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HIGHLIGHTS
- Spreads across 7 acres area
- Operating in 3 shifts – 750 employees
- 2 production lines - Current capacity - 3000MT / Month
- 9 products with various cream varieties
- Consistently delivering high class quality products
- Strong management, commitment & disciplined workmen are key factors for success

CSR ACTIVITIES
- Sponsored 1 lac litre capacity drinking water tank in Abban Kuppe village
- Monthly feeding of orphanage children
- Text book & note books distribution for school children

PRODUCTS
- Kwality Glucose
- Tiger Glucose
- Bourbon
- Good Day-Cashew
- Good Day-Butter
- Tiger Krunch
- Milk Bikis
- Milk Cream
- Treat Creams

Award and Recognition
- IMC Ramakrishna Bajaj National Quality Award 2011
- Business Profitability Partnership Award, 2012 from BiL
- Rotary BSE SME National award for excellence. 2012
- Good Day Gold League Gold Trophy Award 2013,
- 2nd Place in Everyday Perfect Good Day Contest 2014,
- Best Good Day Cashew manufacturing unit, Perfect Good Day Contest 2015.

Gobal Recognition by AIB International

Paramount added another feather in its cap when it was adjudged the 1st Britannia CP unit to get AIB Recognition in India scoring 820 out of 1000 in February 2018. AIB is considered as one of the stringent Food Safety norms across the globe.
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Enjoyable Journey

Congratulations for completing 12 yrs!

It has been an enjoyable journey with you thus far. You have been successfully able to voice the concerns of one of the most important pillars of our industrial and social growth, the small and medium enterprises. I have been able to speak my mind through you and you have been able to effectively engage with practitioners and academicians. Relentless and committed efforts of Mr. Rajen Kumar as chief editor are praiseworthy in addressing policy and practical problems concerning this sector. It is easy to take initiative, but difficult to sustain it and for that he deserves all the accolades. As we are passing through one of the greatest calamities of the century, my gut guides that the future of India lies in the SME sector for sustainable and holistic development. I wish, you remain a strong voice for that cause under the able patronage of its team led by Mr. Rajen Kumar.

Keep growing, keep engaging and celebrating jubilees.

Best wishes

Dr. Vijay Kumar Shrotryia
Professor, Department of Commerce, Faculty of Coomerce & Business
Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
Delhi 110007

Excalibre Inc Sojourns with SME WORLD

Twelve years back, SME WORLD was creating benchmarks, as a dependable ally, guide, to the world of MSMEs creating incredible breakthroughs for budding entrepreneurs to scale and evolve their enterprises. During this time, I got introduced with Mr. Rajen Kumar and was immediately drawn to him for his sheer grit and enthusiasm. He inspired me to share my learning and experiences with evolving entrepreneurs.

After fixing the objectives, critical was how to make them happen. Thus started the monthly column-Coaching and Mentoring in SME WORLD which comprehensively addressed the above challenges, precisely, concisely and in a pointed manner where the reader got an overview of his prevailing expanse- its patterns, trends and chasms.

SME WORLD believes that every business is a growth business, hence one needs to continuously rebuild, rehash one's business model – to be scalable, adaptable, measurable, on a continuum basis, was emphasised, revisited each time, every time, in the sharing's.

Personally for us at Excalibre Inc it's been an experience filled with excitement wherein we transited from the known to the unknown.

Best wishes to Mr. Rajen Kumar – you have many more miles to trudge before you sleep.

K S Ahluwalia
Executive Coach and Mentor- Excalibre
D 138 sector 36. Noida. 201303
Ks.ahluwalia@yahoo.com

Impeccable Regularity

SME WORLD is a great initiative and has been consistently coming out with progression with fresh write ups aimed at improving the small businesses ecosystem. Creditable indeed is the fact that it is appearing with impeccable regularity since 2008.

We at GNA are happy to support the efforts of its Editor Rajen Kumar and I wish him great success.

Jagdish Singh
Chairman, Guru Nanak Auto Enterprises Pvt Ltd.
Phagwara (Punjab)
First of its Kind

Dear Rajen,

Greetings! You are just a wonder man. Words fail me to express my joy and astonishment the way you have completed Twelve years of SME WORLD.

Creating a specialized magazine to cater to Small and Medium Enterprises was not only innovative idea but also a need of the hour to provide factual fact sheet of challenges faced by these enterprises. The kind of in-depth study you did by digging out all government policies, and ensuring that these reach most such enterprises, is no mean a task.

SME WORLD was first of its kind to tell the young entrepreneurs as to what can be done to improve their working conditions. It also provided a lot of information about the various funding sources and the institutions which provide training to Small and Medium Entrepreneurs.

You interviewed several heads of these enterprises and understood the difficulties they faced. All that glitters is not gold they had their sad experiences in dealing with the governmental departments.

You carried the reactions of these people and placed them before the government officials. You covered a large number of Seminars and Conferences on the subject not only in Capital but in other States and sometimes in other countries also.

It is not easy to bring out a magazine spending money from your own pocket and with hardly any advertising support. You had no god father, except your vast experience and a determination to see this venture through.

“Strength doesn’t come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable Will” – M.K. Gandhi

I knew you as a first rate journalist and a professional engaged by several organizations to bring out publication for them. That was not difficult as you had not to struggle for money to print. I met you when you were bringing out a in-house magazine for All India Manufacturers Organisation.

“Persistence and resilience only comes from having been given a chance to work through difficult periods” – Gever Tulley

You started this venture and soon you were recognized by the NSIC. You gave extensive coverage to their programs and underlined the training they were imparting to SMEs. Bringing out successive issues without advertising support is virtually impossible.

“When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves of courage and resilience we did not know we had. And it is only when we are faced with failure do we realize that those resources were always there with in us. We only need to find them and move on with our lives” - A P J Abdul Kalam

It is truly remarkable that you rose to the occasion and ensured that publication must go on. Managing a Office, collecting news, interviewing people, composing and editing articles, finding capable contributors then sending for printing and finally timely dispatch gives steeples nights and twenty four hours planning for next issue.

You received several Awards and honours for your effort but to run a magazine you need money also. Engage staff and find correspondents in different States require tons of money. How you managed God only knows.

You went on line and even during global pandemic SME World was always out in time.

“When do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back again” – Nelson Mandela

Your philosophy as I see is what J.K. Rowling said “Rock bottom became the solid foundation in which I built my life”

Dear Rajen Healthiest Congratulations for this great success.

Dr Vinod Sethi
Secretary General
Capital Foundation Society
Foundation House, K-1, Lajpat Nagar-III,
New Delhi-110024

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A Piece of Wisdom

Dear Mr. Kumar,

Please accept my heartiest felicitations on the 12th anniversary of your distinguished magazine SME World that has traversed through topsy-turvy terrains of the cutthroat competitive realms of business and industry journalism and has managed to carve out a niche of its own under your dynamic, far-sighted and agile stewardship. I avail this occasion to extend my deep appreciation for the e-magazine under your captaincy to bring forward various facets of news, stories and opinions from the world of small and medium enterprises to the forefront. Touched by your graciousness, it gives me a privilege to highlight that SMEs have started getting their due place of honor through your magazine.

As an avid reader, every issue of your esteemed magazine
has been a piece of wisdom, knowledge and brilliance to me and I can't believe that it's already been 12 years since you started the magazine and pleased to say that magazine has extensively and seasonally been transformed, which I call as a testimony to your synergetic hard work, passion and zeal. I am equally overwhelmed to observe your enthusiastic dedication still in the continuum. It is a good fortune that got me closer to your good self and I have been benefited by reading your e-magazine. I have known you since quite a long and your intellectual aura has been distinctly mirrored through your writings. As a Chief Editor, your positive attitude is a reflection of your spirit of determination, proficiency and continuous diligence. Through your sobered magazine, our articles have spanned outreach to various members and stakeholders and our association with SME World since years has been illuminated with synergy, positivity, and intellectual discourse.

I have admired the way you have always dealt with vexing issues concerning SMEs through your columns and appreciate the coverage accorded to predominantly highlight concerns, challenges and prospects of the sector constructively. With your commendable hard work and passion, you have already benefited a large outreach including policy makers, academia, institutions and youth, etc, giving them an upbeat of contemporary coverage. The articles that your organization contemplates are quite illuminating and keep readers updated with current and future trends in small, medium and micro enterprises. Right from local to global, we have access to news and greatly thank you for your earnest endeavors. Through the columns of your reputed magazine, you are delivering a message that even SMEs have the potential to contribute to India's socio-economic growth story and hearing their voice is indispensable given that they are a lifeline to roughly one-third of the population we cannot afford to leave behind.

You have done such a wonderful job giving us a true magazine to enjoy holistic understanding of the SME industry and I strongly believe that with such reasoned and thought out articles, readers and audience stay connected, refreshed and enlivened. You have surely set a foundation stone with a fulfilling mandate and glad your good self is maintaining the integrity of the magazine till date and wish you best of luck for future endeavors. I would like to express my thanks in this regard and I hope to witness good articles coming in the near future.

Regards,

Dr. Arvind Kumar
Founder & President
India Water Foundation

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Great news and achievement, I agree the quality has been consistently good, production and layout slick and attractive, best of course is the fact that the contents have never been boring. Kudos to the editorial team! Lively and innovative subjects, editorial and the last word, superb. I have always enjoyed reading the interviews. Wish you all success

Brij Khandelwal
Veteran Journalist, Agra

Enriching Contents

I had just started my entrepreneurial journey in 2010 and was introduced to SME WORLD by a friend. I must say the magazine enriched my knowledge and made things easy for me. It helped to move to the next level learning profusely from the enriching and informative contents. It is a matter of great pride for the Team SME WORLD to have completed eventful 12 years. It's a great achievement. I am personally impressed by its Editor Rajen Kumar for his thorough professionalism. He was always helping whenever I contacted him.

Dr. Ashok Pandya
Bangalore

Dedication & Commitment

SME WORLD is a magazine dedicated to voice the issues and concerns of the micro, small and medium enterprises. I have seen Mr. Rajen Kumar single handedly working for the benefit of this sector since August 2008. I thank his dedication and commitment to the industry. He has been travelling widely to understand the problems and issues faced by the sector and bringing them to the notice of the concerned authorities and stakeholders. Mr. Rajen also brought the ideas from outside the country and shared the expertise and afforded exposure to the Indian MSMEs. He has also nurtured, guided and supported many SMEs to grow to the next level. I loved his Last Word where he used to highlight the humanity aspects of life and social concerns. I must also appreciate the learned contributors who have added to the knowledge base of the magazine. I wish Rajen a very happy, active and healthy life. Best wishes for his future endeavors.

Prof. Aswath M U
Principal
Bangalore Institute of Technology
Bengaluru-560004
Indian toymakers have pledged to stand firm to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for India to become a global hub for toy manufacturing. Under the All India Toys Federation (AITF), toy retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers nationwide hope to rise above the current economic difficulties to achieve this goal.

"We are happy and encouraged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking about the toy industry. PM Modi said India should become the global hub for toy manufacturing, but it would take some more time to achieve that", said Abdullah Sharif, Vice President of All India Toys Federation (AITF).

Toys promote life-skills
PM Modi had shared this vision in the latest edition of Mann Ki Baat, a monthly public monologue dedicated to the country. The episode, which aired on Sunday, August 30, saw him acknowledge the importance of the sector and its dedicated workforce. "India is home to several toy clusters and thousands of artisans who produce indigenous toys. These toys don't only have cultural connect, but also help build psycho-motor and life-skills among children at an early age," said PM Modi.

The Indian toy industry is currently struggling with a large-scale slump in demand and issues stemming from economic uncertainties. The current COVID-19 pandemic caused a shortage in the supply of toys to the Indian market.

"We also hope that the government gives us some more time to gain a certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), a requirement from today, September 1. For this, we need an additional 18-24 months to ensure that all micro, small, and medium toy enterprises can rise to this challenge," Sharif added.

From September 1, all toy manufacturers and importers need a valid BIS licence to continue to manufacture and import new toys. The AITF is apprehensive that toy MSMEs, facing a financial crunch, would not be able to adhere to these standards right away.

Need for Testing Labs
"We fear that such measures can hinder PM Modi's vision, causing smaller units to shut down. We'd be left with only big MNCs, who will sell expensive branded toys in their store chains," Sharif said.

The federation has proposed a Scheme II for toys. "In such a scheme, we request BIS accredited labs to test our goods up to BIS standards rather than leaving us to set up such labs on our own. We also need an overhaul in terms of investments in tooling, molds, and new talent in toy design and development."

"Very few domestic and nearly none of the foreign toy manufacturers have been able to apply for the required BIS certification, due to multiple clauses. The standards include quality requirements, the onus to set up testing labs, and the process's time-consuming length. Collaborating with existing labs will help them focus on building a toy arsenal for the depleted Indian market."

The current process to get a BIS certification is a time-consuming process, where manufacturers need to wait for 120 days. For foreign manufacturers, this time frame goes up to 180 days.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted India's manufacturing strength at all levels, including the toy industry. Local and international travel restrictions have put curbs on the movement of workers, resources, and finished products at all levels, especially for toymakers.

The new quality controls also hold against the infrastructure realities of this struggling sector. This could lead to a scarcity of toys and impact the livelihoods of everyone involved - traders, wholesalers, shopkeepers, whole-sellers, commission agents, distributors, and their employees.
What is the basic concept behind launching 'Excalibre' and how far it has succeeded in its objective?

Excalibre Inc approach is tailored closely to the needs, spirit and existing practices of the organization that leans itself to change, which isn't merely a layer of new behaviors. It's a fundamental shift in perspective, a new spirit that animates the hearts and minds of employee, eventually becoming the core DNA of the corporation.

Excalibre Inc unique methodology confronts and addresses the following issues by generating solutions that are implementable across with ease.

- What are the specific issues and what stands in the way and how can those obstacles be overcome?
- How can a sense of alignment across, divisional, geographical or functional lines be generated?
By observing man as an essentially evolutionary being, Excalibre Inc Experience Series initiative, focuses back his relationship to the universe - enabling him to resolve his material concerns, along with achieving his evolutionary aspirations, in simple actionable steps.

- How do perceptions of others in the organization – managers, executives, colleagues, or staff- affect their ability to perform?
- Measuring the role of individual contribution for achievement of the organizational objectives.

By exploring these and similar issues, participants gain insight into their culture and practices, as well as freedom to act in ways that depart from established assumptions or norms.

They tend to gain the ability to continue this learning and exploration on their own – to innovate and act in response to a changing environ – not merely to follow an established path or wait for others to lead the way.

At Excalibre Inc, we assist to fructify the vision, mission and values of the company. Individuals integrate the company's values and standards within everyday practices, into their own work environ.

**Our journey so far:**

- Incepted in 2002, till date facilitated over 5.6 million man-hours in consulting space with apex corporations, 14 industries, across 12 management levels.
- Effected business re-engineering and restructuring on inducing productivity enhancement increasing ROI, Identifying New Business Opportunities with 20+ SMES's across 8 Industries, pan globe.
- Coached and mentored students and academia for over 1.8 million man hours.
- Preferred coach for 16+ industries, including Automotive, Insurance, Retail, EOU's, Financial Services, Banking, Education, Engineering, Manufacturing, IT & ITES, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, Reality, Infrastructure, Oil, Gas and Power.
- Knowledge partner with apex business forums like SHRM, WASME, Institute of Directors, SME World, DMA, JKEDI and Assocham.

**What is Excalibre Inc Experience Series?**

Excalibre Inc Experience helps to expand comfort zone - revisit, redefine innate competencies, improve capabilities- resulting in increasing capacities, to deliver faster and better. It creates a template wherein one imbibes better techniques, processes, to inculcate excellence across spectrum.

**Take home include:**

- Actualising their slated vision, through process centricity, coupled with implementing checks and balances, while creating evolving and measurable SOP's.
- New tools, skills and mind set to drive strategy and innovation across zones.
- Defining CEO role in business model reinvention – manage the present, selectively forgetting the past thereby creating the desired future.
- Being a designer – design a disciplined approach to searching, identifying and capturing value.
- Being a rebel with a cause, thereby designing a better business – connecting innovation, business and strategy
- Profit first- transforming your business from a cash eating monster to a money making machine.
- Nailing the job with a focussed, compelling customer value proposition.

- Who do we listen to, who we don't and why.

At Excalibre Inc Experience Series you will come away with a changed paradigm about yourself. Through a process of self-discovery and changed perceptions you WILL become a more confident and powerful personality.

**Please elaborate your findings on the human psychology.**

Excalibre Inc Experience Series recognizes that man is not just so many vials of chemicals fortuitously combined into a remarkable stimulus- response machine. At Excalibre, we view man, as a thinking, and doing being with native capabilities- which certainly can be improved far beyond on a continuum basis.

Empirical studies have clearly demonstrated that the man's decline is directly linked to his degree of denial of his evolutionary nature, his cessation to live with moral values- trust, honesty, integrity etc.

By observing man as an essentially evolutionary being, Excalibre Inc Experience Series initiative, focuses back his relationship to the universe - enabling him to resolve his material concerns, along with achieving his evolutionary aspirations, in simple actionable steps.

Thus, Excalibre Inc Experience is an improvement over any earlier practice in terms of what it can actually do to help man. Problems of drug, education, morals, relationships, trust and other issues- need to be addressed with solutions that inhibit their further growth.

**Matters affecting us most intimately:**

- concerns with one self, family, friends, and associates need to be better understood first, consequently resolved in totality, for the benefit of all concerned.
At Excalibre Inc Experience we assist to fructify vision, mission and values of the company into the life for each employee. Individuals integrate the company’s, personal values and standards within everyday practices, into their own work environ.

This initiative isn’t limited to working professionals, it encompasses all across spectrum, starting from child, to adolescent, to youth, adult and senior ages, across genders, communities, ethnicities, culture.

Excalibre Inc Experience - Unique Approach of its Facilitations

Excalibre Inc Experience approach aims to induce a fundamental shift in the existing perspective, inculcate a new spirit that animates the hearts and minds of individuals, employees, and takes root across spectrum.

Excalibre’s Inc unique methodology confronts and addresses the following issues, by generating solutions that are implementable, across with ease.

Organizations- Managing Time, Talent and Energy

- What are the specific issues, what stands in the way and how can those obstacles be overcome.
- How can a sense of alignment across, divisional, geographical or functional lines be generated?
- How do perceptions of others in the organization – mangers, executives, colleagues, or staff- affect their ability to perform?
- What Role does individual contribution; contribute to the long – term strategies of the team play?
- Simplifying the operating model. Aim for inspiration not just engagement.
- Simplicity – the new competitive advantage in a world of more, better and faster.
- Individuals- saying yes to your potential
- Using time – get ready to use your and peoples time effectively, productively
- Don’t sweat the small stuff- stop letting the little things in life, drive you crazy.
- Guarding the door- negative people are expensive.
- Speaking into existence- verbalizing your future.
- Believe it before you see it- Faith in what and where I begin.
- Do it anyway in the now - persistence.
- The great energy release- What should I be doing.
- Change your questions to change your life.

By exploring these and similar issues, participants gain insight into their culture and practices, as well as freedom to act in ways that depart from established assumptions or norms. They gain the ability to continue this learning and exploration on their own – to innovate and act in response to a changing environ – not merely to follow an established path or wait for others to lead the way.

At Excalibre Inc Experience- we assist to fructify vision, mission and values of the company into the life for each employee. Individuals integrate the company’s, personal values and standards within everyday practices, into their own work environ.

Not content with understanding or compliance, Excalibre’s consulting arm, works to encourage people’s natural creativity and commitment in the service of short and long term strategic goals.

Result: Most individuals are better able to maintain a clear line of sight from their immediate job to the corporation’s over all vision.

They are able to situate themselves squarely within this big picture, to operate from the company’s values, and to grasp how their own contribution directly affects the ability of their corporation, to address the challenges of the future.

Eventually participants observe and explore new possibilities for effective action, achieve higher standards of excellence, and act beyond the existing limits.

Please enumerate the ethos, underlying principles at Excalibre.

Aim at Excalibre is to enhance human transformation by ‘path re-defining solutions’ to boost returns on value creation measures:

- Aim to spark a new intellectual capital by sharing ideas positioned at an angle to conventional thought, in short, effect meaningful steps, that disturb the present, in the service of a better future
- Interfaces address thoughtful leaders, executives and entrepreneurs, across spectrum who are steadfast and committed to responsible change.

Excalibre your thinking partner -- who comes alongside you, providing clarity and focus needed to you to make effective people and product decisions.

A Thinking Partner shares tools that enable you to build better relationships with your team, customers, and stake holders, while working with you to develop effective and integrative leaders.

A Thinking Partner which helps you to GROW and fosters Integrative leadership.

Fosters Integrative Leadership

For Integrative leaders, leadership is more than just vision and strategy. It is not only about budgets, numbers; cause at its root is all about people-what fuels them. It is based on a deep appreciation of the needs we all share; the need to be heard, cared for, valued, respected. He is focused on
developing a successful person in business and not just a successful businessperson.

