

Conversations Today

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START-UP, SKILL UP

About Deshpande Foundation and its activities



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development takes place
automatically."**

An interview with
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From the Editor

Dear Reader,

In the life of every nation there are certain days which are considered as red-letter days. The Republic Day celebration held on 26th January every year in our country is one of those days. Being Republic meant that the supreme power is not held by a monarch, but instead by the elected representatives of the people, along with an elected President.

The origin of Republic day goes back to pre-independence days of 1929, when the Indian National Congress during its Lahore session under the President ship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru passed a resolution declaring 'Complete Independence' as the goal of the nation and decided to celebrate 26th January every year as the Independence day throughout the length and breadth of the country.

It is perhaps the most important day of our country as it marks the birth of our nation as a republic. Therefore, this day is celebrated all over the country with great pomp and show.

As citizens of India, it is our duty to preserve the sovereignty of our nation, and rejoice at the free growth of diversified talents and fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of the nation as a whole.

Jai Hind!

Marie Banu

Editorial

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

Management in Social Entrepreneurship

For social enterprises and a social entrepreneur, it is important that a plan is made up front which will indicate the purpose and goals in a business like format.

The most important first is formulating a Vision-Value statement.

Vision is indicated in a simple and short statement, the vision is one which has long term validity.

Vision statement should be like a mantra which everyone in the organization from bottom to top understands and the stakeholder's vision is in alignment with the vision of the enterprise. An example of a vision statement of Mahatma Gandhi, "Quit India" during freedom struggle. How compact and powerful and visionary it is!

The Vision statement is supported by 'Values' the enterprise will adhere to in the pathway of realization of the vision.

What are values? So to say it will be the DNA of the enterprise. There will be no compromise on the 'Values'. The values need not be a long list of spelled out definition. They can be few and practiced one hundred percent right across the organisation. For citing a few, see below: (Speaking and practicing) truth, (practicing) non-violence, (preserving) self-esteem, (giving) unconditional love and compassion and (giving) forgiveness.

The second step is in articulating and defining the mission of the social enterprise. The mission statement will be more descriptive and elaborative to reinforce the vision. It will have time line and geography.

It will be incomplete without the expression of strategies to implement the mission. The strategies are processes and methodologies for implementation steps.

The strategies will also state the methods and process for measuring achievement, impact and goals and where not measurable state expected intangible measures.

ORGANISATION

Organizations are of various kinds depending on the appropriateness and need. Organizations are hierarchical traditionally. These organizations tend

to consume a lot of energy within and remain in a command and control mode. It gets stifled over a period due to bureaucracy and rigid structures. It ultimately gets overmanned and indifferent to organizational goals. Communication gets overdone or underdone. Reconciliation of data, information, claims and counter

necessary these organizations can be replicated for diverse and geographical needs. Teams are formed on 'task' as a basis and disbanded and reformed from time to time based on goal achievements. You can find encouragement of ownership, doing things differently, innovation, creativity, more for less, hiving off or

termination of unproductive and wasteful activities. There is encouragement for establishing systems, documentation, development analysis, feedback and course correction, in order to achieve continuous improvement. The organization will be quick on perception of risks and its mitigation and will have its antennae high to keep anticipating and tracking changes.

These flat organizations are very nimble and sensitive to perceive and manage changes and absorb new ideas, talents and people for effectiveness.

A flat organization can give unity in diversity and encourage positive dialogue and interaction in an informal way and herein build congruence in setting and achieving desired goals.

Flat organizations give manoeuvrability when replication is required for expansion, and outreach and

customisation to achieve local needs. Flat organizations consume less resources including monetary and therefore lean on costs but high on satisfaction from the human resources and stakeholders view point.

These flat organizations can get easily federated for deriving, learning and exchanging best practices amongst themselves and agro to publish them for public good.

It is also eminently possible to create training and development of all stakeholders in a special purpose vehicle which is set up for the purpose. This will help welcoming like minded youth into the fold of entrepreneurship in social work management and practice.

These organizations will multiply by millions and provide gainful employment, empowerment and nourishment and joy to underutilized and neglected human resource sector.

—P.N. Devarajan



claims put the impact of the organization into jeopardy. Few people driven by self-consciousness, work incessantly and devotedly and produce 80% of the desired results; others the majority of them become bystanders, uninterested and often times, turn into damage inflicting critics. This kind of organization uses up to 80% of all resources including monetary for its maintenance leaving little for common good. Hence hierarchical organizations do not fit social enterprise management.

The other organizational set up is a flat, lean and mean one. The role is multi purpose and multi craft and team like approach. Relationships are given maximum emphasis and communication is straight forward, simple and stand to be corrected. There is more listening and willingness to hear different points of view and hence it is evergreen in its context and spontaneous in delivery. When

Healing Traditionally

“I did not want to see any of my family members suffer from Cancer. I therefore began to search for answers from traditional medicine.”



In this fast and modern life, mankind is spoilt for choice. “But how informed are our choices?” Mr A G Sivanandam, Founder of Sorgam Charitable Trust in Thiruthani has always wondered. A native of this district, Sivanandam completed his Diploma in Mechanical Engineering and worked in the industry for seven years. Meanwhile, two years after his diploma, he also pursued Doctor of Medicine in Accupuncture. The shift was found abrupt by his observers as only few knew about his interest in medicine that he had nurtured from class 9. “I was amused to learn that hypnotism had the capacity to heal diseases. I read a lot. The different forms of healing surprised me and the reasons why some were famous and others weren’t baffled me,” he recalls.

While in class 10, Siva came to know about Cancer and the fact that it had no cure scared him. “I did not want to see any of my family members suffer from Cancer. I therefore began to search for answers from traditional medicine,” he says.

