

XTRAVAGATE

STARTUPS
HURDLES
GROWTH

“

Its not about the ideas
Its about making ideas happen

Scott Branson



Interview with
MR. Laxminarayanan

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Editor's Note

Start up scene in India is in the mature stage and far away from being just a bubble. After all these years, the number of students who quit universities and the professionals who quit their jobs to create a start up is only on the rise. With Walmart acquiring Flipkart, it only inspired Indians to take the entrepreneurial plunge even harder and quicker. With the expanding Indian economy, the number of unicorns created in our own country is another sign that India can do what the western world has been doing, especially after the Flipkart deal which proved that numbers are not just paper values making this a dawn of the new start up era.

The societal values and opinions on starting up ventures have been changing in a faster pace, the fact that a person quits a well paying job and decides to take huge risks is not as blasphemous as it was earlier. Indian government has also stepped up and showed its support by creating new schemes such as start up India to encourage anyone with a good idea to turn their ideas into reality. There are different schemes to help women entrepreneurs to work on their dreams since as discussed in this edition most women do have more obstacles to overcome in order to achieve what they set out to do.

But not all stories are perfect, there are pitfalls, in this case the funding for start up these days after the initial rounds is dwindling. Even though the ideas that are produced are certainly mind blowing and do solve problems, the investors are looking at sustainable metrics and other related factors. This stops them from investing further. But earlier the investments had been higher in the IT sector, now food, health and fitness are the new hot areas to invest. Fintech and health tech segments will be the areas where VCs will be looking into getting their hands dirty.

This edition of our newsletter talks about other such problems that start ups face, how new bold ideas such as SMINQ work in the Indian environment, the rise of unicorns in India and much more.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year from Team Xtravagate.

*Deepika V
(2nd Year, MBA)*

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Startup culture in India

Breaking the conventional Conservative Indian mindset

*Z*oom cars, Flipkart, Oyo Rooms, PayTm, Phone Pe, Ola, Delhivery etc. are a few of the most successful Indian Startups. A startup is a business venture that is scalable and seeks to become a business model. Indian entrepreneurs have flooded our country with startups i.e startups are no longer a trend in India but it has become a culture in India. Thanks to the push given by the central government and many state governments, the number of startups is increasing at a fast pace. Startup culture in India has broken the shackles of our risk-averse conservative mindset which used to gulp a large chunk of our talent pool and used to make them “Jobseekers” rather than “Job givers”.

Indian startups focus its attention towards solving a problem rather than making money. The startup culture in India is getting additional push by the Central Government and several State Governments. Government policies like Startup India, Mudra Yojana, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has launched Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) initiative to boost entrepreneurship. The government has also realised that startups have the potential to generate employment in large numbers and in a country of 1.3 Billion people with the youngest average age of population among major countries, startups have become indispensable to absorb a large chunk of our talent pool. Most of the startups in India so far are based out of Bengaluru, Gurgaon but the fever of startups is now spreading to tier 1 and tier 2 cities. This is a remarkable transformation in the mindset of the Indian people. Entrepreneurship has captured the imagination of the people of India. There are many good innovations in labs and universities all over India, but they don't know how to market it yet. If India starts innovating for itself, it will be a fundamental shift in changing the dynamics of the ecosystem.

