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MAN ON A MISSION

Dr Arvind Kumar
President and Founder, India Water Foundation (IWF) and Governor at the World Water Council.
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India is today facing a crisis of the century. The country has never witnessed the economic holocaust as it does today. Thanks to the Covid-19 which redefined life on this planet. For once, people across nations, rich or poor, developed or underdeveloped, prosperous or backward, are out to fight the battle for survival.

India, home to 1370 million humankind, is beset with the gigantic problem of keeping its teeming millions alive and going. The most striking one the country faces today is the loss of jobs by millions.

The deadly virus which has triggered massive economic disruptions has also brought life to a standstill. The most and the worst hit are the poor wage earners who hurriedly made an escape from cities to their villages.

Over 122 million people in India lost their jobs in the recent past. More than 3/4th of those who lost jobs are wage labourers and small traders. 27 million youth in the age group of 20-30 years lost their jobs in April 2020 alone. The virus will go sooner or later but not before leaving a deadly trail with serious long-term repercussions.

The government faces twin challenges – of revival & restoration and creation of jobs. Experts are of the opinion that the job losses will be much more in smaller firms. Larger companies will be able to see the crisis through.

There has been a massive fall in employment which reduced from an estimated 404 million during 2019-20 to 396 million in March 2020. In April it came down to 282 million (122 million estimated job losses).

Unable to bear the brunt of lockdown, small business segment has been greatly hit. Lacs of establishments chose to down their shutters or call it a day.

As the future looks bleak, it’s time government and the corporate world join hands with greater verve and vigour and draw up a working plan to revive the economy and ensure that this collaboration creates massive employment opportunities for our poor and the vulnerable workforce.
India Water Foundation, a New Delhi, India based organisation, which familiarizes people with the vital role water, energy and environment play in human lives, their impact on health, economic growth, livelihoods of the people and calamities that wreak havoc due to non-judicious harnessing of these natural resources.

Keeping in view the decisive role of water in sustainable development and climate change, Dr Arvind Kumar deems it imperative that actors across sectors must systematically integrate water resources management into their climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and provide

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**Home to 16 percent of World's Population, India has only 4% of World's Water Resources**

Once a water-surplus country, India runs the likely risk of becoming a water-deficit country in not too distant future. Blatant mismanagement, unscientific utilization, pollution and abuse of water resources, the future doesn't look too bright for us. “Conserving every drop of rain is our only hope in order to meet our daily demand of water requirement”, opines Dr Arvind Kumar, President and Founder, India Water Foundation (IWF) and & Governor at the World Water Council.

Dr Arvind Kumar
sustainable solutions to water problems by changing water management practices, especially after coming into force of 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Agreement on Climate Change (PACC). Inputs by Dr Arvind Kumar have enabled the government of Meghalaya to institutionalize the River Basin Management (RBM) mechanism, addressing climate and ecosystem related issues through its Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Programme (IBDLP) to promote gender equity, alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods of the native people.

Dr Kumar has been instrumental in Inter-Sectoral Convergence in Water Sector and Regional Water Diplomacy. He is Member Technical Advisory Committee for India's Third National Communication and Biennial Update Reports to UNFCCC. He is member 'National Wetlands Committee' and Meghalaya State Water Resources Council and the State Council for Climate Change and Sustainable Development, government of Meghalaya. Member of General Body of CAPART (Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology) GOI.

In recognition of its yeoman activities in water, energy, environment and related fields, IWF has been accorded Special Consultative Status by Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN-ECOSOC), Observer Status Governing Body of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), Observer Status with UNFCCC; Observer Status with UNCCD, CTCN membership for Southern Asia, member IUCN and it has afforded an opportunity for catapulting problems confronting India in particular and Asia-Pacific region in general in the realms of water, energy, environment and related sectors to the global stage to elicit international expertise to tackle them.

A PhD in Defense Studies, Dr Arvind has published over 400-plus research articles in reputed journals. He is Editor of online e-Magazine Focus Global Reporter. He is the lead author of a publication published by SAC in December 2015 (Dhaka, Bangladesh) entitled “SAARC Outlook on Water-Energy-Food Nexus in SAARC Region”.

SME WORLD in an email interaction with Dr. Arvind Kumar

How serious is the problem of water depletion in India?

As many as one billion people in India live in areas of physical water scarcity, of which 600 million are in areas of high to extreme water stress, according to 'Beneath the Surface: The State of the World's Water 2019' report. Apart from the economic cost, lack of water, sanitation and hygiene result in the loss of 400,000 lives per year in India. Regardless of improvements in drinking water, many other water sources are contaminated with both bio and chemical pollutants, and over 21% of the country's diseases are water-related.

Water conflicts are rising in water stressed areas among/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 yet to be seen through the lens of an integrated approach. Links between water and climate change have, for a long time, been ignored in global deliberations. Viewed from the angle of the likely impact of climate change, various studies about India project the possible intensification of hydrological cycle due to rise in temperature leading to floods or drought, which would severely affect the poor and vulnerable sections of the society at large. The cost of environmental degradation in India is estimated to be INR 3.75 trillion ($80 billion) a year. The health costs relating to water pollution are alone estimated at about INR 470-610 billion ($6.7-8.7 billion per year) according to World Bank report 2019.

Poor state of India's water bodies

Water scarcity in India was attributable to factors like shrinking water resources while increasing demand for water in India; limited supply; pollution of surface and groundwater resources; and overexploitation of groundwater resources. The first Green Revolution in India, which did resulted in self-sustained agriculture and mass production, came along negative impacts like excessive ground water extraction, rampant use of subsided electricity, extensive use of piped and borewell water, chemical fertilizers and pesticides plugging India's water
Water shortages have been identified by industry, government, academia and civil society as one of the top three global risks of highest concern with India being the fifth most vulnerable among 181 countries to face the impact of climate change. The theme of World Water Day 2020 is 'Water and Climate Change' which explores how the two aspects are deeply linked.

bodies in a poor state. In the name of economic growth, most rivers and streams have been turned into sewer canals and are getting difficult to be treated. In State of India’s Environment 2019 report, both surface and groundwater in the country are under stress.

Over the past decade, there has been a reduction in inflow of fresh water up to 40%, leading to increased salinity in the system. The extent of the wetland has also been reduced. Water ecosystems are natural and man-made ponds and lakes built for irrigation, fisheries are harming water-related ecosystems and are facing deterioration and extinction. India’s most water-stressed blocks situated in Tamil Nadu (541), followed by Rajasthan (218), Uttar Pradesh (139) and Telangana (137), with several other states are reeling under drought-like conditions.

How much time do we have before the water crisis wrecks our lives?

Water shortages have been identified by industry, government, academia and civil society as one of the top three global risks of highest concern with India being the fifth most vulnerable among 181 countries to face the impact of climate change. The theme of World Water Day 2020 is 'Water and Climate Change' which explores how the two aspects are deeply linked. Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030. By definition, this means leaving no one behind. Marginalized groups - women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people and many others - are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.

Water demands to worsen

Pollution and climate change adversely affects the agricultural sector due to declining soil productivity, groundwater depletion and increased incidence of pests. India, home to 16 percent of the world's population, has only 4 percent of the world's water resources at its disposal. Burgeoning demand for water due to growing population is projected to very soon overtake the availability of water. By 2040, it is predicted that 33 countries are likely to face extremely high water stress - including 15 in the Middle East, most of Northern Africa, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Spain. Many - including India, China, Southern Africa, USA and Australia - will face high water stress. Policy think-tank NITI Aayog, in a 2019 report, has said that 600 million Indians already face “high to extreme water stress”. By 2040, it is predicted that 33 countries are likely to face extremely high water stress - including 15 in the Middle East, most of Northern Africa, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Spain. Many - including India, China, Southern Africa, USA and Australia - will face high water stress. Policy think-tank NITI Aayog, in a 2019 report, has said that 600 million Indians already face “high to extreme water stress”.

When water problem is so serious across nations, why has our government failed to come out with tangible water policy and national awareness campaigns?

Water-related problems are particularly acute in Asia. The issue of water resource depletion and mismanagement is particularly severe in India. The region’s aquifers number among the world’s “most stressed,” and the impacts of worsening climate change have engendered water supply uncertainties. Water conflicts arise due to inter-sectoral/inter-states competition & conflicts due to limited sharing and judicious utilization of resource is intensely becoming difficult.

India has witnessed policies like National Water Policy and campaigns such as Namami Ganga, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, reviving the traditional way of conservation, springs initiative, wetland management, and recently 'Catch the Rain Water' to name a few. However, the water use has been growing at more than twice the rate of population increase in the last century, and, although there is no global water scarcity as such, an increasing number of regions are chronically short of water. Roughly one in every two individuals (52 percent) will be living in water-stressed regions by 2050 as climate change affects the water cycle and there will be a 6% loss in gross domestic product by 2050. Water was treated as an 'engineer good' without focus on water governance. However, with water often termed as blue gold, its importance has been significantly raised. We do not have much time left with us and lack of availability, quality access to water can lead to cascading effect like impaired food production, the loss of livelihood security, large-scale migration and increased economic and geopolitical tensions, moving beyond national borders.
makes it harder to manage resources, highlights World Water Development Report 2020 released by the United Nations (UN). Hence our water policy and campaigns are at cross-roads and the absence of 'holistic and integrated National Water Act' with punitive measures, our water problems remain un-resolved even today.

**India Water Hub**

Ministries such as Water Resources, Urban Development, Rural Development and Environment and Forest, etc all have got different roles to play to provide drinking water of adequate quantity and potable quality to meet the health needs of the community. But as things stand now not all the water consumed by the community is potable. Keeping in these urgencies, India Water Foundation had proposed to establish India Water Hub, which will serve as a platform where the data/information, technological advancements, knowledge, best practices/success stories in the water sector could be networked and disseminated to stakeholders.

**Need for Integrated National Water Policy**

We recently organized a session on the need for 'Integrated National Water Policy' it was observed that 'National Water Policy 2012' was myopic and contemporary interventions were yet to be accommodated with latest water development and challenges given our aspirations of Jal Shakti Abhiyaan's mandate to provide tap water to all of these households by 2024. The need is to not just to meet ambitious national developmental targets and regional cooperation goals, but also to meet the regional aspirations of states by turning it into a mass movement.

However, the envisaged National Water Framework law, a prerequisite to supplement the National Water Policy/guidelines/Act in pursuit of requisite responsibility & accountability is non-existent. We have River Basin Management bill 2018 still in the pipeline which if implemented along with competent River basin Authority can resolve 'trans-local' water issues along several development assistance initiatives in internationally shared river basins. Since Water is a State subject, States are required to formulate their own water policies, which currently only Meghalaya has formulated comprehensive 'State Water Policy 2019' towards holistic water management and replication by other states is yet to be seen. Our country needs an 'Integrated National Water Policy' plan that encompasses Demand side-Supply side synergy like Water-Energy-Food security, Water Equity, Disaster management. It is said that the Third World War will be fought on water issue. Kindly elaborate.

Roughly one in every two individuals (52 percent) will be living in water-stressed regions by 2050 as climate change affects the water cycle and makes it harder to manage resources, highlights World Water Development Report 2020 released by the United Nations (UN).

Water Equity, Disaster management. War in the Middle East will be fought over water, not politics.” which was also corroborated by Ban Ki Moon in 2007 that ‘the consequences for humanity are grave. Water scarcity threatens economic and social gains and is a potent fuel for wars and conflict.” With changing geopolitical situation among countries, ‘WATER is considered the new OIL’ is true in contemporary times and nobody spoke about water a decade before India Water Foundation preconceived such notion much earlier.

**Lack of Integration**

An estimated territory of 148 nations falls within international basins and more than 30 countries are located almost entirely within these basins. In all, there are 276 international basins covering around 45% of the Earth’s land surface, host about 40% of the world’s population and account for approximately 60% of global river flow. As the world continues its fight against the coronavirus, the U.S. and Chinese militaries are testing each other’s limits in the Indo-Pacific region. For quite some time now, Ethiopia and Egypt have been at loggerheads over the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) across the Blue Nile River and in Eastern Africa, the severe case of drought has led to the fatal combat between Africans and the Somali clans vying for the right to water accessibility. The problem of water wars becomes more pronounced because around 60 per cent of the world’s international river basins lack any type of cooperative management framework according to 4th UN World Water Development Report.
management cooperation based on nexus approach can be instrumental in enhancing a broader set of mutual benefits and opportunities than individual unilateral country approaches.

There is a need for the establishment of a Regional Water Hub (RWH) to strengthen regional cooperation on water security issues in South Asia wherein all countries of the region should be represented. This Hub should have close synergy with water related national agencies of each member country of South Asia. The proposed RWH would serve as a repository on water-related knowledge to facilitate implementation of such programmes like judicious implementation of anti-flood measures, development of entrepreneurship and improvement in people's livelihoods more effectively through convergence, coordination and cooperation with national/international agencies and respective governments.

In your opinion, what should be done to save our planet from water Holocaust or have we missed the bus?

As I said, Water is the most effective tool to tackle vagaries of climate change because climate change is water change. In the wake of the fact that the impacts of climate change are felt through water, water demand has failed to commensurate with the increasing needs of 1.3 billion with flooding, erratic rain patterns, prolonged droughts, and other extreme weather events; water becomes a critical factor for successful climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

Country like Israel is renowned for its water conservation initiatives such as successfully harnessed drip irrigation, wastewater management and effective water supply and conservation infrastructure that can fully function without rain. It is appreciative to see that Ministry of Jal Shakti has timely initiated ‘Catch the Rains’ just before the onset of monsoon. When our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his June's edition of Mann Ki Baat has asked people to focus on saving water this year, understanding the increasing water needs/demands and variations in water availability, conserving every drop of rain is our only hope in order to meet our daily demand of water requirement. In addition, the priorities for addressing the issue of water conservation and optimizing Rain Water Harvesting under Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) towards a time-bound and mission-mode is much acknowledged.

In the light of these challenges, we need to speed up our understanding and actions to address the relationship between water and climate to prevent putting humankind's future in jeopardy. Therefore, it is time to systematically 'integrate water management' into our climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, some of the strategies include:
- Securing human right to safe drinking water must place obligation on States to ensure that services are affordable. It is now widely recognized that the primary determinant for addressing the issues of global poverty is the provision of safe water; access to safe water enhances the potential for educational opportunities and facilitates participation in local community economic development.


- Bring Water as Concurrent subject under the Constitution of India to effectively confront the many intertwined issues concerning water so that departments within national government and State governments can collaborate effectively.

- A well-designed National Water Act needs to have a substantive 24X7 vision encompassing an integrated approach.

- Dissemination and Assimilation of wit and wisdom along with best practices generated locally, regionally and globally in water and environment sectors and making it accessible to all stakeholders.