Siddha recognises 4,448 types of diseases that mankind can succumb to and also recommends for appropriate cures. Siva believed that Cancer was also recognised in this grouping and began to explore a cure for cancer. He embraced a journey that led him from one place to another and one form of medicine to another, each time resulting in new revelations. He started noticing the side effects in allopathy as against natural healing methods like acupuncture which had no side effects.

The most critical experience in Siva’s journey was his encounter with a famous doctor who confessed about side effects in allopathy medicine. “I was shocked to hear a Doctor (MBBS MD) confess to me about



allopathy. Why was it so dominating then? I had newer, deeper questions and was taken aback by the extent to which every form of medicine promised healing. As I was also practicing Accupuncture, the training sessions with this doctor enlightened me. I realised my purpose in life,” reminisces Siva.

In 1998, when Siva started seeing patients, the speculation amongst the community members was a big obstacle for him. Free consultations created space for dialogue and he got an opportunity to understand the community. They were also scared of consequences that may result from giving up one form of medicine and embracing another. People were also unable to accept acupuncture as a form of healing as it did not prescribe any medication.

In due course, more people turned up for consultations, and Siva was invited to other villages as well. He soon began centres at Gudiyatham, Thiruvallur and

Punniyam panchayats. The results of his perseverance were now evident.

“Awareness alone does not suffice in the health sector. People want to see results. Unless they see someone from their own family or community cured by acupuncture, they would not have the confidence to try it out for themselves. Believing is not enough,” he says.

Interestingly, Siva not only created awareness and offered treatment through his centres. He also promoted the idea of celebrating good health, like birthdays and anniversaries. As this message spread, people began to notice the value of having good health and leading a stress-free and a happy life.

People started introspecting on their lifestyle choices and there was a change in attitude observed. Convinced of the scope of reach, Siva established ‘Sorgam Charitable Trust’ in 2015.

Organised implementation had to be focussed as more and more people wanted

to know how to lead a healthy life. Siva began by sensitising people on the concept of ‘good health’, which is more comprehensive than the conventional notion of ‘absence of diseases’. Resilience gained significance and ground was set for the next intervention.

Siva encouraged community members to plant herbal, medicinal plants in their backyard. This not only helped people treat common illnesses at the household level, but also increased the green cover in the villages. This revival of traditional medicine also made sure that it became a way of life amongst the next generation.

Siva has authored a book on “How to live a healthy life in this fast, modern world?” in Tamil and is now writing his next book on herbal medicine.

As operations expanded, Siva wanted to ensure that Sorgam Charitable Trust was effectively promoting good health practices. He introduced Legal awareness for women and helped them in making informed decisions. “Feeling of self-worth is a critical indicator of good health. It all begins here,” he reminds. Vocational training programmes for women also served the purpose. “Women could now practice a vocation from their homes, on their own. They were not answerable to any boss nor were they stressed about missing family responsibilities due to work,” he adds.

“I did have an idea of what I wanted to do, but CSIM helped me derive my vision and operationalise my interventions on a larger scale. I learnt to present my work and measure its progress. I could see how the idea of good health was nurtured by the Trust and the communities. Thanks to CSIM!” smiles a confident Sivanandam.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Building a bootstrapped ed-tech venture

*The founders of Edureka had a simple thought while setting up the company:
Find the right teacher, and any course will automatically be effective*



Ovleen Bhatia and Kapil Tyagi, erstwhile employees at Infosys Technologies, found their calling in entrepreneurship after their journey in the professional world. Subsequent to their stint in Infosys Technologies, the duo moved on to work in other corporates. Eventually, Tyagi set up a mobile app company in Noida, which Bhatia joined. “While running the organization, we realized that people who were being recruited had no idea about what to do as their education had not trained them. Also, with technology changing so much, those who were in employment couldn’t scale up as quickly and were becoming irrelevant,” says Lovleen Bhatia. He and Tyagi realized that it was not a demand side problem but was more a supply side one and the duo wanted to do something to solve it and thus was born Edureka in 2012. The company was set up with an idea of getting industry practitioners on board its platform to teach the students. “We decided to get practitioners to teach since finding instructors on a full time basis was difficult largely due to poor remuneration,” explains Bhatia. He continues, “Not just this, learning from an Android or Big Data expert gives one a practical learning experience as compared to what one gets from a traditional institute where you realise that the people who are teaching you may not have worked on this and do not have the competency on the topic.” To get over the issue of time and compensation, the company decided to make it an online teaching platform.

Edureka was shaped up with the thought that if one had to improve education, they should get the right people to teach it and, hence, got high quality practitioners to teach part time.

Teachers, the key

The company has strict guidelines that it follows while choosing an instructor and, whenever required, it trains them too. People who teach at Edureka are practitioners who have experience of over 10 years to 15 years in the subject area. “They take some time off from their schedule during weekends or weekdays and go

live and teach the students online,” says Bhatia.

This apart, they need to possess strong communication skills. “We also give them training and ensure that they can deliver to a global audience with a neutral accent,” says he.

It has around 800 instructors on its platform and boasts of very high rate of retention. “Our first instructor is still with us,” beams a proud Bhatia. In the last 3.5 years since the company’s incorporation, the team has found that while these same instructors may change their main stream jobs or moved countries, but they have not left Edureka.

On the customer front, they are largely professionals with anywhere between three and 25 years of work experience. They are spread across 80 countries, with US and India being the biggest client base. “We have customers from almost every English speaking country across the globe,” says the cofounder. The company is building a pedagogy with almost all the courses catering to professionals who are looking to scale themselves in topics like technology, marketing and finance. “Most of the hard skills can be learnt online. Soft skills, for which you need to have group and activities, cannot be done online,” admits Bhatia. The company currently has around 100 courses online (on technology and marketing) and aims to reach 400 to 450 courses in the next 12 to 18 months. Typically, its courses run anywhere between four weeks to six weeks which can be in the form of night classes, weekends or weekdays. The students log in from

“We decided to get practitioners to teach since finding instructors on a full time basis was difficult largely due to poor remuneration. Not just this, learning from an Android or Big Data expert gives one a practical learning outcome as compared to what one gets from a traditional institute where you realise that the people who are teaching you may not have worked on this and do not have the competency on the topic.”



their home or office while the instructor logs in at the same time and in a virtual classroom model they start interacting with each other.

