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We are quiet capable of co-existing in a crime-ridden society where murders, extortions, kidnappings take place round the clock. Our farmers can commit suicides. Let a large chunk of our population continue to live below the poverty line. We may let millions go to bed on empty stomachs. But we have no right, yes, absolutely no right, to let our innocent children lose the battle of life on the hospital beds for want of minimal Medicare facility.

The recent deaths (nay, killing) of over 125 children in Bihar is a sad commentary on the rotten healthcare system in vogue in India even as we take pride in celebrating over seven decades of our freedom.

India, with a pathetic health record in the world, alone accounts for about one-third of all children in the globe aged below five who don’t have basic healthcare.

India is home to more than 40 million stunted children under the age of five – more than any country in the world. Estimates reveal that if essential healthcare were provided to children, 7 million children’s lives could be saved each year.

Every third child in India is malnourished. Infant and child mortality rates continue to remain too high. Exceptionally expensive healthcare forces a large number of families live at the grave risk of rueing their continual poverty, putting millions of children at the risk of becoming malnourished.

According to UNICEF, over two million children die every year from preventable diseases. IMR in India is 63 deaths for every 1000 live births. Of these 47% of the deaths occur within the first week after birth.

While India is a signatory to UN Convention on Child Rights but the allocation of funds and interventions to address health problems have been insufficient. Healthcare delivery systems remain largely non-functional.

We have a commitment to protect child rights - (i) promoting healthy lives (addressing survival, nutrition, health care services etc.), (ii) providing quality education, and (iii) protection against abuse, exploitation and violence (combating child labor, child trafficking and child sexual abuse).

True, India has schedules like space exploration, bullet trains, smart cities but are these of any avail if we cannot save our children: the future of the nation. Saving our children must figure high on the national agenda. The earlier our leadership accepts health for children as the topmost priority the better. Only healthy children will ensure a healthy nation.
In the present complex and competitive business world, a new financial ecosystem is fast evolving adding new dimensions to the credit supply chain management system. The finance institutions including banks are feeling the need to seek assistance of professional agencies for authenticating the credit worthiness of the potential borrowers. The role of Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) is fast becoming indispensable.

However, the big question being asked today is that how reliable our Credit Ratings are? Despite having so much of importance and significance, the Credit Rating Agencies often, withstand the worst of criticism. One such criticism was followed during the global crisis in the year 2008. Recently, a spate of credits events like the default of IL&FS, crisis in DHFL etc is hitting the top rated rating agencies. It is being discussed across different forums that these agencies failed to identify impending defaults in several companies like IL&FS, DHFL & ZEE group leading to sharp downgrade in the rating that were of supposedly high quality.

Why Credit Rating?
Credit rating is an analysis of the credit risks associated with a financial instrument or a financial entity. It is a rating given to a particular entity based on the credentials and the extent to which the financial statements of the entity are sound, in terms of borrowing and lending that has been done in the past.

Usually, it is in the form of a detailed report based on the financial history of borrower/assignor and credit worthiness of the entity or the person obtained from the statements of its assets and liabilities with an aim to determine their ability to meet the debt obligations. It helps in assessment of the solvency of the particular entity. These ratings based on detailed analysis are published by various credit rating agencies like Standard & Poor’s, ICRA, CRISIL, CARE, to name a few.

The Emergence
Credit rating emerged in India with the birth of Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited (CRISIL) in late 1980’s. The scope of credit rating widened thereafter with the establishment of two more rating agencies viz ICRA & CARE in the year 1991 & 1993 respectively.

At present, there are seven rating agencies in India, which have been accredited by Reserve Bank of India for the purpose of risk weighting the bank claims for capital adequacy purposes. These credit rating agencies are – CARE, CRISIL, FITCH India, ICRA, Brickwork Ratings, SMERA, and INFOMERICS.

Need for Credit Rating
Credit Rating establishes link between risk & return. Investors, lenders, & different stakeholders depend on the rating accorded by these agencies to assess the risk level and compare the expected rate of return from the venture. In absence of credit rating system, the risk perception of common investor will largely depend on familiarity about the brand, the promoters etc.

Regulators like Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Securities and Exchange
Board of India (SEBI) uses Credit rating to determine the eligibility criteria for some of the instruments. For example, RBI has stipulated minimum rating criteria by an approved agency for issue of Commercial Paper (CP). Similarly, it is mandatory for any borrowers to get themselves rated from any approved agencies for credit exposure of Rs. 5 Crs & above.

Credit ratings accorded by approved agencies are important tool for risk assessment for lenders like banks/ FIs. In this era of stringent capital adequacy norms, banks take their credit decision based on the rating accorded by the agencies. As per BASEL guidelines, banks must maintain capital as per the percentage of the risk weighted assets i.e., higher the weight, higher will be the requirement of capital maintenance. The risk weight is ascertained by the credit rating assigned by the agencies. Thus, credit rating is important for maintenance of capital by the banks.

Apart from the above, Credit rating also helps in risk diversification by the lenders for example, the credit policy of the lenders define the expected incremental exposure for each rating grade, some banks may expect to increase exposure of “A” rated accounts (low risk accounts) by 60% and “BBB” rated accounts (high risk accounts) by 20% only.

How Credit Rating Works

Based on Information: Any credit rating is based on the information shared by the entity wanting to get rated. The success of the rating will depend on the ability to get access to the privileged information’s. Cooperation from the related parties and willingness to share the confidential information are important prerequisites.

Multiple factors: Rating is not dependent on single prefixed formula or measurement scale. It is dependent on multiple formulas for example – quality of management, financial strength, economic outlook, demand & supply scenario, succession planning etc. To provide unbiased and effective rating, the final decision is taken by committee of experts possessing wide experience.

Monitoring the rating issued: The role of rating agencies does not stop with the assignment of the rating but they must also monitor the rating accorded. This process of monitoring is known as surveillance. The rating agencies do not rate the company / firm but the instrument viz Commercial Paper, term loan etc. It monitors the conduct of the instrument and if required upgrades or downgrades the rating accorded.

Validity: The rating accorded generally remains validity for a period of 12 months from the date of its issuance.

Publication of rating: In India the rating is undertaken only at the request of issuer of any instrument/prospective borrowers and only those ratings that are accepted by the assigner are published in the formal of report.

Time factor: Rating exercise is a time consuming process as because it will depend on how fast the assignor is willing to share all the necessary information and how much cooperation is extended by the assignor of the rating.

Types of Rating in India

Credit Rating: It is the rating of Loan instruments. Both short term & long-term loan instruments of the borrower are rated under this model.

SME Ratings: SME rating is specially designed to facilitate SME borrowers to avail credit facilities from formal channels based on their credit rating. It is observed that majority of the SMEs are dependent for finance on informal sources like friends, family, relatives etc. They fail to prove their ability as a business entity because of lack of adequate information and financial data. Therefore, in order to overcome this crisis and facilitate SME borrowers in availing loans from formal channels, the credit rating agencies offer SME rating.

Sectorial Ratings: The rating agencies also offer sectorial ratings like infrastructure ratings, financial sector ratings etc. depending upon the nature, inherent risk factor, cash flows of the sector.

Credit Rating Tool

Unbiased opinion: As the rating is considered as one of the important tools for any financial decision, it is the duty of the rating agencies to provide an unbiased report. The stakeholders like investors, credit analyst, lenders etc. do not get access to the informations, which a credit rating agency can get. Therefore, it is the duty of the agencies to arrive at a logical conclusion based on the information obtained and reflect fair view about the instruments that are rated.

Provide dependable information: The rating agencies must provide rating rationales and at the same time provide valuable information on which the investors can rely upon. The report should be clear, must be written in simple and easy language.
It is observed that multiple rating agencies approach the same set of companies to assign rating, they have little bargaining power and on many occasions the CRA which offers lowest quote or the highest investment grade wins the mandate. This rating shopping adversely affects the quality of the rating.

Provide basis for investment: Any instrument that is rated by the agencies instills confidence and faith in the investors. It must provide the basis for taking investing decisions.

The Reliability of Credit Ratings

The critics say that the Credit Rating Agencies in India are lenient towards assigning the rating compared to the counterparts in the Western countries. Reports says that there are almost 70 odd companies in India which were rated as “AAA” (highest quality) by the CRAs compared to only two in United States, Nil in Germany & UK and only 14 in China. It indicates that somewhere the parameters used in India for assessment may not be lenient or not at par with those of other countries.

The Operational Challenges

- It is observed that multiple rating agencies approach the same set of companies to assign rating, they have little bargaining power and on many occasions the CRA which offers lowest quote or the highest investment grade wins the mandate. This rating shopping adversely affects the quality of the rating.

- The company managements refuse to share the confidential & critical information which the CRAs. Moreover, while assigning final rating the CRAs also remain sceptical that poor rating may “close the door” for future business opportunity.

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Remedial Measures to Strengthen CRAs in India

- CRAs should not arrive at any decision based on partially received information.

- CRAs should be assigned the task of rating based on bidding and the bidding criteria must be pre-fixed by the regulator so that all the agencies should compete for “quality” and not for “price”.

- The Fee for credit rating must be fixed on slab-wise manner by the regulatory body so that none of the rating agency can assign rating for any number of time. Long association with the assignor leads to “conflict of interest” and the CRAs hesitate to assign poor rating. Mandatory rotation of CRAs will reduce the chance of biased credit rating.

Need for Diligence & Effectiveness

The rating agencies must understand the importance of their role in the economy at large. Investors take important financial decisions considering that rationales issued by rating agencies. High rated instruments gives a confidence to the investor that the chance of unexpected risk is less and the instrument will offer good return. In a country like India that suffers from problem of information asymmetry, difficult financial landscape, lack of knowledge among retail investors etc the credit rating agencies play a vital role “as a torch bearer”.

Each and every entity across the value chain of the process of credit rating viz the assignor of the rating, the rating analyst, the Credit Rating Company, regulatory body etc must act diligently and effectively so as to ensure that none of the innocent investors becomes the victim of any imperfect rating rationales.

Let the “Faith of the investors remain bigger than the faults!”

(About Sumitra R. from June issue)

About R. Sumitra

R. Sumitra is Senior Manager & Faculty, Baroda Apex Academy, Bank of Baroda, has been a banking professional with over 8 years of experience in handling the SMEs, Corporate & Project Finance as Credit analyst. She is MBA finance, CAIIB and is a JRF qualified.
A slew of changes on the income tax front as well as GST kicked-off recently. Since these changes will have a bearing on your financial planning, here’s a ready reckoner:

**Income Tax rebate**

Individual taxpayers having taxable annual income up to Rs 5 lakh will now get full tax rebate. Earlier, they had to pay tax of up to Rs 13,000 while those with taxable income up to Rs 3.5 lakh or below were eligible for a tax rebate of Rs 2,500. According to the government, this will provide a tax benefit of Rs 18,500 crore to an estimated three crore middle class taxpayers and senior citizens.

**Standard deduction**

This fiscal will see the Standard Deduction amount– which was introduced in lieu of the transport allowance and medical reimbursement in FY19- hiked from Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000, which will help you save more tax. “This will provide additional tax benefit of Rs 4,700 crore to more than 3 crore salary earners and pensioners.” Piyush Goyal had said in his Budget speech.

**TDS threshold**

As part of the rationalisation of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) provisions, the threshold limit for applicability of TDS on interest on bank or post office deposits has been raised from Rs 10,000 to Rs 40,000, a move that will benefit small depositors and non-working spouses. Further, a higher TDS threshold limit on rental payment of Rs 2.40 lakh will come into play, up from Rs 1.80 lakh previously.

**More home benefits**

Till FY19, only one residential house property owned by an individual was allowed as self-occupied and the second house was required to be reported as deemed to be let out, and a notional rental value had to be offered to tax. Now, no tax is payable for the second house property. Note that the aggregate amount of deduction towards interest paid on capital borrowed will be restricted to Rs 2 lakh for both the properties and an individual will not be able to carry forward the losses from the second house property.

The Interim Budget also met the long standing demand to roll over capital gains on a second residential house. Till now, long-term capital gains arising on sale of residential house property was allowed as a deduction on purchase or construction of another residential property in India, subject to fulfilment of prescribed conditions. The government has now extended the above benefit for purchase or construction of up to two-house properties, provided the amount of capital gains does not exceed Rs 2 crore. This benefit can be claimed only once in a lifetime of an individual or Hindu Undivided Family (HUF).

**GST on housing**

In February, the GST Council lowered rates on under-construction housing to 5% from 12% and affordable units to 1% from 8% without claiming the input tax credit, effective April 1. The decision is likely to benefit home buyers, real estate developers in select cities, and housing finance companies (HFCs). The Council had also expanded the scope of affordable housing to those costing up to Rs 45 lakh and measuring 60 sq mt in metros and 90 sq mt in non-metro cities.

The decision is expected to boost demand and increase sales of under-construction properties as well as simplify tax structure and compliance for builders. The 34th GST Council meeting last month subsequently established that projects with up to 15% commercial space would be treated as residential property and the above rates would apply.

Here’s another factor to keep in mind in the current fiscal: The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said in a notification last week that input tax credit on account of Integrated tax (IGST) “shall first be utilised towards payment of integrated tax, and the amount remaining, if any, may be utilised towards the payment of central tax (CGST) and State tax (SGST) or Union territory tax (UTGST), as the case may be, in any order”.

