

JUNE 2020 - Volume II Issue 6

FORCENETEZINE

Magazine of the military Veterans in the corporate



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INSIDE

Guide to WFH micro-biz
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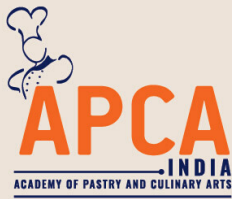
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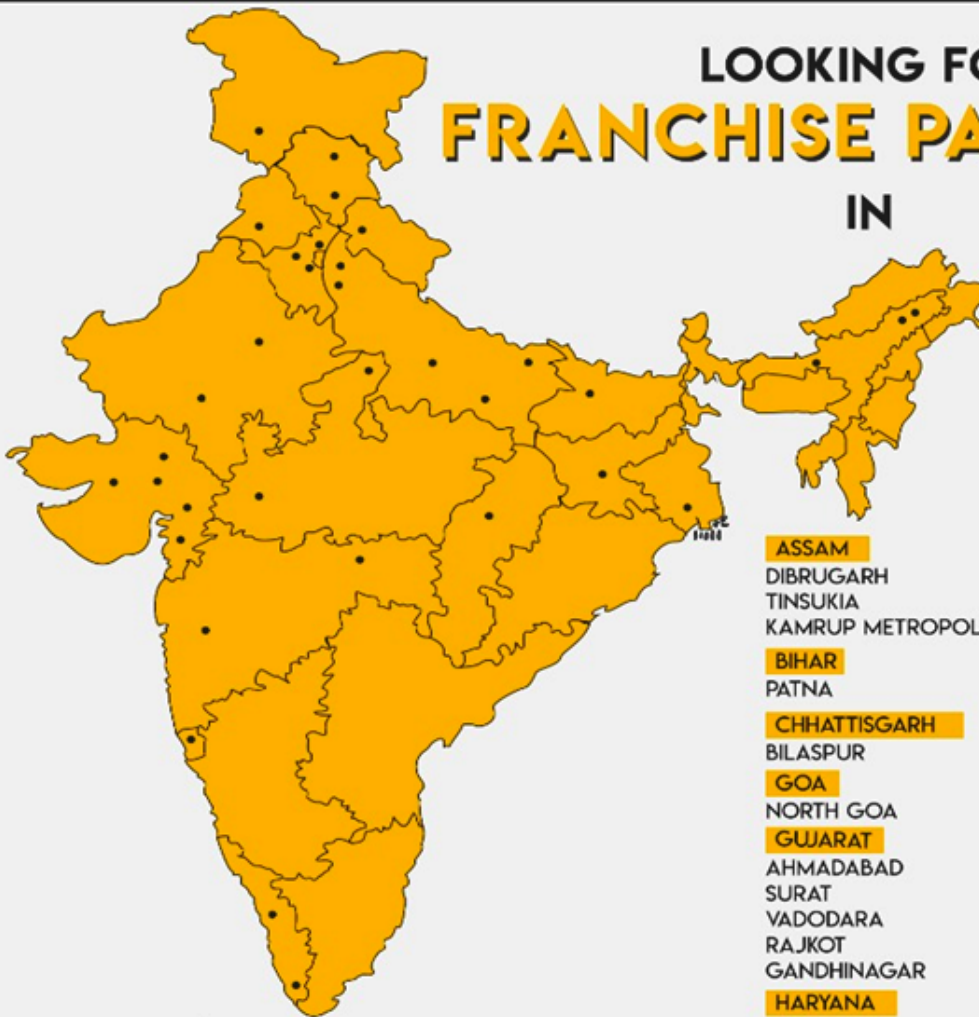
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From the Editor

Dear Reader,

The period in the past few months has been quite challenging for the World at large. Nations are busy strategising their policies and activities to come out least scathed from the impact and after effects of COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge at individual and personal levels is no less, with equally wide range of concerns to be taken care of. While the world stares at economic depression, the population tries to fight the ghost of job lay offs and unemployment.

However, it is a fact which can not be just wished away. We can however, on the other hand, devote our attention and energies to planning and devising our gameplan and how it would unfold to adequately tackle the negative impact of this pandemic in our personal lives. This however needs preparation, and preparation needs time. Fortunately, at this point in time we have adequate time at our disposal. which can be gainfully utilised.

For working professionals, the mantra ought to be 'learn, unlearn, and relearn'. It has to be a conscious initiative on our part to have a focussed determination in this regard. Only those who are able to stick to this with utmost dedication, will be able to leave behind all competition and meet all challenges in the months to come. Forces Network, as a coherent organisation, also understood the significance of this valuable aspect, and embarked on the journey of arming its members with all such necessary knowledge which can add value to their professional life. Not to be left behind in terms of technology, the latest means were employed to impart vast knowledge in the last two months. It is without doubt, that these will keep the members in good stead in the times to come.

Knowledge is a surplus resource in today's world. We are all privy to the largest well of information since the dawn of civilization, and more becomes available every day. While this is obviously great, it has put a lot of pressure not only on businesses but individuals too, to keep up with the latest trends and innovations. Constantly learning new methods and processes have become essential to remaining competitive. It's one thing to introduce a completely new idea into your business. However, what about when there's a new innovation which contradicts an already existing system which has worked well until now? This is when unlearning becomes essential. Unlearning is the act of letting go of old information or habits in order to make room for new ideas which might be better for the enterprise. That is why, do empty the bucket regularly.

So, let us resolve today to overcome these difficult times duly armed with the will to learn, unlearn and relearn. Stay safe, till we meet next.

Cheers to Forces Network - the Network that Works!!!

Regards,
Lt Col Ranvir Singh

Events

L@ckd@wn Learning at Forces Network: Getting the Skills for Tomorrow Today

BY IQBAL SINGH

It was past mid Mar 2020. The corona virus had set the World on fire and it seemed to be getting the entire World on its knees. Many countries were either announcing or implementing lockdowns, and soon the same happened in India from the midnight of 24 Mar 2020. I had been receiving frantic calls from serving officers on the verge of premature retirement, or release from service for SS officers for the past couple of weeks seeking advice. For all those who could move their dates I advised them to defer by one year, but what about those who were having a fixed release date or date of superannuation? To add to it, there were those already on the civvy street who were losing their jobs. After the lockdown the frequency and volume of these calls increased manifolds. It was more than what I could handle on my own. The environment was pensive all around and negativity loomed large. Meanwhile I was wondering as to how to share my message with a larger audience in the shortest possible time.

Keeping 'The Spirit of Forces Network' (TSOFN) in mind, we at Forces Network decided to take charge and act. Life is all about what you do with what you have, so we decided that we will "Make Our Own Way" and "Get Ahead". Secondly, what my corporate experience had taught me was that what we are facing is not a jobs crisis but a skills crisis. Applying the Regret Minimization Framework the question I asked myself at this juncture was, what mistakes we can not afford to make? The answer echoed in the ears loud and clear - "not utilizing this time for skills upgradation and knowledge enhancement".



In today's age even Spiderman needs to continuously learn and upgrade his skills

It was with this backdrop that we at Forces Network launched a series of online learning initiatives which has now come to be known as the L@ckd@wn Learning. This has now continued for over a period of two months. We started the campaign with a Covid Career Advisory Webinar on 28 Mar 2020. The response was overwhelming, and we ran the webinar to a packed audience. This encouraged and enthused us and we set on a journey of discovering, exploring and learning. The next webinar on 04 Mar 2020 also got a thunderous response and due to the limitation on the number of Zoom participants many people could not join. Soon our members' spouses, wards and even friends started joining our events. However our members wanted more. What followed was a terrific learning journey which is captured in the table below, giving out details of the variety of topics covered during this period, so far:

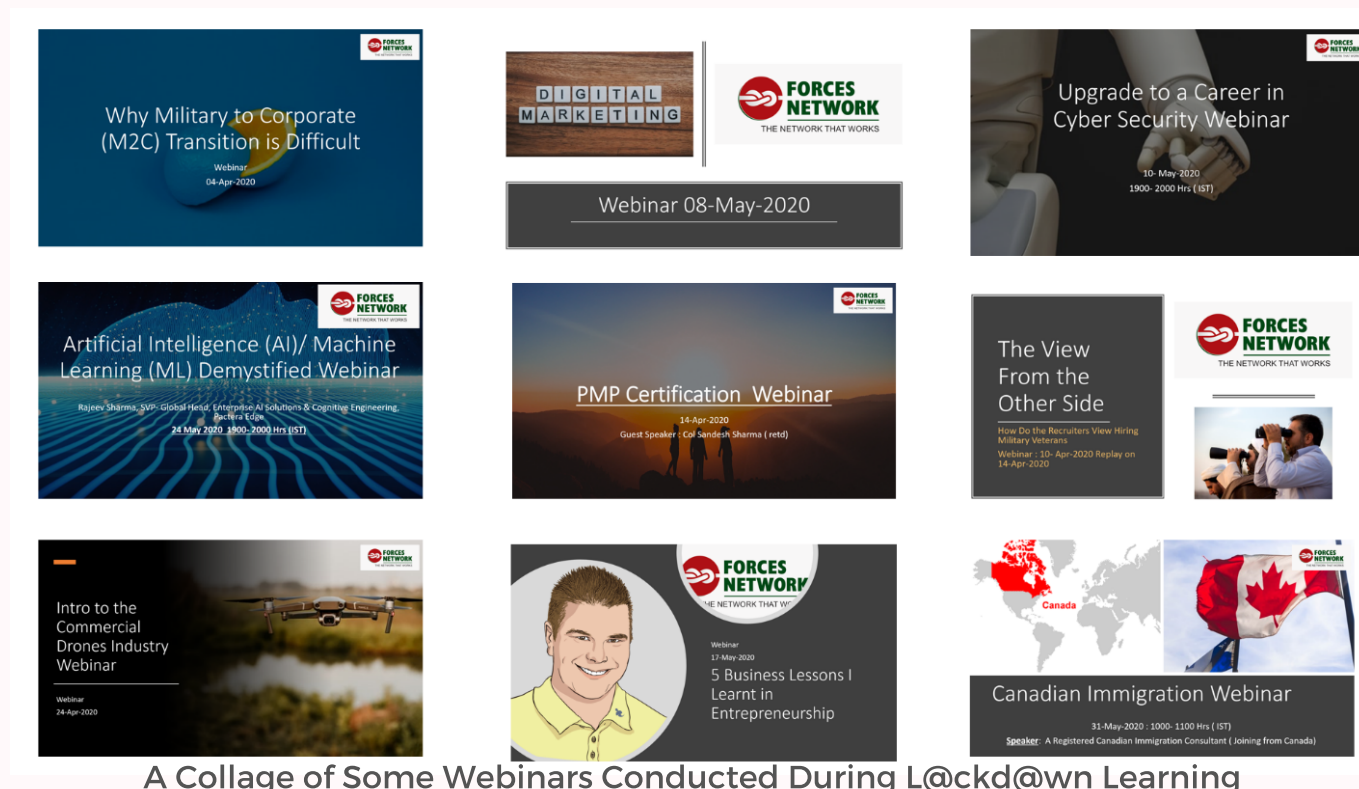
<u>Ser No</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event Name</u>
1	28-Mar-2020	Career Advisory COVID-19 Impact
2	04-Apr-2020	Why a Successful M2C Transition is Difficult
3	10-Apr-2020	The View From the Other Side
4	12-Apr-2020	Replay: The View From the Other Side
5	14-Apr-2020	About PMP Certification
6	17-19 Apr 2020	Online M2C (Military to Corporate) Workshop (3 days)
7	24-Apr-2020	Commercial Drones Industry Intro
8	29-Apr-2020	An Intro to Supply Chain Management
9	01-May-2020	CPP Certification - An Introduction
10	03-May-2020	Immigration to Australia
11	08-May-2020	Digital Marketing
12	10-May-2020	Upgrade to a Career in Cyber Security
13	17-May-2020	5 Business Lessons I Learnt in Entrepreneurship
14	24-May-2020	Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning (ML) Demystified
15	31-May-2020	Immigration to Canada

It was important to choose our topics carefully and keep them relevant to our target audience. We started next with as to Why Military to Corporate (M2C) Transition is difficult, The View from the other side (how the recruiters viewed the hiring of veterans), how to undertake certifications (PMP, CPP), some new age careers in Digital Marketing, Commercial Drones, Cyber Security and Machine Learning. The trainers were practicing industry champions. We also covered entrepreneurship wherein a successful veteran entrepreneur shared the learnings he had while creating a successful business – the advice shared was priceless and something not taught in any business school.

The online mode of pedagogy allowed us to not only reach a wider audience right across the globe but also to tap into quality trainers from across the globe. Just to give you a glimpse we had an IIT Professor come and teach us Digital Marketing, an MIT/Harvard graduate and ex-CEO of a Deep Learning company in the USA spoke on Machine Learning, a public limited company's CISO in India spoke on Cyber Security, and Immigration Consultants joined us from Australia and Canada. We also had participants joining in not just from the remote corners of India and its metros but also

many joined in from UAE, Kuwait, Australia, Congo, Canada and USA. The more people learnt the more they wondered and seeing such extraordinary lives (of trainers/speakers) around us they felt and became inspired too.

Not only was this learning powerful it was impactful in more ways than one. We had feedback saying things like “Eye opener” “What you are talking – no one else talks that”, “I wish I had known this earlier”. The learning helped also reshape the mindset of the participants in more ways than one.



Personally, to be honest, at individual level I was bit apprehensive about the efficacy of an online mode of training especially keeping the wide age profile of our members but that turned out to be a myth. The enthusiasm and energy of our participants was overwhelming. It was heartening to see many self-proclaimed tech challenged members becoming savvy in joining online sessions in a matter of days. Our audience profile ranged from 16 to 60 plus years old – however, it was gratifying to see how each one of them coped, adapted and upgraded their skills in the course of this L@ckd@wn Learning.

In a subsequent feedback survey, all participants appreciated the conduct of the online sessions. The Speaker quality and the webinars content was highly acknowledged by the participants. In addition 100% of the respondents said that they had enjoyed the learning and that the learning had impacted their mindset in a positive manner. A really heartening metric personally for me to notice was that 72% of the respondents said that they had taken forward moving action after the learning ie signed up for a course, certification or decided upon a cutoff date to complete a training/certification – this tells us that we truly created impact! 96 % of the respondents conveyed that they were waiting to join more training to be conducted by Forces Network in the future.

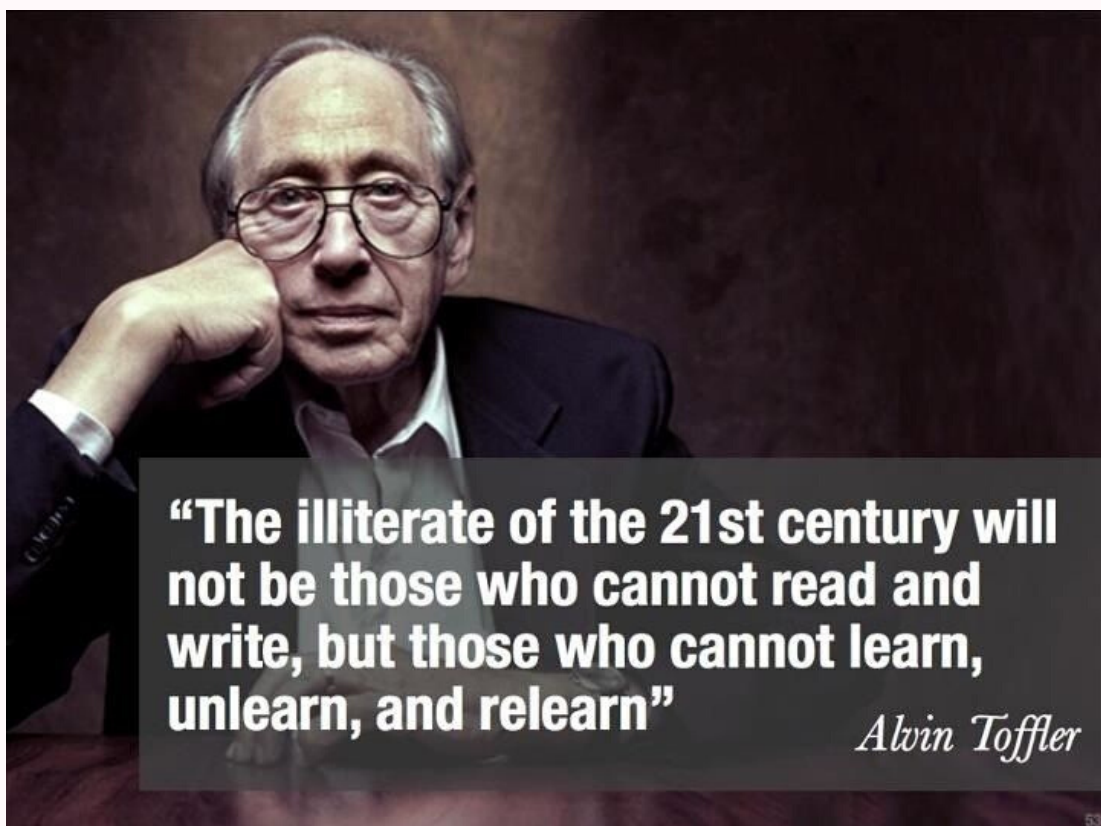
We at Forces Network believe that everybody has the potential to do amazing things in life and we remain committed to helping our members become successful in their civilian careers. We wish to help unleash the potential of our members to the fullest and feel privileged to act as a catalyst in that mission. After such an intense sprint of two months plus where we ran really, really fast and hard we are taking a short pause (to catch our breath 😊) – in fact it is a strategic pause. Post strategizing we shall be back soon with the next level of online learning that would take you deeper, stretch you to your limits and as an outcome make all of us better professionals, better people and better humans.

Watch this space for more!

Three Cheers for Forces Network – the Network that Works!!!



Lt Col Iqbal Singh was commissioned on 19 Dec 1987 into 4th Battalion The Garhwal Rifles. He completed MTech after undergoing the EME Officers Degree Engineering course on Infantry vacancy, and subsequently graduated from the DSSC Wellington. The officer has also done a tenure in the Indian Army's Wargaming and Development Center (WARDEC). After hanging his boots in Jun 2008, he is currently working in a senior role in a large European telecom MNC based at New Delhi. He is a frequent speaker on various industry fora on technology topics especially Cloud Technology and Artificial Intelligence. He founded the Forces Network, now having 5600 plus members, on 04 Dec 2007 and continues to drive it to greater heights. He can be contacted at iqchucks@gmail.com



Stars of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

BY BIDISHA PANDEY

Cdr Amit Dhawan joined the Indian Navy in Nov 1989 and is an alumnus of Naval College of Engineering, INS Shivaji. On completion of his tenure in the Navy, he transformed himself into an expert in the Information Security domain and has worked for multiple prestigious organisations. He is presently the Chief Information Security Officer and Data Protection Officer at Birlasoft.



Joining the Indian Navy

Cdr Amit confesses that joining the Indian Navy was never his plan. He was a happy go lucky school boy who wanted to be an engineer but had no plans on how to go about it. A sportsman at heart, he would have loved to make a career in sports, but the choices were limited and he was not sure where he wanted to be – on a sports ground or an engineer's workshop.

He ended up enrolling himself into a BSc Course at Delhi University. He later applied for joining the Naval Engineering course and before he knew it, he was in Goa for the orientation course. In hindsight, Cdr Amit believes that joining the Indian Navy was the best thing to have happened to him as it gave him a direction, and made him have faith in his own abilities.