The early days were not so easy for the duo. Bhatia recalls their experience of finding their first set of customers which was a challenging task. "No one knew about online learning and Edureka. So, in 2011-12, we conducted 4 to 5 free classes daily and then once they the customers experienced it, we started selling to them," says Bhatia. However, they did find it difficult to sell too as most of them were students and the company didn't promise them jobs or offer any certification. "We offer only good quality learning and hence, it was a big challenge," says Bhatia. Apart from offering competitive rates, the company started putting up YouTube videos of the courses and started doing relevant courses. This helped the company gain traction through word of mouth.

Growth phase

When Edureka was incorporated, the team spent the first two years in understanding the market. "We had funds from our earlier company, which we had invested in Edureka and only in 2013, when we had the platform ready, did we start getting traction," recalls Bhatia. The growth then was good, in fact, the company was listed number one in Deloitte Technology Fast 50 India list. In the subsequent two years, the company grew by around 300 per cent and currently has a US \$12 million to US \$14 million monthly run rate. It aims to touch a run rate of around US \$50 million in the next two and half years.

According to Bhatia, recommendations, repeat and completion rates are the three matrices that they track to measure the success of their offerings. The company has a completion rate (number of people who start the course and the number who actually complete it) of more than 75 per cent when compared to the industry average of 8 per cent to 18 per cent. "One of the key metrics we track is recommendations (net promoter score) which is quite high," says Bhatia. Typically priced at Rs. 18,000 to Rs. 20,000, it has more than 50 per cent to 60 per cent who come back to take more courses from them.

However, the founders also admit of the challenges they face. The biggest one for Edureka



is continuously developing the market; Most ed-tech companies are offering certifications or jobs after course completion. Another key challenge is to manage a heterogeneous student mix in any class.

Taking it to the market

"Word of mouth is one of the best forms of marketing for us," admits Bhatia. In education, if students gain significantly and find that their confidence in the topic is boosted then you get a good turnaround from their reference. Bhatia doesn't believe in advertisements and has taken to YouTube as a good channel for the company. Repeat rate and referrals became a good channel. The company, however, does run digital marketing campaigns, but hardly 25 to 30 per cent of its leads comes from the paid channel. Majority of its leads come from the organic route or through word of mouth. "That's why we never had any

reason to raise money. We knew that the basic metrics to track and that experience helped us. We burnt some cash during the initial few years when we were building the product. But since then, we have been able to do a good job on digital marketing side," says Bhatia.

Look into the future

The company was set up with funds from friends who believed in them and invested in the company at a very early stage. It is currently not looking at raising capital as the founder believes, "You require money for product development, marketing, or to maintain cash flow. And the company has managed all three without external funds so far. On cash flow side, in our business people pay in advance and hence, we have been able to negate a negative cash flow situation. Our marketing strategy doesn't require much funds either," says Bhatia. Though the company is not looking at raising capital to grow, the founders

want to eventually take the company public.

Going forward, the company wants to expand into newer geographies, especially in the non-English speaking world, and also further develop its B2B business model of servicing large companies, with its courses.

What next?

- Reach 400 to 450 courses in the next 12 to 18 months.
- Touch a run rate of around Rs. 50 million in the next two and half years
- Get deeper into the existing geographies, enter new geographies and target the non-English speaking world.

—Poornima Kavlekar

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(www.thesmartceo.in)*

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INITIATIVE AND MANAGEMENT



Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani. It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship.

CSIM offers training and consultancy to social enterprises – for-profits and non-profits – to facilitate them to apply successful business practices and yet retain their social mission.