#startupindia

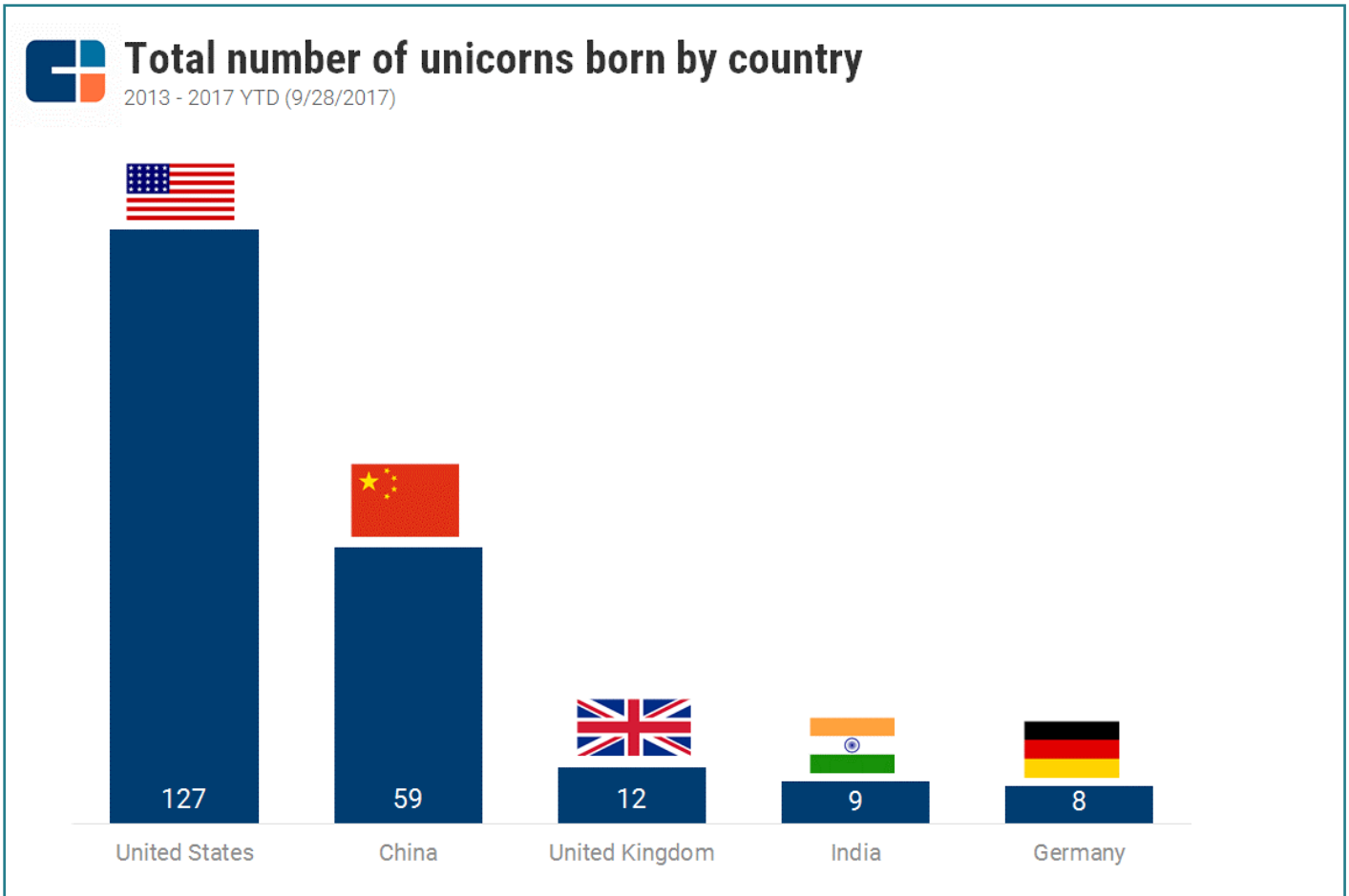
Typical middle-class Indian parents who have always dreamt of seeing their children as top employees in corporations now dream of being called the ‘parents of entrepreneurs’. Most of the best engineering colleges in India have set up entrepreneurship cell. The role models of the youth of India is changing from likes of Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai to Elon Musk, Binny Bansal etc. In the coming decade we will see a tectonic shift in the education sphere which will give more emphasis on following your passion, skill development and less on rote learning and that shift is propelled by the startup culture of India.

Utkarsh Kumar Chaurasia
(1st Year, MBA)



The rise of unicorns

In the November 2013 issue of TechCrunch blog post, Aileen Lee, the founder of Cowboy Ventures - coined the term unicorn as a reference to billion-dollar startups. And since then, unicorns have been the go-to terms to describe any such corporate creatures.



It wasn't long ago that the idea of a pre-IPO tech startup with a \$1 billion market value was a fantasy. Google was never worth \$1 billion as a private company. Neither Amazon or even Flooz.com which couldn't even survive the dot-com bubble crash. But nowadays many start-ups can dare to dream what even Google, Microsoft never could. Uber didn't exist 9 years ago, it was limited to just a city of USA 7 years ago, and now it operates in 72 countries and the company is valued at a whopping \$72 billion. Uber is not the only unicorn out there, in fact, there is a whole blessing, a term we use to refer to the group of unicorns.

In the past decade not, many venture capitalists backed software-based startups were able to get valued at \$1 Billion dollars, now there are more than 100 of such startups.

Reasons for the growth of unicorns:

Innovation is driving the proliferation of such startups. Cell phones, cheap sensors, and cloud computing have empowered a pile of new Internet-connected services that are invading the most tech-disinclined ventures—Uber is roiling the taxi business; Airbnb is upsetting inns. In this upheaval, investors are seeing a huge opportunity.

An almost six-year-old seething bull market in the public stocks has created a tailwind for privately owned business valuations and persuaded the most recent harvest of tech business people that there will be a lot of time to trade out when they feel like it. Complimented by the record-low interest rates have made some enormous institutional speculators scan for returns in the high-chance, the high-remunerate universe of investment. Add to that an absence of control.