Choosing Information Security as the Second Career

“Destiny depends on the decisions you take”. Cdr Amit was always interested in IT and had a flair for problem solving and small level programming. The Navy saw this potential and pushed him into an internal project, the ILMS(Air) project that had been conceived to digitally transform the manual Naval Aviation Inventory Management system. The team was small, dynamic and was keen on delivering a great product. It was decided that the entire design and development would be done in-house, so the

team started learning all facets of IT projects and they became experts in Application Design, Software Development, Database design and management, Network Design and management and IT Support, basically all tenets of an IT services company.

The security element was slowly becoming relevant at that time and this team was again roped in to collaborate on defining the initial Information Security policy. Later, forensic analysis of a HDD infested with Malware, researching on how the malware works kindled Cdr Amit's interest in Information Security. He could see the impact which IT was making and realized that Information Security too will become equally important in years to come.

Military to Corporate Transition

After serving in the Navy for 10 years, Cdr Amit realised that the promotion structure in the Armed Forces is pyramidal and therefore, there had to be a Plan B. He was interested in IT and Information Security, and therefore decided to gain more expertise and knowledge in that field.

He joined a few communities outside, and did a few certifications. Standing with the professionals gave him the confidence, and he was sure that his Plan B would work in case Plan A fails. He always believed that the knowledge gained outside of the organization will always help the organization in some way, tangible or intangible. Cdr Amit remembers, during his preparation for CISSP, when he was posted as Electrical officer of a ship at Karwar, he used to finish his rounds of the ship at 0400 hrs and then prepare for three hours before starting the day officially while at sea.

As luck would have it, the Navy gave him opportunities to progress, but he had to turn them down and quit due to health reasons in his family. He had no choice but to go back to Plan B.

The Corporate Experience

Cdr Amit says that his overall experience in the corporate domain has been great so far. He always tried to be a professional whilst he was in service and he still does the same.

In the initial few months, there were a lot of learnings, not from the work perspective, but more from how the work is to be done. The culture, the way of conversing, and the structure of the organizational setup needed understanding. He feels that the Armed Forces were the first corporate or organised formation in the world. The corporations of today have absorbed those learnings into making their structure. Hence, we from the Armed Forces, are always a step ahead.

If one has clearly understood the structure, policies and processes in the Armed Forces, the transition impact would be minimal.

Life as a CISO

The role of a CISO is relatively new and is evolving from the tenets of Risk and Compliance Management. The role is becoming more technical and demands a better appreciation of technology. In simpler terms, as the World sees unprecedented growth in technology, the vulnerabilities in each of these advances create an opportunity for hackers to exploit and disrupt the system. The cyber threat landscape continues to evolve, with new threats emerging every day. Flaws in microchips, to massive data breaches and flavours of Ransomware keep the security teams busy.

On a lighter note, Cdr Amit explains, it is a 24x7 role and is very similar to his sailing days. Any CISO always wears two hats – one of Preventive and the other of Reactive management. The hacking attempts can occur at any time, and though there are enough controls built in to defy those, one is never sure when an attack would be successful. The identification of a successful attack, its incident response to contain the damage and then removal of the remnants of the attack comprise of the Reactive management.

The Preventive element is the time not spent in the reactive one. It includes the governance, risk assessment, strategy planning in line with emerging threats, budget management, culture enhancement, people management, audits, board reporting, threat and vulnerability management and practicing incident response. The security teams are divided into Operations, Risk Management and Audits.

Overall, the CISO is responsible to the organization for a strong security posture, organization's resilience to a cyber-attack, and supporting business goals.

Future Plans

Cdr Amit has two elements in his future plans. One pertains to the continued addition of value that he can provide to the organization. This element is about consistent learning of the organization's functions and plugging himself in areas where he can support it to grow.

The second part is the knowledge he can gain to enable himself to create additional value. He is aligned to the concept of Steve Jobs' "Connecting the Dots". This YouTube video guides one to learn without too much baggage of thinking. It says, whenever you get an opportunity to learn, do that, as it will always come back to support you in future.

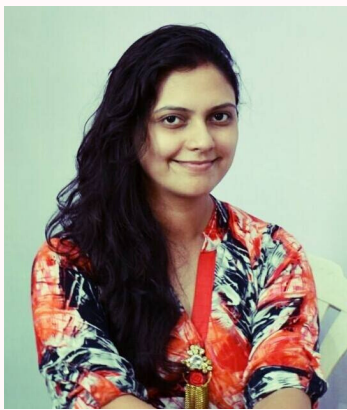
Cdr Amit does at least one certification a year and always looks out for opportunities where he can contribute positively to the organization he serves. As Plan B, he is also working on gaining some knowledge on the startup culture and even looking at consulting opportunities after a few years.

Advice to Fellow Officers

Information Security management, though it requires special skills, these skills are not too far from what we know and do in the Armed forces. The primary element in Information Security is Risk Management and that is already embedded in us.

There are multiple tenets of Information Security. People with limited technical knowledge can be extremely productive in domains like Governance & Risk Management, Cyber Culture development, Third Party Risk Management and Security Audits. While one pursues these elements, the technical knowledge can be enhanced.

Lastly, Cdr Amit states that the bottom line is to learn without too much of thinking, and start the journey. No road will be easy but persistence will pay and you will be successful.



Bidisha Pandey is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site www.sassyweekender.com



ForceNetPreneurs

In this series we plan to showcase a few entrepreneur members of Forces Network who have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as also to learn from them with a view to motivating more amongst our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full time vocation. Finally – we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

BY RANVIR SINGH

Lt Col Jasdeep Singh Nagpal, an alumnus of 82 NDA course, joined 18 JAT in 1993. Hailing from a service family that had a business background, Jasdeep took part in numerous active operations during his service, while his wife looked after the business, till he took PMR in 2017. He is currently involved as a Mentor in varied fields viz Education (NFCI-A Chain of Hotel Management Institutes), Organised Retail (Westside (TATA), Raymond's), Sports Training & Infrastructure (Colonelz Sharpshooterz), Property Management (Commercial, Residential & Agricultural), and Farming. He has to his credit various innovative initiatives that have created greenfield business opportunities, while never letting go of his core philosophy of honestly helping fulfil others needs.



Ranvir: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Army, and your subsequent Army career.

Jasdeep: I hail from a family whose practically 80% of mother's side was ex-Army, and less than 1% on the father's side. My father is an ex-civil services officer, and hails from a family that has roots in business, property and farming. Did my schooling mostly from a Convent School in small town Ambala, and then joined NDA in 1989.

I had a decent run in the Army – AX(I) in almost all the courses I did in my service of about 24 years. I was Instructor in Infantry School in two separate wings, had a Rashtriya Rifles tenure, several tenures in CI Ops, participated in the Kargil War, had numerous HAA tenures, went to UN Mission (SUDAN), was AQ of a brigade, and GSO-I (Info Systems) at Division and Corps level, and had a stint with the Territorial Army HQs. My last posting was in the Military Police at Karu (Ladakh), from where I took PMR in 2017, having duly done my pre-settlement course in Financial Management from MDI Gurgaon. I'm currently settled with my family in the City Beautiful, Chandigarh.

The inherent desire to move out and do business meant despite doing decently well in the Army, my heart lay elsewhere. Early on, I ended up supporting my wife Navneet's first proper business setup in 2003, when along with my brother, she set up a branch of my brother's then fledgling chain of hotel management institutes, NFCI Educations Pvt Ltd. This institute today, besides alumini in hospitality industry across the world, has the singular distinction of having trained over 3000 Armed Forces chefs, both at Jalandhar, and through in-situ courses at Air Force Stations and Army Cantts.

Ranvir: Please give us more details about what you are presently engaged in.

Jasdeep: I am engaged in multiple ventures. One of course is the hotel management institute, NFI Education Pvt Ltd, which now has about 17 branches across India, and is now in Pan India expansion mode on a franchisee model. In the past few months we have added branches at Belgaum, Varanasi, Lucknow, and Mandi (Himachal). More locations are in the pipeline for this very successful line of business.



(In-situ Cookery Training Program: Competition)

When I got the God-sent opportunity to get a multi-storey commercial building constructed shortly after my supersession as Lt Col, the question arose as to whether to let it out on rent, or go in for own business setup. Second venture that I mentored as a family business, is a franchisee of Westside(TATA) at Jalandhar, started in 2012. As the working partner in this family venture, the heavy lifting is owed to my wife Navneet who has been running the show extremely well despite initially being a novice in the field of organised retail, while I kept my one foot on ground in the Olive Greens.

Another venture I mentored sometime in 2014 is Colonelz SharpShooterz, a professional shooting training academy. Besides having produced several top-notch, national level shooterz over the past few years(including training the Army Command teams for Gen JJ Shooting Championship), we are now an established name in sports infrastructure setup, including Shooting Range construction, Indoor and Outdoor Gyms, Obstacle Courses, turf and sports courts solutions, and so on.

Post my PMR in Mar 2017, I setup a multi-brand factory outlet of Raymond's, in order to use my now acquired knowledge of branded clothing retail, as well as use my retirement funds to set up an income source. Our choice of location went wrong, however, and despite the business drawing excellent reviews, we had to shut shop.

I also look after our family farm, which I have majorly activated over the past few years from an non-productive wasteland to an active farm, and other properties built by my father. That has also given me the opportunity to acquire fair amount of legal

knowledge, as property and legal issues go hand-in-hand.

Ranvir: What was the vision behind starting your venture, and thereafter expanding it?

Jasdeep: In the beginning the vision was quite simple – we wanted to test the expansion plans of the then fledgling Hotel Management Institute setup by my brother and his wife. This led us to setting up a branch in the same city. Today the institute provides an excellent opportunity for those wanting to take up a lucrative business in the education industry, with limited investment, and an ROI of just about 3-4 years.

Coming from a business background, but with my immediate family being a service one that did not know the intricacies of running a business, it was a tough call when we decided to setup a venture as big as a Westside Store. Choosing this business offered us the middle path as comparative novices – a retail business with an established and trusted brand who would do all our hand holding while we learnt the ropes. A decently big investment promised decent returns, but the risk factor of putting in big family money, far bigger than what we are used to in service, was a family decision.

Of course, it involved a fair deal of research for several months, including visiting numerous Westside Stores in multiple cities, talking to employees and franchisees of their experiences with the company, studying the profitability of the model etc before we finally took the plunge. Add to that the fact that my family was relocated to Jalandhar, as my wife Navneet was to look after the venture as a working partner in addition to looking after two small kids in an alien environment. I took the backstage when my job took me to Srinagar.

Our next venture was Colonelz SharpShooterz, that was expressly setup with the vision to put Jalandhar on the shooting map of India, and hopefully the world. I was lucky to be guided by good people in the business, who were associated with the top body of the shooting sport, the NRAI. Today we have a host of members who have played at the National Shooting competitions, as well as numerous ones who have participated in the Indian team trials. We have lost count of the number of medals won in district and state championships.

Along the way we got to know additional avenues as this business moved on to infrastructure projects making shooting ranges, gyms etc, sale of equipment and so on. It was a matter of spotting an opportunity, and taking our chances. In our very first army tender for a shooting range, we took on the industry bigwigs as we had nothing to lose, and won. The formula was simple – provide good quality and genuine guidance, and keep your rates reasonable. Here I used my military knowledge of the procurement processes to guide a lot of young officers deal with projects in the right manner so they don't get cheated by commercially oriented vendors due to their lack of knowledge on the subject. And how not to get scared of the IFAs of this world.

Colonelz SharpShooterz currently has numerous completed projects under its belt, including the Western Command Shooting Node, Vajra Shooting Range, Kota Shooting Range, Sainik School Coorg, Top Private Schools at Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Gonda (UP), Lovely Professional University, to name a few.

The main executant of these projects is also a veteran, retired Subedar Major Parveen Kumar.

Along the way there were learning curves in the form of an interesting Online Freelance writing business, a Vermicompost plant etc which helped to hone the skills of quality, and public dealing.



(Premium Shooting Range Construction)

Ranvir: What were the challenges faced in this entrepreneurial journey?

Jasdeep: It is not always a smooth journey, and you have to learn to take the rough with the good. As a Vermicompost manufacturer, the most difficult part was pitching this low-priced product to small shopkeepers who couldn't care less. In the end I had to give it up, as I found the effort not worth the monetary return. It also made me realise that given my background as an officer, I was unable to bring myself down to the level of prolonged sales talk with small time shopkeepers and nursery owners for too long.

Another major difficulty is **getting money out of people**. While we in the Armed forces are very upright about our financial dealings, the civil world is exactly opposite. People will delay payments, even deny them on the slightest pretext, and you would be left wondering why. Frauds abound, and people are after your money. Take it as a fact – Faujis are suckers for trusting people, and you will find people taking advantage of your trust. So the lesson is to be very judgemental of anyone asking you money, be miserly in your finances, and prefer advances and cash over credit any day. Learn to play the game as the civilian world plays it.

Which brings us to the next challenge of **ethics** – is it right to use your contacts to get work done to favour you? The civil world thrives on contact usage, and people go all out to cuddle up to officials and get their work done. It is something I could never do as an upright officer, and I find it even more difficult now that I am a veteran and a businessman. The only way out is to be fair and truthful in your dealings, and hope like hell the man in the chair responds well to your support. Be as helpful as you can to serving brethren, and maybe it will go a full circle one day. Alternatively, choose a line that does not require you to mollycoddle anyone, such as retail with a good brand, or education.

Corruption is another major issue in the civil world, and you have no choice but to get used to it. It goes against our very nature, but there is little choice. You learn to deal with it on the job.

Ranvir: What were the challenges faced in this regard? How did you overcome these challenges?

Jasdeep: I will break them down in these categories:

Financing the project – While the general advice of any setup is to partly finance your business with your own money, and use a loan to finance the balance so you can use it to ward off taxes, we took a different approach. Being first timers in the line of almost every new business we setup, we preferred to use family money ab-initio. As a result we were free from the pressure of performance in the initial years of the business when it was finding its feet. Now as we look towards expansion, a loan is definitely on the cards, as we are now more confident of the financial aspects. Go for a project that you can comfortably afford. Use the money you earn to expand in due course of time.

Requirement of a Mentor – Being novices in a new field when we set up Westside, there was little or practically no domain knowledge available with us. So we took a two-pronged approach. One was to have a well-established, close family relative as an overall mentor to guide us in the nuances of dealing with the business aspects, without any personal interest. My uncle, a well-established entrepreneur himself at Hyderabad, played that very important role. Second was taking up a franchisee of a well-established brand, as compared to setting up our own line, which helped us learn the ropes from Company experts in the field. Once the basics are learnt and experience gained, you can always step out and start something new even if unrelated, like we did with our 10m Shooting project. Here again, being a greenhorn project, we limited our initial expenses to own savings, and managed projects on a case-to-case basis by taking an overdraft facility from the bank.

Dealing with Failure – Everyone who takes up his own journey in the world of business, has to be prepared to fail. It sounds good to hear the advice of a 'backup plan', but it doesn't always work that way in the real world. The one that works is 'Don't keep all your eggs in one basket', and 'Keep one foot on ground'. Maybe I'm the 'low risk' types, but that's been my guiding principle all along, and I've managed to keep my head above water so far.

Do keep some reserves. You never know when you might need them. Lockdown is the perfect example. Businesses are fighting for mere survival. Do you pay salaries to keep your workers loyal, or do you keep some of that money to finance your next project? It's a catch 22 situation. Reserves help.



(Army Officers Shooting Team Practising at Shooting Node)

Ranvir: How do you find your entrepreneurial journey so far? Any regrets?

Jasdeep: I won't rate myself as the typical picture of a true blood, risk taking entrepreneur, who goes all out to peruse his dreams without caring for the money, which supposedly inevitably follows when you follow your hobby. At least that's what they claim. I could never bring myself to take so much risk, and have preferred to follow the middle path.

To mitigate the risk, most of my businesses were run by my wife Navneet who handled the various ventures with finesse, while I provided necessary support during my breaks from service. Aim was that there should be no problems keeping our home hearth burning with the monthly salary. When I finally quit, we already had a reasonable income going to support our family expenses, and we were able to now start working on expanding our horizons.

Regrets? Well, for the failures I've had, there could have been better decision making, or more hard work, or detailed analysis, that would've probably turned them around. But then each day is a learning process, each venture an education.

An Online writing venture that serves the entire world remains a pipe dream. Today I look back and see people with two/three years' experience creating wonders, and I sometimes feel – I had this going beautifully way back. Wanted to take it forward, but couldn't sustain it - never got around to actually setting up a website or a company.

But then, you win some, you lose some.

At times I feel I'm not aggressive enough – could've achieved much more with a more focused, and visionary approach. Hopefully however, with gradual growth, I expect to be able to get a multi-source income by the time the rest of my coursemates superannuate another 6-8 years from now, and retire alongside them. And I won't mind not getting the OROP!

Ranvir: What are your future plans going forward?

Jasdeep: I have the following in my plans:

Organised Retail: Looking at adding one or more small, and large format stores in the near future. Plans are finally in place, hope to get them going even post COVID19.

Education (Hospitality): With my brother, looking at 50 hotel management institutes in next two years, 100 in next four. Franchising is the way ahead, by creating a win-win situation for all. An institute at Karnal, our first in Haryana, is on the verge of completion and should start once lockdown is over. Also look at expanding our in-situ courses, in which trained chefs go to the location of the client, and provide expert training right in the client's backyard.

Shooting & Sports: Looking at expanding in the field of sports events, range management, sports products sales etc. Also looking at expanding the horizons in the infrastructure setup segment, to venture into combat shooting ranges setup besides the sports projects we are already doing. For this research and prototype work is already on. I'm also looking at partnering with the right person to support me in this, and my first preference remains a passionate ex-Armed forces person. We understand each other better.

Property & Farming: Manage all legal issues related to our family properties well, so as to try and reach some resolution. Also set up the farm well enough for it to self-sustain itself, at the very least.

Ranvir: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous entrepreneurial journey. Can you share a few from your experience?

Jasdeep: Yes, and would definitely love to share them. These are:

HR matters. A lot. Business thrives on human skills. If you have a great team member, keep him or her with you, even if at times it may mean a bit of pampering. You wouldn't like to spend months and years training a person, only to have him walk out on you in the end. By the way, be prepared for far, far less loyalty than that you got from your soldiers.

Keep one foot on the ground. Try setting up something on the side while you are still working. The internet and mobiles of today offer amazing connectivity, and there's a huge amount of work you can do in your spare time and leaves. It requires more effort, but then that's a price you'll have to be willing to pay for your resettlement. Your

spouse of course has to be very supportive, as it is on his/her basis that you would be able to actually do this at all.

Use your military training to your advantage. Delegation of duties, trust in your subordinates (but not blind trust), working in an organised manner, talking to your staff about their problems and families helps. People in the civil are not used to such niceties, and it helps build some bonds.

Keep your brains and time available for the process of thinking ahead, and beyond what are strictly routine, day affairs in any company outlet. As opposed to your sitting in one place and making it work extremely well, take a step backward, and let a manager run it for you. Occupy and use your own mind at a strategic level.

Plan for emergencies. Always keep a decent amount as backup, locked away from day to day requirements. Avoid the urge to use this backup to tide over short term crises.

Farming may be worth it only if you're not planning to take it up as a full time occupation, or have a tract of land that's fairly large. At least that's true for the routine variety of crops. A lot of us have noble thoughts of setting up a small fruit grove, or some fancy farming project, which is fine if you are planning it just as a hobby. In my experience, farming in India is basically hand to mouth, that too if you are lucky. You will get heaps of satisfaction growing crops of all varieties and watching them reach final selling stage. But you may not make very good money.