It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives. CSIM operates in Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Bangalore.
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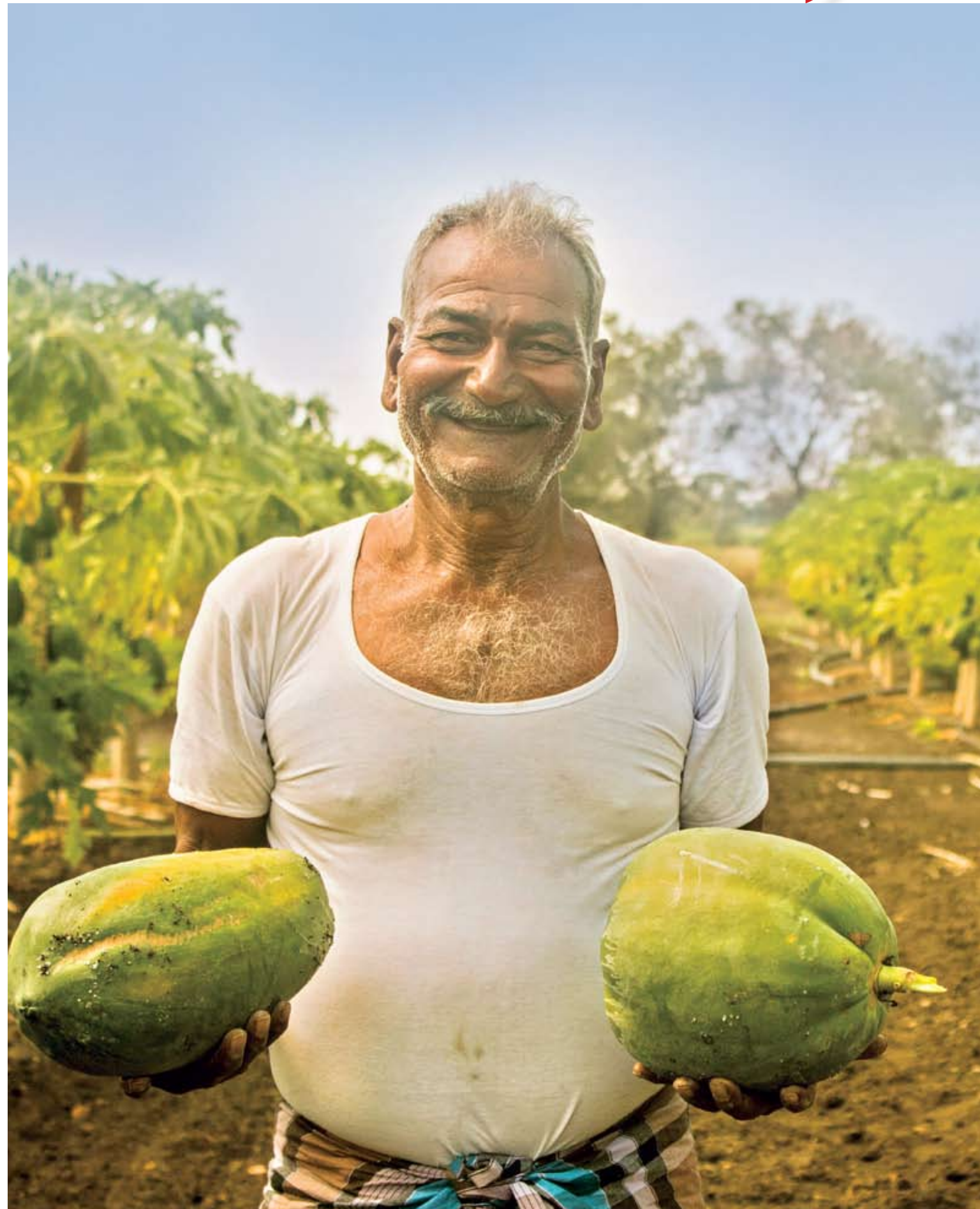
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CSIM also facilitates Social Accounting and Audit for social enterprises, CSR projects, and NGOs through Social Audit Network, India (SAN, India).

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START-UP, SKILL UP

Deshpande Foundation was launched in 1996 with the vision of creating a world where increasing numbers of individuals and organizations are driven by entrepreneurial energy to create and grow enterprises that address social challenges or market opportunities



What began in 1996, as an attempt to use entrepreneurship as a catalyst to bring about social change has today become a holistic movement towards changing lives. In a nutshell, that is the story of Deshpande Foundation. Established over 20 years ago, by Dr Gururaj and Jaishree Deshpande as a platform to bring about social change in the US, Canada and India, the organization has bloomed over the last couple of decades. “The Foundation was launched in 1996 with the vision of creating a world where increasing numbers of individuals and organizations are driven by entrepreneurial energy to create and grow enterprises that address social challenges or market opportunities,” explains Naveen Jha, CEO, Deshpande Foundation. “Our approach today does not restrict itself to merely solving a problem but to also build an ecosystem that enables ideas and entrepreneurs to complement each other for a large impact.” A large part of Deshpande Foundation’s success however, took place in 2007 when it started the Hubli Sandbox initiative, which was aimed at creating and nurturing a group of problem-solvers. “The sustainable and scalable ideas that would go on to come out of this, we hoped, would address challenges of local communities – challenges like poverty, income inequality, and lack of access to basic facilities.” Says Naveen.

The idea of course was to tap into Rural and Semi-urban India, and the capabilities and entrepreneurial drive of its populace. “Through the Sandbox’s bottom-up approach, Deshpande Foundation India equips these people with necessary skills, provides them grants and infrastructure to experiment, puts them through the right networks, and maximizes their potential by constantly engaging them,” says Naveen. Over time, Sandbox has thrown out some partnerships that have evolved into awe-inspiring success stories. “A few of our notable non-profit partners who have scaled effectively are Akshaya Patra (provides nutritious hot mid-day meals to over 1.3 million children in North Karnataka) and Agastya International Foundation (runs the world’s largest hands-on science learning program) and Save a Mother (reduces maternal mortality in over 100 villages in Karnataka),” he adds.

Many programmes that the Sandbox has initiated has emerged from pure need. “Like our Farm Pond program which provides assured irrigation for 2-3 crops a year in drought-prone rain-fed lands, which has led to the construction of 2,000 ponds, irrigat-

ing over 6,384 acres, impacting 9,105 lives across 4 districts of North Karnataka, in the last couple of years alone,” says Naveen, with a sense of achievement. With critical crop-saving water, the initiative has also ensured that farmers turn innovative, diversify crops and multiply income, three-fold.

Another problem that was solved by the organization was an acute HR crisis in tier 2 and tier 3 towns. “We realized that these towns needed skilled human resources to fuel socio-economic growth, skill building programs were launched for unemployed youth in accounts, office management, electrical operations, IT hardware and networking, sustainable agriculture and social entrepreneurship,” says Naveen. “As on date, we have trained and provided gainful employment opportunities to nearly 3,500 rural and semi-urban youth since 2010.”

Another program that reinforces the organisation’s ‘entrepreneurship’ approach to development is Navodyami, which empowers micro-entrepreneurs, especially in textiles, organic food products, arts and handicrafts. Through Navodyami, the entrepreneurs get easy access to credit, offline and online market linkages and expert on-ground mentoring. “We have empowered over 300 micro-entrepreneurs, with some of their enterprises growing by 6 times,” says Naveen.

