

Triumphs and Feats...

...The NewGen Entrepreneurs

*Stories of some of EDII Alumni
who are gloriously riding the entrepreneurial wave*



Entrepreneurship
Development
Institute of India

Some of the Eminent Speakers at EDII Convocations



Shri Subhash Chandra



Shri Sunil Bharti Mittal



Shri Brijmohan Lall Munjal



Shri Anil Ambani



Dr. Kumar Mangalam Birla



Padma Bhushan
Shri Hari Shankar Singhania



Padmashri Ms. Lila Poonawalla



Shri Shashi Ruia

Preface

Dear Readers,

With every new enterprise, the economy gets bolstered a few notches up. The magic of entrepreneurship and its impact on economy is distinct. EDII is also rendering a helping hand in making entrepreneurial dreams come true. The Institute's Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship and Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Development Studies are courses that are aimed to complement India's commitment to reach its entrepreneurial acme. EDII looks forward to reaching out to people in every nook and corner of the country and to every segment of society so that their entrepreneurial dreams get realized. Youths are the torchbearers of the future and form the cornerstone on which the country stands. EDII endorses this and seeks to give a direction to their entrepreneurial aspirations. The students of EDII's two Post Graduate Programmes are creating waves in varied fields. We are proud of their achievements. We present here stories of some of our students to help catch a glimpse into their out-of-the-box thinking, innovative mindset, and perseverance.

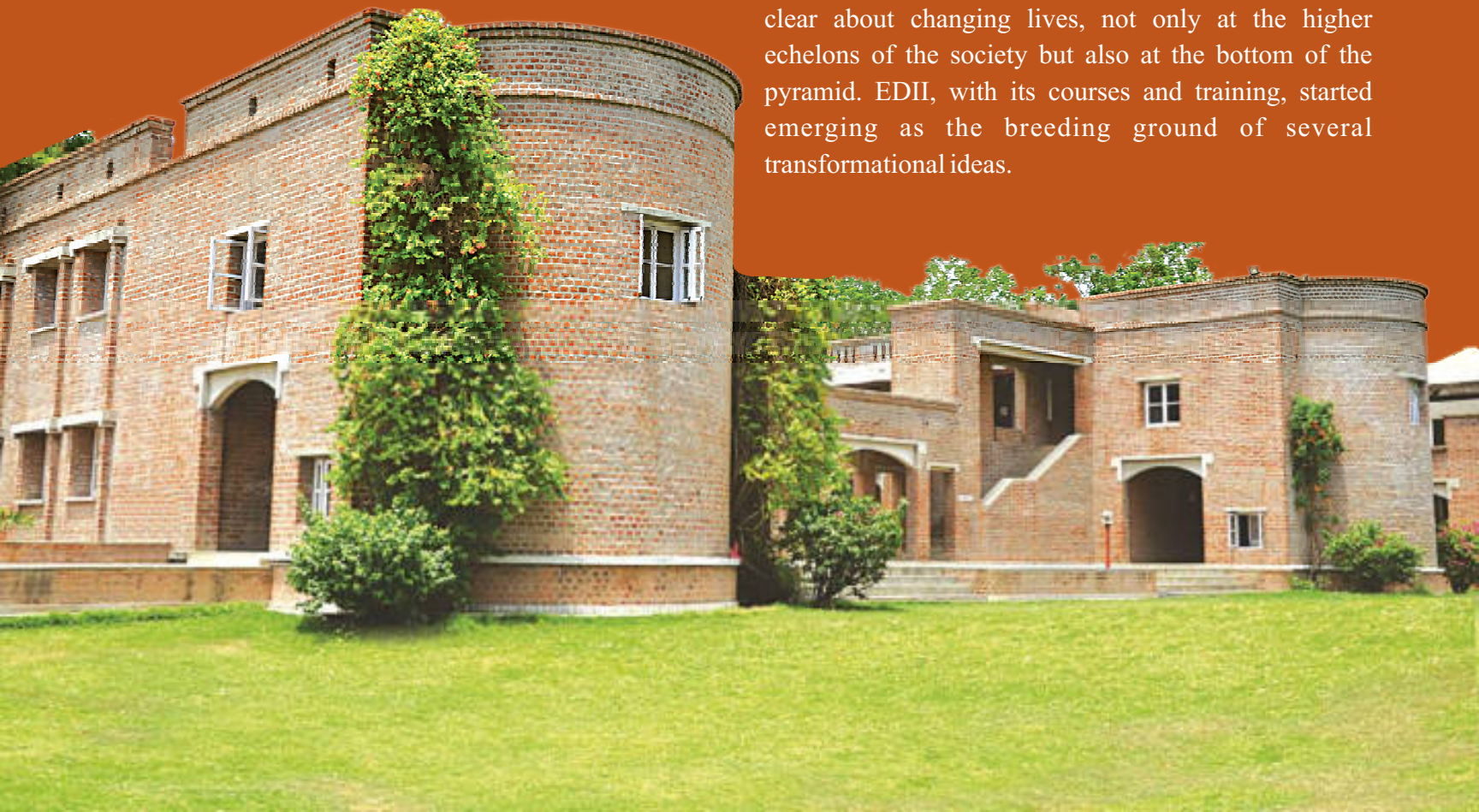


Sunil Shukla
Director-EDII

In 1983 began the journey of a distinctive Institute in India. It was in this year that Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India or EDII, as it is fondly called, started finding its standing in the domain of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship, a newer concept back then, had gradually started gaining a footing in the western part of the country. Identifying the scope of entrepreneurship and with the understanding that entrepreneurs are not necessarily born but can also be created through well-conceived training, begun the

inspiring *odyssey*, a story of over three successful decades and motivating stories.

Set up in 1983 with the support of IDBI Bank Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd, IFCI Ltd, SBI and Government of Gujarat, EDII started enhancing its ambit of activities for various target groups. The institute started receiving support from various governments, and several programmes and courses were introduced to cater to the hidden “entrepreneur” in people across diverse sectors and segments. From the very beginning, the Institute was clear about changing lives, not only at the higher echelons of the society but also at the bottom of the pyramid. EDII, with its courses and training, started emerging as the breeding ground of several transformational ideas.



EDII'S TWO FLAGSHIP POST GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

In order to sensitise the society at large about the charms of being an entrepreneur, entrepreneurship was gradually brought within the fold of education. After several skill-based and short-term programmes, the first-of-its-kind long-term programme in entrepreneurship was introduced to develop a new breed of young generation of futuristic entrepreneurs. The one-year Post Graduate Diploma in Business Entrepreneurship & Management (PGDBEM) initiated in the year 1998 has brought about a paradigm shift in the achievement and awareness quotient of people. In 2008, this course was restructured into a two-year, full-time, AICTE-approved programme, Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship (PGDM-BE).

The PGDM-BE programme facilitates understanding of mainly two verticals: new venture creation and family business management. While New Venture Creation imparts comprehensive knowledge on starting an independent business, the specialisation of Family Business Management looks at equipping the students, desirous of joining their family businesses, with specialised inputs on management, issues, challenges and unique concerns of family businesses.

By the year 2000, the Institute had also recognised the growing importance of non-government initiatives for solving grassroots problems of income and employment generation. To create a cadre of development professionals who could address livelihood concerns, the Institute launched the Post Graduate Diploma in Management of NGOs (PGDMN). This unique specialisation was developed in order to help students either launch their own voluntary organisations or join the development sector to contribute towards its growth. In 2011, this course was converted into a two-year, full-time AICTE-approved Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Development Studies (PGDM-DS).

The PGDM-DS programme is designed as a broad and multi-disciplinary programme to equip students with knowledge, analytical and conceptual skills of social and economic development. It prepares students with the ability to provide entrepreneurial solutions to social problems, livelihoods for rural and urban poor, corporate social responsibility initiatives and creating social enterprises. EDII's 100-per cent placement record in this programme connects each student to a meaningful and challenging career opportunity.

Post Graduate Diploma in Management - Business Entrepreneurship

Dream > Dare > Deliver

This is an accelerated, rigorous and application oriented course offered with an aim to impart comprehensive knowledge of an entrepreneurial ecosystem; develop first generation entrepreneur by building skills in initiating and growing an enterprise; enable family business successor as change agent to encourage competitiveness and growth of business; nurture intrapreneurial aspirations and enhance compatible capabilities.

Unique Aspects of the Programme

- AICTE approved and AIU recognised
- Knowledge and skills for innovative and hi-tech ventures
- Knowledge on emerging businesses and technologies
- Learning on family business management
- Milestones based learning
- International interactions
- Outcome based learning

Post Graduate Diploma in Management - Development Studies

Discover ► Change ► Sustain

PGDM-DS is designed as a broad and multi-disciplinary programme to equip students with knowledge, analytical and conceptual skills of social and economic development. Provide entrepreneurial solutions to social problems, livelihoods for rural and urban unprivileged, corporate social responsibility initiatives and creating social enterprises. PGDM-DS enhances leadership skills and competencies to develop and implement strategies that enable social organizations/enterprises to be strongly positioned in the future.

Unique Aspects of the Programme

- Blends Management learning with Development Orientation
- Focuses on enterprising solutions for the development challenges through orienting students towards social entrepreneurship
- Focuses on imparting both educational & research skills in next generation development professionals
- Entrepreneurial Solutions to Social Problems
- Livelihoods for Rural and Urban Poor
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives
- Building Successful Impact Ventures



EDII ALUMNI

head of the Game...



A detailed study of EDII graduates (*Alumni Survey Report 2017*) was conducted by Dr Jignasu Yagnik, Dr Satya

Acharya and Dr Suresh

Malodia – faculty members at EDII, in order to obtain information about the career and employment status of EDII alumni. The study was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire, which was administered to EDII alumni. The key findings of the survey are:

- EDII alumni are rich in diversity and represent 27 states of India.
- Till date, 1,398 (1,111 PGDM-BE and 287 PGDMN/PGDM-DS) students have successfully graduated from the institute. Of 1,398 students, 1,079 were male while 319 were female students.
- EDII alumni are also present in countries such as Iraq, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Cambodia.



- Hundred per cent alumni were targeted but we could collect data from 983 graduates (207 females and 776 males) only. Hence, the response rate was 70 per cent.
- Nearly 78 per cent alumni have chosen entrepreneurial career paths. Of these, 54 per cent have joined family businesses, 23 per cent have created new ventures and one per cent have set up social enterprises.
- Out of the 78 per cent alumni who have chosen entrepreneurial career paths, 32 per cent are into manufacturing, 37 per cent in services sector and 31 per cent are into trading business.
- EDII alumni were also reported to be working at top positions in the industry. With their intrapreneurial skills, the alumni have reached senior positions in reputed organizations such as Kotak Securities, Plum Slice Labs,



MART, Patni Computers (iGATE), Eco Lab, Donear India Limited, DS Group, AC Nielson, Standard Chartered Bank, etc.

- Across all batches, alumni of the EDII PG programmes find their education to be rewarding personally, professionally and financially.
- On a 10-point scale, the alumni were asked to rate the value of PGDM programmes in terms of the contribution that the programme made in helping them achieve their current position.
 - ➔ 14% rated 10 on 10
 - ➔ 11% rated 9 on 10
 - ➔ 43% rated 8 on 10
 - ➔ 22% rated 7 on 10

The overall rating was 8.12. Ninety per cent of the total ratings were between 7 and 10.





The Expressions of Fashion

Abhinav Daga

PGDBEM 2006-2007

Abhipri – The Jodhpuri Paridhan

Introducing Abhinav Daga from Jodhpur... A student of 9th batch of Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship. His journey undoubtedly testifies the statement – *Don't stop believing in dreams.*

While Abhinav's polite mannerisms cannot go unnoticed, one is particularly attracted by his exclusive sense of fashion – subtle, classy and intricately detailed. He begins with an ear-to-ear smile, “I got into all this by default. Never knew I had this in me. I had joined EDII with different plans but the course and the Institute made me realise my potential which I had never acknowledged.”

Abhinav hails from a family of farmers and agriculture was all that he had always thought about with the only difference that he held a contemporary approach to agriculture. Abhinav wanted to associate agriculture with his modern education and do something worthwhile for the upliftment of his village. He joined EDII to study PGDM-BE with specialisation in agri-entrepreneurship. He says, “My only



goal was to study agriculture from the perspective of entrepreneurship and modern approaches but at EDII, I realised the difference between my preference and talent. My preference was to study agriculture and because of this I could never pay attention to my talent of fashion designing; to my keen eye for style and trends.”

Abhinav had never thought he would take up any other profession other than that related to agriculture. At EDII, he realised that the peer group was always in appreciation of his taste for clothes. At some of the in-house events, Abhinav even designed clothes for his classmates and was applauded for his work each time.

He recalls how a friend had once chided him for studying agriculture and had mentioned that he must take up fashion designing. That was the first trigger for Abhinav and as he says, “From that day I started taking every small task of fashion designing, very seriously.” Although Abhinav was pursuing agripreneurship, he consulted his mentors about the scope and options in fashion designing and tried to simultaneously build his network and knowledge.

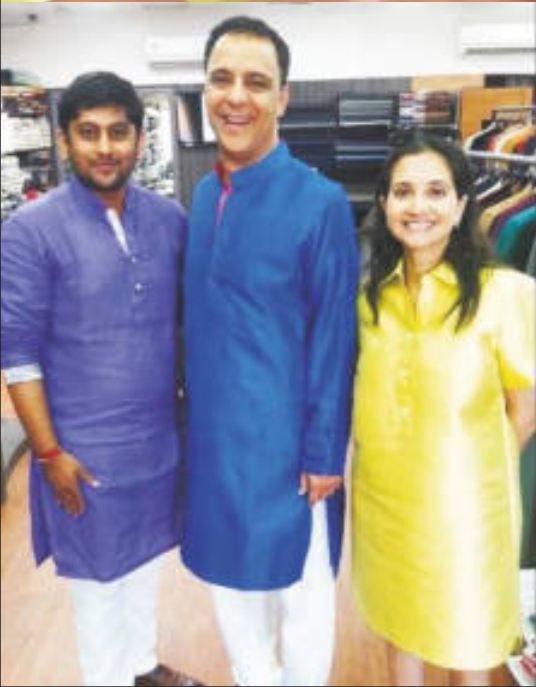
Abhinav learnt the art of doing business and with the help of his mentors, crystallised his plans. He says, “I am grateful for all the mentorship and help that I received in setting up a business outside the domain of agriculture, which was my area of specialization. My guide helped me firm up my action plan and in the meantime, I crossed paths with Priyanka, a fashion graduate. Our friendship blossomed and while we decided to get married; we also simultaneously floated our new venture : Abhipri – The Jodhpuri Paridhan.”

Abhinav envisioned ‘Abhipri–The Jodhpur Paridhan’ primarily to cater to global customers who, he researched and discovered, did not have access to authentic ethnic attire of Jodhpur. His clothes carry his trademark taste which is reflected in every minute detail of his outfits.

Abhipri designs Jodhpuris - *bandhgala, sherwanis*, Hunting Shirts, Breeches, Indo-western wear & Nehru Jackets that bear the genuine Jodhpuri signature and showcase the most contemporary western cuts.

No wonder Abhipri is a top brand today. Just this name is enough for customers to bestow faith; for them Abhipri stands for quality, ethnicity and modernity.

But was the journey easy for Abhinav? He reminisces, “It was difficult to convince my father. He had always thought that I would join agriculture. My family had spent lot of money in my training in the area and to mention to them that I was thinking about venturing into the fashion industry was quite a task.” No one in Abhinav's family had ever got into anything to do with textiles and hence, the level of apprehensions was high. His family even tried to discourage him but Abhinav had done his research and crystallised his plans - there was no way he was backing out. Finally, his family had to relent.



Celebrities
at
abh pri
The Jodhpuri Paridhan

The first challenge Abhinav had to face was finance. He had his project proposal in place; the banks were ready to loan him but his father who harbours an anxiety about availing bank loans did not allow Abhinav to take this route. He offered to loan him which Abhinav accepted. Abhinav says with pride and relief, “Within three years, I repaid the amount which I had borrowed from my father.”

There were struggles for him, especially in the first year of operation. He was dependent on fabric producers, and processors and a delay on their part meant a breach of commitment on Abhinav's part. There were complaints about the accessories used in his outfits, which he purchased from the open market. As rectifying measures, Abhinav entered into a contract with a fabric supplier and a processing house, ensuring a fixed number of work days solely for him. This gave him control over their functioning. He also started manufacturing every small accessory in-house. Even the threads used in stitching were monitored personally by Abhinav.

“The first year was full of complaints,” recalls Abhinav. In several situations, in order to win the trust of his customers, he even returned payments in case of outfits for which he received complaints. Going by the bleak profits in the first year, for a moment, anybody would have thought of closing down but Abhinav was there to persevere. He started off the second year with a better control over all departments of cloth-making and his hard work paid. Today Abh pri - The Jodhpuri Paridhan commands a turnover of ₹7 crore. Abhinav smiles, “There is still a lot to do; there are still markets which I haven't tapped, both nationally and globally. Very soon, I will go online with my products. I am sure this and the other initiatives I am planning will yield even better results.”

May you be always embellished in success. All the best Abhinav.



Targeting the Next level...

Pratik Bachkaniwala

PGDBEM 2001-2002

Pratik's interest in entrepreneurship was kindled when he attended a summer camp at EDII earlier. Clubbed with an early exposure to business, the learning at this camp inspired in him the spirit for embracing entrepreneurship.

Pratik's family is into manufacturing of textile machines. It is an engineering setup and their firm designs, develops and manufactures standard textile machines. They also customise machines as per their clients' requirements.

The idea behind joining the PGDBEM course was to get proper training and skills for handling and promoting his family business. Pratik fondly recalls, "At EDII, I got a good hold on microeconomic analysis, project finance-related matters and other management skills. It was here that my plans got crystallized."

Recalling his plan and ideas for taking his family business onto the next level, Pratik shares, "I thought on many levels and charted out a plan for the progress

of my business. I started with incorporating better management techniques. This was done partly through understanding several project reports before finally implementing their strategies for expansion of the business. We identified and scrutinised opportunities for expansion and acquisition of businesses. The outcome of such a thorough and well-thought plan is in front of you. I have successfully acquired three businesses in the past seven years and have turned them into profitable ventures.”