(Rice crop harvesting in progress)

The only way perhaps is to go into a very specialised field of intensive farming, such as dairy, or hydroponics, or green house cultivation. These are NOT easy mind you as I understand and require 24x7 hard work, but I'm not truly qualified to comment on these as I've personally never tried them out. A word of caution here – explore the demand, and the actual markets these are sold in, and get your agreements in place before you plant even a single seed.

Ranvir: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up entrepreneurship?

Jasdeep: *Why quit the best job in the country Army if you have to take up another job? Step out on your own, and make the world your oyster.*

There is opportunity for all, and it comes in all size of packages. Whatever be your risk taking capacity, your investment potential, or your degree of comfort with the world of business... there's something you can find for yourself. You just have to locate the right mix for yourself. Self and Navneet intend sharing our experiences in retail in the form of a small guide-book for novices, which hopefully should be helpful to people just starting in that line.

You as an **Armed Forces veteran have qualities that no other business owner has** – self discipline, setting-up, and achievement of targets, organised way of working, ability to do deep research before taking a decision etc. Go ahead and take a chance. Running a business is not rocket science.



(in-situ Cookery Training Program: Training of Chefs and Ladies)

If budget is a constraint, look around for freshers, who will settle for much less. Of course you have to work a bit harder to compensate. Better still, work with a mix of experienced people and freshers – that way you'll be able to shed some of the burden.

Financial alacrity is comparatively more difficult to find in people, but the same can be acquired. Or simply hire expert advice – there's plenty available in the market.

Entrepreneurship comes in various shapes and sizes – mine is, part beaten path to keep one foot on ground (Westside, NFI Educations, Raymond's), and part expeditionary in nature (Colonelz SharpShooterz, Vermicompost, Online Freelancing).

Ranvir: Thanks a lot, Jasdeep. It was really enriching to hear you and interact with you. There is definitely a lot to gather from your experience.

Jasdeep: Its been a pleasure for me too. For the Forces Network members, I am always available for any kind of support I may be able to provide. This is a unique network of like-minded individuals, who actually help each other selflessly without a profit motive. Over the past few years, I have learnt a lot from the experience of people in this wonderful network, as well as gained from the connections. On my side, I've guided a fair number of members in setting up of shooting ranges and gyms, guidance of children taking up shooting, getting corporate discounts on a lot of items ex Westside, setting up a retail business, property related matters, training of chefs, setting up a hotel management franchisee, and so on. I only hope I can continue to be of some positive support to anyone willing to step out and take the plunge.



Lt Col Ranvir Singh, a product of Rashtriya Military School and an alumnus of National Defence Academy, was commissioned into 2nd Battalion The Bihar Regiment in June 1988. He has served in all terrains of the country, held appointments at Armoured Brigade HQ, Area HQ, and HQ ARTRAC, and finally hung his boots in Jan 2009. Thereafter, as a Corporate Warrior, he has immensely contributed for last 10 years to recognised organisations like IL&FS Technologies Ltd, National Institute of Bank Management of RBI, and MMTC-PAMP India Pvt Ltd. He has a keen interest in the field of ever evolving Information Technology, and a flair for writing. He can be reached at ranvirsm@gmail.com

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Don't get distracted. Never tell yourself that you need to be the biggest brand in the whole world. Start by working on what you need at the present moment and then what you need to do tomorrow. So, set yourself manageable targets."

Jas Bagniewski, Co-Founder of Eve Sleep

**Everyone can tell you
the **risk**. An entrepreneur
can see the **reward**.**

Expatriate Interview

In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

BY BIDISHA PANDEY

Col Sameer Chaturvedi (Retd) joined the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles after passing out from IMA in Dec 1987 and served in the Indian Army for 20 yrs before switching to the corporate domain in 2008. He served in a combat environment in Jammu and Kashmir in an anti-terrorist role and has been conferred with the prestigious Sena Medal (Gallantry). In his corporate tenure, Col Sameer has worked in diverse fields ranging from Operations, Customer Relations, Business Development, Organisation Building and Logistics. He is currently based in Lagos, Nigeria as Regional CTO at Globacom.



Bidisha: How has your corporate journey been so far?

Sameer: I have been in the corporate world for approximately twelve years now and I must say the journey so far has been quite exciting and full of challenges. Initial few years were a bit tough wherein one had to 'unlearn' all that one had learnt in the Army, the most important being to shed the baggage we carry with ourselves and restart all over again. But as long as one is ready to continue to learn and adapt and work with the values we imbibe while in Services, we are better than the best in our respective field of operations. It has been continuous learning and I guess one needs to update and upgrade constantly to remain competitive in their respective fields.

Bidisha: What are the major projects you have been involved in?

Sameer: The journey for me has been long, varied and challenging. I started to look after a manufacturing plant in a small industrial town, Baddi, in Himachal Pradesh close to Chandigarh. I was then shifted to Delhi as part of the Defence team of ACME Telepower, much to my disliking though. But this was a very challenging part of my career as we were supposed to develop and construct accommodation for the troops at an altitude of above 12000 feet in North Sikkim. Having no background in civil engineering I was involved in the construction of prefabricated shelters for the Army. And finally, I was sent to Bangladesh, from ACME Telepower, to build and maintain telecom sites for Airtel. This again was very challenging as one had to learn the dynamics of Project management. Here I would like to mention that Col Iqbal Singh, Founder Forces Network, and a dear friend, had told me to do the PMP course which at

that time I did not, things probably would have been much easier but then I had to learn the hard way. We were looking after the passive infrastructure for Airtel in Bangladesh. Thereafter, I got an opportunity in Nigeria and I am here since Jul 2013.

Bidisha: What are the major challenges you faced in your journey so far and how did you overcome those challenges?

Sameer: I think the major challenge we from the Defence Forces face, especially the Officers from Combat Arms, I feel is the process of 'Unlearning' and to shed the baggage we carry along, the sooner we lighten our shoulders from the weight of our rank and adjust to the new environment, it enables us to perform better than those who have been in the field before us. I am very certain that the training and qualities we imbibed in the Defence Forces enabled me to meet up and overcome the challenges I experienced in the Corporate world.

Bidisha: Did you have a vision in mind as to what you would like to do post your career in the Armed Forces?

Sameer: Well, it just happened and I took the decision to leave. We all have our reasons. I decided to leave as I did not make it to the next rank, I firmly believe there is more to life than to always look back and probably had I continued, I always would have been looking back in life. Having said this, I will recommend that anyone who is planning to leave should take a couple of years to prepare himself for the Corporate world, especially in today's challenging environment wherein the technology is very quickly taking over, I strongly feel one should equip himself before embarking on untested waters.

Bidisha: What were the major highlights of your tenure in the Indian Army?

Sameer: The Indian Army - unmatched and the best organisation. We all are trained and we strive to be part of a combat mission. I was one of the lucky ones to have had served with my unit in the combat environment in Jammu and Kashmir in an anti-terrorist role. This was the most satisfying period of my career in the Army. We could execute what we had trained for and our Paltan got the Unit Citation without suffering any fatal casualties during the tenure. Nothing can be more satisfying for a Soldier to bring back all the team members alive. Most of our men and Officers were award winners, and I too was conferred with Sena Medal gallantry.

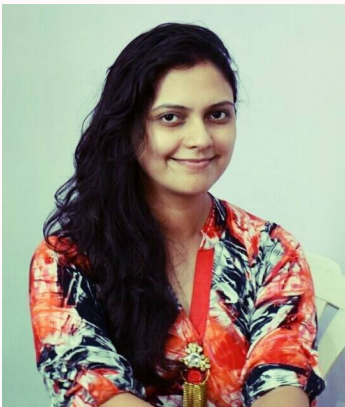
Bidisha: What would be your advice to officers preparing for the transition to the corporate world, especially if they wish to pursue a career in the operations domain?

Sameer: It is a big step in one's life and one should think it over deliberately. At the outset, anyone planning to take the plunge and join the Corporate world should give himself a couple of years to identify what field one would like to join and then prepare himself for it. We have been trained for operations and there is nothing we cannot achieve. We bring a lot of value to an organisation with our inherent qualities of honesty, sincerity and result oriented approach. This can at least give us the first opportunity and then of course it depends on how one has prepared for the challenging world of the Corporate.

Bidisha: What would be your advice to officers who plan to move to a new country post-retirement? What are the major factors one should keep in mind for the same?

Sameer: This is a difficult question to answer as everyone has different requirements and situations may not suit everyone. I believe that in case one is getting an opportunity to work as an expat, one should take it up as it provides a lot of financial stability for sure. One should be very careful taking a decision to settle down in a new country at this stage unless the Officer has already settled his family members and more importantly has something to do himself, otherwise it could prove to be very frustrating in case nothing materialises.

Authored by Bidisha Pandey, based on interaction with Col Sameer Chaturvedi, online and through e-mails.



Bidisha Pandey is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site www.sassyweekender.com

The loneliness of the expatriate is of an odd and complicated kind, for it is inseparable from the feeling of being free, of having escaped.

Adam Gopnik

 quote fancy

Guest Speak

THROUGH INTERACTION BY RANVIR SINGH

Bhawani Singh Shekhawat is the CEO of The Akshaya Patra Foundation, Europe – the world's largest meals program of its kind and a highly respected NGO globally. An alumnus of Military School Belgaum, he is London based and is an active mentor, a speaker on the London Bureau of speakers and Board Advisor. He is also a co-founder of The Adhyayan Foundation and serves as mentor to start-ups as well as faculty in leading business schools around the world. Bhawani previously served in Global and Regional leadership roles with Coca-Cola, Reckitt Benckiser and Nielsen where he was CEO, Regional CEO and also Global Director. He is passionate about Leadership, Strategy and Innovation and enjoys '70s Bollywood music, cricket and long walks in the countryside. He can be reached at singh.bhawani@gmail.com



Innovation and Leadership in a Post Covid World

Introduction

Perhaps it would not be an understatement that we are living in unprecedented times and naturally, unprecedented times call for unprecedented leadership. We have never prepared for where we are today and our response to this unprecedented pandemic both at an individual, institutional and organisational levels has been alarming and perhaps far from ideal. I believe this is a great opportunity to really retrospect and take stock of how we got here, and what can we learn from a leadership perspective that makes our collective lot better.

I often look at Leadership and Innovation as a symbiotic journey because leaders need to be innovative. Innovative leaders respect the three axes of Purpose, Insight, and Pursuit but then they also travel this journey with unabashed humility, deep compassion and acute responsibility.

So, the following are my reflections and as reflections go, they are deeply personal. My attempt here is to present a framework which is anchored in some eternal truths about leadership. These eternal truths are by definition timeless and multi contextual. We can consider applying these at work, at home, at play and perhaps everything in between.

Leadership is not About the Leader

It is not a cliché that a leader is only as good as those that follow. And because it seems like a glamorous aspiration, Leadership is often confused with a position or a

title. It shouldn't be. Leadership is only an earned privilege and hence by definition is an honour and not a position. Often this subtle yet important fact is forgotten, and we end up referring to a leadership position in itself as an aspiration. Ask a young manager his aspiration – he wants to be the CEO and a young officer aspires to be a General. These become aspirational pursuit of a position or a title. Truly Purposive leaders on the other hand, exemplify and execute their role in a manner that they *live their leadership* and not just display and dispense with their title. How about leaders being real and authentic and not simply performing robots doing what their position demands? The truth about one's leadership lies in the *authenticity* of the leader and not just in his *authority*. Today Jessica Arden, the Premier of New Zealand demonstrates such authenticity far better and far more effectively than many leaders in our midst. A leader inspires with authenticity. And hence a leader needs to innovate to inspire with *Purpose* first and foremost and only contextually leverage or activate their position if required.

A leader wears a title lightly and is an author of exemplary practice and not just an authority figure. This requires a deep sense of humility alongside a deep sense of responsibility. If you cannot live and die for others, then your leadership will be vacuous, inept, short-lived and without any meaningful legacy.

Leadership and Systems Thinking

Purposive leaders respect the value of systems. Systems by design are interdependent and not necessarily interoperable. Each entity in the system has a value and catalyses excellence for other entities. Nature around us is perhaps the best example of a well designed 'system'. Leaders need to understand the natural systems of people, processes and practices they are a part of. If they do not understand the systemic interdependence therein, they will be often be misled into deploying a "spray and pray" approach or can succumb to 'decisions by committee' as a default. A leader must understand the systemic inter-dependencies and in so doing must be able to identify the critical areas that need support, reinforcements and redevelopment. Often leaders succumb to myopic thinking and belief systems reflected in "my domain is different" – a cardinal sin in my view. Of course, there will be differences in contexts and domains but there are always underpinnings of a unifying system in all contexts. A leader needs to understand the nature of the underpinning system a lot more than the nature of their business, enterprise or command.

Systems thinking requires one to have deep respect for balancing and reinforcing processes. It requires the tenacity from a leader to learn from iterative processes and to perfect them when these are not mission critical so that the team's intuition is sharpened to deploy them with speed in an emergency. Systems thinking requires you to believe that one must fix the roof when the sun is shining!

Leadership and Design Thinking

Our world is a world of design. It is way more than an accidental occurrence via a

sonic boom. Design thinking is a practice that requires one to pay close attention to underlying insight which help develop foresight. Sadly, most leaders spend a lot of time on hindsight. Hindsight can educate, but insight informs, and foresight allows one to act with courage. The discipline of Design thinking equips leaders to engage deeply with insight so that they can move not just beyond myopia and notions but also towards an uncomfortable reality. An uncomfortable reality is one where impossibility seems like the operative phrase. And leaders must purposively work towards creating a reality that others did not have the courage to even imagine let alone design. And to engage with design thinking requires one to have deep compassion, a sound but non-judgemental moral compass and an acute sense of serving the system one designs. It takes great courage and fortitude from a leader to exemplify this passion and then to truly lead purposively from the front. One needs to be able to ensure that good ideas are sources, almost in a Kaizen like manner, found everywhere and when synthesised into working pilots and versioned effectively can then be deployed at scale. From a leader, this requires courage, tenacity, and a quiet mind.

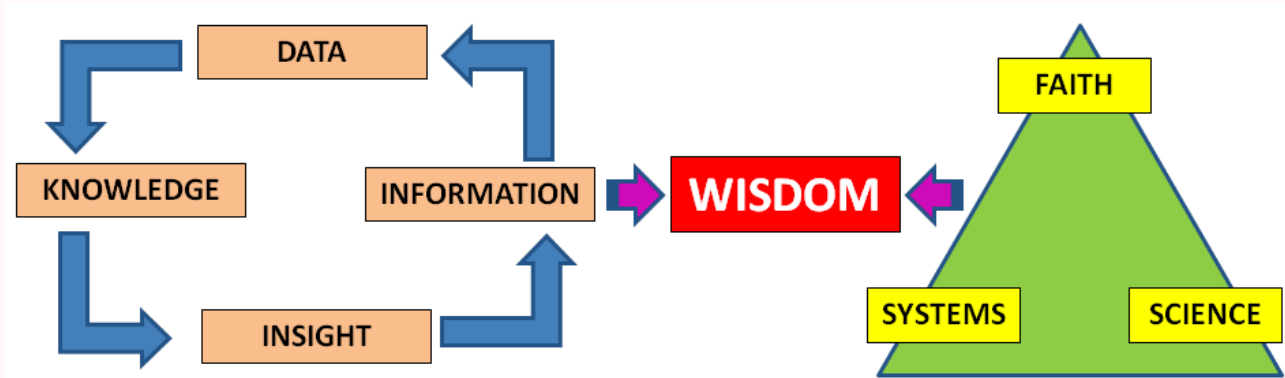
Leadership is not easy and certainly not for everyone. The world needs leaders, followers as well as challengers. And there is an opportunity for each of these three to achieve greatness. But those who aspire for Leadership must value the fact that it takes a lot of hard work, humility, discipline, tenacity and gratitude to be able to effectively serve. These traits are not common and hence authentic leadership is hard to find. The world seeks it, needs it because we all want to get better and do better. The current pandemic offers a great opportunity to those of us who do not have to 'suffer the slings and sorrows of outrageous fortune'. It allows us to think deeply so that we can act purposively.

Leadership and Wisdom

One of the most common challenges that leaders face is related to situations, particularly in systems governed by hierarchy, where there is *public agreement and private disagreement*. Many a times there are situations where people who are important in the overall system dynamics never find the courage or the expression to voice their point of view amongst others but instead would freely express reservations in water cooler conversations. Why does this happen? It is not just because of the leader being directive or authoritarian. The leader could be the most inclusive leader and yet this may happen. The leader simply is not sensitised or I daresay wise enough to see this dichotomy. For a leader could be beset with myopias that cloud understanding and inhibit wisdom. I have often found that there is more information in the world than knowledge, more knowledge than insight and more insight than wisdom.

In our world today we are facing an abundance of data, but data by itself is not valuable. It is like air – without which we will not be able to survive but we still need to learn to breathe and oxygenate. Data needs to be synthesised into knowledge which can make the data “speak”. Then again knowledge itself isn't power. You will see a lot

of highly knowledgeable leaders acting incongruously to their purpose because they haven't really distilled knowledge and information into insight. Insight is rare, it is around us but is not accessed by all. Insight is that little gem, that little 'ahaa' moment which once we experience, you cannot un-experience. It transforms the way we see our opportunities and challenges. Leaders need to pursue this elusive insight almost like diamond miners.



But then there is more insight than wisdom. The crucial bridge for leaders to cross here is their own ability to act, and commit their teams to act, on the insight and not gut, whim or fancy. The discipline of act on the insight also polishes instinct and a leader can create the institutional ability to embark on a path of wisdom. Wisdom is not what one acquires sitting under a tree, it only manifests when one relentlessly acts not on whim or fancy but on deep and distilled insight. When I was much younger a very dear friend left me with a quotation that I hold very close to my heart and one that inspires me every day.

***Inspiration is apt to come only to those who act, waited for,
it usually keeps on waiting - Allen Tucker***

Leaders can provide inspiration only if they have distilled wisdom. And that requires them to be on a journey of iterative action fuelled by insight and not just propelled by data.

However, there is more to this. One of my earlier points in this essay was that Leadership is a journey of Purpose. But what defines and drives purpose? I have often thought that those who are blessed to experience the triangulation of Faith, Science and Systems access their purposive Ikigai sooner and in a more cogent manner. Faith, not necessarily dogmas of religion, allows you to live with an attitude of gratitude. An attitude of gratitude unlike the attitude of entitlement allows one to be a better listener, a better collaborator and more importantly a better assessor of merit. Faith helps us become better people. When Faith combines with systems and science, it becomes supremely powerful as a propellant. My current organisation The Akshaya Patra Foundation, is a living example of this and it is my belief that this triangulation has helped the organisation achieve unprecedented success and live its purpose.

Wisdom after all, provides that wonderful interface for a leader's purposive journey fuelled by insight and inspired by action. It is hard work, and leaders work for this to

be hard-wired. It takes effort, tenacity and tremendous discipline. No wonder leaders aren't just born, they are made too!

Leaders are Contextually Seamless

And this is where the whole crux lies. There is no one template for a leader and studying leadership traits around the world and in multiple, highly varied contexts, I have learnt that if there is one unifying trait that separates consistently effective and happy leaders from others is their ability to be contextually seamless. Inspirational leaders who leave an amazing legacy live their values seamlessly. For them there are no work and life compartments. If they advocate honesty and integrity to their children around the dinner table, they live the same values at work and play. If they ask their children to work hard, they will not cheat on their taxes or with the authorities. If they advocate discipline to those they care about, they also act with discipline when no one is watching. This seamlessness unleashes amazing energy and ability which in-turn infuses authenticity in a leader's words and deed. I am often asked how some people can come across as more authentic and credible than others. Is there a secret sauce? There is. I believe that being authentic is not an intellectual pursuit but rather an outcome of living a life that on the one hand is purposive and on the other is "seamless in values". Such authenticity creates inspiration beyond words and eliminates scepticism for those who receive these words. And even more importantly perhaps authenticity empowers the leader with courage, conviction, tenacity and a quiet mind.