No doubt, the biggest challenge that India faces today, is nation-building. To aid in this, the organization has also launched a first-of-its-kind ‘Leaders Accelerating Development’ programme, which aims to unleash the power of youth towards solving community problems. “We have over 7,000 LEADers who have undertaken projects like developing break-system for bullock carts, smoke-less chulhas and also small activities like pot-hole filling, painting bus stands and conducting blood-donation camps,” says Naveen. “Ever since the Hubli Sandbox was formed in 2007, we are glad to have already gathered the right kind of expertise that we bring to the start-up space, today.” Till date, the foundation has incubated over 60 startups, which have added over Rs 50 crore to the economy, and in doing so, have also created 800 employment opportunities.

“Our model supports mission-driven individuals to come up with sustainable and scalable organizations which have significant socio-economic impact on local communities,” says Naveen, explaining what the Deshpande model is all about. He continues, “Our wide network of 150 non-profit organizations and 300 industry connec-

tions has doubled up as a living laboratory of sorts for entrepreneurs test ideas, that get strengthened and sustained for a period.”

New infusion of capital as impact investment and CSR has today, opened up avenues to address social challenges on a large scale. The foundation believes that tomorrow’s challenges can only be met with innovative solutions that are nurtured into viable enterprises by their respective entrepreneurs. “To foster the next generation of entrepreneurs, leaders and organizations the Foundation’s key focus is on partnering with universities and communities to help build an ecosystem that will create these innovative enterprises,” Naveen explains.

Today, Deshpande Foundation has its hand full. All its attention is now focused on its ‘Farm Ponds’ project, to battle drought in several parts of the country. “Most parts of India have been reeling under drought for more than three successive years,” says Naveen. “Ensuring a secure source of water in rain-fed areas can be the biggest multiplier for agricultural development and our economic prosperity. The National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture finds that harvesting surplus runoff through farm ponds dug in the field is a climate resilient option of ensuring adequate water supply in rain-fed areas. We already have a demand of over 1,000 farmers in Dharwad district want ponds constructed on their lands. We have also started the project in Telangana and are looking to benefit more numbers of vulnerable farmers in drought-hit areas across India.”

Another area of focus is skill-development; the platform here: Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns. “We have set up two centers in Nizamabad in Telangana and Nanded in Maharashtra, from where we propose to skill over a thousand youngsters, every year,” says Naveen. “We are also constructing India’s largest skill-development and incubation center at Hubballi, which will become a hot-bed for innovation and entrepreneurship. We also hope to set up skill-development centers in 5 other Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns this year.” Even as it focuses its energy on initiatives like these, the foundation’s agricultural initiatives will also expand to other districts in Karnataka and Telangana. “As we scale our initiatives, it is important for us to develop the next line of leaders. I will focus on building existing leadership and groom many more to successfully combine the business excellence of for-profits with the compassion of non-profits,” says Naveen as he signs off.



Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

D: Rama asks: "Brahman being Pure, how can *maya* arise from Him and veil Him also?" "Vasishta replies: "In pure mind associated with strong dispassion this question will not arise." Of course in *advaita* (non-dualistic) philosophy there can be no place for *jiva*, *Isvara* and *maya*. Oneself sinking into the Self, the *vasanas* (tendencies) will entirely disappear, leaving no room for such a question.

M.: The answers will be according to the capacity of the seeker. It is said in the second chapter of Gita that no one is born or dies: but in the fourth chapter Sri Krishna says that numerous incarnations of His and of Arjuna had taken place, all known to Him but not to Arjuna. Which of these statements is true? Both statements are true, but from different standpoints. Now a question is raised: How can *jiva* rise up from the Self? I must answer. Only know Your Real Being, then you will not raise this question.

Why should a man consider himself separate? How was he before being born or how will he be after death? Why waste time in such discussions? What was your form in deep sleep? Why do you consider yourself as an individual?

D.: My form remains subtle in deep sleep.

M.: As is the effect so is the cause. As is the tree so is its seed. The whole tree is contained in the seed which later manifests as the tree. The expanded tree must have a substratum which we call *maya*. As a matter of truth there is neither seed nor tree. There is only Being.



D.: *Vasanakshaya* (total end of all predispositions) - *Mano nasa* (annihilation of mind) - *Atma-sakshatkara* (Realisation of the Self). They seem to be interdependent.

M.: The different expressions have only one meaning. They differ according to the individual's stage of progress. Dispassion, Realisation, all mean the same thing; also they say 'practice and dispassion'. Why practice? Because the modes of mind once subside and then rise up; again subside

and rise up, and so on.

D.: Beginningless predisposition makes one do wrong. Without *jnana* this predisposition cannot vanish. But *jnana* looks almost impossible. Expiation alone cannot undo all the karma; for how much expiation will be needed! Look where we will! Everything looks difficult, even impossible. Association with the wise seems to be the only cure of all ills.

M.: What is to be done? Reality is One only. How can It be realised? Realisation is thus an illusion. Practice seems to be necessary. Who is to practise? Looking for the doer, the act and the accessories disappear. Moreover, if Realisation is not present here and now, how can It, newly got, be of any use? What is permanent must be eternally present. Can it be newly got and be permanent also? Realise what is present here and now. The sages did so before and still do that only. Hence they say that it looks as if newly got. Once veiled by ignorance and later revealed, Reality looks as if newly realised. But it is not new.

D.: *Karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana* and their subdivisions only confuse the mind. To follow the elders' words seems to be the only right thing to do. What should I hold? Please tell me. I cannot sift the *srutis* and *smritis*; they are too vast. So please advise me.

(No answer.)

Source: Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Obsession



A little boy was heartbroken to find his pet turtle lying on its back, lifeless and still, beside the pond. His father did his best to console him: "Don't cry, son. We'll arrange a lovely funeral for Mr. Turtle. We'll make him a little coffin all lined in silk and get the undertaker to make a headstone for his grave, with Mr. Turtle's name carved on it. Then we'll have fresh flowers placed on the grave each day and make a little picket fence to go all around it."