Integrative leader comes from a position of authenticity. One cannot fake interest, cause to be effective, one needs to be genuine. This requires a willingness to call upon traits that often are not aligned with the common view of a business leader. But common leadership skills will not achieve uncommon results, integrative leadership will!

Traits include compassion, vulnerability and humility. The critical ingredient to mix with those traits is presence. There is no greater way to demonstrate to an employee that they are heard, cared for, valued, respected, than to offer 100% of your attention and to listen fully.

Which other areas does Excalibre Inc add value?

Additional spaces where Excalibre Inc Experience Series initiatives make a constructive and practical difference are:

- A child, who cannot read well, lagging behind in the class; this initiative can help him dispense with a liability that would otherwise affect him, adversely, for his entire life.

- Your friend and her spouse have a serious relationship issue. One can shrug shoulders and state that 50% of all marriages end in divorce anyway. But does that relieve any part of the anguish that these people you care are going through. Well with this initiative, many relationships not only have been saved but strengthened further.

- A neighbour is having trouble with his business- failure would mean severe hardships for him and his folks. Can a condition like this be turned around, or is it inevitable that most small businesses fail each year, year after year. This series can raise his abilities in all aspects of his life, increasing his awareness, certainty and knowledge. Such a man would be better equipped to leap frog his business challenges more deftly and effectively.

- Someone you know has been arrested for drug usage, alcohol, ego busts, rebellion, violent aggressive defensive behaviour. Reflect – is he doomed for life – fit only to be in and out of rehab centres or could you do something constructive for him, such that he gets off his drugs for good. Well, now you have an option.

- It’s from the individual problems of men and women that the larger concerns of the world grow: drugs, crime, environment, war, hatred, economy and others. Each stems from the individuals who dealt unsuccessfully, with a greater or lesser degree, with different aspects of his living.

What methodologies and processes are followed at Excalibre Inc Experience series?

At Excalibre Inc Experience Series, emphasis is on application of exact methodologies in order to bring about change in the condition of an individual’s life. Its aim is to put a person into a condition where he can be more self-determined about leading a happier and a more fulfiller life.

Excalibre Inc Experience Series does not require one to change his beliefs or convictions. Required only is to apply the information underlined, shared, and observe oneself, whether or not it works for him. You now can do more good not only for yourself, but also for those around you—themselves experiencing enormous personal satisfaction.

During these series, you will gain those invaluable tools that you can use as per situational requirement. Only need to understand the usage, efficacy of these tools, techniques, and tactics. And once you are convinced about their usefulness, you certainly would touch, move and inspire others.

And when enough people have used them as their problem solvers to their pressing issues, elevation of the society to a higher plain is simply a natural extension. Thus a new civilization would evolve, based on trust, decency, honesty and tolerance - a new way of corporate governance.

Flip side: by knowing these tools, techniques, tactics, and not using them would be like pouring water into the sand, more so when the man next door is dying of thirst. It is an observable fact that nothing stays the same for long.
Successful business magnets, progressive thinkers, people of substance, have dreamt of an inclusive world, where each one can revisit his inherent potential, create, achieve new fulfilling benchmarks, savouring a meaningful existence, through an inclusive co-existence - thereby creating institutions of excellence - not limiting to being stand alone islands.

Enumerate the specific benefits for Business, Progressive thinkers and First generation entrepreneurs, from this series.

Business executives and progressive thinkers - the new men - are at cross roads presently. As doing beings they either can begin to move upward towards a more fulfilling age or continue to descent into a new dark age of slavery to mechanistic principles- space where individuality and freedom are lost.

We are all at the threshold of creating something new, something more vibrant, incredible, and practical - an opportunity not existed before. Successful business magnets, progressive thinkers, people of substance, have dreamt of an inclusive world, where each one can revisit his inherent potential, create, achieve new fulfilling benchmarks, savouring a meaningful existence, through an inclusive co-existence - thereby creating institutions of excellence - not limiting to being stand alone islands.

Inspiring generalized, connected leadership is more imperative, required and worthy today, than of creating individualized stand alone leaders.

Small and Medium Business are catalysts of change - like nature's pipeline, they hydrate the whole business space, dishing out quality products while harnessing better, the local flavours.

Do you hand hold and be a resolute guide in key spheres or you share only an overview. Are you a partner or simply a consultant whose expanse is limited to advising, not doing along side?

Excalibre Inc Experience Series is steadfast in hand holding, guiding and being a partner with them; wherein together we create a better, robust enterprise whose edifies hinge on:

- Business Advisory - Strategic Vision, Plan and Implement and Human Resources
- Work Force Mobilization - Create interlocked & engaged teams –address cultural diversity, improve engagement and retention levels
- Leadership Series - Executive Coaching, Training and Mentoring – Evolve emerging Leadership
- Break through Skills Enhancement Series – Optimize Productivity - improve ROI
- Executive Excellence Series - Address Scalability Challenges, Identify New Business Opportunities and Change Management
- Diversity Empowerment Series - Inducing a radical transformation for quantum leap
- Imbibing sustainability, scalability and measurability-measure what matters.
- Identifying new business opportunities.
- Creating institutions of excellence across spectrum.

Remember wisdom is for any man who chooses to reach for it.

Which industries, associations and management forums has Excalibre Inc impacted till date?

- Restructured a perennial loss making State Corporation into profit making, within 24 months.
- Improved employee engagement levels by an average of 35% in client organizations
- Designed a sales selection system resulting in a 42% increase in sales volume
- Created over 1200 + student entrepreneurs in terrorism affected State of Jammu and Kashmir
- Facilitated over 5.6 million man-hours in consulting space with apex corporations, across 18 management levels and at 23+ locations
- Coached and mentored emerging leadership at corporations, students and academia for over 1.8 million man hours
- Proficiently served clients in 16+ industries, including automotive, insurance, retail, EOUs, financial services, banking, education, engineering, manufacturing, IT & ITES, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, Reality, Infrastructure, oil, gas and power.
- Facilitated coaching, Mentoring, Training of over 2,980+ resource personnel, in Senior Management, 7,944 in Middle Management and 8,932 personnel in Junior Management; amongst 32 apex enterprises.

What will be your advice to the budding professionals?

Professional is a change agent – one who looks beyond and explores options to effect a great work. An effective professional can
consider the following steps in case he is steadfast to transit from good to great and be great by choice.

- Change before it's too late- be ready and eager to rewrite your agenda.
- Look reality in the eye and don't flinch.
- Managing less is managing better.
- Create a culture and then spread it.
- Go for a quantum leap.
- Listen to the people who actually do the work.
- Aim for speed, simplicity and self confidence.

What is the next level for Excalibre?

Human evolution index, Productivity enhancement, getting more from less, speed and agility to perform under trying environs is the new normal and in such a dynamic, volatile and fast paced environ, thinking and doing from the feet is the new normal. Gone are the days when one had the luxury of picking up the gun, aiming and then shooting – today its picking the gun, shooting the bulls eyes and then aim. The new normal for Excalibre is helping people discover their inherent potential whereby they create awe-inspiring benchmarks across all domains.

Business Space – Professionals and entrepreneurs

- Understanding the problem of more- increasing top line versus strengthen bottom line.
- It's a ground war- not just an air war.
- Simplicity – the critical differentiator.

- Getting equipped better in this age of unreason.
- Creating Individualized Corporation.
- Measure what Matters – simple ideas to drive 10X growth.
- Transiting from Good to Great and be great by choice.
- Growing slower to scale faster and better.
- Cutting cognitive load and deal with necessary complexity.
- Connect people and cascade excellence: using social bonds to speed the right mindset.

Action Points:

Principle driver at Excalibre Inc is empathy – connecting with others – where in intense, meaningful interfaces are constructed with people who want to effect quantum lap in their domains. For us here, size and scale aren't the principal drivers – its unhindered passion, unbridled vision, evolving weird solutions for future challenges that excite us more. We firmly believe that it's not the big that eats the small; it's the fast that eats the slow.

From 5 countries, 16 industries, we are geared up to expand to 20 countries, 25 industries in the next 30 months and are still counting.

About K S Ahluwalia- Executive Coach and Mentor at Excalibre.

K.S. Ahluwalia has over 30 years of business experience across sales, operations, logistic and retail, publishing, consulting and management roles. Experienced in organization development consultant with primary expertise in leadership assessment, skills enhancement and performance management. He is an expert in directing and providing consulting services in areas such as: executive assessment, career transition, change management, leadership development, succession management, and business restructuring. Challenges clients to design and implement innovative practices and helps clients solve the most difficult challenges standing in the way of making their numbers by creating innovative go-to-market strategies. Blends his background in consulting, sales to deliver a detailed analytical solution for his clients to help them make their numbers.

He bring a vast coaching experience having worked with clients to uncover evidence and determine actionable insights for consistent growth by turn visioning into strategy, strategy into executable roadmaps, and roadmaps into measurable results. He helps primarily new and under-performing leaders to gain a better understanding of their strengths and developmental needs based on formal assessment tools. Ahluwalia extensively interfaced with academia and students in professional institutions, assists in transforming them in arenas of goal setting, relationship management and adolescence challenges and has assisted state governments inculcating entrepreneurship and education amongst the students and devised strategies for evolution of Small and Medium Enterprises.

He is a preferred knowledge partner at Institute of Directors, ASSOCHAM, SHRM, SME World, JKEDI, IECCI, member of All India Management Association, Delhi Management Association, Noida Management Association, National HRD Network, Indus Valley Entrepreneurs, fora 2020 etc. He can be reached at ks.ahluwalia@yahoo.com/
By 2030, we have our goals like ensuring that all girls and boys complete their free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and so on. Covid-19 pandemic has rightly called for 'education overhaul' to meet contemporary challenges and find answers to our concerns and streamline learning outcomes towards a qualitative paradigm of learning. The policy can only be realized through convergence and collaboration implemented by the Centre, State, Civil Society Organizations' and other stakeholders against the backdrop of SDG 2030 realization.

Echoing a new vision of sabka saath, NEP 2020 has the potential to link social, educational and environmental indicators with forward and backward linkages. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and contribute to nation-building in long term and a storehouse of vision for people, planet and a vehicle to deliver the promises of 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat'. Reflecting a New India, the policy is set to be a landmark in India's history of education, says Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India.

In an interview to The Print, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal said 'NEP will be implemented uniformly across all schools and ensure 6% of India's GDP is spent on education'. Amplifying and augmenting foundational literacy is a win-win situation for NEP has the potential to create more equal access and bring into foray more children into learning mode. Kinder-garden school and play-schools finally come within the ambit of formal education. Significant move especially for anganwadi schools to be encompassed into the formal educational system, which otherwise were left behind. The higher secondary school system is revamped to incorporate multi-disciplinary subjects from the realm of arts and science with flexibility in choosing subjects of personal interest resulting in diverse and emotional learning, critical problem solving approach.

Undoubtedly, during the past three decades, we have witnessed monumental changes in the field of education, totally transforming our way of living, sharing of knowledge, learning outcomes and its technology dissemination. Innovation to blur distinction between arts and science subjects is a long overhaul and well appreciated. Opening Indian education, higher education to foreign learning is a credible step to bring best practices, exchange knowledge and resources through a multi-channel exercise. This shall bring the top global universities including Yale, Harvard, MIT, Cambridge etc. to make a foray into Indian education system promoting access to foundational, transferable and present day skills for youth inside and outside formal education systems.

**As savior of India's Demographic Dividend**

However, as a 2019 report, 'Reviving Higher Education in India', by the Brookings Institution, a US-based think tank, highlighted, despite heading towards a “massification” of higher education, India lagged behind in the quality and distribution of higher education. To make India a better place and world-class knowledge power, where does the elements of excellence and
An analysis of the first 10 years since this phase shows how such a shift in the population structure can propel growth because Japan grew in double digits with growth rate above 8%. NEP is a golden opportunity for India to churn the labor force by leveraging the benefits of working age population with right entrepreneurial skills.

In many ways, India's demographics are the envy of the world and the working-age population is now increasing because of rapidly changing population graph. As populations in countries such as China, US, and Japan is getting older, India's population is getting younger. Japan was among the first major economies to experience rapid growth because of changing population structure with its demographic-dividend phase lasting from 1964 to 2004. An analysis of the first 10 years since this phase shows how such a shift in the population structure can propel growth because Japan grew in double digits with growth rate above 8%. NEP is a golden opportunity for India to churn the labor force by leveraging the benefits of working age population with right entrepreneurial skills.

**When Concurrent list holds Education**

States have raised concerns over three language formula and apprehensions raised over hindi as medium of communicating language. Critics have raised apprehension on mother tongue/regional language at primary levels and fear that adoption of English in advanced class shall appear a bane, especially for children from rural background. Different state boards have different mode of teaching and syllabus and have seen NEP as infringement to their educational policies. However, NEP must address these concerns through digital infrastructure and make it available to the rural school population and Governments can provide smart phones and telecom giants like Airtel, Jio, Idea can look forward to provide free internet access to EWS post verification. The government must aim to provide teachers, educators, school authorities and caregivers access to ICT platforms and train them in the dissemination of learning materials. With plans to set up a new autonomous body called National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to oversee the capacity building, develop e-content and provide a platform for educational institutes and stakeholders to share best practices, the forum should hold the vital link to bridge the digital divide and ensure a wider reach of online education in inaccessible areas of India.

The privilege of Education resides in commitment to diverse & qualitative learning and that encompass social-economical-ecological perspectives fostering empowerment, efficient resource management and protecting our natural environment. It is, however, important to note that this policy alone cannot push India's growth story. There are many other factors to be incorporated if the policy stands to link with different missions and goals like education, nutrition, health, skills, environment, etc with development enwrapped with linkages with goals and targets of SDGs 2030. Talk about stress and mental health, counseling about depression and exam tension should be incorporated in education curriculum and making them speak and hear...
policy alone cannot push India’s growth story. There are many other factors to be incorporated if the policy stands to link with different missions and goals like education, nutrition, health, skills, environment, etc with development enveloped with linkages with goals and targets of SDGs 2030. Talk about stress and mental health, counseling about depression and exam tension should be incorporated in education curriculum and making them speak and hear. Learning space shall invite NGOs & CSR wings of organizations to give thrust to inclusive and holistic education in India to come together to provide innovative pedagogy, user-friendly educational devices, and create an enabling environment. Calling NEP as India-centric education policy since Independence, Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Minister of Education has highlighted that the policy has room for cultural values and inventions, for knowledge and science, for education and the Policy would lay the foundations for a new and prosperous India. Hopefully, the policy opens window of opportunities in both theory as well as practical implementation.

**Way Forward**

COVID-19 has taken a hard colossal hit with unprecedented consequences on our educational learning. With Winston Churchill is credited with the saying, “Never let a good crisis go to waste” here, we find this time to opportune the prospects to make inroads to qualitative learning and incorporate the vision of 21st century education needs, but this requires ‘whole-of-society’ approach with a stroke of self-reliance, inclusivity and equity. Excellence by making solution oriented contributions to society at large should be the essence of NEP. Critical learning objectives and analysis is to be promoted in place of rote learning to influence mindsets and enhance problem solving skills and decision making. In the spirit of enriching education, policy is quite noble in thought in making nucleus of India’s growth story and unlocking the prospects of incubating an innovation based education towards nourishing the GenX of our 21st century.

**About Dr. Arvind Kumar**

Dr. Arvind Kumar, a renowned environmentalist is President and Founder of India Water Foundation (Special Consultative Status with UN-ECOSOC, Observer Status Governing Body of UNEA, Observer Status with UNFCCC, Observer Status with UNCCD, member of World Water Council (WWC) and CTCN membership for Southern Asia), a non-profit organization and think tank established for generating a heightened public awareness at national level in India and sub-regional level in Asia, regarding water and its impact on human health, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

He is also Governor on Board of Governors of the World Water Council and specializes in ecosystem-based adaptation, water-energy-food nexus, with specific emphasis on inter-linkages between water, environment and SDGs. He is the lead author of publication with SAC Dhaka titled “SAARC Outlook on Water-Energy-Food Nexus in SAARC Region” published in December 2015 and has published over 400 plus research articles, Ph.D. Defense Studies. He has authored the book 'Eco-System Based Adaptation' published by Elsevier.

He is member of the ‘National Wetlands Committee, MoEF&CC, GOI, member Technical Advisory Committee for India’s Third National Communication and Biennial Update Reports to UNFCCC, member of the Meghalaya State Water Resources Council and Meghalaya council for Environment, Sustainable Development, recently launched “Sikkim Comprehensive Water Resources Plan” at Gangtok. As a member of World Water Council’s Taskforce on Transversality, he presents key strategies in water related areas for the perusal of water security, mainstream water related agendas and share practices in various policy initiatives/ instruments of WWC.

He is conferred with the Achievers Award for his exemplary contribution and commitment for protecting environment by India Eye IHRO in collaboration with UNIC for India & Bhutan on the occasion of World Environment Day 2017 in New Delhi. Under his dynamic leadership, India Water Foundation has, consecutively for two years 2017-18 and 2018-19, won the Water Digest Water Award under the Category “BEST WATER NGO - WATER EDUCATION and Best NGO Water and Sanitation.
In sync with the Prime Minister and RBI Governor's clarion call to provide credit/loans to the financially excluded and the unbanked, VN Finance, a tech-enabled NBFC, has announced small ticket loan offerings – 'Shramik Loan' and 'Rozgar Loan' for migrant workers and financially excluded small business men and women on the eve of Independence Day 2020. In the aftermath of Covid-19 and the problems faced by lakhs of people, VN Finance's approach is to deploy 24X7 service and disburse loans within a day with the least number of documents and hassle-free interaction using technology.

The ticket size of the loan starts from Rs. 25,000 onwards. Those people, who need unsecured loans and have no security or no existing assets, can directly (or through intermediaries) approach VN Finance and share their creditworthiness and repayment capacity. They will get the funds at the best of terms to achieve their dreams.

Vision

VN Finance also offers Secured Loans such as Loan Against Property, Loans against Gold Jewellery and Loans against Inventories. Every business needs ongoing working capital and this requirement keeps increasing with the growth of business. VN Finance's professional team fully understands business needs and provides funding against the goods and inventories already lying in the shops/godown. The small business owner just needs to furnish the inventory list, its value and their needs.

Mohit Kakkad, Director & Founder, VN Finance, said, “We stand committed to our vision of changing the society by helping people to follow the dreams by easy and quick financing. We are focusing on the segments who cannot afford to wait and cannot meet or understand the complex and time-consuming processes of conventional lenders. We work tirelessly to develop delivery mechanisms with technology to make our disbursal process easy, efficient and widespread. We plan to expand aggressively in Mumbai MMR region, Maharashtra State and gradually across India.”

VN Finance is also developing a network of banking intermediaries, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), NGOs and correspondents who can help facilitate credit to migrant workers, unbanked and financially deprived business men and women. Since the target segment is not necessarily highly literate and educated in technology, VN Finance is using technology to help them and the financial intermediaries in the easiest of ways.

Mohit Kakkad firmly believes that if India has to achieve financial inclusion in the true sense, NBFCs such as VN Finance have to play a significant role in enhancing financial literacy, seeking minimal collateral, shorter processing time and building distribution network while grappling with lack of credit history, absence of formal identity, cyclical income and paper work.

About VN Finance

VN Finance Pvt. Ltd.(VNF) is an innovative financial company incorporated in March 2019 as a Non-Deposit taking NBFC (ND). The company is founded by 31-year old Mohit Kakkad with a vision to use technology to provide finance to hitherto unbanked section of society. The company is mainly engaged is providing the small and medium size ticket loans on secured and unsecured basis. Unsecured loans are being provided based on credit worthiness and repayment capacity of the borrowers. The senior management of the company consists of senior leaders from banking industry and mentored by some of the highly qualified professionals. VN Finance has put in place an interest rate policy, adopted by the Board, taking into account relevant factors such as, cost of funds, margin and risk premium, etc and determine the rate of interest to be charged for loans. It has a robust KYV Policy, Fair Practices Code and Corporate Governance Policy.
It took me some time to realize that running a self-funded start-up business is not a sprint but a mountain-trail marathon. The learning curve is steep and constant. Over time, the initial work-pressure and stretch gave way to passion! Having moulded myself with continuous learning on the job, five years on, I know no other way!

Don't think twice, it's all right!”, Bob Dylan's words were ringing in my head as I took the plunge into entrepreneurship, five years ago when I co-founded Rite KnowledgeLabs. Coming from a business family, it seemed like a 'nutshell evolution'. My father is a second-generation businessman. Our dinner conversations while growing up were mostly around business and commerce. Having studied engineering with a specialization in plastics and like most job-ready young professionals, I dipped my toes in the corporate world as a software engineer. However, my last job before starting this venture, at Tech Mahindra, firmed my business dreams. From Java programming, I had moved to marketing and writing content. That's when the power of content in building corporate trust, reputation and admiration dawned on me.

