

Jobless youth eye direct selling biz

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Chennai: Mumbai resident Avankita Naik, among the several youngsters that have lost jobs amid the pandemic, earned Rs 6,000 within two weeks of entering the direct selling business. Many unemployed people under the age of 35 are opening up to newer roles like direct selling, which till now was popular with senior citizens and home-makers.

Naik said it was a good opportunity for her after losing her job at a pharmaceutical company. "I got enrolled as a member in Tupperware India in August. With the lockdown, social media marketing and video-calling platforms have helped to meet and make new customers," she said.

FMCG direct selling brand Amway India, which has over 9 lakh direct sellers, has witnessed a surge in people exploring its business opportunity in the



second quarter alone, of which 64% of the new registrations are under 35 years.

Its CEO Anshu Budhraj said, "Historically, direct selling has played a crucial role in fuelling economic growth and offers an alternative to traditional employment for those wanting a flexible opportunity to supplement household income. Currently, while the traditional employment landscape is witnessing disruption, the gig economy is observing a contrasting trend." The company has about 53% of its custo-

mers under the 35-year-old category.

Customised training modules are designed by the brands for direct sellers to adopt this way of engaging with the consumer. Tupperware India MD Deepak Chhabra said "In the absence of physical meetings, social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, video platforms are replacing traditional meet-and-greets by offering wider reach to engage with existing and potential customers irrespective of where direct sellers are physically stationed." With over 70,000 wo-

men direct sellers across the country, the US-based Tupperware had witnessed a 47% rise in new registrations in July. "We do not charge for registration with an aim to enable self-motivated women to join the business free of cost," Tupperware India MD Deepak Chhabra said.

Global cosmetic brand Oriflame (India) too has witnessed an increase of around 30% in the under-35 age category between the January-March and April-June quarters. Frederic Widell, VP & head of South Asia & MD of India, Oriflame, said, "We have seen the largest share of increment in registration across younger people (below 35) from metro cities and across tier-2 and -3 cities." Direct selling or social selling industry offers the opportunity to work from the safety and convenience of home — the entire business can be done online today with flexible hours.