The little boy dried his eyes and became enthusiastic about the project. When all was ready, a cortege was formed - father, mother, maid and child as chief mourner - and began to move solemnly towards the pond to bring in the body. But the body had vanished! Suddenly they spied Mr. Turtle emerging from the depths of the pond merrily. The little boy stared at his friend in bitter disappointment and cried out "Let's kill him!"



Explicit Learning

- Your obsession makes you inhuman.
- Kill your obsession, not the turtle.
- The little boy got obsessed with the project.



Introspective Learning

- Why do I get obsessed?
- How do I deal with my obsession?
- What is the nature of 'Obsession'?

Prioritising Social and Emotional Learning

Learning is a gradual, continuous process and every child learns at his or her own pace. There are different methods that suit a child. While the system may not be able to adapt child specific methods at an individual level, it is certainly possible to empower every child to realise their potential. And for that, the process of learning must be holistically perceived, building equal importance for social and emotional learning, along with academics.

Learning Curve Life Skills Foundation was established in 2011, in Hyderabad to realise this vision. Ms Gayatri Natarajan, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of the Foundation was earlier running her own preschool where she witnessed the sense of competition amongst parents. She feels that Early Childhood Education is not given the importance and time it deserves. As a consequence, children are forced to catch up with their lessons in a short span. There is so much to learn in a brief period and an overt focus on writing skills even before a child gets to scribble and explore the art of writing has built persistent challenges, thereby affecting a child's self-esteem in the later years.

Gayatri and her spouse Mr Subbu Parameswaran (also the Co-Founder and CEO of the Foundation) strongly believed in enabling the potential of children and were cognizant of the additional support that children from marginalised communities required. Volunteering at a Children's Home gave them a wider perspective, calling for further research and consultation. "The girls there lacked self-confidence. They were ambitious and dreamt of a future, but weren't strong in their academics. As the first batch from the Home were appearing for their 10th grade exams, this was considered as a milestone as it would take them closer to the realisation of their dreams," says Gayatri.

"Academics was not the only area that we had to focus upon. We had to also pay attention to their 'behavioural deficits'. So, we started building their self-esteem, self-awareness, social skills, cognitive abilities and then focused on academics. The success of this intervention encouraged us to probe deeper, and as we did, we were confronting questions on holistic development of children and the lack of emphasis on social and emotional learning," explains Gayatri, lamenting that life skills were often misunderstood



as livelihood skills.

After two years of rigorous research and consultation with experts, the couple developed a model framework to facilitate teaching in regular schools. Drawing from science and structure, this framework sought to build positive learning environments and enable spaces for children. Teachers were the backbone for this model as they were responsible to transact the curriculum. Shaping attitudes, mentoring, and enabling emotional intelligence amongst children ensured healthy development of children, learning and social readiness, and critical thinking and reasoning abilities. Structuring these core areas in a continuum for children belonging to the

age group of 8 to 14 years, assessments were used periodically to measure outcomes at all levels. While this model has managed to bring about a positive influence at the right age, its uniqueness lies in the transformation seen in both teachers and children.

The results from the pilot encouraged the couple to reach wider. Fellows from Teach for India also used this model in schools they intervened. "In one of the schools, the management decided to run the programme even without a fellow from class 4 to class 9, as they were impressed with the results," shares Gayatri. But, aren't the teachers overburdened? The teacher in her smiles. Capacity building of teachers is the first

and significant step as children spend most part of their active hours during the day with them. Continuous training programmes give teachers the space they need to transform themselves. Thereafter, running the programme is almost like a routine task for them in their schools, but more interesting and engaging.

The changes the teachers see in themselves and the children has encouraged them to explore this model further. "There is development every day. Teaching and learning – both are adapted to contexts and both are looked forward to. Academics and life skills are equally attended. That's what we call as an enabling environment. This is where children can clearly focus on the now, act responsibly and make better choices, decisions," adds Gayatri.

Gayatri and team dream of a time when life skills will be understood and valued for what they actually are; when social and emotional intelligence will be seen at par with academic skills/achievements. Although a long journey, the couple are happy with the progress they have made so far. "We are only five years old and hope to achieve more along with our change makers – the teachers," says a hopeful Gayatri who is, looking forward to start operations in Chennai, Bangalore and Pune, very soon.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Social Enterprise Education Program (SEEP) under UK British Council.

Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CSIE) at IITM and Social Impact Lab, University of Southampton have partnered together for an initiative called Social Enterprise Education Program (SEEP) under UK British Council.

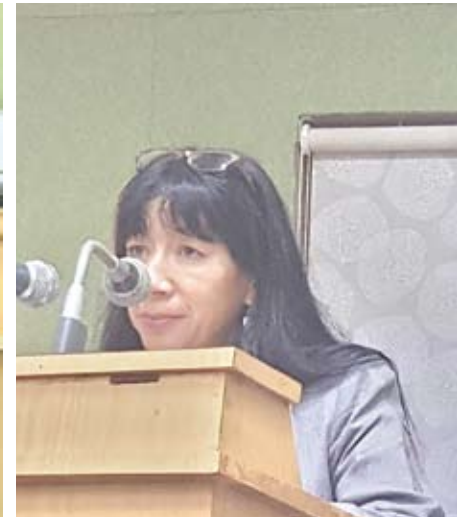
Under the initiative, UK India Social Entrepreneurship Education Network (UKISEEN) has been formed to promote social entrepreneurship education in higher institutions through competitions, exchange of ideas and joint courses. The network was formally launched at UKISEEN conference in April 2016. Currently, many higher institutions have shown interest to be part of this initiative.

A meeting was organized on 11th January 2017 at IIT Madras to bring together participants of the UKISEEN conference to launch an online thematic idea competition and launch a modified interactive UKISEEN website that will have features and benefits for the members.