Once the idea had taken root in me, starting my own company felt like a natural progression. We did a rain check on our career and life goals, and dived into the business headlong. I took my learning from being a plastics engineer to a software programmer to marketing communications and rolled it all into my new-found passion.
My new-found passion
I saw a genuine need gap in bespoke content development; in-house marketing & communications teams struggled for lack of specialized content expertise and external agencies were better equipped to either amplify or carry the message to the external world. Pure-play content focused agencies were missing and are still rare. And, that's when we thought of starting Rite KnowledgeLabs. We took the risk and with good wishes from our peers and friends, we started with a small set of customers. We registered the entity, furnished the office sparsely, put up a sign on the door and got rolling.

It took me some time to realize that running a self-funded start-up business is not a sprint but a mountain-trail marathon. The learning curve is steep and constant. Over time, the initial work-pressure and stretch gave way to passion! Having moulded myself with continuous learning on the job, five years on, I know no other way!

In a niche business like ours, talent and putting together the 'rite' team has been most challenging; it is like a chicken and egg situation – do you wait to hire the right candidate, or do you let the business wait till you find the right fit? In service and people-oriented businesses, our biggest challenge has been ensuring that growth and size don't come with mediocrity. The ability to continue and grow our customers has made us believe that a growth-mindset is a must, but a 'growth-at-any-cost-mindset' can be harmful. I often find that women hold themselves back from adopting a growth-mindset. They hold themselves back when taking up challenging or leadership roles and positions. They often associate these roles with emulating qualities of aggression and assertiveness seen in men. I believe, being authentic, staying true to yourself and creating your own leadership style is the key. People will then look at you with a sense of professional equality and not professional politeness.

For our tribe to grow and make a mark, women should break away from limiting beliefs and planning for growth – be it in a job or a business. From my experience, I can say, a sound support system at home is non-negotiable. My family's encouragement and support have ensured that I can devote quality time to my enterprise as well my two kids – a teenage daughter and a younger son. I don't let conflicting thoughts of neglecting my family for the enterprise come to my mind. Self-doubt and guilt only eat away your time. A balanced rhythm in professional and personal life is tough when you run your own ship. Things will keep tilting out of balance, but practicing self-rigour and discipline will help you maintain your equilibrium.

Ahead of the curve
To grow the business, my mantra has been to focus on being ahead of the curve. If you have better ideas and an innovative approach, you will win in the market. Respect your competition but don't obsess over it. Instead focus on customer obsession and imbibe it in the company's DNA. Go beyond the expected to deliver customer delight. This can be done by continuous improvement and going up the value chain in terms of specialization. Pushing myself to do better and pushing the team
to excel is the only way to grow our business.

Today, content is the key differentiator in a brand’s journey to earn customer trust and admiration. Be it your corporate website, leadership presence in social media or thought-leadership, storytelling as a service (SaaS) helps us deliver superior content-first solutions across digital assets. Looking back at our journey, without any typical start-up funding, we have been able to build a prestigious set of clients - both MNCs and great domestic companies purely based on our 'content-first' digital approach.

We look ahead to grow by doubling in size in the next two years and entering newer markets with strategically aligned partnerships. We want to build a company which irrespective of its size delivers world-class digitally-aligned content and is admired for its ideas, innovation and integrity. I see this happening on the two pillars of talent for building expertise and technology for efficient delivery.

That said, it’s time to remind myself, “It ain’t no use to sit and wonder why, babe…don’t think twice, it’s all right!” and get back to work.

About Zahara Kanchwalla

Zahara is the Co-founder & Executive Director at Rite KnowledgeLabs. As the Chief Operating Officer (COO) she is responsible for providing operational leadership and ensuring service delivery excellence. Across diverse digital stakeholder communication and thought-leadership programs, she works closely with clients, anchoring key account relationships and ensuring the service delivery exceeds expectations right from planning to publishing.

She has over 17 years of experience and has worked with several multinational and leading Indian organizations in various capacities pertaining to business communications, content publishing, e-learning, IT and training. She brings significant business, technology, BFSI and financial content publishing experience and has led engagements with customers across industry sectors. Over the past three years, Zahara has assiduously built and helms some of the most coveted customer relationships with Microsoft India, HDFC Mutual Fund, IIFL Wealth, IIFL Asset Managers, Wadhawan Global Capital and Symphony Air Coolers.

During her initial years she worked with Tech Mahindra in Marketing & Communications and was responsible for global content and knowledge management. Having started her career in IT programming, she has a passion for technology and has consulted organizations in the capacity of a corporate trainer for IT and business communications.
How Organizations Can Ace Virtual Talent Acquisition Process

A n important question that has arisen in the current times is how do you build a strong remote team? Coordinating with your team which is spread across many time zones, ensuring every task gets completed in time, and catching communication breakdowns before they deteriorate are crucial. However, the reality is that remote work is a huge driver for competitive advantage and it is gaining popularity among businesses of all sizes and industries.

Remote teams can tap into large, untapped pools of talent beyond their geographical boundaries. Also, going the remote way eliminates real estate and administrative overheads for businesses. Additionally, 'remote work productivity' has been on everyone's mind for quite some time now. Remote employees are supposedly happier than 'traditional' employees and what better way to boost productivity than keeping your team happy and at ease?

Once you consider a remote work model for your business, it is vital to identify, hire and onboard remote employees for your business. How easy it is to hire virtually? These steps may help you identify your remote rockstars!

A. Signs of a great remote employee

There are plenty of qualities to look for when making any hire. But to hire remote employees that truly excel some characteristics can help tip the balance.

1. Experts in their field, not just skilled

In this increasingly competitive economy, finding people who can perform highly specialized tasks can get a little difficult. With the immense amount of talent available globally, remote hiring creates a distinctive opportunity for companies to reach out to individuals with targeted skill sets.

2. They do not necessarily need external motivation

Obviously, the rules of an office environment - work hours being tracked, observing employee dynamics, etc. - don't apply to a remote team. So the ability to organize and stay motivated in the absence of external guidance becomes a vital requirement in a remote employee. Basically, find individuals who are self-motivated enough to stay productive without someone looking over their shoulder all the time.

3. They're as great at listening as they are at speaking

In a remote hiring environment, communication skills should be assessed more than the ability to talk or the project updates shared. Great communicators are empathetic, proactive, express themselves quite clearly, and are sure that their message is understood. They have commendable interpersonal and listening skills that must be evaluated from the very first interaction.

4. They are more productive when they focus on results, not procedures

Remote team members have little visibility into operational procedures. Hence, it is critical that remote employees keep their eye on the ball and focus first and foremost on achieving expected business goals.

B. Setting your remote hiring process

So you know what to look for in a great remote employee, but how do you hire them? What about the hiring process? Hiring remotely also involves adapting your hiring process to the realities of remote employees. Set direct and clear expectations before you even start interviewing. Hiring remote talent can limit your opportunities for face-to-face interactions. Try to avoid routine questions that can lead to obvious and prepared answers when you evaluate skill sets and cultural fit. This helps you spend zero time on candidates and sets precise expectations about your team culture and hiring process. Also when sourcing candidates, think of less conventional ways where you can find new talent!

Think beyond LinkedIn etc... Where do people meet to bounce off ideas on shared interests?

Additionally, it is imperative to build strong personal connections even when hiring remote employees

C. Best practices for onboarding remote employees

Virtual onboarding can make or break the success of a new remote hire. Which is why even remote companies with effective onboarding systems are constantly looking for ways to improve the process?

Find the best way to introduce new remote employees to the team and projects they will be working on. There are multiple ways to introduce a new team member, but whatever way you choose, make sure to lighten anxiety by clearly defining roles and assignments, and showing new members where to look for help. Leave nothing to the imagination for the new remote employees; make sure goals and timelines are clear from day one

There is no better time to communicate company values, objectives, goals, and timelines than during the orientation day. When remote employees have clarity on their tasks in terms of timelines and outcomes, they are more productive.

Remember, a remote team is only as good as the process you use to put it together. Hiring remotely is definitely a great way to grow your business without efficiency and flexibility. It is also the key to building an even more engaged and productive team. Invest your time and effort into designing a remote hiring process and you will see it becoming a secret ingredient for the success of your business.

-BhavinTurakhia is CEO and Founder. Flock
Launched in the year 2013, Auravedic is a natural beauty brand that firmly believes and focuses on sourcing and using the best local natural ingredients. They have been constantly introducing natural skin care products to suit all types of skin. The brand Auravedic is inspired by the ancient knowledge of the Vedas and uses this knowledge to harness the cleansing and cosmetic properties of natural ingredients.

Philip Alexander and Amrita are the brains behind the inception of Auravedic, having a decade of experience of working with beauty and FMCG brands. The duo noticed that there were no mid-range beauty products brands in the market and decided to fill this niche by offering their consumers immensely effective products at an affordable rate to cater to a larger target audience.

Philip and Amrita are the pioneers and one of the first brands in their space to introduce beauty oils, which have now become a global trend in skincare. Their oils are made using a unique cold pressed method which helps in increasing the efficacy of the product while maintaining the antioxidant properties of its ingredients. Auravedic as a brand has been instrumental in customizing naturally derived oils for all types of skin concerns and formulated for easy use for all its consumers.

The brand is constantly reinventing and creating new products keeping in mind the ever-changing consumer demands and keeping up with market trends.

SME WORLD in an email interaction with Amrita Alexander:

What is the beauty industry scenario in India and how is it growing?

The beauty industry in a country like India is constantly changing, depending on the global trends, customer behavior and demands of the consumers. The beauty industry is constantly growing with a lot of newer brands constantly in the market; it is not what it used to be 5-10 years ago where there were only a few key players in the market. Today the beauty industry is extremely competitive, with every brand trying to create a niche market for them. Brands now need to focus heavily on their social media pages and digital platforms to
Ayurvedic brands differentiate from traditional brands by rejecting incremental fads and flavor-of-the-month line extensions. Instead, they pursue long-term, transformational products. Most Ayurvedic brands have their roots in the ancient Indian Ayurvedic principle that Mother Nature can heal, protect and cleanse skin through effective, safe and nontoxic products.

constantly create engaging content to keep their audiences engaged and create a loyal set of consumers for the brand while also staying relevant in the minds of the consumer.

What are the broad advantages of Ayurvedic beauty products and how these are different from the traditional and established ones in terms of quality etc.?

Ayurvedic brands differentiate from traditional brands by rejecting incremental fads and flavor-of-the-month line extensions. Instead, they pursue long-term, transformational products. Most Ayurvedic brands have their roots in the ancient Indian Ayurvedic principle that Mother Nature can heal, protect and cleanse skin through effective, safe and nontoxic products.

How do you handle the challenge of competition from established brands?

Since the beauty market is so competitive with so many brands, for us every brand is competition. At Auravedic, we constantly try to create products which the customers will relate to and depending on market trends. We test new opportunities with small steps to validate their acceptance. At all times, checking if these steps are consistent with the brand positioning, but also whether they further differentiate the brand from its competitive set. By keeping these principles in mind, we can escape the proverbial “sea of sameness” and provide customers with what they really want: relevant, unique, on-brand differentiation.

What is the USP of your brand?

At Auravedic we aim to create chemical-free products without the use of harmful chemicals. The use of ancient ayurvedic formulations with modern technology and innovations make the products highly unique. The quality of the ingredients results in a wholly new creation with a higher potency than the original material. This painstaking and manual proprietary process enables Auravedic to unite herbs in highly potent blends that contribute specific energy to correct sources of skin problems and enhance the healthy look of the skin.

What factors influence consumer behavior?

There are various factors that influence consumer behavior from the reputation of the brand, price of the product, reviews of the product, and also whether they further differentiate the brand from the competition.

We have always been passionate believers in the healing power of nature. Our vision was to create a pure and natural skin care range combining the ancient arts of alchemy, herbal medicine and Ayurveda to reconnect people to nature. After discovering the benefits and healing properties of ayurvedic oils, we set about creating a simple, easy to use skincare range that had maximum effect on one's skin without any harmful ingredients.

R&D plays a very role in beauty products. What kind of efforts are you making in this regard?

R&D plays an integral part for any organization. At Auravedic, we have a set of loyal customers who receive any of our new products before we launch it in the market for their valuable feedback. Once they try the product and get back with their feedback we then work on fixing issues if any before we go live with it on our website.

E-commerce got a boost lately in view of the ongoing pandemic. How have you prepared yourself to face the onslaught?

Millennials were always outpacing older shoppers in their shift to buy beauty and personal care items online, this ongoing pandemic has just accelerated the growth today and also shifted the segment to almost all age groups who purchase between 50% and 90% of their skincare online. This pandemic has also changed the way beauty brands must market to drive traffic to online retailers or through their own website. Visual-focused social media, like Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, work in a synergistic way with the beauty and personal care market. Many consumers turn to social media as a source of information and expertise when deciding what items to buy. When it comes to beauty and personal care, consumers are driving a major and irreversible shift purchasing online. This, combined with the onslaught of digitally native startup brands, has made the industry more competitive than ever before. To succeed, brands must ensure their products stand out on digital platforms. Word of mouth also plays another important factor as people recommend products to their friends if the product has good results. Listening to our customers, understanding and analyzing feedback and quickly customizing offerings to a fast evolving audience is our top most priority. “For a country as diverse as India, brands have to change their language and communication to stay relevant in local markets”. At Auravedic, this is our constant endeavor to speak to our customers in context of their region, language and culture.

This requires a comprehensive e-commerce strategy that encompasses pure play online retailers such as Amazon, specialty retailers such as Nykaa and niche online retailers.
This strategy should focus on attaining maximum search visibility on these retailers’ websites, meaning that when consumers search for keywords related to your product, your listings appear as close to the top of the search results as possible.

What do you think about the percentage of market share by home grown brands as compared to already well-established players? Will there be a disparity and if yes why?

Home grown brands are a long way off in their market share compared to the established players. While the top 20 brands still capture 90% of the market going to brick-and-mortar retailers, those same brands only capture a 60% share online. So home grown brands are focusing digitally and evaluating potential new opportunities for themselves. Also consumer discussion around natural beauty products has doubled over the last two years but only niche players are addressing it in any meaningful way. They engage authentically with a purpose. It’s about performance… ingredients must deliver immediate, tangible results. This will be transformative for smaller skincare brands… and that’s where these brands are going to break out of the pack.” The smaller brands are growing in numbers in the natural and organic space and the market dynamics are constantly changing due to the speed in which they engage authentically with a purpose and not just regurgitate what’s out there… because it has to be original, fresh, and new.

What made you come up with a homegrown natural beauty brand?

We have always been passionate believers in the healing power of nature. Our vision was to create a pure and natural skin care range combining the ancient arts of alchemy, herbal medicine and Ayurveda to reconnect people to nature. After discovering the benefits and healing properties of ayurvedic oils, we set about creating a simple, easy to use skincare range that had maximum effect on one’s skin without any harmful ingredients.

What is your vision for growth?

Have you drawn any growth trajectory for your brand?

Beyond 2020 and well into the new decade, Auravedic will continue to be more authentic and transparent to their consumer community — and radically so. This is an increasingly important element of our brand’s marketing, social and communications strategy. That old saying “honesty is the best policy” could be the decade’s mantra.

Auravedic intends to grow twice as fast as we are currently growing and keep launching innovative effective best in class value products in a consistent manner.
In the new normal post the pandemic, the lucrative opportunity to earn while gaining the required skills will carve a way for specialists who are industry relevant.

Apprenticeship is one of the few resilient paths that must be marked by both the Government and the Industry as it prepares candidates for a specific job while meeting a company's need for skilled employees. Currently, the government is focusing on skills as its major national priority. According to NAPS Guidelines, the target is to engage 50 Lakh apprentices against the current 2.3 lakh cumulatively by 2020.

Last year the Government of India incorporated changes in the Apprenticeship Rules (1992) with the objective of an increase in skilled manpower and monetary raise for apprentices. According to the Apprenticeship Rule 2019, there will be a raise in the hiring limit of apprentices to 15% of the comprehensive strength of an establishment and a stipend of up to INR 9000/- per month. Apprenticeship programmes help offer on-the-job (OTJ) training to dropouts through placement opportunities. Most importantly, these programmes address the skills gap for industries and work towards reducing the gap through tailor-made-training. Such programmes empower business owners to train their future employees in the skills presently in-demand.

Apprenticeship benefiting companies

Firstly, registered employers under the Apprentices Act, 1961 are spared from contributing to Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees State Insurance (ESI) for apprentices engaged by them. Secondly, financial support is available for employers under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) that was launched in August 2016. NAPS was initiated to promote apprenticeship and increase the number of apprentices in the ecosystem. One of the biggest advantages of NAPS is the end-to-end service for employers through third-party administrators (TPA) and the reduction in attrition as the loyalty element in apprentices is higher.

The Apprentices Act supports establishments, especially MSMEs, to engross apprentices and pay a prescribed rate of stipend to them. Under NAPS, 25% of prescribed stipend, subject to a maximum of INR 1500/- per month per apprentice, is later reimbursed by the Government.

Further support is provided to the establishments without in-house training facilities or an outdoor centre for training fresher apprentice. A basic training sums up to INR 7500/- per apprentice for maximum 500 hours. The amount is reimbursed to the establishments or the Training Provider engaged under NAPS. Besides that, companies engaged with apprentices can take up 'skill training' from their CSR funds to the requirement under the Apprentices Act.

Apprenticeship benefiting Students and Workforce

India’s working age population will continue to increase over the next few years and for a seamless transition from school to work, apprenticeship needs to be considered as an important mechanism. Apprenticeship helps students and the new entrants in the workplace acquire the relevant skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their chosen industry, hence bridging the existing skills gap. The hands-on training offers them a real chance to set their skills into practice and helps them gain more confidence in a working environment. As the apprentices are paid stipend, it also assists them earn-while-they-learn and supports them financially. The apprentices also get a chance to learn as well as work and attain credentials within the company, which reinforces their employability.

Apprenticeship benefiting from skill development

Apprenticeship programmes are one of the most encouraging and promising skills delivery mediums in the industrial and training ecosystem of India. They provide a structured and rigorous training that helps apprentices enhance their skills. Few of the world's most prosperous economies too have been promoting the apprenticeship system. Apart from that, these programmes offer apprentices a chance to put forward their skills into practice, which helps them gain confidence in a working environment. Integration with other schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVV) and so on can provide a wider option for the apprentices.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, any jobs that do not add value to businesses will cease to exist. Hence, apprenticeship is supplementary for the post-COVID era to possess the skills in demand with requisite quality and quantity. Finally, getting the PSUs and large enterprises to engage with apprentices on a larger level, working on cluster based approach to promote apprenticeship in all Industry clusters especially the MSME units and removing all challenges from the stipend and incentive disbursal process would be key to make apprenticeship aspirational and firmly integrated with the skilling ecosystem of the country.

-Siddharth Chaturvedi is Executive Vice President, AISECT Group.
Amongst a cluster of biscuit producers in India, Britannia remains the market leader and the 'numero uno' in the organized biscuit and bakery product market.

Focus on Innovation

Britannia's focus on innovation has led to continuous strengthening of brand leadership positions and market share in the core category. “Britannia's edge over others is due to the fact that the company's management is committed to quality and innovation,” observes the analyst.

Britannia works with its partners on its own terms with uncompromised quality being at the top of agenda. “Quality is the single most factor which will help industries survive with sustainability,” says B. Krishnappa, partner of Bangalore-based Paramount Nutritions India Private Limited which has been Britannia's partner-vendor for almost a decade now. “We started with manufacturing Glucose Biscuit (Tiger Brand) and soon our efforts were recognized. Encouraged, we went on to add one more line and increased the production. We added many more verities of products like Good day, Milk Bikes', Bourbon etc.”, he adds.

Says Rakesh Agarwal, Paramount's other partner, “Manufacturing food products is a critical job and is a big challenge. You just can't go wrong at any stage. Maintain consistent quality in every section and in every action is of paramount importance. Quality raw materials and managing process control, right color, right appearance, right flavor, desired taste, correct packing etc. keeps the production manpower on their toes till the end product is ready for consumption. With consumer democracy reaching new levels in recent times there has been a considerable paradigm shift in lifestyles and awareness towards health.”

Key Micro Nutrients

Krishnappa, however observes, “We at Paramount are alive to the fact that people are increasingly becoming conscious of dietary care and its correlation to wellness. Health and well-being are the major issues today and being the business partner for Britannia Industries, all the products manufactured are fortified with Vitamins, all products are enriched with key micro nutrients. In this way we are contributing towards elimination of malnutrition from the society.”

What makes biscuit 'a snack of the masses'? Biscuit is a hygienically packaged nutritious snack food available at very competitive prices, volumes and different tastes and according to the National Council of Applied Economic research (NCAER) study, biscuit is predominantly consumed by people both from higher and the lower strata of society, particularly children in both rural and urban areas including those falling in low income bracket.