- In view of the growing recognition of indispensability of wetlands to address climate change, investing in wetlands shall enhance climate resilience; improve livelihood security of people and fostering economic growth in tandem with water-energy-food security.

- Consideration of water aspects must encompass carrying generic principle of water planning at macro-level but customized with location specific purpose. High prioritization is required towards community pooling under the public trust doctrine towards food security, livelihoods and sustainable development.

- River Basin Management bill 2018, in the pipeline must be implemented to resolve ‘trans-local’ water issues along several development assistance initiatives in internationally shared river basins. This must be backed by River basin Authority.

- Scaling up partnerships by way of Convergence, right chord between the stakeholders and the government, among different departments must be leveraged to enable inter/intra convergence.

- Emerging technologies and innovative tools can help in enhancing the prospects of provision of real time data to understand the enigma of climate change. Utilize the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) data to develop early-warning systems, mapping water risk, and generating greater understanding holistic view on water shortages.

- Sustainable interventions to reduce Urban-Rural disparity can only be achieved through education, empowerment and ownership by the rural community. Progressive & Learning Environment outcomes through qualitative behavioral change, Knowledge exchange among stakeholders and disseminating scientific literacy holds the key to bring qualitative life among the rural community.

We are focusing on 'Putting People First' and strengthening 'capacity building' endeavours at Pan India level and beyond as it is a sine qua non for adaptation & mitigation of environment related woes. Major activities undertaken by us since inception veered around major themes of water and climate change, which inter alia, included: exchange and sharing of views on salvaging river Yamuna, rejuvenating river Ganga, managing water resources, climate change, sustainable interventions to reduce Urban-Rural disparity can only be achieved through education, empowerment and ownership by the rural community. Progressive & Learning Environment outcomes through qualitative behavioral change, Knowledge exchange among stakeholders and disseminating scientific literacy holds the key to bring qualitative life among the rural community.

What are the broad programs the IWF is initiating towards water conservation?

Experiencing in-depth observation, discussion and understanding since the year 2000 by visiting countries, places enhanced my perspective with environment, I raised the case for water and environment understanding policies, institutions etc. at Pan India level and beyond. I started quite early highlighting and discussing issues of water conservation, hydro-diplomacy, trans-boundary cooperation, etc. My experience of 24 years in the 'media' could not bring me closer to address people's plight at large. After years of determination and efforts, India Water Foundation was founded in 2008 which fostered Cooperation-Coordination-Convergence at various levels through Sensitize, Incentivize & Galvanize model.

Since our inception through our Jal Mitra campaign, we have been advocating water conservation as a public movement building around
50,000 Jal Mitras till date. Nursing the conviction that no policy or programme can be efficiently and effectively implemented sans capacity building of the people who always remain at the receiving end and having no say in policy-making process, India Water Foundation has been emphasizing on involvement of CSOs in facilitating capacity-building of the people. Concomitantly, the civil society is better placed to ensure people’s participation and mobilization of volunteers. We have been opposed to treating water as a commodity; rather espousing the cause of treating water as a social good to which everyone should have equal and free access. We have been pioneering the cause of incorporating Right to clean freshwater into the Constitution of India and this is amply reflected in the presentations and social messages disseminated from time to time. In order to engulf the chasm between policy-making and policy-implementation in water sector, we have been offering its cooperation to various Ministries at the Centre.

**IWF Spearheading Programs**

We are focusing on ‘Putting People First’ and strengthening ‘capacity building’ endeavours at Pan India level and beyond as it is a sine qua non for adaptation & mitigation of environment related woes. Major activities undertaken by us since inception veered around major themes of water and climate change, which inter alia, included: exchange and sharing of views on salvaging river Yamuna, rejuvenating river Ganga, managing water resources, climate change, tackling water scarcity, focus on SDGs and proposal for generating awareness among school children about abandoning the use of plastic. We have drawn the attention of the Government towards degrading environmental conditions and water-related woes of Delhi, with special focus on urgency for central government’s intervention in salvaging river Yamuna. We have been emphasizing on the theme; “Water is life and sanitation is lifestyle.” We have consistently opposed the prevalent practice of open defecation in India and emphasized on building toilets as well as building capacity of the people, especially in the rural areas to make aware of the ill-effects of open defecation. We have offered cooperation and services to the government in making this mission of Swacchh Bharat a success.

**Achievements**

We shared inputs on water saving mechanism in irrigation systems such as micro irrigation (drip, sprinkler, bamboo-drip), recycling of canal seepage water through groundwater use, water storage structures (water reservoirs, rain water harvesting) which in-turn facilitated wise-use of water, availability of drinking & domestic water for irrigation, fisheries, micro-hydel projects etc. and overall water security. We have implemented Public Awareness and Public Participation (PAPP) activities under JICA assisted Ganga Action Plan Project at Varanasi towards keeping Ghats clean and promote appropriate waste management initiatives.

We are continuing our earnest efforts to foster close rapport and cooperation with UN specialized agencies, international agencies, organizations and institutions in SDGs and climate change with specific reference to Paris Agreement on Climate Change, especially in water, energy and environment sectors, in the aftermath of water having been accorded priority in negotiations on climate change and maintaining its synergy with UNEP, UNDP, UNESCAP-SSWA office, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, UN-Habitat etc. Accreditation to United Nations has allowed us to learn from other organizations, assimilate and disseminate best practices, innovative solutions and case studies at local level.

**Beyond borders**

At the international level, the prospects of a Regional Water Hub to tackle water related problems in South and South-West Asia was presented in 2010 at Nairobi (Kenya) and harnessing the Water-Food-Energy-Nexus for Trans-boundary Basin Management Cooperation”: A Case Study of Meghalaya's Climate Change Adaptation was presented in Geneva, Switzerland 2014. A paper was presented on Ecosystem Based Adaptation & Resilience in Meghalaya, India at 6th Asia Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, Manila, Philippines in 2018. Being member of World Water Council, we are contributing inputs towards actions and a roadmap related to water security especially in areas of transversal approach, rural development, strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships. Over the years, we have adhered to harnessing the digital power, the Internet and social media strategically and dynamically to motivate, involve and generate enthusiasm among the people about water related issues. We are convinced that institutions are not more powerful than people and by empowering people and communities we can bring to effect the change they want to see in water, environment and other related sectors for their well being.
As India moves towards accepting social distancing as a new norm, the biggest challenge for businesses is resuming activities. Technology would act as a key bridge for organisations, big or small, to move ahead. One such impactful initiative is Government E-Marketplace (GeM) launched under the 'Digital India' drive.

GeM aims to transform the way procurement of goods and services is done by the government ministries and departments, public sector undertakings and other apex autonomous bodies of the Central government. The platform epitomises the market at large: multiple suppliers/buyers, diverse products with dynamic competition. It allows the government to centralise its account management, compliance procedures, and spend management.

The GeM platform provides the following four key benefits:

First, with no entry barriers, bonafide suppliers of goods who wish to do business with the government can register on the portal and see the listings on a real-time basis.

Second, technology plays a key role in maintaining transparency and offers end-to-end security. The portal supports keen businesses right from registration to final payment, making the process seamless. A query resolution and redressal system is set up to ensure fair amount of transparency and speedy query management. In fact, direct purchase can be done in a matter of minutes as the entire process is online. It is a secured platform and all the documents on GeM are e-signed at various stages both by the buyers and sellers. With the generation of e-invoice, the seller can immediately raise the needed finance through bill discounting.

Third, with tools such as e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation, the government users achieve the best value for their money, thus maintaining the quality of bids and order fulfilment. As the government body places a procurement request, they are mandated to transfer the minimum bid amount value to a Government Pool Account (GPA) at a partner bank such as DCB Bank. Hence, this resolves the fear of payment intent.

Fourth, with hygiene checks at various stages such as requirement, bids and procurement process etc., it ensures that the supply meets specific standards and norms. It also enables buyers to have a huge variety of products from which to pick and choose along with the ease of order process across multiple consignee locations.

A Mediator

GeM has signed MoUs with a few select banks to facilitate transactions between the buyer and various sellers on the portal. It also works as a mediator for flow of money into the movement of goods or the fulfillment of services.

Currently, many industry peers have welcomed this move, which in the long run will result in opening the sphere of public procurement to a vast majority of self-employed in India.

-Praveen Kutty is Head, Retail and SME Banking, DCB Bank Ltd.
Mak Medicals Pvt. Ltd. is a family-run company manufacturing pre-injection alcohol swabs - Mak Swab - since 1998 with CE and ISO 13485 certification and is licensed by CDSCO.

The company was founded with an exceptional entrepreneurial vision to make high-quality yet affordable hygiene and healthcare products available to the teeming millions, with precise commitment and timely delivery promising quality, backed by crystal communication and a respectful partnership.

Yashpal Makhija, an architect from School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, having run his own architecture practice for most of his career, took the entrepreneurial leap into with the launching of Mak Medicals along with his wife, Mohini Makhija, an LSR graduate, and with a Master's in Business Administration and determination to make their venture a resounding success.

The journey did face challenges but the duo - husband-wife team – carried on clearing road blocks with rare determination and heightened passion to make their journey smooth and going.

Triumph and Tragedy

While Yashpal Makhija singularly focussed on the production and quality, Mohini Makhija took up marketing with her rare vision. As they were making amazing headway, destiny had
I joined the company in 2008, after finishing studies, and since then my father, his brother and I have been a team rebuilding the envisioned picture from where things got left off. Our combined strength, humility and transparency have helped us become a reputed national brand.

You are an IITian and could have found a lucrative job. What was the inspiration behind joining the family business?

Personally, it's a lot about the freedom to connect and engage with the world in my own way. To raise what we do to the level of art. Everything we do, as an expression of who we are. Everything about us is like painting a picture of our vision, of what we imagine and how we execute. The freedom and ability to create, innovate and adapt. It's about the fundamentals, our fanaticism for quality and service, and being authentically us.

What are the major changes you have brought or plan to bring in your business?

It's never been about me. It's about the team, the entire team. We are fanatic about quality and service. We own our role in the larger picture, the entire supply chain, and also are continuously aware of our impact on all those associated with us. Every interaction is an opportunity to harmonize and optimize, to create and deliver value. Every touch-point to our product or company should be meaningful, crisp and valuable to the other. It's only then that we can connect, engage, plan and execute, and most importantly communicate. And that requires each member to own their role.

Was there any clash of interest between the old school and new school?

It was always a common interest. Differences in methodology, yes, and most naturally so. The key is to harmonize, balance, integrate and collaborate. And the most important part is to communicate. Keeping the end in mind, and keeping it simple is the purpose. Simple enough to be openly liked or disliked, to be discussed or argued, accepted, diluted or rejected, or just left for another discussion some other day.

Pharma industry is one industry which remains unaffected in the times of pandemic. Was there any major change in your business as a result of pandemic?

Frankly, I doubt there'd be many industries related to physical goods that remain unaffected, globally, as the fundamentals of physical movement of goods and people have been rocked by Coronavirus. It's about change now - very rapid and highly volatile, and even more unpredictable change.

What are the challenges you face in the growth or diversification in your enterprise?

I think the challenges remain same for any MSME now, the primary being to keep the team safe from Coronavirus while keeping operations running.
BD Software Distribution Pvt. Ltd. is one of the leading IT security distributor offering industry-leading consumer and enterprise-level solutions in Indian market.

Together with the channel partners, the Brand aims to focus on bridging the most comprehensive protection from malware and cyber threats to government and educational organizations, businesses and consumers. With more than 20 years of experience the brand sports strong background, technical strength and partner network across the country that enables them to lead some of the best practices in challenging and complex IT security environments.
Almost everyone is using a smart device and we all know how to use them for the best, but we are not aware about the dangers coming with it. That's why having a sound cybersecurity policy for the country should be the top priority. We have to educate people on the dangers too coming with the digital life and not only benefits.

Why is cyber security indispensable for SMEs?

SMEs today are already under pressure due to the situation and the effect it has on almost every business. Lot of SMEs have found unique ways to business continuity. They have arranged digital devices; computers for the employees and making sure the business don't come to a complete stop during these days. For any business, the most important part is the data they have, be it their customers, suppliers, or financial data. Almost everything depends on the data. Now since the employees are working from home, they need to be monitored too, as to what they are doing during the work hours, what data is being used and to make sure that the data is not misused or leaked or destroyed. There are also threats of ransomware or a malware attack as maybe the employee working from home, on his device is not using a proper security solution. So how does the IT head or the IT in charge or the owner makes sure that there is a proper security solution installed in all the employees devices and the software are patched regularly, there is a good system in place to monitor what is the work going on and to make sure that the data is safe. That is where a good cyber security policy comes to use. It is a must for every SME, to have proper solutions installed to protect, to monitor, to safeguard their work and data. Because if something bad happens to the data, you lose valuable business.

What are the broad advantages of cyber security for small companies?

Better protection from Malware. Employee monitoring and prevention of data leakage are the main advantages for small companies.

Who all (sectors) are vulnerable in the area of cyber security?

Anyone having a smart device, a laptop, computer, are vulnerable. Today in this pandemic situation, hospitals & healthcare companies are doing round the clock work to save life's and they are being targeted also the most by cyber criminals. SME are also the target has many have not provided their employees with proper security solutions or do not have a monitoring or a data leakage solution in place.
Anyone having a smart device, a laptop, computer, are vulnerable. Today in this pandemic situation, hospitals & healthcare companies are doing round the clock work to save life's and they are being targeted also the most by cyber criminals. SME are also the target has many have not provided their employees with proper security solutions or do not have a monitoring or a data leakage solution in place. I also feel that children studying on line are also the most vulnerable if there devices are not protected or monitored.

**What brands are part of your portfolio for Indian Markets? Brief us about them.**

Bitdefender is one of the top brand in the cyber security world and we represent them in India since last almost 5 years. We have more than 500,000 user base in India and it is growing steadily. More than 150 different OEM use Bitdefender engine to enhance the security they offer. Bitdefender is used and being appreciated by most of the business houses large and small and also it is a big hit with consumer and SOHO users. We have recently launched Safetica – Auditor, which is a solution for employee monitoring. It has got very good feedback from the customers and we hope to do good business for the same. Our cloud backup solution called Digitware is also doing good business during this time.

**What's your channel strategy and expansion plan for 2020 as per the new markets?**

We are a channel focused company and almost every business is via a channel partner. We work with small SI and big VAR also. Most of the solutions distributed by us are good options for customers during these times and the channel partners are playing a big role in taking them to their customers. We are expanding our employee base in areas where we were not much present and also we are doing continuous virtual event to sign up more partners with us for doing business with our solutions. We have got tailor made schemes and giving away free solutions to our loyal partners in the last 3 months so that they can make extra profits during this time when there is a business uncertainty. We hope we are doing our bit to help our channel community members. Bitdefender also offered 1 year* free endpoint security to all hospitals and healthcare workers for their devices to show our gratitude and thank them for saving lives.