Leadership is a tough journey and not for all. The blessed and the privileged get to serve as leaders. It is a journey after all and not one that is engulfed in bands of clichés but a pursuit that is infused with ingenuity, purpose, gratitude and a deep desire to selflessly serve.

And that is why leaders are a rare breed and we are currently facing a leadership crisis on many fronts. It is a worthy journey in these unprecedented times to embark upon and appreciate those who are on it. We are hearing of a Post- Covid 're-set' of attitudes and behaviours and like Winston Churchill said we should "we should never waste a good crisis". This is as good a time as any for us to bring our very best being to bear and lend our shoulder to making the world a better place.

For that is what leaders do!

A LEADER IS ONE WHO KNOWS THE WAY,
GOES THE WAY,
AND SHOWS THE WAY.
- JOHN C. MAXWELL

Women Power

Spouses of Defence Officers have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such spouses of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

BY RANVIR SINGH

Ms Shreya Sharan Pawar, is an entrepreneur, an online marketing strategist, and a business coach who empowers creative women entrepreneurs to build a brand, market it on social media, and create a life they love. She is an Army wife who runs two businesses on the go as she travels across the country with her husband! She can be reached through mail on connect@shreyasharanpawar.com. Her Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/shreyasharanpawarofficial/ and her website is www.shreyasharanpawar.com.



Ranvir: Please tell us about yourself and what you do, and how you started.

Shreya: I look at myself as an Army wife, entrepreneur, online marketing strategist and a coach for creative women entrepreneurs and freelancers in India. Pretty much in that order too! I started my first venture - Burst of Happyness (www.burstofhappyness.in) - a niche brand of vegan, handmade bath and body products in 2012 and started my business coaching vertical two years ago (www.shreyasharanpawar.com). I met my husband, Yogesh, when I was 19 years old and got married while pursuing my MBA. I declined a high-paying corporate job and now, I live the life of an Army wife, travel, study, create new content and manage my small business on the move!

For the business woman in me, the best description would be that I am an accidental entrepreneur. That is because there wasn't any eureka moment that kick started it all. In reality it just happened. To trace it back now, my biz journey began in 2010 when I became hyper on being unable to find any truly natural products to suit my sensitive skin. All I could see was loads of pretentious stuff from FMCG conglomerates and a few bits from a sadly disorganised cottage industry. Realising that there must be many out there resigned to make-do with pseudo "natural" products, I rolled up my sleeves and got down to learning all that there was to soap-making. From this began 'Burst of Happyness (BOH)', with its line of handmade goodies - natural, vegan and free of preservatives which now operates from a workshop in Pune. BOH has got featured on numerous portals like YourStory, NatGeo Traveller, Chaipaani, Indian Express etc

Ranvir: What is your vision behind starting your micro business?

Shreya: As I mentioned, I didn't start it all with a much haloed vision or a Big Hairy Audacious Goal or something. It was just a call for self-help of a very frustrated person. So the beginning of the business just happened with my experimenting with stuff in my hostel room. It is then that I had to answer questions from family and friends about where was I going with my life. I was not able to provide any clear response to that and remained caught in the timeless illusion of eternity, which is the curse of being so young.

Many years of contemplating and ups and downs gave me a purpose for my own efforts. The first few years of being a solo entrepreneur were very difficult and I wanted to give up many, many times. Thankfully, I found mentors who guided and advised me and helped me grow. That's when I decided, that I will give back to the community once I get my own stuff sorted and put my biz on track!!! So, I learnt, I implemented, I made mistakes, I corrected them, I relearned, and now I want to teach others who have big dreams in their heart but lack the know how!

I believe that money is the most important part of any business, but for me its not the end product. Instead, how many lives do I enable is the ultimate yardstick of success of a business. That my very lofty or holistic goal – 1 lakh enabled woman entrepreneurs.

Ranvir: What challenges have you faced? How did you overcome them, and what are your future plans?

Shreya: The biggest challenge for most, if not every business, is the real world dynamics. No B school teaches the navigation through the actual world of MSME business environment in India. There will never be a lack of a great business idea, of funds, or skilled persons. It's however the lack of hygiene of doing business and then scaling it to a sustainable or rewarding level.

I come from a family of people with the service background and was the first entrepreneur in my family, so basically I am a "self-taught" entrepreneur and learnt everything through trial and error. Another peculiarity of being an "army-wifentrepreneur" is that I had to keep my business in sync with my husband's postings and annual leaves. So, my entire business model is "online" and is ready to pack and move at a short notice!

My future plan is to develop a learning hub for womenpreneurs and offer multiple courses on social media marketing, online marketing, email marketing etc. I have also started a YouTube channel to offer business and marketing advice, and can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/c/shreyasharanpawar>

Ranvir: What advise do you have specially for the spouses of defense officers who desire or aspire to be similarly independent.

Shreya: My first suggestion would be that a "work-from-home entrepreneurship" is

more sustainable in the long run than a job as it gives you the liberty to work on your own terms and in sync with the rhythm of military life. However it should not be looked at as a means to become independent - financially or egoistically. A purpose like that is too materialistic and fraught with taking away happiness instead of enhancing. So there are a few fundamental questions – to do or not to do? If yes then do what? The Hows and whens come much later.



I strongly believe that being a military wife, or otherwise too, you are not in competition with anybody else. It's like golf, only you matter here. Never allow yourself to feel compelled to do something. Follow the dictate of your heart and once decided, then ask the next question – what.

A good business idea should tick a few check boxes. Firstly, doing it must give you joy. It should add to your family happiness and not sacrifice it. And it must **MUST** solve a problem for someone- who will be your customers. A good way to ideate about possible business ventures is to make a list of your strengths, skill, passions, hobbies and experience and then identify who you can help with it??

This will help you zero down a broad business idea which you can convert into a product or a service. For example: You may realize that writing is your passion. You can convert that into multiple service ideas:

Option 1: Content writing for small businesses by offering done-for-you content writing services like product description, press releases, sales copy etc!

Option 2: Ghost writing services for busy authors.

Option 3: Teach content writing

Once you identify your product/service idea you should validate it by offering it for trial via social media and evaluate the need of the market. Tweak your offering by incorporating the feedback received.

This will help you create a strong foundation for your brand. After the “market” approves of your business idea you can start working on your online presence to attract customers and a clients and scale it step by step.

(Based on inputs during interaction with Lt Col Ranvir Singh)

Knowledge Bank

Data Science as a Career

BY VINAY GUPTA

This is the sixth and final part of the six series article on the subject, starting from the Jan 2020 issue of the ForceNeteZine

DSC_6 - Data Science - Education Eco-system

*Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to
change the world - Nelson Mandela*

In this last article of my six article series on Data Science as Career, I will highlight the prevalent educational eco-system for Data Science and the framework to choose suitable training methodology for building your career in Data Science, with special focus to Indian readers.

In my previous five articles, I had begun with the Hype about Data Science field, whether it is a myth or reality and how this hype in the field of Data Science is likely to continue for few more years. Then, in second article, the various aspects of Data Science including the primary domain/components of Data Science skill set and Data Analytics Project Lifecycle were highlighted. Thereafter, in third article the eight skills required by a data scientist to establish in this field were explained. Then in fourth article of the series, five stages of building Data Science career, were explained along with the suggested methodology to achieve the same. Thereafter in the previous article, I had discussed as to how at different age groups the data science career can be built and what are the available options.

Taking this journey further, let's understand our analytics education eco-system.

Last month, I visited my parents at Meerut City. Meerut is a city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is an ancient city, with settlements dating back to the Indus Valley civilisation having been found in and around the area. The city lies 70 km northeast of the national capital New Delhi, and 430 km northwest of the state capital Lucknow. It's predominantly famous for sports good and musical instruments in India. The city is also known as the "Sports City Of India".

In one of the by-lanes, I noticed an A4 size poster written "Starter to Master: Learn R, Python, AI & IoT in 6 weeks, Contact: Mob No. XXXXXXXXXX". I was intrigued not about the content/syllabi but about the duration. As to how can a training Institute teach so many technologies, concepts and algorithms in 6 weeks duration. I called up the mobile number given and the sales girl on the other side promptly noted down my name and brief details and asked me to visit the institute. As I was on vacation and

nothing very significant to do on that day, I quickly agreed to and went to the institute in the evening. The institute was on a main road and had a nice board “BUILD CAREER INSTITUTE”. On entering, I was surprised to see three well laid out classrooms (one each for R/Python, AI and IoT) with digital boards, colourful chairs, Video Projection system, Raspberry Pi & Arduino kits, HTC Vive, Microsoft Hololens and few other self-help IoT kits. I met the Institute Director, Mr Ankush Goyal, a smart young man in 30s. After initial formalities and greetings, I asked him about the business and his concept of education. He told me that the after Y2K (year 2000), the times have never been so good for techies, especially with the knowledge of programming languages and data analysis. Now-a-days, if you are a Computer Science graduate, you might want to consider being a Data Scientist than a simple Web Developer, as it can fetch you 2-3 times higher salary in comparison. In order to do this job switch, one need to learn Data Analytics concepts and do hands-on project. Data Scientist is an acquired skill and once the aspirant acquires the skill his career trajectory transforms to a new level with great scope of growth and high salary.

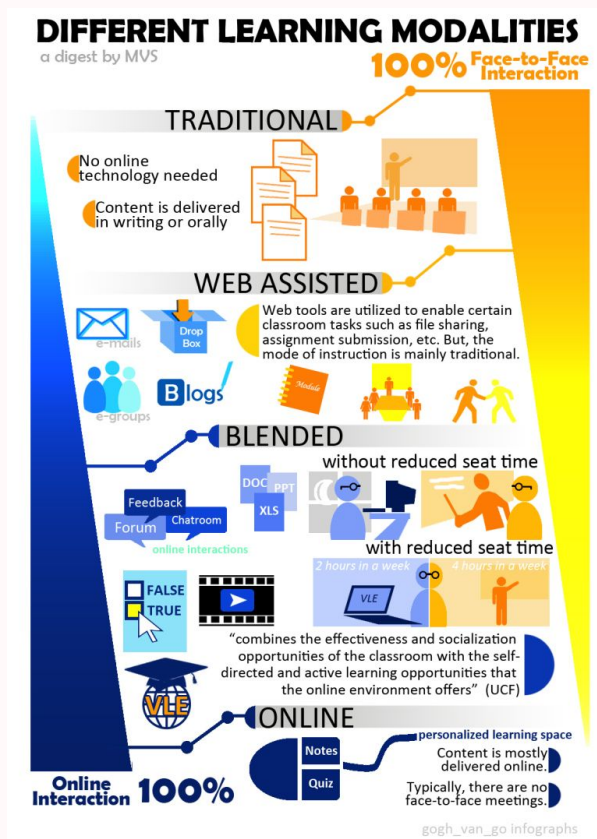
These prospects are driving young and middle aged professionals to switch their careers. So, we have a lot of students coming not only from this city but also from nearby townships and villages. Most of these aspirants are engineers by qualification (BTech or MTech).

Then I asked him about his training plan of transforming “Starter to Master” in six weeks duration. He gave a smile with glint in his eyes, feeling happy that one more customer has been trapped in his smart advertisement. He replied that this is only catchy phrase to attract the youngsters, as everyone wants to up-skill themselves in shortest possible time and with least efforts. While, we are aware that to build the required proficiency at Data Scientist level, it requires at least one year of dedicated efforts but we try to give them the flavour of this journey through the blended learning, participative learning and continuous learning concepts.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear such words and wanted to understand these training concepts in greater details. So, he explained me further that a large number of training institutes provide training on Data Science and Artificial Intelligence using traditional methods, where a trainer delivers lectures and all students are expected to learn at the same pace. This has the age old issue that majority of students don't really grasp the concepts and thereafter they are unable to reproduce in the real life use cases.

Further, a large number of online courses and self-learning modules are available on the internet, but most of these are plagued by low completion rate. Due to professional and family commitments, the aspirants are not able to continue and learn. Further, at times there is a difficulty in understanding certain statistical concepts or algorithms. This discourages them to go further, as they do not have the support of necessary experts.

The Blended learning concept involves integration of online and instructor led



courses. We aim to provide the benefits of classroom learning and convenience of online learning platform in an integrated manner. During the classroom learning, we have limited sessions of blackboard/presentation based teaching. We make the group of 2 or 3 students and ask them to solve the business problems under the guidance of faculty. The learning environment is similar to a corporate office. The interaction with industry experts especially from local sports and music industry, helps us in solving the real business problems by use of data. In addition, we are also forging close partnership with industry leaders such as IBM, Genpact, Tech Mahindra, SAS among others. This helps in building the requisite skill sets in a much earlier time frame.

He also highlighted that Data Analytics by itself may not be disruptive, but combined with Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT), it can be a real force-multiplier. That's why we focus on all the three verticals in a standalone or integrated manner. Showcasing the capabilities of IoT kits, Augmented/Virtual Reality systems alongwith Data analytics makes the whole program very attractive.

I was pleased to know about his views, methodology and approach. I then started thinking about the complex, interwoven, dynamic and also confusing eco-system of Data Analytics Education. Digging deeper, I tried to demystify the various factors/imperatives of Data Analytics Education.

Firstly, let's put some figures to the demand forecast of analytics professionals, which is driving the growth of analytics courses and institutes.

International Data Corporation (IDC) in 2019 had forecasted that spending on AI systems will reach \$97.9 billion in 2023, more than two and one half times the \$37.5 billion that will be spent in 2019. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the 2018-2023 forecast period will be 28.4%. As per McKinsey and Company, almost 70% of businesses shall use AI by 2030.

In addition to AI, Big Data technology in last 5-7 years has been empowering the world. Indeed, there's no denying the fact that companies backed by strong big data capabilities are bound to dominate the markets in the near future. The importance of Big Data doesn't revolve around how much data an organisation has, but with what all they do with it. The combination of Big Data and high powered analytics will enable

managers to accomplish business related transactions, optimise product offerings and assist in smart decision making.

In order to meet the growing demand and exponential growth in adoption of analytics, there has been corresponding increase in the variety and capabilities of the training institutes. The nature of analytics education has drastically evolved over the years and a mix of training models have emerged in the Online and Face-2-Face space to accommodate the changing requirements of learners. Candidates, who wants to build or grow their career in Data Science generally look for course content created by top instructors, with industry and university collaboration to provide a well-rounded analytics education.

Framework for Identifying Suitable Training Options

While there are heaps of information on data science for beginners, what's lacking is a primer on how to choose the right institute that would be meeting your specific requirement. To enable an aspirant to identify the suitable option meeting HIS SPECIFIC NEED AT THAT TIME, I have listed down the following six factors to identify or evaluate the available training options:

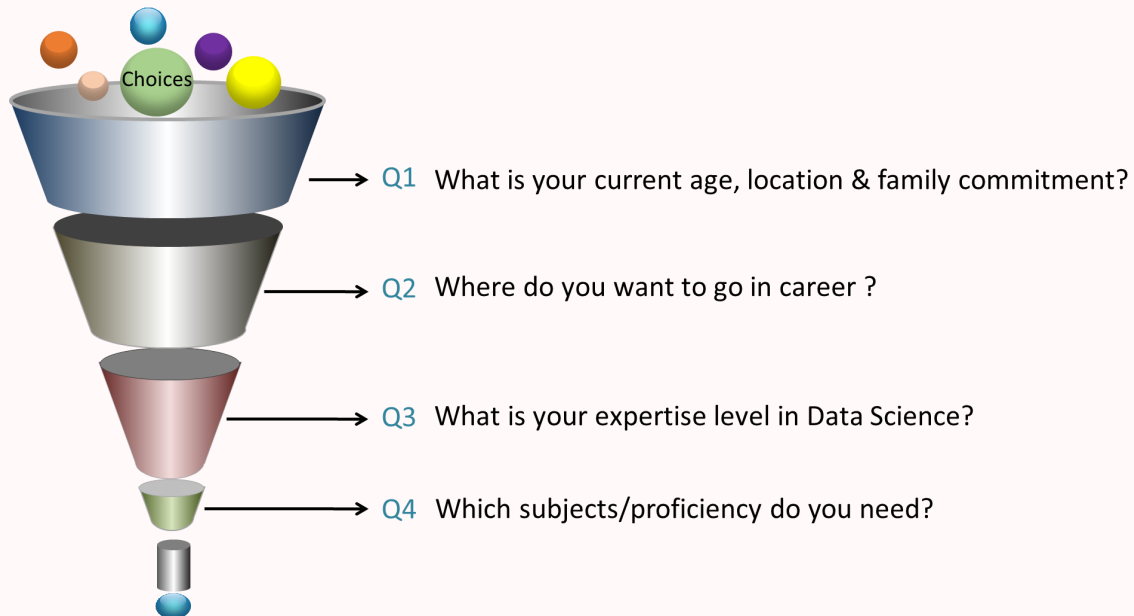


If we look at the above options, the total combinations comes to 2304 (3x3x4x4x4x4). To simplify this predicament, I have made it into a self-help four step process and a table to identify the suitable combination for your specific requirement. You have to choose your specific cell, based on the answers to the four questions to identify the best training methodology.

Four Steps Process for Making the Choice

Step 1 : What is your current age, location and family commitment? This is a very important planning parameter, as it is linked to your social, family and professional commitments. At each stage of life and for each individual, the requirements are

unique. Accordingly, one needs to deliberate and choose the option available for training/up-skilling. During younger age, and before marriage the number of contact hours and practice hours can be higher. Subsequently, with age and increased family pressures, the focus on up-skilling and learning new concepts/technologies become lesser. At this stage passion and self-motivation plays a major role.



Another important factor is your location. In case, good training institutes are not available in your city then you are forced to enrol for online courses. Similarly, proximity to a good training institute enables better logistics and feasibility to take up classroom or Face-2-Face on week days/weekend courses. So, it is important to keep the objective clear and have a mentor to guide you through the maze of abundant paths and options available.

This complex and changing world is being studied by various educational and training institutes and accordingly they have curated their courses. One need to identify the right fit for himself/herself.

Step 2 : Where do you want to go in career? This question is related to current and future job profile. Would you like to build a career in Data Science from level zero or would you like to switch from current role to data analyst/scientist profile or you would like to increase your knowledge and proficiency in certain statistical techniques or emerging Big data technology, which will be helpful in current role.

The journey to each of these milestones will vary with respect to the training content, methodology and duration. Intuitively, the one who is going to build the career in Data science would need more hand-holding, broad based training content and longer duration of training hours.

In case, one is planning to switch the career into the Data science field, then it depends on the past job profiles, educational qualifications, relevant skills level and hours available for Data Science training. However, in case, you are already an expert

in this field and have basic expertise, then in order to learn new technology or statistical concept, the requirement is very focussed, need based and comparatively shorter in duration.

Step 3 : What is your expertise level in Data Science? After choosing to make or build career in Data Science, the first step in choosing the right training need is to identify, where you are at your Data Science learning journey viz. Beginner, Intermediate or Expert.