In terms of garnering support from his family, Pratik has been the luckier one. With constant support and motivation from his family members, he has scaled newer heights by the day and has turned the scales in his favour, over the years. He adds, “My father was happy and looked forward to the implementation of my plans and was keen on handing over all major operations to me. His confidence in me was a major driving force. I knew that even if I stumbled anywhere, he was there to back me and push me further.”

But all was not a bed of roses for this lad. There was a time when he kept moving at a great pace but his family started fragmenting. Pratik shares, “Our family got split and business was divided. During that time, we faced severe crisis in adopting and getting familiar with the smaller, demerged units. The first few years were also difficult as there was financial shortfall due to change in management. Gradually though, we overcame the situation and business started falling in place.”

An important element of learning at EDII deals with handling crises and overcoming challenges. “The training at EDII pulled me through the crises,” remarks Pratik. And with diligence and perseverance, Pratik pulled him through the grim situation.


From a family business, Pratik has gone on to lead four companies today. As he shares, “I am managing four companies, of which two are fully-owned firms. They have a turnover of ₹25 crore and ₹6 crore, respectively. The other two companies are owned in 50% partnership and give me a return of ₹5 crore and ₹3 crore, respectively.”

With a steady growth and a good pace, expansion has been on Pratik's mind constantly. With his entrepreneurial spirit intact and sight on distant goals, he is here to stay. The top priority at this point in time is to go public.

We wish him the best in all his endeavours.

For the youngsters, he shares his words of wisdom, “Have long-term goals and stay focussed on these goals. With perseverance, everything will eventually fall in place.”





When East met West,
a Journey of
Milestones
Began

Ayrton Mayengbam

PGDM-BE 2014-2016

Ayrton Mayengbam is an example of faith in self; he affirms how determination can steer passion, can help break the barriers of language, boundary and customs, to rise and shine. Ayrton hails from an affluent family of Manipur. He was schooled in Delhi for better prospects but as he admits, “I was an average student. Infact, I never planned my life with my education in mind. I was a rebel. If someone said that a particular thing was out of my reach, I would put in all means to achieve it. I have been a rebel and let me confess, I loved being one.”

Ayrton hails from a family which is into the business of construction. But he never saw himself joining his dad's business. The reason he gives is, “It's not in me to take orders from anybody, not even from my father; that was also the reason why I have always wanted to set up my business. Being my own boss fascinated me.”

After completing his education in Bengaluru, Ayrton wanted to go to Australia for studying Management but because his college results were declared late, he could not apply for the spring session. Left with no other option, he

started exploring possibilities in India. EDII's entrepreneurship course appealed to him as it was in consonance with his ultimate goal. Also, Gujarat being renowned for its business mindedness, coming to the state with the dream of becoming an entrepreneur somewhere instilled a curiosity and hope in him.

However, Ayrton's mind was not entirely in EDII and he started with it as a stop-gap arrangement but very soon, as he says, "I found a new lease of life here. I had wanted to ultimately join an Australian university but six months into the PGDM-BE course and I knew that this was what I had always been looking for. EDII gave me a platform to think about entrepreneurship in a systematic way."

The next important step for Ayrton was to identify a business



opportunity. His father is a construction baron in Manipur, and he and his family wanted Ayrton to join the construction business back home. But, Ayrton wanted to be on his own; he wanted to carve his own identity. His search for business opportunity was leading him to a no-man's land when at a party, his school friend reminded him of his creativity in designing denim jeans. Ayrton was popular among his friends for designing his own denims. Ayrton never bought readymade jeans for himself; instead he had designed every pair of jeans he owned. The suggestions instantly went down with Ayrton and alongside pursuing his course at EDII; he started exploring the possibilities of getting denims manufactured. As he says, "I started enjoying my errands to the local market, the fabric suppliers and the wholesalers. I realised this was my passion. Also, I had grown up under the informal mentorship of my grandmother who was a fashion diva and a jewellery designer in her own times. Every aspect was now hugely impacting my decision to venture into the field. I felt it was always in me; just that I had never jolted it."

Ayrton got some 200 pairs of jeans manufactured using the pocket money he had saved, and started selling these among his friends at EDII. Encouraged by this, he ordered 500 more pairs. But this time, the order was not executed to his satisfaction. "I learnt my first lesson. I had outsourced everything and had taken things for granted. This failure taught me how important it is to focus on even the minute details when it comes to business. I sold these at a very cheap price. I was often mocked but I bore it all, drawing a lesson from even failure and every mockery only because I wanted to have the last laugh."

By the time Ayrton graduated from EDII, he had the fabric suppliers lined up, the tailors in place and a partnership



arrangement with a local businessman to initiate the business. The first few months were tough as finances posed a major challenge. On several days, he went without two square meals. Ayrton had refused to accept financial help from his father who had initially disapproved of his business. He wanted to fight back every odd and prove his mettle. Thanking EDII faculty, Ayrton shares, “The milestone-based learning at EDII got me ready to create a better roadmap for myself. Financial training and able mentorship made me research the systems of creating denim. Eventually, sheer hard work clubbed with faculty guidance showed me the way. It was only because of my training that I could work within limited budget, handle manpower and succeed in a state where I had come just two-and-a-half years ago.”

Ayrton finds Ahmedabad a great place to create new designs. He believes that while East gave him the direction, the western end of the country gave him the entrepreneurial route. Today, Ayrton's denims have found comfortable market in Uttar Pradesh, Guwahati, Assam, Manipur and Rajkot. He has also initiated work towards floating textile export house and launching cotton trousers. With a capacity to roll out 10,000-15,000 denims a month, Ayrton lives life by the motto – *life is short*.

This young entrepreneur has his growth strategy perfectly in place and is focussing single-mindedly on the three most important aspects of business – product quality, brand-building and market.

Fighting back is Ayrton's biggest trait and he is determined to move ahead. “It's now that I have got a new lease of life,” he signs off.

A man in a dark grey suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie stands in a hallway. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The hallway has wooden trim and a white wall with a keypad on the left. The lighting is soft and even.

The Story of his Steely Resolve

Sumit Grover
PGDBEM 1999-2000

For this Delhi lad, life was *cool*. He wanted to make it large but never thought seriously over what it takes to make it thus. As a protected child from a family with business background, he wasn't ever coerced into working hard and establishing a distinct identity. After his graduation in commerce, he was once again at crossroads – he wanted to join business but at the same time felt it was too early and that he should dabble with something else. But the phrase – 'something else' made no sense to him. All he was sure of was that he did not want to pursue a master's degree in engineering akin to his peers. Somewhere, he was connected with business and so when a friend mentioned EDII's Post Graduate Programme in Management – Business Entrepreneurship to him, it struck a chord. As Sumit puts it, "I have a strong intuitive power and something seemed to be telling me that I must grab this opportunity. Soon, I was at EDII, with every day only reaffirming my decision. I got more focussed here. The desire to create something of my own got kindled in me."



By his own admission, Sumit was a changed person after joining the course at EDII. He started contemplating his own business. After research and under mentorship of his guide and father, who possessed 45 years of experience in the steel industry, he zeroed in on steel rolling mills. He prepared a detailed project report and tried to learn as much as possible about the idea. The question about a permanent base for his business bemused him but only for a while, as somewhere in his heart he was convinced about Ahmedabad as his '*karmabhumi*', as Sumit puts it.

Sumit was discouraged by many of his friends who were dissuading him from joining the steel business; they said he was technically not sound and, therefore, would not be able to pick up tricks of the trade. But, Sumit remained resolute and never doubted his competence. "I had grown up amid discussions on business and had unconsciously imbibed the unyielding spirit of an entrepreneur. Hence, I was against quitting this easily. I did understand why not being an engineer would hinder my business or could be a mark of my technical incompetence. I decided to do something concrete about it," reminisces Sumit.

So, despite his impatience to take the plunge immediately after completion of his course, Sumit waited for a while. He took up a job with an Ahmedabad-based company as a trainee to derive on-job training. Simultaneously, he got an opportunity to put his skills to test when he revived a steel plant.

A year later when he set up his business, Sumit bagged his first order of exporting hydraulic cylinders to Saudi Arabia worth ₹50,000. He fulfilled the order but at a loss of ₹10,000. He shares, "I did not earn from this order; rather I spent my own money but I learnt a lot. My father encouraged me, saying that unless I soiled my hands, I would not learn anything."


Sumit called his company Vinod, after his mother's name, whom he worships. Vinod International gradually started moving up the ladder. It has evolved as a 100% export-oriented company which offers total solutions through concept-to-completion approach for steel industry. Sumit has made a mark for himself and today owns offices in Saudi Arabia and Dubai as well. But, success didn't come easy to him. He has had his bad days when he felt like quitting but he hung on.



Sumit smiles as he shares how, owing to his pride, he never took any financial help from his father even though there were times when mustering finance was a hefty task. To survive in the market, he had to offer credit for 90 to 180 days, which he found utterly difficult, given his limited resources. He carefully devised strategies to deal with every difficult situation and to sustain in the market. There were times when he had to substantially reduce his margins to stay in the league. At times when he felt like quitting, his father's words reverberated in his mind, “Unless you soil your hands, you won't learn anything.” These words of wisdom inspired the fighter in him and urged him to work harder. Sumit's optimism kept him going.

Always on a lookout for newer opportunities, Sumit is ambitious and raring to go. After having carved his niche in the area of steel exports, he has more companies in kitty: Vinod Mines & Refractories Limited, Vinod Manufacturing Limited and Le Voir Trdaes Private Limited. Over the next five years, he plans to put Engineering Quartz Slab Project together. Having established himself as a successful entrepreneur, Sumit also wants to give back to society. He runs an NGO where new start-ups/businesses or industries are supported through training. He has represented India during Ministers' Forum at Uganda and is also an active member of several organisations. Sumit is also the President of EDII's Alumni Organisation.

Sumit's grit and determination has scripted an inspiring story, a story that entails the transformation of the steel business in India.



Taking Plunge after testing the Waters

It was on a momentous day in the month August year 2001 when Ranjeet Shrivastava set his foot in the state of Gujarat. It was a new place for him, a new land with a vast expanse of opportunities. Little did he know that this would soon become home away from his home in Bihar. Few days into the state and Ranjeet was awestruck with the freedom, peace, business-friendly, people-friendly and crime-free life here. He could see girls and women travelling alone at odd hours and kids on scooters at midnight, enjoying their lives. Then and there, he had made up his mind; he was here to stay. He had decided to make a living here and as destiny would have it, today, Ranjeet is a popular name in the entrepreneurial circle in the city of Ahmedabad.

Ranjeet's interest in entrepreneurship stemmed from his roots. His family was into the business of LPG Distributorship. Ranjeet wanted to bring more professionalism into their business and thus started looking for courses in entrepreneurship. It was then that he came across EDII and without any doubt, took the plunge.

At the very onset, Ranjeet had decided that he wouldn't delve into his family

Ranjeet Shrivastava

PGDBEM 2001-2002

business immediately post graduating. Instead, he would first help set up at least five businesses as a consultant, and then plunge into becoming a fulltime entrepreneur. The learning at EDII, as he shares, benefitted him aptly. “Especially the practical hands-on training and field exposure opened up my mind and my plans for venturing into a **Consultancy Services** business got crystallised here at EDII.”

After graduating from EDII, Ranjeet started working with Maniar Vehicles as its Sales Head, with the objective of imbibing knowledge of local market and its struggles. Two years down the line, he switched to Kotak Life Insurance as Branch Head. Between 2005 and 2014, Ranjeet charted an inspirational journey. In the first 18 months of his tenure here, he bagged six promotions! The repository of knowledge that he had gained at Maniar Vehicles was vital in this success of his life. The understanding of the local market came handy at Kotak.

In 2008, he finally took over the reins of his family business in his hands. It was a tough challenge but Ranjeet not only sailed through, but also mentored his spouse become an entrepreneur. **Forret India Pvt. Ltd**, his consultancy firm, has in the past nine years grown from two to 40 employees, with an increase in turnover of almost 50 per cent year-over-year.

In the year 2015, Ranjeet ventured into yet another domain – boutique services – with the name of Askanytime.in India Pvt. Ltd. This firm operates only for its registered clientele and has a whole range of services, ranging from event organising, tour operations, IT services, house or office renovation, etc. Upon enquiring how he identified this business opportunity, or how did he benefit his family business, Ranjeet, besotted with a smile, shares, “As promised, I did five successful consultancy projects, free-of-cost, to get the flair of business operations. All the five businesses were unique in terms of products/services and were successful. Seeing this kind of success gave me strength and confidence to start my own venture. So much so, that I did not take a penny from my

family, friends or relatives for starting my venture. I made it work single-handedly and that made me feel as an entrepreneur.”

“Patience was my strength. It has helped the entrepreneur in me come to the fore,” clears Ranjeet. He also adds, “My family has supported me through the thick and thin. They always had faith in me **and** my capabilities. They believed that I would run the business well, owing to my education and professional skills, and that I would be able to handle the pressure well. Their confidence in me has led me to my targets.”

Ranjeet's journey has been progressive, although he has had his share of hiccups. Initially, he faced fundraising issues as he had committed that he would not take a single penny from family, friends or relatives. So, the start was risky. But, god helps those who help themselves. He managed funds from his savings and some promoters. Thus, Ranjeet sailed through and managed things using his knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship. “I never thought of giving up as failure was out of question and out of my dictionary. EDII played a key role in keeping me motivated. The learning that I derived at the institute has helped me grow at every stage of my venture. Before starting my business, I took legal advice from my mentors at EDII. Live projects and the whole environment helped me in my journey at every step,” recalls Ranjeet.

For his future, Ranjeet has steady plans, well-thought and well-planned. He wants to make his business “glocal” i.e. global-local. He wants to capture the whole market with his products. Today, his turnover stands at close to crore. This figure has traversed a long journey from ₹10 lakh in its first year of operations.

To the aspiring entrepreneurs, Ranjeet only has to say, “Never ever give up. You are unique and you have the courage needed to plunge into entrepreneurship. Have faith in yourself and keep patience”.



Sparkling all the way.....

Priti Bhatia

PGDBEM 2003-2004
Managing Director -
Awesome Sparklers

TTrue to her name Priti, she spreads ‘love’ and ‘joy’ through her aesthetically-designed jewellery. A designer par excellence, she is a renowned name in the jewellery industry. Priti had a protected childhood in a joint family in Surat. A national champion in skating, she grew up with the learning that nothing comes easy; hard work begets success.

With her mind set on becoming an ‘achiever’ in life, she scanned the educational circuit to find a direction and came to know about EDII’s PGDM-BE course. *To become an entrepreneur* did tickle her creative instincts and she decided to give it a shot by undergoing the course. Doing business was not new for Priti as her family was into the business of chemicals and she had grown up seeing them discuss business. However, she had never thought of entrepreneurship as a career for herself. Priti had the desire to achieve but was clueless about the trajectory that she wanted to adopt. Priti recalls: “Having completed graduation, I was seeking alternatives for further studies. I was interested in



business venturing but wasn't sure if I wanted to pursue it. But, I believe somewhere that an inkling impressed upon me and I decided to join EDII to learn how to become an entrepreneur. It was an apt decision, I must say. Quality sessions, knowledge and guidance of faculty and industry interactions proved to be helpful."

A go-getter all the way, at EDII Priti bagged the Bharti Student of the Year Award for Best All-rounder of the PG Programmes 2003-04 and Silver Medal for Scholastic Performance in Family Business Management 2003-04. An emotional Priti says, "That day proved to be my turning point. I knew I had it in me to make it big."

At EDII, Priti had specialised in Family Business Management and so, she joined her family business and started supervising the import-export department where she handled import of dyes from China. Even after her marriage, two years post managing her family business, she continued her association with entrepreneurship by taking charge of a part of her husband's business. Her husband was into pharmaceutical and hotel businesses. They also managed 'Lifespring', a health and beauty store. Priti was assigned the responsibility of managing operations of Lifespring. She stated: "I was responsible for the overall stock management at the store. But by this time, despite all the satisfaction that I derived from running a business, I had begun to feel the need to have something of my own." This was, however, a difficult period for Priti who also had to go through a strained marital relationship. Despite all efforts, she could not save her marriage and returned to Surat. She was at an all-time low. Life seemed to have given her a mean defeat.

Priti remarks: "It was the toughest phase of my life but my family, especially my parents, stood by me. My mother was aware of my knack for business and motivated me to think on

those lines. I had a passion for jewellery and had made some keen observations. I had noticed that people were being cheated in the name of diamond jewellery. So, I had made a mental note that someday I would venture into diamond jewellery making on account of huge market potential and because I believed people deserved better. I had shared this idea in the past with my mother who now encouraged me to start a business in diamond jewellery-making. My mother thoroughly convinced me.”

Love, support and encouragement slowly helped Priti overcome the tough times. She started thinking on the lines of setting up her dream venture.

Priti attended a one-week diamond grading course, followed by one-month jewellery-designing programme at International Gemological Institute (IGI) in Mumbai. Both the programmes proved to be helpful. While the diamond-grading course offered knowledge in the key area of diamond business, the designing programme imparted insights into creating artistic pieces of jewellery.

In March 2010, with personal finance of 60 lakh, Priti launched her enterprise - *Awesome Sparklers* – specialising in designer diamond jewellery, targeting women above 30. Exclusively designed by Priti, the jewellery brand was created from 18-carat gold and embellished with diamonds and gem stones. The raw material is sourced from Surat and Mumbai. Elegant, ready-to-wear jewellery pieces are made by job contractors based in Surat and Mumbai, and is the forte of Awesome Sparklers. The jewellery-makers were informal workers and labourers, compensated through the piece-wage system. The products of Awesome Sparklers range from rings, pendants, chains, earrings to pendent sets, both in the light and heavy ranges. In addition to retailing these products, Priti also got into small-scale distribution of loose diamonds. Priti sticks to the policy of ensuring 50% payment in advance, that

is, at the time of receiving orders and the remaining payment on delivery of the product.

Awesome Sparklers has earned the reputation of selling unique jewellery with awesome craftsmanship. As Priti puts it, “I want people to wear my jewellery and not keep it locked in the cupboard. And, that they will do only when the designs are subtle yet appealing. All my designs depict a distinct subtlety except the bridal and the special-occasion jewellery, which are heavy.”