**Transfer of shares only in demat form**

Last Wednesday, Sebi announced that transfer of shares of listed companies can be done only in the dematerialised (demat) form from April 1 but investors are not barred from holding shares in the physical form. This decision was taken back in March 2018 and in December the watchdog had extended the deadline for the same to April 1. Last week it decided to not extend the deadline any further. Shares in the demat form will help in maintaining a transparent record of shareholding at companies amid rising concerns over beneficial ownership of entities.
The recent episode of attack on doctors in a Kolkata hospital and the subsequent strike by doctors across the country puts the spotlight back on the issue of violence against medical personnel. Attacks on doctors by kin of patients have made regular headlines across the country in recent years. A study conducted by the Indian Medical Association a few years back found that a whopping 75% of surveyed doctors had suffered some form of physical violence while on official duty. Pertinently, a majority of these assaults are reported from ICUs or Emergency Room where critically ill patients are admitted.

Violence against medical practitioners is not something unique to India. A German study published in the 2015 found that almost 50% of surveyed doctors had confronted aggressive behavior, with 10% of them experiencing violent attacks. A survey conducted in China found that incidents of physical violence causing harm had increased from 48% in 2008 to 64% in 2012.

Instances of violence have considerably increased in recent years not just in overburdened public hospitals but also against private hospitals. At the root of this problem in India is the paucity of healthcare resources. Shortage of human resource, medical infrastructure and number of beds are real problems that must be addressed on the policy level. However, this disturbing trend is also symptomatic of the changing relationship between doctors and patients in India. Till a few decades back, doctors in India were looked upon with much trust and faith by people. Unfortunately today most common people look at medical practitioners with an element of suspicion and distrust.

**Causes behind violence**

The trust deficit between doctors and patients is a real concern. With the proliferation of private clinics and the emergence of Corporate Hospitals, there is a growing perception that doctors are operating with the intention of fleecing. The mistrust phenomenon has also been fuelled by constant media scrutiny that highlights malpractices and corruption by medical practitioners. There is an interpersonal angle to the erosion of trust as well. In a country where the doctor patient ratio is far from satisfactory, doctors are always overwhelmed with patients. Heavily busy doctors often do not have enough time to invest in in-depth conversation with patients. Saddled with a meager healthcare budget, public hospitals present a dismal picture where overcrowding, long waiting time and the need for multiple visits for investigations and consultations frustrate patients on a daily basis. Lack of sufficient security and protection for doctors also embolden mob violence which itself has seen a disturbing growth in recent years.

**Role of healthcare manager**

This brings us to the all important question of what hospitals can do to minimize such incidents. With doctors busy with clinical work, there is need to have adequate number of managers to provide administrative...
and managerial support so as to allow doctors perform their duties without fear or distraction. The officials responsible for administrating a hospital must not only have managerial skills but also adequate soft skills, a compassionate approach and understanding of social and behavioral issues.

Here are a few necessary elements of a sound hospital management:

**Consent and communication at regular intervals**

Often, doctors do not adequately communicate with attendants, who later complain about being kept in the dark. At no point should the relatives be misinformed or given unreasonable expectations of recovery when the patient is critical. It is highly important that in case of critical patients, treating doctors meet families every day, even more than once if required and clearly explain to them the prognosis. Having a regular and honest communication ensures that patients are under no false expectations.

Informed consent is another significant step in preventing violence. While attendants are always made to sign documents before a medical procedure, doctors or hospital managements hardly explain the contents of the documents to medically illiterate families. Not to forget the need to have proper documentation of patients’ course of treatment so as to be secure in case a matter goes to police or court. The Golden Rule of consent taking is “The person (doctor) who holds the knife holds the pen”, in short the consent should be taken only by the doctors after a detailed explaining in the language understood by the patient / patient family.

**Compassionate treatment of kin**

It is essential for hospital managers to inculcate the spirit of compassion and care among all staff members. For doctors and medical staff witnessing serious illnesses and mortality, it is an everyday affair. However, for families who lose a member, it is nothing less than an earth shaking event. It is important therefore to be considerate to them, make processes smooth and quick and eliminate unnecessary hassle.

**Be prepared**

While all efforts must be taken to pre-empt violence, it is also important to be prepared to deal with a violent situation, much like you are prepared to handle emergencies such as a fire or earthquake. One of the most important steps to prevent violence inside a hospital premise is to restrict entry of attendants through passes. Security guards must be alert to signs of any possible unrest.

A standard operating procedure must be developed and each staff member should be aware of the do's and don'ts of such situations. If signs of aggression are noticed, senior management must immediately reach the spot, intervene and speak to attendants to prevent the incident from escalating.

**Rebuild trust**

For the medical community at large, it is important to make efforts to rebuild the lost trust between doctors and patients. They must also make efforts to not just treat patients physically but also assuage their concerns, remove their doubts and help reduce stress. The corporate houses that are investing in the field of medicine must also pay attention to create affordable healthcare facilities.

-Dr Dharminder Nagar is Managing Director, Paras Healthcare.
Ajoy Khandheria

For all the gratified talk about India's health sector and the medical tourism hub it has turned India into, the truth remains that our healthcare system is highly inequitable. Even today, a large section of our population has to travel more than 100 km to access basic healthcare. Data collected by NSSO in 2010 found that 86% of all trips taken for medical purposes were by rural Indians.

According to estimates, urban centres are home to almost 70% of the doctors and almost 65% of the country’s hospital beds despite having less than 30% of the total population. Government estimates suggested that as on March 31, 2017, only 4,156 posts for specialists were filled in Community Health Centres as against a requirement of 22,496. From lack of access to high cost of services, rural patients face several hurdles to healthcare that limit their ability to avail the care they need.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or Ayushman Bharat programme which promises to benefit 10.74 crore poor and deprived rural families, has raised much hopes. However, establishing an affordable and accessible healthcare ecosystem in India requires a wider approach that includes creating the required human resource and raising awareness among rural Indians.

**Barriers to affordable healthcare access in rural areas**

**Low Health Literacy**

Poor health literacy disables a patient's ability to comprehend health information and instructions from their healthcare providers. Sometimes, due to the low health literacy, rural residents get reluctant to visit a healthcare facility as they don't have confidence of communicating with a healthcare professional. At the same time, it also translates into low awareness about chronic diseases and symptoms that must be taken seriously. It is important therefore to have a functioning primary healthcare service closer to the doors of rural people.

**Long distance commutation**

According to a NATHEALTH-PwC report released in 2017, 50% of beneficiaries travel more than 100 kms to access quality medical care as about 70% of India’s healthcare infrastructure is concentrated in the top 20 cities. The requirement of long distance commutation increases costs and inconvenience and often results in discontinuation of treatment. For people living with chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease etc who require frequent visits to outpatient healthcare facilities, this can have serious consequences on health.

**Workforce Shortage**

India faces a shortage of doctors and allied healthcare professionals and this shortage is even more glaring in rural areas where it severely limits...
access to healthcare and negatively impacts health outcomes. Poor medical infrastructure in rural India also acts as an impediment in attracting qualified and trained health professionals. The government’s ambitious Ayushman Bharat scheme which envisages establishing of 150,000 health and wellness centres cannot succeed without addressing the human resource gap in rural areas.

The Way Forward

Human resource creation

Ways have to be found out to generate trained human resource to provide healthcare services in rural areas. This can be done by commissioning new medical colleges in rural areas, providing monetary and non monetary incentives to doctors to work in rural areas, improving working conditions for healthcare professionals and provide them with ancillary infrastructure to carry out basic duties.

Taking trained AYUSH practitioners on board and equipping them with the ability to diagnose and refer conditions at primary level can also temporarily fill the human resource gap.

Re-skilling primary healthcare doctors

Doctors in rural areas should also be constantly reskilled and upgraded to make them abreast with the latest developments in medical field. With growing and improving understanding of diseases and treatments, modern healthcare system demands constant upgrading of skills and continuous medical education. The doctors in primary healthcare setup must be updated and able to cope with evolving disease patterns and epidemics and make right diagnosis and provide quality treatment. It is important therefore to make CMEs mandatory for them.

Innovative approaches to healthcare

To bypass the problems of human resource and infrastructure shortage, we need to create innovative and low cost solutions and technologies that can enable us bring healthcare closer to the homes of the rural populations. Rural ambulances, mobile check up vans, healthcare kiosks and use of telemedicine are ways to achieve this.

Gramin Health Care has opened more than 100 operational kiosks across 6 states that provide basic healthcare services to villagers every day. These kiosks are digitised healthcare clinics that use telemedicine to help under-served communities get access to doctors. These kiosks have a nurse who conducts a physical examination and connects with the online doctor by live audio or video feed through a technology backed platform. The services are provided at subsidized rates.

We need many more such disruptive initiatives and platforms to further the goal of universal healthcare.

India faces a shortage of doctors and allied healthcare professionals and this shortage is even more glaring in rural areas where it severely limits access to healthcare and negatively impacts health outcomes. Poor medical infrastructure in rural India also acts as an impediment in attracting qualified and trained health professionals.

About Gramin Healthcare

Founded by Ajay Khandheria, an entrepreneur evangelist, Gramin Health Care (GHC) is one of a kind enterprise providing affordable primary healthcare in India's rural and poorest regions. With the vision to bring primary health care services and access to specialist care in rural area, GHC works on a unique model, making healthcare delivery to villages economically viable. Since its inception in April 2016, it has expanded to 6 states, including Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana.

In April 2017, the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) bought 26% stake in GHC and further strengthened the movement in realising the vision of the organisation. Today, GHC has 103 manned operational clinics and has conducted over 3900 health camps in Tier 4 and below regions, while in the process, making a difference to over 1 lakh lives. The services provided by GHC help farmers and rural population to avail primary medical care at an unmatched and nominal fee. Through various health camps, collaborations and partnership, Gramin Health Care does not only bring primary health care and specialist care services but also provides health cover, diagnostics, medicines, ambulance services, immunisation and pain management and hospital beds booking to the most deprived people in the country.
As the MSME sector continues to provide healthy growth in employment, the government announced 12 schemes, to facilitate the growth of MSME sector.

The salient one was to approve loans up to Rs.1 cr in 59 minutes. The loan amount will be between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs.1 cr. The rate of interest starts from 8%. After the approval of the application, the loan amount will be disbursed within a week. There is no mandatory requirement for collateral as the online portal is directly connected to the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises scheme. While registering, the borrower need not make any payment. Once the applicant's proposal matches the bank's minimum criteria for lending, the borrower will have to be submitting a fee of Rs. 1,000 plus taxes.

- **Rebate in interest rate** - When the GST was introduced, many MSMEs started paying GST for the first time. Paying GST creates a credit profile for the MSMEs and it is possible to assess their credit rating based on the financial profile of the firm. On the new loans to be availed, GST-registered MSMEs will get 2% subvention or rebate on incremental new loans of up to Rs 1 crore. Interest subvention on pre- and post-shipment credit for exports by MSMEs has also been increased from 3% to 5%. The 2% subvention will reduce their interest cost.

- **Cash flow certainty** - Companies with a turnover of more than Rs 500 crore have to join Trade Receivables e- Discounting System (TReDS) and it has become mandatory. This will help MSMEs to discount their bills and improve the cash flow, to ensure a smooth operation.

- **Procurement by PSUs** - Public Sector units in several sectors are the market leaders and their purchase budget in a year is a very large. Now, PSUs have to procure, at least a quarter of their requirement (25%) from MSMEs. Earlier, it was at 20%. This will give a big boost to MSMEs and their integration into the industry value chain will increase. This will also help to create more jobs due to higher demand.

- **Women Entrepreneurs** - The participation of women in various sectors is rising and the government also has created several special schemes to promote women's participation in the society. With a view to encourage, more women to pursue entrepreneurship, out of the 25%
procurement mandated from MSMEs from PSUs, 3% has been reserved for women entrepreneurs.

- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** - Government has created a grand programme on Digitisation of the Economy. One of the initiatives under digitisation is creating E-marketplaces, where MSMEs can participate easily. Now it is mandatory for all Central PSUs to take membership of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and they will put their purchase requirements in the market place, which MSMEs can identify easily and participate in the process.

- **Technological Upgradation** - MSMEs have money only to run their business and they are constrained to invest in upgrading their technology, products and R&D related to their business. With a view to assist MSMEs in upgrading the Technology, Government has created a budget of Rs 6,000 crore and it will be used for 20 hubs and 100 tool rooms for technology upgradation.

- **Pharma companies** - India has gained competitiveness in Pharma business and has emerged as the Generic pharma product hub in the world. There are more than 10,000 companies producing pharma products in India and with a view to encourage setting up more Pharma units government has created a scheme for forming MSME pharma clusters. 70% cost of establishing these clusters will be borne by the Central government.

- **One annual return** - At present MSMEs are filing several reports in a year relating to Labour laws and Central rules. This consumes lot of time of the entrepreneurs and taking away their attention from the core business. To make this process simple, now, MSMEs will have to file just one annual return on eight labour laws and ten central rules.

- **Inspections** - At present, Inspectors visit the factories and many a times, entrepreneurs are harassed and this has become one of the irritants for MSMEs and they are finding it difficult to manage this process. The process of inspection from the discretion of the inspector has been changed to selection of a company through a computerised random allotment and inspectors will have to upload reports on the portal within 48 hours of their visit. This has brought lot of transparency to the process.

