he added.

“India has rich demographic dividend as 65% of its population is below 35 years of age, a factor that leaves many other countries envy,” he said and added that there is no dearth for capacity among the youth but the challenge is to transform this capacity into positive force.

Earlier, Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy said, the tendency of identifying bottlenecks needs to be replaced with identifying and utilising the available facilities. “What we do is more important than what we have. This apart, most of the bottlenecks are in our minds. Therefore, the change of mindset is very much essential. Path would be clear if mindset overcomes the mind,” he said.

Gururaj Deshpande of Deshpande Foundation also spoke.

‘Govt not interested’

At another event of Deshpande Foundation ‘Dialogue with CSR Ecosystem’, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs DG, and CEO Sameer Sharma said, the Government is not interested in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds that the companies set aside from their profit. Instead, the Union government wants the companies to share 2% of its profit, on their terms, with the society for development.

Speaking during the second day of the Deshpande Foundation's Development Dialogue ‘Armchair Discussion’ held at the BVB campus here on Sunday, he said, if the government wanted to utilise these funds, it would instead take it as cess. The main objective of the government is to ensure that private companies connect with society, and through their funds bring in private expertise and NGOs.

He asked the NGOs, who have partnered with the public sector entities, to work cordially with the elected representatives, as they are integral part of the decision making.

“Winning over the adverse and wicked forces is one of the challenges the NGOs have to pass,” he said.

Sharma also said, the government is not in a position to act against companies which have not spent their 2% CSR funds, as the government, since 1950s, has not been able to spend all its funds on various projects.

Subject experts Nanthi Vakas, Neelima Khetan, Radha Sule, Nikhil Pant, and others were present on the occasion.

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