No wonder, Priti won the best jewellery design award in 2013, 2015, JJS-IJ Award in 2016 and a special award in 2016 from the Hon’ble Governor of Gujarat for good work, growth and development in gems and jewellery industry.

Priti has put up exhibitions at Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Ludhiana, Surat and Chandigarh. Her brand was promoted through *Cosmo*, *Femina*, *Times of India*, radio stations Mumbai and Delhi *93.5 FM*. Recently she started her own all-equipped, technically innovative jewellery factory where emphasis is solely on quality and workmanship. Priti believes, “India has it all in this domain, so the primary goal behind my endeavours, at this stage, is to popularize the finesse that Indian jewellery must be known for. The ‘Made in India’ tag must reflect reliability and quality.”

Priti’s enterprise today basks in the glory of having crossed a turnover of Rs. 80 crore. With a wide customer base in the national and international markets, Priti’s start-up is among the top five nationally.

She concludes, “In every adversity, there lies an opportunity. Who could have proved this better than I. I was fortunate to have got trained in entrepreneurship and to have received guidance from my father, whom I consider my role model.”



Karithanam

Ayur Farms:

A Backwaters

Indian Homestay Experience

Preethy Thomas

PGDBEM 2006-2007

Managing Director - Karithanam Ayur Farms

Her infectious exuberance can instantly put a smile on anyone's face. Her response to a customary 'hello' is a spirited, full of energy, ear-to-ear smile. No wonder, one connects instantly with Preethy. I was provoked to ask her, "How is it that you are always so full of life?" Her response was, "My father had a transferrable job. Just when I would begin to settle at a place, my father would get transferred and within a few days, I would find myself in a new school, among new people, trying to make friends. I think that trait has remained with me. I love to meet people, so much so that my father even lightly mentioned during my growing up years that I must get into the hospitality business. Somewhere, that light comment by my father had a deep impact on me and I actually began nurturing the dream of a career in the hospitality business."

During her final year at school, Deepthy applied for a three-year Hotel Management Programme at the Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology & Applied

Nutrition (IHMCT&AN), run and managed by the Ministry of Tourism. Preethy finally secured admission in the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Hyderabad during the year 2002.

After three years of professional education along with rigorous training, she graduated in 2005 and took up a job as the Front Office Associate in the ITC Hotel Group at ITC Grand Central, a five-star deluxe business hotel located at Parel, Mumbai. She proved herself and in three months, was promoted to their Executive Lounge to receive VIP guests of the hotel. But, Preethy wasn't content and started preparation for Common Admission Test as well as other management exams for further studies. It was her father who introduced entrepreneurship in hospitality to her and suggested EDII to pursue training in the area. This caught Preethy's fancy and after clearing the tests, she enrolled for the Institute's Post Graduate Diploma in Business Entrepreneurship and Management (PGDBEM) programme."

Preethy added: "EDII offers an inspiring environment to have something of your own. I still remember we had a lot of case study exercises and exciting field visits for a comprehensive learning experience in entrepreneurship. I opted for Services Management. EDII put my entrepreneurship plans in perspective. I knew I was thinking right."

After completing PGDM-BE and after gaining work experience for a while, Preethy decided to implement her project on homestay business. Her project report at EDII was also on homestay business. She shifted to Kerala where she decided to use her father's ancestral house as her homestay business idea. "And very soon, Karithanam Ayur Farms Homestay (Karithanam Homestay) was born," beams Preethy.

Homestay is a form of tourism that allows a visitor to rent a room from a local family in a homelike setting. It is sometimes used for improving language skills and getting familiar with

the local culture and lifestyle. Guests are either accommodated in the family home or in separate quarters nearby. Nowadays, most homestays provide their guests with just as much comfort as a reputable hotel. Preethy had thought about this business idea because her assessment of the footfall of foreign tourists to India had given her a fair idea about the huge potential that lay in this business. Homestays are in demand in regions witnessing maximum foreign tourists and, therefore, Preethy had very carefully chosen Kerala. Also as Preethy reasons, "As per the Kerala State Tourism Department, there is shortage of hotel rooms during peak season. Hence, Kerala is an appropriate location for a homestay venture."

Preethy faced several setup challenges. "Getting the license was not much of a hassle as the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala, supports homestays. However, it involved several reminders and follow-ups for the inspection and other essential formal procedures. It was a big challenge indeed to understand the way labour is employed in Kerala. Only specific kind of workers can be hired for a particular work, so one cannot recruit people from other community for some kinds of work. Thus, owing to stringent labour rules and high literacy rate, it was very difficult to hire manpower at a reasonable rate. Yet, despite all hiccups, I was determined to see my business through and along with my husband's and father's support, dealt with all problems."


Throwing light on the homestay business, Preethy said: "The Department of Tourism has laid down guidelines for classification of homestay units and based on the facilities and quality of the accommodation provided, homestay units are classified into three categories. Homestay units fulfilling all the essential conditions prescribed by the Department of Tourism and meeting all required criteria in the checklist of facilities, belong to the Class-A category and are given the

Diamond House status by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC). Similarly, those in Class-B category are awarded the Gold House status and those in Class-C category are accorded the Silver House status.” Karithanam Homestay, within a year of setting up, was accorded KTDC-approved Diamond Category Homestay Certificate.”

The homestay venture was financed from own savings and recurring business revenues. Karithanam Homestay’s target market comprises NRIs, foreign and domestic tourists. The journey was replete with challenges but was worth the effort. Preethy recounts: “Despite competition from local hotels and homestays, Karithanam Homestay succeeded as it offers a truly unique experience to guests. I made sure that I showcased India’s diverse culture, religions, faiths and traditions to the guests. That became our winning point. The homestay was also done up with that objective. “

As a strategic move, Preethy also added the Kerala Ayurveda dimension to her business. Karithanam is an *ayurveda* homestay with an ethnic touch. Ennakkathara Ayurvedics, their business associate, caters to the wellness and rejuvenation needs of the guests in ancient and traditional Indian *ayurveda* way. Karithanam Homestay also offers a full-fledged library equipped with over 3,000 books from varied areas so that the guests can explore India through these books. As a business strategy, Preethy is very particular about sustaining relations not only with the lead travel agents in and around Kerala but also with other travel agents across India so that the business prospers. Preethy credits her success to her learning during graduation, work experience and EDII’s hardcore entrepreneurship training along with mentoring support.

Preethy concludes, “It is my dream that Karithanam Homestay gets rated as the best homestay in Kerala. I wish to provide excellent hospitality and the best of other services under one roof to each and every individual who visits us.”



Khadi

on the Voyage of
Grace and Elegance...

Khadi got a new lease of life during the Indian independence movement and became an icon of the nation's freedom struggle. Gradually though, the fabric came to be associated with ruggedness and lack of finesse, and got relegated to a backseat among the list of fabrics. For a very long time during the evolutionary stages of India, Khadi was fighting a losing battle. Some relief came when Khadi started getting blended with other fibres like silk and wool to produce appealing, colourful fabrics with some distinct qualities and sheen. Well, even then Khadi could never get over its image of 'commoners' cloth'. Several designers took turns to reviving the image of Khadi and ensuring that it starts getting associated with modernity while simultaneously underlining the traditional feel that it embodies. Yet there are miles to go before Khadi bears a victory baton.

Priyanshi Jariwala
PGDM-BE 2014-2016



Priyanshi Jariwala is one of the few visionaries to sight the glamour quotient in Khadi. Priyanshi took the plunge into entrepreneurship with an assurance to the young that she would introduce Khadi to them in a fashionable and ever-so-desirable form. Her innovative start-up, The Khadi Cult, offers fashionable and youth-centric Khadi clothes.

Priyanshi completed her graduation from Narsee Monjee College of Commerce & Economics and the immediate option before her was to join her family business. Her family is into metallic yarn manufacturing. They also own a diagnostic centre franchise of Apollo hospitals. But, Priyanshi had other aims. She wanted to join her family business not as a natural successor but as a deserving successor with an idea about business to make it big on her own merit. She wanted to make a meaningful contribution. She wanted to learn the nuances of ‘doing business’ before venturing out. Through some friends, she came to know about EDII’s Post Graduate Programme in Management – Business Entrepreneurship. The curriculum, as she says, “promised to give me what I was looking for”. She decided to join it and very soon, Priyanshi was learning ‘how to do business’ at EDII campus.

Speaking about her learning at EDII, Priyanshi says, “Studying at EDII was a different experience altogether. The professors were approachable and were always ready to help us with our business ideas. They tested waters every now and then to make sure that we were certain and confident about our business idea.”

EDII changed her perspective and she started looking for an opportunity to set up her own business. Right from the first

year, Priyanshi started working on her business idea. She had a liking for clothing and accessories, and these were the two opportunities she focussed upon for market research. Ultimately, she settled on floating a business of providing comfortable and fashionable clothing in Khadi for the youth. Priyanshi shares, “I understand the requirements of today’s youth. While they have an orientation towards western clothing, they also prefer comfort and style. I decided to move away from the run-of-the-mill fabric used in designing clothes for the youth; instead gave them different kind of clothes that promise style and comfort.”

Priyanshi knew that she was choosing the road less trodden but she was determined. She visited a host of Khadi Bhandars to assess the market and without much ado, took to business. As she says, “Assuring myself of success, I just started designing Khadi clothes.”

Priyanshi addressed all the lapses that she had noticed during her visits to Khadi Bhandars. She expanded choices for youths and pitched Khadi as a stylish fabric, which remains cool in summers and provides warmth in winters. She adorned the clothing with modern prints, styles and cuts. With such focus, Priyanshi worked on her start-up. Even for her internship, she worked on her own start-up, thus having perfected the strengths and assessed the weaknesses by the time she launched her unit.

Luckily, six months after Priyanshi started working on her start-up idea, Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in *Mann ki Baat*, mentioned that Khadi should be widely promoted among youth. With Prime Minister’s accent on

Khadi clothes, it became easier for Priyanshi to venture into the market.

The path for Priyanshi was not a bed of roses. Lack of experience and practical training did put her into losses and wastage of metres of cloth. Reaching out to people was also a task. However at this juncture, she used her entrepreneurial training. As she puts it, “There was a time when on account of a technical error, I wasted 22 metres of cloth but instead of panicking, I used the cloth creatively and made beautiful bags out of it. So, at every stage, I fought till I gradually felt confident.” She also trained herself by working extensively with textile professionals and designers. This helped her achieve creative landmarks by way of designing Khadi *chaniya-cholis* which got her noticed. She is also careful about not repeating her designs and places more focus on innovating. Her next innovation is Khadi Denim.

Today, Priyanshi’s products are in demand in Surat and this demand is constantly rising. Priyanshi plans to make Khadi popular in India and abroad and is already in talks with a few companies in New Jersey, France and Europe that are interested in the distribution of Khadi wear. This young entrepreneur is all charged up and is taking small steps to success. Her confidence is contagious and there’s no way The Khadi Cult wouldn’t make among the top Indian clothing brands, five years down the line.

We wish her all the best!



Tiling her Success Brick by Brick

It's a common belief that it comes easy for family business successors. And, it is this tag that Kinjal wanted to break-free from. Her father recalls, "Ever since she cleared class tenth, she had become keen on contributing to family business and would always tell me that she would be different from other successors and add wings to the growth graph of the enterprise."

Kinjal wanted to prove it to herself for which she charted out a plan of action. While she tried to understand the nuances of her family business of ceramic tiles, she simultaneously joined the Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship (PGDM-BE) at EDII, in order to learn all about running and managing a business. As she puts it, "I trusted myself and was convinced about working hard but, I realised how important it is to possess updated knowledge on business trends and practices. That was the reason I had done Bachelors of Business Administration from M S University but, I still felt the need to upgrade my skills. I was clear as to what I wanted to equip myself with and hence, surfed the internet to gather details on the syllabus of various business-related courses. I had heard about EDII's PGDM-BE course and a closer probe into the course curriculum convinced me about joining this course. My decision to join PGDM-BE was by far the best that could have happened to me. My two-year stay at

Kinjal Patel

PGDM-BE 2014-2016

EDII opened up a new world for me. I was surprised to know the scope my family business had in terms of expansion and modification.”

At EDII, Kinjal specialised in Family Business Management and worked out a five-year growth plan for her family business. The focus of the growth plan was on identifying strengths and weaknesses, and addressing these with forward-looking strategies to place the business on a higher growth trajectory over a period of next five years. Kinjal was now ensconced in knowledge and felt comfortable.

In _____ 20__, Kinjal joined her reputed family business of ceramic tiles. She was determined to be the torchbearer of a business where presence of women is almost negligible. Hundreds of families in Morbi are involved in manufacturing ceramic products but the number of women entrepreneurs in this business is negligible. Also, the manufacturing units deal directly with the suppliers and there is no retail selling. Kinjal says, “Customers do not come directly to the manufacturing units to buy products. The owners of ceramic units have to deal largely with labourers, truck-drivers and suppliers. Therefore, even if it is an established family business, parents do not encourage their daughters or sisters to join the unit. But, with the new generation of girls wanting to make a contribution, they are now joining the business although mainly in the marketing and accounts departments of the units.” Kinjal was fortunate to have a supportive family. Very soon, her card bore the designation of Managing Partner - Shreeji Ceramic. Kinjal shares her card with an exuberant smile.

She says, “EDII is one of the most prestigious institutes offering Family Business Management course. I had joined the institute wanting to learn the nuances of family business. And, EDII not just made me competent in this area but also taught me several other aspects related to entrepreneurship.

First and foremost, I gained immense confidence which helped me sail through every situation.”

Kinjal had ideas for her family business but the biggest challenge for her was to get them accepted. Being an age-old business, certain practices had almost got embedded. To change them needed to primarily assure the promoters that these are further contemporary in outlook and will guarantee far better results. Kinjal also looked for freedom in decision-making and style of work. She did not want to get inhibited by the interference of the promoters.

Talking about problems faced by second-generation entrepreneurs, Kinjal remarks, “In family-managed businesses, family relations and business ethics overlap and come in the way of each other, and it is from here that confusions emerge. I did not want such a situation in my business on account of my joining it. I was aware of some of the gaps but I did not want to impose anything on anybody too soon. I was fully aware of the repercussions of such a pressure. So, I decided to take one step at a time. All my soft-skills training at EDII was being put to test – creativity, leadership, communication skills and so on.”

Kinjal recounts how her training in family business management helped her at every step. Gradually, she introduced professionalism in business and made everybody do away with the traditional ways. Kinjal researched the ceramic tile industry, carried out a market research and pointed out how the consumer preferences had changed and that a progressive business is always the one to match steps with the market trends. Today, her production unit produces several new varieties which is in keeping with the demand and leanings of the people. Kinjal understood the importance of innovation for a business and therefore introduced several innovations in tile designs. This was an instant hit among the

consumers, thus greatly impacting their productivity. Kinjal also technically upgraded the traditional tile-making process which was prevalent earlier, which resulted in better-finished products and in turn increased demand. In another landmark move, Kinjal ensured that in line with campaigns such as Digital India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, her organisation too adopts green and clean fuel for power sources.

Step by step, Kinjal almost turned around her family business. She not just imparted it a progressive outlook in terms of its business processes but also introduced positive modifications in technology and design.

Today, a happy Kinjal says, “Initially, being the only working woman in my family, things were not very smooth. Slowly and steadily, I have made my place in the business.”

Kinjal admits that the creative marketing ideas she learned at EDII proved to be very useful to her. She remarks, “In our industry, needs of the suppliers are highly neglected. I learnt at EDII that if I want my suppliers to give preference to my products or buy only my products, I must take care of their needs. It is important for the manufacturer to know if the supplier is facing problems; these could be in transportation, in procuring the supply on time, etc. Here lies the gap as generally manufacturers in ceramic industry do not involve themselves in such issues. I just identified these gaps and addressed them. I was delighted to see the results and more importantly, to see my family develop faith in me.”

Kinjal now envisions to give an international standing to Shreeji Ceramic. She is working on branding Shreeji Ceramic internationally by resorting to all modern tools of marketing. She has also joined hands with another EDII student Nikita Maheshwari in developing a website for selling ceramic tiles online. This initiative has earned rave reviews and appreciation.



Familiar with the problems related to online sales of ceramic products, she says, “Customers chose to touch and feel the tiles before buying them. The colour of the tiles displayed on the website varies from screen to screen. Indian customers are still not used to buying such products online but there are ways and means which can be relied upon to address these problems. I am doing all of it and I’m sure things will improve.” Kinjal has made her mark by introducing several new business and marketing practices in her company and is determined to take the business overseas in the years to come. Today, Kinjal is an example for other potential women entrepreneurs and is a testimony to the fact that women can succeed in any field of their choice. She says it’s time that we stop associating women with limited products such as fabric, handicrafts, cosmetics, etc. Kinjal is highly confident about the technical bent of mind among women and says that with right knowledge and orientation, they can fly. Kinjal thanks her stars for having got an opportunity to hone her skills at EDII.

A second-generation entrepreneur, Kinjal has carved a niche in the domain. Today, the senior members of her family acknowledge her support and look forward to being guided by her. ‘That is my achievement,’ Kinjal signs off.



On a Ride to Tickling the Taste Buds

Parth Mehta

PGDM-BE 2014-2016

Parth grew up amidst acclaim for his tactical approach. He graduated from the School of Liberal Studies, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University where he specialised in Business Administration. In college, his friends looked up to him for organising events and mustering sponsorship support. During one such well-organised event in college, a cultural committee member came up to him, shook hands and remarked, “You will excel as an entrepreneur. You have an eagle’s eye.” Parth reacts, “I was thrilled to hear these comments. My confidence instantly soared up. That was the first time the seeds of entrepreneurship were sown in me. I started nurturing a dream and couldn’t wait to get into my own business headlong.” Immediately after college, Parth initiated a trading venture but failed. Determined, he made another foray but unfortunately, that also met with an inglorious end.

