

*The Telecom Titan Who Measures
Empire in Lives, Not Ledgers*

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Long before Ravi Shankar Rai transformed Savitri Telecom Services into one of the country's most formidable diversified technology powerhouses, he was arrested by a single, unrelenting question—one that would come to define not just a career, but a philosophy of enterprise itself: what value do skills hold if they never translate into livelihood?

It was the 1990s, and Rai was cutting his teeth in the telecom industry, watching with quiet disquiet as educated, technically trained youth were left stranded at the threshold of opportunity. Where others saw an unfortunate but unchangeable social reality, Rai saw an industry waiting to be reshaped—and a mandate he alone seemed willing to answer.

In 1999, that conviction crystallised into Savitri, an enterprise founded not on the pursuit of scale for its own sake, but on the singular mission of building stable, sustainable, and dignified employment. More than a quarter-century later, Savitri has grown into a commanding presence across telecom infrastructure, cybersecurity, networking, system integration, and managed services—a footprint that speaks to Rai's near-total command over the evolving contours of India's technology landscape. In an exclusive conversation with TradeFlock, Rai reflects on the experiences that forged his leadership, why he measures success in lives transformed rather than revenue generated, and the convictions that continue to anchor his ascent to the summit of Indian enterprise.

What inspired your entrepreneurial journey?

There was one experience that irrevocably altered how I viewed my career. While working in the telecom industry, I encountered five young men

from my region teetering on the edge of a wrong path, starved of opportunity. I urged them toward computer training, certain it would secure their futures.

And yet, even armed with technical skill, they could not find work. That moment was a reckoning—proof that competence without access to employment is a hollow promise. In 1999, I founded Savitri to correct that injustice, and that founding purpose remains the compass by which I lead to this day.

What defines your leadership philosophy?

We have always positioned ourselves as technology-driven rather than product-driven—a distinction that has proven decisive. As the



industry advanced from fibre optics and telecom infrastructure into the era of 5G, cybersecurity, networking, and system integration, we did not merely keep pace; we moved ahead of the curve, treating innovation and continuous learning as non-negotiable pillars of our culture.

What truly sets us apart, however, is an uncompromising commitment to execution. We do not simply deliver solutions and depart—we assume ownership of their entire lifecycle. With an upward of 15,000 projects completed across the length and breadth of India, we have engineered a legacy of trust built on quality, reliability, and unwavering consistency—a dominance earned project by project, relationship by relationship.

How do you foster a culture of respect and dignity?

I have long held that respect must never be dictated by designation. Early in my career, I observed how society lavished admiration on air hostesses, even though their responsibilities mirrored those carried out, unnoticed, by office support staff. The labour was identical; only the perception differed. That disparity never left me.

At Savitri, we deliberately use terms such as “office host” and “house host”, because every role carries inherent dignity. We are building a workplace where hierarchy does not dictate treatment—where a CEO and an “office host” stand on equal ground in the eyes of the organisation. To me, that is the truest expression of an inclusive workplace.

You've never fired an employee in 25 years. What's the philosophy behind that?

In a quarter-century of operation, Savitri has never dismissed a single employee. When mistakes occur, our first instinct is correction, not removal. Every employee sustains a family, and one decision at the top can ripple through many lives below. Discipline has its place, but so does compassion—and leaders would do well to remember that every business decision carries a human cost that extends far beyond the office walls.

How important is trust in building a business?

Trust is the bedrock upon which every business relationship stands. We have consistently honoured our commitments—to employees, suppliers, partners, and customers alike. For more than two decades, one principle has guided

us without exception: never overlook what is owed to others. Integrity, in the end, builds relationships that outlast any single transaction.

Why is entrepreneurship as important to you as employment?

Creating jobs matters, but creating entrepreneurs carries even greater weight, for they, in turn, become engines of employment themselves. Since 1999, I have made it a personal mission to encourage at least ten individuals every year to launch their own ventures. Often, all they require is trust and a foothold.

I still recall backing a young printing shop employee through his very first orders. Today, he commands a thriving business that sustains several families. Over the years, we have helped cultivate more than 500 such enterprises—an achievement that ranks among those I hold closest.

What differentiates Savitri in today's technology landscape?

Our conviction has never wavered: we are technology-driven, not product-driven. As the sector evolved—from fibre optics and telecom infrastructure to 5G, cybersecurity, networking, and system integration - we evolved in step, and often ahead of it, with innovation woven into the very fabric of our culture.

Execution remains our sharpest edge. We do not simply hand over solutions; we shoulder responsibility for their entire lifecycle. Across more than 15,000 completed projects nationwide, we have forged enduring customer relationships defined by quality, reliability, and relentless consistency - the hallmarks of a company that leads, rather than follows, in an industry it has come to command.

What lies ahead for you and Savitri?

Our ambition has never been to become the largest company in the room; it has always been to grow with responsibility and purpose. If we remain committed to generating meaningful employment, nurturing entrepreneurs, embracing emerging technologies, and staying anchored to our core values, growth will follow as a natural consequence rather than a forced pursuit. Challenges will inevitably arise, but I choose to see them as opportunities to sharpen our resolve. Above all, my aspiration is for Savitri to endure as a place where people find dignity, security, and purpose—a legacy far more enduring than any balance sheet. ♦