



ADVAIT: India's First Defence-Tech Accelerator Driving Innovation and CSR Impact

India is taking a significant step toward strengthening its defence and technology ecosystem with the introduction of **ADVAIT**, a first-of-its-kind defence-tech accelerator. This initiative is designed to support startups working in defence and aerospace, enabling innovation that contributes to national security and technological advancement.

Developed through the collaboration between India Accelerator and the Institute for Defence Studies and Research (IDSR), Gujarat University, ADVAIT represents a strategic effort to nurture cutting-edge solutions in critical sectors.

Building India's Defence Innovation Ecosystem

ADVAIT is specifically tailored to empower startups that are building advanced technologies in areas such as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, space technology, cybersecurity, surveillance, and advanced materials.

The accelerator focuses on enabling early-stage and growth-stage startups to develop scalable and impactful solutions. By supporting innovation in these areas, ADVAIT contributes to strengthening India's defence capabilities while also encouraging technological self-reliance.

This initiative aligns with the broader vision of building a robust defence innovation ecosystem that not only supports military applications but also drives technological spillovers into civilian sectors.

The Tripod Model: Industry, Academia, and Startups

One of the defining features of ADVAIT is its **tripod model**, which integrates three key stakeholders—industry, academia, and startups.

This model ensures that innovations are:

- Technologically sound through academic research
- Market-ready through industry collaboration

- Scalable through startup agility

By bringing these three pillars together, ADVAIT creates a structured pathway for innovation, ensuring that solutions are both practical and strategically aligned with national priorities.

How Defence Technologies Create Social Impact

Defence technologies have historically contributed to solving broader societal challenges. As highlighted in the post, several innovations developed for defence purposes are now being applied in civilian contexts:

- Drones used for surveillance are also supporting agriculture and medical deliveries
- Bio-digester toilets developed for high-altitude army areas are being used in rural and disaster-hit regions
- Portable Oxygen Generation Systems (POGS), originally designed for soldiers, proved critical during the COVID-19 crisis

These examples demonstrate how defence innovation can extend beyond security and contribute to public welfare and development.

The Role of CSR in Strengthening Defence Innovation

The post raises an important question—should CSR be limited to welfare activities for armed forces, or should it also contribute to building the ecosystem that empowers them?

ADVAIT presents an opportunity for CSR initiatives to expand their scope by supporting innovation platforms that have long-term strategic and social impact. By investing in defence-tech startups, CSR programmes can:

- Promote indigenous innovation
- Strengthen national security capabilities
- Enable technology-driven solutions for societal challenges

There is a growing need for CSR departments to collaborate with such platforms and contribute to building sustainable innovation ecosystems.

Conclusion

ADVAIT represents a forward-looking approach to defence and technology development in India. By combining the strengths of startups, academia, and industry, it creates a strong foundation for innovation that benefits both national security and society at large.

Supporting such initiatives through CSR can accelerate the development of impactful technologies and contribute to a more resilient and self-reliant India.

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