Just when Parth had given up all hopes of making it big in business, a friend mentioned that he must give himself a

second chance. Driven by passion and motivation, Parth decided to delve again but this time, certainly after equipping himself with relevant knowledge. His search for appropriate courses led him to EDII's Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship (PGDM-BE). Parth was in no two minds about undergoing a course in entrepreneurship. In fact, he had even tutored 100 kids of India in a course on Entrepreneurship Leadership, managed by Infosys. Parth cleared the tests and with a focussed objective, got involved in the PGDM-BE course. As Parth says, "During my earlier businesses, I thought I knew a lot about this discipline but I was wrong. Even while joining the PGDM-BE, I was 80% convinced that I would learn. But, only a few days into the course and I realised that the world of business was vast, its vicissitudes were perplexing and unless mastered, it was difficult to move ahead. So, I thank EDII for telling me that I need to unlearn a few things and learn a whole new world of things. Calculated risk-taking, business opportunity identification, project implementation and sustainability were areas that particularly caught my fancy during the course."

After a thorough opportunity-mapping, Parth settled on a business in food and beverages. He worked on a Food Truck Project under able mentorship support of EDII faculty. Parth had always been experimenting with food. He was fond of cooking and had tried his hand at it several times, simply out of interest. Everybody had appreciated Parth's culinary skills but nobody had encouraged it from a commercial point of view. Ironically, Parth had also never looked at his skills from the point of making a living. At EDII, he realised he could convert his passion into a business opportunity. Parth started working on his idea. His biggest concern was to impart a unique identity to his venture. He knew that unless he wooed people with exclusive products, he wouldn't be able to make a mark,

especially when he had decided to price the items at par with restaurant rates. Parth began work on his business model and crystallised his plans well within the duration of the course. As he puts it, "I don't remember having wasted time at EDII. I was studying all the time, thinking business or taking actions related to my plans. The process of creation had engrossed me completely."

A food truck! The idea did raise eyebrows initially, so we asked Parth as to how did he think about it and not a restaurant which normally would be the idea for a food enthusiast.

"Once I decided that I had to get into the food industry, I made random travel plans. I travelled almost across the country, observing what was new in this area and how could I innovate to catch the target's attention. I realised that theme-based restaurants or those with features such as catchy décor or live music appealed to people, especially youth. For me, finance was a constraint and so, a lavish restaurant at a posh location was ruled out. Next was the idea of a theme-based restaurant. I wanted to address this and in thinking about creative ways, I thought of starting a fruit truck with exotic fruits," shares Parth.

Parth's father was not convinced with the idea of a fruit truck. Parth had to reason extensively with him to get his nod. Parth launched India's first fruit



truck on June 28, 2016, with an investment of ₹ 15 lakh, which he borrowed from his father.

Parth's appealingly decked-up truck, called 9834 The Fruit Truck, was soon stationed opposite a high-profile club in Ahmedabad. Parth started popularising his signature drink – the *jamun* shots, served in an enticing glass rimmed with salt and garnished to tantalise the taste buds. This became a rage among all age groups and people from nearby localities started frequenting his truck, especially after dinner. Parth was careful about giving a twist to every dish that he served. Besides shots, 9834 The Fruit Truck serves exotic fruit platters, cold-pressed and blended juices, vegan smoothies, fresh fruit shakes, and fruit desserts that are a rage among young and old alike.

Although Parth's truck soared up the popularity ladder, there were times when the business graph started plunging. This



was when some people copied his idea and parked trucks with almost the same products, at cheaper rates. As Parth recalls, “I don't mind people getting into the same business. There's space for everybody but what disturbs me is the fact that they use unfair means. I knew I was in a business where I would sustain even if I used sub-standard products. Yet I never compromised with the quality and so, reducing prices was something we couldn't have afforded. So while I maintained my quality and thus the price, I introduced new dishes which were slightly less priced, keeping in mind people's preferences. Gradually, people realised that what I served them was chemical-free and healthy and that is how my customers started thronging to my truck again.”

Storing fruits and vegetables was a big concern for Parth. He addressed this concern strategically, leading to very little wastage. Parth considers the storage facility as his biggest strength and says that because of gaps in this department, several vendors could not sustain. Parth's technique of extracting juices imparted an exceptional taste to his beverages. He smiles and is quick to add how this trade secret is his biggest blessing.

With a turnover of ₹ 50 lakh, Parth is all set to look beyond. He plans to diversify and capture different locations.

As Parth wraps up, he reminds us about his alma mater, “I am thankful to School of Liberal Studies for putting me on the right track and then to EDII for giving a concrete shape to my half-baked idea and for drilling in me the belief that instead of dilly-dallying and nurturing inhibitions, I must trust the market survey and set out with confidence.”



The metal gate squealed as I entered Jay Merja's humble working space. The squeal had already summoned Jay who welcomed me with a firm handshake. As I stepped inside his office room, I noticed an inspiring quote by Mahatma Gandhi – 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow; learn as if you were to live forever.' Jay seemed to have read my thoughts and instantly remarked, "That's how I wish to live. Isn't it truly appealing?" That one statement from Jay said a lot about his personality and the rest of the conversation that evening only testified so much that I had deduced about him.

Jay began, "I had always wanted to impact lives and one of my uncles once said to me that if I had to do so, I had to become an entrepreneur. So, this was the only dream which I had always harboured. My goal was clear; I was only looking for means."

Hailing from Gandhinagar, Jay had heard a lot about EDII and its entrepreneurship course. Without a second thought, he applied for EDII's PGDM-BE 2013-15 programme and commenced the journey with the belief of making it big. Jay was a focussed student. As one of the faculty member's remarks, "Jay has an

Jay Merja
PGDM-BE 2013-2015

exploratory mind. He is good at probing ideas and scenarios. I always encouraged him to engage with the external environment and keep sourcing opportunities.” No wonder, Jay did his tasks diligently and excelled to arrive a full circle.

Jay says, “My plans to becoming a successful entrepreneur got crystallised at EDII. The process of approaching a business which was taught to us through various means and methodologies prepared us well for our role as an entrepreneur.”

Jay appreciates the curriculum of EDII on the premise of it being a judicious mix of theory and practice. In addition, says Jay, “EDII gave me an opportunity to participate in several conferences and seminars which helped me gain exposure and expand my network.” Jay got a platform to pitch his ideas to many investors and financing organisations.

After a lot of exposure and exploration, Jay settled on exploring the potential in professional logistics. Jay wanted to venture into a business based on a revolutionary model; the Uber model appealed to him. He initiated MUVR.in which is a technology based logistics solutions providing company.

Associated with IEEE, as a member of their Educational Activity Board, Jay visited the USA. There he discovered the adaptability of technology in logistics which provides people flexibility and convenience.” Jay says, “In India, we have gradually started using and depending on technology for booking cab and movie tickets but there is a lack of technology in the transportation and logistics sector.” This was the revelation which led to the birth of MUVR.in. Jay replicated the UBER model into the logistics sector by providing mini truck and tempo services within fingertips, using technology. Once MUVR receives an order over telephone, application or website, it immediately contacts partner drivers and assigns vehicles. His primary clients are Big Bazaar, D-Mart, Reliance, Fresh and Hyper city; several pharmaceutical companies and organizations in the business of milk manufacturing, automobile parts procuring, in addition to FMCG companies.

So, MUVR provides both retail real-time logistics solutions using various commercial vehicles as well as enterprise dedicated fixed vehicle for delivery and supply solutions using focussed technology support.

Before floating his enterprise, Jay had initiated in-depth primary as well as secondary research. Very soon, he generated a database of 580 tempo owners and got a good understanding of the market and its demand. Jay launched the app which fetched him good response. His customers are industry/traders/wholesalers and big companies which require the logistics services on a daily basis.

Jay feels happy that his company has not only helped industry and other B2B platforms solve their logistics and transportation glitches via single point-of-contact using technology but has also created income opportunities for mini tempo drivers. Many of these drivers have registered a 100 per cent growth in their income.

MUVR.in has come a long way. The company has nine employees and is generating an average revenue of ¹ 4-5 lakh per month.

Jay feels happy to recall how his father, an Additional Collector with the Govt. of Gujarat was against his getting into business but is extremely proud of his success today. Jay is the first entrepreneur in his family.

Having overcome problems of funds and thus the limitations which cropped up in his experimentations with business expansion and technology, Jay is today comfortably ensconced in confidence and determination. Dealing with tempo drivers and educating them on the usage of smartphones and modern applications was also a challenge for him. At times, he was bogged down by negative thoughts but he is glad he has overcome them all and has found his path. With operations in Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara, Jay looks ahead with a focussed vision and strategy in place.

Keep walking the unbeaten path... All the best !!!

The Spirit that Prevailed to Triumph

Vivek Kataruka

PGDBEM 1999-2000

Founder -Chemshel Enterprises
Private Limited

His office bears a conspicuous bright colour which complements the broad smile on every face that I came across within the first few metres of entering. By the time I reached Vivek's office, I was convinced that I was going to meet a multifaceted entrepreneur who was just as concerned about keeping up his employee motivation as making it big in business.

An exuberant face greets me with a handshake. Vivek unfolds his life, dreams and plans before me, "Ever since I started thinking about my career, entrepreneurship has beckoned me. Even during school days, my essays on career goals always said that I wanted to become a businessman. Like other children whose goals changed in every standard, mine remained unchanged."

After earning a Bachelor's in Commerce (honours) from the Hindu College, Delhi University, Vivek wanted to set out on his entrepreneurial journey. But, at this stage he was slightly unsure about his business idea and did not want to join his thriving family business. 'His own,' were the words that overpowered him. It was during those unsure times that he came across an advertisement on EDII's Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship. A slight probe informed him that it was a course for business aspirants. Vivek appeared for the selection test and was very soon on EDII Campus, talking and observing business with mentors, experts and entrepreneurs. Vivek says, "The classes established for me the significance of knowledge for an entrepreneur, ways of sourcing funds, ensuring networks, and I became determined to first equip myself appropriately. Knowledge brought in confidence and my resolve turned steely by the end of the course."

Despite having identified a few business opportunities, including setting up of cold storage, manufacturing aloe vera gel and papaya extract, Vivek was somehow not convinced. He reminisces, "Those were the days of all-time low for me. But, I am a self-motivated person. I would remind myself of my college days where I had founded the commerce society to promote sharing of new ideas and knowledge as well as networking among commerce

undergraduates of Delhi colleges, and then devised ways to source funds and sponsors. These little reminders helped me sail through, by endorsing that I possessed the skills to succeed and lead. I strongly held onto my belief.”

Vivek comes from a family which owns a flourishing business and it was obvious that there was pressure from the members of his family to join the family business. With nothing concrete in hand, Vivek reluctantly joined his family business. His reluctance emerged from the longing to create something of his own and he knew that his family business would give him little scope to venture into uncharted areas. For a while, he managed the Bajaj automobile dealership, a family business arm at Bankura, West Bengal and with financial assistance from family, simultaneously, in a bid to find his ground, tied up with SSI Education to offer computer training programmes. Initially, the centre did well but later, it incurred a loss of ₹ 6 lakh, leaving him no option but to wind up.

A brief stint and it was already frustrating for him at the family business – ideas clashed, opinions didn’t match and his approaches backfired amidst a business setting which ran on conventional style and attitude. But, Vivek is quick to add, “May be I could not fit in because of my aspirations but there is certainly a great deal that I learnt about doing business. I worked under the able supervision of my father and knew how it is to run a businesses, the daily crises, the problems of employees, pressure from customers and so many issues which have to be dealt with utmost patience and understanding. My own failure during this period, brought me closer to reality and I understood that even with all my knowledge, I needed to know several aspects while selecting and conducting a business. I was still in touch with EDII mentors and they helped me at every stage of reaching an opportunity and fighting with my emotions after a failed venture. I was also fortunate that my family completely understood my aspirations and gave me a free hand to experiment.”

During this time, through one of his associates, Vivek came to know about shellac trading, a viable business opportunity in West Bengal. Its high-end products needed to be exported in bulk to Europe and USA. Vivek found the idea promising and undertook a preliminary market study which revealed a huge demand in the

international market, both for shellac as well as products derived from it. He also gathered that shellac-trading desperately called for professional players who could cater to the needs of highly-professional foreign clients. The business was till now being managed in an unorganised manner and displayed huge scope for educated entrepreneurs who could understand international regulations like FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approvals, REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulations, EPA (United States Environment Protection Agency) governance and similar regulatory compliance formalities for international trading. Vivek’s probe put him in touch with two prospective clients with whom he shared samples of alueritic acid.

While ambrettolide is used as a fixative in perfume manufacturing, alueritic acid (comprising 35-40% shellac, a resin), is a key raw material for the synthesis of Civetone, Exaltone, Ambrettolide and Isoambrettolide in the perfume industry. Vivek did have his rounds of crises, which he primarily encountered in large-scale production of alueritic acid and ambrettolide, but gradually his understanding of the business strengthened and he undertook a three-month pilot project to manufacture alueritic acid from seedlac. Vivek comments: “It seemed difficult but I was convinced. So, I collected steel utensils, hand weights, filter cloths and a gas stove, and decided to implement the project in my backyard under the guidance of a scientist and a retired worker of a chemical plant in Kolkata. Success was not easy; several bouts of failure started taking a toll on me. I had to try really hard to continue. Certain inputs and techniques proved wrong, like some metals generated adverse reactions and thus had to be removed in the subsequent trials. However, after several rounds of such trials and errors, we finally emerged successful.”

The samples of alueritic acid thus prepared were sent to two prospective foreign clients. Getting approval from them was Vivek’s first major victory. Vivek then visited Europe for a quick market survey of the demand. The visit was fruitful and he was convinced of setting out on the path of commercial production. He realised the happiness of prospective buyers on seeing somebody qualified, aware, educated and professional in approach in this business. The next step was to set up an

enterprise for commercial production. Convinced about its feasibility, he established Chemshel in January 2004. But, the going was not easy. Corruption proved to be a major obstacle. Bureaucratic hassles were such that he wasn't getting permission to begin production. Sourcing finance, acquiring land and persuading elders in the family for the initiative complicated the start-up phase for him. He realised that the new enterprise called for a fixed capital of ₹ 50 lakh and working capital of ₹ 35 lakh, amounting to a total investment of ₹ 85 lakh. Vivek says: "The amount was huge. The risk factor was also there but I persisted. I decided to seek bank loan. My business project was evaluated by State Bank of India, Kolkata and Union Bank of India, Kolkata. While SBI offered loan at 13.5 %, UBI offered the same at 12% and so, I opted for the latter and started commercial production after launching Chemshel."

The major products offered by Chemshel comprise seedlac, shellac and aleuritic acid. The company's demand for as much as 35-40% lac, a key raw material for these products is fulfilled through contract farming and the remaining 60-65% is sourced through suppliers. Chemshel's lac plantation farm is based at Kantadih, a village in the Purulia district of West Bengal and the production plant is located on Wilcox Road in Purulia.

Challenges kept surfacing and at every stage, Vivek kept relying on his entrepreneurial skills to ward them off. The major hiccups emerged from operating in a small town with poor access to skilled technicians, spares and plant, winning over customers by communicating the value of the offering, regulatory compliances and labour issues. Purulia is a small town in West Bengal, with poor access to skilled technicians, spares and plant. Vivek hired an experienced worker who supervised and trained new workers. However, labour-related problems became his major worry which he addressed by forming a labour union and dealing directly with the leader of the union rather than dealing individually with each labour. He ensured that the workers received all legitimate benefits.

Vivek carefully crystallised strategies to deal with other problems, "I decided to win customers through elaborate presentations, showcasing my manufacturing, storage & packaging capacities and quality-control practices. I believe that the best way of attracting returns is accepting customer orders as

far as the variable cost is recovered. Till this day, I follow this. For marketing, I resorted to distribution of free samples to prospective clients. This helped me win the trust of my customers and they were assured of my quality. I also evolved the policy of delivering even an order as small as one kilogram and wait for three to four days, before inquiring about the payment terms. Our customer response time is less than half an hour even if it is merely an acknowledgment to a mail received from our customer."

Every operation at Chemshel was initially monitored by Vivek and this ensured compliance of all regulations for international trade, a factor which is very important in this business. Led by Vivek's practical approach, strong will and persistence, Chemshel's aleuritic acid plant operations began generating profits and the bank loan was repaid.

Aleuritic acid is a key raw material for creating perfumery chemicals like ambrettolide and iso-ambrettolide. Chemshel has developed the competency to offer ambrettolide, a fixative which is used for perfumes and has an appealing market. As the next step, Vivek envisioned emerging as an exporter of ambrettolide and is today among the major global suppliers of ambrettolide, with exports to 20 countries. Bringing this product in his portfolio was a strategic growth move. Vivek knew that Chemshel's integrated plant for ambrettolide will impart it an edge over its rivals. An internal source of raw material like aleuritic acid and seedlac ensured that the 'quality' was not compromised. Thus, the cost of ambrettolide was controlled considerably, leading to a price level that was five per cent lower vis-à-vis Chemshel's competing products. Being used as a food flavour and additive in nations with Jewish population, ambrettolide offered by Chemshel had to be Kosher-certified. Kosher meaning *kashrut*, *kashrus* or *kashruth*, denotes food that conforms to the Jewish dietary laws. Kosher certification signifies that the certified product meets Kosher requirements. Vivek ensured this landmark as well.

Under Vivek's astute leadership, Chemshel's investment scaled from ₹ 85 lakh in 2004-05 to ₹ 5.45 crore in 2008-09, and finally to ₹ ____ crore in 2016-17. Its turnover expanded from ₹2-3 crore in 2004-05 and ₹ 8-9 crore in 2008-09 to ₹ 35 crore in 2016-17.

Way to go Vivek! Keep up this spirit.

Accessorising to Make a Formidable Business Presence

Gaurav Parmar

PGDBEM 1999-2000

“The EDII President Alumnus Award 2017 goes to.....” and the audience at the 18th PG Convocation with bated breath hear, *“... Gaurav Parmar”*. A wave of exultation and jubilation swept the crowd, especially the gathering of EDII PG alumni sitting together right in the middle of the marquee, rejoiced with words of appreciation. The compere extolled Gaurav’s entrepreneurial traits and his unparalleled contribution to his family business and to the economy of the state and the country. The sound of applause reverberated in the marquee for a long time.