**Which sector has the strongest adoption for Cyber solutions?**

In the last 3 months almost every sector has opened up to digital lifestyle and so it has increased need of cyber security solutions. Once again I would say the healthcare sector are adopting fast, financial institutions & banks are ramping up their cyber security solutions the most. We have also seen small SME buying cyber security solutions quickly and deploying them so that the work continues without any disruptions due to cyber attacks.

**Any new Brand tie ups in pipeline, in the near future?**

We have tied up with some very exciting brands from April 2020 this year. We have launched Zecurion (UBA & DLP), Zero Spam (Spam filtering solution), PDF AutoSigner (for putting digital signatures on your documents), Safetica Auditor, Mailvault (Mail Archiving) and SafeDNS. In all we have 10 good cyber security solutions and we look forward to taking our brands across India in the following months.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal to the citizens of India to buy local products and be a part of India's growth story is likely to encourage demand for indigenous products. He also called upon the MSMEs', Start-up entrepreneurs' to make the nation self-reliant by making as much local goods as possible to remove dependence on imported goods. This would also support the country's economy, which is hit by a prolonged phase of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He highlighted that the coronavirus outbreak has made us realize the importance of local manufacturing, local market, and the need to make our supply chains efficient & sustained. "In times of crisis, this local has fulfilled our demand, this local has saved us. Local is not just the need, it is our responsibility also," he said.

However, local does not only mean products made by Indian companies, but also those manufactured in India by multinational companies or MNCs. The ongoing health crisis has given an impetus to the sales of local products, as they inspire consumer confidence.

The moment the pandemic hit the nation, not even a single PPE kit was manufactured in India, only a few N95 masks were available. However, with our exceptional local manufacturing capabilities we are able to produce close to two lakh PPE kits and two lakh N95 masks on a daily basis. Also, as per news reports, India is world’s number 2 in its masks making capacity and is planning to export as well.

This offers an opportune time for SMEs and start-ups to make local products and get them recognized in the marketplace with the use of India barcodes, starting with 890, the barcode numbers identify your products on globally unambiguous way, ensuring that no other product across the world will have this number in an authorized manner. This is because these numbers are developed and maintained by a global supply chain standards organisation – GS1. In India, GS1 India is the only authorised body to allocate GS1 barcode numbers, starting with 890, to companies based in India.

Not only these barcode numbers ensure the company manufacturing these products is based in India but also help manufacturers in selling them through retail chains and online marketplaces.

In these difficult times, it is critical for manufacturers of local products to speak the global language of business and be visible on several sales (retail) platforms that are being used by consumers to fulfill their daily needs.

Additionally, the use of 890 barcode numbers facilitate counterfeit detection in the supply chain at its point of entry and enable manufacturers to investigate and deal with the counterfeit sources.

Summary of benefits accrued by labeling your products with '890' barcodes:

- Unique identification of your products
- Ability to sell products through leading retailers and online shopping channels
- Free access to online tool (DataKart) for easy generation, management and allocation of barcode numbers.
- Counterfeit detection in the supply chain
- Retailers and online marketplaces can easily validate the barcode numbers used by you
- Increased visibility of product pages in Google searches

In order to be vocal about local products, use 890 barcodes on your products and popularise the fact that these barcode numbers mean that the products are manufactured in India. To know more about 890 barcode numbers, visit: https://support.gs1india.org/barcode_registration_1/

-Charu Khanna is Head of Marketing, GS1 India.
The Art of Opportunity

Building growth and ventures through strategic innovation and visual thinking.

Do, or do not. There is no try

Innovation was synonymous with R &D or process efficiencies- hall marks of traditional competitive advantage. Little did any of us know then, that in our lifetimes an entire occupational discipline would emerge to keep enterprises innovative or continuously inventive? Or that titles like director of Innovation, chief innovation officer or even chief imaginative officer would decorate corporate culture.

Yet it did and for a good reason. The relatively short span of time in which we have seen some of the industry titans, displaced by innovative start ups, has put the entire business world on notice. And the message is clear- merely maintaining your position is no longer sufficient. New growth, the kind of business associated with genuine innovation, that will bring value to your customers, your business, and even to the world around you, is the only way to ensure survival.

The urgency is not felt by those with the word innovation etched into their job titles, but from top of the company to the bottom, we are now all corporate innovators. With all these people focussed on the problem, we should have solved – right, but in actuality, its no. Challenge is finding and capitalizing on new growth opportunities is hard more, so for established enterprises, that are often hampered by outdated mindsets, legacy business models and large scale bureaucracies. Core competencies can morph into corporate rigidities if we aren't strategically alert and careful. Under these types of circumstances, the ability to think outside of box and create new growth initiatives is difficult.

Yet with the increased urgency comes the need to find and charter a new path to growth – one that isn't a rocket science. Needed is a road map to help discover, catalyze, curate opportunities to deliver real growth. That's what we are exploring in this penned piece.

We here are sharing pathways to a rich and compelling journey for us all, more so, for those, who are passionate in pursing new growth. Hence introducing new ways of thinking about growth, strategy and strategic innovation, such as non customers, essential customer needs and the building blocks of business, revenue models, which should translate into new ways of working?

Consequently need to approach crafting; executing the strategy to build new growth businesses would be the desired path forward.

While innovation isn't new, the art of opportunity makes it much more accessible for us all. And that's something every corporate entrepreneur searching for new growth urgently needs. Our journey introduces concepts, demonstrates principles, and presents activities, in a way that allows you and me to both understand, practice the art of opportunity totally and in totality.

Our journey passes through the following touch points:

- Core concepts- redefining, revisiting and rehashing them not simply following and replicating the past in present.
- Inspirations – examples of how other corporations have put these concepts into practice to generate
The art of opportunity is about how strategic innovation and business design thinking can grow existing businesses and create completely new ones, by discovering opportunities for new growth, and crafting strategies to seize these opportunities.

Strategic Innovation – Its inference

- The art of opportunity is about how strategic innovation and business design thinking can grow existing businesses and create completely new ones, by discovering opportunities for new growth, and crafting strategies to seize these opportunities.
- Strategy is essentially about making choices about where to play and how to win.
- Strategic management theorems offer frameworks to guide our thinking, help develop answers to these questions, enabling us to select right choices, thus providing fresh, modern ways to look at these questions, exalting us to come up with more innovative answers, that past traditional strategic management approaches offer.

Traditional Strategic Management

Traditional Strategy

On a business level, traditional strategic management is primarily concerned with where to play and how to win. Where to play is framed as a choice of industry and product market combination. Simply speaking you pick up an industry, say air transportation, and a market for example intercontinental flights from India and you define your offerings within this market, e.g. low cost direct city-city flights.

How to win is mostly defined as achieving competitive advantage- generic choices about how to achieve competitive advantage are to either:

- Being a cost leader.
- Differentiate your offering.
- Focus a niche.

Another theory captioned - three choices to win states:

- Product leadership- offering the best product/solution by focusing on product innovation.
- Operational excellence- be a price and convenience leader by focusing on low cost, lean, fast production and speedy delivery
- Customer intimacy – win by creating loyal customers through tailored offerings and focusing on customer relationships.

Strategy development and execution thereby follow a linear process of analysing the situation and environment followed by developing a strategy and finally executing it, the underlying principle, being the development of the strategy needs to be completed before the strategy is executed.

Caution: It's not inferred that these traditional management approaches do not work. For some organizations and in certain industries, they work extremely well, if applied in the right manner. Yet a lot of companies also struggle when attempting to chive their growth and innovation targets with these traditional frameworks.

Folks let's put on our thinking caps and devise innovative strategies in the now, that can leap frog growth in my enterprise covering the steps as elucidated in Template 1.

Collated by

-K S Ahluwalia, Executive Coach and Mentor-Excalibre,
E-mail: ks.ahluwalia@yahoo.com
SMEs Hit Hard

COVID-19 pandemic has hit hard nations all around the world and most of the countries didn't see it coming and added to that unpreparedness has amplified the damages further. According to World Trade Organization (WTO), the slump in MSME sector is going to be around 32 percent. This damage could have been lessened if governments across the globe had taken timely measures to curb this by simply following the mantra of 'Lockdowns' and 'Safe Social Distancing', damages could have been ameliorated to a greater extent.

Least to say that economy is at rock bottom and many sectors have seen a tremendous decline in their growth. Whether it is heavy industries, cottage industries, but the MSME sector has been worst affected. MSME sector is the backbone of any economy, and any disruption in this sector causes major turbulence in economy in terms of income generation and jobs.

They contribute major part of economy world-wide and are very important in creating jobs across nation. As per data issued by World Bank they represent about 90% of business and more than 50% of economic activity world-wide. SME contributes 40% of GDP in emerging economies.

As per World Bank estimates above, we can see that MSME sector plays a major role in Asia Pacific region and Sub-Sahara Africa, where most of the population of world resides.

Source: Various secondary sources including Exim Bank, RBI and Ministry of Mines.
Pre-Crisis MSMEs Indian Scenario
Seeing the prospects of growth of MSME in the Union budget of 20-21, Rs 7572.20 Crore has been allocated which has been an all-time high so far. Even the government has asked RBI to restructure the debt window for MSME sector to clear any ambiguity. For development of MSME cluster for increasing the capacities of MSMEs, productivity and competitiveness, MSME sector has been allocated funds of Rs 391 Crore as compared to Rs. 228 Crore which is an increment of 71%. However, as shown in table below the credit gap stands at an exorbitant level at Rs.25.8 trillion.

MSME Global Trends
Globally it is not so a thriving phase for MSMEs before COVID-19 crisis, however, the sector remained like a sweet spot for economies and creating much needed jobs.

If we talk about China, before COVID-19 impact, the push by government to reduce pollution and clean environment has hit hard their MSMEs. This culling of MSMEs has forced 176,000 businesses to shut down impacting jobs and growth. China’s GDP was predicted to fall from 6.4% to 6.1% at the beginning of 2019. MSME sector forms the backbone of American and European economies. The US alone has 30 million of MSMEs which accounts for two-thirds of the jobs created. MSMEs' exports have shown tremendous growth with significant boost in economy by paying higher wages and rewarding greater profits.

In Euro zone during the previous financial year of 2018-2019, MSMEs contributed about 60% for the majority of the growth achievements in their economies. Micro SMEs generated 28.5% of this growth while small size contributes 17% and medium size contributes 14% respectively. Many suitable policies were adopted by EU to stimulate the growth of SME’s in this region.

Impact on Indian MSMEs
As per the analysts, we can see in the chart below loan amount of MSME sector outstanding with banks is of Rs. 4.73 lakh crore which is second highest and the debt outstanding in general along with large enterprises is one of the major reasons for the slower economic growth faced by India. The bad loans by NBFC can be attributed to NPA on account of MSME failure in repaying the debt. This to an extent increased the risk in banking sector, and the pandemic resulted in further deterioration in bad debt across banking sector.

In spite of the fact that MSME contributes nearly 30% of country’s GDP and around half of the country’s exports and there are 6.33 Crore unincorporated companies employing around 11 crore people. Due to slump and hence reduced cash flows of MSME the sector is not able to repay its creditors. Yet, according to TransUnion CIBL-SIDBI MSME Pulse Report NPAs in MSMEs continue to be lower than those of the large corporates.

Impact on MSMEs Globally
The vital parameters like global trade, investment, growth and employment are going to suffer a lot and the way to reach sustainable goals seems far way behind. One of the major industries affected was textile industry where the growth is predicted to be contracted to 27-30% as per a report by McKinsey. In France a drop of 90% has been registered in apparel consumption, while online sales have been declined to 20% across Europe and 40% across United States.

The growth in pharmaceutical industry has brought some good news during this global crisis and it is not like something out of the blue but due to pandemic. Seventeen emerging economies from regions like South
America, South-East Asia and Eastern Europe are becoming increasingly attractive markets for pharmaceutical industries.

An analysis of report by CSO of India, the current and potential impact of COVID-19 on MSME sector on different parameters is explained below.

### Public Policy Measures & MSMEs

Undoubtedly the impact of Covid-19 on Indian economy could be significant and with global pandemic-triggered recession looming over Indian economy. Following steps are taken by government to reduce the impact on SMEs.

- **RBI has introduced moratorium on loans availed by MSME for a period of three months, deferred interest payment without asset classification and ease on working capital so that MSME can revive their business.**

- **Many Public Sector banks have introduced emergency credit line where a 200 Crore of loan or 10% of existing fund based working capital can be availed by the MSME borrowers, provided within 48 hours with minimum paper work and zero collateral.**

- **The GST payment has been deferred till June 30 for the suffering MSME sector so that they can withstand the demand dip.**

- **RBI has introduced a loan of Rs 50,000 Crore on long-term repo rate operation aimed towards NBFC and micro finance institutions.**

- **The planned debt purchase represents about 2 per cent of the total outstanding debt of the top 20 NBFCs that represent close to 75 per cent of the assets of the NBFC sector.**

- **The government will set up a special purpose vehicle that will subscribe to new and existing bonds issued by NBFCs up to a maximum of Rs 30,000 crore and have decided to provide uncollateralized loan of 3 lakh crore four year tenure credit guarantee.**

- **Companies with outstanding of Rs25 crore and turnover of 100 crore will qualify for same, in 45 days government will clear the receivables.**

- **EPF contribution reduced from 12 to 10% for both employer and employee having workforce of more than 100 people.**

- **Global tenders have been disallowed for projects up to Rs 200 crore.**

- **MSMEs declared NPAs or those stressed will be eligible for equity support as the government will facilitate the provision of Rs 20,000 crore as subordinate debt.**

- **Government Measures Globally: A Comparative Picture**

Although government has taken many steps that are in compliance with the ongoing COVID-19 scenario and its impact on MSME sector, but a lot should have been done. Major thing that the governments failed to address is that issue of daily wage earners, who were dependent on the MSME.

### Current and potential impact on the sector: A Case of MSMEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price variations of key raw materials</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The domestic supplies and those from imports both will suffer leading to a significant impact on availability and cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production shutdown</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Will lead to a cascading impact even after the lockdown restrictions have been eased owing to global slowdown in demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash flow constraints</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Will have impact on working capital needs during lock down, will also have an impact on supply chain, future investments and expansions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain disruption</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on markets, relationships with downstream and upstream enterprises, pressure to look for newer markets etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contractual, wage labor will get impacted more leading to layoffs, unrest, lowering of purchasing power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer sentiment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative sentiment and diminishing liquidity will impact most of the consumer goods industries, retail, and service enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts (if applicable)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With Europe and U.S. being affected the most, there will be huge impact on exports as global demand is expected to come down significantly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consumers turned to E-commerce platform and aggregators to meet their need for essential supplies and needs, and contact less deliveries will remain a new way of doing business. Uber has opted to deliver essential supplies and Zomato has also opted to deliver groceries.

