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# This campaign intends to help women-led businesses get that definitive edge. Here's how

EdelGive's Naghma Mulla explains why it's important to provide women the right environment and support rather than just empowering them





The campaign intends to support women-led businesses

Everyone talks about empowering women, educating them and building their skill set to enable them to succeed in life. But do we really make it easy for them to do that? Yes, you might spend lavishly on educating your girl child or even making sure they land a job, but does our society really ensure that its women get to go as far as they want to? **UdyamStree** is a campaign started by EdelGive, the philanthropic arm of EdelWeiss Foundation to ensure that we as a society not only focus on empowering women, but also provide them with a conducive environment to follow their dreams.

Naghma Mulla, the COO of EdelGive explains, "While life skills are certainly important, when we address requirements of women and try to think of empowerment, we should look at financial stability and stability that comes from knowing one's rights." Since 2015, EdelGive has been very active in the space of women empowerment and have been working on economic empowerment and social empowerment, where you enable a woman to access her rights, access her property rights and navigate and negotiate within families, till she is capable of improving her financial stability.

Speaking about the campaign, Naghma says, "Udyam Stree is a platform where we hope to help women-led businesses not just by capacity building, but figuring out how we can purchase more

from them, give them more chances, make it equitable for business. Whether it is the network business or real-life business, even something as small as accessing finance, for a woman, it is much more difficult, because there are biases and mind blocks. So we're talking about how to support women-led businesses. As part of this, we're going to be bringing out stories of women entrepreneurs in India, how they face these challenges, how they overcame them, bring women together, and have active dialogues about how we can play our part in helping women in India follow their dreams."

The campaign started in October and the plan is to create a platform for collective action. "We're going to bring to the same table funders, corporates, people of influence and experts that help us design these narratives. We hope people can connect with each other. We hope to see a shift in the way people perceive women-led businesses. We hope to make it easier for women to run their businesses and create an informed environment," Naghma concludes.

It had also become very clear to them that the onus of this empowerment cannot be put on the woman alone, because the entire ecosystem has been designed for men. "Whether it is good or bad, for years, it is men who have been in charge. So while we can teach women life skills, we will have to do a more 360 degree effort to make the ecosystem more compliant to her requirements," says Naghma.

EdelGive was started twelve years ago, but, for a very long time, the members didn't really understand what development takes. They started with education, livelihood and women's empowerment, funding skill building and life skills for women. But right from 2008-2015, their own experience in the life skills

# space gave them clarity that they cannot offer band-aid solutions for women's problems and expect transformation.

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