At last, there is the intangible component of discernment and people's perception. In the startup world, a valuation of \$1 billion says that your startup success is fait accompli and not some fly-by-night ones with plans to rapidly offer out to Google.

Indian unicorns:

India is not far behind in having their own Unicorns, Flipkart - India's leading unicorn currently valued at \$ 11.6 billion and may catapult to \$20 billion soon. The retail giant Walmart owned homegrown e-commerce unicorn Flipkart, proved to be a tough challenge for e-commerce behemoth Amazon in India.

The SoftBank backed hospitality company OYO Rooms has 100,000 rooms in inventory, which in terms of imprints is more than some of the largest legacy hotels of the country. The hotel chain startup is set to cross \$4 Billion dollars in a new round of funding and with-it recent plans to enter China has put the entire startup system in India agog.

Less talked about but highly efficient digital payment company Pine Labs is all set to be part of Unicorn club with Temasek striking a \$400 Million deal to acquire stakes in Pine labs that will ricochet its valuation from current \$82 million dollars to the much-vaunted value of \$1 Billion. The PayPal backed startup has 65,000 merchants and 300,000 terminals.

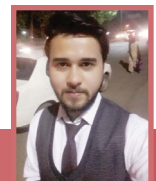
There are many other unicorns present in India- Ola, Swiggy, Policy Bazaar, Byju's and the list is a non-exhaustive one. But one thing that is common among all is, they all were avant-garde in the Indian ecosystem. They galvanized the unorganized market with the help of technological scaffold.



The future for Unicorns:

One thing which should be made clear that it is not the panacea for the VCs around the world trying to make their company grow in order to raise as much capital as possible. If something we have learned from dot-com bubble burst is that increasing the funding is no guarantee that the company's valuation will increase. It's entirely possible that another wave of cataclysmic premonition might leave many of brio filled unicorns punctured and overcapitalized. A venture capitalist is still not sanguine about unicorns primarily because of the previous scars of what happened in 2000. But it's fine, Unicorns are allowed to fail and they even might but every now and then, a startup will barge in this world of startups guided by unicorn-level round funding and trickle-up economics for venture capitalist to not miss out on super-unicorns again like it happened last time around when a sea tempest named Facebook took the world by storm.

Aniket Sharma
(1st Year, MBA)



Hurdles in startup: How to overcome



The stringent reality about the startup and running a startup is that 9 out of 10 startups fail every day, and some of the industries, failure rates are higher than usual. The challenges can be many but each and every startup has its own distinctive journey.

I see a sturdy relation between initiating a startup and running a marathon, because there are many people who participate in a marathon but very few who complete it. Many budding entrepreneurs start a startup but few show the persistence to reach the finish line. Both are the same, as both test your hard work and patience in the pursuit of the ultimate goal.

Nowadays many entrepreneurs want to gain quickly and consistently to enhance the value of their product or startups. However, that should not be the only motive of the entrepreneur because if one wants to win a marathon race and if he/she runs too fast they will burn out soon, and if one burns out (tired) then he/she cannot complete the distance, the same as entrepreneurs should not consider setting up their startup and where only focus is to achieve a goal quickly and finish line in the fastest way. In the faster way, you can cover a short distance but not long distance. Whereas we can see a marathoner starts slowly as he has a long way to go. The same way entrepreneur should be thinking about startup, start a startup slowly and take it for the long way.

It is the most important for entrepreneurs to think like a marathoner's mindset while setting up their startup. Marathoner works hard to prepare himself for the long-distance runner and to judge his body strength that will complete the distance. likewise, entrepreneur too has hard work on his startup idea and use available resources to establish his startup, in the case of marathoner think about his stamina and strength, how long he will last. in the same way startup's success depends on the entrepreneur's action and utilization of his resources.

As we discussed above, we know a startup is like a marathon runner, but without hurdles, no startup can be successful, so I want to discuss some the most important hurdles which is faced by all startups and how to overcome and to be successful.