If you are a Beginner, then it is preferred to have a classroom or Face-2-Face training methodology. It can have on online modules, as well but primarily it should constitute the structured class room learning. Learners with intermediate expertise, can choose to have a Blended Learning Model or Online Learning Model depending on the complexity of the technology or concepts being learnt. Greater the complexity higher the Face-2-Face contact hours.

As regarding the Experts, it would be a very specific technology or application based training required. Thus the nature of training would be dependent mainly on number of hours that can be spared in a week or profile of institution.

Step 4 : Which subjects/proficiency do you need? As we have discussed earlier that the data science field rests on three main pillars, viz. Statistics, Analytics platform/technologies and business domain knowledge. So, depending on the individual aptitude, present skill level and future job requirements, the course modules/subjects are decided. In case, one is looking to become a Business or Data analyst then use cases specific to the particular domain say HR, Marketing, Energy, Banking or Telecom need to be studied.

If there are new machine learning or deep learning algorithms need to be understood and practised, say Convolutional Neural Networks, Gaussian Additive Networks, Learning vector quantization, Ant Colony Optimisation, LSTM (Long Short Term Memory) Networks etc then the training medium and methodology need to be accordingly tailored-for.

Similarly, there are popular and emerging platforms and big data technologies being made available for developers and analysts say Apache Spark, Apache Kafka, Flink, Apache Storm etc. Another classic example is Julia, the new kid on the block. In last few years or so, both Python and R ecosystems have received a lot of attention as open source data science and became wide spread. Accordingly, the programmers and analysts have spent years getting to know all the nooks and crannies of their favoured language.

So, gaining proficiency in the various new technology/platform would require a different approach. This would include combination of classroom offline/online learning, browsing YouTube videos, becoming part of community and attending seminars/workshops.

Based on the above four steps, one may choose the methodology of training, duration of training, content/course module in training and certification requirements.

DATA SCIENCE : CHOICE OF TRAINING METHODOLOGY										
Age (in years)	Training Content	Training Delivery Option								
50 years plus	Data Analysis & Visualisation	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
	ML & DL with coding	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
	Advanced AI Applications	★ 3	★ 3		★ 3	★ 3	★ 2		★ 1	★ 2
	Specific Platform/Technology	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2
40-50 years	Data Analysis & Visualisation	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
	ML & DL with coding	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 1
	Advanced AI Applications	★ 3	★ 3		★ 3	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2
	Specific Platform/Technology	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 2
30-40 years	Data Analysis & Visualisation	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
	ML & DL with coding	★ 3	★ 3		★ 3	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 1
	Advanced AI Applications	★ 4	★ 4		★ 4	★ 3	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2
	Specific Platform/Technology	★ 2	★ 2		★ 2	★ 2	★ 1		★ 1	★ 2
20 -30 years	Data Analysis & Visualisation	★ 3	★ 3		★ 3	★ 2	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
	ML & DL with coding	★ 4	★ 4		★ 4	★ 3	★ 2		★ 2	★ 1
	Advanced AI Applications	★ 4	★ 3		★ 3	★ 3	★ 3		★ 2	★ 2
	Specific Platform/Technology	★ 3	★ 3		★ 2	★ 2	★ 1		★ 1	★ 1
Learning Objective		Start	Switch	Grow	Start	Switch	Grow	Start	Switch	Grow
Expertise Level		Beginner			Intermediate			Expert		
Legend		★ 1	Online self-paced Online by Instructor Classroom @ Training Institute Classroom @ Educational Institute							
		★ 2								
		★ 3								
		★ 4								

I am also including the results of the survey/analysis done by Analytics India Magazine in 2019 on Top 10 Full Time Data science courses in India and Top 10 Data Science Training Institutes in India. Hope this will provide some initial inputs for your further research and selection.

ANALYTICS INDIA MAGAZINE TOP 10 FULL-TIME DATA SCIENCE COURSES IN INDIA - RANKING 2019							
Ranking 2019	Ranking 2018	Course Name	Course Content	Faculty	Student Experience	Others	Average Score
1	1	Post Graduate Diploma in Business Analytics (IIM Calcutta, ISI Kolkata, IIT Kharagpur)	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.90
2	3	Postgraduate Diploma in Data Science (Full-time) (with MAHE by Jigsaw Academy)	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.77
3	2	PG Program In Data Science (Praxis Business School)	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.70
4	4	PGP in Data Science and Engineering (Great Learning)	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.67
5	-	M.Tech Data Science & Artificial Intelligence (NMIMS's Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management & Engineering)	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.57
6	9	PGDM (Big Data Analytics) (Goa Institute Of Management)	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.55
7	-	Leadership Through Analytics And Decision Sciences (T. A. Pai Management Institute)	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.47
8	7	MBA (Data Sciences & Data Analytics) (Symbiosis Centre for Information Technology)	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.45
9	-	MBA Two-Year Full-Time Residential Programme (IFMR Graduate School of Business, Krea University)	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.37
10	8	Graduate Certificate Program in Data Science & Engineering (Big Data & Visual Analytics) (SP Jain School of Global Management)	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.35

ANALYTICS INDIA MAGAZINE		TOP 10 DATA SCIENCE TRAINING INSTITUTES IN INDIA - RANKING 2019					
Ranking 2019	2018	Training Institute	Course Content	Faculty	Student Experience	Others	Average Score
1	1	Jigsaw Academy	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.82
2	2	AnalytixLabs	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.75
3	-	Simplilearn	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.67
4	4	IMS Proschool	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.55
5	6	Edvancer	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.42
6	9	Imarticus Learning	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.37
7	-	Edureka	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.20
8	8	Nikhil Analytics	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.12
9	7	Ivy Professional School	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.07
10	10	Inventateq	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.97

To Summarise:

In the six article series on 'Data Science as a career', I aimed to demystify the various facts, terms, roles and career options in the field of Data Science using Five W's (Why, What, Who, When, Where) and one H (How). To recapitulate, the basic essence of each article is given here:

- [Article 1](#) (Jan 2020 issue) : Why we need to Study Data science ?
- [Article 2](#) (Feb 2020 issue): What to study to acquire Data science skills?
- [Article 3](#) (Mar 2020 issue): Who should study and develop career in Data science?
- [Article 4](#) (Apr 2020 issue): How to build the career graph in the Data science field?
- [Article 5](#) (May 2020 issue): When in your life journey, you should look for relevant data science opportunities?
- [Article 6](#) (Jun 2020 issue): Where should one go to for building the knowledge & skills in Data Science field.

Hope you find this article series informative, relevant and useful.

In the end, I would like to wish each one of the aspirants best of luck and success in their respective journey to realise your dreams.

DISCLAIMER: *The name, location and director of the institute mentioned in this chapter is fictitious and used only to explain the concepts and any resemblance would be purely coincidental.*

Kindly share your comments/inputs/feedback at vinayeme@gmail.com.

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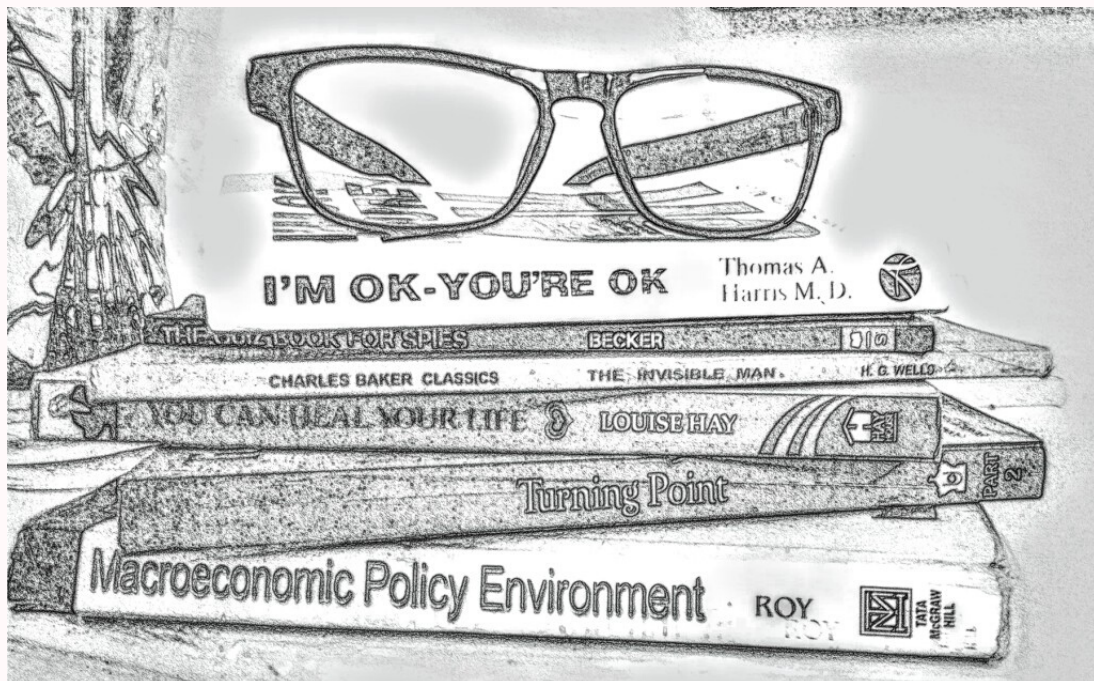


Vinay Gupta served in the Army for 22 years where he established the Centre for Data Analytics in MCME Secunderabad and thereafter developing analytics driven Military Equipment Management system. He has participated as speaker/panelist in various international/national seminars/conferences on Big Data Analytics, Industrial IoT and Renewable Energy. Presently, as Head Data Analytics & Business Excellence of Suzlon Global Services Limited, he is leading the Digitalisation & Analytics Program of wind and solar farm operations. He is a thought leader with 28 years of experience in the field of Predictive Analytics, Big Data Applications, IIoT systems, Telecommunications and Military Equipment.

#Lockdown Learnings: Discover Yourself

BY SANGEETA THAKUR

The Covid-19 pandemic has inadvertently created the need to be unconventional in all our activities. In one jerk all of us have realised the importance of health over money!! The prolonged lockdown has given us time to introspect and have a broader vision of life. Watching the poor unable to even manage one meal for themselves makes us realize the value of food. The formal office work culture is under scanner. Work from home/outsourcing/offering contract-based positions will be some of the new HR strategies. Some of the industries like aviation, travel and tourism, hospitality, entertainment, etc. could take a long time to recover. All those who lost their jobs or are on the verge of losing them, need to up-skill and upgrade themselves in this new world.



The continuous hard work of medical professionals, essential service providers and all the support staff who are in the first line of tackling the outbreak is highly commendable. In the fight to deal with the crisis, many NGOs are supporting the Government bodies and have contributed immensely in finding and filling the gaps in the last mile connectivity. As a social responsibility, many organizations have gone beyond their core industry to support communities. Entrepreneurs in organic farming and agri-business, eldercare services, app-based services, online education, counselling and life coach for stress management etc are the services in demand now.

As we adjust our day-to-day routines to a new normal, making vital changes in the processes and communiqué is proportionately critical. Uncertainty gives us more freedom to embrace the 80/20 thinking and finding that 20% requires experimenting

with new technologies, media platforms, or creative strategies. For example, several retail clients are now using search-data-analytics to promote products that people want right now, rather than waiting for sales data to build a decision.

While it is for businesses to define goals and values with mission statements, most people are now taking time to pinpoint their individual senses of wisdom. People are introspecting to identify the fundamental causes of behaviours, as well as what truly motivates them to make changes. It befits how you make decisions, how you lead, and how you create boundaries. Forcing oneself to focus on core values and how one defines success is an enlightening exercise. This is the perfect time to pause, reconsider positioning, and create a fresh vision of your brand (both personal & business). All this requires a certain degree of courage.



The uncertainty of the situation has influenced how we work- being agile, flexible, and cooperating effortlessly across teams. We must treat this as the starting point for reinvention. The situation is forcing us to think about our values and usual processes. Experiences we never had before to stimulate our creativity like - online concerts, live-streamed art classes, virtual museum tours, shooting videos on phones at home, etc to name a few.

Our favorite restaurants are closed and home deliveries are restricted. As revealed by Google, the record high recipe searches on the internet indicate families cooking restaurant delicacies at home. On the other hand, Zomato and Swiggy forayed into the delivery of grocery and liquor to embrace the change with time. The examples are endless where industries transformed to manufacture sanitizers, ventilators, and PPEs while their core production units remained at a standstill.

To reflect evolving relevance in these unprecedented times, it is essential to sharpen our learning curve. All famous Universities in the world are offering free online courses



or courses at discounted rates. We should take advantage of these offers, pick our choice, and earn some of these laurels and certifications. Retail and supply chain, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, machine learning, health and wellness, cloud computing, and cyber security are some newer areas on the rising trend. Data analytics and IOTs are the lifelines of future industries. Digital marketing has emerged as a powerful gizmo to reach the masses. Blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn, and other social media platforms are rolling as new realities for creative minds to share knowledge and skills.

Let isolation ignite our imagination. Cuddle an investigational cognizance, one shouldn't let a catastrophe go to waste. These are testing times, yes, but it's also the time when the true creative spirit can emerge. As one tackles short-term issues, one should strongly believe in continuing to build long-term competitive advantage. With this in mind, one should invest in IT capability and brand building. It is time to be a fearless, passionate and an everlasting optimist to see a positive impact on the way we move forward!



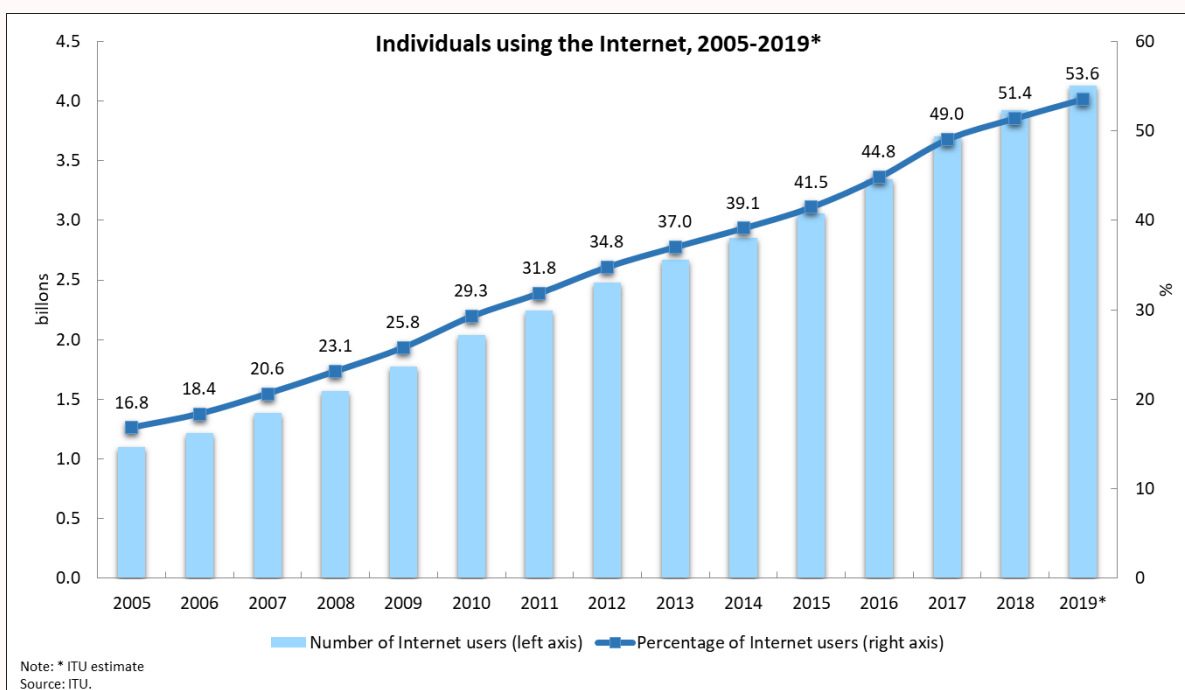
Sqn Ldr Sangeeta Thakur served as Meteorological Officer in IAF. She has 20 years of diversified experience in the field of Weather forecasting, Education and Airport Terminal management. She has been associated with various schools and University of repute. She was part of the operational team for overall upgradation of Ahmedabad Airport as a consultant with Airports Authority of India. She is presently pursuing a course on Strategic Innovation, digital marketing and business analytics from IIT Delhi.

Augmented Reality in Marketing

BY ARCHISHA SINGH

As a child, I still remember when we got our first mobile phone in the family. Besides the rudimentary functions of a basic hand-set, the only compelling feature it was endowed with was the popular retro snake game. I recall how even then everyone in the family was thrilled to bits about the new gadget. Looking back, though we were curious about how the future was going to be evolved with this ever-changing technological innovation, it is astonishing how none of us foresaw the significant impact the technology would have over us in the following years and how it would become an indispensable part of our lives.

In the present day, the use of technology has become ubiquitous to a point that sighting someone unadorned with a technological accessory would seem completely absurd to most of us. Considering the cut-throat rivalry among innumerable companies armed with the finest talent and advanced infrastructure, consumers today are spoiled for choice. According to the estimations by ITU (International Telecommunication Union), it was found that globally the number of internet users increased from 16.8 per cent in 2005 to 53.6 per cent or 4.1 billion people in 2019 (Fig. 1), which is more than half of the world population of 7.8 billion as per the recent statistics by worldometer. This unbridled growth with respect to the utilisation of technology is steering accelerated increase in the investment apportioned to research and development, solely to maximise consumer delight. According to the recent statistics by UNESCO Institute of Statistics, the global spending on R&D reached a record high of almost \$1.7 trillion USD.



(<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>)

When we look around everyone is bedizened with the most advanced gadgets, be it a smart-watch possessing countless complex functions or a wireless earplug which saves

us the trouble of untangling the enmeshed wire or simply just having your entire life in a phone that fits your pocket. As astounding as it sounds, the truth is that slowly but steadily both technology and reality are merging and becoming indistinguishable. With that epiphany, to increase consumer engagement marketers are working their fingers to the bone to find pioneering solutions to couple the real with the virtual world and enhance consumer experience. As an effect, a concept which has emerged is Augmented Reality.

What is Augmented Reality?

Augmented Reality (AR) is exactly what the words suggest, this technology is used to augment reality which means it makes the use of computer-generated images and pictures or perceptual information to overlay or superimpose it on the users' view of the reality, that is, their surroundings. The first functioning form of this technology was called Virtual Fixture which was developed by Louis Rosenberg in 1992 at the U.S Air Force's Armstrong Laboratory. This involved a collaboration of machine and human that facilitated improvement in human performance by overlaying virtual aid on the actual environment of the user which enabled increased productivity.

Thus, it can be said that Augmented Reality primarily enhances the users' experience of the real world by combining the virtual and the real world through real-time interaction. A more comprehensible example to grasp this concept would be the Pokemon-Go gaming application released in 2016 which involved players to explore their physical environment using their mobile phones to catch *Pokemons* and visit *PokeStops* virtually situated at different physical locations. The game became exceedingly popular and successful, it was recognised as the fastest to earn \$100 million and secured the most number of downloads in the first month of release.

AR in Marketing

Presently, although AR is considered to be integrated in Gaming and Entertainment Industry where it has made inroads, however, through years of continuous exploration of the potentiality of the application of augmented reality, its applicability now encompasses myriad of other industries like real estate, fashion, automobile, etc. One such principal function it has forayed in is Marketing wherein businesses are rapidly innovating which is resulting in not only changing the business' stratagem but also completely altering the business environment.