India is the second largest manufacturer of biscuits after USA. Indian Biscuit industry is one of the fastest growing segments in the nation's food industry. However, the recent times have witnessed biscuits undergone a major image transformation which makes biscuit no more the food of the poor but a popular snack of mass consumption. Quips a small retailer in central Delhi, “our biscuit shelves have to be regularly filled up almost daily with fresh stocks of biscuits in view of regular and increasing demand.”

The biscuit market in India is estimated to be over Rs 10,000 crore (US$ 1.84 billion) and the industry is also gearing up to aggressively tap the medium and premium segment within the country over the next couple of years.

Though India is considered as a major producer and consumer of Biscuits, the per capita consumption of biscuits in our country is yet low – only a little over 2.1 Kg., compared to more than 10 kg in the USA, UK and West European countries and above 4.25 kg in south East Asian countries. “The primary reason for this scenario is very poor development of food processing industry and almost half of biscuit production is in the unorganized sector in India,” says an industry analyst.
“We at paramount believe in the highest quality products and we strictly go by the Britannia’s norms, system & processes. Sustainability is also continuous improvement on resources – human or hardware. We are striving to improve on processes to achieve the excellence our products deserve,” Says Agarwal and adds, “the core purpose is to make people enjoy life and it is only when they have good health and good health is only through when they eat healthy foods.”

Paramount has a passion for learning more and more by applying thought creativity and sound judgement to meet aggressive goals. The company has made it a practice to continuously invest in people, product and processes. “We don’t care how much we have taken home but we do care how much we have improved on our own performance,” says Krishnappa.

Paramount has a commitment with their principles, Britannia, and they fondly share their vision to make Britannia the favourite food brand of a billion odd Indians and help earn Britannia a fair name. Paramount’s aim is to secure #1 or #2 for all their brands in chosen value spaces and markets. The company wants to create a business model which is exemplary and they are leaving nothing to chance.

Ambitious Goals

Paramount has set ambitious business goals - ‘At least one Britannia brand purchased and consumed by 50% of all India households at least once a week’ and the vision goes beyond - ‘To be a preferred safe and reliable provider of quality FMCG products and services for all customer segments. Paramount has been identified and recognised as ‘GOOD DAY CENTER’ among BIL CPs because of its consistent production & quality deliverability of its premium pillar brand of Britannia.

Started with an initial production of 900 tons/month, they have increased the capacity in July 2011 by the addition of CREAM LINE and in July 2014 they have achieved the ambitious highest production of 3076 tons covering the varieties like Good Day Cashew and Good Day Butter. They don’t forget to mention that this was possible because of the support of 500+ employees working on twin line operations.

The company has scores of achievements and awards to its credit. These include IMC Ramakrishna Bajaj National Quality award in 2011, Business Excellence partnership award in April 2012, Rotary BSE SME National award for excellence in 2012 and Good Day Gold League Gold Trophy award in 2013.

Paramount's is committed to keeping clean environment as it has developed mechanism for Zero Solid Waste Disposal, 100 % utilization of waste water for gardening after treatment, continuous focus on reduction of energy consumption & non – biodegradable wastes e.g. laminate besides emission control through stack monitoring and periodic plantation as its green initiatives.

Paramount is well aware of its responsibility towards society. The company has a well defined CSR policy to guide its strategic planning and provide a roadmap for its initiatives. The core elements of CSR policy are Ethical functioning, Respect for Workers’ Rights and Welfare, Respect for Environment, Activities for Social and Inclusive Development. “We are already doing a lot of work under CSR. Some of the initiatives are providing drinking water in ABBAN KUPPE village, monthly feeding of orphanage children, and text book & note books distribution for school children etc.

CSR Activities

Paramount is actively involved in social uplifement of orphanage children. NELE (Shelter), a project of Hindu Seva Pratishthana, was started way back in August 2000, to provide all possible care to destitute children. So far 90 centers have been established, 5 in Bengaluru and one each at Mysore, Shimoga and Bagalkote. Over 300 boys and girls have found caring homes in these centers. The facilities include Shelter, Food, Clothing and Health Care, Academic & cultural education & social awareness, encouragement for Sports, Music, Fine Arts, Sanskrit and Yoga and Awareness on health and hygiene.

Paramount has set ambitious goals for moving to the next level and has laid out a growth path to tread on. “We want to be in list of world class food processing industry. We are looking forward to diversify to other FMCG Products and would like to associate with other major global players,” says Krishnappa with twinkle in his eyes. “Yes, the road may be long and challenging but then we like challenges,” Says Agarwal with all smiles.
Intended to transform Indian Market, the PM Modi's concept of Make in India & Skill Development, has been widely appreciated and accepted by every sector. However, as far as the Small Medium Enterprises Sector is concerned, there is still a pertinent question whether SME Industry is ready to produce world-class products or not?

SME’s have contributed a significant role in the development of the country's economy. According to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, India has more than 48 million SMEs, which contribute 45% of industrial output.

Government’s “Make in India” initiative's emphasis on increasing the share of manufacturing in the gross domestic product (GDP) from the present 14-15 per cent to 25 per cent by 2022 has the potential to transform the fortunes of the MSME sector but hitherto it's not enabled vigorously.

With the aim to significantly benefit the Indian economy these initiatives will play a key role. And other ongoing policies like the public procurement policy, the micro and small enterprises (MSE) cluster development programme (MSE-CDP), the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) are also a boom for the sector.

In today’s rapidly evolving world, SMEs are tackling the mounting challenges from global players to address their growing & changing needs. For Indian SME to standout in this clutter, it is important to develop strategies to become customers centric quality focused programmes and integrate efficiency tools.

**Challenges of SMEs**

The clusters of Make in India can achieve this success through modification in the entire organizational strategies and current working process to deal with the economic crisis. SMEs need to bring changes in the business model to make India the favorite investment destinations in the world and it will surely open doors for big global retailers in India. Following adaptations in the model meant capitalizing on the changing trend in market demand, innovating with the product or the manufacturing process and carrying business with flexibility.

**Achieving Quality Management in SME:**

The term Quality Management has a specific meaning within Small Medium Enterprise business sector. It does not only aim to ensure 'good quality' rather it ensures consistent good quality of products. The implication of quality management will benefit the SME sector in enhancing the bottom-line, market share, productivity, improving the product and service quality, and in implying appropriate strategy.

**Certification OF SME firms:**

As far as Small and Medium Enterprisers are concerned the improvements are much more marked because they have started from a 'less punctual' basis, as this seems to be a low ranked priority before certification. The certification of Indian SME firms will increase the perception of their product quality in the global market.

Certification will improve monitoring of product quality, monitoring of supplier quality assurance systems and supplier performance in the areas of quality, delivery and service. Internal benefits include better documentation, greater quality awareness, increased operational efficiency, greater productivity and reduced discarded/reprocessing costs.

**Supply Chain Management:**

One of the concern areas is the Supply Chain Management. Due to the insufficiency of the resources like money, time, technology, manpower, material, the SME sector should focus on strategy with reduction of lead time and products cost simultaneously and there is also need to emphasize the relationship between the firm's SC strategy and firm's business strategy. SMEs need to break isolation of their suppliers and other entities.

**Association with Global and Indian firms:**

In the emerging scenario, Indian SME sector urges 'Make in India' to get investment and partnership in the manufacturing part from big Indian companies and global firms for growth and prospects. As manufacturing is the toughest side of the small and medium entrepreneurship. To broaden the roots...
of SME, It is Important to increase the reach of Small medium enterprises in investment of Plant & Machinery.

**Export Promotion:**

The capability of Indian MSME products to compete in international markets is reflected in its share of about 30%-35% in national exports. In case of items like readymade garments, leather goods, processed foods, engineering items, the performance has been commendable both in terms of value and their share within the SME sector. With a view to rendering assistance to Micro & Small Manufacturing Enterprises in the field of exploring market potential, export promotion, participation in international trade fair exhibition, there is an immediate urge to promote export in the small scale sector by encouraging simplification and streamlining of procedures, incentives for higher production of exports, preferential treatments to SMEs in the market development fund, simplification of duty drawback rules, etc.

**MSME Ministry:**

The MSME Ministry requires to be more engaged in enhancement of the training programs to increase the capabilities of the tool rooms, MSME Development Institutes and other organizations under it. The training programmes range from traditional rural industries to high-end, high-tech programmes on CNC machines. Programmes for skill development were conducted for nearly 5.51 lakh trainees in 2013-14 and the target for 2014-15 is 5.20 lakh persons.

Especially need of the hour is to make Indian SME sector digitally literate.

**Funding Exposure:**

Government holds various funding programmes specifically for SME’s. Although the escalating number of Small and medium start ups are not able to take the advantage of these programs due to the lack of awareness and very specific categorization for the schemes. So, for the wider development Public sector units and private sector units should join their hand together.

**Adoption of Digital India Initiative:**

Despite the boom of Digital India Initiative by the government, small enterprise still lacks in the adoption of the newer technologies. The main reason is unlike big firms they don’t believe in investing in too much money in the expensive technology. The fact that creates hurdle in the success of digital India is reach of technology is not equivalent and affordable to all.

The second thing is small enterprises lack the trust about the prospects of technology. They hesitate that What if technology fails? And our business flops? So government and Technology providers need to digitally literate the people. Only the knowledge about the technology can build confidence and also aware people about the methodologies and techniques to reduce the fear and chances of hindrance on overall business, or to make a back-up plan.

**To improve operations / manufacturing management:**

In present competitive world the earning and growth of Indian SMEs has been deteriorating continuously and such companies are bleeding out of financial crunch. Thus, Make in India needs to improve agility, visibility, and operational performance across manufacturing and for that SME’s urges to have global attention like China.

Make in India is expecting to rank the country amongst the world’s top three growth economies and the top three manufacturing destinations by 2020. SME demands favorable demographic dividends for the next 2-3 decades and sustained availability of quality workforce. Strong technical and engineering capabilities need to be supported by top-notch scientific and technical institutes. To persuade foreign investors SME needs to open well-regulated and stable financial markets with well build consumerism in the domestic market.

Thus, for the Make in India vision to reach the destination of accomplishment, we need to empower the potential SME sector and their evident productive contributions. Government needs to wake up to this reality and enable creation of even policy and business environment for SME’s.

**About A. Sharma**

With an experience spanning 15 years in several-industry verticals across India and abroad as a management and business consultant, Sharma has cherish many huge companies in various sectors. He is particularly skilled in the planning and analysis required for meeting high corporate goals. His area of expertise includes specialization in business, financial and technology consulting.

An accomplished visionary, his delivery verticals are project management, marketing, accounting and finance, budget management, production management, business process re-engineering, requirements analysis, change management, logistics management and solutions implementation.

After completing his studies, he embarked on a dynamic career in business development and management and has been associated with top dairy, ship building, infrastructure and construction, aviation, media and manufacturing companies and through his remarkable skill, has been successful in establishing operational improvements in projects. In South East Asia and Middle East, he has guided and facilitated large organizations to improve their internal business processes.

He has mastered in the branch of business analysis with a sound understanding of existing pain points and has ability to create winning solutions of the issues and develop a business model, working strategy and finance operations.
In this backdrop in all these years whenever I visited a Mall, whether in NCR, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Guwahati, Lucknow or any other small city my belief got confirmed. Of late I kept reading stories of empty malls and some of them closing down, it started giving me a feel that business opportunities when not defended by viable research and when it is just following herd behavior, it is bound to result in what is happening in many of the cases. And that is the challenge before entrepreneurs of all sizes and from all geographies, to respond and work on.

The proliferation of multi-national branded products and their availability through malls and exclusive outlets in many ways hinder the growth of small business segment in India. Hence initiatives have to be taken at government as well as private level to develop SME Malls at different places to encourage small and medium size entrepreneurs to portray their products and services and to develop linkage with effective market.

It was some five years back when I visited a Mall in Gurgaon with some friends and afterwards, thought of sharing my take on their present and future. It was put on my blog and my friends, who read it, were skeptical as to whether what I was preemtping was really something that was reality of the future.

In this backdrop in all these years whenever I visited a Mall, whether in NCR, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Guwahati, Lucknow or any other small city my belief got confirmed. Of late I kept reading stories of empty malls and some of them closing down, it started giving me a feel that business opportunities when not defended by viable research and when it is just following herd behavior, it is bound to result in what is happening in many of the cases. And that is the challenge before entrepreneurs of all sizes and from all geographies, to respond and work on.

One of the issue raised in my earlier post on sustainability of malls was that many of them were involved in some kind of practices through which the transactions get recorded resulting in conversion of unaccounted cash and bringing it to the books of accounts. This helps some of the owners of the outlets to carry on with such shops without much of risk on sales. I am not too sure about the size of such shops in the malls but looking at the operational cost involved and the cost of bills to be borne by them, it gives me a signal that there must be some truth in this.

The Challenge

It is also reported that in order to escape from scorching heat, many enter a mall and spend time in air-conditioned environment. The
conversion of visitor into customer is yet another challenge for the shop owners in the malls. Just around ten percent of the malls operating in and around Delhi are said to be successful so far as their financials are concerned. Though Delhi is considered the best option for future growth potential for this sector and builders and marketers are eyeing for this geography, yet my skepticism sees better scope in smaller cities rather than metropolitan cities. Bangalore, Kolkata and Mumbai have far better proportion of successful malls than Delhi but still Delhi is able to catch attention of investors as there are multiple options for the use of infrastructure put forth for shopping malls.

There are many factors that are important for Indian market environment which is visibly fast changing but it is going to take more time to get transformed into an environment where our culture gets blended with that of geographies where small shops and down-town market culture has faded away.

**Future of Malls**

The factors, which traditionally determine success of a mall, could be its layout design, location, availability of brands, amenities provided, proximity with residential blocks etc. And most of the realtors keep these in mind. It does help them position themselves better depending on their approach and priority. This is conventional route followed by most of them.

The mall owners have to think differently and have to focus more on the small entrepreneurs who are bringing in innovative products and are willing to take risk. They need a better platform to launch their products and malls could provide them that opportunity. The proliferation of multi-national branded products and their availability through malls and exclusive outlets in many ways hinder the growth of small business segment in India. Hence initiatives have to be taken at government as well as private level to develop SME malls at different places to encourage small and medium size entrepreneurs to portray their products and services and to develop linkage with effective market. This place should provide them an opportunity to network with their clients and study the market for redesigning or introducing innovative products. This has become more important in the wake of the initiative of the government through launching make in India campaign. SME malls could be an opportune outlet for market exploration and product launches.

The future for malls is not bleak if its format is changed and instead of its concentration it is expanded in the length and breadth of the country.

In case of smaller cities multi brand formats which primarily focus on organizing highly unorganized retail sector in India, would be good choice. It would help in systematizing the retail sector as well as facilitate market operations for the benefits of customers and users.

**Develop SME Malls**

The mall owners have to think differently and have to focus more on the small entrepreneurs who are bringing in innovative products and are willing to take risk. They need a better platform to launch their products and malls could provide them that opportunity. The proliferation of multi-national branded products and their availability through malls and exclusive outlets in many ways hinder the growth of small business segment in India. Hence initiatives have to be taken at government as well as private level to develop SME malls at different places to encourage small and medium size entrepreneurs to portray their products and services and to develop linkage with effective market. This place should provide them an opportunity to network with their clients and study the market for redesigning or introducing innovative products. This has become more important in the wake of the initiative of the government through launching make in India campaign. SME malls could be an opportune outlet for market exploration and product launches.

The future for malls is not bleak if its format is changed and instead of its concentration it is expanded in the length and breadth of the country.

(Dev Vijay Kumar Sharma is professor of commerce at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya and also heads the Department. He can be reached at: vkshro@gmail.com)
The quarter profits until 31st March 2020 disclosed a win-win status for most of the business sectors. This status prompted corporate to gear up for the next quarter. The get set and go mode fainted as the news of the Covid-19 Pandemic's arrival mushroomed. The spirit of executing new strategies ebbed away. The corporate and governments alike baffled. Business sectors all across the world started experiencing an unfamiliar turbulence. Pandemic's roar became louder to a crescendo leading to such turbulences – rippling across industries, markets and government policy circles.

Government's tactics to combat the roar unlocked new avenues for umpteen challenges for each business sector. The first such challenge turned up with the announcement of the Lockdown Strategies. Business Admins had to bow down to the stringent laws imposed for the welfare of the populace and take some harsh decisions to safeguard themselves. Consequently, a few sectors suffered a huge loss while others experienced a mild turbulence.

Market's Picture, Then and Now

Digging into the archives it can be stated that Market has always been an exhibition of mostly Luxury and Necessity Products. Marketers use distinct tactics to attract their target population towards their products. The marketers attempt has confused customers as they fail to draw the line of difference between Necessity Products and Luxury Products. The outbreak of this Pandemic however succeeded in making the customers mark the line of difference. This understanding has changed the game for the marketers as Luxury Products turned into a secondary choice for the customers.

Two Business Sectors which has a maintained score amidst the blue days are – Fast-moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and Pharmaceutical Sector. The prime reason behind their well-maintained score is the utility of products they deal in. Lockdown imposed by the government forced the business sectors to shut down their brick and mortar stores. The first phase of Lockdown announced the closure of Market. Considering the needs of populace, Government drafted a few relaxation norms. Stores selling the necessity products were allowed to open for customers. The Pandemic's fright attracted the customers towards the FMCG & Pharmaceutical sector. This inclination brought in a flight for both the sectors. Let’s explore how the inclination became a stroke of luck for these sectors.

Success Tactics of FMCG & Pharmaceutical Sector

The FMCG Sector has always been successful in attracting customers because of the nature of products which falls under the category. Also, it has a wide spectrum of choices for their target population. The sector has limited barriers in the entry and exit procedures which brings in a whooping competition. Both Innovation and Imitation holds an equal chance of winning the game here. Many Imitative products become stars despite of the leading innovative products because of Brand Equity. This tells how active a marketer should be to survive in this sector. Techniques need to be re-framed and executed so that they hold a distinct position and pride in

Scores of the leading FMCGs of India
In order to win the minds of the customers or to convert a customer into a consumer, the prime ingredient required is developing the Unique Selling Proposition. The Pandemic has opened avenues for certain brands to reframe their old USP in order to generate cash inflows.

The FMCG Sector in particular has responded to the challenges posed by the Pandemic in a very impressive way.

Some of the tactics utilized by the leading brands to maintain their scores are:

- **Reframing Promotional Campaigns:** The Pandemic has obliged the customers consume products which satisfy the real need of the hour. This stood as a challenge for this sector. Therefore, for a select category of products under this sector the brands set forth to track a tactic for their survival amidst the blue days. With the aim of maintaining a clean-cut score the marketers conducted an in-depth survey and elected the ways of presenting the same product as a prime necessity in the same market. The commonly incorporated tactics for executing this idea was 'reframing their existing Promotional Campaigns' to persuade the customers once again. In this process the marketers have utilized both emotional and fear appeals. They tried to consider the important information circulated by the medical bodies on boosting the immune system. Thus, with the hope of penetrating into the minds of the target population, marketers reframed their promotional campaigns. The information shared in the campaign regarding a product had an important bottom line and i.e. 'If you consume this product your immunity will be boosted directly or indirectly.' This trick indeed worked for many products under different brands. A bitter truth of the present market is that most of the customers indulge in emotional buying than rational buying. This brought in numerous opportunities for the sector to maintain its score. Secondly, the use of Comparative Advertising and Ambush Marketing can also be witnessed. They are considered as powerful tools in a market where the target population can be persuaded with the help of emotional and fear tactics.

- **Adding to the existing Product Line:** There are brands which have a well pronounced Brand Loyalty in the market they are operating. Further, Their Brand Equity can also be utilized for attracting customers towards their new add-ons. The pandemic prevailing has horrified the people undoubtedly but interestingly this has been considered as an important opportunity by a few leading conglomerates to introduce new products. Hence, they developed new products (imitative and innovative) for their existing customer base to enhance their score.

- **Converting Cash Cows into Stars:** Prior to the Pandemic there still existed products under this sector which were very useful and had the potentials of becoming the stars of the market. But such products were unsuccessful in the market because the customers didn't realize the need. With the experts focusing on certain aspects to rule over COVID 19, these products were projected by the marketers once again in the market. There was no change in the promotional campaigns. This time the customers were attracted towards them because they were in real need.

- **Reframing Unique Selling Proposition (USP):** In order to win the minds of the customers or to convert a customer into a consumer, the prime ingredient required is developing the Unique Selling Proposition. The Pandemic has opened avenues for certain brands to reframe their old USP in order to generate cash inflows. A few brands from this sector were successful in doing the same and hence they didn't run in losses. The USP can be reframed by demonstrating the Brands competitive advantage over other alternatives. The Marketers can also custom the points of difference to outshine in the competitive arena.

- **Use of e-commerce-** Though the Government allowed the functioning of Brick and Mortar models selling FMCG Products, the customer traffic was not impressive in the initial days. The availability of such necessity products in popular e-commerce sites boosted the customer traffic. This brough in ease for the customers residing in metro cities mostly. Another tactic accompanying this was the freedom to use plastic money and virtual payment systems. Together this tactic too resulted in a grand success.