- **Air and Water Pollution Laws** - Now MSMEs can file returns with self certification and only 10% of the units will be inspected. Further, they need a single air and water clearance and just one consent to establish a factory. The process has been made simple and become a single window clearance.

- **Minor Violations under Companies Act** - An ordinance has been promulgated to simplify the levy of penalties for minor offences under the Companies Act. Now MSMEs no longer have to approach court, which is a time consuming process but they can correct them through simple procedures.

These twelve initiatives will go a long way in boosting the growth of MSMEs in India and they will be able to create robust business models which will pave the way for faster integration of MSMEs into the Indian Economy. The awareness has to be created about these schemes to all the MSMEs in India.

**About R Kannan**

R. Kannan is Head Corporate Performance Monitoring & Research, Hinduja Group dealing in aspects relating to Planning, Budgeting, Performance Monitoring, Business Development M&A and Global Economic and Industry Research. He is an expert in Finance and Strategy with more than 30 years experience. His career spans as a Management Consultant and as a Key member of Corporate Head Quarters in Various corporate including TCS / PWC as Management Consultant, Hinduja Group as VP and Head of Strategy, ICICI Infotech as EVP and Head of Strategy, ICICI Bank as EVP Strategy. He carried out assignments relating to Corporate Finance, Fund Raising, Treasury Management, Strategy Formulation/Implementation, Organisation Restructuring, Corporate Performance Management, Business Development and Mergers/Acquisitions.

He is a member of Expert Committees in FICCI/CII/Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Indian Merchant's Chamber on Committees relating to States, Industry, Economy, Banking, Transportation, Environment, etc. At present Member of the Private Equity and Venture Capital Committee of Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
The rollout of the Goods and Service Tax (GST) on 1st July 2017 was a landmark reform in India’s indirect tax regime. Since its implementation, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have been the biggest beneficiaries of this tax reform.

The onset of GST regime has comprehensively subsumed within itself, various indirect taxes, including those falling in the purview of the state governments, eliminating the need for SME owners and manufacturers to correspond with multiple tax departments, often with overlapping jurisdictions and adhere to tedious documentation procedures towards tax compliance.

Additionally, the integration of the tax structure under the novel concept of ‘One Nation, One Tax’ has superseded the separate state tax laws and enabled single GST registration in a state for SMEs to supply goods and services to customers across India without affecting their landed costs, attributable to lower logistics costs.

The unrestricted movement of goods across states, without stoppage for checks or documentation, has expedited the movement of goods and significantly reduced transportation and warehousing costs, which often constitute a huge portion of overhead costs for SMEs.

Experts estimate that the centralization of the indirect tax framework has effectively reduced the tax rate to 18-28%, as against the previous 24%-32% rate in the multi-taxation system, which cumulatively made up seventeen different taxes and cesses. The overall streamlined approach has enabled SMEs to channelize their time and resources towards running the business rather than deal with the procedural issues of coping with multiple, and frequently, changing tax legislation.

Removal of cascading effect

The single-return format with application of a uniform tax rate, comprising subcomponents like CGST - Central Goods and Services Tax, SGST - State Goods and Services Tax and IGST - Integrated Goods and Services Tax, for the same goods across India has removed the cascading effect of taxation on sale of goods and services, facilitating Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to compete on a level playing field with the established, big players in the industry, owing to availability of Input Tax Credit (ITC) across the supply chain. It must be remembered that GST is basically a value-added tax with the allowance of ITC. The chain reaction effect of carry forward of ITC has acted as a major deterrent against GST violation, as non-compliance by an entity at any stage in the value chain, would result in loss of ITC to the subsequent consumer. This has, in turn, led to a larger number of SMEs voluntarily embracing GST, given the inability of the business community, to transact with non-GST compliant entities. For an economy to prosper,
it is vital that the majority of the business enterprises are participants in the formalised sectors adhering to the prevalent tax structure. The adoption of GST norms is a positive indicator that SMEs belonging to unorganized sectors are entering the mainstream organized segments. Another positive development for MSMEs is that they can avail input tax credit on services, even in case of dealing entirely in goods.

Owing to lack of scale, many SMEs have limited monetary resources, which restricts their ability to adopt expensive technology and recruit in-house tax professionals. Keeping in mind these limitations, the government has extended the facility of free accounting software for SMEs with a turnover up to Rs 1.5 crore. Further, the Harmonised System Nomenclature (HSN) has been rolled out as a rationalisation initiative of the items falling within the ambit of GST.

**Easing cash flow**

The government has introduced new measures to simplify the invoicing process, especially for the MSMEs. Business enterprises with an annual turnover of up to Rs 1.5 crore need not mention the HSN Code in the tax invoice. Further, it would suffice for GST assessees with an annual turnover between Rs 1.5 and Rs 5 crore to mention the first two digits of HSN code in their invoices. Only taxpayers with an annual turnover limit above Rs 5 crore are required to mention the full 4-digit HSN code in their invoices.

Working capital is the fuel for a well-oiled business organization to conduct routine operations, be it raw material purchases, payment to suppliers, wages or other short-term requirements. Often, MSMEs face financial difficulties like funds shortfall, which is overcome by short-term borrowings. The cash flow challenges faced by MSMEs are aggravated by the credit period of 60-90 days enjoyed by customers and the cash outflows due to the mandatory payment of tax liability on their outward supplies by the 20th of the month, besides other operational expenses. Thus, it is imperative that MSMEs manage working capital efficiently & effectively to ensure adequate liquidity in the business. To institutionalize the practice of prompt payment to MSMEs and improve their cash flows, the government has made it mandatory for corporate to pay all MSMEs within 45 days or face a levy of penalty. As a step towards transparency in GST reporting, corporates are required to disclose details of the overdue payment to Micro and Small enterprises amounts in Form MSME - 1 on the MCA portal periodically.

**Eliminating complexities**

Recognizing the pain points of the MSMEs falling under the scope of the GST tax net, the government has sought to resolve them by extending numerous benefits like reduced rates of interest on loans and eligibility to avail other incentive schemes being operated by different ministerial departments.

For the Indian economy to continue its growth trajectory, it is vital to develop an ecosystem, especially on the policy front, by which SMEs can thrive and grow. GST aims to achieve this by eliminating the complexities of tax compliance, enabling ease of conducting business, preventing tax leakages, widening the scope to reduce the tax burden, incentivising MSMEs with fiscal relaxations like composition scheme and exemptions based on turnover limit, facilitating greater adoption of digital technologies, minimizing paperwork, enhancing the competitive advantage of MSMEs, augmenting interstate business and most importantly helping in the creation of a unified, common marketplace with free movement of goods and provision of services, across India. With its coverage of multiple objectives, aimed at benefiting SMEs, clearly, GST means business.

-Ankit Agarwal is Managing Director, Alankit LTD.
GST simplified tax regime for the businesses by subsuming almost all types of indirect taxes levied by the Centre and the states. This lowered the effective tax paid by the end-consumer on any good or service as the GST reduced the cascading effect. It also tied the Centre and various states in an unique way that they cannot move independent of each other – laying a solid foundation of cooperation. GST also brought in the unorganized sector into main fold, another major achievement.

The GST collections are now crossing Rs 1lakh crore mark consecutively for 4 months since Mar 2019 and the highest collection so far being in April 2019 with INR 1.14 lakh crore, points towards a positive trend in GST revenue collection. Over 4 million voluntary GST registrations indicate the network benefits of being part of GSTN. Moreover, with the introduction of GST and the e-way bill, inert-state movement of goods has become easier and involves lower times, benefiting the logistics sector as well.

The Road Ahead

The MSME sector has been known to the backbone of any growing economy, taking it from purely an agrarian to an industrialized economy. Over 60 million such enterprises operate in various industries across India, employing over 100 million people. The sector accounts for a substantial 28% of India’s GDP and over 40% of its exports. The sector can provide larger employment opportunities at a comparatively lower capital cost especially in the rural and remote areas, by becoming part of the industrial ecosystem and acting as a large ancillary unite for large enterprises to support the system in growth.

Any business, more so with the SMEs, requires finance to sustain its existence and grow to achieve newer scales. While Banks and NBFCs serve as an important source of such funding, most SMEs still largely depend on finances from internal sources or from local moneylenders. External funding still remains an issue for them as one of the toughest tasks for financiers is adjudging the creditworthiness of aSMEs. For the absence of reliable information about SMEs, most traditional banks demand collateral or a guarantee to consider them for any credit. This is why perhaps one can hear many entrepreneurs say “you don’t get finance when you need the most”. More complexities in the loan process, longer processing time and higher uncertainties in the underlying business of small-scale sectors make loans more expensive- higher processing cost and even higher interest rates.

GST has undoubtedly, played an important role in formalization of businesses by subsuming almost all types of indirect taxes levied by the Centre and the states, setting the base for a unified tax system - One Nation, One Tax, One Market. While the road to 'One Nation-One Tax' has not been an easy one, the Government has put in best efforts to address various implementation related issues such as political deadlocks, frequent amendments, clarifications and IT related challenges.
of the unorganized sector and with periodic returns filing, the business records have been getting more organized with passing times.

**The need of the hour**

Effective measures can be taken even when the SMEs take the center stage as the borrower. Credit Scores are now available even for SMEs and the financial institutions can check out their credit history from the credit information bureaus at a click of the button. This can instantly reduce the preliminary evaluation time in all such cases where an MSME has previously availed a formal credit.

It is important to appreciate that the credit score alone cannot reduce the information asymmetry that existing between the financiers and the MSMEs. The financiers tend to be a lot more cautious in their appraisals in the current times and look for more information about them such as the business accounts, current accounts, income statements, expense statements, sales statements, etc. before being comfortable with an application.

GSTN filings are available in digital format. If these are made available to financiers directly or via consent of the subject, it will empower bankers with very credible data source. GSTN will not only lower the information asymmetry for bankers but also significantly lower the decision time. Lenders will, of course, have to be more creative in their credit processes and product structure to enable cash-flow based lending even for the cases with no credit history.

GST records coupled with the credit history can certainly be a valuable resource for the lenders to consider lending to SMEs. Improved access to credit to MSMEs is imperative to help our economy grow at a healthy rate and generate much needed employment for millions of youths getting added to the potential workforce.

-Parijat Garg is Sr. Vice President at CRIF High Mark.

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Microsoft Initiatives to Strengthen Consumer Trust in Digital Services

Unveiling the results of a new consumer study, Microsoft has called for an increased focus to strengthen trust in digital services in the country. The study, Understanding Consumer Trust in Digital Services in Asia Pacific, found that only two out of five (41%) of consumers in India trust organizations offering digital services to protect their personal data. A study sponsored by Microsoft and conducted by IDC Asia/Pacific, aimed to understand consumers’ expectations of trust and their experiences with digital services and provide tangible insights to organizations to help bridge the gap by earning and sustaining the trust of consumers in the digital world.

“The upside for organizations with a trusted digital platform is tremendous as India is one of the largest and fastest growing digital services markets in Asia Pacific where almost all of the transactions and interactions here would be digital in the near future,” said Keshav Dhakad, Group Head & Assistant General Counsel - Corporate, External & Legal Affairs (CELA), Microsoft India. “However, despite consumers’ increasing dependence on digital services, there is still a considerable trust gap that needs to be addressed. Most consumers still do not perceive organizations to be trusted data stewards. It is clear that businesses need to do a lot more to understand what drives consumer trust and focus on how they can build trust and make it a key competitive advantage for their digital services,” Keshav added.
Crowdfunding in Healthcare: ImpactGuru.com Impacting Lives

Digital Regime will Boost Crowdfunding in India

ImpactGuru.com is a tech-for-good platform founded by Piyush Jain, CEO and Khushboo Jain, COO, to provide complete crowdfunding solutions to empower individuals, NGOs and social enterprises to raise funds for medical emergencies, personal needs, creative projects or any social cause – be it big or small. It was incubated at Harvard Innovation Lab in the USA in 2014.

With its presence in Mumbai, New Delhi, Singapore, and San Francisco, the duo’s entrepreneurial journey started with a mission to help India’s people find crowdfunding solutions for healthcare, social change, and personal and creative projects. From raising Rs. 25 lakhs for a primary school teacher’s liver transplant, to weeks back having popular actress Sunny Leone setup a fundraiser on ImpactGuru.com to raise funds for her team member’s kidney transplant, all of this has been a purposeful journey.

Says Piyush, “Crowdfunding in India is currently at a nascent stage. This holds good even within the healthcare ecosystem. Every year,
India spends a $100 billion on healthcare, sixty percent of which is out-of-pocket expenses. The level of awareness about medical crowdfunding among patients, hospital management and even doctors was fairly low in the country, but it seems to be picking up now. Millions of people die in India due to lack of funds for medical treatment. Crowdfunding is the most disruptive solution to address this problem. We are on a mission to make healthcare accessible to all and save more lives by crowdfunding via our platform ImpactGuru.com and are aiming to be a catalyst in this process."

Piyush Jain in an email interaction with SME WORLD

What ails crowdfunding in India? What are the factors which hold back investors?

Crowdfunding is driven by a culture of generosity and a high propensity for people to pay digitally through social media. Crowdfunding in India is set to grow exponentially once friction on payments within social media reduces even further. And the great thing is that Whatsapp Pay is about to launch in India after recently having shared that they have complied with the Reserve Bank of India's directions. We believe that's the biggest catalyst for growth of crowdfunding in India having seen first-hand the importance of WeChat and WeChatPay in China for crowdfunding.