With Augmented Reality still being in its inceptive phase, belligerent marketers are more deeply and thoroughly exploring this area to unveil ground-breaking methods and techniques to effectively satisfy burgeoning demands and exceeding expectations of the consumers. Augmented Reality is applied in Marketing to create a brand awareness with a "wow" factor through increased customer engagement, improved experience and bringing digital to real world. According to a study conducted by Oracle it was found that 61% companies that were able to successfully apply augmented reality to their businesses were able to score higher on the customer

satisfaction metric. Applicability of this promising technology can give way to seamless consumer learning process, assistance in decision-making by minimising errors, help marketeers in increasing customer engagement and devising innovative branding strategies.

Consumer Learning and Decision-Making

When it comes to consumer learning, it is a process through which a consumer obtains information about a specific product or service that increases the consumers' span of knowledge, this acquired knowledge then governs the consumers' buying behaviour in future. At present, the customers avail themselves of learning through numerous traditional methods like reading, surfing the internet, watching advertisements or simply discussing with acquaintances. Augmented Reality, in this respect, would completely revolutionise the entire process of consumer learning.

While purchasing a product or a service a customer takes considerable risks, one such risk is accuracy in judging the suitability of a product. One of the valuable ways in which this technology has been able to help customers is through product visualisation. Using Modiface's augmented reality, Loreal and Sephora, leading personal care and cosmetic companies, have allowed consumers to try-on make-up overlays using their mobile phone's camera in real-time to understand the suitability of the product, preventing the major shortcoming of trial before purchase concerning this industry.



(<https://immersive-technology.com/augmentedreality/augmented-reality-makes-a-splash-at-toyota-vehicle-showrooms/>)

Another factor it positively impacts is consumers' product knowledge, considering Toyota Vehicle Demo, wherein the company partnered with a digital agency Brandwidth to create a new iPad app used at its showrooms across UK which facilitated consumers to understand all inner workings of the vehicle like its motor, battery and fuel tank through overlaid information (Fig. 2). These factors give way to

stepping closer to accurate decision-making and minimising errors, taking into account IKEA one of the early adopters of augmented reality in the year 2013, using an iOS mobile app they allowed the users to view virtual pieces of furniture from its catalog that could be arranged in the users house to check if it would fit the consumers' real environment and facilitate decision-making involving minimum errors leading to a better consumer experience and trust building.

Customer Engagement

When taking into account customer engagement, it can be averred as a salient aspect of marketing. With the ever-present spiralling clutter of advertisements and promotions, it has become very difficult for marketers to grab consumers' attention but at the same time it is of utmost importance considering it is the initial step towards forming a long-term relationship with the consumers. To engage a target customer, marketers should approach them using methods which involve using interactive features or advertisements which can distinguish itself from the clutter that surrounds the consumers.

Augmented Reality has made it possible by using disruptive promotional techniques to create excitement and to resonate with the customers at an emotional level that encourages them seek to more information about the product or service and push them to interact with the company. A new concept has emerged that is Augmented Reality shopping which is becoming increasingly popular that minimises consumer efforts and costs incurred in the mere learning process, and at the same time creates excitement. For example, Adidas, a leading sportswear manufacturer, and Snapchat, a popular photo messaging social media app, collaborated which allowed Snapchat users to preview Adidas' new running shoe collection by virtually trying it on and getting more information through an interactive augmented reality experience. Pepsi



(<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/198369558561335317/>)

Max also created a brilliant advertisement as an effort to stand out, where they turned a bus stand's glass wall into a fake window with camera installed, the unsuspecting customers got a view of their real environment through the glass window but were soon startled with virtually created flying saucers, an attacking robot and a loose tiger that appeared in the real environment, until they realised it was an advertisement (Fig. 3).

The above examples show how companies are rapidly innovating and thinking out of the box, of never-before applied techniques and methods to seize every opportunity to attract customers and leave a lasting impression. Another important aspect of application of AR is that it facilitates in creating multiple consumer touchpoints, that is, when a potential consumer interacts or comes in contact with the company. For example, Taco Bell has utilised the Augmented Reality technology by strategically placing a QR code on its Tacos box and Soda cups for its Doritos shell campaign, when a consumer scanned the QR code using the Taco Bell app they were able to view product-related content on Twitter and Facebook. Another interesting campaign was pulled off by AMC Theatres, by scanning the code placed on the poster of a particular movie the user could view its trailer, book tickets and get other movie-related information.

Branding

Augmented Reality has also impacted the branding strategies of a company, through which a company seeks to create a desirable image in the minds of customers that resonates with them to develop a long-term relationship and ultimately achieve organisational goals. It was discovered in a study that 76% of the consumers today prefer spending on experiences rather than material possessions.

With the change in trends, marketers are now focusing on providing a delightful experience to their consumers to create a positive standing in the consumers' mind and increase brand recall. An example to substantiate this would be of Stubhub, an American ticket exchange and resale company, for Super Bowl LII they activated an Augmented Reality feature which allowed users to view a virtual 3D model of the stadium including nearby parking garages and concession stands to help users visualise their experience before buying a tickets and minimise any risk, this was done to provide a better experience to the consumers in accordance to his/her expectations.

Another example aimed at providing an enhanced experience is Rekorderlig, a brand for Cider manufacturer in Sweden, brought Swedish mid-summer in London using augmented reality by creating a resembling landscape and created their own Rekorderlig land. Augmented Reality in this respect helps in creating innovative branding, building excitement and creating a positive image of the company.

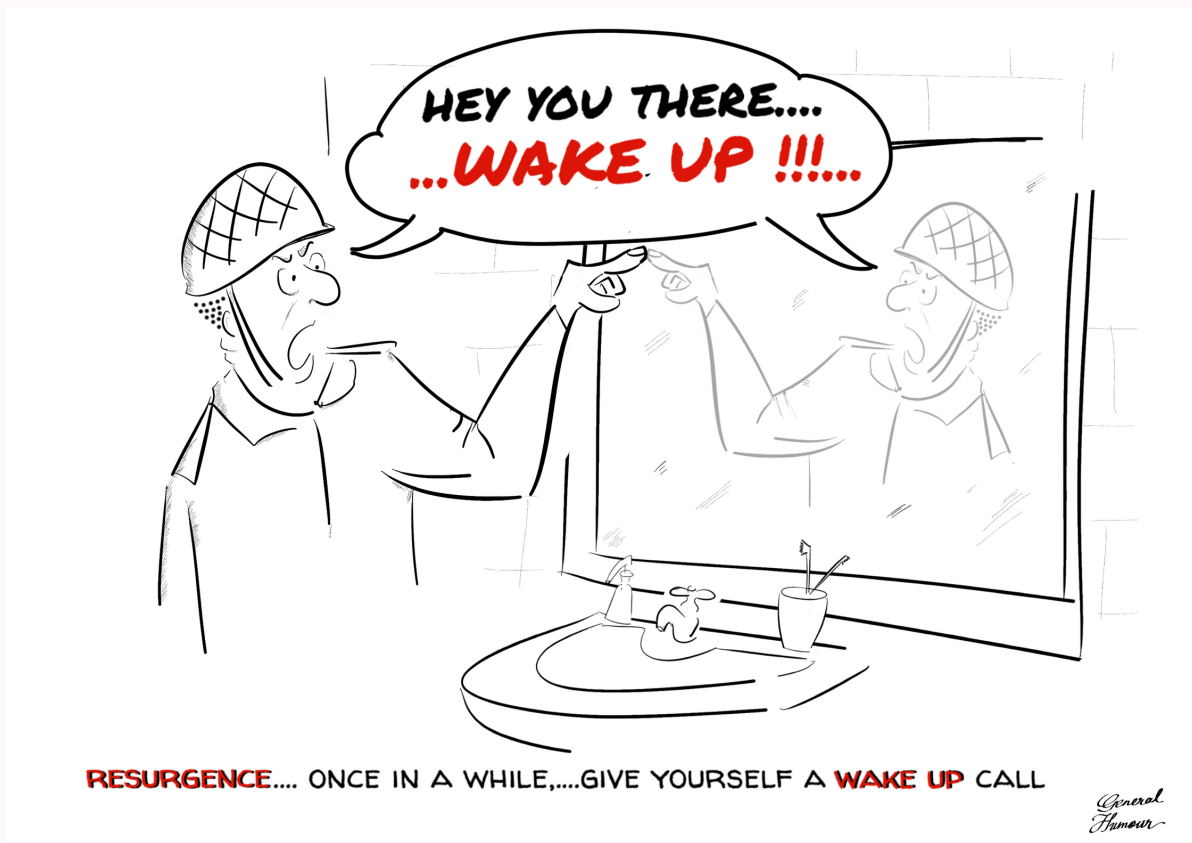
Conclusion

Augmented Reality still being a novelty has been able to increase consumers'

attention span to 2.5 times of a traditional advertisement, the newness of which has been successfully able to grab consumers' recognition. Though there might be certain impediments in its way in the form of a constant stable internet connectivity, hardware limitations, a need for a mobile application, to name a few, the technology still has tremendous potential to become a game changer and completely transform the business environment. With the inconceivable developments the technology is now tossing ahead of us with every passing day, Augmented Technology, undoubtedly, has the power to revamp the entire business landscape and completely alter consumers' behaviour and interaction with businesses in the market.



Archisha Singh is a recent MBA graduate from Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad. She is passionate about learning and practicing the various aspects of Sales & Marketing and is looking forward to be working with one of the leading insurance companies in the Country. She also holds an Undergraduate degree in B.Com (H) specialising in Marketing Management from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. Previously, Archisha has contributed to her college magazines and has also worked in the content team as a part of her Marketing Club at post-graduation level. In future, she wants to be a successful marketing professional and with her work contribute to creating a positive impact on the society as a whole.



Amit Dalvi

A Military Wife's Guide To Starting a Work-from-home Micro Business - 8 Bite-sized Steps

BY CHANDANA BANERJEE

Have you found yourself saying any of the following:

- *"I can't pursue a career because I'm married to a man in uniform!"*
- *"Even though I'm well-qualified, I can't find a good job in the remote military base that we're posed to."*
- *"I really want to work-from-home, but don't know how to begin."*

If you've been waiting for the right job to find you as you move from one base to another on posting, only to be disappointed with the measly job options in these remote areas, or feel that you can't be both, a Fauji wife And a career woman, then you're in for a surprise.

With the Internet, your qualifications, and talents, and a huge dollop of determination and passion, you CAN carve out a niche for yourself as a military spouse based in a back-of-beyond base.

If a tailor-made job offer is difficult to find at the boonies where you are stationed, you can always come up with an idea, skill or talent that you can upcycle into a career for yourself. Take a course, get a new degree or spend some time honing your talents before you turn it into a dream job.

Here are a few tried-and-tested baby steps to get you going on your "milpreneur" (military wife entrepreneur) journey.

Note: *Arm yourself with a healthy dose of willpower and "can-do" attitude before you embark on this unique journey.*

1. Make a List of Your Degrees, Skills, and Passions. Whip out a notebook and jot down all the degrees you've accumulated over the years, the things that you're good at and the things that light your fire. Go through this list a few times and come up with business ideas crafted around some of these. If any of these business ideas interest you more than the others, put them in the short-list and consider them in the work-from-home micro biz context.

2. Finalize Your Micro Business Idea. You can discuss your shortlisted ideas with your partner or a trusted friend or a mentor, or just come to a decision on your own about which one you'd finally like to run with. Come up with who your target audience will be (who you'd like to create your products or tailor your services for) and what you'd like to name your brand. like to name your brand.

3. Check What You Need to Learn Before You Begin to Earn. Before your launch yourself into your chosen work-from-home career, let's polish up those skills and talents. Is there a certification that you need to clear, a course that can help you set up your home business, or a few skills to set you up as an entrepreneur? Spend some time learning before you begin earning.

4. Create Social Media Business Pages With Your Brand Name. One of the simplest ways to create a brand identity and put your work out there is by creating business pages on Facebook and Instagram. Start sharing your work with your friends, community and prospective clients through these pages. You can also get a website designed for your business.

5. Test Your Ideas. Before you begin pouring all your time and energy into creating a plethora of products or services, create one or two of these and share it with your audience at a pocket-friendly price. Monitor the response and collect feedback. Based on this, you can go ahead and churn out more products and services for your clients.

6. Set Small and Achievable Goals. The secret to not being overwhelmed by this entrepreneur journey is to break up your goal into bite-sized steps. Whether it's about signing up for a course, creating a product or offering a service, make things more practical and simple for yourself.

7. Take the Plunge. While it's easy to keep putting off launching our micro business, what with all the ideas and courses we need to try out; it is imperative to set a deadline and finally open the doors to our business to the world. So, go on, take that plunge.

8. Embrace the Entrepreneur Journey. Being a self-employed military wife has its own set of unique challenges. There are sudden postings, remote bases, multiple house shiftings, erratic internet connection, welfare meets, VIP visits, social obligations and long phases of sole parenting to consider. Juggling these with our own dreams and deadlines can be anything but easy. But if you keep your eye on the joy that your work brings you, then this "milpreneurship" journey will actually make your military wife life even more interesting.

Here's wishing you the best as you embark on your work-from-home entrepreneurship adventure!



Chandana Banerjee is a multipotentialite military wife entrepreneur, and homeschooling mom. She is a writer, creative writing teacher, artist, micro business coach to military wives and moms, and a green wellness coach. She is also the Amazon #1 bestselling author of "The Work-At-Home Military Wife", and is passionate about helping military wives and moms create work-from-home micro ventures around their talents and hobbies. More about her can be found at her lifestyle blog and portfolio <https://chandabanerjee.com>.

Book Reviews

Games Indians Play: Why We Are the Way We Are: by V Raghunathan

BY SURESH CHANDRA

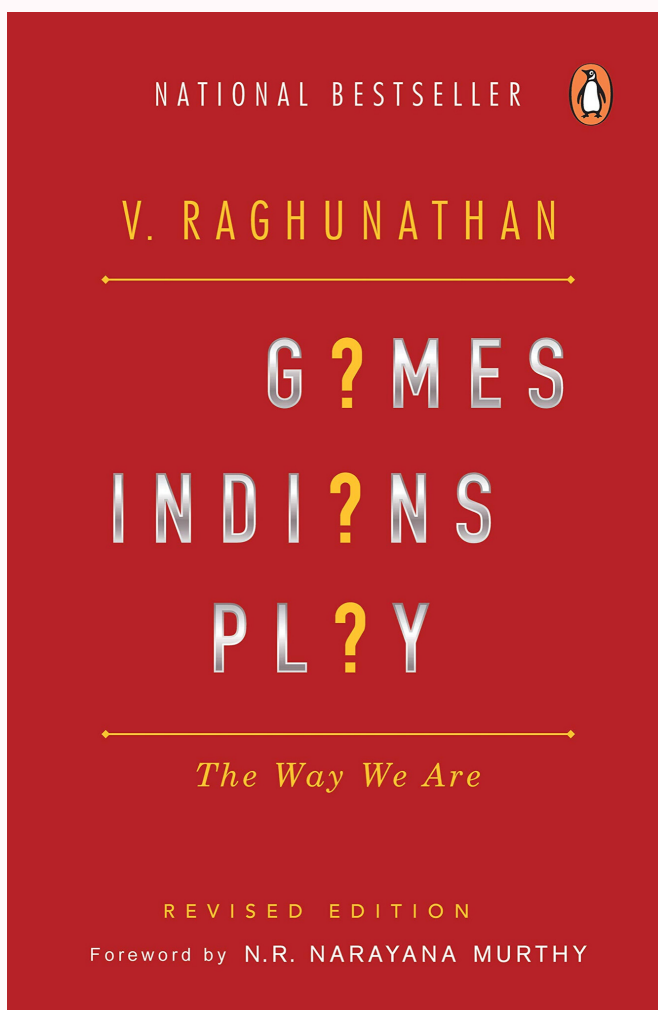
About the Author: Dr Viswanathan Raghunathan was a Professor of Finance at IIM-A till 2001 after which he joined the corporate in a variety of roles to include President ING Vysya Bank and presently the CEO of GMR Varalakshmi Foundation. He has thrice featured in the list of 50 thinkers across India and the Indian diaspora. A prolific writer, he has to his credit over 500 academic papers and over a dozen books. He is a regular contributor to Economic Times, Mint and other national dailies. He has one of the largest private collections of old locks, is a cartoonist of repute and has played India level chess.

The book “**Games Indians Play: Why We are the Way We Are**” is an interesting read and it hits you within the first few pages where the author begins with a soliloquy of sorts (reproduced below).

Why is my sense of public hygiene so porcine? Why do I throw my garbage around with the gay abandon of an inebriated uncle flinging 500-rupee notes at a Punjabi wedding? Why do I spit with a free will, as if without that one right I would be a citizen of a lesser democracy? Why do I tear off a page from a library book, or write my name on the Taj Mahal's walls? Why do I set a stadium aflame, or set a city bus or any other handy public property alight at the slightest provocation? Why do I toot my horn in a residential locality at 3 a.m.? Why don't I leave a public toilet at least as clean as I found it, or at least nearly so; but instead leave it much worse and then complain of its abysmal state? Why don't I contribute in any way to help maintain a beautiful public park? Why is my concern for quality in whatever I do Lilliputian in scope? Why are my canals, lakes, rivers and even streets choking with polyethylene? Why is my ambition or satisfaction threshold for anything at all below the level of a centipede's belly button? Why do I run the tap full blast while shaving even when I know of the acute water shortage in the city? Why don't I stop or slow down my car to allow a senior citizen or a child or a woman to cross the road? Why do I routinely jump out of my seat in a mad rush for the overhead baggage even before the aircraft comes to a halt, despite the repeated entreaties of the cabin crew? Why do I routinely disregard an airline's announcement to board in orderly groups in accordance with seat numbers? Why does it not hurt my national pride that in international terminals abroad extra staff is appointed at gates from which flights to India are to depart? Why don't I vote? Why don't I stand up

or retaliate against social ills? Why is it that every time the government announces a well-intended measure, such as a higher rate of interest for senior citizens, I am not averse to borrowing my ageing parents' names, or the old family maid's for that matter, to earn those additional basis points? Why is it that every time the government announces no tax deduction at source for small depositors, I split my bank deposit into fifteen different accounts, with the active connivance of the bank manager? Why do I drive on the wrong side of the road nonchalantly? Why do I jump red lights with the alacrity of a jackrabbit leaping ahead of buckshot? Why do I block the left lane, when my intention is to turn right? Or vice versa? Why do I overtake from the left? Why don't I stick to my lane, instead of zigzagging? Why do I drive at night in the city with the high beam on? Why do I jump queues like an Olympic heptathlon gold hopeful?

These are everyday behaviours of common Indians around us and has set many of us thinking at times – why do we behave like we do. We have tried to attribute various reasons for such behaviour like education, upbringing, couldn't care less attitude etc etc. The author, given his background, uses Game Theory, a branch of mathematics for decision making in competitive scenarios to explain our behaviour. For me, being a maths major and having studied Game Theory was a good enough reason to pick this book to see the authors point of view.