### Status of FMCGs in Indian Market

Fig Courtesy-https://www.ibef.org/industry/fmcg.aspx

The Pharmaceutical Sector too well- maintained its score despite Pandemic Blues. The reason behind it was the utility off the products it deals in. This sector holds a significant position in Indian as well as Global Market.

### Status of Pharmaceutical Sector in Indian Market

FigCourtesy-https://www.ibef.org/industry/ pharmaceutical-india.aspx
The pharma sector didn't shrink rather the COVID 19 precautions identified by the medical experts surged the sector. It brought in a healthy customer traffic which contributed for its stable score. As compared to the FMCG Sector the pharmaceutical didn't face many challenges. Hence it didn't employ too many marketing tactics. The only tactic utilized by this sector to boost itself is Repeat Advertising. This excluded the need of incorporating changes in the campaign or product structure. It is basically a planned recap of the products for the target audience. The customers were informed how such products can be beneficial to either boost their health or rescue them from any health emergency.

The Way Ahead – A Take on Sectors & Economy

Business is one intrepid game of profit and loss. The marketers of the FMCG sector together with the Government should be superlative players. The sector is presently the fourth largest sector in India. Its growth amidst the pandemic blues should be applauded. India stands as the third worst. Anticipating the growth of this sector, the government should frame certain policies for the present economic situation, keeping in view the trends in virus spread and potential toll on economy, incomes and spending ability of people. With the limited prospects, India can still start developing prudent policies for effectively controlling the virus and equally for a fast growth of the economy. The ongoing episodes from the market demonstrates the essence of both the sectors for boosting the GDP. The drop of 23.9% in the GDP can be reversed significantly if the Government tries to consider the importance of both Rural and Urban Markets and take suitable measures. There has been no trace of uniformity in the rural markets during this phase, resulting in a decline. To retain the win-win position and to maintain the uniformity, the sectors need to formulate customized tactics for the markets of different states. This execution will require a proper synchronizing with the Government and cooperation.

Apart from the mentioned sectors, the other important sectors couldn't have a balanced score until the last quarter, September 2020. They faced losses forcing them to halt until the spread is controlled. For boosting the economy of a country all the sectors equally need to be in sound health. The contemporary situation demands a solution also from the government. The efforts taken by the individual sectors didn't seem to be cup-winning ones. Hence to restart such sectors alongside the atypical strategies coordination from the Government will be required to compensate the losses suffered by various sectors and segments of the population during this pandemic phase. It can also be predicted that the sectors will regain its previous status after the new normal end.

About Dr Gajavelli V S

Dr Gajavelli V S is Professor & Chairperson, Centres of Excellence for Sustainability, Growth & Development at Institute of Management Technology Nagpur. He has more than 25 years of experience in management education, research, executive education, in-company programs, faculty development and consulting. He holds a Ph.D. from Hyderabad Central University and trained in the Participant-Centered Learning & Case Method Craft (PCL) at Harvard Business School and on Teaching Methodologies & Case Writing by Richard Ivey and Stockholm School, respectively.

He has been hosted by Burgundy School of Business, Dijon-Paris, France; and Faculty of Business & Economics at University Diponegoro, Semerang-Indonesia as a visiting scholar. Dr Gajavelli has presented and published several research papers in various national and international professional forums such as UNEP, Nairobi-Kenya and ISEE, Halifax-Canada & authored two text-books in the area of Economic Environment and Decision-making. He has several recognitions and professional awards to his credit.

About Prof. Gargi Sarma

Ms. Gargi Sarma is a faculty in post-graduate studies at K C Das Commerce College, Guwahati and earlier hosted by Guwahati University as a visiting Professor. Her academic and professional interests lie in management and marketing strategies.

Ms. Gargi is an avid academic having completed her masters in commerce and M. Phil programs and pursuing her Doctoral work in advertising. She has presented 20 papers in National & International Seminars and published 10 research papers in reputed journals. Ms. Gargi has been credited with professional achievements and awards in international forums.
The Millennium Alliance Initiative today held a ceremony to announce the award of US$ 3.6 million (₹26.25 Crore) to 49 aspiring Indian social entrepreneurs for their innovative solutions to address Indian and global development challenges. Among them, 33 innovative solutions will focus on health, agriculture, clean energy, education, water and sanitation and disability. This is the 6th round of awards made by the multilateral initiative since it was founded in 2012. The remaining 16 solutions will respond to the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 crisis in India and Africa/South Asia with support (up to US$1.3 Million) from the UK Government.

Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India stated, “The Millennium Alliance directly contributes towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty alleviation, hunger reduction, good health and well-being, quality education, clean water & sanitation, affordable and clean energy and partnerships. I hope the Millennium Alliance continues to contribute with positive socio-economic impact across the developing world. I congratulate all the partners, innovators and entrepreneurs who have been part of this journey and wish the initiative all the success to move from strength to strength.”

Recognising Hard Work

Congratulating the winners, the U.S. Chargé d'affaires Edgard Kagan said, “The United States and India have a long history of collaboration in the development sector, including working together on cutting-edge research and building partnerships that promote science and technology-based innovation and entrepreneurship. We are honored to recognize the hard work and dedication of the 49 enterprises receiving the grant, who are addressing some of India’s most challenging development issues, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Sir Philip Barton, British High Commissioner to India said, “I am delighted to join the Millennium Alliance Awards ceremony today. Now more than ever, the global community should come together to tackle the challenges that face us all. The Millennium Alliance Awards recognize the creativity of innovators in providing solutions to the current COVID-19 crisis. As a joint force for good, the UK-India are working together to address global development challenges across health, agriculture, clean energy, education, water & sanitation and disability sectors. The Millennium Alliance demonstrates our joint determination to ‘build back better’ from this crisis.”

Aja Chowdhry, Founder, HCL and Chairman, FICCI Start-up Committee stated, “The Millennium Alliance is a unique partnership that brings together global partners for achieving a common objective of fostering social innovation. The enterprises awarded under the program are playing an important role in providing service delivery of affordable solutions at the last mile. The Alliance supports technology and innovation development taking India on a path of self-reliance.”

Central ministries and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) have cleared payments to the tune of over Rs 6,800 crore owed to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the last three months. “More than Rs 6,800 crore have been paid by the Ministries and CPSEs in the last three months alone,” the MSME ministry said in a statement.

“Almost three-fourths of the monthly dues have been paid during the same month by most of the ministries and CPSEs. The pending amounts are expected to be released in the normal course of business and within 45 days,” the ministry added.

In May, the Union Finance Minister, as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat package, had announced that government entities should make such payments within 45 days. The Ministry of MSME said it followed up on this announcement vigorously and took up the matter with the central ministries, CPSEs and state governments.

“Particularly very active follow up has been done with the Heads of CPSEs,” it added.

The Ministry further said that to make the reporting easy, regular and seamless, a dedicated online reporting format has been made for reporting the monthly payments and monthly pending. The MSME Development Act of 2006 provides that such dues should be paid within 45 days.

“Active follow up is being done with the state governments for payment and regular reports. Similar online reporting system has been devised and put in place for the states' reporting,” it added. (KNN)
There are probably many definitions of the word mediocre or mediocrity, but my definition is “thinking and believing that I am doing the best I can.” Honestly, there is no harm in being mediocre but the world pays for excellence, brilliance. They pay for the diamond which has better clarity or cut, the footwear that is custom-made, the engineer who is more innovative; a doctor who is more skilled, pen which makes writing a pleasure, the car with the best engineering and aesthetics, the instrument which gives highest accuracy, the sound system with the superior quality sound. The list can simply continue. Bottom line is — there are too many contenders who are fighting to be mediocre. There is little value addition or differentiation for the better. The ones who have created excellence in their work or business have become established and developed a sustainable model for existence.

Why do people or businesses in general tend to be mediocre? It is easy and does not require much effort. Why bother striving for perfection? Quite often it is the lack of internal motivation and misplaced cognition of what is it we really want. Everyone wants more money, better living standards and comfort but can we get it just by wishful thinking? We have to walk the extra mile and not only try to become above average but strive to improve – continuously, relentlessly. We have to take things to a particular state of conclusion. Till then the job is just not done and something that is half done is not worth much.
needs to be done with a commitment to accuracy with complete follow-through. My lawn tennis coach used to always stress on the need for follow-through in the strokes I played. He would say, “If your follow-through is good, you will achieve the results you desire. The job is not over when your racket connects with the ball, it has to be made to land in the required part of the opponents’ court to help you score a point or give you a tactical advantage.” Try throwing the ball in a bowling alley and restricting the follow-through. See where the ball lands up and how many pins fall. Once you offer a quotation, do you check back with the prospect if the rate is acceptable? Do you ask what else is required to secure the order? Once the order is secured do you keep the customer in loop about the delivery schedule, do you check back if the items were received as desired? Do you inquire if anything else can be done to improve the relation between you and your buyer or seller? Do you walk the extra mile? Do you make that effort? If not, try and do it. See the difference. Everything should be taken to its logical end and if it is a regular business transaction then the process has to be repeated every time without fail. That is how we can try to attain excellence and differentiate us from the herd.

The easier way is to be inefficient, do poor quality work and resort to blame game or bribery, skimming, cheating to cover up for the slack. You can pay off people only so many times then you get stuck in the maze. The harder but more sustainable route is to set the systems right, create checks and balances, demonstrate compliance and demand the same from everyone else. Motivate yourself to do a job properly and with dedication every time without fail. Make the extra effort whether your job description calls for it or not. Many people get similar opportunities only few shine while the rest remain mediocre. Mediocrity is mundane, all pervasive and replicated at ease. Apple, Rolex, Rolls Royce, Victorinox, Faber are few examples of excellence. The world worships excellence, they aspire for those people, products or services and they are ready to pay the demanded price justified or not.

The only thing that stops you from rising above mediocrity and aiming for excellence is you.

“Only a mediocre person is always at his best.”
— W. Somerset Maugham

Dr. Ipshita Banu Guha is Associate Editor, SME WORLD and is the author of “Going Soft is the New Normal” (available on Amazon -http://www.amazon.com/dp/B008JUL81O)
International trade has flourished over the years due to the many benefits it has offered to different countries across the globe. The international trade accounts for a good part of a country’s gross domestic product. It is also one of the important sources of revenue for a developing country. However, there are a lot of risks involved in the import export activity. How to overcome the frauds and secure your business?

Imports in India averaged 6745 USD Million from 1957 until 2016, reaching an all time high of 45281.90 USD Million in May of 2011 and a record low of 117.40 USD Million in August of 1958. India is heavily dependent on crude oil imports, with petroleum crude accounting for about 34 percent of the total inward shipments. India imports: Crude Oil (34% of total imports), gold and silver (12% of the total imports), machinery (10%), electronic goods (7%) and pearls, precious and semi-precious stones (5%). India's main import partners are China (10.7% of the total shipments), United Arab Emirates (8 %), Saudi Arabia (7%), Switzerland (7%) and the United States (5%) as per available data. As per During June,2016 exports were valued at US$ 22572.30 million (Rs.151904.56 crore) which was 1.27 per cent higher in Dollar terms (6.72 per cent higher in Rupee terms) than the level of US$ 22289.43 million (Rs. 142341.88 crore) during June,2015. Imports during June 2016 were valued at US$ 30688.54 million (Rs. 206524.39 crore).

Due to advanced production techniques, highly advanced transportation systems, transnational corporations, outsourcing of manufacturing and services, and rapid industrialization, the international trade system is growing and spreading very fast. Cross border transactions created many opportunities for exporters and importers across the globe to import products having less production cost in exporting country and thereby taking advantage of margins in selling in domestic market.

**Risk associated with Import Business**

Risk is a fact of business life, more so of international business. Importing can be an effective way of finding low-cost supplies, reducing your costs and delivery times mean working capital can be tied up for many months.

- The distance between importing country and country of supplier is much greater than when importer sources locally. This applies to geographical distance, but equally to cultural and language differences. This can make it more difficult to deal with quality control, or to return faulty goods.
- Import can be proved extremely complex, confusing, costly and loss making if you are not vigilant importer. Expected gains can often be erased by long transit times, rising or fluctuating delivery costs, unexpected delays and fraud by supplier.

**Most common frauds in Import Business**

In a cross border transactions, learning more about your trading partner is a critical part of business decisions. In global trade there is little room for error in choosing a trustworthy supplier or relying on a credible buyer. Some of the common frauds in import business are:

1. No response from supplier after opening of Letter of Credit.
2. No response from supplier after payment of initial deposit as per contract.
3. Fake Bill of Lading is submitted by supplier along with other shipping documents and payment is made as per contract either LC terms or TT.
4. Product delivered is totally different from product ordered and payment of LC (at sight) is released by bank based on fake Bill of Lading. Sometime supplier ships product is either banned or on which Anti dumping duty is applicable in India.
5. Delivered product is different from approved sample product and it does not match with your requirement in terms of...
color, chemical composition, size, length, taste etc.

**Protect Your Business**

1. **Selection of Supplier**
   - Request a copy of the company’s certificate of import/export, business license, check validity of address and phone number, license validity date, name of registered representative, etc.
   - Check online details of company like promoters, management, subscribed capital etc on Company registry portal of particular country.
   - Take opinion about your supplier from Indian Embassy located in country of your supplier.
   - Verify the company’s international trade experience and avoid firms that have less than two years of experience.
   - Seek multiple references and check them. Request referrals to both suppliers and customers.
   - Sign sale contract only after taking legal opinion from qualified professional about the validity and enforceability.
   - If you are going to trade for high value transactions or for long term trade then insist on having the registration document and other agreements signed with the supplier company attested by the Embassy of India or the relevant Consulate in country of supplier.
   - Include arbitration clause in contract and clearly mention that cost of arbitration shall be reimbursed to winning party by the losing party. The contract should be in English.

2. **Inspection & Payment**
   - In consultation with the supplier include a clause in the contract which provides for release of LC only after verification of quality and quantity of goods by an internationally accredited inspection agency at destination port.
   - Conduct Physical verification of the goods at the point of loading (by your known agent or reliable third party agency).
   - Never pay any advance money if you are dealing with your supplier first time. If payment term is advance payment always take bank guarantee from supplier to the extent of advance money.
   - Pay only using secured forms of payment methods such as letter of credit or direct telegraphic transfer (T/T or wire transfer).
   - Don’t release LC payment if you are not sure of the quality and quantity of the product based on shipping documents.

“**Red Flags**”

A red flag is an indicator of potential problems or issues with your supplier. There is no universal standard for identifying red flags. The method used to detect problems depends on your due diligence and research methodology at the time of selecting supplier. Below are a few red flags that can be indication for possibility of fraud.

- Supplier is not familiar with your product’s application, grades, size, chemical composition etc.
- Limited details or unwillingness to provide information related to their company.
- Incomplete information of Supplier Company in the sale contract.
- Supplier’s Inability to specifically explain the export regulations applicable to your product.
- Supplier’s Location of office space is in residential areas.
- Less than one year of operation history with very young leadership
- Unusually large product supply capacity or urgency to supply
- Insistence that the contract is only legitimate if signed in exporting country

**Recovery of loss due to fraud**

Dealing with the right supplier and loading inspection by trustworthy agency reduce the risks of poor quality goods or delivery problems. Even so, suppliers can fail to meet their obligations. Enforcing your contractual rights can be difficult, time consuming, expensive or even impossible. If you are victim of any import fraud, you have following options to recover your money or goods but nothing is guaranteed.

1. The Best and cost saving method is negotiation & mediation with supplier. However most of the time this method is not workable when Supplier Company is not a legal entity or has no physical business presence.
2. Submit complaint along with summary of case and copy of all documents to the Consul of Indian Embassy located in country of your supplier. In most cases if Supplier Company is legal registered company this method brings the positive result.
3. Submit complaint to Council for promotion of International Trade located in country of your supplier. This method mostly works in parallel with method no. 2 and brings positive result.
4. You can appoint an Arbitrator in consultation with your supplier as per contract clause and arbitration court will decide the case by issuing judgment in form of Arbitration Award and its legally binding to both the parties. However in some countries arbitration judgment awarded in a country different from a country of supplier is not enforceable in country of your supplier due to different laws. E. g Arbitration award passed by Singapore International Arbitration Centre is not enforceable in China.
5. Last & final option available to importer is to file a civil case against the supplier in a court of supplier’s country. This method is most expensive, tedious and time consuming. However if the value of transaction involved is much higher than total cost including advocate fee and related expenses and no other method is workable then this is the option where importer can recover his money.

Shiva Chaudhari, a chartered accountant, is a young and an enthusiastic entrepreneur and is the founder & CEO of the Blueship Overseas Trade Private Limited engaged in international trade in many products. He has 10 years of experience in field of management & business development. A fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, he is qualified company secretary and also holds degree of Master in Business Administration. He guides various SMEs in field of business plan, Strategy, Risk Management, Finance and Business growth. He can be reached at
India is a vast country with the 2nd highest population in the world. It has the richness of healthcare resources running in its veins. The country is the global resource centre of Yoga and also the 3rd largest producer of medicines worldwide. 50% of the world's vaccines come from here. Not only technological disruptions, our nation are equally endowed with natural produce as well (largest producer of milk and 2nd largest producer of vegetables).

However, despite the natural bounty, an estimated 649 million Indians do not have access to quality nutrition and healthcare. The country is the capital of diabetes and obesity. Chronic diseases are projected to account for 53% of total deaths. A considerably large number of prescriptions are written by unqualified doctors.

Needless to say, the severity of the above-mentioned situations amplified in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. So, the question arises: despite booming resources, why is the last mile not finding access to them?

Structured Distribution
Lack of structured distribution of quality generic medicine in India is the reason. Our country is characterised by its highly and densely populated areas with a great divide between the urban and rural ones. The traditional practices of healthcare focus mostly on the urban-centric population with a limited focus on semi-urban and rural areas. This can be solved by digital technology, but this is not enough. Healthcare also needs to be local and personalised to reach every nook and corner.

So even if the pharmaceutical industry has expanded in view of the pandemic situation, the benefits may not have trickled down to all strata of the population.

And we at SastaSundar are addressing exactly that!

SastaSundar is a digital platform of healthcare supported by a network of physical counselling and service centres called ‘healthbuddies’. The service verticals of SastaSundar are Pharmacy, Diagnostics and Wellness. We are essentially a partnership between online to offline, digital to personal, AI to hug and cloud to local care; we work on making consistent access of affordable healthcare available to all segments of the population.

By integrating AI and data analytics with personal counselling, SastaSundar is providing a comprehensive solution to a wide range of healthcare needs - from preventive care to diagnostics to medicine procurement to doctor consultation. And technology is playing the critical role of connecting all the healthcare service providers in our ecosystem and bridging various social segments through the local network. SastaSundar is a smart integration of online, offline, data and logistics.

The advent of COVID-19 has brought an unprecedented time upon the world. Amidst the panic and exigency, the viral contagion has triggered, the disease is teaching us an important lesson too. COVID-19 has pointed out and rightly so, that both diseases and complications demand prevention. So, compliance and availability of right medicine, diagnostic services and counselling are critical.
To ensure healthcare delivery across all geography - Urban, Rural, Internet and Off-the-Internet, we are going beyond the existing ways of healthcare delivery.

The model is based on the belief “Healthcare should be Local”. So our online-offline model is supported by network of local small chemists. By walking every step of the way with them, the platform encourages local entrepreneurship and aatmanirbharta. As a Local Support System, each small chemist takes healthcare to the doorsteps of all the people in his locality – Community Servicing and Counselling. As a result, the reach of healthcare is getting expanded from metros to tier1, tier2 cities and up to the last village of the country.

In context of COVID-19, we apprehended the possible problems, accepted the challenge, and decided to face it with full preparedness, precaution and care. We started the preparations in the middle of February and when nationwide lockdown was announced during March end, the entire team was streamlined to supply medicine and healthcare products to the customers without any disturbance. Not even for a minute were our services closed. All our employees and healthbuddies were fully on the ground to suffice COVID essentials like masks, hand sanitisers and thermometers among others to the customers. Undertaking considerable risks to their health, our delivery boys delivered door to door so that our customers faced no hassle or scarcity. Very importantly, we ensured at all points of time that all of us, employees, healthbuddies and delivery boys alike, strictly adhered to all safety protocols.

Healthbuddy Network

Both our Area Logistics Centers at Kolkata and Delhi-NCR were always fully operational and almost all medicines were available at SastaSundar.com without any disturbance or shortage of supply. Consequently, the team was empowered enough to face all challenges. Our efficient supply chain management proved yet again that even in such a difficult situation, our values of genuineness and our principles of efficiency in terms of cost & consumer experience, remain intact.

We have started our 3rd Area Logistics Center and healthbuddy network in Maharashtra (West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Delhi, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Uttarakhand networks are also active). The places where we are not building our healthbuddy network right now, are being serviced via courier and therefore, we are sufficing doorstep delivery to customers almost across PAN India.