Way Forward

So what is the way forward to move out of this Pandemic of COVID-19 for MSME globally and especially for Indian MSMEs, then there needs to be an exit plan as the economies cannot be stalled further. The recent changes in the consumer pattern and behavior will cause disruption in the new kind of businesses and MSME sector will not be looked upon as they were previously operated and familiar.

Impact Lending and Lending for Profit can Co-exist

With a mission to fund small businesses by leveraging the digital ecosystem, NeoGrowth Credit has been supporting the MSMEs to grow as well has been creating a positive social impact in their lives.

NeoGrowth has conducted an independent study to analyze and estimate the social impact created by the company through its business and thereby assessing the social impact on the lives of the borrowers. Through an extensive survey with a base of over 17,000 live customers as on 31st March, 2020, this sample was collected across Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The report highlights impact lending, like Fostering Entrepreneurship to first generation entrepreneurs by providing loans to borrowers with no prior formal business experience. 77.5% of the total NeoGrowth customers interviewed were first generation entrepreneurs.

Financial Inclusion

Another interesting insight was driving economic growth, 84.1% of interviewed customers registered an increase in revenue post availing a loan from NeoGrowth. The company believes in driving financial inclusion, 51.4% of the interviewees were first time borrowers which is a testament to its mission of creating strong positive social impact on MSMEs by lending to first generation entrepreneurs, assisting women entrepreneurs and enabling customers in job creation and improvement of credit scores via loans. The company has always strongly believed in promoting gender inclusion thereby supporting women empowerment. NeoGrowth has extended loans to 1,829 women in FY 2019-20 which comprises of 10.8% of the total borrowers.

Since its inception, NeoGrowth has been at the forefront of the country’s ongoing fintech revolution. Pioneering the evolution of digital lending in India, the company has continued to strengthen its foothold in the MSME segment by facilitating easy, fast, and hassle-free access to credit through its robust risk-scoring mechanism.

NeoGrowth Credit has touched 70,000+ Customers since inception, it has disbursed over INR 5,500 crores (USD 733 Mn). But the realm of the impact created by the brand is not limited to extending financial support to these businesses, and this report stands as a true reflection of the indirect positive impact created on the society through its lending activities. NeoGrowth aims to continue delivering positive financial as well as social value to all its customers, while making a key contribution to bringing about true financial inclusion in India.
Individually who have pre-existing illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory issues are at a higher risk due to low immunity. Generally, immunity reduces as you get older. In the younger generation with no underlying illnesses, improper nutrition can cause lowering of immunity.

There are also certain methods to improve your immunity which is paramount at this juncture of the second phase of lockdown.

Keep your immunity boosted

The current need of the hour is a quick boost to your immunity system to keep it fighting fit. You have to be concerned whether you are getting the right amount of nutrients from your diet.

Some of the immunity booster capsules will really help for instance Protuff Immunity Booster, which immunizes with naturally rich minerals and vitamins. The capsules include Echinacea Ext which is used as a popular herbal remedy, linked too many health benefits, such as reduced inflammation, and improved immunity and lowering blood sugar levels. Other ingredient is Elderberry Ext. Hippocrates, the “Father of Medicine,” called the elder tree his “medicine chest”. Elderberry is widely considered one of the world’s most healing plant. It is packed with antioxidants and vitamins that may boost your immune system. It also includes Acerola Ext which is a primary superpower with its high vitamin C content. Vitamin C encourages the production of white blood cells, known as lymphocytes and phagocytes. These cells help protect your body against certain infections and viruses. Zinc Citrate present in these capsules is essential for cell growth and division, immune function, enzyme reactions, DNA synthesis and protein production. Focusing on Vitamin D3 (veg source) is very essential. It plays a significant role in skeletal health, and it’s benefits go well beyond bone health to all parts of the body. Vitamin D can act as an antioxidant, regulate immune activity, support cardiovascular health, modulate blood sugar balance, and regulate neurotransmitter synthesis and more.

Vegan Lifestyle

With the larger population becoming more health conscious and moving to...
The food which you consume plays a very essential in determining your overall health and immunity. Consuming lower carb diets will definitely help in controlling high blood sugar, blood pressure and also slow down diabetes. Focusing on a protein-rich diet will keep you in good shape with regular consumption vegetables and fruits rich in Beta carotene, Ascorbic acid & other essential vitamins. Certain foods like mushrooms, tomato, bell pepper and green vegetables like broccoli, spinach are also good options to build resilience in the body against infections.

**Keep exercising**
A good diet should be followed by an exercise routine. Keep exercising regularly, as even a little exercise will help in releasing the toxins from your body. It is recommended to exercise for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on your stamina. If you have not started exercising yet, then it is a good time to start. There are several social media channels and apps to help you exercise at home. Regular exercise improves metabolism, which has a direct correlation with body immunity.

**Keep yourself Hydrated**
Drink up to 8-10 glasses of water every day. Hydration will help to erase out the toxins from the body and lower the chances of flu. Drinking juices made from citrus fruits and coconut water will beat the heat.

**Keep yourself de-stressed**
The testing times, and a prolonged period of staying indoors has its implications on your mental wellbeing. The growing anxiety around the pandemic is another concern that is affecting millions across the globe. While the uncertainty might be overwhelming, there are a few remedies we can follow like practicing meditation or yoga, listening to our favorite playlists, getting connected virtually with long-lost ones, pursuing or refreshing your hobbies.

**Keep your sleep clock healthy**
A good and healthy sleep for 7-8 hours is one of the best way to help your body being recharged; lack of sleep will leave you tired and can impair your brain activity. It will prevent the body from resting and this can cause other bodily malfunctions which can create an impact on your immunity resistance.

While the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic is being fought valiantly by our Covid Warriors, we can do our bit by keeping ourselves immunized by following the disciplined health lifestyle. This will not only limit ourselves getting exposed to the virus but shall also make us give hands to the medical health workers and to the nation to recover fast.

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**About Deepak Khicha**
Deepak Khicha, CEO Aarnix Healthsciences has a 40+ years of experience, across specialty chemicals and Pharma industries. He has been the channel partner of the top 3 global chemical corporations and carries with him the rich knowledge of sourcing simple, high quality ingredients for the nutritional formulations. He is a self-confessed fitness freak with a strong affinity for Naturopathy and ancient Ayurvedic alternate medicine system. He is also a Yoga practioner since 51 years. Because of his disciplined eating regimen and regular exercise, at age 64 years, he has no chronic diseases and is able to clock over 70 work hours a week.

At Aarnix Healthsciences, he is on a mission to bring wellness and Preventive Healthcare to Indian homes. What started for him as a way of life and passion, has grown him into an Innovator and manufacturer of the finest Protein powders and functional foods to give balanced nutrition, for a healthy and fit lifestyle. He is an avid researcher and has a well-stocked library. He is always eager to share his knowledge, which can make a meaningful difference in people's lives.
What will it take for drones and other Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies to develop into flourishing, future-oriented economic systems? As leaders across the world scramble to respond to this fundamental question, it may be India that answers best. The type of indigenous growth required to lead the next era of aviation will result from economic innovation and scalability and India has just the right mix of the key elements needed to stimulate this.

Drones, as we know them today, represent a significant development in robotic technology and the private use of drones has started trending in media recently. The use of unmanned aircraft such as drones, is not a new concept and the origins of the concept can be traced back to 1896, when the first pilotless steam-powered aircraft registered a powered flight lasting over one minute. Drones have multitude uses which have become apparent. The use cases of drones are immense in areas like mining, industrial, agriculture, broadcast, mobility, e-commerce, inspection, medical, logistics, and others. Beyond environmental monitoring and water management, supply chain and last-mile delivery service providers in the health industry have begun to experiment with drones in India.

**Huge Potential**

The Indian drone market has a potential of $900 million by the end of 2021 compared to the global market which rests at $21.47 billion. Even though these numbers are pre-Covid, the extensive use of drones in driving the COVID-19 response at the ground level could lead to an increase in the demand and growth in the industry. Studies indicate drones have the potential to bring down the cost of compliance.

One of the main advantages of drone-based applications touted by both manufacturers and service providers is its low cost compared to competing technologies like airplanes, satellites, vehicles and human interference. In recent years as the price of drones has fallen and regulations around their usage have been relaxed, they have emerged as major competition. This is particularly evident in the field of aerial photography, inspections and monitoring. While INR 40-50k will get you a day of drone imaging, it's only likely to get you an hour of aerial imaging, making drones the obvious choice for customers such as real-estate agents after a couple of snaps of a construction property.

But the real value of drones lies not in their price per area, but their ability to do things the other technologies can't. Flying so close to the ground means they are able to achieve resolutions of just a few centimetres and capture imagery at unprecedented oblique angles. This allows you to do things like provide accurate stand counts for corn fields or create high precision 3D models of everything from bridges, Infrastructure to telecom towers. This kind of close in view was previously only possible with helicopters, but their daily rental costs are in the region of INR 500k rather than INR 50k for a drone. Drones are also able to fly in a matter of hours, making it possible to react quickly to sudden events. For a farmer wanting to assess the damage to his crops following a hailstorm or an oil company wanting to investigate a sudden drop in pressure in a pipeline, the economic benefit of receiving information quickly can vastly outweigh acquisition costs. With a fully automated drone ready to fly out of the box available for just a few thousand bucks, people are no longer reliant on external experts to capture high quality aerial images. Additionally, Hybrid business models (bring your own drone) where customers collect imagery with their own drone, upload it to the cloud and
Urban and semi-urban deliveries is one such sector which is poised to grow exponentially. The requirement is going to be more immediate towards healthcare deliveries that include long tail medics, vaccines, blood package and diagnostic samples. Owing to the current scenario because of the pandemic, this is one such sector which is witnessing immense interest.

Challenges

Urban and semi-urban deliveries is one such sector which is poised to grow exponentially. The requirement is going to be more immediate towards healthcare deliveries that include long tail medics, vaccines, blood package and diagnostic samples. Owing to the current scenario because of the pandemic, this is one such sector which is witnessing immense interest. There are multiple companies who are conducting trials and preparing grounds to begin commercial deliveries once the policy is in place to allow BVLOS operations.

There are certain challenges ranging from policy maturity, market and operations which are encumbering the progression of UAS use in India. Conceptualising and mandating this tech, however, was the easy part. Implementing it would be a challenge. Perhaps hardest of all would be ensuring the compliance of stakeholders and riding through an intensive policy framework. Apart from policies, market scenario imposes another challenge. Drone market is still burgeoning in India. Companies involved in UAS market are still focusing on primary applications such as real-time monitoring which involves communicating information in real-time. Exploring AI, AR/VR, IoT and 3D modelling are still waiting to be explored. Consequently, the price of Indian drones in the 250g-2kg category, for example, is at least twice that of their DJI equivalents. Some have also argued that UAVs pose a significant threat to privacy protection. Since, drones may be misused for unethical activities such as corporate espionage, trespassing, surveillance, unauthorised photography and burglary. Hence it is agreed that any UAV policy must provide for adequate liability in case of breach of an individual's privacy.

In Conclusion, Gaps in infrastructure, an awareness and agreement to answer climatological challenges, and a willingness to try new technologies to address new social divides demonstrates one reason why India may lead with drones.

About Ankit Kumar

Ankit Kumar, a Next Gen Serial entrepreneur & founder of Alternate Global is making it possible to start Drone deliveries in India in next couple of days as they have received a nod to start the first 100 hours of BVLOS trials on Drone delivery of medicines and other packages. A consortium led by Ankit’s Alternative Global India (AGI) is set to anchor and manage the overall consortium for the trials. Besides, Drone Ankit is also into the business of electric vehicle & Mobility sharing startUps.

Siyaram’s Launches Anti-Corona Fabric with Australia-based HealthGuard

Siyaram’s, one of the leading textile brands in men’s fashion for over four decades, launched its Anti-Corona range of fabric tested by WHO (World Health Organisation) approved labs to fight against the spread of pandemic. As India witnesses a surge in the number of cases with every passing day, Siyaram’s conducted an extensive research and a series of detailed studies for weeks to develop an innovative fabric that helps in combating Corona virus in an effective way. The new Anti-Corona fabric provides a 24/7 silent sentinel protection from the deadly virus and is developed in association with HealthGuard, a global leader in non-invasive healthcare for 25 years dedicated to research and development of safe & innovative biotech solutions.

The new fabric guarantees 99.94% effectiveness against Corona virus and has non-leaching properties compared to other metal based chemistry products, making the treated layer of fabric to not dissolve in water. “90 percent of our body is covered with clothes and viruses have the tendency to thrive on the surface of fabrics for longer hours increasing the exposure of humans to the infection. “The ‘Cosmetic based chemistry’ coating utilized in making of our fabric is made of positive compounds and when it comes in contact with the negative compounds, it disintegrates the outer lipid coating and destroys the virus in a matter of few seconds”, says Ramesh Poddar, CMD of Siyaram Silk Mills Ltd. The new anti-corona fabric is made of natural substances and does not harm the human skin. With the use of sustainable and biodegradable ingredients, Siyaram’s has successfully ensured that the fabric does not leach any harmful components and renders a smooth and soft feel to clothes.

“We at Siyaram’s have ensured that we do not compromise on the style quotient, the texture, the designs and the color of the fabric. We want our customers to be protected in style and in the coming days, the Anti-Corona fabric will not just be a trend but it will be a necessity. This fabric will allow our customers to embrace life after lockdown with full confidence and have an armour against the adversities”, adds Poddar.
Visualizing an erudite society sans education is similar to staging 'Hamlet without the King of Denmark'. Can you imagine a world without education? Probably the first thought that we get after hearing such a question is, No! A world without education is as a bird without wings. “Education has been called the technique of transmitting civilization. In order that it may transmit civilization, it has to perform two major functions: It must enlighten the understanding, and it must enrich the character,” avers, Nani Palkhivala. Hence education always tops the list of highest priorities in any society. In India, it has been so from the Vedic ages. The supply of 'priceless' human resources for educated society is possible only through education. Therefore, the need of the hour is, 'A spiritual paradigm to education.'