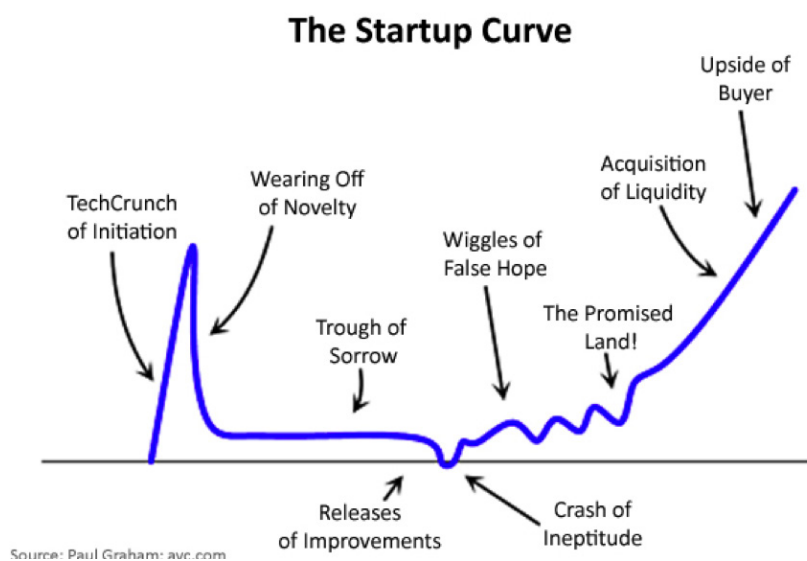
Money:

Money is a most important aspect to start any startup or business, an entrepreneur faces the problem when he/she spend all their money in startup and when business starts to run and they don't have money to sustain. This is one of the most important hurdles faced by a startup.

But we have a solution for this when entrepreneur start business first, he needs to make a financial plan according to his products and he needs to prepare for shortage of money. If any case, he should have backup to run business for some more time to grow business because business take time to run.

Strong Leadership:

In order for a startup to marshal the arduous strength if it needs to succeed, it must have good leader who can handle the employee and solve problem as soon as possible within a time period because in startup time and money and good decision are play most important role in startups, and don't confuse being a strong leader with being strong dictatorial boss. Leadership plays a crucial role in a startup; a good leader understands the need to hire good people for the young company. Good leaders are the decision makers new idea creators team makers and image makers of their company. In short, we can say about the rest of the advice below is worthless without a strong leader showing the way forward.



Ignoring marketing/Branding yourself

Each company has its own image and own brand, which is more than a logo and a catchy tagline. Why do they do this? Because most of the startups ignore marketing for new products because they don't have enough money to spend on it, but some of the startups have money but they also do not want to spend money on marketing because they don't know about how does marketing play a very significant role in promoting a product in a short period of time. Sometimes they ignore it completely and put their faith in word of mouth, but startups often miss out on this because they overlook the importance of advertising and marketing.

Creating an image of the company requires to understand its customer base and create a different or unique image from the rest. Branding or image should be a part of a startup's vision from the beginning.

Product Description

Many of the new entrepreneurs, making the decision of what kind of product or service to focus on is the first major hurdle in launching a business. This type of hurdle is faced by entrepreneurs who may scuffle to determine which niche market to target. They need to focus on what type of products or services are required in the market, according to the marketing requirement they need to launch a product or service and give better assistance than other competitors.

Competitors

It does not matter what type of business you go into; your startup is in a contest for survival. If you are the first mover in the market then for few months or few years you may be a sole player of the market for that particular product but within few days or months, your competitor will grow and then you need to prepare to compete with them with your new advanced and latest technology as they cannot adopt the latest and high-level technology in starting but he/she can use it. and if you launch a product and service which already exists in the market then you need to recognize your competitor and you need to make a strategy to compete with them, you need to study your competitor's strategy.

Time -management

Prioritizing decision-making is of utmost importance. Learning to properly manage time is crucial to staying on task. A weekly goal must be set, something that you want to accomplish over the workweek. Taking breaks is also necessary to avoid burnout.

Conclusion

World famous entrepreneur Elon Musk famously said “running a startup is like chewing glass and staring into the abyss”. However, startup founders like himself and his peers like Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg etc. are the ones who have changed the world for better. It can be considered a tedious task and sometimes even be a total suffering due to total failure, but consistency and rationality in decision making eventually leads to glorifying success.

Pradeep Kumar
(1st Year, MBA)



'What's wrong with Indian start-ups?'

Post-1947, India was broken and raw. It was at this moment that the current business mammoths like the Tatas and Birlas sprouted entrepreneurial wings and built the Indian economy. This sweeping gale of entrepreneurship was seen prominently again in the Indian economy with the expansion of the internet. The internet gave birth to many zealous entrepreneurs who didn't have to deal much with the 'license raj'. The economic liberalization also saw a shift from the capital-intensive industrial sector to the tertiary and the service sectors. Narayana Murthy is the classic example of an educated corporate who took the plunge at that time with hardly any financial backing.