For generating awareness on COVID-19 & immunity, we have built one of the largest Knowledge Resource Centres with 1000+ articles, videos, interviews & safety protocols, etc. The idea has been to empower our customers with the rightful information and to help them act upon the rightful advices. This app and web digital library can be freely accessed by one and all.

We envision our business as our social objective and this philosophy is working very well in the time of COVID-19. Our culture of service, of 'Being Child' is playing a critical role in establishing emotional connectivity among our team members and the same is also extending to our customers. So essentially, even if distant physically, we are always together - emotionally and digitally.

We are mission-oriented to solve India’s healthcare access problem; and this resolution is firmed by the COVID-19 challenge.

Identifying the need of the hour, we have also launched a range of immunity boosting herbal products like Immunity Kadha, Golden Milk Mixture, Giloy Powder and Steam Inhaler among others, in our ambit.

About B. L. Mittal

B L Mittal, Founder & Executive Chairman of SastaSundar.com, is providing consistent access to affordable healthcare in a convenient manner. He is FCA, FCS and FCM and comes with an experience of over 25 years working as an entrepreneur, a social worker. His areas of working have been strategic management, healthcare and investment banking.

Mittal started his career with M.P. Birla Group. Later in the year 2000, he founded his first company in financial services named Microsec, and in the year 2013, he moved on to the domain of healthcare and founded SastaSundar.com. Mr. Mittal is closely associated with Annamrita (a mid-day meal scheme of ISKCON Foundation). He is the founding member of Microsec Foundation.

Mittal believes that innovation, non-discrimination, emotional connect and happiness are the integral parts. Being genuine is his core values, he believes that imagination, conduct and communication should always be genuine.
Lockdown Afforded Us Opportunity to Enhance Knowledge and Capabilities: Essentia Environments

This pandemic, the resulting lockdown and the ongoing slowdown has affected our industry as much as, if not more than, most of the other economic activity in the country. When you are pushed into isolation and are struggling to stay afloat financially, new construction or upgrading your facilities is not high on your list of priorities so of course a slow down across our industry was not just inevitable but also understandable. However, interestingly the last few months have seen us get busier than ever. We took a conscious decision to not just upgrade our knowledge base across the organization but also add to our capabilities during this slowdown. Being mindful of the situation that all of us find ourselves in, we have also been very aggressive with our pricing.

We have consciously sacrificed profit over revenue. And as a result our teams have expanded both in numbers and intellect, our product offering has grown, and so has our revenue. All of this infuses a sense of purpose and confidence in us all. Lastly, this pandemic has nudged us to increase our digital presence. We are of course having more zoom meetings with both our clients and suppliers but also live chats and interactions which keeps us connected with a wider audience. These are of course strategic steps which have allowed us to not just survive but rather thrive in these challenging times. However, these steps would have been brought to naught without having a sense of changing requirements and preferences of not just our clients but

Never let a good crisis goes to waste' so said Winston Churchill. Apparently. Whether he actually said it or not there is still something about the phrase that resonates with all of us at Essentia. It spurred us to action instead of passively accepting the consequences of events beyond our control.

Hardesh Chawla
This pandemic, the resulting lockdown and the ongoing slowdown has affected our industry as much as, if not more than, most of the other economic activity in the country. When you are pushed into isolation and are struggling to stay afloat financially, new construction or upgrading your facilities is not high on your list of priorities so of course a slow down across our industry was not just inevitable but also understandable.

exaggerated manner. With aggressive pricing, more comprehensive offering, and a sense of understanding and empathy for the current environment, I genuinely believe that Essentia Environments is ideally positioned to offer a partnership rather than a typical client-service relationship to all our customers.

I feel it would be a disservice if we don't point out all the positives that this crisis has bestowed upon us before I sign off. We see young people embracing the responsibility of maintaining extra hygiene and social distancing with alacrity and without a whimper just to protect their elders. We see suppliers across our value chain stepping up and working harder than ever to meet their commitments. It has brought families closer and nudged us all to recognize the obvious that It is all about people you love and care for. And it has forced us all to have a scientific bend of mind and thus become smarter just to survive this. Aristotle recognized this eons ago when he said 'Suffering becomes beautiful when anyone bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility but through greatness of mind'.

Lastly, let me take this opportunity to also wish you and all your readers good health. May you all stay safe and prosper.

About Hardesh Chawla

Hardesh Chawla, Founder of Essentia Environments, comes with over 20 years of experience in bringing complex and intricate designs to life. Chawla, the driving force behind Essentia Environments has constantly set new benchmarks with each project and has encouraged his clients to expect more.

An MBA from INSEAD, and having worked in several countries, he has instilled a sense of professionalism, discipline, and integrity which has been instrumental in helping him achieve success and take his enterprise to where it is today. Having an engineering background, he is well equipped to find solutions to complex problems.

After a successful career in financial services and real estate, Hardesh found his true calling in creating beautiful spaces for a discerning set of clients in India and abroad. From corporate spaces to retail to restaurants and high-end residences, he has done it all.

“I thrive in a challenging environment. I enjoy pushing myself and my team and, in the process, evolve and improve myself and the processes. I love meeting commitments and take huge pleasure in meeting deadlines. The feeling that you get after a job well done is immensely satisfying and gives a high that remains unmatched, for me at least” says Mr. Chawla.

He believes that building spaces is a team effort and having a qualified and professional team is what sets them apart. What further helps is the experience of having created hundreds of spaces over the past two decades and the fact that all the necessary skill sets are available in-house. “Essentia Environments gives me the freedom to express the confidence, power, and attitude of today’s design. It also allows me the opportunity to do something about the way I want our modern India to be”, he believes.
In today's word of intense competition in the business sector, no matter what the size of your business, you need marketing for success. Changing times, increasing aspirations of the consumer at one end; decreasing pricing power due to intense competition and proliferation of brands at the other call for the invention of 'New Age' marketing strategies. The companies are beginning to leverage informal social networks to engage people, mollify customers, strengthen their brands and even hire people.

India has one of the largest internet populations in the world. So, for the companies in India, there is a need for an attitudinal change. New age represents new ideas, media, technology relationships and new channels of marketing and sales, including the social media such as Facebook. New Age marketing must understand consumers, create desire and demand amongst them. New age consumers are more demanding and fast changing too. All good brands must establish a partnership with the consumer across product design and pricing. Moreover, these users are the most sought-after customers with high disposable incomes, and companies with clear online media plans are waking up to the fact that they can reap the benefits of engaging with this audience. Those that don't, risk losing the customers that they already have or slipping behind their more savvy competitors.

However, there is no denying that marketing is one of the weakest areas where SMEs & SMBs face problems. Constant change in the marketing dynamics as a result of technological revolution and marketing orientation in the wake of globalisation is making a profound impact on the competitiveness and existence of SMEs. The major problem faced by SMEs relate to a slackening of demand for their products/services leading to liquidity crunch.
In the turbulent business environment, even the large corporate have to face slackening of demand for their products/services. In the present scenario, to succeed in an ever dynamic business and economic environment, SMEs have to think beyond orthodox/traditional marketing practices and adopt new age tools to promote their products and services: websites, search engine optimization, social media, blogging and e-commerce tools for instance, have emerged as channels that businesses cannot ignore. They have become more a necessity than choice.

Knowing what kind of marketing channels are effective for small businesses can help you target your resources and benchmark your efforts against the rest of the sector. Over 70% of SMEs had websites set up, whilst social media and digital advertising were the second most common form of digital marketing employed. Email marketing came in third, which is an area we suggest SMEs should look at if they haven't already using it, because of its track record of delivering ROI.

The problems in this regard are that when you are using social media, you will not be able to properly predict what kind of 'return' you can get. So it is very important to monitor your social media campaigns closely. Even when it is for advertisement, it can't be pinpointed that someone will get 'x' kind of impact when they are spending 'y' amount of money. But as far as technique of using social media for SMEs and SMBs go, there is no one particular technique, which can be used for everybody. The techniques will change as the requirement will change.

**Different Perspective**

Line Media and Hospitality Pvt Ltd is catering to SMEs and SMBs but with a totally different perspective. Given the right personalised touch, they show the greatest scope of growth. The Idea has always been optimising a marketing budget, not adding to it. To emphasise, LMH looks at the current areas of expenditure, tries best to convert the impact from that to a tangible ROI. This allows understanding the purpose of the activity. This is only capable in an SMB, where one can make changes to marketing methods and see a reflection in the sales figures in a short period of time. To emphasise on the same, the aim is to always work within the designated budget, not increase it. It is important to understand that if a client is hiring marketing experts they are already spending money.

Lot of businesses are hesitant on newer marketing techniques and they needed to be shown around it. Technology today allows us to take on a plethora of modes and mediums tailor made for different purposes including branding, selling, marketing & impacting. For an F&B sector client, LMH has incorporated NFC tags, which in turn triggered sales, while on the other hand, for a B2B client, they have created an entire portal, which has squeezed their workload and so they were able to spend more time on Lead Generation. They have used FB wi-fi to increase the number of organic reach on the client's FB page, have Integrated apps into offline Media which enabled consumers to Interact with the product brochure.

But one of the biggest hurdles in front of these companies is where to spend and how to spend. They really have to spend effectively and at the same time, they should track their results on a regular basis and really analyse those. And that is why companies providing marketing strategies and integrated digitalsolutions should be their first choice.

Keeping in mind all the above perspective, today, SMEs and SMBs should go for optimum marketing solutions. Minimising cost and maximising the output in this regard should be the key objective for any company who is providing marketing solutions and LMH is also aiming that.

**Vasisht Gopalka is Director, Line Media & Hospitality Pvt Ltd**
Lee Dongsoo
He has dedicated his Life to Spirulina

Years ago when he met with a serious accident and had given up all hopes to lead a healthy life again, he was introduced to Spirulina. “In fact it is only Spirulina' which saved me,” says Lee Dongsoo.
Since that day he decided to propagate Spirulina and reveal to the world what wonders Spirulina can do.

He conceived a brand “Earth Spirulina’ and started importing Spirulina and making it in state-of-the-packs. His passion to Spirulina is so strong that he undertook global survey to fetch the best quality of Spirulina.

Today, Earth Spirulina is a successful brand and remains in high demand.

What is Spirulina?
Spirulina is a natural “algae” (cyanbacteria) powder that is incredibly high in protein and a good source of antioxidants, B-vitamins and other nutrients. When harvested correctly from non-contaminated ponds and bodies of water, it is one of the most potent nutrient sources available.

It is largely made up of protein and essential amino acids, and is typically recommended to vegetarians due to its high natural iron content. The high concentration of protein and iron also makes it ideal during pregnancy, after surgery, or anytime the immune system needs a boost.

Benefits of Spirulina
Though it does taste like pond scum, Spirulina has some great health-boosting qualities. It is also described as the most Nutrient Dense Food On the Planet

The concentration of protein and vitamins in Spirulina has led many to classify it as the “most nutrient dense food on the planet.” Compared to other foods gram for gram, it lives up to this reputation and is a great source of:

- **Protein:** It is considered a complete source of high-quality protein and is often compared to eggs for the amount of protein per gram. The protein in Spirulina is highly usable and has a net protein utilization rate of between 50-61%
- **Vitamin B1:** Also called Thiamin, this vitamin is necessary for the digestion of fats and proteins. It is often taken for increased energy, eye health, brain function and for improving nerve functioning.
- **Iron:** Spirulina is a favorite food for vegetarians and vegans because it is one of the best plant sources of iron. Even for those who consume meat, it has a highly absorbable form of iron that is gentle on the digestive system.
- **Calcium:** Spirulina is also incredibly high in calcium with over 26 times the calcium in milk.
Higher Education in India:

What needs to be changed?

The subsequent governments of India over the decades recognized the importance of higher education in India ever since independence. As a result, important areas such as educational institutions, school enrolment, technical education, and higher education in other fields have been the key areas of importance.

However, the recent 'Top 100 Universities of the world 2014' list presents a dismal scenario of Indian educational institutions as none of the universities and colleges have made it to the elite club of the international universities. Here we will throw light on the major challenges faced by higher education in India and the other important factors that need attention.

The higher education system in India is the third largest in the world after China and the US. According to the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) report 2013, there are over 3524 institutions that offer post-diploma and diploma courses. Moreover, around 3495 engineering colleges in India offer degree courses to more than 1.2 million student intake. Some Indian institutions for higher education such as Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Management (IIM) are well recognized. However, when it comes to global competition, the ranking of our educational institutions struggles to compete with the foreign varskies.

Four Major Challenges

What hinders the growth of higher education sector in India? Is it the high cost of education, low quality of research, less industry interaction, or curriculum?

The dismal performance of our education system in the global platform is an area of concern. We have few institutions that prepare professionals for the small and medium sectors. Those who seek international exposure choose to study abroad or choose top ranking Indian institutions like IIMs and IITs and move abroad for job. Major challenges include:

1) Equity concern
This is one of the biggest concerns in our education system. There is an equity concern due to disparity in terms of gender, communities and rural-urban. The access to quality education is much below the expected level for students belonging to all low-income groups of the society. High tuition fee for professional courses in Indian varskies creates a gap between higher education and the aspiring engineers or medical students.

An article in Forbes concerns the rising cost of education: College Costs Out of Control. The cost is rising with little or no effort to control it.

Possible Solution: The need of the hour is some more educational institutions that offer professional degrees at an affordable cost. More colleges are required that are dedicated to churn out professionals for the small and medium enterprises.

2) Expansion
During 2001-2009, student enrolment for higher education in India has grown at an annual rate of 7.4 per cent, which lags behind that of Brazil, China, and Malaysia. Thus, the expansion of higher education in India is slow than its International counterparts in terms of student enrollment.

Solution: The government should make more efforts to encourage students to enroll for higher education. As mentioned before, high cost of education becomes a major hindrance between the talented students and their career dreams. Professional education is possible for those who can afford high college fees. Less student...
Many graduates from IITs and IIMs do not choose to contribute their skills to Indian sectors and either join a company abroad or pursue advanced studies there. With an improved education system, we can dream of a country where economic growth, employment, and business opportunities are available.

Enrollment is a result of a wide gap in education quality, which is based on the financial status of families. As per a combined study by Caroline M Hoxby and Christopher Avery, the economist of Stanford and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, respectively, low-income group students are less likely to apply for the most selective colleges than their high income counterparts.

More government and private institutions that offer financial aid, scholarship programs, and affordable course fee can significantly work in the direction of increasing student enrollment.

3) Regulatory Environment

This is another factor of much debate. The regulatory environment that features conflicts and several issues between numerous regulatory authorities governs the higher education in India. Moreover, there remains issues related to the role of overseas higher education institutions in the country.

Possible Solution: There is an alarming requirement to define the role of private sector in higher education, particularly in context of financial resources. A better management and governance of the regulatory environment brings in some possibility of a better education system.

Many graduates from IITs and IIMs do not choose to contribute their skills to Indian sectors and either join a company abroad or pursue advanced studies there. With an improved education system, we can dream of a country where economic growth, employment, and business opportunities are available. This will encourage students to choose Indian varsities over global institutes, as there is paucity of professionals who are ready to work in promising sectors like SMEs.

4) Excellence

Excellence in terms of infrastructure, research facility for students, and quality faculty are some vital factors that play a significant role in plaguing the education sector in India. Quality education includes various dimensions out of which facilities, infrastructure, faculty, and research are the most important ones.

Faculty: High student-faculty ratio results in quality issues. While student enrollment in the last thirty years has increased six times, faculty number increased by only four times.

Education: The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accredited only 13 per cent of the colleges and 32 per cent of Indian universities in India as on March 2010. This presents a dismal picture of the quality education in the country, which plays a crucial role in employability factor. As a result, employers face difficulty in hiring the right talent.

As per an industry survey, students studying in several higher education institutes in India lack skills, which creates employability issues.

Moreover, only two Indian engineering colleges (IIT Madras and IIT Bombay) are featured in the QS World University Ranking 2014 for civil & structural engineering.

Infrastructure: Another challenge faced is the poor infrastructure and facilities offered by public sector institutions. Inadequate facilities like computer labs, library and seminar halls restrict the options of practical knowledge of the students.

Placement services offered by many Indian varsities are limited, which results in less coordination between prospective employers and students.

Moreover, inadequate attention to research facilities and innovation in higher education institutions in the country is a major pitfall. The reason could be anything such as lack of quality faculty, insufficient resources, etc. As for 2009, the students enrolled for M. Phil/Ph.D. constituted only 0.48 per cent of the total enrollment in higher education.

Possible Solution: To match the standards of foreign varsities, Indian universities and colleges should give attention to improve infrastructure. The top B-schools in the world like Wharton, IMD, and New York University’s Stern School of Business are adopting tablets as a smart mode of delivering a better learning experience to students. Harvard Business School has also converted its library of more than 17,000 titles to an effective tablet format.

As of now, the course curriculum offered by institutions in India does not encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in students. Hence, the focus of Indian institutions of higher education should also be more on framing the curriculum that increases employability for students in different fields like engineering, medicine, and management.

It is the time to improve the global competitiveness of Indian institutes of higher education to give the world best managers, engineers and doctors from India.

(Swati Srivastava is a follower of the latest trends in the education sector of India and writes for various online education and career portals. Follow her at G Plus.)
Women across India are embracing entrepreneurship as a viable career option due to increasing support at centre and state level. A survey by BNP Paribas in 2015 has reported that India currently has highest percentage of women entrepreneurs in the world. Women are a part of growing community of micro entrepreneurs in India which form 27% of all rural workers engaged in small business ventures and 16.5% of all urban workers in women work place participation. Women constitute nearly more than half of the world’s total population. In 2014-2015 the total number of women enterprises in India in small scale sector was estimated at 10,63,722 (10.11 %). About 14% of the women enterprises were in the registered as small and medium enterprises while the remaining 86% registered under micro enterprises. The share of women employment was found significantly higher at 23 % in the States of Orissa, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

Key Sectors For Women Entrepreneurs

As reported by Ministry of MSME women-led enterprises has increased from 10.45 lakh units in 2008-2010 to 23.3 lakh units in 2014-2015. Gujarat, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra score highest in Infrastructure support provided by the government for creating entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. Emerging promising sectors for women entrepreneurs include food processing, e-commerce, mobile value added services such as those related to financial inclusion, healthcare, personal care services, maintenance services, water and waste management, and education services. Currently there are 150 incubators in India – almost all are government sponsored and largely affiliated to educational institutions. In the next decade the aim is to add 1500 incubators in Tier I and Tier II cities in India.

Table 1: Women Entrepreneurs Engaged in Various Sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Percentage of Women Entrepreneurs in different sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical and Electronics</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Processing/ product</td>
<td>18.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile and Garments</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic and Rubber</td>
<td>12.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service and Trading</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro Based</td>
<td>7.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Census 2015

It is apparent from the data in the Table 1 above that the sectoral preference of women entrepreneur is highest in service and trading at 25% followed by food processing at 18.28%, textile and garment industry at 18%, plastic and rubber is 12.18% and agro based products is about 7.57%. The remaining about 24 % women have preference for sectors such as electrical and electronics, pharmaceutical, paper and construction.

Table 2: Percentage of Female Employment in the various states of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name of State/ UT</th>
<th>Percentage of Female employment in the state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>JAMMU &amp; KASHMIR</td>
<td>7.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIMACHAL PRADESH</td>
<td>6.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PUNJAB</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CHANDIGARH</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>UTTARANCHAL</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HARYANA</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DELHI</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>RAJASTHAN</td>
<td>7.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>UTTAR PRADESH</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BIHAR</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SIKKIM</td>
<td>16.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In states of Karnataka, Goa, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Mizoram, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, the share of women employment is found to be significantly higher (more than 20%) compared to the total employment in other respective States. The proportion of female employees in the total employment in the SSI sector is 13.31%.

Government Initiatives supporting Women Entrepreneurship in India

At present the percentage of population in India below poverty line is about 27% which is projected to be reduced to 14% by 2020. By 2020, total employment in agriculture may fall to less than 40 per cent, while the share of the services sector will increases proportionately because of which a change in GDP contribution is estimated below.

The Sectoral Composition of GDP in percent in 2020 will be-

- Agriculture 08
- Industry 32
- Services 60

As women constitute nearly half of the population of India, the government needs to follow an inclusive approach by empowering women entrepreneurs for sustainable development. The Internet of Things (IoT) is the latest vertical delivering solutions capability attracting investment from Angel investors and Venture capitalists. The National Investment & Infrastructure Fund has been set up with an annual flow of INR 20,000 crore which will fuel entrepreneurship across tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

Percentage of women employed in banking sector is between 15-17%. Bhartiya Mahila Bank has 70% women staff and will add 700 more women staff by 2017. Various schemes has been introduced at central and state level for promoting women entrepreneurship in India: Bharatiya Mahila Bank has devised a sustainable business model for promoting women entrepreneur in India and aims to garner Rs 60,000 crore of total business by 2020.