Gaurav, a second-generation entrepreneur was never comfortable basking in the glory of his family business. He couldn’t wait to take the reins of his family business in his hands. Gaurav was never a frivolous child or a youth; his talks about his career and life perplexed his family. As his mother says, “Gaurav has always made the family proud. I don’t remember his childhood for any naughtiness or mischief; instead his acts of maturity are still fresh in my mind. Everybody applauded him for the depth and logic in his thinking.”

After his graduation, Gaurav was eager to join his family business but as he says, “An insightful self-talk revealed to me that I wasn’t completely prepared and needed to further equip myself.” He wanted to learn business and hence, started scanning courses on business management but during the course of this probe, he came to know about EDII’s PG course in entrepreneurship. The objectives and the goals of the course matched his expectations completely and he joined the Post Graduate Diploma in Management-Business Entrepreneurship at EDII.

Gaurav had a good idea about his family business and right from the beginning, he was clear about making an indelible impact as a second-generation entrepreneur. At EDII, Gaurav specialised in Family Business management. He exults with fond memories, “EDII was the first business pad for me and the wisdom that I have earned here will always guide me. I am so grateful to the mentors for literally holding my hand and giving me the confidence, which I consider the biggest success tool in business.”

Immediately after graduating from EDII, Gaurav joined his family business. At the time of his joining the business, his company RIMTEX, a Textile Accessories and Machinery company based in Surendranagar in Gujarat, manufactured spinning cans, with exports to four countries, namely _____, _____, _____ and _____. Gaurav carved a strategy which prompted enhancing production capacity and harnessing the export potential. He introduced changes in production technology which required an additional cost of ₹ _____. Initially, his father was apprehensive about the move and had the inhibition that it might backfire. However, Gaurav very diligently prepared a list of pros and cons of both the existing and the suggested systems. His father had no reason not to get convinced. Gaurav thus introduced the changes in technology, resulting in improved production and a noticeable rise in quality. With better quality, RIMTEX’s products got an instant acceptance. This was exactly what Gaurav was looking forward to. He had targeted to raise the standards of his

products and upgraded the normal technical and production practices adopted in the sector. It was a calculated risk as it involved a decent investment and the improved products also became a little dearer. Gaurav's only apprehension while doing so was – *What if price becomes a constraint?*

Somewhere, Gaurav was convinced that his idea would fit the demands of the time and the world. As he puts it, “My decisions are never random; they come after a trail of thoughts and a proper probe. Somewhere, I knew my move would generate results.” He was proved right and his initiatives started getting termed as path-breaking. Soon, Rimtex was exporting to 56 countries, which meant that its production capacity had increased substantially to meet that kind of demand. With near-zero rejection rate and a turnover of ₹____, RIMTEX is today the largest manufacturer of spinning cans in the world, and has diversified to promote six different companies under its umbrella. Gaurav's conviction towards quality excellence has led to many positive outcomes. All the communication and marketing material of RIMTEX bears the stamp of ‘Let's Promote Quality’ – a testimony to Gaurav's unmatched vision and a ‘non-compromising’ attitude.

Ask Gaurav if it's time for him to sit back and admire his creation and he quips, “No. It's not time yet. I have some more plans and with more experience, I also have the courage to think even bigger. Progress must go on happening, no matter at what scale but I hate being complacent. This trait was instilled in me by EDII and will stay with me forever. This *mantra* is my driving force.”

Gaurav's hunger for progress is insatiable. Each of his company commands the highest reputation globally and is benchmarked by competitors for its quality distinction. Gaurav loves the quote: *The road to success is always under construction*, and recalls how during times when he felt his moves might backfire and that he must resort to traditional methods, he kept repeating this quote to himself. So this, he says, is just a beginning, and he is now focussed on setting up

two new manufacturing facilities in joint venture with overseas partners. He wishes to scale up his company's core competency in manufacturing.

To satiate his ever-growing need to contribute and ‘make a difference’, Gaurav also actively takes up leadership responsibilities in many social and business organisations. He voluntarily took the responsibility of forming EDII Alumni Association and played a significant role as the Founding Trustee and President of the same. He garnered support from fellow members and led the alumni activities for six long years. He successfully built a legacy that is emulated by the subsequent office-bearers. Today, the Alumni Association has over 500 life members and a rich corpus to carry out developmental activities, such as Confederation of Indian Industries, Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), Textile Accessories & Machinery Manufacturer's Association and Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industries (GCCCI) Youth Wing.

Gaurav says these engagements motivate him to strive towards learning and progress. He was elected as the President of Entrepreneurs' Organization Gujarat Chapter for 2015-16. During his presidential period, the EO Gujarat Chapter received the award of Best Performing Chapter of South Asia region. Also, for the first time in EO Gujarat Chapter, a President Award was presented. Gaurav was the proud recipient of the Best President Award in South Asia.

We wished best of luck to Gaurav and were just about to leave, when he insisted that we take note of an important thought: “It was in the precincts of the EDII campus that I realised the difference between a ‘good’ company and a ‘great’ company. And ever since, my zeal to achieve nothing but the best has been fuelling my ambitions”.

No wonder, his zeal for excellence, coupled with entrepreneurial inventiveness, has today seen him make a mark in India as also across the globe.

We are proud of you.... Let your baton soar higher and higher.

Advising to Open Avenues...

Nooruddin Bombaywala

PGDBEM 1999-2000

Indore... A city which hosts premier institutes is also emerging as a manufacturing hub. A non-metropolitan city, it sure has not picked up all the threads of an entrepreneurial ecosystem yet but still offers some distinct advantages to budding entrepreneurs. The city is fast developing into a mature start-ups economy. One such story that the city wrote is of Nooruddin Bombaywala – an entrepreneur who scripted his inspiring success story from the scratch.

Nooruddin was born and brought up in Indore. His father is a first-generation entrepreneur who had started his career in 1984 with a small plywood retail business in Indore. Nooruddin was a bright student who was always setting new goals for himself. A go-getter, Nooruddin feels encouragement and endorsement could have honed his confidence and spirit of creativity, preparing him for bigger milestones early in life. He recalls, “I spent the first four years of my childhood without my father as he was posted on a job abroad. I was a bright student and ranked among the top ten in most of the classes. My parents never took much interest in my school activities and so, I always felt a lack of appreciation. I had to whip up all the motivation from within to keep targeting new goals. Despite my achievements, I grew up as a lad who lacked confidence. After completing my schooling in Indore, I pursued BBA (Finance) from Prestige Institute of Management, Indore University. It was here that I gradually started getting hold of my identity.”

Nooruddin was aware of his lapses and wanted to build a strong personality. He firmly believed that

education at the right place, coupled with exposure, could help him. Therefore, when his cousin, an EDII graduate, mentioned the advantages of pursuing the Post Graduate Diploma in Management – Business Entrepreneurship (PGDM-BE) to him, he was convinced. “I joined EDII based on my cousin’s recommendation. Although my dad was a first-generation entrepreneur, I wasn’t too enthused about becoming one. I had joined EDII to gain knowledge and to get a degree which could land me a good job. However, the very first few days at EDII transformed me into an aspiring entrepreneur.”

Nooruddin had gained knowledge and was clear about setting up a business in future but before that, he wanted to satisfy his urge for knowing all about as many aspects as possible. He wanted to study in the US to amass more exposure and learning. IT was a booming area then and he decided to do a course in the area in the hope of compensating for all the personality traits that he thought he was partially bereft of.

“I applied to several universities in the US and appeared for relevant exams. I received admission calls from five US universities and chose University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as it is a large public university. My father offered to spend 15 lakh towards my study and air ticket but I had to arrange for the remaining 75% expenses. It was a big risk that I decided to take because I neither had any scholarship support nor any idea as to how would I finance my study abroad. I think this is the confidence which EDII had instilled in me.”

Nooruddin’s life in the US was tough. He did several menial jobs to support himself and his studies till he got some relief with his appointment as a paid intern at Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF), a financial services company. Nooruddin toiled for almost 20 hours a day at TIAA-CREF

and another unpaid internship at Dell Sports, a technology start-up, where he programmed their systems.

The pain of hardships got blurred against the learning that Nooruddin derived. Working with these seasoned professionals, he mastered the financial advice domain and also gained insights into how a professional organisation is run. And, “CONFIDENCE became my biggest ally,” mentions Nooruddin, with a gleam in his eyes. He added, “I learnt the lessons of life through the harshest and the hardest of ways.”

Nooruddin felt confident about venturing into the domain of finance. He was confident about his entrepreneurial venture – “All thanks to the learning imparted at EDII and the experience I gained during my internship with TIAA-CREF.”

While still in the US, Nooruddin teamed up with his brother-in-law, Mustafa Nadeem (based at Indore), who had very good experience in the financial market. They ventured into broking business as partners. Nooruddin provided the seed funding and offered all required support from the US while Mustafa managed clients and operations at Indore. Around that time, Nooruddin sensed a severe crisis facing the US as well as its potential impact on the Indian economy. Apprehensive about their clients’ investments, Mustafa and Nooruddin suggested to their customers to book profits and immediately liquidate their portfolios. Some heeded to their advice while some attributed their advice to ulterior motives. But finally, with their prediction having come true, a bond of trust was established between them and the clients. Also, the faith in their competency increased among the client group.

On returning to India in May 2010, Nooruddin became more focused and streamlined his broking business. As Nooruddin puts it, “After having hit a plateau, I realised it was time to take some innovative actions to keep the business on a growth track. We undertook a market study by collecting relevant data

about traders and were shocked with the outcomes. The market penetration of professional traders was as low as 8% in India. Moreover, 50% of traders entering the market were found to be leaving it within a short span of six months as they did not have trading expertise. Majority of the traders traded merely on emotions, sentiments or rumours and hence, lost money. Traders were also unaware about market techniques and traded blindly on advice of their dealers whose main focus was increasing turnover. We hired a research team to offer in-house advice to our clients and our in-house recommendations were valued by them. We sensed a good business opportunity; the market had tremendous potential. We decided to tap it by initiating a professional advising setup to provide traders with expert advice on how to trade, which scripts to buy, which scripts to sell and at what levels so that we can create professional traders who understand markets and know how to manage their portfolios with proper risk management.”

Preliminary work in this area met with huge success and after working informally for a long time, Nooruddin along with Mustafa, finally launched Epic Research Pvt Ltd (Epic) to offer fee-based professional advisory services to investors all over India, with an aim to enable them to take informed investment decisions. However, the journey was not as smooth as they had envisioned. It did meet with several challenges. “It was very challenging to satisfy infrastructure needs of the business. We faced difficulties in setting up the telecom, internet and IT systems which were essential to manage our business operations. Firstly, these systems were capital-intensive. Secondly, there was a lack of good software providers who could precisely understand the needs of a small business and customise the software to automate business processes in a cost-effective way. We found that even an in-house team would involve a lot of time and money. Thirdly, owing to our highly-technical systems, it was very difficult for

us to ensure that the software and telecom equipments communicate properly with each other. People with required technical skills were also hard to find for a start-up.” Apart from these, Nooruddin found it a major hassle to identify and retain talent.

The duo addressed Epic’s infrastructure issue by continuously improving their on-paper processes and implementing these step-by-step into their IT systems. They did this by putting their requirements on paper, getting these requirements coded into systems and finally replacing the manual processes with automation. Today, Epic has created a system for every difficulty and this has been named as ‘Epic ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)’. This innovative system has a detail of work that this organisation is into. Every department, every Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which is well-defined and every individual at Epic is integrated within the ERP system. Simultaneously, alongside free webinars, the company also launched Investment Awareness Programmes (IAPs) in various cities inviting traders and investment community to learn about markets. To promote their company, they put in place an e-marketing team which aggressively resorted to social marketing tools and tie-ups.

Today, true to its name Epic, the company has created history. Starting with three people, today it has grown to employ _____ people, has expanded client base to Singapore, Malaysia, USA, Australia and Middle-East, and from generating revenue of ₹ 1 lakh in the first month, today its turnover has crossed ₹ _____. In recognition of its excellence in delivering quality products and services, Epic was conferred the Brands Academy Leadership Excellence Awards in 2014. It also featured among the top 25 promising financial consultants in India by *Consultants Review Magazine* (January 2015).

Congratulations Nooruddin..... You have created a larger-than-life success story.



Enhancing Digital Footprints for Businesses

Gifted with a fabulous sense of humour, this young lad finds a reason or two in the most serious of conversations. When questioned about his inclination towards entrepreneurship, he quips, “No particular reason; show me a Sindhi who doesn't nurture the dream of becoming an entrepreneur. The Sindhis who are employees, no matter at what position, are always on a lookout for an entrepreneurial opportunity. I am no exception.”

Nikhil always idolised entrepreneurs. He recalls how he sought to emulate thoughts and actions of noted entrepreneurs which he imbibed by reading their biographies. Despite his entrepreneurial ambition, his family had made it very clear that there was no compromising with his education. So, Nikhil did not even try to mess with it. He waited to complete his education before taking up an entrepreneurial career. During his mechanical engineering, which he had joined on someone's advice that Mechanical plus MBA would be the killing combination before starting a business, he realised

Nikhil Talreja

PGDM-BE 2010-2012



that machines did not interest him. He could not bring himself to like machines and, therefore, dropped the idea of venturing into this area. Unclear, Nikhil started preparing for MBA entrance exams and scored more than 90 percentile in all the competitive exams, including CAT, XAT and MAT. He appeared for interviews in one of the most prominent B-schools of India and everywhere, and faced the same question - “Why MBA?” - to which he answered “I want to learn about business and start a venture of my own”. It was during these interviews that Nikhil came to know about EDII, found it in sync with his objective and decided to join EDII's Post Graduate Diploma Management – Business Entrepreneurship course.

Unlike mechanical engineering, his decision of studying at EDII was a fairly informed choice. As he says, “In the two years of my stay at EDII, I clarified all the doubts that I had about entrepreneurship, probed into its various aspects and with each passing day, became more confident about my decision. Interaction with successful entrepreneurs, industry experts and faculty members readied me to take the plunge into entrepreneurship.” Nikhil gloriously graduated from EDII in 2010 with a Silver medal in Services Management specialisation.

Nikhil was working on a couple of ideas and the idea of starting a classified service got him interested. It was an era when mobile penetration in India had crossed over 70% while the internet penetration was hardly inching at a pace of 10%. He joined hands with two partners, one being an IIM graduate and another, an investor in his business, an experienced professional working in the US. They started “KuchBhiBikega” – a tele-classified platform that allowed people to post and access classified information through a

phone call in addition to the internet. They got appreciation for the problem being solved by the business and got initial traction of early adopters along with recognition by getting covered in various media. However, the cash flow was negative and they could not sustain themselves for a longer time. They had to close down the business in a span of 18 months of operations. A learning that Nikhil drew was that raising funds on time and have a technical co-founder could have saved the venture and scale could have been achieved.

Nikhil now, once again, started scanning the environment for opportunities. As he says, “I was never in a state of anxiety. I knew I would make it. At every step and in assessing every opportunity, I was getting mentored by EDII faculty. That immensely boosted my confidence.” During a chance meeting with Nitin Jain who had just ventured into the business of digital marketing, Nikhil found his grounding. He gelled well with Nitin and partnered with him in the organisation 'Digital Upstarts', a start-up, with the aim of making digital marketing his primary preoccupation. Their roles were clear. Nikhil focused on work from the roots and at every stage, evaluated and implemented his understanding of business management. He concentrated on managing operations, finance and business strategy.

Challenges, of course, were many. As Nikhil says, “Those were the days when people were just beginning to get familiar with social media and clients were hesitant about harnessing its potential. At times, they simply refused to go online with their details.” Nikhil also found it difficult to contend with self-proclaimed online social media experts who offered their services at one fourth of his price. Nikhil had to ensure that the clients learnt as well as unlearnt a lot of things to reach appropriate decisions.

The company which started as social media agency has now evolved into a full-fledged digital marketing agency that provides services like SEO, SEM, website development, Mobile App marketing, video production & marketing, etc. to its clients. In a period of more than six years, Digital Upstarts has come to service more than 100 clients including several reputed regional, national and international brands from varied sectors like retail, education, entertainment, hospitality, etc. Nikhil recalls how he and his partner, Nitin, played a major role as online marketing partners of three blockbuster Gujarati films, namely *Bey Yaar*, *Wrong Side Raju* (National Award winning film) and *Shubh Aarambh and the recent film, Love Ni Bhavai*.

The company is growing from strength to strength and recently adopted a private limited company structure under the nomenclature of Clever Buds Digital Marketing Private Limited. The brand name, however, remains the same as Digital Upstarts. With a turnover of close to 1Cr, today the company employs 10 people including copywriters, graphic designers, website developer, SEO executive, media planner, cinematographer and video editor. The company's target is to double the current team size to 20 people in next one year and strengthen their presence in metro cities.

Nikhil is an active alumnus of the institute and has been in the Board of EDII Alumni Association as Secretary since 2015.

With Sam Walton, Founder of Walmart and Steve Jobs as his inspiration, Nikhil Talreja, COO, Digital Upstarts & Director, Clever Buds Digital Marketing Private Limited, looks ahead with a focused vision. He concludes, “There are miles to go before I sleep.”

Steering Digital Transformation

Laval Bhatt

PGDBEM 2000–2001

The day I met Laval for the interview happened to be 5th September – Teachers’ Day. We began with small talk on the role of a teacher in a student’s life but the way Laval spoke, instantly told me that I was talking to true entrepreneur. His ability to draw you into a conversation, convince you about his beliefs, use assuring body language and be a good listener are traits which one cannot help but notice. I was convinced that Laval was putting his learning to good use.

Laval Bhatt, a student of third batch of PGDM-BE, convinces you when he says, “I have always been passionate about two things in my life: learning and doing something new each day and making a mark in whatever I undertake. Right from the very beginning, I knew I wanted to be different but before anything else I wanted to equip myself with knowledge in varied and contemporary fields.”

So before chasing his dreams, Laval wanted to *meaningfully* complete his

education and be well-informed. Through a friend, Laval came to know about EDII's PG course, researched its curriculum and found it in tune with the times. He decided to pursue EDII's PGDM-BE; cleared all exams and joined it to study entrepreneurship. As he says, "The course offered a mix of managerial and entrepreneurial inputs and this excited me. At EDII, I developed unique skillsets which somewhere instilled in me the confidence that I could perch myself at my dream terminus only if I had the liberty to envision strategies and implement them. My peers also influenced me with their entrepreneurial parleys and at one point I was fully convinced about adopting entrepreneurship as a career."