The first chapter “The way we are” sets the stage for the book where he discusses various observations on behavioural traits attributed to us as a population. He draws upon the views of various authors like Richard Nisbett in “The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently . . . and Why” and V.S. Naipaul in his “India: A Wounded Civilization”. As per Raghunathan, these authors have made observations without explaining the reasons for the same. Hence, he sets about his quest to find reasons for the said behaviours. He examines various reasons like climate, population density, poverty, literacy, genetics, colonial rule etc and quickly rules them out due to contradictory evidence in similar demographics and other geographical areas. He also compares our performance as a people in key projects like Konkan Railway, Delhi Metro, Kolkata metro with similar or more

challenging projects executed in China. Later in the chapter he lay down the hard hitting “**13 Cannons of Indianness**” – (1) Low trustworthiness (2) Lack of self-regulation and sense of fairness (3) Being privately smart and publicly dumb (4) Being too intelligent for our own good (5) Fatalist outlook (6) Abysmal sense of public hygiene and public aesthetics (7) Reluctance to penalize wrong conduct in others (8) Deep-rooted corruption and a flair for free riding (9) Inability to follow or implement systems (10) A sense of self-worth that is massaged only if we have the ‘authority’ to break rules (11) Propensity to look for loopholes in laws (12) Mistaking talk for action (13) Acting only when we hit the absolute rock bottom of anything at all. He thus lays down the groundwork to offer an explanation based on Game Theory, specifically “Prisoners Dilemma”.

The Prisoners Dilemma

There are two accomplices in some suspected crime, who are caught by the law. **Both prisoners** are assumed to be **entirely selfish**, in that **each wants to minimize their sentence**. The law puts them in separate cells, leaving them incommunicado. Each is offered a plea-bargaining opportunity. If one **cooperates** with the law (that is squeals on the accomplice), one will go scot free while the other will get five years behind bars. If neither cooperate i.e. don not squeal on the other, each gets only two Years. But if each **defects** i.e. squeal on the other, each gets four years. So here is the dilemma: should one squeal against the other? The author explains the dilemma as given below:

		You	
		Do Not Squeal	Squeal
I	Do Not Squeal	(-2,-2)	(-5,0)
	Squeal	(0,-5)	(-4,-4)

As rational and intelligent beings each of us would argue thus: ‘If he decides to squeal on me, it is best that I squeal too. Why should the scoundrel romp home free while I get the slammer for five years? On the other hand, if he, the fool, is naive enough not to squeal, it is in my best interest to squeal and romp home free while he is free to enjoy his stay behind the bars.’ So no matter what I do, your ‘rational’ choice is to squeal. So you squeal. I, on my part following a similar trail of thought cannot trump that logic either and so I do ditto, and squeal. The squeal-squeal decision earns both of us four years in the slammer. But if we had chosen not to squeal, we would have served only two years each. It is obvious that

*in order 'not to squeal' one need not be driven by higher-order values like friendship, kindness or altruism. **'Do not squeal', in fact, turns out to be the superior option even if we are supremely selfish and rational,** though hardly a convincing one when you are one of the prisoners in dilemma.*

As per the author, rational thinking and intelligence go hand in hand. Indians are intelligent but we use much of our intelligence trying to figure ways to circumvent every law, regulation and norm in a bid to do better for ourselves; the other be damned. Hence **we are like the prisoners in the Prisoners Dilemma who act in their self interest and not for the common good.**

The author provides many examples wherein most Indians largely would defect (in Prisoners Dilemma terminology) for selfish gains rather than cooperate for the common greater good.

"When I jump a queue or a red light, or throw that garbage on the pavement, I am taking a rational 'squeal' decision, since it seems to put me at an advantage vis-à-vis others. Here I am being privately smart."

Since we tend to deal or interact with the same people over and over again, the **Iterative Prisoners Dilemma** comes into play. The question then is what is the best strategy for one to derive maximum utility from the interactions, assuming for example, when two parties where both cooperate with each other, each derives a utility of 2 when one cooperates and the other defects, the defector gets 5 points while the cooperator gets -1 (because it stings to be cheated). But when both parties defect, neither gets any utility points. He uses the experiments of Robert Axelrod, a game theorist to indicate that **Tit for Tat strategy** is the best where **you are never the first ever to defect; thereafter, do exactly what the opponent did the last time.** In other words, you should always start with cooperation and continue cooperating till the other defects.

He associates many behaviours with Indians "**defecting**" like not delivering goods (on time), not delivering quality goods, not paying invoices, saying "What can I do?" to social problems, saying "What harm will it cause?" in civic issues like running red lights, and not showing care and concern for public areas.

The author also talks about the '**Crab in the Bucket Syndrome**' where we behave like crabs in a bucket from where no crab would escape since any crab trying to get out of the bucket is sure to be pulled down by others inside. It is a reflection of dissatisfaction with others doing better than ourselves. We are perfectly happy if they do as badly as us, but cannot accept others doing well. We want parity with our neighbor or our competitor, no matter how.

The book's culminating chapter is the relation between Game Theory and Gita wherein he discusses application of game theory to moral and political science. He is

of the view that optimality self-policing social system can be achieved if the actions are driven by the Hindu notion of dharma. When both parties play by the rules of dharma, the Equilibrium achieved is truly and optimally for both.

If one has ever experienced any kind of frustration with India, it is easy to jump on the bandwagon and use this as your filter. There are a few areas where I really identified with the author's thoughts based on my experiences. The area where I most agree with the author is that **selfish individual decisions lead to a much worse situation for others at large**. If more people would act in the interest of the larger good, many of these things would be taken care of. I found the book as interesting read.

Each chapter in the book commences with a short story. The story below summarises the essence of the book:

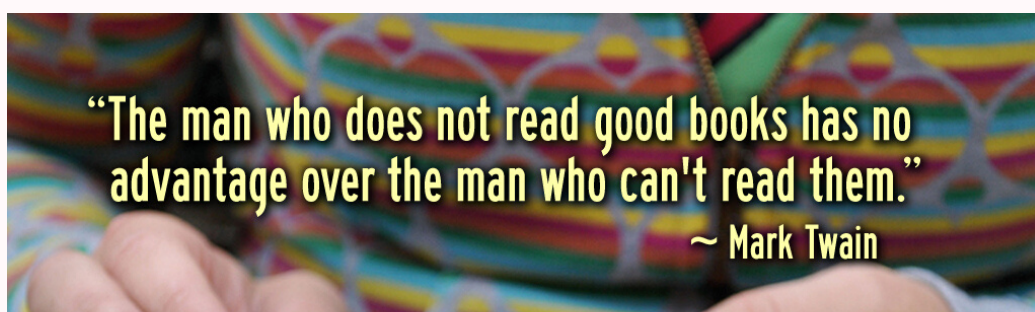
An anthropologist proposed a game to the African tribal children . . . He placed a basket of sweets near a tree and made the children stand 100 metres away. Then he announced that whoever reached first would get all the sweets in the basket. When he said, 'Ready steady go!' . . . What do you think the children did?

They all held each other's hands, ran together towards the tree, divided the sweets equally among themselves, and ate the sweets. When the anthropologist asked them why they did so, they answered, 'Ubuntu', which is Nguni Bantu for, ***'How can one be happy when the others are sad?'***

*Also, Ubuntu means: **I am because we are!***



Col Suresh Chandra was commissioned on 11 Jun 1988 in the 94 Field Regiment. He commanded 121 Light Regiment and superannuated from service on 30 Nov 2017. An MTech (CSE - IITD), he has been instrumental in the design and development of the ACCCS / Project Shakti. He was an instructor in School of Artillery and DS, JC Wing, Army War College. He has also served with the Wargaming Centre, SWC and was Col GS (Systems) Western Command. Post retirement he divides his time between mentoring underprivileged kids in Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science of Class XII level, and freelancing as a cyber security and data analytics expert. He is available at sureshchandra@protonmail.com



ForceNet Connect

STRANDED IN AUSTRALIA

Rajat Paliwal was stranded in Australia along with his family, and was not able to get a booking for the evacuation flight. He sought assistance, and through Forces Network got to know about contact details of Capt (IN) Manish who is defence attache in Australia.

When approached, the officer extended full support in getting them on to the evacuation flight from Australia. With hundreds of Indians still stranded in Australia it was quite fortunate to have got onto the flight, courtesy Capt Manish. It also needs a special mention for Capt Manish who not only assisted Rajat, but several other families too, in spite this not being his primary job.

SELECTED AS REGISTRAR, AT IIT HYDERABAD

Cmde M Nambiar, PhD, though apprehensive earlier, initiated the discussion on the subject in the Forces Network Group, and after gaining adequate inputs, guidance and support from other members including serving and retired Registrars, applied for the coveted post fully armed with information and knowledge.

Subsequent to deliberate selection process he has finally been appointed for the post. It serves his complete purpose as it is his strong domain and also at his place of residence.

He was also able to get absolute clarity regarding fixation of pay, when serving with such institutes, something which confuses the desiring aspirants. It is also envisaged that the Group at large would have benefited from these meaningful discussions.

REVIVAL OF YOUTUBE CHANNEL

A distress message was received on the Group from Lt Rita Gangwani.

She used to shoot for a channel named Pragya for motivational stories and after the shoots purchased the CD's of her shoots for personal use. Her stories from this channel had been hosted since 2007.

Sometime back, this Pragya channel which had closed doors almost 7-8 years back decided to sell off their shoots to a third party. This third party tracked her stories and then got her YouTube channel banned. This was a severe setback for Rita. She then approached the PR of this third party and requested them to revive her channel. and

she promised them that she would remove the said videos, and conveyed to them that it was done only with the premise that she had paid for the CD's and the content. Once convinced, they approached YouTube to withdraw their complaint.

However, in spite of that, YouTube refused to revive her channel and in a surprising move, they also banned all her other channels linked to that account. It was a great shock for Rita as she lost all her emotional memories with family, her testimonials, her interviews and everything related to her work and profession.

So, she reached out to Forces Network for help, with the plea to her her channel revived even for just 24 hours so that she can at least download her other personal material.

Rajive Sinha, who had first come in contact with Rita while organising the very first seminar of Forces Network, got down to assist immediately, understanding the significance it had for Rita. It was also because of the extreme positive attitude which Rita had exhibited during their initial and subsequent interactions, and her significant contributions for the Network.

He contacted her to know about the incident and asked her to share complete details. He then requested his friend working with Google to look into this case. He asked for few more details which were promptly provided to him, which he shared with the team at YouTube. And, within a matter of 24 hours, the issue was resolved, with all the channels of Rita getting revived, and also getting her subscribers back.

Rajive says, "Well, magic happens. I would say that her issue got resolved because she is a source of immense positive energy and ever helpful. All's well that ends well. This reiterates the power of networking and the acme of all networks - The Forces Network. And, Rita calls it, "A wonderful platform with Cinderella's magic wand".

A STUDENT WRITES

(this has been reproduced verbatim, so as to not take away the essence of the writer)

A network that really works, is what stands true for me when I think of Forces Network.

As a student of Army Institute of Management & Technology, I got associated with Forces Network when Col. Iqbal Sir, a visiting speaker, shared with us his journey and the humble beginning of Forces Network, and all the successful chapters that have taken place across the length and breadth of the country. Looking at the level of enthusiasm in us, Col Iqbal sir shared an opportunity with us, and that was, to be part of the Delhi Chapter to be held in December, 2018.

If we wait for Ocean to dry before we take a plunge in it, we will never be able to take a plunge.

Along with few of my MBA coursemates, we grabbed this opportunity with both our hands and plunged into the uncharted territory of networking. We are truly indebted to them for their kind gesture by making us part of the Delhi Chapter of Forces Network. We had no idea that the first Chapter that we are attending would turn out to be of such magnanimous learning and an opportunity that would take our career uphill. The keynote speaker of the session was Mr. Deep Kalra, Group Chairman of Go-MMT group. He elegantly shared his journey, the ups and downs which he faced and how he, along with his team members, aced all the obstacles. The Group CHRO of Go-MMT, Capt Yuvraj Srivastava, was also part of the session. In his presentation he shared the increasing role being played by defence officers in the Go-MMT group and opportunities that lie ahead.

I am grateful to Uday Sir for providing an opportunity to interact with Mr Kalra and Capt Srivastava, and invite them to our institute's International Conference and for the campus placement process. From this one short meeting began a journey, which eventually landed me a Senior Executive position in the office of the doyen of travel industry.

Capt Yuvraj accepted our invitation to be the Keynote speaker in the International Conference of our Institute. In his delivery, he emphasized on how technology is being leveraged in HR domain and which factors and skills will play a key role in identifying the best fit candidate. The session was highly applauded by faculty members and students. Post session, after few follow ups with Capt Srivastava, his team from Go-MMT group contacted our institute's Placement cell with an opportunity.

Soon after, the selection process got lined up. After rigorous three rounds of interview, along with the final round at Gurugram Head Office with the Vice President of Hotel Division, four students from our Institute got selected for the offered position. With almighty's grace and the confidence gained by networking with industry experts in Forces Network, I was able to make it in the top four. Witnessing the success stories and growth plans of well established global organizations and round-table interactions with the eminent industry experts provided me with an insight of the industry and what skills in particular are needed to get into a specific domain or industry.

One thing that I have learned from Iqbal Sir is that, "Never let even a small opportunity go in vain and always be on your toes, ready to charge and accomplish the set mission." Throughout all this while, Capt Uday guided and mentored me on personal branding. In his words, "We are all brands with different brand equity. It is completely upon us what brand value we wish to create for ourselves by showcasing our true spirit."

Forces network has helped me build my brand value and bridge the gap to my first corporate step. I find myself blessed that I met Col. Iqbal sir and Capt. Uday sir early in my career and realised the importance of networking.

Compiled from mails received in the Forces Network Group - Editor

Stories

When Someone You Adore, Becomes a Memory

BY GURU SADAY BATABYAL

Amidst the dreary Covid-19 updates on the TV screen, depressing news of legendary footballer Chuni Goswami's death appeared on a downhearted Thursday, 30 April as the Nation was still coping with a double-blow having lost Irrfan Khan and Rishi Kapoor, two iconic actors of the cinematic world.



He was the first mega star of Indian football. The only time I saw him playing was in 1968, at Bolpur - Santiniketan during a star-studded charity match for raising funds for the flood affected people of West Bengal. I was then a student - a crazy fan of Goswami like many others of my generation. I still vividly recall tickets were priced at Rs 5/- and upwards and the area earmarked for Rs 5/- had the most enthusiastic and vibrant spectators, where majority of them were teenager groups of students like me. PK Banerjee too played in that match. In those pre-television days, it was the radio - the transistor as it was popularly known, that had us glued for hours. And for the first time in my life I was to witness those demi-gods playing. We the residents of villages located 200 kms away

from Kolkata were simply awe-struck seeing them enter the field welcomed by the deafening sound of thousand claps! Hailing from West Bengal most of my friends were Mohunbagan supporters and as the match progressed, much to our dismay East Bengal was firing from all cylinders and was leading by 1-0 till half time. Last ten minutes of the match became more tense when Mohunbagan equalised by scoring a goal. Memories of that balmy Saturday afternoon still flash in front of the eyes - a tense Mohunbagan - East Bengal match was coming to an end with 1-1 and lo and behold Chuni Goswami during the fag end of the match scores an astounding goal with a bicycle back volley, something the many of us had never seen before. For us teenagers, it was stuff dreams were made of. Hip-hip hurrah, my Mohunbagan has won! And our hero Chuni mesmerised us with his graceful dribbling and body swerve and skilful moves as if an artist is playing football! No wonder his contemporary Jarnail Singh the stalwart footballer once told a correspondent, "While we all are bunch of good players, Chuni is different. He is an artist."

But what made Subimal Goswami better known Chuni Goswami different? As a player he was renowned for his entertaining football. "His superb speed with the ball, excellent trapping and shrewd passing had made him a household name, but it was his dazzling dribbling and body swerves that ultimately set him apart from the other greats of his era," commentator Novy Kapadia wrote in his book 'Barefoot to Boots: The Many Lives of Indian Football'.

Chuni Goswami made his International debut against Burma (now Myanmar) in the Asian Games in Tokyo in 1958, and during the match his goal contributed to make India win 3-2. Goswami's biggest achievement was the captaining of India to the 1962 Asian Games Gold medal when India scripted a historic 2-1 victory against South Korea in the final to get India its second gold medal in Asian Games history. Though PK and Jarnail Singh scored a goal each in the final and Chuni did not, however he was in stupendous form through out the tournament. He was honoured with the Best Striker of Asia Award in 1962. He represented India in 36 official International matches, captaining in 16 of them, and scoring 13 goals. Besides two editions of the Asian Games, Chuni was also part of India's Olympic squad in the Rome Olympics in 1960. He also captained India to the final of the AFC Asian Cup in Tel Aviv in 1964 and was part of India's campaign in the pre-Olympic qualification in 1959 (in Kabul), 1960 (in Kolkata and Jakarta), 1963 (in Colombo as Captain), and in 1964 in (Tehran and Kolkata). He also played in the Merdeka Cup in Jakarta in 1961, and 1964 (as Captain). Starting his international career in 1957, Goswami was the mega star of the golden era national football team despite the presence of greats like Peter Thangaraj, Jarnail Singh, Tulsidas Balaram, PK Banerjee, T.A Rahman, Ashok Chatterjee and others. Yet, he bid adieu to international football in 1964. He was only 27 then. And from the professional football he retired in 1968, just at 31.



However his sporting career was not over. Already an all rounder Ranji Trophy player, he then concentrated on cricket. In 1966, bowling prowess of Chuni Goswami and Test player Subroto Guha orchestrated the historic innings defeat of Gary Sobers' West Indies by the combined Central and East Zone team under Hanumant Singh in Indore. Chuni Goswami a medium in-swinging, took eight wickets. He was not included in the Indian Test cricket team despite his such acumen, may be he started this game late. In 1971-72 season, he was made the Bengal Cricket Team captain. He took the team to the Ranji Trophy final before losing against Bombay at the Brabourne Stadium. His cricket career ended at 46 First Class matches with a haul of 1592 runs and 47 wickets. He was an unparalleled example who played football and cricket at the highest level. However, cricketer Chuni Goswami could not outshine footballer Chuni Goswami. All through his life he played for Mohunbagan Club never changing his loyalty despite many lucrative offers including once an invitation for a trial with Tottenham Hotspur, which probably the biggest club in England in the 60s under the management of legendary coach Bill Nicholson. Goswami scored 200 goals for Mohun Bagan and won 14 trophies for the club as their captain. He led his side to three successive Durand Cup triumphs as well as four successive Calcutta Football League wins. He was also proficient player of hockey and tennis and played for his club.



Who was not his fan in the 60s? President Radhakrishnan, Army Chief General Jayanta Chowdhury, film stars Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Uttam Kumar, singers S D Barman, Hemant Kumar et al. Chuni Goswami also acted in a Bengali film. For his performances and contribution to the sport, which included representing India in the Olympics and the Asia Cup, Goswami was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1963 and the Padma Shri in 1983. He was Sheriff of Kolkata in 2005. The Indian Postal Department honoured him with a commemorative postal stamp on his 82nd birthday (January 15, 2020) making him the third Indian footballer to be honoured by the postal department after late Gostho Paul (1998), and late Dr. Talimeren Ao (2018).

Chance directed, my moments with Chuni Goswami whom I adored came. About two

decades ago while I was posted in Fort William Kolkata, we met during a dinner hosted by Consul General of Germany where for almost twenty minutes he chatted with me. After exchanging pleasantries he asked me, "Are you a full Colonel or a half Colonel?" I was taken aback by such a question from a civilian who I thought may not have intricate knowledge of the difference between a full Colonel and a half Colonel. When I replied that I was a full Colonel he quipped, "For a full Colonel, you look young." Such a compliment from him naturally flattered me. While thanking him I also praised his knowledge of colloquial representation of Army ranks. Then he mentioned that he was the the founding manager of SBI Fort William Branch and served there from 1971-73 (this branch was opened before Bangladesh war) and those days full Colonel were very few and were usually elderly looking persons! He was nostalgic about his tenure at Fort William and let me know how deeply he regarded the Armed Forces. It was indeed gracious of him that before he left the dinner party he came to me and after shaking my hands said, "Pleasure meeting you Colonel". Years later, in 2012 when acclaimed Bengali film actor Soumitra Chatterjee was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, CII East on whose Executive Council I was, organised a function at ITC Sonar to felicitate him. We invited many dignitaries of Kolkata across cross functional fields like cine stars, poets and authors, academics, corporate honchos, civil and military officials, sportsmen etc. From the sports world PK Banerjee, Chuni Goswami, Gurbax Singh (Hockey Olympian) graced the occasion. We were meeting after a decade and while welcoming him to the function he mentioned, "I think we met before". During the brief interaction he enquired when did I leave Army and shift to corporate and passingly mentioned that he still cherishes his memories of Fort William. Last I met him very briefly three years ago at the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CCFC).