Factors holding back investors: We believe that investors are maybe underestimating the market potential of crowdfunding. Based on the growth that we have seen in China, we believe that India will be a very large market for crowdfunding.

What is the scenario of crowdfunding in health in India and what potential it holds? What is the future of crowdfunding in India?

Healthcare problem in India - 80% of India's 1.3 billion population lack health insurance. The remaining 20% have an average insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakhs. When struck with critical illnesses, the cover is of limited use and patients go into a debt poverty trap by being forced to take loans to fund expenses.

Critical illnesses such as cancer and heart diseases and organ transplants don't just drain the finances of those from below-the-poverty-line backgrounds, but also the 400mm strong middle class population. Unfortunately, 55 million Indian people get pushed into poverty annually because they are unable to pay and cope up with rising healthcare costs, which are growing at 20% annually.

Healthcare crowdfunding is an alternative method of raising funds online for medical expenses, with the patient (or his/her friends or family) primarily relying on social media networks to mobilise donors to finance the relevant medical bills. Typically, each of these donors contribute relatively small sums of money online to help raise a much larger goal amount.

Healthcare crowdfunding to the rescue - Is the most disruptive solution to address this problem as funds raised online is considered as a donation. Therefore, customers don't have to resort to selling homes or mortgaging jewelry out of desperation. Crowdfunding allows people to raise money quickly in a hassle free manner without any payback liability.

One of ImpactGuru's crowdfunding milestone: Alamelu from Tamil Nadu, was able to raise Rs 21.94 lakhs in just 24 hours through our platform. Funds raised went towards her son's Stem-Cell Transplantation as he was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease, Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis

Future of crowdfunding in India:

Rising internet access and digital payments penetration continues to complement the growth of the crowdfunding industry in India. The recent relief efforts for Kerala floods stand as a testament to the power of crowdfunding. Crowdfunding has evolved to become a ray of hope for people to pursue their passion, to save lives and to provide for the underprivileged. Crowdfunding is undoubtedly one of the best things that has happened due to technological growth and development.

Crowdfunding for healthcare is a new concept. What drove you towards this sector?

The strong passion to make a difference in the lives of people and save more lives inspired Co-Founder, Khushboo Jain and Ito start a fintech company focused on making healthcare more affordable. We thus co-founded ImpactGuru.com with a mission to help India's people find crowdfunding solutions primarily for healthcare as well as social change.

Healthcare crowdfunding is an alternative method of raising funds online for medical expenses, with the patient (or his/her friends or family) primarily relying on social media networks to mobilise donors to finance the relevant medical bills. Typically, each of these donors contribute relatively small sums of money online to help raise a much larger goal amount. For example: 200 donors contributing Rs 5,000 each can mobilise Rs 10 lakhs for a cancer surgery in less than 24 hours. The additional advantage of crowdfunding is that patients do not have to repay that money back to the funders as the money provided online
We do agree that healthcare is a State responsibility. But it would be practically impossible for it to pay for the healthcare of every single person in the State. In particular, Government has a much bigger responsibility to help as many people who cannot afford healthcare.

is a donation and not a loan.
ImpactGuru.com’s core mission is to work tirelessly to ensure that no one dies due to lack of funds for their healthcare expenses in India.

Healthcare is basically a state responsibility. What are the risks involved in crowdfunding for individuals?
We do agree that healthcare is a State responsibility. But it would be practically impossible for it to pay for the healthcare of every single person in the State. In particular, Government has a much bigger responsibility to help as many people who cannot afford healthcare. Though, very few Governments in the world particularly those which are emerging economies are able to pay for the healthcare of every single citizen that too a population of the scale of India.

Risk involved in crowdfunding for individuals from a platform perspective is ensuring that every case is verified with the hospital. We ensure every Fundraiser goes through a special Due Diligence process and is vetted by our Team.

How do you ensure ROI?
Ours is a highly scalable, asset light, transparent revenue model. We charge a 5% fee on total funds raised. There is no upfront fee that customers need to pay to use our platform. We charge additional fixed fees for premium services such as digital marketing, video and content support.

Do we have dedicated platforms for crowdfunding for healthcare?
If yes, how successful these are?
ImpactGuru.com is creating social impact everyday helping patients fund critical illnesses and saving lives as that is our mission. It is heartening to learn that the healthcare crowdfunding platform Co-Founder Khushboo Jain and I conceptualized has so far benefited over 20,000 patients from over 200,000 donors.

Here are some of ImpactGuru’s healthcare crowdfunding success stories:
I. Mumbai resident Amit Shenoy, admitted at Apollo Hospital Navi Mumbai raised Rs. 45 lakhs in 7 days through ImpactGuru for his Allogenic Stem Cell transplant.
II. 15-Year-old Deekshit required funds for his mother’s rectal prolapse surgery. Deekshits’ fundraiser surpassed the target goal of 15 lakhs in 3. 5 hours on
III. Puja Bhatnagar from Delhi had battled chronic liver disease for 17 years. In March 2017, it became evident that she needed a liver transplant when she stopped responding to her ongoing treatment. The hospital costs and medical bills were piling up, and her husband, Anurag, had to soon figure out options to raise money. Within a span of a month, Anurag was able to raise Rs 25 lakh through donations and contributions from 407 people.
IV. 8-year-old Ahanti was in-need of funds for her heart transplant. In a quick span, Ahanti raised Rs. 26.68 lakhs from 738 donors, through crowdfunding on ImpactGuru
V. Upendar Kasam from Cyient Limited, Hyderabad put up a fundraiser for an orphan in his neighborhood for his treatment. The boy was fighting Bone Cancer for over a year. Within a week, the fundraiser garnered 117 social media shares and raised Rs. 3.12 lakhs from 175 donors through crowdfunding on ImpactGuru.com.

What is the growth trajectory you may have drawn for ImpactGuru.com? How do you view your growth in the next 5 years?
The ImpactGuru team is driven with the intent to make healthcare accessible to all and save more lives.

International expansion - In terms of markets we want to be strongly focused in India but we are looking opportunistically in other markets specifically Middle East because of some recent investments in ImpactGuru.com from various investors there. Our focus is to be strongly focused on healthcare crowdfunding which is a proven concept in the US, UK as well as China. We want to be Asia’s largest healthcare crowdfunding platform excluding China.

About Piyush Jain
Piyush has both, educational and work experience in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, London, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Mumbai, New Delhi and Kolkata. He has extensive experience in the fields of investment banking, management consulting and startups and has an acute insight into emerging markets. He also possesses experience across industries, a tri-sector leadership approach and is very conversant with tech ventures.

Piyush’s perspectives have been further enriched due to his stint in private sector companies like BCG, J.P. Morgan, Ernst & Young, public sector (Government of India) and non-profit sector (Instiglio), as well as with a Silicon Valley startup, So-Fi - world’s #1 fintech startup involved with funding.

Piyush holds an undergraduate degree from Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, where he was a Joseph Wharton Scholar, and a graduate degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. At Harvard, he assisted Professor Thornburg in teaching a class on Financial Management in Nonprofit Organizations. He has co-authored a paper at Harvard Business School on innovative ways to finance entrepreneurial and social ventures and did his graduate capstone exercise at Harvard on crowdfunding and CSR.
Apps have grown to become the driving force of our daily lives. The digital world, which has revolutionized our existence wouldn't be able to do so if there were no apps for your favourite services. The whole app-based experience has made it easier to engage and retain customers, while also helping brands deliver a seamless user experience. The brands that have been able to deliver the best app experiences are now ruling the charts on the app stores; apps like Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Facebook, Whatsapp, Bigo Live, TikTok are a few examples.

Keep reading for 10 important things to consider when creating the best app experience.

1 Core purpose
Every app on the app store is there to solve a problem and is driven by a goal statement. Every small business or entrepreneur needs to clearly define what they want users to get out of their app. Once you’ve figured out this bottom-line purpose, build your app around that.

2 Choice of features
A good app focuses on one thing rather than creating a clutter of services. A social media app may not need a payment gateway, but a retail app is useless without one. Choosing the right set of features to help deliver your app's core purpose is imperative. If user feedback says more features are needed, they can be rolled out with updates. Until then, keep it simple.

3 Value driven
Yes, a good app should be simple, but it should also provide value for its user. For the ideal experience, your app has to save your users' most precious commodity: TIME. Streamlining your app and dealing with user queries in the most direct and simplified way makes the whole experience more smooth and enjoyable.

4 In-app analytics
In-app analytics are a major app development tool. Users opt in to share some amount of data with the developer so that the app can be refined for better performance and solution delivery. In-app analytics help you understand what users do (and do not) want, so you can add or remove features to maintain a more efficient and enjoyable user experience.

5 Offline functionality
Though internet connectivity is now present nearly everywhere, the ideal app-based experience should not rely solely on the interwebs. If your app works efficiently and provides access to its core functionality in offline mode, your users are far less likely to be frustrated with an unresponsive app.

6 High performance
Top performance is the key to a successful app; anything less than ideal performance makes for a negative user experience. Crashes, slowdowns and bugs repel the very users that you're trying to attract. When your target audience starts looking for more reliable alternatives, it's not a good sign for you or your app.

7 Cross platform functionality
You don't restrict yourself to one type of device and neither do your users. If your app doesn't work equally well on all prominent platforms, you're going to lose out to someone else whose app is more versatile.

8 Keep it free
Ads and in-app purchases are nobody's favorite part of the online experience. The only thing worse is having to pay to download your app in the first place. Attracting and keeping your users can be a difficult balancing act. If ads and in-app purchases are what it takes to get your app downloaded for free, go for it. No one wants to pay good money for something they haven’t had the chance to try. If you've done your job right, once users are able to test your app, they'll fork out the money to unlock the premium features.

9 Updating
It's not enough to just build the perfect app. You have to keep building it. Your app needs to be updated on a regular basis to provide a smooth and seamless experience with updated security. But more than that, an updated UI and new features will keep your app fresh and avoid the deadly pitfall of user burnout.

10 Feedback
Whatever else you do, the only thing that ultimately matters is the way your app is experienced by your users. And the only way to learn about that user experience is to ask. Users love to be heard, and if their issues are promptly resolved, they'll spread the good word about your app. Then, more users will follow.

-Sachin Dev Duggal is Founder & CEO, Engineer.ai.
I have a contrasting view on startups, as I tend to give less focus and emphasis on just the Idea and conceptualization stage of the startup, where an entrepreneur identifies a problem that can be turned into a business model, which solves it and meanwhile expect to generate profit at the end of it. I think it’s time to stop the romance with ideas and fads. People tend to lay more emphasis on ideas and entrepreneurship and less on the procedures & processes required to turn that idea or concept into sustainable business enterprises.

It’s a cliché, to give the whole credit or blame for the success or failure of the startup to just the “business idea”. I believe that the most critical success factor for any startup is a term which we swear by, internally is “PME”, which stands for “Planning”, “Mobilization” & “Execution”. This has been the foundation of the five successful startups, which we have developed over the last 10 years.

The Research

Let’s address each of them. First is going on the drawing board and doing the required home work. Before committing to any green field business opportunity, sufficient amount of secondary and primary research shall be done, including a detailed primary interaction with different players in the value chain, including the prospective customers, competitors, financing institutions, prospective hires. This kind of exercise will provide the critical insights into how the whole ecosystem works and how to take advantage of the niche opportunities available within that ecosystem. I very firmly believe that, if this first step is done rigorously, the probability of failure of the venture goes down by 30 percent or so. This exercise should be spearheaded by the stakeholders themselves, rather than using third party intelligence to arrive at any conclusion. It might sound very straightforward but the rewards of work done at this stage is highly underrated. We carry out a detailed roadshow and meet all participants across the value chain before committing to any new business.

Next step after signing on the dotted line is the “Mobilization” of resources, which here would include the right market & competitor intelligence, availability of conventional & alternative financing sources and people with the right mindset to work in greenfield businesses.

Another underrated factor is the choice of people to work in the green field ventures. Having seen a lot of CXO level resources succeed or fail across the ventures involved in. People who do a great job in large corporations and work under a strait jacket organizational structure might not necessarily prove equally successful in the green field ventures. Significant time and effort should be spent on choosing the right people who are go getters and are always open to roll up their sleeves and take up roles and responsibility, outside their designated area of operations & expertise. It should be taken into consideration if they have dealt with ambiguous, undefined and uncertain situations & tasks. What their view on optimally utilizing minimal resources. Chemistry between the shareholders and the CXO hires is also extremely important. Detailed reference check should be carried out involving meeting and talking to their ex colleagues.

On a slightly different note, with respect to mobilization of resources, for smaller scale ventures, one can
Moving to sustainability of the startups. After navigating one’s way through the above-mentioned challenges, maintaining sustainability is a massive factor. With scale, comes a lot of operational & financing challenges for newer businesses. Changing macro situation can post both operational and financing challenges.

Also take assistance from accelerators, incubators and co-working spaces which provide attractive incentives for startups and early-stage entrepreneurs— including administrative support for setting up a business and networking opportunities with like-minded innovators.