Laval had been a good student throughout and so, his family always encouraged him to get into a high-profile job. But the orientation at EDII had left an indelible mark on Laval. His spirit of achievement got fortified here and the first seeds of entrepreneurship were planted in him. When he expressed his desire to his parents to make a career in business, they were initially not quite supportive; also because none of his family members had done business before. They thought business was a risky thing. Laval, with talks on his plans and strategies, eventually, convinced both his parents.

Thus began the extensive process of business opportunity identification. Coming from a VPN background, Laval was very well connected to technology. He says, "Digital marketing was an emerging field at that time, and it caught my attention. That's how I got to know what business I wanted to get into."

After the PG course at EDII, Laval worked for some time with multinationals to gain experience. However, he never let go off his aim to become an entrepreneur. Very soon, he launched HoneyBee Infomedia Pvt. Ltd. - a Digital Marketing Agency.

Initially getting clients and investment was an issue, but Laval successfully overcame those glitches. He says he still faces issues; mainly operational challenges but takes it all in his stride. His motivation has always remained upbeat and even during the worst of crises he only thought about continuing with an unbeatable spirit. Laval says, "My work is my passion and I have worked very hard to reach where I am today. The guidance provided by my professors at EDII helped me a great deal. If you are an entrepreneur, you are expected to make big decisions with a calm mind. My professors at EDII taught me how to deal with issues one faces while making important decisions in business."

Laval has been successfully running his Digital Marketing Agency with client base in India, USA, UK and several other prominent destinations. After around five years of inception of his organization and over 120 clients, Laval has taken the next big step by instituting a digital magazine. "We have recently started a digital magazine and I want to make it big too," shares Laval.

The journey has been satisfying for Laval. From an investment of 1 lakh, which he managed from his personal savings, and being a one-man unit, he has come a long way. Laval's organisation, which has 15 employees, is synonymous with credibility, quality and trust. Reflecting over his past, he says, "I have enjoyed my journey. The crises which had bothered me then, are actually the reasons today which make me proud of the distance that I have covered. I have no regrets. I had an ambition and an idea and I made sure that I give myself a chance to test them. I did and succeeded. So, for all the wannabe entrepreneurs, my message is – Take the plunge, don't waste time thinking about it. Trust me, it's totally worth it at the end."

Qualimark...

The name that
snack lovers swear by...

Nimesh Pithava

PGDM-BE 2012-2014

Director – Qualimark Machines Pvt Ltd

*R*oti (or chapattis) is India's staple food. And in Gujarat, khakhra is a much-favoured daily breakfast snack. Nimesh Pithava of Bharuch saw a business opportunity in the humble *rotis* and *khakras*. He thought a step beyond and envisioned making a product which could make *rotis* and *khakhras* and here he is, making a statement with Qualimark Machines Pvt Ltd - a company launched in 2001, and today, a leader in export of khakhra and chapatti-making machines to several countries.

Driven by innovation and perseverance, the firm has consistently scaled newer heights under the leadership of Nimesh, an alumnus of the PGDM-BE batch of 2013-15. Recently, the organization bagged the Best MSME Award 2014-15, in the category 'Innovation in Technology', by the Government of Gujarat.

True to its name, Qualimark has been producing the best quality khakhra and chapatti-making machines at their 25,000-sqft manufacturing unit,

supported by state-of-the-art R&D centre, spanning 5,000 sqft. With constant hauling and technological upgradation, the company has stepped up on the ladders of growth and success, and at the same time, has set very high standards for its competitors.

Nimesh's family had the traditional business of making khakhras. Nimesh, too, grew up amid the business chores. After completing graduation, he decided to pursue an MBA degree and cultivate knowledge on the concepts of business. He believed that an MBA would not only brush his skills but will also give him the right platform to transform his vision into reality. He heard about EDII and the specialisation of family business management that it was offering, and decided to apply.

It was at the institute that Nimesh's plans for his business were crystallised. Recalling his earlier days at EDII, Nimesh shares, "I had seen my father doing business in an era when business was the fiefdom of few. Growing up in a culture of buying and selling, I always knew I would not be doing a conventional job. I could never see myself doing one."

Talking about the impetus he received at the institute, Nimesh nostalgically says, "EDII's role has been vital in shaping up the entrepreneur in me. The curriculum's entire focus was on business and in those days, family business management was a unique course. I joined the same, thinking that I will get to learn new things and get new ideas to grow my family business."

Whatever Nimesh has achieved in life, he attributes major credit of the same to EDII. He recalls that he started exporting immediately after having studied international marketing in one of the classes. He was taught about the Engineering

Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) and registered with them. Soon after, he expanded his family business overseas, by exporting their products to other countries. Peer study, brainstorming, business environment, etc. made his thoughts clearer and steady. Talking about the professors, Nimesh fondly remembers, "The professors at EDII had been very supportive and complacent. I would especially thank them and other guest faculty who, time and again, supported my ideas and guided me about how to venture with them. Even the smallest of the ideas were implemented in consultation with them."

On a personal front, Nimesh has sacrificed a lot to get Qualimark to the level it has now reached. Over the past few years, finding time for family has been the major challenge. His absence at family functions and long work hours have led to familial stress several times; although, he shares that his family and wife have been extremely supportive of his profession. They understand his commitment to work and have thus stood by him through the thick and thin. Nimesh also shares that his father had played a key role in his life and career. When Nimesh was taking over the reins of business in his hands, his father had disagreed with him on a lot of fronts but, never came in Nimesh's way. Instead, he always gave Nimesh a free hand in exercising control and freedom in decisions.

Another hurdle that Nimesh faced in the initial times was that of legal and government procedures, rules and regulations. Initially, it was difficult for him to understand government's policies and procedures, so much so, that once his firm's VAT number was surrendered for about three months. Once or twice, the company also faced financial crises but subsequently, it sailed on.

Today, Qualimark has embossed its name firmly in the arena of food processing products. With its clientele in over 19 states and 15 countries, the firm is constantly innovating and upgrading technology in food processing. Their vision is to reach a turnover of Rs. 100-crore over the next ten years. During FY17, the company's turnover stood at Rs. 4 crore and for FY18, the returns are expected to touch Rs. 10 crore. With aggressive marketing and reaching out to more cities and states by opening up sales offices there, Qualimark is striving to meet its endeavours everyday. The company already has its offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Nagpur and Bengaluru.

Nimesh transformed a traditional family business into a full-fledged international exports' firm. Talking about the future plans, Nimesh speaks, "Till now, the firm was only making niche products but now we plan to diversify our line of products and therefore, tap larger customer base in both India and overseas. We plan to involve aggressive marketing rather than just relying on IndiaMart's enquiries. To help meet our objectives, we are participating in more expos than ever now. The present manufacturing unit will also be shifted to a bigger, 48,000-sqft industrial land in Bharuch. The R&D centre will be expanded and bulk supply of food products will be undertaken. Apart from this, we are also focussing on expanding our dealer network. Hiring of learned and efficient staff, to help meet our objectives, is another area in focus."

He adds, "Every half year, we will launch a new product. Very soon, we will also be launching products for making *chakris*, *theplas* and *khakhra* chips – a never-tried before snack." Nimesh concludes with a warm smile.



Visioning the Blind

Dharmendra Jena

PGDMN 2003-2004

Manager-Blind People's Association-Bareja Eye and General Hospital
Navalbhai & Hiraba Eye Hospital

As we reached Navalbhai & Hiraba Eye Hospital at Bareja, about 21 kms away from Ahmedabad to meet Dharmendra, it was difficult not to notice the energy Dharmendra exuberated at the hospital and be infected by it! Dharmendra promptly took us to his office which seemed to be bustling with activity which he controlled with precision and swiftness and was ready to give us his total attention. He cheerfully shared his journey from Orissa to Gujarat.

This sensitive, 20-year-old boy from Orissa had barely finished college when he decided that he wanted to pursue an academic program on community health at Vellore. It was after this that he had a chance meeting with an alumna of EDII who told Dharmendra about this specialised course of NGO management. Dharmendra realized that this course was extremely focussed and would

help give further direction to his aspiration to bring about a change in society through health.

Living up to the quote that good things come in small packages, Dharmendra is ever smiling, empathetic and also a financial whiz that has made his present assignment not only sustainable but profitable. His parents were also supportive of the idea and encouraged him to join. He was lucky to get 100% scholarship by SIDBI to fund his course. He recalls how the rich curriculum ensured that the class visited over 20 organizations during their one year term. This broadened their horizon and helped the students develop a better understanding of the sector. It was during his internship that Dharmendra studied Blind People's Association's recently launched eye hospital at Bareja. Dharmendra shared the project evaluation presentation with the BPA management and emphasized on both its social and economic value creation. He suggested a complete paradigm shift to a business model that would make the venture self-sustainable. He also offered a plan to develop a Save Sight fund to make the hospital sustainable. An inclusive approach was also suggested where people with other disabilities would also be covered through the community based rehabilitation approach.

Impressed with the presentation, BPA offered Dharmendra an opportunity to develop the Bajera initiative. Dharmendra recalls that a total of 5 staff members provided service to 10 villages, and conducted 500 surgeries annually. He realized that technology upgradation could increase this number multi-fold. He proposed that modern PHACO machines be introduced but the management was initially sceptical about the idea. Dharmendra rented a machine and supporting

technology and conducted a pilot run and proved the financial and technological viability of the project. This also increased the confidence of the funding agencies as well as patients on seeing the results after surgery!

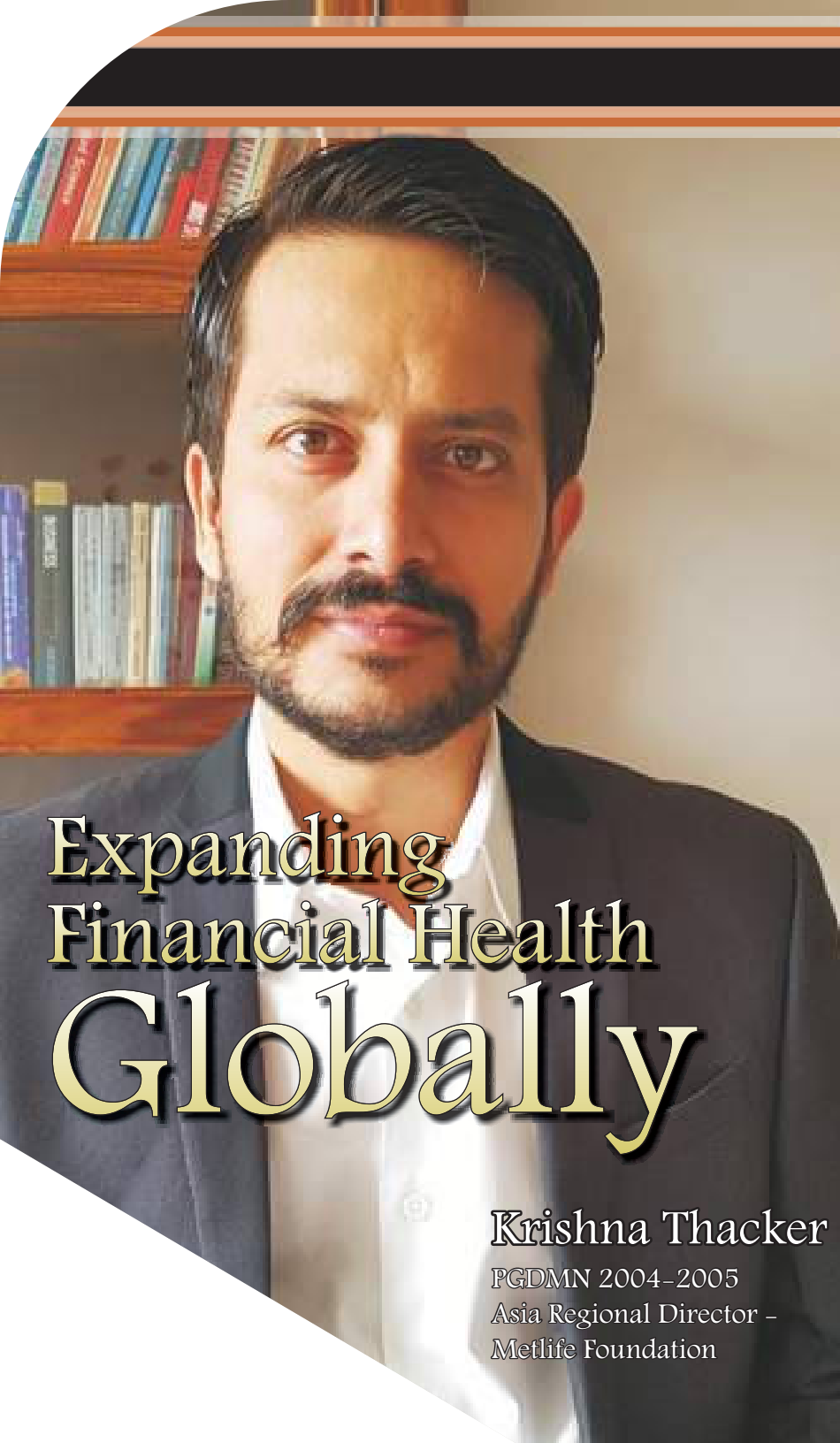
Dharmendra acknowledges the vital role that EDII faculty played as mentors and guides even after the students left the campus. The constant support, linkages, and encouragement from the alumni left a great impact. Under EDII's partnership with Oklahoma University's Economy Empowerment Program, three participants were selected across India. Dharmendra was one of them. He visited USA and took great benefits from their Community Hospital. He studied the state-of-art technology, the quality control management, hygiene, patient-doctor relationship facilities at their community hospital and tried to replicate it in India. His entrepreneurial mind is now struggling to find ways to get the US made machines at a lower cost to India. A new surgical wing has come up under his supervision and has both laminar and modular design, making these facilities equal to national standards and become a role model to others. The Bareja hospital has been awarded for the best quality of eye care services.

To his amusement, with no formal training in medicine, Dharmendra is popularly known as Dr. Jena courtesy his knowledge. He sits on the board of Vision 2020, Association of Community Ophthalmologists of India and is very active in the Gujarat chapter. He is also in the Quality Control Protocol Development team. Dharmendra admits that his project planning training from EDII has been extremely useful in his work life.

NGO management had instilled in him an understanding to collate issues even in the periphery. He did not restrict his focus on blindness and eye care only but addressed all kinds of disabilities. He used his understanding of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in a unique way. Inclusive involvement of persons from cross disabilities in the SHGs has left a great impact and this model is being replicated in other parts of the country.

Married to a local Gujarati girl who shares his passion in healthcare, Dharmendra looks content. His two children are smart and lovable and add to his own cheerful temperament. Despite his busy life, Dharmendra is pursuing his Ph D from Raffel University after adding a MA in Sociology to his profile. Very unassuming and constantly wanting to learn more we share his achievements of making this venture become truly profitable despite a no profit motive. The turnover in last 10 years has risen from Rs 5 Lakhs to Rs 5 Crores. From staff strength of 5, he has expanded to 93 and a reach of 10 villages to a 1000. His vision centre approach is leading Ahmedabad to be a blind free region. He is soon to launch a Doctor's Fellowship Course in PHACO Surgery and Optometry College which will introduce a four year course.

Dharmendra lauds the efforts of EDII in continuing to bring the academia and corporates together with their students, even after they leave their nest. He leaves a message to budding social entrepreneurs and students that use all your energy creatively and develop your lateral thinking abilities. Meet all your challenges with conviction and never give up.



Expanding Financial Health Globally

Krishna Thacker

PGDMN 2004-2005

Asia Regional Director -
Metlife Foundation

It was easy to locate Krishna Thacker while he was at EDII. Head straight to the library and there he would be. Settled in a quiet corner with a book, Krishna was a sponge for knowledge and people. Krishna is still fondly remembered by faculty and friends alike. This is further supported by his colleagues and acquaintances, who met him through his journey as a student to Asia Regional Director at MetLife Foundation. This has made him a rich owner of a very dedicated and supportive team and friends, besides a happy memory bank.

Krishna is with simple needs and a happy-go-lucky disposition. He is an only child from a lower middle class family from Kutch. He shares that it was only after his senior secondary schooling that he ventured out to Mumbai for further studies. This is when, Krishna admits, he was a little reckless and busy enjoying the new found freedom. As a result he was expelled within a year from the university. Nevertheless, his parents' trust, strong support, and encouragement led him to pursue B Com at Bhuj. Having understood the value of both time and money, Krishna worked as a computer assistant to a CA for a paltry amount of Rs 300 per month for a part time job in year 1999 when he was 18 years old. It was not the money, but the eagerness to gain an understanding about work in real life that motivated him to take up this assignment. In 2001, the devastating earthquake that hit Kutch caused severe damage to the building Krishna resided in and as many as 40 of his neighbours and friends lost their lives in his building as it collapsed, and about 20,000 people died in the district. Both his mother and he, suffered serious injuries and were hospitalised for over 4 months at Navsari and Ahmedabad respectively. This calamity resulted in severe financial and personal crisis. However, Krishna's resilience soon got him back on his own two feet and pursue his education. It was during his sophomore year

that his curiosity led him to walk into a camp (temporary office set up) in the neighbourhood by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and he ended up finding a job as a field supervisor for their water and sanitation program. This grassroots level work was a great eye opener and led him to realise the role of financial support in the local economic development of a region to address chronic poverty. The importance of financial empowerment further set in. This job not only paid him well but made him aware about professionally managed NGOs and the significance of higher education in them.

His short stint with Gruh Finance introduced him to financial services and also propelled him to take up higher studies. He attempted the Common Admission Test (CAT) and started evaluating various options he could take. It was then that one of his friends told him about EDII and its specialised NGO Management course which irked his interest. He arrived at the sprawling twenty three acre campus to appear for the entrance test and claims to have fallen in love with the institute on his first visit. Joining EDII was a game changing decision for him. His nostalgic smile bears testimony to the good times he had here. The rich library itself seemed to be a paradise to him. Krishna had always been bad at rote and did not enjoy memory challenging academic sessions but found concept oriented courses very interesting. He remembers the heated discussions that took place during the class and the faculty that nurtured democratic thought. One crucial lesson learnt at EDII, which went on to become his mantra in life, was to never shy away from working at the grass root level.