**Truth and Possibility**

People often confuse education with schooling, whenever there is a discussion on education. When they hear the word, their mind simply thinks about schools or colleges. They might also look at particular jobs like teachers or tutors. The problem with this is often that while looking to assist people to learn, the way tons of faculties and teachers operate is not necessarily something we will properly call education. They have chosen or fallen or been pushed into 'schooling' — trying to drill learning into people consistent with some plan often involved by the others. Paulo Freire (1973) famously called this banking — making deposits of data. Such 'schooling' too easily descends into treating learners like objects, things to be acted upon rather than people to be related to.

Education, as we understand it here is a process of inviting truth and possibility, of encouraging and giving time to discovery. Nani Palakhivala’s observation about education is that, “The first objective of education should be to turn out integrated personalities in whom have been inculcated noble ideas.”

Further, he says, “I am using the word in its profound sense. Animals can be trained; but only a human being can be educated. Education requires personal participation and transformation. It cannot be given to anyone; it must be inwardly appropriated. It involves the cultivation of the mind, not merely with a view to equipping you earning a living or to possess it as a commodity for sale in the marketplace.”

Swami Vivekananda says, “Education means that process by which character is made, the strength of mind is increased, and intellect is sharpened, as a result of which one can stand on one’s own feet.” It is, as Dewey (1916) put it, a human process – 'a process of living, and not a preparation for future living'. The Yajurveda declares, “I resolve to discard all the false values and accept every true ideal of life”.

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“Where is the life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?” – T. S. Eliot

Dr. S. Balasubramanyam, PhD

**True Education – A stimulus to Life and Higher Values**

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SME WORLD JULY, 2020
The purpose of education is not loading the mind with information. Moreover, such information getting absorbed in life is simply a chance. It can just make one literate, but not happy or contented. George Macaulay Trevelyan, the great-grandnephew of Lord Macaulay, who said, “Education has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.”

**Literacy and Education**

In short, the purpose of education is not loading the mind with information. Moreover, such information getting absorbed in life is simply a chance. It can just make one literate, but not happy or contented. George Macaulay Trevelyan, the great-grandnephew of Lord Macaulay, who said, “Education has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.”

Albert Einstein’s observation about the sense of values deserves worth mentioning in this context, that is, “It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise he – with his specialised knowledge – more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person.”

Therefore, life is to be lived; so, education must prepare one for life.

Man being divine in nature, life also should be lived in a divine way of life. A quote, I read long back, is very appropriate, which needs mention here is that “life is not for eating, sleeping, making merry, or begetting children, but for attaining perfection by transcending the animal instincts.”

There is more to life than amassing wealth or indulging earthly pleasures. Man can lead a virtuous life out of his good or bad deeds. Man must adhere to the laws of being, and maintain the balance between mind and body, between thought, feelings, and actions.

Atharvaveda offers a piece of guidance: “Give prominence to intellect over emotions. God has housed your emotional heart and your logical mind in one body. Further, it advises, “Do not be carried away by the emotions, nor be carried away by mere logic, get motivation from heart, but the direction from the brain, and march forward with firm strides”.

**Purpose of Education**

Education must teach, how to maintain equanimity, when passions control the mind and the body, As Lord Krishna manifested in Bhagwadgita, i.e., “Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma phaleshou kada chana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani.”

The meaning of Krishna’s statement is that every human being must become a ‘karma yogi,’ who works hard without caring for the fruits of his actions and practice to treat success or failure with a detached mind.

A word of caution from Rigveda: “O man, keep awake! Let not fools lure you or the cunning beguile you”. Education should implant in one, the sense of humour, so useful for dissolving stress.

**Role of an Educator**

Life being an intricate web of relationships, it is the task of the educator to inculcate among students the values of love, respect, trust, and gratitude. The Rigveda says, “May we assemble and march forward with a common purpose; May we confer together with open minds and work together harmoniously for common good; May we pool our thoughts for integrated wisdom, and always work triggered by higher ideals”.

Life becomes divine when one lives in soul-consciousness.

**Faith, Reverence, Conviction, is the Key**

Changing times have changed the mindset of the young generation. Unfortunately, the young generation deems an ill-mannered approach as the symbol of freedom. Freedom is not enslavement to physical enjoyment. It is not fulfilling the diktats of the lower self, dismissal of time-tested customs, non-observance of laws of the land, or discounting the voice of conscience. True freedom is inner liberation.

The present-day education has failed to instill reverence – reverence for ancient writings, parents, teachers,
Worldly-Knowledge to Self-Knowledge

A spiritual paradigm to education is the need of the hour. From worldly-knowledge to self-knowledge is a spectacular jump from normal understanding to cosmic knowledge. Spirituality recognizes the immanent principle of consciousness in existence, which, in turn, implies one's unity with the cosmos and with everything around. It provides a spark of the divine in primal elements, in plants, animals, and humans.

To ignite the soul of pupils with the highest truth, teachers should be not only erudite but have perfect conduct. When King Janaka, himself a philosopher, requested the Yagnavalka to take him as a disciple, he said, “Disciples must qualify to be the worthy recipients of knowledge.” They should have total control of the senses and lead a disciplined life.

The mission of education is not just to inform but also to transform, lead one to the fountain of all knowledge. Spiritual orientation to life can help students to be pure in thought, word, and deed. It can compel them to adopt a ‘giving attitude’, shed the grabbing mindset, and defuse the desire to become rich overnight even by resorting to foul means.

Further, a prayer in Atharvaveda states, “O God, keep away from me that wealth which brings about my fall; and results in defaming; which entangles me from all directions; and withers me like a parasitic plant that withers away from the supporting tree.”

The supreme realization of the Oneness of the Reality, expressing itself in many ways, can change one's perceptions and outlook towards life. Self-love is transformed into love for all beings, obsession into compassion, and hatred into respect. Life's tempo remains unimpeded if one has spiritual energy-reserves to absorb the shocks of day-to-day life.

Noble ideas can bring students out of their world of fantasy, de-addict their minds of racial, religious, and other prejudices, and improve their mental health to face the challenge of time. Students need to understand that a life of purity can do wonders in many ways; that the development of intuitive ability is as important as the development of the mind.

To live is to feel for others. “The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing,” wrote Blaise Pascal. Moral and spiritual education could make students receptive to other people's feelings and sympathize with them. Spiritual poverty is more harmful than the poverty of other kinds. Today it has led to restlessness in the world today.

The orientation of students is compulsory for the observance of seven codes of conduct, namely, truth, non-violence, non-covetousness, noble company, hygiene, self-control, and a quest for the divine. These codes of conduct can uplift young minds morally, and turn them into instruments of social change. Educational curricula should be prepared in such a way to provide a remedy to material and sensual values, acting like poison on impressionable minds. To conclude, “For a nation nothing is more rewarding than education in human values.”
The unprecedented times has pushed businesses across the world to shift to remote working and given the increasing demand for a safe and hassle-free platform, 'Fokuz' was developed in a short span of four months.

Seamless Experience

It promises unparalleled user experience like simple click schedule meetings, high quality video and audio, secure experience, go live option to any social media handles, effortless screen shares, built in recording feature, integrated chat option, file sharing and remote support. In addition, features like Automated meeting reports by email which includes Username, Browser details, IP address, Individual time spent by each participant and Location of every participant sets Fokuz aside from other similar platforms.

Fokuz would be available across Android and iOS devices as well as Windows and macOS computers, thus enabling new seamless experience for all meeting attendees. Unlike any other such platforms it features the option of unlimited participants. It will be available free of cost for the coming two months and can be accessed from round the globe at https://fokuz.io

“Working remotely has posed a huge challenge in the way we work and video conferencing has become an integral part of our daily life. Increased use of such platforms has given rise to issues like security threat, lag, constant disconnection, interruptions, poor audio or video quality, limited features and many others. “Fokuz’ was developed giving prime attention to such customer pain points. We aim to set new benchmark in the segment with our unique offerings”, says Manodh Mohan, Founder & CEO (Salesfokuz), Skyislimit Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a significant role in the economic growth of the country. As per Ministry of Commerce 2020 statistics, the MSME sector in India employs over 100 million people (second largest employment provider after agriculture), accounts for 45 per cent of manufacturing output and more than 40 per cent of the country's exports. With 63.4 million units throughout the country, MSMEs contribute around 6.11 per cent of the manufacturing GDP and 24.63 per cent of the GDP from service activities. So it would be safe to say that the sector is the backbone of the national economic structure and has imparted resilience to ward off global economic shocks and adversities.

Over the years, through notable initiatives such as Make in India, the GoI has promoted the Indian manufacturing brands and attracted global companies to engage with MSMEs. However limited start-ups in the manufacturing segment, limited access to adequate and timely credit and lack of knowledge of appropriate technology has been a major roadblock that has impeded their access into global markets. Especially for sectors like Zinc die-casting. Professionals familiar with prospects of Zinc die cast (ZDC) industry can understand that its proliferation can change India's industrial landscape, as it did in China. ZDC factories operating in clusters can generate employment for millions and products in billions covering virtually all sectors of manufacturing economy – be it automotive, sanitaryware, builder's hardware, kitchen ware, electronic products and jewellery.

High Fluidity
Zinc die-casting dominates all facets of engineering industries due to its unique properties, vis-à-vis closest rival Aluminium in die-casting arena. ZDC is time and energy efficient with lower processing cost. Since it's heavier and produces excellent surface finish post casting and processing, it is an ideal replacement for traditional brass castings. Better casting precision, closer tolerances, it provides high fluidity with ultrathin castings upto 0.40mm.

If we compare our present status is comparison to other developing nations like China, India lags behind tremendously despite having zinc surplus. China has 50% plus market share worldwide against 1.5% for India which is miniscule. China employs 15million people in zinc die-casting space as compared to a few lakhs by India. Globally, 18% of zinc produced gets absorbed for zinc die casting – a popular manufacturing process used in automobile, bathroom and sanitary ware segment. However, only 8% of the zinc gets consumed for die-casting in India which is far below the world average. While there have been small enterprises and MSMEs exporting zinc and related raw material to global markets, the quantity and quality is far behind global requirements.
Moreover, when companies like Hindustan Zinc Limited export pure Zinc, its realization is USD 2000 per ton. However, when China exports ZDC products, its realization becomes USD 7000 per ton – a value addition of USD 5000 per ton. Branded products value additions are significantly higher.

**Need for Policy Measures**

So the question is what ails this sector from 'GROWTH'? The answer is lack of technical capability in Indian MSME, lack of required skillset and technical knowledge to make products meeting global quality norms, lack of awareness of ZDC potential amongst both government and private sector and finally, lack of awareness of ZDC’s potential by sectoral associations and primary Zinc producers. Recent report issued by State Bank of India (SBI) Eco wrap May 2020 suggests that India possess enormous potential to be a self-sufficient market for MSMEs especially in Zinc, Copper and Aluminum however currently has a very small manufacturing base as compared to developing nations like China. It is therefore imperative to push both in terms of strategic relations and structural reforms by the government. Policy measures like these will not only make India a global hub for MSMEs in Zinc die-casting but will also provide employment opportunities across sector.

Hence, for the Zinc die-casting sector to outshine and put India on the global map, it is imperative that the following measures are taken into consideration by the government and regulatory bodies:

- **Ban export of pure Zinc** – Government should initiate a practice to announce a time frame, after which only 'value added' ZDC products can be exported. This is similar to Chinese policy of limited export of pure metals and only export value added products – that will help India retain its prosperity.
- **Announcement of such a ban, will propel, GoI officials, consumers and importers of ZDC products, sectoral associations, primary metal producers and MSME entrepreneurs work in tandem to create a vibrant environment for ZDC to proliferate.**
- **To help learn skill sets and technology, create institutions on the line of CIPET (Central Institutes of Plastic Engineering and Technology). Create ZDC clusters near such institutes, so that skilled output from these institutes find ready employment**
- **For startups financing in manufacturing sector, GOI and Indian financial institutions formulate a new framework, since gestation period for settling such industries is much larger compared to Service startups.**

Recently, in a welcome initiative by the GoI, our Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the much required impetuous and policy reforms to the MSME sector. Efforts like fund-to-fund worth Rs 50,000 crore and collateral-free automatic loans will further encourage the domestic zinc-die-casting players to expand their operations, making our manufacturing units and products at par with global standards. The sector will further benefit if multinationals brands domestic manufactured material especially zinc. It has a potential to generate huge revenue for the country and will further lead to employment opportunities thereby making India self-reliant or Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

**Awareness**

Lastly, awareness about benefits and application of Zinc die-casting amongst manufacturrs, engineers, designers, policy makers and government is key to growth for the sector. Organizations like International Zinc Association (IZA) – the only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of zinc and its users has been instrumental in representing the zinc industry globally, to sustainably grow markets and maintain the industry's license to operate through effectively managed initiatives in research and development, technology transfer, and communication of the value of zinc. It is also dedicated to increasing awareness of zinc casting alloys among engineers, designers and specifiers through technology transfer, technical services and designer education programs. It is only when organizations like these work with the government that the sector can tap its actual potential.

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**About Dr. Rahul Sharma – Director (India), International Zinc Association**

With 19 years of experience, in his present role at IZA, he has been responsible for providing technical and marketing support to zinc consumers with the galvanizing sector in India. He is the member of BIS (MTD-4) committee, CII Corrosion Management committee and Life Member of Indian Road congress, Institute of Metals. He is an expert in corrosion prevention technologies and has delivered several seminars at various organizations like MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority), CIDCO, MSRDC (Maharashtra State Road development Corporation), Indian railways & various Smart city councils in India.

**About Sandeep Tandon – Founder and CEO, DST Industries**

In year 2000, DST industries started as a brain child of Sandeep Tandon who foresaw the need to develop Decorative Hardware in Zinc in line with the developed World. In 15 years starting 2000, Sandeep with his team of professionals managed to take revenues from USD 7.50K to USD 1.04 million i.e. 138 times.
Across the world, we are witnessing a massive transformation in every aspect of our lives owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a drastic change in the way we communicate, work and lead our lives. On the work front, we are facing several scenarios, which are poised to become the new normal. As we move forward, technology will play a crucial role in the way we work, practically revolutionising the space.

As governments begin easing restrictions and businesses start functioning normally, here are some of the top digital communication technology trends that are set to transform the future of work.

Pacing towards 5G network: As many companies are moving towards a work from home culture despite certain relaxations in most parts of the country, there is an increasing demand for faster and higher bandwidth networks. 5G which is the next generation network designed with “Service Based” architecture offers a superior class of service based on the 'Slice' of network. This caters to a particular service type such as IoT, low latency applications such as Tele-Medicine and more, making its adaptation crucial to aid seamless remote working.

Rise of Virtual conferences: With a focus on maintaining social distancing and minimal contact with humans, companies are opting for webinars and virtual summits. In the new normal, industry is all set to witness an increase in virtual meetings and conferences for announcements, product launches etc. Many video conferencing applications have already witnessed a huge surge in usage in the past few months as employees are connecting with each other virtually. From internal meetings with limited participants, to a full-fledged webinar or conference wherein thousands of people can participate, events will continue to take place online. This new trend is likely to continue for a long time with an aim to maintain social distancing etiquette and ensure everyone’s safety.