**Sustainable Ecosystem**

Similarly identifying both conventional and alternative financing which will sustain the business in the next three to five years is critical. Many times, entrepreneurs might not have the knowledge of the spectrum of financing solutions in the market. Sometimes the financing solutions in the emerging markets are not as comprehensive as they are in the western markets. SME & start up credit gap is still massive in most of emerging markets. However, missing components required to build a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem have begun to emerge in emerging markets as well. There are a wide range of financing resources available from VC, early stage investors, conventional sme financing, mezzanine financing, private equity, which can be used at different stages of the venture. Also, in the most recent times, there have been introduction of policies to put a growth-oriented thrust on the entrepreneurial ventures. Policies like MUDRA Yojana, Startup India and SETU, if utilized properly, may give a stable start to the firms in terms of meeting their initial financial requirements.

After immaculate planning and efficient mobilization, the importance of execution and routine business operations cannot be overstated. Starts up should have the culture of out of the box thinking and execution. However, that should not be confused with the need to have water tight operational systems, procedures and business performance evaluation in the organization. A very strict business planning and tracking the results against the same is of utmost importance. In India, we can see some startups trying to replicate the procedural patterns of established firms in the Silicon Valley. This cannot go wrong any further. This should be based on your understanding of the business, that you have comprehended in the initial phases, coupled with the nature of customers your venture is planning to serve and what your short term and long-term goals are.

Moving to sustainability of the startups. After navigating one’s way through the above-mentioned challenges, maintaining sustainability is a massive factor. With scale, comes a lot of operational & financing challenges for newer businesses. Changing macro situation can post both operational and financing challenges. Operational challenges might include, severe price competition, client retention, receivables & collection issues, efficient resource management, introduction of disruptive products & services, to name a few. Financing challenges include lack of financing options in the midst of depressed market conditions. All these prospective scenarios should be planned for on a continuous basis.

Sustainability should be built into the company’s business planning, values, vision & culture. Sustainability is an ongoing process of planning to be two steps ahead of any headwinds in your industry & macro environment.

**Planning for Consolidation**

Lastly, planning should be done to take advantage of weak market conditions leading to industry consolidation. These kinds of situations present opportunities for inorganic growth from acquisitions of other players in the market.

Having executives on the board with private equity experience is critical for startups. They will bring with them experience of mergers, acquisitions, restructuring, buy outs, exits, IPOs. There are two very critical yet complimentary aspects to building sustainable successful business, operational expertise & corporate finance experience. Having executives and board members with these two broad experiences will go a long way in ensuring the growth & sustainability of the business in both buoyant and depressed market conditions.

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### About Amit Marwah

Amit Marwah (CFA) is Chief Investment Officer, Dayim Holdings, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a major Investment Holding Company. Established in 2006 as a platform to act as an incubator for top international companies to enter Saudi Arabia, UAE and other surrounding GCC markets, it has Joint ventures with some of the biggest global organizations from US, France, Sweden, Spain, India etc.

Amit, an MBA in International Finance from Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi is also a CFA Charter holder. He has played an instrumental role in establishing various multimillion dollar corporations in the last 10 years, across the Middle East, in partnerships with major international brands. His articles have been featured in various magazines and blogs in the past including BBC, Start-up360, Silicon India, Insights Success and the Annual Magazine of MBA, Delhi School of Economics.

Prior to his stint at Dayim Holdings, he worked as a management consultant at Mckinsey & Co., Cushman & Wakefield and at Kotak Mahindra Bank in the Investment & Strategy Management domain.
However, over the years the changes in economy & technology have brought many changes and cost-effective innovations in the SCM field, which will benefit SMEs immensely, but increasing operational efficiency and reducing cost.

**Road Ahead**

The introduction of Goods and Services Tax or GST has made the whole of India come to a common market by removing the differential tax structure prevailing in different states. It has also done away with the need to set up warehouses in different states and regions where an organisation intends to do business. GST has also helped the transportation sector by removing sales tax check post, thereby reducing the queues in the state borders, and improving the delivery time.

Earlier a business entity had to set up warehouses in different states and do stock transfer from their main factory or warehouse as such it was not feasible for a small organisation to set up so many warehouses entailing huge investments, handling compliances, manpower and other complexities which was challenging for SMEs because of their inherent constraints of liquidity crisis, lack of managerial skills etc.

However, after the rollout of GST, many organisations are consolidating their warehouses to single location as per their area of operations. Many logistics players are setting up large format state of Art warehouses in centralized location thereby providing economies of scale to the users,

The SME sector can hire storage space in such warehouses, which will help them avoid huge CAPEX. They can avail of the logistics services of “3PL logistics players- Third Party Logistics” who can offer those services in various areas like storage, inventory management, visibility of goods movement, billing, documentation etc. A thriving startup environment in the logistics space is bringing lot of cost-effective innovations that will be particularly beneficial for the SME sectors.

**Shared Mobility**

Just Like Ola and Uber has brought revolution in the public transportation domain, companies like RIVIGO, PORTER, DUNZO are bringing the benefits of technology & shared mobility in the commercial space.

The transportation sector has always been marred by poor investments, poor condition of vehicles, poor working conditions along with lack of transparency in freight rates and Poor Road & Rail connectivity in the country.

This has always discouraged a small organisation from expanding their market. However, over the past few years the transportation segment has seen positive policy intervention
from the Government. The pace of Highway construction has improved from 12 km per day to 24 km per day with a target of Reaching 30km per day. The Sagar Mala project envisages connecting National Highways to Major Ports.

**PIT STOP**

Companies like PORTER, DUNZO etc are aggregators of commercial vehicles of all sizes and booking is done through apps, their pricing and billing are transparent and they provide benefits of GPS tracking, good vehicle condition and trained staff etc. RIVIGO has made truck driving an attractive career option for drivers with the concepts like PIT STOP wherein a driver will work only for normal working hours and drive up to a Pit stop point and he will then be able to come back to his residence on the same day by taking the return vehicle on the same route. This has improved driver's productivity, working condition and has brought positive changes amongst the drivers. Riviigo has also recently launched the National Freight Index to bring transparency in the freight rates; this has been made possible by the use of Algorithms, Machine learning etc. The freight Index can be accessed free of cost by any organisation and it presently shows truck rentals of 1500 origin and destination locations for 30 types of trucks.

The National Waterways 1 (NW1) from Haldia in West Bengal to Prayagraj (Formerly Allahabad) has been made operational, the thrust of the Government is to develop the Inland waterways as an alternative mode of transportation to Road, Rail. This has the potential to reduce the transportation cost to Re 0.50 per kg compared to Rs 1.50 per kg in other modes. This will help SME sector immensely.

The Government has also come up with guidelines on usage of Drones; slowly this will also be used commercial for carrying smaller loads for over a particular distance for timely delivery. Also on the anvil is the National Logistics Policy which aims to reduce the overall Logistics cost to 9 % of GDP from 14 % at present.

Apart from the above, the use of modern technology like cloud computing technologies, Software as a Service (SAAS) have minimized the needs for CAPEX investments for ERP, servers etc. Many ERP providers like SAP, RAMCO etc are bringing customized and cost-effective Packages for SME sector.

With the use of Artificial Intelligence, 3D Printing technologies and Robotics the future holds immense potential for SMEs, which can lead SMEs towards greater achievements.

About The Author
R. Visvesvaran is a Post Graduate in Transportation & Logistics Management from IISWBM, Kolkata. He is having over 13 years of experience in SCM various sectors like retail, telecom, fashion etc. Presently he is heading the purchase department of Sri SriTatta Panchkarma, the hospitality division of Art of Living, Bangalore.

**DBS Bank Partners with Priority Vendor**

DBS Bank India Limited (DBIL) has entered into a strategic partnership with Priority Vendor, a leading online dynamic discounting platform, to enable suppliers achieve their short-term working capital requirements. This unique invoice discounting proposition allows suppliers to manage their cash flow by unlocking the capital that is tied up in invoices by leveraging on the higher financial standing of the buyer, without the need to provide any collateral security or personal guarantee. It provides flexibility to the suppliers to opt for early payments to manage their working capital by forgoing a portion of the invoiced amount, and in return receive earlier payment, totally at the discretion of the supplier. This will also significantly reduce the requirements of small suppliers for traditional Bank finance as their receivables will be converted to cash almost on immediate basis. Though the program will serve the needs of MSME suppliers, but it is not restricted to MSMEs.

The Program also enables the large and medium buyers to support their strategic supplier base, thus bring in loyalty and provides synergies in bringing their financial and physical supply chain together. The program is fully automated and digital in nature and does not require any paper trail or manual intervention which makes the supply chain more effective, efficient including providing the ability to scale up. Both existing and new customers (large and medium buyers) will be able to take the advantage of this initiative.

At a group level, DBS has a 50 year legacy in serving SMEs and the bank believes that the growth of this sector is closely interwoven with the growth of the economy. It has harnessed the power of technology to transform banking and introduce customer-centric, innovative solutions. By partnering with Priority Vendor for the online discounting platform, DBIL has taken a step further in this direction, reaffirming its vision to empower local businesses and support the Indian SME and MSME growth story.

The tie-up with PV reinforces DBS philosophy of leading the next generation of digital transformation by enabling customers to reshape their supply chain with the latest technology and maximize innovation. An efficient supply chain management is vital and DBIL's strategic partnership with PV provides opportunities to buyers to improve commercial terms, extend DPOs, enhance supplier relationship thereby ensuring certainty and reliability of supplies leading to a financially robust supply chain.
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector has been recognized as an engine of growth in India. The contribution of small and medium enterprises sector to manufacturing output, employment and exports of the country is quite significant. According to estimates, in terms of value, the sector accounts for about 45 per cent of the manufacturing output and 40 percent of the total exports of India. Despite being pillars of economy the SMEs continue to face several problems in their day-to-day operations.

SMEs are often unable to procure adequate financial resources for the purchase of machinery, equipment and raw materials as well as for meeting day-to-day expenses. Further, they find it difficult to recruit and motivate skilled managerial and technical personnel. This increases their vulnerability to various financial risks. Such risks can directly affect day-to-day operations, decrease revenue or increase expenses. Their impact may be serious enough for the business to fail.

Most business managers know instinctively that they should have insurance policies to cover risks to life and property. However, these are generally considered as an expense that can be set aside unless mandated by law or their financiers or by contracts. Furthermore, there are many other risks that all businesses face, some of which are overlooked or ignored entirely.

Each business has its own set of exposures that may derail its operations. Businesses should have a holistic way at looking at their risks by taking into consideration its operations, employees, and third-party exposures. SME insurance has an array of protection covers for various businesses with an option to choose the specific covers befitting each business needs and creating a customized package for the same. It works like a one-stop solution for almost all insurable risks that an SME may encounter. Coverage includes basic Fire & allied perils as primary cover along with host of additional covers. They include Burglary, Theft, Business Interruption covers, breakdown of Machinery and electronic equipments, all risks for portable equipments, employee Fidelity cover, employee Personal Accident cover, Money insurance, Public Liability & Workmen’s compensation- an all in one package solution.

Need to Protect Assets

In addition to these a transit insurance can be looked at to protect loss of goods in transit both for domestic and export/imports.
Most business managers know instinctively that they should have insurance policies to cover risks to life and property. However, these are generally considered as an expense that can be set aside unless mandated by law or their financiers or by contracts. Furthermore, there are many other risks that all businesses face, some of which are overlooked or ignored entirely.

It’s a common misnomer that only large companies are frequently exposed to data breaches, hacking incidents and network failures. The truth is, however, that there are thousands of small businesses handling sensitive information that could be exposed, leaving them liable to numerous claims.

Besides the need to protect the Assets of business enterprise, SME should be aware of the rise in liability exposures. Business enterprises are exposed to liability from Bodily Injury and property damage to third parties arising from their business operation, premises or products. These can be insured through a comprehensive Commercial General Liability insurance.

Today's businesses operate in a fast-moving and dynamic environment. Management is closely involved in the day-to-day business operations and important business decisions have to be made on the spot. Such entrepreneurial environment can have a dangerous downside as well. Because the management is so closely involved in daily operations and is often making key decisions, small company owners and managers are extremely vulnerable to lawsuits from regulators, shareholders, customers, competitors, employees and government bodies amongst others for a number of reasons involving their positions in the company including Misuse of funds, Misrepresentation of company assets, Fraud, Breaking workplace laws, employee Discrimination, Wrongful termination, Sexual harassment etc. A costly lawsuit of this kind can have a particularly severe impact on individuals since the owner's personal net worth is often tied to the financial health of the company. There are policies which offer an easy way for small and medium-sized companies to secure protection for their Directors and Officers from such lawsuits and claims.

The Vulnerability

It’s a common misnomer that only large companies are frequently exposed to data breaches, hacking incidents and network failures. The truth is, however, that there are thousands of small businesses handling sensitive information that could be exposed, leaving them liable to numerous claims. All it takes is one breach, whether it's as sophisticated as a hacking or as simple as an employee's laptop being stolen, to cost the business seriously. Cyber Insurance coverage comes in handy & protects businesses from the increasingly sophisticated and complex threats that are prevalent in today’s tech-driven society. Any business that handles sensitive customer information, like credit card numbers, is at risk. If a breach or network failure happens, it could end up costing your small business lakhs of Rupees. As data & system breaches become more and more common, this insurance will grow to be just as vital to small businesses as policies that protect them from perils like fires, floods or riot incidents.

About Deepak Sankar

Deepak Sankar, Sr. Vice President & National Head - Speciality Lines & AIGC, Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited, brings with him an experience of over 17 years with specialties in Property & Casualty Underwriting, portfolio management, distribution and channel management.