He had an inherent ability to motivate people to get financial support and then manage it well. The academic development in NGO management and empathy for the deprived made this silver medallist opt for the development sector with passion. Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) seemed a natural choice to begin his career, working with a reputable and strong organisation in his home district. He handled both funding of

loans and recovery of loans from women at the grass root levels, among other capacity building initiatives.

Krishna's assignment with IFMR in partnership with MIT was challenging and a great learning experience where he worked on an assignment all by himself at Mumbai. Although it was a very challenging assignment and a great learning experience, what Krishna missed was a team. This was followed by an assignment with Microsave at Lucknow as a senior analyst, which provided him with opportunities to work with governments, small and large banks, NGOs, technology companies, mobile network operators in many countries like India, Laos, Phillipines, Papua New Guinea etc. He has worked on and implemented large scale financial inclusion programs with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ADB and the UN. Krishna has worked closely with several institutions in Asia, advising and working with them as they 'go digital' and restructure their business models to offer wide range of technology enabled financial services and a better customer experience for the un/under banked communities to help them manage their financial lives better. What started with a team of 13 people grew multi fold in 6 years and 2 months and was a huge success by the end of six years when he had to quit due to family reasons.

Presently he is Asia Regional Director at MetLife Foundation. In 2013, MetLife Foundation committed USD 200 million to be spent over five years to support their new mission of improving financial inclusion/financial health of low income people across the world. Krishna joined MetLife in early 2013 to kick-start. MetLife Foundation's work in the Asia region, and is responsible for driving and managing MetLife Foundation's work and strategy in Asia.

He supports and works closely with the best financial inclusion experts and organizations in Asia to identify and address key issues related to financial inclusion in each country. The issues that he covers are diverse. On one hand he

supports a mobile-phone enabled product in one market and on the other, provides relevant training to increase the availability of skilled staff. While a micro finance institution (MFI) in Bangladesh is harnessing the power of "digital financial services" created by their in-house mobile money services, in other countries he is working with several financial inclusion partners who are seeking to become better providers of customer centric financial services. He also introduced Behavioral Economics to effectively design products and services which helped their customers to achieve their financial goals.

His education at EDII, where he studied subjects like gender, poverty, livelihood and financial inclusion, and his well-rounded experience after his studies, helps him to stay grounded and incorporate principles of gender sensitivity and strong governance to support greater number of women achieve their financial goals. He has further helped in developing women centric financial products that ensure that women's financial needs are met, both in terms of the kinds of products they may be interested in (e.g. savings for children's education or a loan to run their own businesses) and in ways that they can be made sustainable.

Krishna focusses on about 10 countries in Asia which include both developed and developing countries such as Korea, China, Malaysia, India, Nepal and Vietnam. Over the last three plus years, Metlife Foundation has supported more than 45 partners across the region and has reached more than 2.1 million 'low to moderate income' people with targeted, affordable and conveniently delivered financial services. Krishna is positive that the impact and reach will be significantly greater over the next two years as the projects mature and as they continue expanding their work in the region.

Krishna realizes that each country, institution, and each project is unique. And as one solution cannot fit all. So while scaling needs replicability, it also needs to be efficient and far reaching, with critical testing of the technology. Active collaboration, constant learning and fostering partnerships are vital.

Krishna's international partner acknowledged his expertise in Digital Finance (DF) to launch the innovative Mobile Money for the Poor MM4P programme as he holistically supported some of them to develop sustainable strategies to enter the market. Krishna is a key and useful resource even on foreign lands. Krishna is highly valued for his client-focus and ability to develop relationships. Extremely articulate, diligent and a dedicated professional, Krishna has a deep sense of intellectual curiosity. His strong subject matter expertise and excellent interpersonal skills make him a popular team member. His camaraderie is respected and appreciated

On being asked about his future plans, Krishna admitted that he did not have a calibrated plan but believed in taking one step at a time and doing the right thing in a given situation. His own reasons for a change were very simple as "*mazaa nahin aa raha*" or even when he seemed a wee bit lost with the roles in the organization. He said that one faced uncertainties all the time but the key was to look for the right questions to which one had to find pertinent answers.

To the new students and aspiring change makers Krishna's message is that any change has to first begin from within (oneself) and no matter what situation you are in, big or small, it always helps to ask and remind yourself as to what is the problem that you are helping solve or in other words, what way are your actions today making this world a better place... Outside of his work on improving financial health of low to middle income people, the problems that Krishna chooses to spend his time with is sustainable living, elderly care, and coaching/mentoring youth.

Krishna has a lovely wife who hails from Phillipines and strongly supports all his missions. Their son Abeer is awaiting the arrival of his sibling and constantly trying to find a suitable name too. We are proud of the work contributed by Krishna and wish to see him as a change maker in diverse fields, we wish him success in all ventures that he gets attached to.

Banking on Development: With Kuldeep Arora

Kuldeep Arora

PGDBEM-NGO 1998-1999

Director -

Kuldhra Group of Companies

Indian Institute of Rural Development

ARTH Microfinance Pvt Ltd

Kuldhra Multi State Credit Coopertative Society


Kuldhra Foundation

Co - Promoter, Arth Microfinance Pvt Ltd.

Kuldeep greets me warmly with a broad smile that reaches his eyes instantly. Kuldeep Kumar Arora is a student from the pioneering batch of 1998-99 of Post Graduate Diploma in NGO Management (PGDMN) of EDII. He comes from a Punjabi family and admits that education was not high on his priority list. Youngest in his family, Kuldeep spent his childhood happily and lazily imagining how he could make India better. Army men films truly inspired him. Although Kuldeep aspired to join the defence services, he was unable to do so as he had a knee lock problem. This was disappointing but now he knew that he had to find a different route to contribute to the society.

While he was searching for meaningful options he came across the NGO management course of EDII. This piqued his interest and he applied for it. He remembers his first visit to EDII very fondly. The green campus with peacocks and the Neem tree lined avenue was totally enamouring. But it was not an easy task to settle in. Within the very first week, his lack of English abilities almost made him pack his bags. Strong support both from his batch mates and faculty made him continue, and this turned out to be the best decision of his life. However, now when you see his accomplishments and talk to him, you fail to understand why his linguistic skills were ever doubted. As a foodie, fondly known as 'Dhabha' among friends, he states that the best food ever was what was served by EDII canteen then.

It was during his academic grooming at EDII that Kuldeep got an exposure of entrepreneurship and



NGO. Both these words had been alien to him till then. He had now realised that social entrepreneurship was his calling. He fully appreciates the support and guidance he got, both in and out of the campus, through the rich curriculum of the course. However, he first chose to work with an organisation. He started as a project officer through campus placement in a well-established and growing NGO called Indian Institute of Rural Development (IIRD). He was promptly sent to Jhalawar, one of the most backwards districts of Rajasthan on a project for cluster development. Almost ready to quit, Kuldeep was encouraged to persevere by the faculty at EDII and rightly so as he obviously succeeded. Every day was a challenge both in existential and work terms. While food and living was not easy, promoting rural entrepreneurs & securing loan from banks was equally tough. His ability to facilitate with rural areas & promote entrepreneurs was noticed by the administration, and he was given the independent charge of handling a new intervention of the World bank - IDA and the government of Rajasthan. In 2002, Kuldeep received an appreciation letter from the Chief Minister of Rajasthan for drought relief work in Jhalawar district.

Identifying rural entrepreneurs, groups of women, and helping them prepare project reports and securing funds from the banks was not an easy task. The feather in his cap was IIRD being declared *best enterprise service provider agency* across India and receiving award from the Union Finance Minister. In FY 2003-04 & subsequent year, Kuldeep & his team organized thousands of poor women into SHGs & IIRD received the 'best SHG bank linkage agency award'. Taking into account the significant work done by IIRD in Jhalawar in 2003-04, Union MSME Minister appointed IIRD as Nodal agency and Kuldeep became Nodal officer to the ministry. Thus, Kuldeep got an exceptional opportunity to work closely with senior bankers & GoI officials. During this period, he

hosted numerous events, which were graced by MSME Minister, Chief Minister of state, Chairman IBA, Secretaries of various ministries of state and central government. Thousands of poor rural women were covered with micro insurance and Kuldeep received the 'best micro insurance seller award' at a convention in London. Now there was no looking back and Kuldeep was working from 7 am in the morning to 1 am. Promotions and projects kept him on his toes. From a small team of two, by 2005. Kuldeep boasted of a diverse team of more than 100 people who were veterinary doctors, civil engineers, legal professionals etc.

In 2003 he got engaged and was to get married within a fortnight. He remembers amusedly that the short duration did not give his bride enough time to change her mind as his life was no bed of roses. Lack of medical facility and erratic schedules created problems and led Kuldeep to take up an assignment in urban Jaipur with Tata AIG instead. This also brought a hike in the salary by 4 times. However, within a year Kuldeep started missing his interactions with farmers and poor people and was invited by IIRD to join them, again, and that too as the Director. This is when Kuldeep initiated a separate division called Arth Microfinance and his own entrepreneurial dream came true in partnership with the promoters of IIRD. Later in 2009 IIRD took over a NBFC and renamed the company as ARTH Microfinance, which is NBFC-MFI in 2015, he received international awards from Union Agriculture Minister, Govt. of India for 'best pasture land development' at the 23rd Grasslands Congress at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Kuldeep got a special assignment from state government to design community operational manual / guidelines for one of the most ambitious projects namely AJVEEIKA, supported by World Bank, IFAD & DFID. Kuldeep has designed many innovative schemes for rural poor, especially for farmers & women, and his efforts are

appreciated at various levels. He is also a member in many district level, divisional committees.

Presently, Kuldeep is focusing on expansion of his micro finance business. Arth provides microfinance to both urban and rural women, and has already supported about 84000 active women borrowers.

Kuldeep shares that his parents were not very happy with his choice of a program on NGO management but did not object as at least it was socially relevant. However, they were taken aback when he left his fortune 500 company well-paying job and started his own venture and that too in a very risky sector. With his gentle smile and a twinkle in his eyes, Kuldeep acknowledges that he has had his share of challenges in business but they are in any case inevitable. Though he appears soft and gentle, he has a spine of steel. While he did think of giving up temporarily due to political interventions, his grilling from EDII days kept him resilient. It has also taught him the power of visioning. From a mere 20 Lakhs that he managed with own savings, loan from friends, family and market, his venture has reached a turnover of Rs 107 Cr in FY 2016-17. He hopes to scale up and convert it into a small finance bank. We wish him all the success and leave a much larger footprint on the development of women.

Kuldeep's message to budding entrepreneurs is "Business is nothing but acquiring, retaining and growing your customer". He strongly believes that customers and your team are two most important people in business. An entrepreneur should always invest in technology, training of team and strengthening relations with customers. Never mind the place or scale, get started. No idea is 100% viable. His motto is "Act and see the impact."

EDII wishes him all the success in all that he envisions for doing.



Strength in simplicity

Greatness lies in great ideas! This is the mantra of Sonkee Shah, CEO at ARCH Development Foundation, a CSR management company operating in Vadodara, Gujarat. A petite and smiling woman with quiet confidence and an eye for perfection, Sonkee has over 17 years of rich industry experience. You walk into her office and get the first taste of minimalism and impeccable organisation, two qualities she is strongly associated with. A visionary in true sense, Sonkee anticipated the importance of good CSR management in industry long before the Ministry of Corporate Affairs made it mandatory. She always spoke of how structure and legal compliance in CSR had a twofold advantage; maximising benefits for the beneficiary and better company accountability and responsibility towards its surroundings. Today, her belief has become a subject of great global interest.

Sonkee Shah

PGDBEM-NGO 1999-2000

Ask Sonkee why CSR consultancy and management and 'Why not?' she asks back! She believes that traditional practices and a myopic view of Indian businesses have limited companies to employing tax consultants and financial advisors but none to plan their CSR activities. Why she questions in behest! "A CSR team may not look like a profit centre in the short run, but has a deep rooted positive impact on any organisation in the long run!" In fact ARCH, in the short time span of two years, has created ripples in this traditional thinking and is compelling companies to re-think their organisational strategy. As Sonkee treads along changing and challenging conventional practises, she is a glowing example of leading from the front as her small but committed team moves mountains in CSR Management under her able leadership.

As a child, Sonkee was always a face in the crowd. Her choices and ideologies were different from her peers. A brief but impactful act of volunteering in the fund raising committee of the Latur earthquake relief in 1993 first sowed seeds of social entrepreneurship in her. With a post-graduation degree in Agriculture and Extension Education System and a PG Diploma in NGO Management she worked closely with uplifting people suffering from HIV in the capacity of Project Manager at Francois Xavier Bagnoud and Valsad Rakhtdan Kendra. She then took the responsibility of projects in the field of Micro-finance, health and education with special focus on women and children. She also dabbled with research studies on legal issues concerning women and spearheaded Sakhi Mandal Projects with the Gujarat government for skill development and training of women for sustenance. As Project Manager with Suzlon for a period of two years Sonkee

worked in the area of setting up CSR Council at the grassroots level, employee volunteering, and conducting CSR orientation programs at business schools. At Larsen & Tubro, Hazira she became an indispensable member of their corporate CSR team executing 360 degree dynamics of Social Auditing.

Sonkee believes that certain decisions that one makes become game changers in life. She recalls her decision to take up



professional training in NGO Management as one in hers. Not only did she find her life partner but also a flourishing life path in social entrepreneurship! Another path breaking move for her came in 2014 when surrounded by deep difficulty she made the toughest decision of her life. She found herself sitting in her boss's cabin with a promotion in one hand and her resignation in the other. As Project Manager in the CSR department of L&T Power while she had outdone her contemporaries and earned herself a historic promotion in less

than two years of joining, she had to give it up all due to personal commitments. With family taking precedence over her job, she decided to take a sabbatical to put things into perspective. During this cooling off period, Sonkee recharged and re-charted the course of her life by turning entrepreneur. She completed the Social Auditing course from Social Audit Network India in 2015 and took up freelancing projects for CSR consultancy. It is on 17th July 2015 that her baby, ARCH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION was born.

Today, ARCH is a force to reckon with in CSR consultancy and management amongst corporates, MNCs and small business enterprises. Sonkee is spearheading her team of 20 and involved in smooth functioning of everyday activities. An inspiration for them, she exercises her comprehensive knowledge of development and CSR projects to design, plan, execute, & monitor self-sustaining programs at grass roots level. Her creative thinking and immaculate execution has made her popular with her clients. Nothing gives her more satisfaction than a well-thought of plan implemented well.

A woman is Shakti. A woman is a Superhero. And Sonkee is a rare combination of both. While she juggles her responsibilities as a homemaker, mother and an entrepreneur, things are not always a piece of cake. There are days when plans go overboard and a little out of her stride but those are the days when the learning is maximum. With clients queuing up and projects flooding in, Sonkee has a lot to be grateful about. She finds inspiration in big and small opportunities in everything to make the world a better place. Her happiness revolves around the things she loves, and needless to say ARCH is surely higher than most others on her LOVE ladder!



Shikhar

Micro finance:

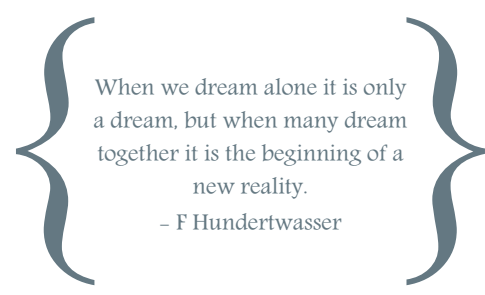

Taking EDII training to new heights

Satyavir Chakrapani

PGDMN 2000-2001

Founder - Shikhar Microfinance Private Limited

Coming from the village of Phoolan Devi but belonging to a family of freedom fighters, Satya had grown up listening to stories about the freedom struggle. He was aware of how his father opted out of traditional engineering education and got to establishing number of schools to provide basic primary schooling in remote rural areas. Satya and his three siblings were made to study in the same school. This was a great leveler for all four of them and did not let arrogance set in. This also helped him emerge as a grounded human being and respect all strata of society. It made him realize the importance of quality and creative education too. He completed his Master's in History from Kanpur University and subsequently pursued LLB. Simultaneously, he worked on Licentiate in Teaching (LT) which was similar to B Ed. An understanding emerging from diverse fields of education, a disciplinarian father's training, socialist ideologies, and agnostic thought kept Satya curious about the change needed in the society. This was one of the reasons why he later chose to join EDII and benefit from it.



When we dream alone it is only
a dream, but when many dream
together it is the beginning of a
new reality.

- F Hundertwasser

He started his career with World Vision, which was a non-profit organization and worked in the remote of areas of Utrakhand, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat to assess the development impact on education. Following this, he worked on a project to develop local leadership through cooperatives. The idea germinated in the years to follow. He tried to develop Farmers & Producers' Associations and federations of SHGs at Shramik Bharti, a renowned NGO in Kanpur. Innovative practices like thrift and credit were introduced. Satya admits that he understood the informal interpretations of concepts like collective bargaining and also the need for professional training

He also worked on a World Bank Project where he introduced the idea of taking Self Help Groups (SHGs) to the next level. He initiated the idea of federating them and helped in designing self-financing health schemes and tried to coordinate with various other relevant services. He was already inspired by Gandhi's Gram Swaraj and then Satya heard about Entrepreneurship Development Institute in Gandhi's own land, and its focused NGO Management course.

Although Satya had got admission in International MBA at Colorado, he was unable to get enough scholarship. Meanwhile, Satya attended a MDP by EDII. It left him very curious and with an inner dialogue he decided to join the first batch of NGO Management. He was lucky to get 100%

scholarship for academic support by NABARD. He was enamored by the well-stocked library and knew that he would definitely benefit from this treasure during his stay at EDII. And all that reading did help him to plan what he would do next and benefit the society too. He joined the programme to gain an understanding of the sector and as he puts it, “so that I could initiate my career on the premise of knowledge and not solely on my inclinations and instinct. And, I was proved right.”