Surge in IoT enabled Solutions: There is a rise in demand for smart devices across the country owing to factors such as enhanced lifestyles and the need to stay connected virtually. There is also a growing need for smart products that can be controlled through voice commands or remote commands for minimal physical contact. From remote monitoring of patients in hospitals to remotely operating the equipment in a factory, IoT adoption is likely to get a major boost in the changed world post COVID world.

E-Commerce is the king – There is a huge surge in online shopping for household items, apparels and books. And with it comes a big demand for online or mobile payment solutions and services. People have started to use more online banking services and other online financial services such as investments. Overall, there will be more online financial transactions and commerce that will take place in the post COVID era. These changes will force a more rapid adoption of communication infrastructure spend in rural and unconnected areas, with the use of technology such as VSAT terminals, UHF frequency based rural wireless broadband solutions, Wi-Fi etc.

Use of Shared Spectrum: It is a given fact that there is going to be an upsurge in content being consumed on mobile devices in a post COVID-19 world. This is particularly seen in the use of video conferencing platforms for team meetings, attending lectures online, or watching video for leisure and
example - When wireless networks are using shared spectrum, AI/ML systems will uninterruptedly monitor the load on various networks. Basis the data type, network load and number of users the AI/ML systems can support networks with a choice to select the utmost optimal parameters to distribute content. These systems will help enhance user experiences significantly.

With swift progress the development of innovative technologies, corporate India definitely has much to look forward to as digital technology is set to transform our lives in a post COVID-19 world.

-Parag Naik is Co-Founder & CEO, Saankhya Lab.

**World's 1st Ayurvedic Drinks vending machine powered by AI**

Brahmaveda revolutionizes the triangular relationship between the corporate world, immunity, and health with its unique, state-of-the-art, world's 1st vending machine, dispersing Ayurvedic drinks in the form of concoctions, decoctions and juices. The machine is equipped with the right blend of ancient remedies and modern technology, helping in improving the immunity of all, to help them sustain the pandemic and come out of it stronger. As we all know, having regular tea and coffee does not provide any health benefits thus, Brahmaveda introduces this new culture of adopting ancient Ayurveda herbs. Under the leadership and thought of Mr. Chiranjeev Shrivastava, Brahmaveda has been invented to aim to contribute towards the overall health and well-being of the consumers by delivering authentic ancient ayurveda equipped with modern technology and digitalization.

The idea of serving Ayurvedic drinks via a vending machine is a welcome break from the monotonous and unhealthy coffee/tea vending machines, which have been around the corner for ages. Besides adhering to the trending thoughts of “Make in India” and “Swachh Bharat”, and now "Atma Nirbhar" - this Ayurvedic drink serves to promote a preventive healthy lifestyle, coming up as new into the contemporary Indian workspaces and promises to bring the much-needed break from tea and coffee culture. BrahmaVeda is all set to revolutionize the beverage refreshment space both at the workplace and at home.

**Valued in Gold:**

Mumbai MP honours COVID warriors in gold coins

The COVID crisis, which is fast engulfing northern Mumbai in its throes, has already consumed 4896 precious lives. During this situation, our COVID warriors, who put their very lives at stake to serve the ailing public, deserve a special vote of thanks. Mumbai MP Gopal Shetty has attempted to deliver this appreciation to 30 COVID warriors, gifting them ₹5000 cash and a gold coin weighing 1 gram. These warriors include security guards, sanitation workers and administrative workers. The Satra Park Cooperative Housing Society organised the felicitation ceremony in Borivali, Mumbai and Shetty, the parliamentarian for North Mumbai, presided over the event as its chief guest. He also inaugurated a COVID care centre that the society had set up within its premises. This centre has a capacity of 12 patients.

"I aim to ensure that all of us contribute our efforts in every way possible, during this COVID crisis. I also hope that these positive efforts will guide us collectively on a path away from our current situation", said Gopal Shetty, the MP from North Mumbai. Shetty had appealed to the Mumbai administration, seeking approval for private housing societies to develop COVID care centres within their compounds. "I am grateful that the administration has agreed to this demand and am seeing many societies step forward and take the necessary steps to develop these centres”, added Shetty.
Indian culture always has a complicated history with drinking. Though it is legal in the country, it is still frowned upon by the community. The primary reasons for this dissent are the irresponsible actions by people who cannot hold their liquor. This increases the number of road accidents and other social crimes. Excessive alcohol tampers with the moral judgement of the person. It induces inhibitions and paves the way for various crimes. People often view or even experience negative instances associated with the intoxication of their peers and loved ones. This has led to the collective contention about the habit. However, it is not impossible to eliminate the product due to economic and social reasons.

The liquor industry is the second-largest revenue generator in the country. The estimated consumption for this year is about 6.5 billion litres. The numbers of people who contribute to this sale are increasing on an annual basis. Nevertheless, the percentage of responsible drinking is limited in this group. The metropolitan region is gradually adapting to the concept of social drinking. This small population limit their consumption for special occasions. The liquor shops do not have any control mechanism to manage product sales. Even if they implement stringent social distancing protocols, it is highly challenging to manage the consumer in an inebriated state. This questions the essential notion of safe drinking habits. The ideal solution to the predicaments faced by intoxication would be to redefine certain aspects of the industry. The companies have the responsibility to instil the notion of responsible drinking practices. Though we cannot expect an overnight transformation, LiqHub is geared up to take the next step.

The foremost step to be undertaken for this purpose is to understand consumer expectations and social challenges. This will re-establish the importance of implementing the changes. On a more intricate level, most people consider liquor as a mechanism to escape reality. This clouds their judgement and catalyses various criminal activities. The platforms focus on educating the consumers and minimising these events. Some of the most gruelling crimes in the community were caused under the influence of alcohol. People do not understand the implications of their actions. This threatens the peaceful existence of society. Common threats include road accidents, violence against women, misconduct and quaffing.

Cause of Major Accidents
In a country with millions of busy vehicles, the safety of the road is compromised even if one per cent of the drivers are drunk. A study states that at least one major accident happens every minute due to the same reason. A personal loss inspired us to work towards eliminating this risk by sourcing and delivering the product to the consumer's preferred address. This would enhance the safety of the Indian roads and prevent the rate of accidents. The motor vehicle act says that the blood alcohol limit (BAC) should be less than 0.3%. Though the Government has passed stringent regulations to monitor the situation, certain leeway in the implementation phase leads to tragic incidents. The shocking aspect of driving under the influence is that the innocent bystanders often become victims of the incident. Some of these injuries can be life-threatening or even fatal in most cases. Most accidents occur during the commute time between the shop or bar and residence. This can be avoided through online delivery and acquisition system. Consumers can choose their drink from the safety of their residents. The company will source the products from the vendors and deliver them to the customer's place. The entire process is completed in minimal time. The clients would receive real time advice about the order through the application.
Women safety has always been a cause of concern in our society. Though we are fighting for gender equality, the environment is unsafe. We still live in the times where victims share partial responsibility. Liqhub focuses on minimising these threats against them. Intoxicated people tend to commit more crimes. Online delivery system would eliminate these risks and enhances the safety of the community. Women would have the liberty to pursue their careers and interests without worry. Another major social issue is the unwritten notion that drinking is solely reserved for men. Though this scenario is gradually improving, it is almost impossible for women to purchase alcohol from shops and bars without facing harsh disparagement. These factors call for the need for a stringent upgrade in the liquor segment. The privacy features at LiqHub allows all consumers to purchase liquor without fear of criticism. The online acquisition and delivery concept would address multiple social issues and pave the path for women empowerment.

**Online Delivery**

LiqHub has identified a critical concern regarding online delivery. We understand the scepticism faced by innovative and modern concepts. The companies have patiently and diligently analysed the expectation of the potential target group. This research has provided them with valuable insights to launch the product with utmost preciseness. Liquor aggregators have identified the critical concerns raised by the Government and the consumers. About Aryan Solanki

Aryan Solanki, founder of Liqhub, has extensive expertise in the domain of e-commerce, technology and resource management. He has a penchant for identifying and resolving the challenges in the online business forum. Aryan has worked with diverse platforms and has implemented practical solutions to enhance their consumer experience. A multi-talented person, he has a concise understanding of the intricate aspects of the product management. He assists and advocates with the diverse teams to ensure seamless operations.

Aryan has comprehensive awareness about the unique elements of the online platform development. His proficiency is inclusive of agile coaching, growth hacking, product planning, documentation and implementation. He has a futuristic vision and understands the importance of technological advancements in the progression of the company.

His speciality is the holistic approach in ideation, product design, competitor reach, development and quality analysis. His involvement in these unique segments of technological innovation has motivated him to launch Liqhub. Aryan's domain expertise of the division comes from Let'sBuyDrink, which is an eCommerce portal for imported alcohol. He has a master's degree from Stratford University.

**LiqHub**

LiqHub is an innovative and contemporary concept that assists consumers to relish their liquor from the safety and comfort of their homes contemplating the concept of launching a secure and extensive online liquor sale platform. The company has been working on the model since 2017. The launch synchronises with the current need of the community. This would address multiple issues with a single click. LiqHub has developed a state of the art acquisition and delivery process. LiqHub seeks to empower women by enabling them to enjoy the finer aspects of life without the overbearing social norms. The company envisions spreading the awareness of the products and simplifying the online buying process. Our team genuinely care about the privacy of the consumers and takes adequate caution to provide a seamless delivery at a reasonable charge. This is the preliminary stage of the product. The company is in the plans to include a reward system in the future.
Payment collection is a crucial function and plays a significant role in maintaining a company's financial health, be it large corporates or small businesses like cable operators, newspaper vendors, gyms and fitness centers, etc. The most hit are the micro-entrepreneurs whose entire business depends upon payment collection. One of the key issues that surround the micro-business segment has been the money flow, and often small business owners due to lack of resources tend to track their finances manually. Payment collection is a critical factor for their thriving or even survival and this makes it very important today to discuss the payment challenges faced by this sector.

Below are some of the challenges faced by micro-entrepreneurs in payment collection and which can be addressed using simple but effective solution.

**Customer Management:**

Micro entrepreneurs usually have a large number of customers. They have to contact each one of them and maintain a record of their payments manually. Managing so many customers on your own can lead to confusion and irregularities in payments. These companies need efficient methods to manage their users by keeping track of customers who employ their services. A recurring billing solution that offers an effective way of categorizing sign-ups, services, different pricing plans, will go a long way in making them effective.

**Delayed Payments:**

Many a time customers may not be available at their homes or may not have enough cash to pay, which leads to delayed payment for these businesses. Customers may be not be able to keep a track and often miss out on their payments, which is a loss for the small businesses. Timely payments are an important aspect for them, for which adopting appropriate technology would help them tremendously. These entrepreneurs tend to waste a lot of time and resources on payment collection which can otherwise be utilized effectively to grow their business.

Ashwani Rathore Payment collectors carry out multiple manual processes that not only make their collection process inefficient, but increase the opportunity for human error. These micro-entrepreneurs resort to manual collection because they don’t have the necessary bandwidth for automating these processes. Automatic invoicing would make not just their own but their customers’ lives a lot easier. They need an alternative that integrates automation.
In today’s digital world, businesses must have strong digital presence. Micro entrepreneurs, as a segment have very minimal or almost no online presence and these businesses need a solution that would help them function in this digital world. Sending automated invoices to the customers directly on their phones where they can pay online would save a lot of effort on their part.

Having a digital presence:

In today’s digital world, businesses must have strong digital presence. Micro entrepreneurs, as a segment have very minimal or almost no online presence and these businesses need a solution that would help them function in this digital world. Sending automated invoices to the customers directly on their phones where they can pay online would save a lot of effort on their part. Carrying out payment collection in a digital manner would be beneficial for customers as well and it would act as a differentiator for these small entrepreneurs.

Recurring Invoicing:

With so many different customers on board, invoicing can be a headache. The situation is even more complicated if you are offering different levels of services or customers sign up at different periods. With different pricing for every service for every customer, it becomes very difficult to manage the billing for each one of them. Easy-to-use recurring billing software is necessary for these entrepreneurs to carry out these tasks that manage payments monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually or as required by the company.

In a nutshell, one of the main requirements of small hyperlocal businesses is to have software that is cost-friendly, and hassle-free. It should save time on setup and maintenance, and be easy-to-use so that it doesn't need them to hire another person for it. It should provide a variety of payment options for the customers from all existing payment modes like Credit/Debit Cards, Net banking, UPI, EMI, Wallets, etc. The key is a simplified payment solution and it should be convenient to use for both – the vendor and the consumer.

About Ashwani Rathore

Ashwani Rathore, Co-Founder & CEO, SpiderG is B.Tech from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Allahabad and an MBA (Finance) from Asian Institute of Management, Manila started his career in 2005 with IT major Cognizant, and then worked for a product company Talentica Software. In 2007 Ashwani had also started a venture “Moms Kitchen”, a food e-commerce and aggregator and ran it for 3 years. After this venture, he worked for Venture Capital firm IndiaCo Ventures Ltd where his role was deal evaluation for investments. With over 10 years of experience in finance and marketing, a large part of his experience involved setting up new businesses across e-commerce, IT, and B2B industries.

As the CEO of SpiderG, Ashwani is responsible for Finance, Marketing and Hiring processes. He is also accountable to drive revenue and margins by scaling up of operations and ensuring the right finances are in place to capture growth opportunities.

Khadi Masks now Available Online

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has said its khadi face masks are now available for sale online, with cotton and silk masks priced at Rs 30 and Rs 100 per piece, respectively. This will benefit people in the remotest parts of the country particularly those who cannot afford to move out of their houses or visit Khadi India outlets due to constraints.

For online purchase of masks, the order should be minimum Rs 500, wherein buyers have the option of choosing from the four types of masks available, i.e. White Cotton masks with Black piping, White Cotton masks with Tri-colour piping, Silk masks in solid colours and Printed Silk masks in multiple colours, KVIC said on Wednesday. The KVIC delivers the masks for free within 5 days from the date of purchase. The online sale is currently valid within the country only.

KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said the online sale of Khadi face masks has been started so that people buy only genuine Khadi face masks. “Online sale of Khadi masks also aims at preventing buyers from any fraud. Many online portals have been selling masks in the name of Khadi that are neither genuine Khadi fabric nor hand-made products. A number of people tend to fall in the trap of such misleading advertisements,” Saxena added.
The coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing safety scare could end up triggering the demand and supply of processed meats, with the right nudge from the government and active participation from private players. India has over 10 lakh poultry farmers who breed close to 800 million birds annually. The sector contributes 4.5 percent to the national GDP. The market is predominantly driven by the production and sale of fresh meat, and processed meat accounts for slightly over 5 percent. If you look at countries like France and Russia, processed meats take up over 30 percent of the market share. There is clearly a lot of scope to double the current market share of processed meats.