Deepak started his professional career in 2002 and since then he has been associated with Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited. He holds a MBA degree in Marketing, and Business Administration from the University of Madras.
Climate change is one of the main driving forces of change for water resources management, together with demographic, economic, environmental, social and technological forces. Warmer temperatures are creating patterns of deeper droughts, land degradation and desertification, creating a stress on food security. Water conflicts can arise in water stressed areas among local communities and between countries because sharing a very limited and essential resource is extremely difficult. They are often conceived in isolation, but solutions to the major challenges must be seen through an integration approach. Links between water and climate change have for a long time been ignored in international climate summits. But now, it has started seeking a central stage in international platform.

In the 21st Century, freshwater supplies are drying up, explosive population growth is straining world resources, and global hyper-nationalism is testing diplomatic relations. Meanwhile, water demand is expected to step up 55% between 2000 and 2050. In the coming century, in terms of its value as a global resource, it’s been described as “the Next OIL”.

Enhanced levels of Water Pollution. Climate variability is bringing more uncertainty as to the availability, predictability and geographical distribution of water. It also poses major risks to our economies, societies and ecosystems. Taking a look at the magnitude of Water crisis, we can see Imbalances between availability and demand, the degradation of groundwater and surface water quality, intersectoral competition, interregional and international conflicts, all bring water issues to the fore. Water quality degradation can be a major cause of water scarcity. Water conflicts can arise in water stressed areas among local communities and between countries.
countries because sharing a very limited and essential resource is extremely difficult. The extremes are attributed to Anthropogenic causes of water scarcity is rising as a result of twin issues: Rapid population growth & Relative decrease of water supply. Climate Change is affecting us all.

High Climate Change dynamics across the globe have replicating effect seen through global warming; raising carbon footprint and haphazard urbanization has culminated into enhanced levels of Water Pollution.

Broadly speaking, water is climate change. Climate change manifests itself primarily through changes in the water cycle. As climate changes, droughts, floods, melting glaciers, sea-level rise and storms intensify or alter, often with severe consequences. Climate change impacts have direct consequences for water security and conflict. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change adaptation will have to build climate resilience. Climate resilience is strengthened through healthy ecosystem services that rely on well-functioning river basins. Effective country-driven climate change adaptation should reflect the importance of water management in reducing vulnerability and building climate resilience.

Astonishing Reality

Water and human development have clear linkages between them and the impact it has on people’s lives and livelihood entails the potential of subsequently making a decisive contribution towards improved livelihoods. Such SDG measures that deal with climate variability and build upon existing land and water management practices have the potential to create resilience to climate change, enhance water security and contribute to sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation gives a very real and astonishing reality which we need to take cognizance of. The sooner, the better!

Harness Ecosystem-based Adaptation

To improve efficiency and ensure long-term sustainable water security, there is need to go beyond the concept of integrated water resource management (IWRM), which is a vertical approach to the short water cycle. It needs to be combined with a horizontal approach, based on the fundamental links between water, energy, food, and environment nexus along with health, and education. Concurrently, it is equally significant to harness ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) approach in managing water. These approaches entail the potential of enabling development policies to be implemented at national and local levels without segmentation or isolation, and without opposing any of the existing approaches, seeing them as implicitly interrelated, rather than conflicting.

On a concluding note, prioritizing water saving and toughen management of water resources is the foremost thing which must be acknowledged. There is a need for devising national water conservation strategy emphasizing on frequent water conservation actions, implementing this strategy requires the most stringent water resources management system, and that should adhere to the principle of determining water demand, urban development, and production output in line with water resources availability.

Majority of water-related problems are solvable through environmentally and politically sustainable water management, and the technologies and policy tools that are required to make progress are well known. What is needed now is Action.

-Dr Arvind Kumar is President, India Water Foundation.
Six months ago I found a page from a tear off “Life’s Little Instruction” calendar on my desk. My wife put it there with the note, “this is you!” The phrase on the calendar page is “Stop to think. Rush to execute.”

I took it as a compliment. I have always prided myself on my commitment to the relationship between planning and execution. “Hope is not a strategy.” “Structure follows strategy.” “Effort without a plan is usually wasted.”

These are just some of my pet phrases about the value of strategy and planning. I am nearly maniacal about having a clear objective, a well considered plan on how to reach the objective, and the discipline of sticking to the plan.

Most of the time working from a plan delivers the desired results. My planning mania applies equally to cleaning the garage and building our business. If the job is worth doing, it is worth planning for. In any endeavor of relevance nearly every time I have ventured forth without the structure of a plan I have found that my time and energy have to say the least not been rewarded. I attribute any success achieved in the absence of a plan pure luck.

Spontaneity and whimsy have their place (perhaps that is an oxymoron) but when it comes to working toward specific objectives, let’s make a plan and get to work.

Recently I have had the opportunity to work with a group who has shown apparent disdain for planning, plans, a structured approach to execution and disregard for the phrase: “If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always gotten.”

The group is a political campaign office. This is the candidate's fourth attempt to win the office he is pursuing. Since the candidate is not running as an incumbent you can deduce the result of the first three campaigns.

The campaign team appears convinced that running the campaign in 2012 just like the prior campaigns is going to somehow result in a different outcome. Granted, this is a different time, these are different opponents, and the debate centers on different issues. But, it is still a big gamble to assume that previously failed strategies will result in a victory this time around.

The experience has caused me to reminisce about the basics of planning and how improved the candidate’s odds would be if his team willingly abandoned old beliefs and assumptions and started planning for success from the ground up. While winning wouldn’t be assured he and his campaign team would at least have a fighting chance by coming up with something that put their resources to the highest and best use in pursuit of their goal.

Planning isn't really all that hard. Effective planning does, however, require taking a few moments to stop, really think about a few things, make some decisions, assign some responsibilities, and work as a team— even if that team is just one person.

What are you trying to accomplish? It is crucial to take the time to clearly establish the goal of the efforts about to be exerted. In the case of the campaign the goal is to win the primary.

In this example everything else; raising money, organizing fund raising events, getting radio and TV interviews, are all means to the end of winning the primary.

In and of themselves these tactical elements are only steps to the objective. How will you know when you have accomplished the goal?

While this is pretty binary in the
campaign I write of, many goals don’t come with such clear cut, yes/no outcomes. Jotting down a definition of success is helpful for two reasons.

**First**, it forces you to get specific. **Second**, it helps you hold yourself and the team accountable.

What do you have to work with to reach this goal and how will you distribute resources?

Time, talent, tools, budget dollars, tech support, and many other types of resources are available. There are usually actually more assets at your disposal than you even realize.

This is kind of like packing your back pack for a camping trip. You need to make sure you have what you are going to need because once you are out there you can’t easily come back.

Most resources are finite. Misusing them is wasting them. In the campaign the two most perishable resources are cash and volunteer time. Cash is hard to raise.

Volunteers are willing to work if they feel like they are contributing and having success. Misuse any of your resources and your odds of success go down. Be prudent.

What is the sequence of events necessary to get to your goal? Plans by design are sequential. You complete step one, move to step two, adapt, adjust, and proceed.

Without the plan the result is often a group working on step two before step one is even complete. Work out of sequence tends to result in waste and frustration.

Write it down and hand it out. Everyone needs to be on the same page, literally. It is not a plan if the entire team doesn’t know what it says and what their role is.

**Communicate. Communicate. Communicate. And then communicate some more. Get people involved, invested, accountable, and owning the outcome. Communicate.**

And finally, there has to be a boss, the manager and keeper of the plan and the ONE person who decides when to alter the plan. The plan boss is the Communicator in Chief. Things happen, both expected and unexpected.

The boss is the one person who keeps everyone focused on the aforementioned objective and makes the necessary adjustments during the execution phase to keep the team pointed to the end goal.

Without one person making the field adjustments every time something unexpected comes along, progress will grind to a halt. Will our political candidate succeed? Who knows?

But there is little doubt if the campaign team takes a little time to plan and prepare for success the chances of success are greatly improved.

*The same is true of your team. You may or may not succeed in the pursuit of your objectives. Your odds of success are significantly enhanced if you are working from a plan.*

**Your call now folks**

**Contributed by**

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**SHAKEDEAL EXPANDS INTO NEW GEOGRAPHIES**

ShakeDeal, India’s largest B2B e-commerce marketplace which makes procurement easy in categories like industrial goods & supplies, office & housekeeping supplies and corporate gifting, further expands its reach by opening two new offices in Ahmedabad and New Delhi. With the launch of new offices, the company aims at streamlining, improving regional utilization and driving out inefficiencies plaguing the traditional supply chain network in the fragmented industrial goods segment.

In a short span of three years, ShakeDeal has delivered on an aggressive growth strategy. It has registered 600% year-on-year growth and is catering to 4,000 small, medium and large enterprises on a monthly basis. With an inventory of over 40+ product categories and over 3 lakh+ products to choose from, ShakeDeal caters to various business verticals such as industrial supplies, office supplies, warehouse supplies, and corporate gifting.

**Commenting on the market expansion**, Akshay Hegde, MD & Co-Founder, ShakeDeal, said, “We at ShakeDeal are aligned to become a one stop procurement partner for companies by assisting them with their indirect procurement needs. Introduction of our new offices is a step towards closing the gaps in the traditional offline system and deployment of operational expertise for better regional utilization. Along with providing state-of-the-art technology products and solutions, it has been our constant endeavor to come closer to our customers through our robust network."

ShakeDeal has a solution-driven approach and mastered the art of managing end-to-end solutions for their clients. By focusing on what the customers’ pain points are, the company provides unique, case-wise value adds that differentiate them when it comes to traditional B2B acquisition strategies. A procurement focused technology platform, ShakeDeal’s primary objective is to acquire quality supplies at the best possible price and timely delivery of the goods. Through an open marketplace, the company offers products across verticals such as industrials, Office, warehousing & housekeeping supplies.
The Start Ups story is well into its phase II. This trend began about ten years or so back. Initial teething problems have been greatly ironed out, though scale has been reached only by a few start-ups. Rest are still in struggle mode. In between private investments had dried up in the last couple of years, barring some small investments here or there.

Some really successful ones are:-
- Paytm
- Flipkart
- Ola Cabs
- OYO Rooms
- Zomato
- RedBus

However a huge number have not got off the ground as serious businesses. Here are some causes of this slow or negative growth.

The environment in India still does not match up to that in places like Silicon Valley, Israel and some European countries. Especially in USA, the individual funding for start-ups is being done by thousands of HNIs (each high network individuals) who make many investments and on a continuing basis. Such countries have already matured for Start Up activity. Entrepreneurs in India are yet very raw. Mostly they focus on a 'Me Too' copycat manner, trying to duplicate foreign success stories. There are few original ideas floating around in Indian start ups. Most such entrepreneurs think they will get millions of Dollar equity investments, even without proof of concept. The initial euphoria of blind scatter investments got over 3 to 4 years back. The investors have matured and want to see some results, some revenues, focus on customers etc.

Teams : Entrepreneurs out of college, or otherwise too, need first to put together a team which compliments one another. They have to put together tech, commercial, marketing, financial and gen admin(HR etc) people to form and manage the company.

Honesty: This is one of the most crucial areas where start ups go wrong. Once they get any funding, they feel it's their own money and use it for things not in the business plan. Some even use part of the money for their personal spending or unnecessary expenses which are not essential for growing the business. Often entrepreneurs don't pay statutory dues and keep it for later. This is a major fault. Statutory must compulsorily be paid on time and not used for working capital. An image of honesty is also essential for the business to grow.

Short cuts: There are no short cuts. Starts up entrepreneurs make mistakes when they try to grow their business too fast. Rarely one becomes a billionaire overnight. Thousands of start ups have made this mistake and folded up. Slow and steady is the way to go. Every business takes time to mature. There are always snags which crop up in the initial months and years. Often the business plans have to be changed from what was envisaged in the beginning.

This happens due to several reasons like :-
- Current business plan not working out
- Too much competition
- Some competitors being heavily funded
- The expected market demand not growing etc.

Start Up entrepreneurs should never give up. Just keep costs as low. Sometimes the promoter starts demanding high salaries which do not match up to revenues. Other Start ups which are funded and in growth mode are below :-

Steps for Start-ups to Follow for Growth
iD Fresh Food

iD Fresh Food, a Rs 100 crore turnover ready-to-cook packaged food company in Bengaluru that makes idly and dosa batter, 'just heat' parotas and chapattis, and curd and paneer. The company, which made 10 packets of one kilogram batter a day in 2005, manufactures 50,000 packets a day now and has grown into a team of 1,300 employees who work at their units in Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Dubai.

PRACTO was initiated from the difficulties Shashank faced concerning his father's health. Practo, a product of Naabo solutions, became the Home for health by its hassle-free solutions for doctor appointments, delivery of medicine at the doorstep, online consultation with their registered doctors along with online appointment booking software for doctors to manage their clinics. Practo in collaboration with ICICI Lombard launched an app “IL Take-Care” for the cashless consulting for the health insurance.

Zivame

Zivame, an online lingerie business has been ushered in the Indian market by Richa Kar, a BTUian in the year of 2011 with the vision of “Offering every woman the confidence, comfort and choice she deserves”. Richa while working in her previous job got a chance to explore the profits available in India in lingerie market. Zivame won brownie points from its customers by including unique features of all women customer care to ease the customer issues.