He found two more like minded people and established Shikhar Microfinance. Over the decade Shikhar Microfinance has a portfolio of 59.4 Crores through 41990 active loans across 26 branches with the help of a team of 168 people. The journey was arduous but satisfying. What remained constant was a dream to bring about a change since his days at Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India through his PGDEM NM programme. His grooming here not only enriched his educational competency but also developed empathy for all around him. With a vision to empower communities by providing financial services and livelihood opportunities Satyavir values his Shikhar family and aids their training sessions to constantly upgrade their skills and awareness about the sector. His employees appreciate the blend of happiness and success that each of them manages to find with the organization.

He also manages home for destitute 'Sewa Ashram' under Delhi House Society, which aims to rehabilitate the poor and destitute in the NCR. Simultaneously Satya floated Partners of Shikhar Trust (POST), an investment vehicle through crowd funding; to invite investment from likeminded development oriented individuals with an aim of promoting microfinance activities. He acquired Anup Leasing Pvt. Ltd (ALPL) and renamed it as 'Shikhar Microfinance (P) Ltd'

(SMPL). He also manages Shikhar Dairy Private Ltd. Satyavir says that micro credit needs to reach the next level of enterprise creation which was essential for the actual growth of society. He says that we need to relook the business models used in the development sector. Satya's hard work has finally paid off and his Sewa Ashram is now on auto pilot mode, which he falls should be replicated.

Satyavir however admits that not all of his experiments were successful. His dairy project faced many challenges and he needed to revamp the complete program. But his training from EDII made him more resilient, making him never say die. On one hand his parents are worried about his future but still stand by him in all his ventures. His wife Esther, belongs to Madhya Pradesh and has been extremely supportive. She co-founded the company with him and keeps him motivated.

When asked about his future plans Satyavir shared that by 2021 he hoped to set up Shikhar Small Finance Bank and bringing IPO of SMPL. He would like others to benefit from his own experience. He intended to give entrepreneurship advisory services, mentoring and start-up funds, besides providing easy housing financing to the needy. He also wanted to replicate the Sewa Ashram through franchisee model.

Satyavir's message to upcoming students and social entrepreneurs is that why not take risks voluntarily instead of taking risks when one is cornered or forced to. Values were getting commercialized and hence there was a need to focus on them & ensure a value-based society. The time had come to build the nation by opportunity and wealth creation from bottom up.

EDII wishes Satyavir Chakrapani all the best in everything he does and all good wishes for the future.

Straddling

Social and Business Sectors!

Hareesh Belawadi

PGDMN 2001-2002

This Gemini was born at Udupi in Karnataka, to Rajalakshmi, a homemaker, and (Late) Shankar Narayan, a mathematics educator with the Manipal College of Education and a native of Udupi. Interestingly, the surname Belawadi became the family's surname due to local naming customs as one of his ancestors had migrated to Belawadi seven generations ago to work as a temple priest.

Since childhood, Hareesh was enamoured by wheels, trains and trucks. A degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Manipal Institute of Technology and work at Tata Motors for over five years seemed like a natural answer to pander to his passion. Yet, he was aware of the challenges and opportunities faced by the communities at the bottom of the pyramid. He had always been supporting the community as corporate-volunteer in CSR activities of Tata Motors and Tata Steel and earlier still in college days as volunteer for adult education and healthcare programs in villages around Udupi.

His exposure to rural living and agriculture started only in the year 2000

when a relative sought his help in resolving a family crisis. That is when he tried to form a business-collective of marginal farmers, but it failed miserably. This brought in a realisation that professional training would result in better management of initiatives of NGO programmes. It is then that Hareesh became aware about EDII which offered two academic programmes. One diploma was to encourage family business or new enterprise creation, or NGO management on the other. He joined the Post Graduate Diploma in Management of NGO (PGDMN) programme at EDII. He believes this was the most vital decision of his life as he rediscovered his purpose in life and could choose a path that would use his skills to bring about a relevant change in the society. As a mid-career professional, an intense one-year program made total sense to him. The prestigious scholarship from IDBI at EDII gave him the push.

Hareesh was campus placed at Cohesion Foundation in Rajkot and he learnt a lot about local economic development of the rural areas. His next learning was in a very diverse initiative. Toe Hold produced traditional hand-crafted leather footwear cluster at Athani in Belagavi District of Karnataka. Hareesh facilitated Toe Hold's transition from a leather footwear project to a social enterprise, jointly owned and governed by 168 women leather footwear artisans through 13 self-help groups. He later emerged as the Chief Operating Officer cum facilitator.

Hareesh tied the matrimonial knot in 2004 with Deepashree - a development professional with a Electronics & Communication Engineering degree, and master's in Sustainable Development. Hareesh was blessed with Tanvi in 2011. Deepa worked in the corporate and social and thus the two joined forces to make a change in the world


Another attempt at the development sector helped him to identify a niche market opportunity for professionals possessing cross-sector multi-disciplinary experience, thus ---
----- him leverage his skills and competencies acquired

during his six years of corporate stint and seven years' service in the development sector. This is when the entrepreneurial bug bit Hareesh. He initiated Tantra Development Consulting with an aim to offer professional consulting services to both, business as well as social sectors. Within just two years, Tantra's investment scaled up substantially and its revenue also expanded commendably. With CSR becoming mandatory, newer areas for consultancy with creative solutions emerged. Later, Hareesh got associated with Zonar Enterprises LLP, as a partner and management consultant. Driven by his entrepreneurial passion, Hareesh is in the process of creating three new ventures in areas of telematics, medical technology and instrumentation & automation!

As a consultant he has already worked with 38 clients on 79 projects in both rural and urban pockets of 12 states of India. He is now an acclaimed expert for bootstrapped start-ups and SMEs - including technology ventures, agribusinesses, garment initiatives, green makers, and oddball entrepreneurs. He is now working on projects with elements of 'innovation' backed by corporate houses or CSR entities, and 'enterprise' by Producer Collectives hand-held by local NGOs

Hareesh acknowledges the role of EDII in his mentoring and consultancies. He helps entrepreneurial-initiatives achieve better results in their pursuit of both profit and social impact, imaginatively using business, technology, and development together. His people skills and abilities in strategy, innovation, design, and marketing are put to good use in them. Hareesh works with teams that address complex business / social problems in adverse areas, while simultaneously overcoming resource-constraints, and is able to provide value to multiple stakeholders. This makes him popular for co-creating pragmatic frugal-solutions across sectors.

EDII is proud of his efforts in encouraging entrepreneurship at all levels.



Boldly

Challenging the Social Norms

Urvi Shah

PGDM-DS 2014-2016

23-years-old Urvi belongs to Ahmedabad and is the single girl child of a printer-publisher father and a home-maker mother. This pert, exuberant girl seems to be bursting with energy. Her sharp wit and keen sense of humour leads to a positive attitude that makes her look at all problems as an opportunity. This Virgo is a mix of intelligence, attention to detail, common sense, and commitment, and as the books say, a woman born under this sun sign is very smart, modest, and capable. This woman's fast mind can find humor in most things, and often empathize with others more than her emotions alone would allow. Urvi also is practical, modest, loving, intelligent and helpful. She has the ability to make people around her feel comfortable in her company.

She did her graduation in Business Administration from Gujarat University and then pursued post-graduation in Development Studies from EDII in 2016. While doing her Post Graduation, during an academic project, she started researching on LGBT community and gained interest to work in the same field. She was actually

researching on issues faced by homosexuals in India. India considers homosexuality a taboo and therefore it is not accepted. She understood that Homosexual people were going through problems of depression, anxiety, loneliness and other social problems. She became curious to know about their life partners and hence did a research on them. Urvi discovered that on conventional dating websites for homosexuals fake profiles are very common and majority of the people registered there are looking for one night stands or short-term relationships. On the other hand, there were people looking to get settled with a partner and form a family. Here, she came up with the "Arranged Marriage" system where they help them find a like-minded person. Her idea was to set up the company in India, but this was against the law. So she set it up in the U.S. with a partner who is a US citizen. Urvi operates her business from Ahmedabad in India as of now, and has 26 homosexual employees in her team.

Urvi seems to have found a gap in the market, so to speak, because the website has become very popular in the short time it's been operating. At first, people didn't seem to understand the process so Urvi and her team were flooded with inquiries from people who thought that this was just another dating website. There are plenty of websites to arrange marriages for heterosexuals, but none for the LGBT community. Urvi decided to focus on servicing queer people. Urvi admits that she knew she had a tough fight ahead socially, but her parents supported her in her belief to contribute in helping the community of LGBTs.

Urvi shares that EDII prepared her to be ready to stand her ground when pursuing a cause. EDII helped her to develop a deep understanding of project planning and also helped her develop her risk taking abilities. A batch that brewed diverse ideas of development





Paving the way for the change makers

From the 5th batch of NGO management at EDII, Shalabh gets a happy smile while he reminisces about the time spent here. He comes from a very democratic family that did not push him to pursue the traditional roads to success, but instead encouraged him to respond to his inner calling. He pursued his B Com Honours and Masters from Shri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as he aspired for a value-based education and not merely a money minting purposive one. The gap in academic research and actual implementation of the resultant project became obvious. Despite appreciation the recommendations rarely saw the light of the day. This is when he understood the roles of NGOs and worked with them over the next two years and realised that no formal education was open in development space. He further educated himself about human rights. However, a need for professional training to manage NGOs was always perceived. It was at this time that he got introduced to EDII

Shalabh Mittal

PGDMN 2002-2003

and its PG diploma in NGO management. The course content and the approach intrigued Shalabh and he joined EDII with great energy. The structure and design of the program bundled with his previous rich experience was now in cognizance and made sense to him. The flexibility simultaneously he also worked as a research associate to support the program. Shalabh shares that EDII has a very welcoming effect and a great learning environment. He was totally enamoured by the library that had a very peaceful and calming effect. His own interactions with Lok Bharti

His friends, colleagues and students all remember his style statement fondly. The coloured khadi kurtas and kolhapuris with traditional diaries and ethnic jholas that became brand Shalabh. In fact, at a point of time, he even wore a pony tail with panache. An unusual blend of humour, sensitivity and nurturing attitude, Shalabh was ever popular and still is connected with them on social media and in real life.

Shalabh appreciates how faculty at EDII were discerning enough to give him higher order thinking skills based case studies in finance instead of limiting his financial management curriculum to the general course. One-size-fit all policy was not blindly followed. His own Gandhian thoughts developed while he visited Lokbharati which is a Gandhian Institute. He also conducted some training for students of Masters in rural management and developed his own skills in the process.

Unfortunately while pursuing the course, Shalabh lost his father, to whom he was very close to. although he lost the Bharti Award due to insufficient attendance, he bagged the highest salary offer from Pravah which he joined to lead the project. Within the next three years he developed his team from four members to twenty. He worked on a World Bank

aided climate change project besides conducting socio economic study for the fishing sector in India.

EDII soon beckoned Shalabh again and this time as the coordinator to the course. His understanding of the course and curriculum took it forward beyond the obvious. With constant student interaction, building their confidence and encouraging EDII's flagship entrepreneurship even in the development sector Shalabh brought the two year PGDM Development Studies to a new level. The course was revamped and newer issues incorporated.

Shalabh admits that his own concept of entrepreneurship got conceived and nurtured at EDII. His fifteen years of multi-sectoral experience in health, livelihoods, water, sanitation and social entrepreneurship has helped him facilitate start-up social enterprises among women affected by HIV/AIDS. Armed with a professional approach, management skills, and EDII training, he emerged as an expert in project management, idea generation, project conceptualization and project implementation.

Presently Shalabh is the CEO of School of Social Entrepreneurship. His learnings and experience from EDII are evident in the work that he does. His exploring the unexplored reflects on his own risk taking behaviour. He passionately nurtures budding social entrepreneurs through this venture. Shalabh crusades that "All innovators are not entrepreneurs. Innovations need commercialization and hence a strong ecosystem to support social innovations should be delivered in a social enterprise model."

We are proud to see him leave a mark and wish him success in all that he does.



Don't let the almost serious eyes peeping behind the horn rimmed glasses fool you. The shy gentle smile that Sujata displays often grows to light up her face and the animated expression and sheer enthusiasm take over. Sujata Goswami had to play multiple roles in her life at a very tender age. Sujata was barely 9 when she lost her mother. This left her family devastated but her elder brother took it as his responsibility to nurture her along with her father who was a brave single parent. He was a chemical engineer and was settled in Indore but later had to relocate to different cities for his job. Sujata acknowledges that it was a small town but provided her a healthy blend of literature, education and culture. Holistic development was evident, but as years passed, she withdrew into a shell, grew a loner and became self-contained.

She pursued her graduation in science and got married, and then ventured into teaching Maths and Science in a school. But Sujata was destined to do much more. She got a chanced opportunity to learn further and thought of a second innings at higher education. Her interest

Sujata

PGDMN 2004-2005



in the development sector and her brother's motivation made her seek admission at EDII. It was during her interview that her evident interest in the development sector was appreciated. Sujata shares that being a loner, a novice at development work, left her a little fearful of the decision she took of joining EDII. However, the green environment and the limited number of focussed fellow students was a catharsis for her. She discovered herself a new. She overcame her inner fears, made new friends, was an avid reader, and developed a special knack for writing skills, especially in the areas of natural resource management and gender. EDII helped her choose a future course of action that brought out the best in her and left her feeling content. She topped her batch with a Gold medal.

Through campus recruitment, Sujata was soon working as management trainee with Sarba Shanti Ayog, the development partner organization of leading Fair Trade organization, Sasha. Her in-depth understanding and project management skills got her speeding in an upward trajectory. Within a short span of three months she was confirmed in the organization and gates seemed to have opened to vast opportunities.

Sujata presently is the Executive Director of Sarba Shanti Ayog. Her work with SSA has taken her around the world, and exposed her to many developmental perspectives globally.

Now was the time when Sujata exemplified the theoretical pinnings provided at EDII through actual application in real life. The field visits forced during the Development Studies course made her learning abilities much stronger. While the exposure was western Indian the socio economic perspectives of eastern India challenged them, leading to debates and a strong understanding. Sujata appreciates the interactions provided by faculty from across institutions like MICA, NID, IIM and CEPT that were extremely beneficial and gave a huge boost to the understandings of the subjects.

Sujata has worked extensively in capacity building of women artisans and businesses in the organization. She has constantly worked at market development for crafts and closely oversees the the flagship store of Sasha in Kolkata.. There has been an increased intensity in reaching out to consumers recently, with introduction of pop ups at various stores and cities. They ever intend to hold pop-up exhibitions in various cities. Out of the 5000 artisans her organization works with regularly, more than 60% are marginalised women. A soft smile is evident when Sujata gently informs that the women of 24 Parganas, one of the most backwards districts in West Bengal, have come out of their home and become independent and more empowered. The change is clearly visible both in terms of social and economic empowerment. This helps them gain control over their assets and helps in decision-making. Since they work in their home environment, with their community and with flexible hours, it makes the enterprises of these women more sustainable.

The training at EDII continuous to help, Sujata to go back to books and academics. She is constantly adding to her skills. She is alert and is also utilising the digital media to her advantage. With her ear to the ground Sujata manages to respond to the changes in the environment speedily. So way to go Sujata and keep up the good work.



A Surprise Package in Social Entrepreneurship

EDII has met some highly unusual people in its journey of developing development professionals. One of them was Tejas Merh Desai. A development sector specialist, a financial whiz and a trained chartered accountant, Tejas surprises you yet again with her multi-lingual abilities. In addition, she is a trained Kathak artist/ danseuse who seems to step straight out of a Barbara Cartland novel with her pert nose and a very expressive face.

A single girl child of unconventional parents, Tejas spent her childhood in an almost live edition of National Geographic as her father was a Geohydrogeologist and lived very close to nature. Tejas travelled extensively with her father to the far interiors of Saurashtra, an arid region which was almost always parched of water. At a very young age she saw suffering borne out of the scarcity of water both in terms of acute poverty and the emotional toll it took on people. This resulted in an awareness of the “other India”, the India that people

Tejas Merh
PGDMN 2000-2001

usually prefer to blinker out. Her mother was a professor of journalism at Saurashtra University and later worked on freelance assignments and translation work for the development sector, which further sowed in her the seeds of 'be the change you wish to see'.

She moved to Ahmedabad with her parents in the early 90s and learnt all that was available in Ahmedabad. By the time she finished HSC, she already had 7 years of intensive training in Kathak, a diploma in French and a decent HSC score. The decision to take up Finance as a career was a practical one but once she passed CA, her choice to join the development sector was one that was borne out of the empathy and sensitivity she had learnt in her childhood.

Once she decided to work in the development sector, she felt the need to understand the sector better to be able to figure out where her expertise would be used best. EDII provided that understanding. Finance for Non-profits was not a common specialisation but she realised that marrying of the finance concepts to development ones made her an expert in both which was a rare combination.

She started working even before she graduated from EDII. The earthquake in 2001 which shook Gujarat gave her a chance to put into practice all that she had learnt and she used that context for her practical project which was a part of the EDII course. Her project won her a gold medal from EDII.

The project was done through GiveIndia, and they offered her a job immediately after graduation in August 2001. Since then, her journey has led her to work with many NGOs across the development sector spectrum.

With the same ease she took marriage and motherhood in her stride. She started taking on freelance consulting projects from 2009. NGO accounting, finance management and legal



compliance became her expertise. She started her own venture Avkaash in 2015.

As a chartered accountant, Tejas had the financial expertise but EDII brought an understanding of finance contextually, which was extremely important. Equity, gender work could not be understood sequentially but patience to understand the context was well utilised. She developed her soft skills relevant to non-governmental organisations. Currently, Tejas is developing an NGO Finance Network which aims to be a knowledge sharing platform for finance professionals working with NGOs in India.

On one hand this permanent learner is ready to conduct some much needed academic research in her area and on the other, she is learning, performing and teaching Kathak to young children, and encouraging her gymnast daughter to reach different heights. Hoping that her versatility stays and exuberance grows, EDII wishes her new levels.

Some of the Eminent Speakers at EDII Convocations



Shri Venugopal Dhoot



Dr. K. C. Chakrabarty



Dr. Sam Pitroda



Mr. Rajiv Takru



Shri G. M. Rao



Dr. Hasmukh Adhia



Shri O P Kohli



Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal



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