As part of the activities to promote this network, a seminar was also organized on 11th Jan 2017 with the objective to discuss social entrepreneurship education. Prof. R. Nagarajan, Dean – International & Alumni Relations, IIT Madras and Ms. Mei-Kwei Barker, Director, British Council South India were the Chief Guests for the occasion. Prof. Nagarajan, CSIE Coordinator, noted that “CSIE has brought a fresh vision and energy to social entrepreneurship on the IIT Madras campus through education, research, outreach and capacity-building initiatives. Participation in UKISEEN is a clear indicator of this”.

Shri. Gururaj “Desh” Deshpande moderated a panel session with fellow IIT Madras alumni Ms. Jaishree Deshpande and Shri. S. “Kris” Gopalakrishnan, as well as Raj Melville and Naveen Jha of the Deshpande Foundation.

—Vidhiya Saravanan



Remembering Kaveri Natarajan

Mrs. Kaveri Natarajan, founded Kaingkarya Social Welfare Organization in 1991. Kaingkarya's intervention targeted the children of migrant quarry laborers in Tirusulam area. On realizing that 'no exposure to education' was the reason for the higher dropout rate amongst children in rural areas, decided to take education to their very doorstep. She started a mobile

crèche and also a bridge course for older children. Apart from enrolling them in schools, they also provided sponsorship for needy children. Counseling and Guidance Services for the community, Health awareness and health camps were also conducted. She also pioneered a curriculum for training nursing assistants and has trained over 500 nursing assistants.

Kaveri was a the recipient of the Sadguru Gnanananda Award in

2002 for her for her tireless initiatives in working towards the betterment of the lives of the women and children. She was an active Trustee in CIOSA and was closely associated with CSIM as faculty and as a Council member.

CSIM fraternity conveys our deepest condolences on the recent passing of Mrs. Kavery Natarjan. She will always be remembered as a great social worker.



Nruthya Bodhini – Musings of an Artiste

05 – Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring happens most of the times on the fly and not necessarily as a separate process. The Guru appears sometimes in the most unobtrusive way and makes a significant difference in our life that is only seen and felt years later.

“Vacation has begun and let us have our classes at 11am every day,” said the Teacher.

“EVERYDAY!! Oooohhh,” came the grumbling sounds from the girls in dance class. Smiling, the teacher relented and said, “OK, you can have the weekends off.” “Why 11am?” Sadhana interrupted. She loved reading her story books and hanging out with friends in Gandhi bazar, a market place nearby. 11am was perfect to do that after her parents had gone to office. “In the evening, I will start teaching new students. Besides, you are seniors and I want to teach and choreograph new compositions with you. Also, this year for the annual day show, I want to have you all perform a grand dance drama and that’s going to take a lot of effort so 11 to 2pm will give us the time to work on it.”

The change in the timing may have seemed inconsequential but it gave a totally new perspective to the relationship the teacher and students shared from then on. More than dance, it was the life lessons that Sadhana cherished the most. The one quality that made this possible was Sadhana’s ability to take notes from every conversation she had. With practice, she had developed the ability to extract the important messages from long lectures and sermons, thus making every experience a learning opportunity.

“What does a relationship mean to you? What’s your favourite emotion to express?” the teacher surprised the girls with a question. “What do you mean?” asked Radhu, puzzled; “Why are you asking this?” Bindya questioned.

“If you haven’t thought about what relationships are and you don’t know who you are, how will you express yourself through dance? How will you know how to relate to the nayaka (hero) and nayaki (heroine) characters? How will you be true to the composition on stage?” explained the teacher.

Sadhana made a note, “To do something in the best way possible, I need to know myself first and I need to identify myself with it”.

“Oh, lets discuss!” Secretly rejoicing a break from dancing, the girls sat down to talk. It felt more comfortable to sit and talk than be on



the feet after one hour of dancing!! And this became the most interesting part of dance class for Sadhana.

The journey through social entrepreneurship is similar. While there is an agenda to be achieved, there are collectibles through the journey. Mentors appear in several forms for those who are ready and willing to learn from life. Unless the social entrepreneur is in touch with him/herself and is introspective, the connectivity to social issues remains outside – in. If it has to become inside-out, the social entrepreneur has to build a process of self – enquiry which is ongoing and evolving. To enable the process of self-enquiry, mentors and coaches appear from various corners. Different perspectives are opened up and deeper learning process happens. An agile awake mind can identify those opportunities and make the most of them.

No one knew how four hours just passed by every day. Discussions on Indian culture, traditions, love, behaviour, marriage, career, values like trust, giving, letting go, greed, jealousy, possessiveness and so on. Sadhana was totally engaged in connecting to life and her brain was filled with all these thought about life. Dance class turned into a coaching session, five days a week. The most interesting part was that

this coaching went both ways – the girls got to know themselves and the teacher understood their refreshing perspectives.

Seetha, who would be in a constant hurry to finish and leave class rarely joined the bandwagon.

Bindya and Sadhana were the most engaged students. The friendship that began through these conversations grew and lasted over three decades between the girls. For

Sadhana, it was the moment when she decided to dedicate her life to understanding people and behaviour.

- Opportunities knock at the door; grab it when it comes and don’t wait for it to knock again”
- “Where there is a will there is a way; agreeing to attempt is already half done”
- “Love just happens and it can also be for a person or a profession – it’s just a connection to heart”.
- “If I love something, I cannot say I don’t love just because I didn’t get him or the thing- Love is love, whenever it is”
- “Every emotion has a place and relevance in life; I first need to know what I feel”
- “Anything done without passion is ordinary; if it has to become extraordinary and stand out I should merge with it and be



willing to lose my identity”

- “Love to bhakti and bhakti is a means to reach the inner most part of self”

...So on went Sadhana’s notes out of every discussion they had on the compositions, life and relationships. When the student is ready, the teacher appears and path is made. Every note became an integral part of Sadhana’s existence. They became her beliefs that stood through her decisions and choices in life. She moved on to make behavioural science and people management a part of her doctoral study and training as a profession in the decades that came.