Rentomojo

Rentomojo started Rentomojo for providing the online rental services for furniture (only for a period of 3 months) in the year 2014. It was started with intention of providing customers with the ever evolving style without the actual investment costs for furniture. The company was funded by IDG Ventures India and Accel partners initially and in 2017, the company gained $10 million Series B funding from Bain Capital Ventures and Renaud Laplanche. Rentomojo expanded its business to renting of two-wheelers and appliances in 8 cities (Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, Chennai, Gurgaon, Noida, Bengaluru, Delhi) with an option of Rent-to-own model by the year of 2018. Rentomojo is offering new features to its customers like annual cleaning, free maintenance along with the subscription, swap products and many more for their convenience.

LeadSquared

LeadSquared started its journey in the year 2012 for addressing the issues of task and lead management by marketing automation and CRM software for businesses. The company was founded by Nilesh Patel, Sudhakar Gorti, Prashant Singh, Sukhbir Kalsi and Anand Kumar. The solutions include Lead capture automation, Lead Nurturing, Sales Management, Market Analytics, Lead Management, Dynamic Content and Mobile Call center. The company has been ranked as the 5th fastest growing tech company in India by The Deloitte Technology Fast50 India 2017 awards.

Vikash Mittersain is Chairman & Managing Director, Nazara Technologies Ltd. & Founder & President, India Business Group Chamber of Commerce.
I say this every single time I speak to entrepreneurs, I say this in probable every video I do on Facebook or YouTube and I am going to say this here again – “If everything in your business is dependent on you, then you are going to be stuck in the trap of Self-employment and will always be fire-fighting in your business.”

Most small and medium business owners do not hire and build teams and end up doing everything by themselves. This keeps them small. This keeps them stuck. This does not allow them to scale their business because they cannot take consistent action in all areas of their business i.e. Marketing, Sales, Operations, Accounts, Human Resources and Management.

Lack of Vision

Now if you ask me, why would any entrepreneur not hire and not build a team?

Here are the reasons I hear most often:

1. No money to hire, rather do everything by myself and save that money
2. Fear that people will join, learn and leave
3. Cannot trust people and want to do everything by myself
4. No skills for managing people

In this blog, I want to attack, assassinate and eliminate the 1st reason – “No money to hire, rather do everything by myself and save that money”

Nature has certain laws… one of them is “To reap, you first need to sow.” As a business owner, if you fail to understand the laws of nature and in your ignorance or in your arrogance, you decide to defy the laws of nature, then be prepared for being humbled by the failures you are setting yourself up for.

But if you embrace and accept the laws of nature, then I can promise you that success will be a natural consequence in whatever you do. Let me firstly state this, if you are saying “I don't have the money to hire”, I trust you! I know you are not lying and being plain stingy. But I want you to really get this – “You don't hire people and build a team, when you make the money. You hire people and build a team so that you can make the money.”

Cross Comfort Zone

One has to go outside their comfort zone to achieve growth. You cannot do what’s comfortable and expect for growth to happen. I am not asking you to mass hire. But you need to hire enough people so that you can create time and space for yourself to focus on the critical tasks to grow your business. If you are going to be doing everything in your business, stay assured you will accomplish very little. You will always be fire-fighting and your aspirations will
shrink over a period of time and the only thing you will play for then will be “monthly survival”. And if as an entrepreneur, you have already reached a stage in your life where just making enough money to survive the month gives you joy, then I am concerned for you. You have officially accepted Fire-Fighting as a way of life.

The only way to breakthrough this fire-fighting is when you hire people and build a team. Any business needs a team to grow and scale. You need people who have the skills, knowledge and time so that every critical activity of the business is done for the business to make progress.

Before I tell you, what roles should you hire for and what should you not hire for (which I will in my next few blogs), I need you to be open to hiring. And to open you up to this idea that you need to invest in hiring, I am going to close this article with one last thought for you to ponder over – “If you think hiring is an expense, not hiring is more expensive”. Think about it, in the process of avoiding increase of overheads, you are actually landing yourself in the trap of doing everything by yourself. That is dangerous. You doing what you are doing forever is more expensive for your aspirations and business than you going outside your comfort zone and investing in building a team. And if you do not have the conviction in yourself and your business, to leverage the team you will invest on to generate more money, then my question is – “Why are you doing what you are doing? What makes you feel that you will ever break out of this struggle without challenging the status quo?”

Share your thoughts with me on what opened up for you by reading this article? What questions can I answer for you to support you to breakthrough in your business? I am happy to serve you to transform your business.
Email security is a top-of-mind concern for many organizations, with business email compromise (BEC) gaining prominence as one of the lethal tactics adopted by cybercriminals to attack enterprises. Law enforcement agencies worldwide have been keeping a close watch on BEC scams as a result of the increasing losses year on year. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), BEC has incurred nearly $12.5 billion losses to companies as of 2018. On average, one successful BEC attack can cost the company $130,000. We reported the number of BEC attacks in 2018 increased by 28 percent globally.

Falling victim to a BEC scam has long been a problem that generally arises from human negligence and our natural inclination to do what someone in authority asks of us. Because these scams do not have any malicious links or attachments, they can evade traditional detections. These two factors make BEC a persistent threat for enterprises. Before we delve into what measures an enterprise need to take to mitigate risks associated with BEC, it is important to know how it works.

At the core of it, BEC is a form of spear phishing where an attacker, by pretending to be a high-ranking executive – usually the CEO, attempts to trick a victim – usually the CFO - into paying a fraudulent invoice. To do so, fraudsters carefully research and closely monitor the potential target victims – both the spooked executive and the one issuing the payment - and their organizations. The tone of the email is usually urgent.

It is also observed that most BEC attempts happen in countries with established business hubs and those that see a lot of multinational business operations.

**BEC persists and new trends**

In India, some 1.5 billion email threats were blocked by usin 2018. BEC, as a form of email-based scam, remains a very potent and lucrative means of funnelling money from companies. As per our security predictions for 2019, BEC scammers will target employees further down the company hierarchy this year, for example, secretaries or executive assistants.

In what appears to be a product of masterful social engineering, BEC scammers are also reportedly using...
Cybersecurity awareness training and enforcing best practices against email threats can help employees stay alert and not fall prey to these attacks.

Verify any changes in vendor payment details by using a secondary sign-off by company personnel.

Stay updated on your customers and vendors' habits, including the details, and reasons behind payments.

Confirm requests for transfer of funds when using phone verification as part of two-factor authentication, use known familiar numbers, not the details provided in the email requests.

If you suspect that you have been targeted by a BEC email, report the incident immediately to law enforcement or file a complaint with the cybercrime department.

Organizations should consider using a multilayered identification process for transferring resources and invest in smart email protection. There are advanced security technologies available now that can prevent users and organizations from falling for BEC attacks.

domestic money mules recruited via confidence or romance scams. After grooming these victims, scammers will trick them into opening accounts that will only be used for short term, presumably to avoid being tracked by the authorities. Another phenomenon noticed is that some BEC victims are tricked to purchase gift cards. In this BEC variation, a cybercriminal posing as a person in authority may send a spoofed email, phone call, or text to a victim, requesting to buy gift cards for personal or business purposes.

Gearing up against BEC threats

Businesses are advised to stay vigilant and educate employees on how not to fall victim to BEC scams and other similar attacks. It's true that cybercriminals usually prefer big companies but there's little guarantee that small and medium-sized enterprises won't get hit. For one thing, smaller companies tend to have less robust security infrastructure in place.

Here are some tips on how to stay protected and secure:

- Be wary of irregular emails that are sent from C-suite executives authorizing an urgent payment. Look for discrepancies in the email address, the way it is written, the sign-off, and more. Review past emails that request transfer of funds to determine if this one is irregular.

Organizations should consider using a multilayered identification process for transferring resources and invest in smart email protection. There are advanced security technologies available now that can prevent users and organizations from falling for BEC attacks. For example, by studying and learning the unique ways executives compose their emails, a new AI-based technology is able to pick up on tiny details that set authentic emails apart from fraudulent ones, leading to better detection of BEC scams.

BEC is here to stay, with Gartner predicting that through 2023, business compromise attacks will be persistent and evasive, leading to large financial fraud losses for enterprises and data breaches for organizations.

-Nilesh Jain is vice president, Southeast Asia and India, Trend Micro.

Tourism Min Applauds NSIC Initiatives

Satyajeet Rajan, Director General, Ministry of Tourism recently visited the NSIC - Livelihood Business Incubation Center and Advance Training Centre at NTSC (Okhla) and appreciated the efforts of NSIC in job creation through skill & entrepreneurship training along with services provided for the growth of MSME sector. A.K. Shrivastava, Chairman, Asia Pacific Institute of Management also accompanied the delegates. Applauding the NSIC initiative Satyajeet Rajan stated that institutions/universities should come forward to associate with NSIC for mutual growth in terms of employment & skill development. Also present on were Manoj Lal, Senior General Manager, NSIC and O.P. Singh, Centre Head, NTSC (Okhla).
Kwebmaker, a Mumbai-based digital agencies, is working closely with brands like Tata, Mahindra, HDFC Fund, Mumbai Indians, etc., Kwebmaker, aims to be the No.1 digital agency in India believes Digital is the Future of the developed India. “I want to be seen amongst the top in this industry making a difference,” says Dhananjay Arora, the Founder and CEO of Kwebmaker. The agency has since grown from a small one person agency to a 100+ team with global offices providing services across the digital spectrum including - Web, E commerce, Mobile Apps and Digital Marketing.

What is the concept behind creating Kwebmaker?

Kwebmaker was born back in 1998 when the internet and the web was at an absolute nascent stage, but I was confident that the internet is here to stay and am glad that I started this journey and with 20 years gone we are amongst the top in the industry with offices in 4 countries

What is the USP of Kwebmaker?

We have the right mix of Tech and Creativity and one of the few agencies that has a complete in-house team for Web, Ecom, Mobile apps, Search, Social and Digital.

What kind of specific services you are rendering to organisations like Tata, Mahindra, HDFC bank etc.?

We have clients across the spectrum and from client to client our services are customised and bespoke. For example - we handle all websites for Tata Realty and Infrastructure, for Tata Motors we worked on a portal to sell and auction second hand commercial vehicles whereas for HDFC we
designed their entire Customer portal for Home loan users.

**What potential 'Digital' ecosystem holds in a developing country like India?**

Digital today is in the centre of all organisations, brands, processes, companies and our entire nation. There is digitisation across the board, look at sectors like Banks, Traffic management, Office and processes automation, Retail Ecommerce, B2B ecommerce, travel. I think there may be few or no sector not touched by Digital. So the potential is clearly huge.

**Describe your journey from a humble beginning to the present sizeable growth?**

Simply put it's been amazing, challenging, tough yet rewarding. We have learnt and grown a lot over the years and we keep learning and evolving. We’ve been fortunate to have a great team and amazing clients and our success and growth and thanks to both.

**Digital literacy still eludes a large number of organisations especially the small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) sector. Are you taking any initiatives in spreading awareness about the creating a digital regime for growth?**

Frankly digital literacy is really high at the moment not just in Tier 1 but even Tier 2 and 3 cities. The new generations that our entering even legacy businesses are aware of the potential of using digital and trying to bring in digitisation into their businesses and processes. We also make sure that we participate in events, even rural conferences to increase the literacy and the impact of Digital for the SME sector.

**How do you impress upon organisations on the need for a good website?**

Back when we started this was a huge challenge but today more organisations understand the need for a good Digital presence.

**Please explain SEO and SEM.**

In a nutshell, SEO is the organic listing of your website on Google or any other search engine. This is a long-term and continuous exercise and requires continuous efforts to get a good organic listing. SEM on the other hand is paid media/advertising on Google or any other search engine. The results and returns are tangible and immediate.

**More and more organisations are developing mobile app. Who should go for mobile app and why?**

Mobile apps are great for functionality requirements in any business. If you need your users (b2b or b2c) to be continuously updated with information and to take action and transactions, apps are a great way to engage your users in a quick and user friendly manner.

**How does a mobile app help in the organisations?**

Mobile Apps can help organisations in numerous ways. There can be transactions (buy, sell, book, etc.) There can be flow of information (forms, online pdfs and data) there can be process flows, reporting. Frankly any kind of information exchange and transactions can be done via mobile apps in a quick and secure manner.

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**Pearson India to Focus on B2C Biz to Accelerate Growth**

In line with the growing need for self-development and adaptive learning, Pearson India, the digital learning company, aims to strengthen its presence in the B2C segment through a host of existing products and new launches. Targeting to build a robust B2C portfolio of 50% over the next 2 years, the company is poised to make a giant leap in the B2C segment with its innovative product line. As digital disruption in the education sector is heavily underway, students now expect new, predominantly digital and cohesive ways of learning.

In line with the B2C strategy, Pearson India has launched a first-of-its-kind adaptive assessment module - MyInsights - to aid students in preparing effectively for their IIT JEE entrance exam. Keeping the learners at the core, MyInsights offers assessments and time-based tests to adjust to the learners’ ability level and provide a personalized score and specific learning path for students to master the topic. It assesses (identify generic and specific gaps), measures (the clarity of conceptual understanding) and analyzes students’ performance in a convenient way by bringing value to the learners. Powered by the algorithm that adapts to each learner’s level of knowledge, the innovative product will provide a unique learning path to support students with their IIT JEE preparation.