However, in a few years, becoming an entrepreneur was the new fad. Instead of opting for corporate jobs and gaining experience, many fresh graduates opted to become entrepreneurs. While there are many success stories like Flipkart, MakeMyTrip and Zomato, the majority of start-ups fail in India. India might have become the third largest start-up ecosystem but statistically, 90% of Indian start-ups fail within the first five years of their inception.

Lack of innovation is often cited as the most prevalent reason for start-ups to crumble even before they stand steady. Failure on part of innovation is either due to obsolete technology or lack of unique business models. There are a few exceptions where Indian entrepreneurs have identified the local needs and replicated it from an existing global business model. Flipkart took from Amazon, just like Ola took from Uber. This strategy however only worked for a few companies and the massive chunk failed. Though there have been numerous initiatives put forward by the Indian Government like establishing The Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and by other organizations like the Kakinada Experiment, there is no a doubt that 'Innovation' is usually the missing link in India's entrepreneurial chain.

Usage of funds or rather the misuse of funds is another root cause for start-ups to fail. While Larry Page and Sergey Brin conceived Google in a humble garage and Sachin and Binny Bansal started Flipkart in a modest rented flat, most entrepreneurs begin in a very lavish manner with posh offices. There is no proper planning and allocation of funds nor ploughing back of profits or contingency funds. Many investors have lost a great deal of money after pooling funds into flawed models that ended up draining money in the wrong manner.

According to Henri Fayol, "to manage is to forecast and to plan, to organise, to command, to coordinate and to control". Forecasting, market research and environmental scanning are some crucial exercises that young Indian entrepreneurs fail to do before starting a business. Instead of studying the market and identifying the needs of the majority segment, they plan and design products that later flounder in the market. They fail to check its feasibility and get advice from a consultant. Often the co-founders may be strong but sans a good team and coordination, the business model and execution will fail. Marketing and branding is a key aspect for any business and is also as a commonly overlooked factor by the start-ups that later went on to fail.

There are myriad reasons as to why different start-ups have failed. The food delivery industry is a place where many start-ups sprouted but very few players like Zomato, FreshMenu and Swiggy were able to survive the heat. TinyOwl was a promising start-up that failed very soon due to over-hiring. iTiffin was another start-up that failed because of its inability to raise growth funding. In a similar manner, every sector in India has many failed start-ups but very few beacons of promise.

A report from the Global Innovation Index said that India has the ingredients needed to be a global driver of innovation, including market potential, talent pool and an underlying culture of frugal innovation but relative weaknesses exist in the indicators for the business environment, education expenditures, new business creations and the creative goods and services production. The start-ups in India can have higher success rates if they focus on proper planning and cater to the real needs of the consumers with innovation and creativity. With the Government's support and the know-how of prolific business leaders who can mentor the young entrepreneurs, the future of Indian start-ups doesn't look so gloomy after all.

*Miriam Ann Philip
(1st Year, MBA)*



CAMPUS CONNECT

“Why should I bother about Blockchain?”

The students of DOMS, NIT Trichy were able to answer the question after the interesting session on Blockchain technology and Finance by Mr. Gaurav Sangtani , VP Goldman Sachs. The two hour session was an eclectic one with the students posing all sorts of doubts.

in an organization but a prerequisite in the current business world. which kick started with an exciting round of quiz.

Unexplored sectors.

Mr. Raja Shanmugam, our alumni, addressed the students at DoMS about a unexplored and thriving sector to pursue our careers in, the real estate sector.

“Without great quality it does not matter



what something costs....”

With the Quality month celebrations in full bloom around the globe, DOMS, NIT Trichy too played its part. Mr Manikandan M, Manager & Head Zero Defects programme, Rolls-Royce delivered a short session on Quality and Zero Defects and its relevance. Total quality is no longer an achievement

His own experience and growth in the sector helped in understanding and making the session very interactive. The students were briefed about the opportunities and gained a lot of knowledge.

Dhanya Johnson
(1st Year, MBA)



Interview with MR. Laxminarayanan

A philanthropist who has many accolades under his belt. MR. Laxminarayanan G is a seasoned Professional in the management field, from being offered to be a brand manager in axis bank to being a principal consultant in PwC, he has done it all. He was the Vice president, customer strategy for 8K miles software service Ltd where he headed the Marketing for one of the Cutting-Edge Technology service provider firm based out of Silicon Valley.

Apart from the business world, he's also a man with golden heart, he has a penchant for giving back to the society, he was a trustee & first volunteer for Gold Heart foundation where he was Responsible for planning and organizing 28 grooming centres in 2 different districts for 650 underprivileged students. Currently, he works as a senior manager in Deloitte India where he's responsible for managing some of the key priority accounts for Deloitte Consulting.

Here are some excerpts from our conversation with him regarding startup culture in India.