Since I met him first, whenever I visited the office of Manager SBI Fort William Kolkata I invariably looked at the board noticing his name listed on the top amongst those who occupied this chair. When someone you adore becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure! I know for sure whenever I visit that office hereafter, his name will draw my attention more than before and there will always be a silent prayer on my lips "RIP - first poster boy of Indian football - Chuni Goswami!"



Col Guru saday Batabyal, an officer of 3/4 GR is a DSSC graduate and holds a PhD degree from Visva Bharati-Santiniketan. His journey with the corporate began with the appointment of CEO of a IT Company of B K Birla Group, later he was CEO of Data-Core, and Executive Director of DCPL Group. He has been a member of Executive Council of CII and Bengal Chambers of Commerce and was engaged by Government of Fiji as adviser on e-governance. Since 2015 after retiring from the corporate, he is pursuing academic and research activities and occasionally working as a visiting professor teaching Theory of Strategy, International Relations in a few universities in India, Bangladesh and USA. His articles have been published in India and abroad.

On a Wandering Spree

BY TOOLIKA RANI

"Wandering re-establishes the original harmony which once existed between man and the universe." ~ Anatole France

In the month of May, it felt as if I lived in a dream land. All around me, tiny specs floated in the air, descending from the trees and filling our terrace and the courtyard. Hordes and hordes of them alighted from their high perch with even a slight nudge of breeze and spread their light wings to disperse far and wide to unknown destinations. Safely tugged in the centre was a tiny seed in each of these flying masquerades. Even to the sedentary trees, Nature had ingeniously given means to travel. Reflection on it suddenly made me wonder how movement was an innate part of life! My mind wandered and as far as it stretched, everything everywhere seemed to be spinning. How fascinating that the entire universe is in a constant state of motion! The Earth revolves around the Sun, and also rotates on its own axis, the Moon revolves around the Earth; in the interplanetary space, the plasma is in motion. Gravitational waves generated millions of years ago are still travelling in space. Inside the Sun, the ions are moving, and outside it, the charged particles are racing forward in the form of solar flares. Inside the Earth, just beneath the upper crust, hot lava is brewing in a circular motion. The air keeps circulating all around the Earth and so do the ocean currents beyond the shores. Water rises up as clouds, which flit across the sky and come down again in the form of rain. Within our bodies the blood is flowing and so are the ideas reverberating across the world, enlightening youth, bringing revolutions, breaking barriers.

Thus awed by the centrality of motion in the scheme of life, I reminisced about my own wanderings. Intensified by the sombering effect of lockdown, the insatiable urge relished the snapshots of memories of faraway lands. One thing that stood out and which I had not paid much attention to, in the rush of hour, was the role of Forces in facilitating these travels. Indian Air Force, my identity provider also bestowed on me wings and the access to the vast horizon we call the World. So, I decided to pay a tribute to that esteemed organization which shapes personalities, nurtures dreams and enriches one in myriad unique ways.

Foray into The Factory of Clouds

Greenery that grew on your nerves, thundering, lightening and lashing rains that swooped down the runway from one end to other is all I remember from that exotic first posting at the Indo-Bhutan border. Hashimara the gateway to Bhutan, brought with it regular weekend trips to that tiny mountainous country, where we would peep into another world as soon as we crossed the border gate. In contrast to the bustling jostle on the broken roads of Jaigaon, the Indian town on the border, Phuentsholling moved in a slow, quite, systematic and sophisticated way, as if entering into a time machine one has been transported into another era. Buddhist monasteries and

gompas spotted the landscape and the air suddenly felt serene. I especially loved the 18 km approach road from Hashi to Phuentsholing, in which all throughout the mountains beacons from the front. I soaked in the breeze and feasted my senses on the open vast stretch bisected by a stream as I rode pillion on my friend's bike. The affair didn't stop here. I brought my mother to visit here; and a Professor of History she prepared two major research projects on Bhutan. This took us to the length and breadth of the country spanning across four consecutive visits. So, my first posting enriched us by two books, several articles, wonderful experiences, an in-depth knowledge of our neighbor, and life-long friends from across the border. The highlight remained the beautiful trek to the Tiger's Nest (Taktshang Monastery) in Paro on an auspicious day of Guru Padmasambhava's birthday. Precariously perched on a rocky outcrop, it heralded the message of beauty in fragility.



(Tiger's Nest (Taktshang Monastery at Paro, Bhutan, and Famous Unicorn seal of Harappa displayed at Lothal Museum)

Enamoured by Glass and Glitter

Keekar (Acacia) trees adorned the premises of officers' mess, temperature reached 40°C in the day and the evening was soothed by a cool sea breeze. From mountains I was transported to the western Indian city of Jamnagar in Gujarat. The market there provided an array of merchandise, the most famous being the Bandhni (tie and dye). I so fell in love with the glass embroidered and bandhani clothes that my wardrobe had nothing but them for a very long time. Being a history buff, a visit to Somnath temple was a natural progression. The sight of the endless Arabian Sea got etched in my mind, and I can still feel the quite vast expanse of water that triggered awe and fear at the same time. The events of the bygone era came alive as the lights danced on different parts of the temple in a fascinating night show.

Our next stop the holy city of Dwarka, associated with the naughty and witty lord Srikrishna, amazed us by the serenity of its temples. It came as a pleasant surprise to see that no pundits pestered you for a Pooja; the rates were fixed and pasted on the

the entrance, pundits sittings quietly inside the premises, to provide their services if wished for. Devoid of cacophony, it helped fostering a spiritual connection with the place.

A walk in the Bapu's Haveli in Porbandar was humbling to say the least. To tread the same earth where such a great man was born and brought up was like witnessing history with your own eyes. Further ahead Diu presented an altogether different slice of time. A former Portugese colony, it wore the aura of a different culture. The brightly painted houses in violet, dark yellow, pink, brown suddenly made life more colourful. The statues of water sprouting mermaids on the road junctions fascinated me, and the memory of soaking in the high waves at the beach still feels like a splash of refreshing water. The excavated mounds of Harappan cities Lothal and Dholavira showcased the level of advancement in town planning and water management of one of the most ancient civilisations of the world. The famous unicorn seal, and the dockyard at Lothal stood as the testimony to ancient India's trade relations.

However, what enamoured me the most was the colourful glass studded backless cholis worn with an equally elegant ghaghra by the damsels on the roads in the countryside. The elegance, ease and élan in their gait and the glitter of those clothes was hard to match by professional models and designers. I felt proud of the cultural diversity of our country where traditional clothes, dietary habits, living patterns formed a vivid mosaic of splendid richness. The charm of it so captivated my heart that later during my visit to Rann of Kutchh festival, I swaggered around on the white sand decked in a magenta Ghaghara choli all studded with mirrors and dangling festoons. A lady came to me and appreciatively asked, "Are you going to give the cultural performance tonight?" Well, I wished I knew Dandiya!



(Qutubshahi Tomb in Bidar, and the Entrance of Bidar Fort)

Venturing into the Deccan

Hailing from North India, I had always dreaded being posted to south. Wouldn't it be so unbearably hot! But Forces as an ultimate integrative organization have a capacity to break prejudices. It was none other than my Alma Mater that called me this time- the prestigious Indian Air Force Academy in Hyderabad. And the cherry on the top was that I was being paid to run and work out - my favourite tasks, with hundreds of

companions for free. As an Outdoor Training Instructor I enjoyed my sunrises and sunsets on the sports ground. To my surprise I found the weather more conducive here than in north. Days might have been hot but mornings and evenings were pleasant, and the North east Monsoon brought plenty of rain.



(Vitthala Temple at Hampi)

My escapades continued as the South possessed richness not only in gold but also in history. Golconda fort, Ramappa temple, and thousand pillar temple in Warangal, Qutubshahi tombs in Bidar, and Hampi complex whetted my appetite for the past. On behest of my mother, I even endured standing in the long queue for darshan in Tirupati temple. A peep into this treasure trove of India was enough to justify the lament of the Roman writer Pliny about the world's gold being sunk in India. The gold plated spires of the temples, the intricate carvings on the sculptures beautifully delineating even the minutest details such as nails, the grandeur of the complexes, the remarkable symmetry in the architecture all combined left the visitor spell bound. Repositories of India's diverse and rich cultural heritage, these monuments are our connection with our roots and conduits of continuity with the future.



A spotted dove suddenly takes flight and my attention is diverted to it. It flits from one tree to another, reclaiming its world. I look at it amazed and marvel at nature which has instilled in us an ever-nudging urge to expand our horizons. Move we shall so that the inner core becomes still just like the solid core of the spinning earth. Move we shall to gain the depth to be able to receive and give plentifully.



Squadron Leader Toolika Rani has served in the Indian Air Force from 2005-2015 as an ATC Officer, and as Outdoor Training Instructor at the Air Force Academy, Hyderabad. She is an avid trav mountaineer, motivational speaker, writer and is presently doing Ph.D. on Sherpas of Nepal. She can be reached on tulich83@gmail.com

I Become....

BY RASHMI KASHYAP

We all know that today's world belongs to the woman of substance. Woman is power, a person of positive influence, she motivates the world with her constructive energy and leads the way to success. She is as delicate as rose yet as strong as Maa Durga.

The poem deals with the various roles of an Army officer's wife, which she plays at different junctures of her life.

I live in a moment, live it well

Engrossed, committed, pride to swell

I am action, emotion and devotion

I build the foundation with the bricks

Thrown at me without explanation

I become what is to be expected

Living this very moment, not regretted

I become a daughter, to grow, to be pampered

My in laws know me as a home maker

I display my cookery skills for a sumptuous dinner

I host wonderful parties, who needs an event manager?

Being a mother I don all the hats possible

A nanny, friend, teacher and counselor

At times hard task master but mostly protector

I am a sister, who shares, laugh till I roll down

Argue till collapse, together paint the town

It's time to move, I become Movers and Packers

Living out of boxes, posted to exotic places

Hey! I become traveler during vacations

An explorer reaching out to untouched locations

I am a photographer seeking perfection

Lakes, forests, mountains make my collection

As soon as I enter the campus, an updated teacher

A friend, guide and philosopher to young custodians forever

I become a beloved wife to greet my man in the evening

Flashing million dollar smile, fresh and glowing

Living this very moment totally enchanted

I scribble like a writer to bond with this world

I become a spirited soul when close to God.

Yes I live my moment and live it all.



Rashmi Kashyap has over 20 years of experience and expertise in the field of education. Her career commenced as a fashion designer but due to transferable job of her spouse she chose to become a teacher and progressed on to be a Counselor, Principal and head of faculty, and in her various roles in education space she has been an effective leader and mentor to students. A focused professional with a passion and commitment for education, Rashmi holds graduate degree in Education and Arts with post graduate degree in English. An avid blogger she can be followed on www.soulinspiritblog.com. Happily married with two sons currently she is based out of Hyderabad.

The Mobile Mania

BY ANITA SHARMA

Through the years, the human race has been single minded in its pursuit of new-fangled technologies and trendy lifestyles. It has been engrossed in inventing, acquiring and adopting means of cushioning the lives of its members with greater comfort and luxuries. And we are not to be left behind. Let me apologise if I hurt any sentiments with my oblique reference to my fellow citizens and let me assure you that I don't mean any offence to my countrymen. I am as patriotic and loyal as the next person but I need to restrict my surmises as I have no access to data about the behaviour of people beyond our borders.

So, being the hot-blooded and enthusiastic people that we are, we have welcomed the mobile revolution with open arms and embraced it wholeheartedly. From my domestic help and the rickshaw puller across the corner, to the ten year old who lives across my apartment, everyone is the proud owner of this little hand held device which has become more than a life line. I have no issues with that. What hurts my sentiments is the rippling effect this personal gadget has on public life.

Most of us are given to expressing our views in loud and confident tones, irrespective of the fact that apart from our targeted audience, a large number of unwilling individuals are compelled to become silent recipients of our wisdom. And when it comes to speaking to a virtual listener over this tiny instrument, many of us tend to raise our voices a couple of decibels in order to ensure that the sound waves emitting from our vocal chords travel unrestricted. Who cares for the discomfort or inconvenience caused to those in our immediate vicinity?

Then again, I wonder if I should applaud the generosity of all those users who take it upon themselves to enlighten everyone within their radar by forwarding all the videos and message received. And that too, ASAP. They sincerely believe that they are doing their contacts a huge favour. Never pausing for even a minute to reflect on the veracity or relevance of the material they shoot into their circuits. I have received the same messages from a dozen concerned friends, not to mention the same tik-toks and videos which I had received a couple of months or even a year back and which have been revived with religious regularity and unflinching frequency. Needless to mention, they have lost their humour or shock value to repetitive familiarity. Besides, I now have the additional daily chore of clearing my mobile of hundreds of smileys, emojis, good mornings and good nights which keep piling up at an alarming rate. And oh! yes, the long sequence of birthday or anniversary wishes on personal groups followed by an even longer sequence of thank you's and folded hands.

Apart from contributing to the irritation factor, in these pressing times the unsolicited generosity of key-happy friends and well-wishers is bound to have a detrimental effect on morale and psyche. Pseudo-clips and falsified news are every now and again sending people into a frenzy of panic buying. There have been disgusting clips about

people deliberately and intentionally trying to foil the government's efforts to contain the pandemic. So much venom and animosity is being generated that post the lock down, we could easily head for a communal showdown.

The situation is grave with the death toll across the globe indicative that we are at war with a micro-organism which is proving larger than life. Let us restrain ourselves from spreading discordant and notes whose veracity is questionable. They serve no purpose except giving birth to depression and fear. Cooped up within the safety of my home and with the TV and my mobile as the only link with the outside world, I am faced with an inevitable Shakespearian question - 'to believe or not to believe'.

Stay safe!



Anita Sharma is a science graduate with masters in English Literature and works as an educator. With about 28 years of teaching experience, Science remains her first love. She has done her first level as a Reiki healer and indulges in tarot reading as an aside. She is married to Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma.

**Consistent
progress. Learn
and improve every
day. You'll always
look back and be
thankful for the
effort that you put
into yourself.**

Matrimonials

Brides Desired

Suitable match is sought by Wg Cdr Nirjhar Ghosh for his son. The son was born on 15 Aug 1993 and is 176 cm tall. He is Master of Science from Carnegie Mellon University, USA, and is presently employed with Apple in California, USA. Father is a retired officer and now working in Corporate Sector. Mother is an educationist and a home maker. He is their single child. The family is settled at Gurugram. A girl preferably working in the USA is desired.

Wg Cdr Nirjhar Ghosh can be reached at +91-97170061582, and nirjhar63@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Hemant Saxena for his son. The son was born on 1 Jun 1991, and is 5' 7" tall. He is MS in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics from Carnegie Mellon University, and is now employed as Data Engineer, with EY Melbourne. Father, a retired officer, is now working as Zonal Head Vigilance Management RRL and mother is Assistant Professor Amity University Noida. Younger sister is pursuing Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from NIMHANS Bangalore. The family resides at New Delhi. Preference is for a well educated girl with adaptability to relocating overseas.

Col Hemant Saxena can be reached at +91-9717736478 and hemant.pratimam@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma for his son. The son was born on 6 Jun 1994 and is 5' 9" tall. He is a serving Captain in the Army. Father is a serving officer and settled at Noida. Mother is an Educationist. His elder sister is a dentist and married to an Army Officer. A compatible professionally qualified girl who is willing for constant move due to transfers, preferably from teaching profession is desired. Match from Brahmin families is desired and horoscope match is must. It is a Hindu Brahmin family.

Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma can be reached at +91-7587519163 and dineshduttsharma1963@gmail.com for additional details.

Grooms Desired

Suitable match is sought by Air Vice Marshal P K Shrivastava for his daughter. The daughter was born on 6 Feb 1993 and is 5' 4" tall. She has done her BE and MBA and is presently a Marketing Manager in a MNC. Father is a retired officer, and presently is the Vice Chancellor of a private university Bhopal. Her elder sister is married. The family is presently settled at Bhopal. A compatible professionally qualified and well settled boy, who is 28-29 years old, 5' 7" to 5' 11" tall and working in MNC/PSU or in business, is desired. It is a Kayasth Hindu family.

Air Vice Marshal P K Shrivastava can be reached at +91-7022530889, and pramodairforce@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Sanjay Srivastava for his daughter. The daughter was born on 29 Jan 1994 and is 5' 4" tall. She has done Eco (Honours) and MBA, and after having worked for Coffee Day Beverages and Cars 24, is now selected for ICICI Bank. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. Her younger brother is pursuing BBA. The family is presently settled at Noida. A well settled boy with pleasing personality between 28 to 30 years is desired.

Col Sanjay Srivastava can be reached at +91-8288094004 and sansri_13church@hotmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Rana Gajraj Singh for his daughter. The daughter was born on 22 May 1992 and is 5' 5" tall. She is BTech (MIT) and MBA (ESADE-Spain) qualified, and is presently employed as Senior Consultant with KPMG, Canada. Father is presently self employed post retirement and corporate service. Mother is a home maker. Her younger brother is studying in NLU. While the girl is a resident of Canada, the family is settled in NCR. A well settled boy preferably from Canada or USA or willing to relocate to Canada is desired. Preference is for a Rajput boy, but open to alliance from others from good families too.

Col Rana Gajraj Singh can be reached at +91-9632045583 and colgsr@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Col Sudhir Handa for his daughter. The daughter was born on 29 Jul 1991 and is 5' 4" tall. She has done BSc Biotech, MBA, and BEd. Having worked with AXIS Bank earlier, she has now switched to teaching profession. Father is a serving officer, and mother is a home maker. Her younger brother is pursuing MBA. A compatible non-manglik boy, aged 30-33 years and with height of 5' 8", working in Defence or a Government job, and from a Punjabi Khatri family is desired. Horoscope matching is essential.

Col Sudhir Handa can be reached at +91-09858519335 and sudhirhanda67@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Brig Pradeep Arora for his daughter. The daughter was born on 6 Jan 1990 and is 152 cm tall. She has done B Com and MBA Finance (PGDM). After having worked with Deloitte, she is now with EnY at Gurgaon as American Tax Professional. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. The family is settled at Dwarka, Delhi. Her younger sister is in Class XII. A suitable boy aged 30-34 years, with height above 152 cm, with a stable job in Delhi, Gurgaon, or Bengaluru, or from service background, and open to moving abroad/other cities, is desired. Horoscope match is preferred. Caste and religion, no bar.

Brig Pradeep Arora can be reached at +91-84110217971, and pradeeparora20@gmail.com for additional details.

“

Networking is not about just connecting people. It's about connecting people with people, people with ideas, and people with opportunities.

— Michele Jennae

“

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— Herminia Ibarra



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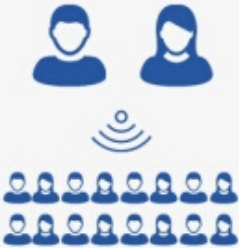
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