KVIC disbursed Rs 312.68 crore as margin money subsidy in 2011-12, compared to Rs 277.63 crore in 2010-11 — an increase of about 12 percent. Over 600 women have benefited through regular Entrepreneurship development programmes.

E-Commerce giants such as Amazon, Snapdeal and Flipkart are helping women entrepreneurs become financial independent by exploring online market places by selling products across categories such as health care, home furnishing, fashion accessories, designer jewellery, footwear, handicrafts, apparels, etc. Percentage of Women sellers on Flipkart is between 21-25%, Snapdeal has 34% and Shopclues has 20% of women entrepreneurs. Flipkart expects growth of women entrepreneurs to increase by 20%-30% by 2017. Ola cabs is a car rental company which aims to create more than 65,000 woman driver-entrepreneurs in next 4 to 5 years. The Coca-Cola Company plans to empower 5 million women entrepreneurs throughout Coca-Cola’s global business system by 2020.

Women are key drivers of economic development. However, studies reflect that large number of women are yet to be registered under MSME Act. The knowledge economy is creating opportunities for women in almost every field including ICT, online retailing, health care, tourism, education, etc. Diversity in terms of skills and demographics significantly enhance the productivity of the firm. Effective steps are needed to harness the economic potential of enterprising women participation in strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurial initiatives in Micro enterprises can bring a multiplier effect in the economy.

Dr Shaili Vadera is Assistant Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University, Lucknow.
Even amid the pandemic, scores of new businesses are being created, not only within the big metro cities, but also emerging from smaller cities and towns. E-commerce technology and platforms like Shopify are helping Indian entrepreneurs survive and thrive on limited resources and budgets. Indian businesses are now able to build their brand, reach consumers, and deliver their unique products to every part of India. The accessibility provided through e-commerce has allowed consumers to get access to their favourites brands, in turn sellers have also been agile and have adapted to the Direct To Consumer model to ensure they are able to see all across the country.

World Entrepreneurs' Day, which takes place on 21 August, aims to create awareness for entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership throughout the world. It presents the perfect opportunity to celebrate the small-town entrepreneurs who are leading the charge in India, and share their inspiring success stories.

1. **Udyan Tea from Siliguri**

Like many great businesses, Udyan Tea was born out of a strange concoction of frustration and a subsequent desire to offer a better, tastier, fresher solution. The team behind Udyan are a bunch of tea-enthusiasts who have a legacy that few can claim - they all belong to the land of tea - Darjeeling. Noticing that the majority of tea available in the market today is of substandard quality, and believing that we ought to be drinking the best tea out there, they created Udyan Tea, which offers high-quality tea sourced out directly from the best gardens in Darjeeling, Assam, Nepal and Nilgris.

2. **Muddy Hands from Siliguri**

Muddy Hands is a lifestyle brand reimagining our deep-rooted connection with nature. The brand is known for its home decor products that bring back the much-needed
warmth to our spaces in urban jungles. Founded by Vartika Agarwal and Shashi Agarwal, out of love for nature, Muddy Hands encourages everyone to bring the wild home.

3. SLATE HASH from Vadodara

SLATE HASH started with a simple idea which continues to be its focus today: create high-quality, well-designed products that we would want to own and use. As a project rooted in a passion for building something, it has grown into one of the most popular printed T-shirt brands in India. Based in Vadodara, it has attracted an avid following with signature collections inspired by pop culture themes, cult movies and sassy quotes and one liners.

4. D’sign Lab from Nashik

D’sign Lab is today an established brand from Nashik that sells functional and stylish storage products for home and garden. It was founded by Vishal Rajput and has flourished under his business and design leadership, leading it to become a household name for functional yet innovative home decor.

5. OnlyMat from Cherthala

OnlyMat is one of India's largest online stores for indoor and outdoor mats, coir mats, personalized, and stencilled mats. The brand employs skilled practitioners of the oldest handloom industries to sell authentic mats, with expertise that goes back more than 100 years. The brand aims at bringing the oldest Handloom industries alive.

6. Unique Plastic Industries from Himachal

Unique Plastic Industries have become a leading brand for industrial plastic items like PVC Tarpaulins, Shade Net, Industrial Rope, Mulching Sheet, Anti Hail Net, Shade Nets, and Green House Sheet, Seed Tray, Jute Gunny Bag, Hessian Cloth, Foldable PVC Tanks, Flower Pots, etc. as well as household items such as buckets, dustbins, mugs, racks, etc. The brand was first established in 1986 in Solan, Himachal Pradesh and has since transitioned into an online store.
What Does The Future Hold For The Poultry Sector?

India is gradually experiencing an increase in urbanization and increasingly disposable incomes. Reflecting the drift to an increasingly urban lifestyle, the 10 major cities in the country account for over 60 percent of all poultry meat consumption. There has also been a gradual shift in eating habits, with the well-informed younger generation increasingly adopting non-vegetarian diets.

Demographic changes happen to favor both broiler and egg industries as proteins derived from poultry are more affordable and are not associated with any religious taboos. Although consumption levels are rising, per capita consumption of meat is still 4.4 kg per annum against the ICMR recommended 10.5 kg per annum. The per capita consumption of eggs is 68 eggs per annum against the ICMR recommended 180 eggs per annum. Food processing is expected to become one of India’s major industries in the coming years. The production chain is rapidly evolving with increased production and processing, better storage facilities, and evolving preferences. At present, only 10 percent of the agricultural produce is processed, resulting in a lot of wastage. The government plans to triple the sector’s capacity and has also committed investments of 6000 crore rupees in mega food parks across the country. The production is becoming more integrated in the broiler sector. Meanwhile, 85 percent of all egg production is accounted for by commercial farms. The increasing demand for poultry meat and the improved organization has made India the third largest producer of eggs and the fifth largest producer of broilers.

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.

With social distancing being the new normal for foreseeable future, and the need for hygienically stored meat which is not touched by hand is going to 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.

However, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed if we want the industry to flourish.
Challenges

1) Transportation:
Over 60 percent of broiler birds and eggs are produced in six major states. Birds are usually transported alive in unhygienic and inhumane conditions resulting in mortalities during transport. Lack of dry processing and proper cold chain facilities make transport of good poultry produce a logistical challenge.

2) Licensing and Regulatory control
There is no regulatory authority ensuring quality standards in farms, processing and transportation in the domestic market. Licensing is done on the municipality level, and they lack the knowledge and expertise to enforce unified quality standards.

3) Multidrug resistant pathogens
The rampant use of antibiotics to treat infections and promote growth has led to the rise of multidrug-resistant pathogens. The industry must shift to bacteriophages and enzybiotics to minimize losses and increase productivity. Once these areas are properly addressed, it might improve the outlook for the sector.

4) Current Crisis
Although an increase in consumer demand was able to restore poultry products’ prices, the lockdown had already affected the poultry farmers in several ways. As soon as the lockdown commenced, the sales started to plummet. It also led to disruption in transportation, which prevented the movements of poultry products and other supplies to the markets. The loss of two sales broiler cycles proved to be costly for small-time poultry farmers. The bigger producers were able to tide through tough times by channeling their sales into processed meat and other value-added products. For poultry producers who sell products to the restaurant, hotel and catering sector, the current situation is quite challenging. These outlets accounted for 40 percent of total sales before the pandemic and a lot of them still remain closed despite easing of restrictions. Full recovery of the sector is not going to happen till large public gatherings like parties, weddings, and conferences are allowed to take place again.

Although restrictions are being eased in a phased manner, new hotspots continue to emerge due to which various local governments are re-imposing mobility. Meanwhile, the periodic outbreaks of avian influenza led to the recirculation of false claims that chickens are potential carriers of coronavirus. However, the temporary obstacles aside, the situation is expected to stabilize soon.

-Dr. Ramdas Kambale is Director Sales APAC and Board Member, Vetphage Pharmaceuticals.

OkCredit and Delhi Capitals Join Hands to Empower Small Businesses

OkCredit, "Digital India ka Digital BahiKhata", has announced its partnership with Delhi Capitals (DC) as their Principal Sponsor for the upcoming season thirteen of Indian Premier League (IPL), starting on 19th September 2020 in UAE.

During the tournament, OkCredit will be known as the ‘Official Digital Credit Ledger’ of Delhi Capitals. Through this association, OkCredit will endeavour to leverage its journey of digitizing the micro and small business landscape in India amongst the huge fan base of the team and tournament.

OkCredit is also supporting Delhi Capitals in getting ‘Vocal for Local’ by empowering various small and iconic retail businesses across the city with their simple to use digital solutions. As part of ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign, Delhi Capitals will tell stories of some of the most iconic shops and vendors who have become a part of the city’s unique identity over the years. OkCredit will further directly support these retailers who have now been impacted by the ongoing pandemic; to grow their business and expand their reach by helping them go digital.

Commenting on the partnership, Harsh Pokharna, Co-founder & CEO, OkCredit, said, “We are pleased to associate with Delhi Capitals as their Principal Sponsor in the upcoming IPL Season. IPL enjoys a humungous response each year and through this partnership, we hope to reach the nook and corner of our country and take a step forward in the vision of creating a Digital India. We look forward to the tournament and wish the team all the best.”

Meanwhile Dhiraj Malhotra, CEO, Delhi Capitals, said, “We are delighted to have OkCredit onboard as the ‘Official Digital Credit Ledger of Delhi Capitals. This pandemic has again highlighted the importance of going digital for both big and small businesses. OkCredit’s innovative digital ledger will provide great utility to local businesses as they recover from the lockdown. I want to thank the entire team at OkCredit for extending their valuable support.”

The Delhi Capitals’ ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign powered by OkCredit will go live building up to this year’s edition of the IPL celebrating and supporting local businesses that contributed to our city's colourful culture. OkCredit's digital solutions will help them adapt to the changing world while preserving their roots and heritage.
Gender Inequality

Let Woman Come Out of Her Comfort Zone

There has always been a lot of discussion on gender inequality in India and across the world. But the question here is, whom should we blame for Gender Inequality. And the obvious answer that comes here is a community called MALES. But if we try and understand a broader perspective, there may be other factors also that can be considered for Gender Inequality. i.e Females, Organizations, Society.

Let us first understand why females themselves can be the first & foremost factor responsible for gender inequality. The definition of equality is that one should be treated equally in all means. So, if we talk about gender equality in corporate, it will be demanding and expecting equality in terms of wages, work profile, behavioral treatment and promotions & career advancement. But let us be honest to ourselves and answer these questions.

The Female Card

How many of us are ready to stay back
in office till late, work on Sundays or public holidays, travel within a short notice to any corner of the country or the world without any hesitation, ready to travel with any of the colleagues without asking whether the person is a male or female. Well here, we may use our 'Ladies Card' and pass on our work to a male colleague and request him to complete the work by sitting late as you have a social responsibility to fulfill at home. When asked to travel, you may refuse to do so, may be

Talking about the organizations, as we discussed in the earlier paragraph, we females are ready to work and accept the responsibility for all the equivalent profiles that males are working on. But if the top management (organization) is not letting you do the same because of societal factors like, what if some mishap happens when you are travelling alone late night or what about your safety while travelling in a remote area or what if the industry demands recruitment of only males and entry of females are prohibited at the time of recruitment itself?

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These mentioned things may be done purposefully as the organizations may always be under a social pressure and fear as to security of the lady while performing her assignment, the company may be held responsible for the same, which may in turn harm or tarnish the image of the company. So then here again not males, not females but the organization is responsible for gender inequality.

And lastly, let us talk about the society. We females are ready to perform equally as Males. Males are also ready to promote equality and the organization is also totally into promotion of equality between males and females in all the aspects. But sometimes it happens that males, females and organizations are not doing so or are not allowed to do so because of the societal pressure which forces them to put males and female in separate or different cadre.

So to conclude, let us all come out of our stereotype mindset and try and not blame any one factor for gender inequality but understand and analyse the situation and view gender inequality in broader and a holistic way.

Comfort Zone

Let us come out of our comfort zone and let males not underestimate the capacity of a females. Let organizations not remain under societal pressure and let society not judge females in a stereotype way and assess her character on the basis of the job profile.

Once we fix and overcome the above problems, the world will be full of a bias-free environment and there will be no inequality between males and females in the corporate world.

However, the write up is pointing towards the corporate world and may not apply to all the areas where females are working. And it may also not apply to self made, brave, dedicated, hardworking and powerful women who have never ever bothered about all these stereotypes and have made it to the top most position in their career.
Today, digitalization is the question and solution to all our problems, with how accessible it is to every household. The constant usage of digital platforms has taken the advertising game for brands a notch higher. In the last few years, digitalization determines the buying pattern of consumers. As a result, offline advertising is losing its charm, paving the way for a more successful medium of advertising, digital, or online advertising.

Advertising has always been about helping a brand to connect with its audience at the right place and time. Today, brands can connect with their audience at a platform where they are spending most of their time: the Internet. 65% of people watch a pop-up ad or a video advertisement on YouTube and get influenced by it to buy something.

Digital Advertising is a form of advertising that is available online. It is an effective way to attract, engage, and connect with customers online. But there is a lot of fuss surrounding digital advertising. We will be answering some of the primary questions surrounding it.

What is Digital Advertising?

Digital Advertising is a process of gaining publicity through online platforms like social media, search engines, websites, and other platforms that can reach digitally. Today, consumers spend more of their time on the web, so digital advertising helps you to connect with your target audience in the right place.

How do Digital Ads prove its effectiveness?

Digital Ads work by using Internet-based advertising tools to research, manage, track, analyze, and improve online advertising campaigns. Digital media advertising is not just putting up quick digital ads on Twitter, Pinterest, or Yahoo.

When done effectively, digital marketing seamlessly integrates into your target customer’s user experience thereon website, guiding them back to your site and business. It does so in a very natural and non-intrusive way. Digital ads are personalized to maximize relevance to your target customer this, in turn, maximizes conversion rates, and since it is digital, you’ll track virtually every step your customer makes about your ad. This allows you to realize an ROI unacceptable through other means.

What Are the Types of Digital Advertising? What reasonably Digital Ads are you able to Use?

Digital advertising includes six primary types:

- PPC (Pay Per Click)
- CPM
- Search Advertising
- Display Remarketing
- Social Media
- Email

Your business goals define which form of digital advertising is suitable for you. The correct usage will be able to satisfy your marketing goals like:

- Generate leads
- Increase Brand Awareness
- Get More Customers
- Make More Sales
- Get customers to spend more

Digital Advertising: A boon

You won’t have to ask about digital advertising once you see it working for your business like magic. No other method can drive targeted traffic faster than Internet ads. Increase revenues and grow your business with this important tool.

There are such a large amount of different tools and platforms available to induce you more engagement and sales together with your customer base. If you’re able to dive into the method but need touch assistance getting the results you would like, there’s still some way to grow your digital media advertising.

Digital Ecosystem:

This digitized world has a responsibility towards its ecosystem, too. Digital ecosystems aren't only one of the largest innovation trends to emerge in recent years. They're quickly gaining economic might. In fact, they may generate an estimated 30% of world corporate revenue by 2025, as per a survey.

Whether they form through a startup or a large capital company, digital ecosystems bring companies together across industries and technology areas by offering access to a standard set of content, applications, analytics, datasets and other tools. The info they
Digital ecosystems can provide every company, irrespective of vertical or size, with the tools and expertise it must gain a competitive edge. But their biggest long-term potential is also societal, not just economic. Their unique, collaborative characteristics can enable them to tackle problems and challenges greater than those of anyone company.

throw off collectively is additionally a possible gold mine for computing (AI) applications and advanced analytics tools, which may work like a magic only if they're fed huge quantities of high-quality data.

A variety of examples of ecosystems exist across many industries—in voice assistants, banking and digital payments, online shopping, healthcare, housing, the auto sector, and lots of others. Unlike traditional client-customer relationships or private business networks, each company during a digital ecosystem has something to supply and gain from a full range of participants.

Digital ecosystems can provide every company, irrespective of vertical or size, with the tools and expertise it must gain a competitive edge. But their biggest long-term potential is also societal, not just economic. Their unique, collaborative characteristics can enable them to tackle problems and challenges greater than those of anyone company. Digital ecosystems could, as an example, persuade be instrumental in slowing global climate change.

Here are 3 ways business leaders can leverage digital ecosystems to continuously innovate and thrive in 2020 and beyond.

1. New styles of Partnerships which will Jump-start Growth:

The competitive landscape has never been more intense. Digital startups have burst onto the scene and are outpacing many incumbents who are playing catch-up with digital transformation efforts. But no company has the end-to-end technology stack needed to resolve common critical challenges, like finding innovative ways to expand energy efficiency and establish long-term sustainability practices.

Open ecosystems, on the opposite hand, pile up cross-industry experts in mutually helpful ways. They permit startups to scale, to expand the market and geographic reach, and to find novel use cases for proofs of concept. They will deploy the network and industry expertise of more seasoned collaborators to achieve guidance and connect with potential customers.

For more established companies, partnering with startups can fill gaps in technical expertise that may help carve out stronger positions in new markets.

2. The Power Of Shared Data

Today, many companies are sitting on troves of highly valuable but unused data. There's enormous potential in viewing this data not only as a byproduct of the Internet of Things (IoT) but as a feasible source of revenue.

However, the practice of sharing data across companies and business models that enable data monetization continues to be in its infancy. Digital ecosystems, through the network effects they create, can significantly accelerate value creation during this space and enable win-win scenarios.

In a digital ecosystem in logistics, for instance, network participants—logistics service providers, container lines, customs authorities and others—are finding ways to share data to be able to enjoy the advantages of full cargo visibility of all players. Digital ecosystems also allow participants to share and monetize data they glean from internal sources for greater customer and societal outcomes, like sustainability. But they will also open up new market segments, business models and areas of growth that didn't exist before.

3. Toward Higher Goals

Combating temperature change could be a top priority for many companies today to fulfil regulatory requirements and to honour a collective desire to protect the earth. A recent newspaper report shows that 215 of the world's biggest companies see the temperature change as a threat, likely to affect their business within the subsequent five years, with a cumulative cost of $1 trillion.

Transforming your internal operations to be more sustainable will always be a vital objective, but companies have a new responsibility today—arguably—to also empower their partners, supply chain stakeholders and customers within the sustainability transition additionally.

Digital ecosystems are uniquely positioned to assist drive this sort of empowerment through shared goals, shared knowledge and other means. They'll offer strategic frameworks that consolidate sustainability best practices, identify priority areas for action, and connect companies with the partners and technology providers that have the sustainable solutions and services to deal with the particular problems of these searching for answers within the ecosystem.

As technologies like IoT, machine learning and AI still proliferate within the coming years, companies must be prepared to explore new paths of innovation—not just their “digital transformation” to unravel real business challenges, but to place all that digital horsepower to figure on huge problems that nobody company can solve.

Working in a Digital Ecosystem is challenging yet important for achieving a sustainable business, one that may prove to be beneficial for the planet. Hire a correct digital agency to get an answer to what actually is digital advertising and to face the challenges that come with it. One that may facilitate you to get the simple return on investment!
One of the leading crowdfunding platforms, Catapooolt, helps entrepreneurs at different stages of their journey by bringing other entrepreneurs help them by backing them to achieve the next milestone, this makes it a very conducive environment for the whole ecosystem helping each other grow by the strength of getting enough capital through crowdfunding and validation of their ideas. This also helps the entrepreneurs not dilute equity at a stage where they do not get good valuation and be more prepared when they have to go to a real institutional investment. Catapooolt also makes appropriate introductions to the strategic investors community and let the magic of the start-up do its work.

We have been helping entrepreneurs online and offline all the time, currently we have lot of entrepreneurs who we help in many ways of finding them new revenue sources, become more innovative at this stage, we even work with them to see if they can create anything which be of help in the current circumstances which might be temporary but helps the society and the entrepreneurs.

We have come up with an initiative calling entrepreneurs to help mitigate crisis of the current circumstances in healthcare, economic, agriculture, logistic & supply chain, education, hospitality, travel & tourism etc. It invites all the entrepreneurs, ideators etc. to come forward and share their ideas, solutions, services etc. to facilitate resolving the problems related to the current scenario better. It is true that entrepreneurs are the first to find solutions for problems. In this difficult time along with the constant threat by this deadly virus, which has taken a huge toll on the normalcy of life? We thought of coming up with a challenge to help Entrepreneurs who can contribute by finding solutions, which is what the Entrepreneurs are known for. Entrepreneurs who have ideation or solution in any area which is currently challenged which includes healthcare, agriculture, logistics, farmer connect, supply chain and many others etc. We ensure to back these amazing concepts and contribute our bit as a responsible platform.
Evolving new ecosystem

Catapooolt has taken multiple steps and initiatives to evolve the Entrepreneurs, Startup and innovation ecosystem.

1) Change Maker, an overall Startup identification and selection process to get the best startups and help them in their journey to the next level including connecting with investors, market access, help them with their first few clients and deals etc.