A live market puts a lot of pressure on producers as the meat process are affected by the economics of supply and demand as well as unpredictable market shocks. The rearing process and the gestation period make it difficult for farmers to vary the supply with the demand. This is compounded by the fact that the cycle of meat consumption is not constant in India. Producers end bearing reduced margins and even sustain losses to keep up the farming volumes. To give a fair idea, the loss suffered by the industry due to the current crisis is upwards of INR 20,000 crores.

The benefits of processed meat

A mature processed meat market will be beneficial to producers and customers alike. Processing technology will increase the shelf life of all meat products, which will make it easier for farmers to absorb any shocks due to the improved control over the inventory. Also, the fact that the product can be stored will shield them from unexpected crashes in prices.

Social distancing is going to be the norm for the foreseeable future, and the need for hygienically stored meat which is not touched by hand is going to go up. Customers are going to educate themselves and start looking for traceability, t, and fresh and hygienic meat. Processed meat is the logical answer to all the above demands, and it will allow producers to adhere to the strict quality requirements. Players who can integrate themselves into a brand-driven processed meat market could gain a lot from this trend.

What are the challenges?

The main challenge in hastening this transition is Indians' preference to buying fresh food. We are used to buying fresh vegetables, fruits, and poultry. To bring about a large-scale behavioral change, we need to seriously invest in customer education. It will be quite challenging to convince them that the...
The main challenge in hastening this transition is Indians' preference to buying fresh food. We are used to buying fresh vegetables, fruits, and poultry. To bring about a large-scale behavioral change, we need to seriously invest in customer education. It will be quite challenging to convince them that the taste of the meat and the nutrient value will remain undisturbed due to the processing.

Once we start to see an increase in customer acceptance, we will be able to come up with strategies to create and use more capacities. Players in the market can seize the opportunity to strike international ties, and boost our exports. Central regulations will play a key role in attracting investor interest and promoting the consumption of processed meat. While the transition is not going to happen overnight, we can expect to see a mature processed meat market in five years.

On the other hand, we need heavy investment to improve the infrastructure of the supply chain. We need an efficient cold chain from processing plants to storage units extending all the way to retail refrigeration. We need favorable policies from the government if we want to attract lucrative foreign investments.

The road ahead
In the long run, both producers and customers will benefit from the move to processed meats. Wet market will continue to operate alongside. To ignite a behavioral change, we need to create more awareness and change the public's perception towards processed meats. There are plenty of factors that will accelerate a change in consumption patterns – changing demographic profiles and lifestyles, exposure to a wider variety of cuisines, and growth of modern restaurants and retail chains.

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-Dr Ramdas Kambale is Sr. Vice President and Dr Krishna Chandra Sahoo is Global Product Manager, Vetphage Pharmaceutical

Sandvik Enforces Patent Rights in India

The Delhi High Court in India, has ruled in favor of Sandvik after an investigation and subsequent law suit for patent infringement. HK Engineering Works based in Faridabad (India) was discovered to be manufacturing patented Vertical Shaft Impact crusher (VSI) parts for the Indian market. A lawsuit was filed against HK in the Delhi High Court and, following negotiations, an agreement was reached and produced in Court. A permanent injunction is now in place against HK, who were also ordered to compensate Sandvik financially and take steps to prevent further infringement of the patent and sale of the product in question.

Sandvik invests significant sums of money in research and development and also in registering intellectual property rights, such as patents, which are designed to protect this investment in its products. Sandvik believes it must protect its interests to continue investing in the future and to remain world leaders in tools, service and equipment design.

Sandvik Group
Sandvik is a high-tech and global engineering group offering products and services that enhance customer productivity, profitability and safety. We hold world-leading positions in selected areas – tools and tooling systems for metal cutting; equipment and tools, service and technical solutions for the mining industry and rock excavation within the construction industry; products in advanced stainless steels and special alloys as well as products for industrial heating. In 2019, the Group had approximately 40,000 employees and revenues of about 100 billion SEK in more than 160 countries within continuing operations.
A New REALITY

The Real Estate Sector Post COVID 19

COVID-19 has impacted all of us in many ways, bringing about a change in our lifestyle, values and beliefs significantly. Given that our collective memory is short, as evidenced by past events, COVID is still going to have a much longer lasting impact on us. And some of this will become permanent part of our conscious, the 'new normal'.

The way we live, and more so, the way we would want to live is going to impact the realty sector in a big way. The sector will have to reinvent itself to understand, comprehend, plan and implement in new innovative ways to meet the emerging new requirements. The time for 'Business as Usual' is over, and creative disruption shall be the norm. While it will prompt the Real Estate sector to go back to the drawing board, it also offers new avenues to explore new innovations as also to fast-track incorporation of new technologies, be it construction technologies, home automation, IoT or AI. The planning would need to incorporate altered norms of social distancing, mobility, density and health considerations.

The concept of Work from Home has indeed caught up across the spectrum but is specifically significant for the millennials in the IT and related sectors. Post COVID, the offices shall buzz again, but definitely not as earlier. This is going to greatly impact the commercial and residential segments, which will also need to factor in the requirement of increased spacing and other health concerns. The e-commerce picking up in a big way during the pandemic is also going to largely impact the shopping malls and warehousing in different ways. The lesser need for travel for work or tourism will reduce demand for hospitality sector requirement of space. The disruption during the pandemic would also drive the potential buyers to go in for near completed properties rather than during launch, except for the brands they trust. The Real Estate sector would need to work out the new ways to effectively deal with the emerging dimensions to sustain itself.

Towards Satellite Towns

However, Urbanisation is not going to stop, but will slightly slow down surely in the aftermath of the pandemic for some time. Accordingly, the demand for all asset classes is going to be there and increase over the time. However, the product and factors which would excite the customers shall be different from what we have today. Possibly living in the crowded
downtown may not remain the preferred choice and the demand may prop up for satellite townships, offering much better quality of life. The marketing of properties will undergo changes, wherein the focus will be on the specifics which are included to make them feel safe. Be it, appropriate public spaces, voice activated controls, safer centralised air conditioning, larger lifts etc.

The planning for residential complexes and specific housing unit is expected to change immensely. While larger public spaces and circulation areas would see an increase, the large swimming pool may be a thing of the past. The individual home would need to have a place or two to double up as the office for self or spouse or kids. The requirement of higher personal spacing, as also for open areas like balconies, would likely push up unit areas. Similarly, for Office spaces, the need for social distancing would mean redesigning of cubicles and workstations. The centralised air conditioning would also need technological interventions to prevent circulation of viruses. In all the cases, need for avoidance of touching controls for lifts, lighting etc, would mandate using voice activated controls. IT interventions for uninterrupted availability of high bandwidth internet would be mandatory, as also higher capacity or increased number of lifts would be the norm.

**Financial Burden**

The current Real Estate scenario with a large inventory of delayed and still unfinished houses would drive the buyers towards nearly completed projects, requiring the builders to put in much larger investments into their projects. Servicing these increased investments would create additional financial burden, which will necessitate completing the projects in the shortest possible time for them to be able to sell their properties to the buyers to generate resources. To minimise the construction time, use of construction technologies would be imperative. The technologies for modular construction, like precast systems, formwork systems, steel construction etc are already in vogue to some extent, but post Covid will become a norm. These technologies would also be mandated by the non-availability of labour, especially migrant workers who may not return back fast enough. The requirement of quality for the much aware customers of today, also calls for industrialised construction in a big way. Covid pandemic would definitely fast track this process of transition to new technologies.

No one is sure when we shall get over Covid or at least the fear of it, but it is definitely going to the change the Reality sector significantly, most probably for the better. This might be the inflexion moment for the real estate sector enabling it to think afresh and reimagine in this covid reality.

-Rajesh Goel is the Director General, NAREDCO.

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**How India is Important for Global Markets**

Many nations are holding China responsible for unabated spread of the pandemic and countries including Japan, US and EU have announced plans to exit from China since Covid-19 pandemic first came into light in November 2019 in Chinese city of Wuhan.

With disruptions in China's manufacturing and production operations and delayed delivery of goods as a result of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, many global companies are seeking alternative destinations to diversify their supply chains. With low labor costs, incentives and regulatory relaxations for manufacturing, and a reduced corporate tax rate, India has emerged as an alternative hub for global manufacturing.

**India a Lucrative Market**

India also offers lower operating costs, competitive infrastructure, special economic zones (SEZs) that offer duty free exports among other benefits, incentives to boost domestic manufacturing, and business-friendly policies. Plus, while China is engulfed in a trade war with the US, India has a comparatively good relationship with the US with both countries currently engaged in bilateral trade talks. If due support is provided by the government to the industry including MSMEs, which employs a large workforce across the value chain, reboot of business will become a reality and growth can certainly be achieved.

India's expanding economy and robust middle class provide a lucrative market while its abundant skilled and semi-skilled labor add to the country's ability to support bulk manufacturing, assembly, and processing. In addition to these advantages, India's democratic fabric, with an emphasis on transparency and rules-based international order as well as readiness to meet its contractual commitments without resorting to weaponizing trade policies would pave way for fair trade.

-S Ravi is Former Chairman, BSE, Founder & Managing Partner Ravi Rajan & Co.
The 5% contraction in the Indian economy expected by CRISIL this fiscal – wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic – will significantly hurt micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across sectors.

The pain will radiate as India Inc heads towards ~15% decline in revenue and ~25% fall in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda). For MSMEs, the fall in revenue will be steeper at 17-21%, while Ebitda margin will shrink 200-300 basis points to 4-5% as weak demand gnaws away gains from lower commodity prices.

A sharp decline at the operating level will also impact creditworthiness, aggravating the liquidity stretch these units have been grappling with, particularly on the working capital front.

In the process, average interest service coverage ratio could slide to 1-1.5 times from 2.4 times seen between fiscals 2017 and 2020, even after factoring in the benefit of moratorium on interest payments announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Sans moratorium, the ratio would have gone below 1.

The challenges would be the hardest for micro enterprises, which account for 32% of the overall MSME debt, and are facing material stress in terms of revenue growth, Ebitda margins and working capital stretch.

Previous downturns have shown that micro and small enterprises are unable to manage transient working capital challenges as easily as their large and medium peers. To that extent, the measures announced by the Ministry of Finance and the RBI, nudging banks and other institutions to lend more, will help them tide over tapered cash flows.

The bigger issue, however, is demand, which needs to revive for growth to improve sustainably.

Says Amish Mehta, Chief Operating Officer, CRISIL, “The current facilitations may not have the heft to crank up demand in the near term because fiscal stimulus is limited and only to vulnerable households. It is critical that the demand curve is yanked steeply northwards, especially in discretionary products and services. A three-pronged strategy is essential now: one, improve the sentiment around job security for formal and informal workers to boost consumption. Two, hasten implementation of the Rs 3 lakh crore Aatmanirbhar scheme to ensure flow of liquidity to MSMEs continues. Three, and most importantly, lenders have to go beyond traditional credit processes because they have to play a seminal role in recovery. That will mean closer interactions with MSMEs to
understand underlying drivers of business, and using innovations such as operational scorecards, digital platforms and alternative data for monitoring and underwriting.”

As for sectors, CRISIL sees consumer discretionary, construction, and export-linked ones bearing the brunt. Small real-estate contractors into EPC (engineering, procurement, construction) projects, and ceramics and textiles makers have been significantly impacted so their credit profiles are the most vulnerable.

Revenue growth of MSMEs in the real estate engineering, procurement and construction segment could almost halve with demand sliding even as rising costs, supply chain disruptions and labour issues exert severe pressure on margins. Lower utilisation and partial absorption of BS-VI price hike could erode margins of auto-component MSMEs this fiscal despite lower raw material prices. Working capital is highest for MSME sectors that have higher B2B clientele or dominant export share, such as gems & jewellery, ready-made garments and real estate contractors.

**Incremental working capital**

The assessment is also borne out by a survey conducted by CRISIL covering ~450 MSMEs across crucial upstream sectors such as construction-real estate, auto components and textiles-readymade, and downstream sectors such as FMCG distributorships and auto dealerships. The survey highlighted sector-specific challenges.

In upstream sectors, inventory build-up and stretched receivables highlight the need for incremental working capital in the next 1-2 months. Given the varied pace of revival, the worst-affected ones, such as construction, auto-component manufacturers and auto dealers, do not expect a rebound before fiscal 2022. While some MSMEs remain optimistic about the upcoming festive season, FMCG distributors expect de-growth this fiscal due to consumer down trading and supply-side challenges.

For construction-real estate, auto components, and textiles-readymade sectors, the biggest challenges are tepid demand given the discretionary nature of spend and supply-side constraints related to labour and raw material. While, construction units have seen an 80-85% drop in enquiries – especially in the premium segment – about 35-40% of auto-component players reported order deferrals by OEMs. The challenges have been relatively less for cluster-based players in both textiles and auto components.

Among downstream sectors, FMCG distributors and auto dealers have seen diverse trends in demand. While FMCG distributors benefitted from panic buying in the initial phase of lockdown, majority of them reported a 5-10% dip in sales in May due to product and manpower availability issues, especially in Red zones. Auto distributors reported near-zero sales in April – for the first time ever – and have in May seen a more than 50% dip in enquiries and doubling of sales cycle, indicating a slow recovery in demand. A shift to cash-based sales and reduction in credit period offered to retailers by FMCG distributors and support extended by OEM to auto dealers have cushioned their liquidity position to an extent.

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**Annexure**

* MSME financials to be hit severely this fiscal
  * Covid-19 to push revenue growth into deep red

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Ebitda margins to fall as weak demand offsets low commodity prices

(Note: Common sample of 11,590 entities. Source: CRISIL Quantix)
PayNearby, India's largest hyperlocal fintech startup, in its first 'India Savings Behaviour' report has revealed that while over 80% of India today has a bank account, yet a huge chunk accounting for more than 70% of the people falling under the low-income group, still avail informal arrangements such as chit funds and cash under mattress to park their savings. Among the key reasons cited for this trend are the strong social contract that chit funds nurture in this cohort and a combined effect of lack of awareness, tech intimidation and accessibility challenges of formal financial systems.

The trend was observed across both urban interiors and rural India.

The nationwide survey of nearly 10,000 low-income group people conducted by PayNearby through on field detailed interactions and a digital survey highlighted several insights into the factors that influence the cohort's saving habits. 47% of people who responded said that flexibility in tenure and no restrictions on the amount to be saved played a decisive role while making a choice about the financial offering.

