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Essel group eyes big in education



Essel group chairman Subhash Chandra, Zee Learn CEO Sumeet Mehta and its Child Development head Nitya Ramaswami at a press conference in Chennai on Thursday.

NT Bureau

Chennai, Apr 9:

In the next 5-7 years, media conglomerate Essel group would invest around Rs 500 to 700 crore in setting up 300 schools across India, according to its chairman Subhash Chandra.

Announcing the setting up of 50 schools under Zee Learn brand across India over the last year, he said this subsidiary of Essel group had already invested Rs 100 crore and achieved a turnover of Rs 100 crore for the fiscal ended March

2010. By 2015, Zee Learn would become a Rs 800-crore turnover company with the implementation of aggressive growth plans. Under the proposed 300 schools, the group has a vision of targeting one million students in the next five years. Beside this, the group would be setting up a varsity in Uttaranchal over 60 acres of land. The university was expected to be ready by the end of 2011. 'We are investing about Rs 100 crore in the new varsity to be called Himgiri Nabh Vidyalaya,' said Subhash Chandra. The university

would offer courses on critical subjects such as teachers training, refreshing courses for existing teachers as well as newcomers, mass communication, film and entertainment related subjects, business management, new streams such as courses in supply chain and logistics management which would be primarily tailored to meet the job requirements.

Speaking to media persons, Zee Learn CEO Sumeet Mehta said the schools under this brand would teach children the way they desired to learn. 'The 50th school was set up at Erode in Tamilnadu and the South zone is emerging as a strong hub for education,' he said. Mehta said that six more schools were coming up in Tamilnadu under the Zee Learn brand. 'All the Zee Schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education and we are also thinking of opening State Board schools,' he said.

Zee Schools have become the second largest chain of educational institutions in the country with around 250 million children being enrolled in their centres. Moreover, Zee Learn runs a preschool chain Kidzee which has 700 units in over 311 cities.