Aniket Sharma: *You have had quite an illustrious career so far, and you have seen the startup culture from close quarters. How the startup culture has changed over the years.*

MR. Laxminarayan G: *One thing which has changed immensely over the years is the perception about the startup, now the people are more inclined towards having their own startup compared to the mindset people had decades ago. They understand that the potential dividends and benefits of having your own startup are much bigger than any benefits you can draw by working for some company. Another thing which has changed a lot over the years is that the people are more daring, risk-taking is an option now – startups have an uncertainty factor along with them but that's the risk people are ready to take now.*

Now the questions have changed, it's no more 'what if we fail?', but 'how can we make it successful?'. The opportunities are also far more readily available as compared to yesteryears where lack of channels also compounded the apprehension towards startups. Today's youth have strong desire to do something different as opposed to doing same mundane task as everyone, which has led to people think more innovatively and have their own startup.

Aniket Sharma: *The startup scene has proliferated in recent years; do you think this is the result of bullish market and it's just another dot-com bubble crash waiting to happen?*

Mr. laxminarayanan G: *Yes, it is a bullish market right now but we have to understand that this is a cycle, down period comes and it takes off again in a startup cycle. So, its nothing to worry about, dot-com bubble crash had many factors involved, the recent proliferation which you speak of is part of a cycle and that's what going on right now.*

Aniket Sharma: *Recently we have seen the trend that Indian startups are imitating their foreign counterparts and trying to capture the market before these foreign startups come to India, like we have seen in the case of Oyo rooms competing with AirBnB, Ola giving stiff competition to Uber, and urban ladder & pepperfry doing it the same before IKEA came to India. What are your views on it?*

Mr Laxminarayanan G: *You are right about Oyo and AirBnB case, Airbnb is struggling to get big in India when it's taking the hospitality market by storm in Europe while being unable to replicate the same kind of success in India. But that's about it, Ola is struggling big time and even asking the government to support them. These foreign startups come with a lot of resources to back them, so simply imitating is not enough – you need to have a viable working model to sustain your business.*

There has been a recent trend of fly by night kind of startups, to have a startup and sell it to big companies and make quick bucks. So, the startup is having a new dynamic nowadays, we have a lot of startups-like Myntra, Jabong who sold themselves to bigger fishes. Imitating is not enough, you need to understand the market to make it a big one.

Aniket Sharma: *What may be successful in Mumbai, may not be successful in Chennai. Do you think that startup has to be really adaptive according to the market they are operating in?*

Mr Laxminarayanan G: *Absolutely! As I was sharing earlier, you need to understand the market and its intricacies. There's a reason why Airbnb struggled in India and we have other examples too of companies who failed to feel the sentiments of the market; the problem is the culture of the place like India is very diverse and you need to have horses for courses strategy here. One size fits all never works here. You simply can't paint the whole of your market with the same brush instead we have to use a different strategy in different regions to stay relevant in that particular market.*

Aniket Sharma: *Concluding, what would you advise the students who are aspiring entrepreneurs?*

Mr Laxminarayanan G: *There has been a lot of development in the startup scene in India, almost all B-schools now have B-plan competitions to create a platform for sharing Ideas and creating business models – which is the base of startups of our country. The government has taken various initiatives to help the entrepreneurship culture in India.*

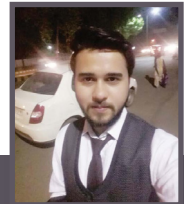
I don't know, if many people know this but IIM Bangalore has incubation centre named NSRCEL which is open for every budding entrepreneur in the country. There are such resources available through different avenues. The opportunities and resources available nowadays have increased immensely but one has to be active enough to search for them and use them to the fullest. If one has a good product idea and the will to succeed, he will find every resource, be it money, guidance or whatever it takes to make this idea successful.



My hearty wishes for the budding entrepreneurs of this NIT Trichy DOMS community. Whenever they need help to make their ideas successful, industry resources like us are always available to vet it out and be a mentor for them.

Thank you, Mr Laxminarayanan Sir. That was a profoundly informative session. I hope and believe such valuable insights will make everyone with entrepreneurship bone in their body be well equipped with the knowledge to venture onto the startup path. I am sure our readers will have a better clarity on their perspective towards the startup culture especially in India. We wish you all the success in your future endeavours.

*Aniket Sharma
(1st Year, MBA)*



COME BACK HOME

(Harsh realities about women entrepreneurship in Indian society)

So being an entrepreneur, male or female, I think in any part of the world is always a challenging task. Right from when you have an idea, you believe in it so much and even when others might not see it in you. However, you put it out there every day and try to get people to back you, you push and you risk everything. You risk your self-respect, your reputation, money, time and most importantly you risk your heart and soul. Most people only see the final end of that success- the name, fame, and the money that people get out of becoming a multi-millionaire, but people don't often see what happens behind the scenes.