One of the most neglected part of a social entrepreneur journey is the documentation of the journey and process itself. Note taking therefore is an integral part for a social entrepreneur. The powerful story that the entrepreneur is able to say brings the people who are willing to join hands to stay with the entrepreneur. The learning collected through a lifetime is worthy of making a path for others who are contemplating on similar journey. When life presents itself at the deepest form, the notes that emerge are life’s learnings that has universality hidden in it.

The art of dancing was not just form of movement that Sadhana learnt. It was education about life, love and relationships for her. It made her reflective and connect to her inner voice within. Similarly, social entrepreneurship journey is all about fulfilling self. While it seems like one is providing help and support to others, we are actually helping ourselves and finding the life fulfilment in addressing those issues that are deep within.

To be continued....stay connected....

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath

“There is a misnomer that if there is good economic growth, then development takes place automatically.”

Prof. P.K. Biswas shares with Marie Banu his views on Social Entrepreneurship.

Prof. P.K. Biswas is the Director of Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR). He has done his Masters in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and was Ph.D Fellow at Institute for Social & Economic change, Bengaluru.

He has over three decades of experience in Research, Teaching, Training and Consulting in the field of development and General management and. He has worked in multi-cultural situations and multi-dimensional situations having collaboration with community based organizations, civil societies, industries, government and international organizations.

Prof. P.K. Biswas began his academic journey with Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad in 1983. He worked with Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal (An Autonomous institute of Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India) since its inception in 1984. In August 2013, he assumed the role of Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management (LBSIM), Delhi before joining IFMR in September 2014.

In an exclusive interview, Prof. P.K. Biswas shares with Marie Banu his views on Social Entrepreneurship.

What made you interested in Social Entrepreneurship?

My heart had always concern for social issues. I was always concerned about Community Empowerment. When I worked at IIFM, we worked on Natural Resource Management, which impacts everyone's life in our country—whether rich or poor; rural or urban. That's how I got involved in people-centric development issues and that led me to Social Entrepreneurship, because I feel that everybody should get involved in solving social problems.

I was always in the field of management education, although I hold a doctorate in Sociology. I brought in application of social issues in management education. That's the time when I noticed that there has been a lot of good work done in the space of social entrepreneurship. Many of my own students of IIFM have done outstanding work, and most of them are Asoka Fellows. I then thought: “why not a full-fledged course on social entrepreneurship?” Although it is popular in the west, in India it is a recent phenomenon.

About the need to include social entrepreneurship in the college curriculum?

I believe that Social entrepreneurship should be introduced in all engineering and management colleges because the youth today have the requisite skill set and can be honed towards social issues. If you go by our curriculum today, there is not much focus on social issues.

Thus, I launched the Social Entrepreneurship course at IIFM in 2006-07, as well as at LBSIM, & now at IFMR. I believe that management graduates are well equipped to handle this situation. Social Entrepreneurship is not doing something new because you are motivated; you also need a certain set of skills.

A social entrepreneur should necessarily have communication ability, marketing, finance, and resource mobilization skills. There are a lot of risks in this area, and one should be prepared to face that.

I am taking up an initiative to sensitise these

educational institutions about the social issues prevalent in India. For instance, you are producing a number of graduates each year. What is the purpose of producing graduates when they cannot solve the problems in their own country? I have the highest regard for people who try and find solutions for solving social problems.

Can you share your thoughts on the need for social entrepreneurs to focus on livelihood?

Livelihood is critical to anybody. We have a large number of people living below the poverty line. There is a misnomer that if there is good economic growth, then development takes place automatically. Do you think poverty in India has reduced even after achieving 7.1% GDP? On the one hand we are adding

billionaires to the Forbes' List, and on the other, Central India, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and a few parts of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra have a high rate of poverty. The missing link is access, entitlement, and rights—which are also reasons for poverty. Normally, we look only at income as indicator. But, this is not correct.

People should have the ability and opportunity to make a choice, which they don't have. They must have political freedom, right to vote, and must be in a position to exercise their franchise. Sustainable livelihood is therefore important to ensure education, health and employment opportunities.

Social Entrepreneurs should therefore give importance to livelihood. They should make money and plough back the money to create employment opportunities.

Any notable students of yours and their work that you would like to share?

Vineet Rai of Aviskar Venture Capital is a social venture capitalist. He is raising a lot of funds for Micro Finance Institutions. Micro credit is a big issue in India, unlike Bangladesh. A lot of people are deprived as banks demand for collateral. MFIs therefore help to bridge the gap.

Paul Basil is the CEO of Villgro mobilises funds to support entrepreneurs, mostly in rural areas, who do not have access to funds otherwise.

Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya, Co-Founder, CEO and Director of Ekgaon Technology brought in technology interface to help the development process. He is also an Asoka Fellow.

Amit Jain is doing extremely well by providing health education through internet. He also provides safe drinking water.

Vineet Rai, Paul Basil, Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya and Amit Jain are all Asoka Fellows. Many of my students are involved in interesting work; a lot of them are working in the energy sector and skill building as well. They were instrumental in inspiring me to launch a professional course on social entrepreneurship at IIFM, LBSIM & IFMR.

What do you think are the challenges in the Social Entrepreneurship space?

I would say that motivating youngsters to focus towards the social sector and its development is the biggest challenge. Second, is funding. One should be prepared to face failures while experimenting. There is always an element of risk in entrepreneurship; some may succeed and some may not. So, you should be able to provide that ecosystem.



Photo credit: Marie Banu