

Golden opportunity for youth

# Entrepreneurship development is vital for the economy

by  
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Entrepreneur is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as someone who starts his own business, especially when this involves a new opportunity. Among other definitions, I chose this definition because of its suitability to Sri Lankan business culture.

As per the records of the Statistics Department, micro, small and medium scale enterprise is over a million, with over three million workers engaged in it. Almost all establishments in these categories operate as sole ownership or partnership businesses.

These establishments make an enormous contribution to the economy. Most of the micro level businesses are not legally registered while small and medium scale enterprises are either incorporated or functioning as legal sole proprietorship or partnership basis.

In my long experience in the private sector, I have come across hundreds of business owners who started business taking financial risks by seeing opportunities.

However, the notable fact is that most of these usually intelligent and hard working risk takers who are not afraid to take bold decisions, are not adequately knowledgeable about the theoretical, technical or applied process of entrepreneurship or management. Hence, there is a substantial gap between their natural business ac-

men and the conceptual knowledge they possess.

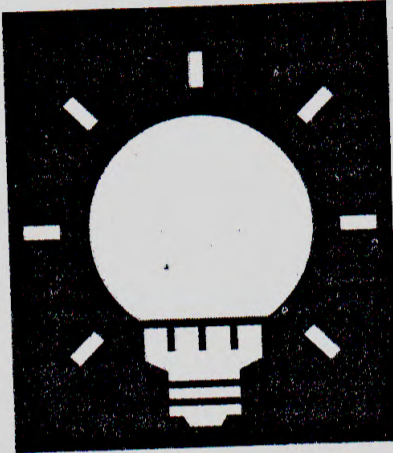
I have stumbled upon medium scale entrepreneurs who own successful business operations with a work force of hundreds, who solely depend on their business instincts.

If they make an effort to learn and gain knowledge about management practices, they would be in a much better situation in business. Typically, these businessmen who are successful most of the time ignore intellectual advice. They are their own bosses, set their own goals, control their own progress and run their business how they see fit. They deal with their own success or failure and view it as their own burden and responsibility.

Through his manifesto, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa indicated that his vision is to create an economy driven by young entrepreneurs and provide extensive opportunities and incentives. He states that Youth Entrepreneur Counselling Centres will be set up to provide integrated services in entrepreneurial learning covering theoretical, technical and scientific processes. A national youth fund will also be set up with an initial allocation of a billion rupees provided by the Treasury.

This is great news and a golden opportunity for youngsters looking forward to start on their own. They will have two very important and compulsory factors to commence a business entity. Those selected initially will receive capital contribution from the Government and subsequently technical assistance, such as management knowledge and identifying opportunities.

Entrepreneurial development has become an extremely vital factor; in



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view of it being a key feature of economic development.

Therefore, entrepreneurs have become the seeds of development to provide greater employment opportunities, increase per capita income and revenue to the Government by way of taxes and other levies. Entrepreneurship development\*is carried out to increase the number of potential future entrepreneurs and to improve the knowledge of entrepreneurs through a process of improving skills

and knowledge business owners through awareness campaigns and if possible through training programs.

In the current context, encouraging large numbers of micro, small and medium scale business owners to understand the importance of structured knowledge must be done to enhance the current productivity levels.

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To attract existing businessmen, a well structured and properly designed policy with clear objectives is needed. An awareness program to make them understand the future potential of learning must be made available.

The Government, fortunately, has realised the weight of this important issue which was neglected up to now. The impact certainly will be immense and in general improvement of the current vast number of small and medium business will provide more employment and contribute more to the economy.

Government policy usually has a substantial impact on entrepreneurs. Despite some promises made previously, no Government had specific policies or programs to effectively support entrepreneurial businesses. Therefore, creating an effective policy on entrepreneur development is essential under the guidance of a creative and knowledgeable team.