Every entrepreneurial journey usually has thousands of failures associated with it and every journey is an emotional one. A woman's entrepreneurial journey is a really painful one.

While scrolling my YouTube playlist I once saw the harsh reality lines of Indian society from the movie DANGAL - "choriya chuli choka ke liye sahi hey, unko lakshman rekha nehi laghna chaiye, aur agar langhe toh jor jabardasti ghar wapis khinch ke le aao." (Girls are good for household chores, they should never cross the boundary line of home, and if they cross it forcefully pull them back home). So here the question arises to a country which gave birth to a brave soul like Kalpana Chawla about why it is so reluctant in its approach to women entrepreneurship. Women only have a marginal share of 14% in the Indian entrepreneur industry and I would tell you the best five harsh reasons why this valuable asset of our country is so less in use:

1) Unequal opportunity to play:

"It's not your cup of tea, you are good for desk jobs, don't eye the field jobs" are some of the harsh lines which women in corporate sectors have to hear. Men are considered to be leaders, risk takers, initiators, decision makers of course in our patriarchal society of India, and girls in turn are considered to be followers, dictionary takers, assistants but never a boss, as if they are not made for it.

2) Why do you want to work?

"You are smart, beautiful, don't worry you will get a nice eligible husband, why do you need to work?" Isn't this something very familiar to us Indians. We think as if a girl's life is so good that she has got those two soft hands to put mehendi only and not to make them rough in building new jobs.

3) Marriage and the end of life....

When it comes to marriage, we are famous for the happy big fat Indian weddings, but nobody wants to see the dark side of that. A woman who goes to a new family, bags a new surname, and with all this she loses her freedom. The freedom of going out, the freedom of taking decisions of her own life and the freedom of progressing in her own career. The hard lines here to be read is that: a newspaper wrote this lines in bold letters- "kya shadi ke baad deepika, anushka ki carrer ho jayegi khatm" (will Deepika and Anushka's filmy career be over after their marriage). Isn't this so tragic to read in the world's fastest developing country.

4) Babies and business don't mix.

Another reality is babies. Once a girl becomes a mother, it's better to sit back at home and play, feed, and change the diapers. She can't think of going out there and work.

"Would you like to take care of the new born baby?" If the same question is asked in an American society, the men would happily say yes, but if this is asked in India, the faces of men would turn red. "Why would I do so? it's not in our tradition", they say.

5) Harassments

And after crossing these 4 levels of struggle if a women comes up and pursues her dream, the biggest ghost of Indian society knocks her door- "Hi ma'am. I am rape, I am molestation, I am harassment." Oh jeez, just



think of it; how hard it would have been for that lady to bear all this. I might sound harsh in these lines but truth is always harsh. We still view women as piece of flesh and not as a leader or strategy maker.

Ask anybody to give the top 3 entrepreneurs of India, they would name- Binny Bansal, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Bhavish Aggarwal and other male names only. Where goes the equality here boss? Why is this mentality of inequality still existing today in the corporate sector and why doesn't anybody question this bizarre taboo? We have got skill India, start-up India, make-in-India but why we are we not able to produce female entrepreneurs? Isn't it because of our male dominating society attitude which says, "don't get your hands dirty, come back home honey!"

*Siddhartha Harichandan
(1st Year, MBA)*



Views From the News

The statue of unity

This is the statue of Indian statesman and independence activist Sardar Vallabhai Patel who was also the first deputy prime minister of India. This colossal structure that is currently the world's tallest statue stands at a whopping 182 meters. It was built at a cost of 3,050 crore rupees by an army of over 3000 workers and was completed within a period of three and a half years. For some time now it has been a topic of debate on whether it is a wise investment or just another waste of the taxpayers money.

1. The Statue of Unity stands out as one of India's most vulgar (for the lack of a better word) expenditures; only just falling behind Isha Ambani's gaudy wedding. Its larger than life appearance and demand for attention inevitably got everyone across the globe talking about it. While some have criticised the statue's protagonist ("it should have been Gandhi!"), my main qualm as a citizen is, where are our priorities?! It's incredulous that the government spent \$430 million on a statue, not even "#MadeinIndia", when we have farmers committing suicide every other day, girls not being given the education they deserve, pathetic healthcare, and so many other sectors which are in genuine and desperate need of funds. My only reaction is, "Why?"