2) Product Czar is a physical product innovation initiative where we do the same things as Change Maker but for physical product innovation

3) Game changer which is same for Gaming industry

4) Corporate innovative which helps bring entrepreneurship elements to employees in large corporations so that employees get to take ownership of innovative projects and also gain out of that for doing that extra effort to achieve something extraordinary

5) Student entrepreneurship is a new program which has universities and colleges which help ingrain entrepreneurship at an early stage, they are the brightest minds and at a stage where energy is high and can build solutions at a very new age way to solve new age problems

6) We are also currently running Corona Super Solvers, an initiative where we are identifying entrepreneurs and startups who are building solutions in many verticals but with the core focus on corona and post corona circumstances related problem solving

All these initiatives are towards one common goal of helping startups, concepts, ideas, entrepreneurs to get to the next level of their journey, help them with whatever is required from funding to mentorship, to market access and also go global. We have built a lot of industry relationships in India and globally to help these projects in the fastest way possible.

We have been helping entrepreneurs online and offline all the time, currently we have lot of entrepreneurs who we help in many ways of finding them new revenue sources, become more innovative at this stage, we even work with them to see if they can create anything which be of help in the current circumstances which might be temporary but helps the society and the entrepreneurs.

About Shabir Momin

Shabir Momin started working at a very early age and became the youngest CTO at the age of 21, and was awarded Rex Karmaveer Global Fellow & Karmaveer Chakra Award (Gold) Recipient 2019. He won Business world Young Entrepreneur Award in the recent past along with Entrepreneur of the year 2013 by TiE. He is honored with the “100 Smartest Digital Marketing Leaders Citation” by World Digital Marketing Congress. Brahma Kumaris & their media wing Godlywood studio awarded him for his achievement & excellence in media at the International Conference-cum-Cultural Festival.

Shabir has had a successful track record in various technology and business positions at a CXO level for few years before he became an entrepreneur. He has sold a few ventures in the past and his current ventures that he has founded and co-founded are ZengaTV, one of the leading OTT services, OneDigital Entertainment, a Digital content company, OneAxcess.com, a unique self-serve, multi- platform distribution and monetization video ecosystem with over few thousands of content owners, creators and brand advertisers on board, InnovCrowd Pte Ltd which owns two Crowd funding platforms - DesiredWings and Catapooolt focusing on reward based and equity crowd funding respectively, Rastey, a Cab Service, WoVoyage, a women only travel company, PSiamgone.com, an after death service, Holosuit, an AR/VR, tech start up, Clinical Nutrition, Food & supplement brand etc. He has further investments in renewable power and a few other industries. He is a successful entrepreneur and a professional with an excellent track record in technology innovation especially in the digital media and convergence technology.
Auto LPG transition, the immediate antidote

According to the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), LPG has a global warming potential (GWP) factor of zero, as compared to CO2’s 1 and methane’s 25. Two of the most damaging agents impacting human health – NOx and PM with major origins in vehicular pollution – have near-zero emissions from auto LPG. In an estimate, mere doubling of autogas vehicles would reduce global NOx emissions by 4% and PM 2.5 release by 5% apart from an impressive 130 Mt reduction in CO2 emissions on a well-to-wheels (WTW) basis – within the next 20 years itself. This would translate into a massive socio-economic and environmental benefit worth $ 59 billion.

Auto LPG which is already the third widely used automotive fuel globally can therefore play a viable bridging role unitl EVs can become a reality. It will help bring substantive benefits to the environment, will be easy on consumer pocket at a time of soaring petrol prices and also allow automatic sector enough leeway to recover.

Paving the way for Autogas & alternative fuels though policy

Due to a highly assured and abundant global supply, an inherent low cost as compared to petrol and diesel, a
practical nature of transition and sheer number of vehicles available in the country, India could become the next autogas hub in the world, à la South Korea or Turkey. The government needs to realize the benefits of this “low hanging fruit” in its fight to improve air quality.

Incentivising both customers as well as suppliers for this transition is the natural first step. For the end-users to convert their existing vehicles to LPG, in addition to tax breaks and subsidies, a GST reduction for both auto LPG (presently 18%) and LPG conversion kits (presently 28%) would be a much-needed respite. Then Type Approval norms regulating conversion to gaseous fuels must also be made perpetual in alignment with global/European norms instead of the tedious need for approval every three years. The exorbitantly high nature of this conversion has been definitely deflating for the retrofitment market. This must be addressed forthwith.

Finally, promoting a basket of alternative fuels including Auto LPG, CNG and ethanol, rather than a singular push on EVs gives the end-user a wider choice of clean fuels to pick from. A series of surveys and online polls had already suggested last year that customers were not ready for electric vehicles as yet. The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME-2) policy also stands being extremely vulnerable in the face of the coronavirus crisis. In such circumstances, transitioning of personal vehicles from petrol/diesel to Auto LPG can help the country meet its environmental commitments while leaving room for the automobile sector to thrive and grow while we wait for the slow unfolding of the electric vehicles era.

About IAC
Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC) is the nodal body for the promotion of Auto LPG in India. Members of the Coalition include the Oil Sector PSUs, Private Auto LPG marketers, Kit Suppliers and Equipment manufacturers. The Coalition works very closely with the World LPG Association, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, and several other auto and petroleum industry organisations.

About CleanFUEL India
CleanFuel India, an ISO 9001:2000 Company, has been at the forefront of the Indian Auto LPG Industry backed up with CleanFUEL USA's global experience in more than 25 nations over the last two decades.

CleanFuel India has become one of the few players in the industry which are vertically integrated to include not just its retail network of Auto LPG Dispensing Stations coming up across the country, but also its CFT Auto LPG Dispensers range which are now installed in over 60 cities nationwide, covering 13 States in India.

About Suyash Gupta
Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition has been at the forefront of promoting clean auto fuel in India for the past 17 years, both as Director General of the industry body, Indian Auto LPG Coalition, and Managing Director of CleanFUEL India.

A Bachelor of Business Administration from Thames Valley University, London, Mr Gupta is a member of the Global Steering Committee of ‘Cooking for Life’ initiative promoting use of cleaner fuels and represents India on the Core GAIN Group of World LP Gas Association at Paris.

A former consultant to National Energy Technology Laboratory, US Department of Energy, Mr Gupta is also a member of apex committees of Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, being a member of Standing Committee on Emission Legislation (SCoE) & Central Motor Vehicle Rules (Technical Standing Committee) (CMVR-TSC).

In this role, he has authored several articles, chaired key sessions, traveling extensively to present papers on Indian LPG Scenario across several cities in the US, the UK, Germany, France, Poland, Japan and many other countries.
While the pandemic has painted a grim picture for a lot of industries, it is not surprising to see optimistic projections for the Indian retail and B2B e-commerce industry. India's online B2B platform industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of ~20.0% during the period FY' 2019 to FY' 2025.

The Indian retail industry is expected to reach US$ 1.1 trillion by 2020. The country's online grocery market is estimated to exceed sales of about Rs 22,500 crore (US$ 3.19 billion) in 2020, witnessing a significant jump of 76 percent over the previous year.

It is projected that by 2021, traditional retail will hold a significant share of 75 percent, organized retail share will reach 18 percent, and retail e-commerce share will reach 7 percent of the total retail market. According to the National Skill Development Corporation [NSDC], the sector will generate approximately 56 Mn jobs across segments by 20225.

In my opinion, three factors have fuelled growth in this industry during the pandemic:

1. **Inability of manufacturers and e-grocery to deliver**
   As the country went into lockdown mode in March, consumers started to stock up essentials. Marquee brands could not deliver due to the failure of complex supply chains. While earlier, urban consumers had become used to getting grocery home-delivered via online channels, the same consumers were taken by surprise during the lockdown. Not all brands were available, and not all channels were up and running.

2. **Resurgence of the humble corner stores**
   Amidst this crisis, the once-forgotten, neighborhood corner store owner stood out like a hero. As each store handled 20 to 200 families, these stores stepped in to meet the demand. Kirana stores are also typically non-air conditioned, which helped dispel fears of virus transmission. From taking orders on WhatsApp to becoming adept at contactless transactions, there was a reformation that Kirana stores made overnight. In doing so, they became the hope of millions of Indian homes. And, while at it, they also wrote out an all-new case study in agility and adaptability. However, the more significant challenges neighbourhood Kirana store owners faced were to meet the constant demand to replenish stocks every day.

3. **The switch to online B2B marketplaces for corner stores**
   During the pandemic, traditional distributors were unable to replenish stocks daily to corner stores. Online B2B marketplaces emerged as new fulfilment channels for corner stores. At Taikee, we were helping corner stores fill their supplies daily, letting them manage a much smaller inventory but a more comprehensive assortment. This forced inventory optimization also helped them manage their limited space and capital to continue serving customers’ needs. In many ways, it served as an eye-opener to the general trade industry that modern-day online B2B platforms were an alternative channel to help them shop at a lower rate and with a better assortment.

I am of the opinion that this offline to online shift changed the narrative the second time for the Indian general trade industry. The first time was demonetization. But this time, the push was stronger, lasted longer, and had enabled the corner stores to adapt quickly.

**Taikee by Peel-Works’ approach**

We experienced a significant demand surge in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Categories like packaged foods, health and personal care, home cleaning, and sanitation exploded. Demand for family pack...
size SKUs (stock-keeping units) increased, and so did the presence of regional and local brands.

At Taikee, our vision has always been to deliver better lives to corner stores. The pandemic was a call for us to rise above the situation and play a larger role in the lives of not only corner stores but the collective society as well. Our goal was to serve corner stores, serve customers, and serve the country during these times of crisis.

We switched our business to an inventory model during the pandemic for better control of fulfilment and offerings to the customer. We realized that as a marketplace model, there was dependence on sellers, whose interests were not always aligned with the end customers. With this shift, we had more control over the pricing and selection, and irrespective of the market situation, we could help retailers serve customers better.

To serve stores and people better, we added seven new fulfilment centers across India. Our fulfilment centers, led by forces veterans, pushed all the possible levers so that the wheels continued to turn. It was challenging to get the workforce at the fulfillment centers, but we managed to increase our workforce and delivery vehicles. Setting up new telecalling teams across three cities immediately helped us understand and fulfill the changing demands of the stores. On the stock delivery front, we were ensuring contactless delivery.

With the pandemic, we believed that operating with empathy was the key. Times like these were not about me-only business practices. These moments were about serving and creating a legacy. Some initiatives we took in this direction included:

- Making PPE kits, sanitizers, and gloves available in a short time
- Converting our fulfilment centers into meal centers to feed thousands of homeless people
- For those who had lost their jobs to the pandemic, we started the Oota initiative - a commission-based program that helped them earn money when they introduced Taikee to the neighborhood stores and got stores to place orders
- Adopting a street dog in every fulfillment center, taking care of all its needs
- Focusing on up skilling and hiring (from acid attack survivors to new moms), and not firing. We tried to create a gender-balanced organization
- Conducting business with a service-like attitude and believing in the power of 12 million corner stores helping fuel the brand growth of our B2B business during the crisis. We see our company scaling to more stores and cities going forward this year.
- As per Nielsen, recovery in FMCG sales to almost pre-Covid level is attributable to the undeveloped semi-urban/rural quarters and traditional trade channels over modern trade outlets.
- Kirana Stores the Future

Indian retail market is projected to reach $1.75 trillion by 2026, with the corner stores playing a key role in this growth. The rules of this game could change post-Covid-19, with footfalls to corner stores spiralling upwards. More number of digitally empowered Kirana stores will mean higher growth for B2B brands like ours.

On a parting note, the corner store business is a source of livelihood for over thirty million Indian families. It is a business that runs twelve hours each day for 365 days in a year. This channel needs to digitally enable itself so that it continues to flourish.

(SOURCE: Ken Research, Ibef.org, IVf.org, nsdcindia.org, investindia.gov.in)

About Peel-works Pvt Ltd

Peel-works Pvt Ltd is a Mumbai headquartered B2B grocery e-commerce company that operates the retail management platform, Taikee. The Company was founded in 2010 and has raised more than Rs 100 crore from various investors, including Chiratae, Inventus Capital, HDFC Bank, Unilever Ventures, Indian Angel Network, Equanimity, and a few more.

About Sachin Chhabra

Sachin Chhabra, the founder of Peel-Works, started his journey in the FMCG industry around 25 years ago with Hindustan Unilever. After working across a variety of roles, he founded Peel-Works in 2010 with a mission to provide ‘Better Lives to India's Corner Stores’. Taikee by Peel-Works is a B2B e-commerce platform that makes sourcing grocery inventory convenient for small and mid-sized retailers. An alumnus of St. Stephen's College, Sachin's vision is to create a sustainable business built on inclusive practices and larger social good.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector has emerged as a very important sector of the Indian economy as the sector contributes significantly to employment generation, bringing in innovation and scaling up exports to achieve inclusive growth. The sector is the backbone of the socio-economic development and accounts for 45% of total industrial production, 48% of total exports and contributes 32% to the overall GDP. This sector comprises around 64 million enterprises and employs close to 120 million people. Despite its key role in the country’s economic ecosystem, the pandemic has brought the sector on the receiving end.

Due to COVID-19 resulting in persistent lockdowns, the Indian MSMEs sector suffered the most with its collective production decreasing by more than 90%. This unexpected turbulence has invariably impacted the sector due to its comparatively low financial resilience and higher vulnerability. At the same time this situation opened prospects for them to integrate with impending technologies to stay a mile ahead from their competitors and make a fruitful existence in market. The most amazing case study of such amalgamation is in the fields of logistics. Ensuring fast and safe movement of goods amidst raging times has become a challenge and moreover in case of essential commodities, where maintaining an optimum supply chain became the need of the hour for SMEs. To meet consumer demand timely and ensure their own survival, new-age logistics came to the rescue. Here Smart routing, contactless deliveries, optimized costs gave them new wings in right directions and further drove MSMEs to embed tech not only in logistics but in their overall day to day operations. Aligning their customer-centric approach with their inherent ability of promptness and innovation, these MSMEs now face a bigger challenge to constantly deliver consistent quality service as offered by the larger players. This is where technology and automation can become an imperative solution to SMEs.

Apart from adoption of emerging technologies, MSME face many other challenges like:

- Lacks of capital due to inadequate access to finance and credit
- Inability to attract talented and tech-savvy manpower
- Poor infrastructure and utilities resulting in low-production capacity
- Technology and digital knowledge gap
- Payments asymmetry
- Scaling up operations
- Lack of marketing know-how
- Implementing other ancillary services that are required for expansion in both domestic and international markets.

For any economy to grow, the basic remains same i.e. to have enough access to credit for generating employment that ultimately leads to socio-economic development. This era as I see belongs to Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Internet of Things and immutable technology like Blockchain. In India, when it comes to adopting blockchain, many times, MSMEs find themselves in dilemma as there is lack of a clear roadmap. This further creates a ruckus about the idea of introducing blockchain to the system. In this article, I intend to emphasis on how adoption of blockchain can be a potential solution to the existing problems of MSMEs and can add value to the current ecosystem.

What is a Blockchain?
A blockchain is a digital record of transactions. Here individual records, called blocks, are linked together in a single list, called a chain. So, records of transactions form a chain that is called Blockchain. In simpler words, the digital ledger is like a Google spreadsheet shared among numerous computers in a network, in which, the transactional records are stored based on actual purchases. Every transaction in this ledger is authorized by the digital signature of the owner, which authenticates the transaction and safeguards it from tampering and making it highly secure. The data which is stored inside a block depends on the type of blockchain. For Example, A Bitcoin Block contains information about the Sender, Receiver, and number of bitcoins to be transferred. Other core properties of blockchain involve:

- In short, Blockchain presents itself as a resolution to the challenges possessed by our MSMEs. Majority have an opinion that blockchain can be used to solve only money-related business complications, but the fact is, it can be highly useful in resolving issues arising out of System Inefficiency, Transparency, Process Automation, Auditability, User Privacy, Trusted Record Keeping, Access Control etc. Other benefits can be:

Cross Border Payments: Blockchain can provide wings to our MSMEs that aims to go global by assisting them in
Blockchain provides real-time access to information on transactions and supply chain progression as each step is time-stamped and verified by all the involved parties, making it accurate and immutable. This added feature of visibility to the system may lead to exploration of more invoice financing solutions further resulting in quicker transaction processing, better cash flow for the suppliers and possibly better rates from invoice finance providers. As a result, it can help bring products and transactional services to market quickly and inexpensively.

Need for Regulatory Framework

In absence of global blockchain regulations and standards, MSMEs are bound to face limitations to their scope of action which will imply a risk to their growth. With the initiation of forming international bodies for setting up blockchain protocols worldwide, the real test will be to establish the legality of smart contracts, smoothing cross border Peer-to-Peer offerings and bring clarity of the highest level to the business and regulators.

As Rome wasn’t built in a day, things will take time to shape up especially considering the current pandemic situation. Industry will need to build up trust over time by experimenting with new technologies and try getting desired results. To make blockchain an integral part of MSME business process, this technology needs a chance to prove its potential of providing solution to every business problem.

The big question remains; do the circumstances spell a big opportunity or a doomsday for the country’s sprawling MSMEs sector? Or it must live by the axiom: “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

About Akshay Anand Dongre

Akshay Anand Dongre is a Business Management professional with a blend of Operational and Corporate Marketing functional experience. A Management graduate from Sydenham Institute of Management with over 16 years of experience, Akshay’s expertise is in Brand Management, Digital Marketing, Domestic & International Markets, Corporate Social Responsibility and Media Management. With a stronghold and deep understanding of on-ground implementations of services, Akshay remains a passionate learner of new technologies. He intends to start his eventful journey in the stream of Blockchain.
**Fujifilm India helps healthcare warriors harness the power of instant photography**

Fujifilm India Private Limited, a pioneer in imaging and healthcare technologies, in line with its 'Don't Just Take, Give' motto has pledged to spread positivity and joy in these unforeseen times with its new campaign 'Connecting Hearts', a CSR initiative to help improve the disconnect between patients and doctors. To reduce anxiousness among patients and help them combat COVID with congeniality and affection, Fujifilm has introduced a unique patient-focused program by sharing instax cameras and films at hospitals to spread smiles across doctors and nurses working on the frontline during these times.

The digital film titled 'Connecting Hearts' dives into how the healthcare heroes treating COVID-19 patients are required to wear a significant amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) to safeguard themselves from the threat of the disease. The film conceptualized in association with m/SIX India, highlights that in many cases, doctors and nurses treating patients have to obscure everything but their eyes, which in turn results in not being able to form a proper connection with their patients. The video iterates how healthcare professionals all over have been trying to find ways to connect better with patients in order to lessen the anxiety and stress induced by the disease.

With Fujifilm stepping up in providing instax cameras and films, this initiative lets the doctors use the simplicity and accessibility of instax instant photography to help easily distinguish themselves on their PPE. With Instant cameras, doctors or nurses can now effortlessly take a photograph and quickly attach a credit card-sized instant photo print of themselves to their medical gowns.

**Protection**

Commenting on this, Haruto Iwata, Managing Director, Fujifilm India Pvt. Ltd. said, “In line with our initiative to spread joy with our Instax range of cameras, this program is our subtle way of releasing stress in these unprecedented times. While photography may not be able to help in curing patients or protect healthcare staff, at Fujifilm, we believe it may actually cultivate a closer engagement between doctors and nurses and the patients they are treating. With this, we can share friendly faces of our health warriors from behind their PPE and remind them that there is a human on the other side of the gown, gloves, goggles and N95 mask.”

Adding to this Tribhuwan Joshi, Lead Brand Communication, Public Relations & CSR said, “With our campaign 'Connecting Hearts' we wish to pay our salute to the healthcare professionals all over India fighting the battle at the frontlines to minimize the growing nervousness for COVID-19. With our initiative quickly revealing the happy and comforting face behind the PPE, healthcare staff and patients have noticed a sense of calmness, relaxation & empathy in the most challenging of circumstances that these patients are currently facing. With this we aim to take our motto, 'Never Stop, believing in Smiles' forward and spread a ray of positivity and hope among the people combatting each day with the unparalleled disease.”

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**Odisha Industries Minister asks youth to invest in MSME sector**

Odisha Industries Minister asks youth to invest in MSME sector

Dibya Shankar Mishra has urged the youths in the state to take advantage of the present industrial environment in Odisha and invest in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.

Speaking at a webinar on 'Ease of doing business in MSME in Odisha' organised by Odisha Corporate Foundation (OCF), recently, the Minister said, “it is high time we strengthened the economy of our state by engaging over 10 lakh youths and thousands of skilled as well as semi skilled labourers in MSME sector, who have had returned to Odisha due to the present COVID-19 pandemic.”

He also said that industries as well as MSME generate livelihood opportunities. However, the MSMEs create better as well as the maximum opportunities for economic prosperity.

Mishra further asserted that industries are now keen on investing in Odisha due to its rich natural resources, legacy of commerce and available modern infrastructure.

"Amid global turmoil, it is an encouraging sign that Odisha could grab an investment of Rs 1,700 crore,” Mishra added. (KNN)