Expenses big deterrents

The need for flexibility was further highlighted when more than 65% of respondents said that they shied away from saving through formal mechanisms as they were unable to maintain regular cash flows. When prodded further on this topic, the respondents revealed that uncertainty in income flow and large household expenses were big deterrents for them to commit to any fixed value regular savings product. A strong present bias was observed in this cohort and priority was given to current liquidity needs over future returns.

More than 35% of the respondents said that their primary objective while saving was to stop themselves and the household from making unnecessary expenses. When prodded further on this topic, 65% of the respondents revealed that they wanted to accumulate any surplus money that they had to create a lump sum and help them meet short and medium term life goals. The short and medium term goals differed significantly by gender and age groups, and were as diverse as buying a bike to funding a child's education. Buying jewellery, land or setting up a house were other popular life goals.

49% of the respondents also spoke about building a safety net that would help them deal with emergencies. The pandemic has thrown millions of people into chaos, affecting their financial well-being due to soaring unemployment rates and insecurities around regular salary payments. There seems to be a heightened awareness among citizens to save for crisis, like the current COVID-19 situation and ensure financial security.

Fear of documentation

The study also revealed that the low income group cohort prioritized flexibility, security, trust and ease of use over return on investment while choosing their savings product. More than 40% of the respondents cited fear of documentation and processes being a primary reason for not choosing a formal savings product. The feeling of alienation in structured set-ups, documentation hassles, operational timings, waiting time, amongst others were cited as the key reasons for the hesitance.

Over 43% of consumers said that the ease of operational process is a critical factor that determines whether and how often they will put money into a savings fund. They find it very inconvenient when they have to spend time traveling, filling out application forms and cited reasons like losing out on daily wages as deterrents to the process.

Commenting on the same, Anand Kumar Bajaj, MD & CEO, PayNearby,
said, “Our greatest learning from the pandemic has been the need to invest in our health and economic infrastructure, so that we are better prepared to meet challenging situations like the current one. While we rely on government, civic and regulatory bodies to do their bit, it is important that individually we play our part in ensuring the security of people around us. One of the most important steps to ensuring economic security is to build the discipline of savings amongst the masses.

We know a large part of Bharat today are struggling to make both ends meet, and through our open banking platform, we want to ensure that DBT funds reach the intended. Our Digital Pradhans, spread across 17,000 PIN codes have done a tremendous job of enabling DBT fund access of more than Rs. 6,000 crores in the last two months. This was possible because of NPCI’s support, guidance from RBI, policy directions from DFS and Finance Ministry and most important, the Banks who host these millions of accounts and our sponsor banks.

Digital Pradhans

It is now important to take the next step in our journey to make deeper impact in people’s lives and ensure that we not only help our fellow citizens create the safety net for unforeseen circumstances but also help them save and fulfill their life goals. The study has revealed the need to simplify savings product offerings, so that it is easy to access and easy to consume for our masses. Through our Digital Pradhans, who enjoy a strong social contract in their catchment areas, we hope to import the trust and relationship of the local retailer and work closely with our banking partners to enable, easy to consume goal based savings products in a secure, friendly environment for Bharat.

Our team is working hard to create a platform to create awareness and inculcate the behaviour of small savings in citizens, so that we are better prepared as a society to meet any eventualities. I am happy to announce that we will soon launch our neo-banking initiative, BankNearby, in collaboration with leading banks in India, through which we will slowly introduce multiple banking products, and bring high end technology, in a simple and easy to consume version, for the masses.”

Rajesh Kumar, MD and CEO, TransUnion CIBIL recently said, “It is important that emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS) reaches to deserving MSMEs. According to the TransUnion CIBIL analysis, it is heartening to note that almost 81% of eligible MSMEs in ECLGS are structurally strong.” MSME sector is the lifeline of the country and in the current pandemic situation, it is critical to find and fund MSMEs that are structurally strong to refuel Indian economy, he added.

Addressing a FICCI webinar on ‘Financing Avenues for the MSME Sector’, Kumar said that ECLGS is a simple and enabling scheme that will benefit MSMEs. In the COVID-19 scenario, TransUnion CIBIL is working towards helping and implementing the scheme. It is a good opportunity for strengthening our monitoring system for MSMEs. TransUnion CIBIL is reaching out to eligible borrowers and also monitoring portfolios of existing and new loans, he added.

Infusing Liquidity

Highlighting the objective and features of ECLGS, Kumar said that the scheme was launched by the Government of India for supporting MSMEs in the COVID-19 crisis. It will provide relief to the MSME sector by incentivizing Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) to provide additional credit of up to Rs 3 lakh crore at low cost, enabling MSMEs to remain in business. The scheme will infuse liquidity in the MSME sector, providing 100% government guaranteed loan for the period of 4 years including 12 months moratorium for principal amount and with a limit of 20% of total outstanding of upto Rs 25 crore, he added.

Vipul Mahajan, Joint Vice President, Market Planner – Commercial Business, TransUnion CIBIL said that it is important to keep a watch on the signs on recovery to quickly align portfolio actions. The signs of recovery include, starting of credit repayments, controlling debt build-up, granting ECLGS support, CIBIL MSME Rank remaining intact in good range, beginning of business transactions and good promoter risk situation.

He added that MSME credit was going through tough time pre-COVID but ECLGS has set the stage for boosting MSME sector.

Abridge the Gap

Dr. H P Kumar, Senior Executive Committee Member, FICCI CMSME and Former CMD, NSIC said that though the government has formulated policies, there is still a gap which remains to be bridged between MSMEs and access of funds. Due diligence by bankers is required while providing funds to MSMEs for protecting the interest of the borrower and bank. NBFCs work on the ground with MSMEs and they can share the burden with banks and act as intermediaries in disbursement of funds to MSMEs.

He added that there is a need for handholding of beneficiaries and FICCI has been working on this front with the stakeholders.

Ms Uma Reddy, Member, FICCI-CMSME Executive Committee & Managing Director, Hitech Magnetics & Electronics Private Limited said that economic activities have begun but MSMEs are struggling and need support to recover. The government has launched various schemes and economic packages for providing funds to MSMEs but the need is to understand how the sector can access these funds. She added that MSMEs during COVID-19 crisis have quickly adopted technology, Artificial Intelligence and robotics. They are also looking at diversification and are now supplying COVID related products.
The Role USP Plays in Making an Enterprise Truly Distinct with Lasting Competitive Edge

USP should be regarded as the true value proposition of a firm. At the heart of every flourishing business, there is always a value proposition, something the promoters and the managers feel proud. The process of determining a unique value proposition varies based on the state of a business. (https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-unique-selling-proposition/)

Reaping long-term benefits.

Every business needs to consider what really makes its dealings with its stakeholders’ truly one of its kind. USP is not to mirror an enterprise's noticeable features, such as its name, logo or website. It is neither a catchphrase nor a promotion rally cry. It has to be single-mindedly practiced internally and articulated externally to focus and reap long-term benefits.

The real fact that makes a firm unique is much deeper. It is a mix of various factors like the values that the firm truly believes in; the style of its management; the personality and preferences of senior managers; and, how regular members practice values. It is, therefore, the firm's DNA.

Distinctiveness is a characteristic found not only in every firm but also in every individual. Every human being has his own USP, which is called “Unique Character Traits”, or UCT. It is an expression of the individual’s Tenets and Value systems.

The sacred writings seek to explain this build-up of USP with reference to the inborn character of a person. Bhagavad Gita avers that nature ensures that every being born and every object and natural product in existence is imbued with one or more of three characters in different degrees of concentration and combination.

The three traits, Sattva (unadulterated and enlightening), Rajas (obsession and hostility) and Tamas (inertial and crudeness) suffuse everything. These three traits compete among themselves for superiority while trying to tame the other. Thus, satva predominates by suppressing rajas and tamas; rajas predominates by suppressing sattva and tamas; and
aggrandizement. With the increase in greed and an appetite for self-predominance of Rajas would reflect others. On the other hand, a along with its ability to influence the light of truth and knowledge, doors of the human body glow with times. Gita declares (14.11) that when Sattva is predominant, all the qualities are overwhelmingly practiced at all times. Gita declares (14.11) that when Sattva is predominant, all the doors of the human body glow with the light of truth and knowledge, along with its ability to influence others. On the other hand, a predominance of Rajas would reflect greed and an appetite for self-aggrandizement. With the increase in Tamas, there is a flourishing of thoughtlessness and delusion.

USP and sustainability

It is long-established information that an individual or a firm develops the best and globally appealing USP when Sattvic qualities are overwhelmingly practiced at all times. Gita declares (14.11) that when Sattva is predominant, all the doors of the human body glow with the light of truth and knowledge, along with its ability to influence others. On the other hand, a predominance of Rajas would reflect greed and an appetite for self-aggrandizement. With the increase in Tamas, there is a flourishing of thoughtlessness and delusion.

No firm can develop its USP overnight. It can and should evolve over time, becoming stronger, more focused and more attractive to the customers as the values are honed in all concerned. Many business managers think that a great USP is established through the product design exercise. They spend countless hours of executive time and engage market research firms to find out the specific ‘emotional needs’ of customers that can be addressed by a product or service. Some professionals believe that a sentence of USP can give a great deal of clarity to the business model, and it can even define the most important business goals.

Alas, in today’s commoditized world, any product that shows any level of distinction will soon be spied, matched or even outdone by competitors. The future does not lie in fashioning competitor-proof products. It is important to identify a genuine USP and make every effort to sustain it. A true and difficult to photocopy USP can emerge only from a firm’s intangible strengths: a commitment to truthfulness and honesty towards every stakeholder. Where a firm adheres to this as its core working principle, it will unknowingly be developing an unconquerable USP that would stand at all times. Truthfulness indeed equals reputation, market position, and profits.

The operating principle must always cling to four important components of truthfulness.

Honest business enterprises undergo a SWOT analysis of themselves to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. They will not bamboozle themselves by making dubious free statements of what they intend to offer while remaining aware of their true capabilities.

Plainspoken businesses would go to any level to meet the commitment or promises that they make. In the process, they build trust with customers’ brick-by-brick. Where such firms are incapable of fulfilling any commitment despite the best efforts, they will have the honesty to take the customer into confidence, instead of resorting to ‘creativity’ with the truth.

Straightforward firms will always be law-abiding in all respects. Apart from the well-known compliance aspects and standards, such firms would ensure that they would not resort to reaping fraudulent gains by ‘bending’ laws or shrewdly interpreting them. They would always make a mistake on the side of fairness. In this context, the readers will recall that there is a spate of recent cases in India involving several firms keeping the retail price of their goods unchanged despite graining from Goods and Services Tax.

Truthful firms will make every effort to create unfailing workplace behavior. When you create a culture anchored on honesty, you help foster employee behavior that is consistent regardless of external influences. For example, an employee will remain respectful and helpful even when faced with a rude customer who is not on the right side.

In his book “Winners Never Cheat”, Jon Huntsman, a US businessperson, and philanthropist, describes how a firm can grow to great heights by refusing to compromise the basic principles of honesty and integrity. He says, “There are no moral shortcuts in the game of business, or life. There are three kinds of people: the unsuccessful, the temporarily successful, and those who become and remain successful. The difference is the character”. Further, he says, “Be honest. Improper actions often appear easier routes, or require no courage, or are temporarily advantageous”.

It is for this reason, our ancient writings strongly advocate character and self-awareness to build and strengthen the inner moral compass. They assert that once you have ‘Dharma’ or the sattvic qualities as the USP, you stay protected and you flourish at all times.

Mahabharata pronounces “Dharma Rakshitah Rakshitaha”, which means Dharma protects those who protect Dharma. Says a religious practitioner, “Dharma is a name given to that essence, which contains everything, just like Gravitation is a name given to that force which holds everything on earth.”
New research from Pegasystems Inc, the software company empowering digital transformation (DX) at the world’s leading enterprises, reveals most business leaders overestimated the state of their digital transformation efforts – which hampered their ability to adapt to the pandemic. Nearly three quarters (74%) of business decision makers said the crisis exposed more gaps in their business operations and systems than they originally expected.

The global study, conducted by research firm Savant in late May, found that four out of five leaders thought they were fairly deep into their DX initiatives – with 35% assessing themselves in ‘advanced stages.’ But this appears to be wishful thinking, leaving them vulnerable to a host of customer engagement failings triggered by the pandemic:

- More than half (54%) conceded they should have done more to help their customers during the crisis.
- Over one third (37%) communicated at least one message to customers that was badly received and damaged their brand reputation.
- Over one third (36%) said they lost customers during the pandemic due to failings in their communications.

As a result, business leaders are vowing not to let their lagging technology infrastructure put them at risk for the next crisis. Seventy-one percent say the pandemic experience has forced them to accelerate their DX plans; 62% will increase the priority level of DX within their organization; and another 56% will add more DX investment. With these new DX plans in place, nine out of 10 business leaders feel confident they will be prepared to face a similar crisis if one should hit in the next two years.

Which specific DX projects have risen to the top of their wish lists? The survey found the three most popular DX projects needed to prepare for a future crisis were: cloud-based systems (48%), customer relationship management (CRM) software (41%), and AI-driven analytics and decisioning (37%).

Other findings suggest that even with all the problems it created, the pandemic could have some positive outcomes on businesses:

- **Change for the better** – 74% of respondents say their business learned a lot during the crisis and will permanently change the way they operate for the better.
- **Greater empathy** – 69% say the crisis taught them to be more empathetic with customers.
- **Getting to know you** – 61% feel they learned more about their customers during the crisis than they did the previous two years combined.
- **Working from home actually works** – 71% said remote working has been successful and will likely continue after the crisis ends.

Pega surveyed more than 1,200 business decision makers around the world for their perspectives on how their organization has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The results include responses from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, and Australia.

**Quotes & Commentary:**

“What this research makes clear is that digital transformation can no longer be a ‘nice to have’ for today’s businesses,” said Don Schuerman, CTO and vice president of product marketing, Pegasystems. “Even those that thought they were digitally advanced now realize they’ve only scratched the surface. Organizations may need to reexamine every part of their business for digital readiness or face consequences, regardless of whether another crisis of this magnitude happens again or not.”

**About Pega**

Pega is the leader in cloud software for customer engagement and operational excellence. The world’s most recognized and successful brands rely on Pega’s AI-powered software to optimize every customer interaction on any channel while ensuring their brand promises are kept. Pega’s low-code application development platform allows enterprises to quickly build and evolve apps to meet their customer and employee needs and drive digital transformation on a global scale. For more than 35 years, Pega has enabled higher customer satisfaction, lower costs, and increased customer lifetime value.