- Koka Tarini Siddhartha (Lawyer, Bengaluru)



2. Statue of Unity has been successful in uniting all the people however not the way the ruling party would have liked. In a cruel twist of fate reminiscent of screwball comedies of yore, it has united everyone against everything the BJP stands for. To many the Statue of Unity is seen more as a Statue of Vanity and in a country like India with a leader like Patel, that emotion just does not strike the right chord.

- Arunkumar Sekhar (Journalist, Cinema Express, The New Indian Express, Chennai)

3. The statue of unity is a commemoration of the man under whose pioneering leadership we were able to achieve our dream of a united India without any bloodshed. Built on PPP model, the statue apart from being a symbolic representation is also a major tourist attraction with over 1.28 lakh visitors in the first 10 days of its inauguration. An acute analogy is drawn between the unity achieved by our founding fathers and the unity we strive to achieve by overcoming the sect divides.

- Arun Pareek (Student, Department of Management Studies, NIT Trichy)

4. *Personally, I feel there was no need for a statue of unity. Instead of building inanimate objects, the people should take effort to build harmony among themselves. With PM standing for communalism, the statue seems ironical. It was not even a gift. The people's money was put into constructing this 597ft tall building. I don't think Sardar Vallabhai Patel would have liked to see a gigantic structure of him. There are 'n' number of developmental project that the government can channelize their money in order to catalyse the process of development. It saddened me that the authorities prioritised on constructing a 'Human figure' rather than focussing on Human lives.*

- Oshin Grace Daniell (Journalist, The New Indian Express, Ernakulam)

5. *"My only desire is that India should be a good producer and no one should be hungry, shedding tears for food in this country,"*

In this day and age do we actually need a statue worth 3000 cr of the people's money. It is located at a place that is mostly tribal land and was built despite heavy opposition from local tribes. One reason people point out is that it will build the economy of the region. But will it really? More money would be invested for transport of said tourists to that place and even more for infrastructure. What about maintenance costs? Taking all of this into consideration when is it ever going to even going to break even. Shouldn't this amount be invested in our disaster management system. We are having recurring cyclones and floods and droughts due to climate change that we are very ill equipped to handle. Shouldn't we focus our collective efforts into stopping the blood , sweat and tears of farmers who are struggling to keep their work going . The quote I started with was told by Mr Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Are we really honouring him?

- Samuel Soundararaj(Administrator for Export Textile Industry , Coimbatore)

Ann Mathew
(1st Year, MBA)



SMINQ- The Queue Chopper

An increasing number of new generation start-ups in the technology/knowledge-intensive industries have created something of a “euphoria” in major cities of India. India is becoming a start-up hub and the opportunities of growth is enormous than ever. Now let’s see how this Pune based company came up with a simple solution to a mind-numbing problem..

If you have ever cooled your heels at a doctor’s clinic waiting for your turn, you already know how vexatious it is to watch the clock tick by. Ever wondered how nice it would be without waiting in queues! Here is the one-stop solution for managing queues- SMINQ – “Be just in Time”. The idea cropped up when the co-founders (Shachin Bharadwaj, Santhosh Nagarajan and Sheldon Dsouza) were mulling over different possibilities to start a new venture – A mobile platform for queue management. An app that provides real-time information from user updates and with the information being short lived.

Tired of Waiting in that Line?



We head to a lot of places where we are uncertain about the time it may take to get served. Soon, the co-founders realised how long queues at hospitals, banks, retail stores, restaurants, car parks and other places take a toll on people’s time and energy. We all get stuck because we don’t have access to any real-time data with us. Thus, began the journey of SMINQ, with building an app so that users can book appointments with doctors and get real-time alerts on waiting time at clinics. Doctors can also plan their day using the app.



Sminq it. Be "Just in time"



Currently, Sminq is being used in clinics in Pune, having 40 subscribed doctors on its platform. It has two interfaces, one for the doctors to schedule their days and the other for the patients to receive notifications and alerts to plan their appointment. The understanding here is by analysing the trends and the pattern that a particular doctor follows at her/his clinic and accordingly, predict the time that a patient can expect to be served. Now covering Pune, Mumbai and Nashik, the app has a subscription-based revenue model, features 150-plus premium clinics and caters to 5,00,000-plus users. SMINQ is on its way to becoming a global platform for people to share what's "Live Now" at places around the world.

A simple but creative idea like SMINQ, when looked at with the right technical expertise, not only has the potential to solve a long persistent pain area but also helps the country enhance the Healthcare industry. The rate at which such innovative startup ideas can be translated to real-world problem solvers will pave the road to India's success story of becoming a global superpower.

*Vijayalakshmi N
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