Commenting on the development Vikas Singh, Managing Director, Pearson India said, “We have a formidable presence across all segments of education and now we are looking at creating a pipeline of innovative digital solutions, well-suited for learners. Our newly launched product MyInsights is an innovative platform that combines contextualized learning with world-class technology to offer better learning outcomes for IIT JEE aspirants. According to recent data. 11 lakh students appear for IIT JEE every year, however, less than 1% make it to the campus gates. IIT JEE examination is a crucial step for every engineering aspirant in the country and it requires them to have a clear understanding of the concepts, which will now be facilitated by MyInsights. This launch is a critical component of our B2C strategy for the Indian market and we will continue to add new consumer-centric products to strengthen our business in the country.”

In the fast-moving world, where tailored products and customer experience are a competitive advantage, Pearson India also offers PTE Academic and Pearson Professional Programmes that help students realize their dream of studying abroad and professionals to upskill and reskill to progress in their career respectively.
Supportive to SMEs

Very supportive to SMEs, further smoothening the processes for credit and operational efficiencies! The move to e-Invoices is going to be the most impactful next step in GST. E-Invoices will substantially reduce tax compliance burden for SMEs. Increasing the corporate tax slab to 400 Crore, and angel tax removal are icings on the cake. The push for digital payments and waiver of all merchant fee is a superb move. It underlines the focus on transparency and reduces cost of doing business.

Vinod Subramaniam, CEO, Logo Infosoft

Several Benefits for MSMEs sector

With India set to become a $3 trillion economy this year, the first union budget by the Modi 2.0 government has introduced several benefits for the MSME sector. Over the years, MSMEs have been battling to get loans, given their inability to produce relevant assets as evidence. In fact, the current gap between the demand and credit supply within the Indian MSME sector is about $230 billion. The introduction of the 1 cr – 59 minute MSME loan brings great relief to small business owners, making easier accessibility and processing of loans through a single portal.

Sampad Swain, CEO & Co-Founder, Instamojo

Boost to the housing sector

The government's idea to provide affordable housing will be a possibility and is highly successful in almost all the cities except Mumbai where there is a paucity of land. I believe that the additional incentive of Rs 1.5 lakh on interest on loans borrowed under the affordable housing would give a boost to the real estate sector further.

The Union Budget would provide a much needed boost to the housing and infrastructure sector. The government's proposal to invest more than Rs 100 lakh crore for infrastructure over the next 5 years is also a welcome move.

Niranj Hiranandani, President NAREDCO & Managing Director of Hiranandani group.

Strong Reforms for MSME Business

The government has set up very strong reforms to encourage the MSME business. The new policy Pradhan Mantri Karam Yogi Man Dan Scheme will not only boost the economy but will also encourage self-reliance among the MSME community.

We believe that women are the real agent of change in the society and lack of access to credit should not deter them, providing them with a loan up to Rs 1 lakh under Mudra Yojana is a great initiative to promote women empowerment. Government's one-time six-month credit guarantee for the purchase of assets of high rated NBFCs up to Rs. 1 lakh crore is a clear direction to the banking and NBFC sector of the Government's commitment to resolving the crisis.

Moreover, by allowing FII's and FPI's to invest in debt papers of NBFC's will create and give a boost to the much-needed liquidity to the NBFC's. This may eventually help ease out the liquidity crisis in the real estate sector among other businesses.

Rajesh Sharma, Managing Director, Capri Global Capital Limited.

Boost to Digital Payments

This budget is a good synthesis of continuing the Digital India mission with improving efficiency. The
proposal to set up a payment platform for MSMEs for online presentation and payment of invoices will not only help cash flow but also give a huge boost to Digital Payments, as the entire supply chain will now be incentivized to go Digital. Also the platform opens up possibilities for accessing lower cost funding. The other two moves for no MDR for businesses above 50 crores turnover and 2% TDS on cash withdrawals more than 1 crore per annum are a further nudge to industry to lower the entry barrier to Digital Payments and disincentivize use of cash. Overall, a positive budget for the payments industry.”

*Anand Ramachandran, CFO, Ingenico ePayments India Private Limited*

### Promoting Youth

The budget has given a very clear message that India wants to be an incubator of new enterprises, and promote the youth to follow their passions of starting their businesses. Apart from benefits, we really hope the reduction of bureaucracy and bureaucrats is also on the cards soon both of which currently can really take away good productive time from young businesses red tape.

*Varun Khanna, CMO, Aeronutrix Sports Products Pvt. Ltd. and Director, Full life Healthcare Pvt. Ltd*

### Incremental Improvements

The government recently announced an ambitious goal for the India economy to grow to 5 trillion $ by 2024. It’s against this backdrop that I feel the budget has allowed for incremental improvements rather than a bold big bang approach which would allow the economy to grow towards the goal. The Indian economy will need to grow at 8%+ over the next several years and the creation, incubation and nurturing of start-ups will play a critical role in achieving this goal. Secondly, a continued focus on transportation and logistics sector will act as a critical launchpad for the India economy and as such, the government will need to continue to focus on clearing bureaucratic obstacles and focus on implementing some key initiatives announced in today’s budget.

*Mudasar Mohamed, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, Ezyhaul*

### Will Improve Talent

The government’s continued push to improve the quality of higher education in India is extremely commendable. The allocation of INR 400 crore to create a world-class higher education ecosystem in the country will definitely improve the quality of talent that joins the workforce. The focus on the amplification of skills in new-age tech domains such as AI, IoT, Big Data, and Robotics will also help to address the severe skills shortage that businesses across India are facing at present, apart from opening newer avenues of career growth for Indian professionals. The government should also make stronger efforts to incorporate data literacy training at the grassroots level and incentivise organisations to launch data literacy training initiatives for their employees. Doing so will equip current and future Indian professionals with the required knowledge and competencies to navigate the data-driven world of tomorrow.

*Pankaj Muthe, Program Manager, Academic Program, APAC, Qlik*

### Positive Step for Start ups

The announcement of a dedicated TV channel for start-ups, is a positive step towards identifying budding entrepreneurs to augment the nation’s economic development. The fact that it will be designed and executed by start-up entrepreneurs themselves will hopefully ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the channel.

*Harsh Mariwala, Founder, Ascent Foundation. Chairman, Marico Ltd.*

### Encouraging Skill Development

The budget presented encourages skill development across the country, and especially within the tech industry--it’s a well grounded approach to propel India towards a $5 trillion economy. The focus on modern technologies like big data, VR, 3D printing, AI and IoT which will not only provide job opportunities for
metropolitan urbanites living in the biggest cities, but also those in rural areas, as well. The proposal of 20 tech incubators in the agro sector along with the allocation of Rs.400 cr for higher education institutes to transform them into innovation labs is a clear indication about the kind of informed, technically equipped resources India is set to enable for the coming, ever-growing technology-driven industries. The push for digital economy and training of over 2cr. individuals to bridge the urban and rural digital divide is one of the key indicators that India is positioning itself to become a hub for digital transformation in the near future."

**Sachin Dev Duggal, Founder & CEO, Engineer.ai**

### Impetus to infrastructure sector

The Economic Survey, the Budget Speech and the Finance Bill complement each other in an effective way to pave the path for real GDP growth rate of 8% envisioned in the Economic Survey To this end, the Budget rightly gives an impetus to the financing of the infrastructure sector by announcing the intention of the government to invest Rs. 1 lakh crore in infrastructure in the next five years and recognising the need to build upon our learnings of development finance institutions to fund long-term infrastructure projects and the setting up of a Committee in this regard. Once constituted, the Committee could examine the issue of asset liability mismatches faced by banks and financial institutions. The emphasis on deepening the long-term bond market for the infrastructure sector is also very welcome. This policy fillip for infrastructure finance will in turn buttress the highway, infrastructure corridor and power related targets and structural reforms in the Budget.

**L Viswanathan, Partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas**

### Intent to evolve MSMEs ecosystem

The budget gives a road map of India's transforming economy and government's intent to evolve an ecosystem for MSMEs, which is definitely going to scale-up production, build-up infrastructure and help in ease of doing business across the country. Investment in MSMEs will receive a big boost through the proposed Government portal. This should eliminate the delays in payments to small enterprises. By making PAN and Aadhar card interchangeable the government has further offered more transparency and scalability for businesses.

**Dinesh Agarwal, Founder & MD - IndiaMart InterMESH Ltd**

### Will Improve Cyber Security Skills

The proposal of ensuring the growth of SMEs through various initiatives including establishment of an online portal for MSMEs for filing of bills or the government’s efforts at improving the cyber security skills of our youth in next generation technology areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Robotics, aims at meeting the huge demand of skills required in IT and cyber security while we look at strengthening the digital transformation wave. With cyber threats being detected on servers (39%), network (35%), endpoints (8%) and mobile (18%) and 89% of IT managers believing cyber security recruitment is a challenge, there still remains a pressing need for further investment in technologies for data protection and IT Security, both from the Government and organization's standpoint.

**Sunil Sharma, MD- sales, Sophos India & SAARC**

### Promising for SMEs

With India having more than 50 million SMEs, the 2019 budget seems incredibly promising for further augmenting their growth and development. Also, with the Government announcing the establishment of an online portal to enable filling of bills for MSMEs, this has the potential to materially impact the SME landscape in India. Additionally, by offering credit of up to Rs. 1 crore within an hour for SMEs, will enable businesses to increase investment in R&D, upskilling and bringing in technological innovations to work.

**Somesh Misra, VP Operations, Deskera**

### Giant Leaps towards cashless economy

The Budget 2019 has witnessed giant leaps towards building a cashless economy. One of the biggest steps is developing the country’s first payment system (One Nation-One Card) for transport which will be a holistic card for citizens for digital
payments across travel, shopping etc. The decision of not charging customers for digital payments and waiving off the MDR charges is also a push in the right direction to encourage every citizen to carry out digital transactions and make India a less cash economy.

**Bhavin Turakhia, co-founder & CEO, Zeta**

**Bight for Start up ecosystem**

The Budget is paving the way for a brighter future for India’s start-up ecosystem with easing of the angel tax thereby ensuring more entrepreneurs join the start-up bandwagon. The idea to have a separate channel for start-ups under the aegis of Doordarshan will help disseminate critical information on a real-time basis to budding entrepreneurs in the tier II and III markets particularly thus enabling them to help realise the Government of India’s vision of becoming a USD $3 trillion economy this year.

**Vishal Gondal, CEO and Founder GOQii**

**Compliance relief for small businesses**

If the budget proposals are followed up this should mean, for small businesses, relief in compliance and opening up of new sources of funding courtesy the proposed changes in venture funding scrutiny and taxation. If the money does find its way in infrastructure the way the FM has laid out, the economy should see some pick up that is absolutely necessary for the survival of small businesses. This will help the economy turn a corner soon.

**Jitendra Chaturvedi, Director & Co-Founder, Batooni**

**Boost to LED lighting**

Government’s impetus on provision of electricity connection to every rural Indian family was a much needed reform. Also, as energy efficient products & solutions are seeing increased adoption, we are pleased with the government’s UJALA scheme of distributing approximately 35 crore LED bulbs and promoting the use of LED bulbs across the country. This will provide a tremendous boost to companies such as Goldmedal that have been at the forefront of introducing energy-efficient solutions such as LED lighting. Additionally, the Government’s proposal to provide INR 100 lakh crore investment in infrastructure over the next 5 years along with an increased focus on Make in India, will provide a further fillip to companies looking to set up manufacturing facilities in the country.”

**Kishan Jain, Director, Goldmedal Electricials**

**Welcome for Tech Ecosystem**

It’s a welcome move for the technology ecosystem and I am happy that the government is focusing on high-end technology manufacturing. I believe that this initiative complements India’s strengths as a global hub for technology development and adoption. This will add further impetus to design, product development and design-led high value manufacturing in India. This also bolsters India’s “Make in India” initiative and will enhance the country’s competitiveness and growth.

**Ms. Nivruti Rai, Country Head Intel India and VP, Data Centers Group, Intel**

**Need for Tech adoption for MSMEs**

To give a positive push and create a productive environment for this segment to flourish, there is a need for perfect ease of doing business environment, nurturing a demand based skilled manpower and wide adoption of technological advancements in SME and MSME sector. Allotment of Rs 350 Crore for 2 per cent interest subvention for all GST-registered MSMEs under the interest subvention scheme is a step in the right direction.

The new age jobs across economies will require a huge change in skill sets. India can take advantage of this and fill up the shortage of relevant and high-tech skilled labour in near future. India can lead the world in meeting this huge demand with a focus on new age and industry relevant skills such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Robotics, etc.

**Sudhir Singh, Managing Director, Marg ERP Ltd.**

**Relief for Angel Investors**

The budget announcements made regarding startups and popularizing digital transactions are steps in the right direction. The potential resolution of the Angel Tax issue is a big relief as with requisite declarations both start-ups and individual angel investors will be spared from scrutiny on valuation and share premium. Moreover, by levying 2% TDS on cash withdrawals exceeding Rs. 1cr in a year from a bank account, the budget has taken concrete steps towards discouraging cash transactions and enabling widespread adoption of digital payments. We believe the government has taken meaningful steps to bolster the growth of the startup ecosystem as well as promoting a cashless economy, and we are looking forward to the Indian economy growing rapidly in the next 5 years!

**Gaurav Jalan, Founder & CEO, mPokket**
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