

from the author of No.1 Best-Sellers like

*Count Your Chickens Before they Hatch & Discover the Diamond in You*



# THE TIGER ROARS

DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



**12 stories of SUCCESS that will leave you INSPIRED !!**





Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri





## **Praise for Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri**

*“The maverick management guru!”*

**Financial Times, London**

*“The intellectual litterateur of the decade”*

**The Hindustan Times**

*“Set(s) the stage on fire”*

*“Inspiration personified”*

**The Times of India**

*“Mega Disruptor and Godfather of  
Private Education in India”*

**Elite Magazine**



In memory of Tom—a real Tiger till  
his last breath!

And for all you beautiful smiling and  
lovely babies — Arun Shanto, Laila  
Asha, Svenja, Lena & Tanja—who  
call me “Tiger” and almost make me  
believe that I’m one!!

And above all, for you, Tigress Rani.  
You inspire me with your passion for  
life and all it’s little pleasures. You  
inspire me with the way you lead your  
life and brought up your beautiful  
little cubs. You inspire with the fight  
you keep putting up daily against all  
physical adversities. You inspire me  
with your open mind that is always  
ready to absorb new knowledge even  
if they challenge your existing beliefs.  
You inspire with your ability to love  
others. You are a beautiful story of  
success, that I wish to write about  
more one day!

Love you all, always.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Che, thanks for helping me with the interviews and editing. You are my Cub, my Tiger and my Life. Without your approval nothing moves in my life anymore — and that makes my life far better than ever before. Your intellect and creativity inspires me like nobody else!!

Shikha, 25 years and counting— thanks for this life defining friendship, commitment and sustained sincerity. Thanks also for organising all the interviews and coordinating non-stop with all the inspirational subjects of this book and taking it upon yourself to make sure that it comes out on time!

Naveen, 30 years and counting— you are the man who I lean on for everything in life, more and more with every passing year. Your sincere look into each chapter and approval makes me believe that readers will like the final product!! I keep saying, and

I repeat, thank you for becoming the brother I lost. Your smiling company keeps me going!

Ratul, thanks for taking in my severe criticisms and yet always working with a smile and promising to keep doing so for life!! That's rare. Thanks so much for the hard work you put in for this book—to transcreate all the interviews with the interesting trivia that you researched and gathered!

Thank you Ms. Rachna Burman, Mr. Anupam Kar and Soumen Das for the support from Times Books. Super grateful!

Thank you Vishal Rajput for your valuable design support for our body of work over the years and this book in particular.

Arundhati, the cover looks great! Thank you!!

Thank you Mom and Rajita for being there.

Vishal Gupta, your undying sincerity, passion and smiling confidence provides me with a betrayal-free rock solid security. Thank you so much for being there in my life.

Thank you Zak, Sarah & Anjali for all your love that you make me feel in your special ways in the love filled magical moments in different proportions you all get to spend with me.

## P R E F A C E

Tiger Roars is a fascinating journey of 12 inspiring success stories mirroring the rise of India— stories picked up carefully from the hinterland to the glamour capital of India, from start-ups to old money!

The writing of this book itself has been a beautiful journey for me!! From going to meet some of the awesome people in the book, in various parts of the country to seeing their establishments and seeing them in action personally was itself such a huge learning for me! Then there were long inspiring and eye opening calls with some! Every moment has been exhilarating!

The preface to this book thus, can only do justice when I give a few lines of introduction about all of them and express my gratitude to all! I hope these lines make my readers realise what makes these amazing Tigresses and Tigers Roar and in turn make India flourish!!!

Not just because he comes alphabetically at top, but in reality as well, I'm most grateful to Adi Godrej sir for so much love he has given over the last two decades. He has always supported me with his full heart. From launching my first book *Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch* to launching IIPM's Mumbai campus (the first IIPM campus outside of Delhi) to writing the introduction for our book *Power Brands* to giving numerous interviews including the one for this book! Meeting him in his office for an interview I took of his first *The Hindustan Times*, remains one of my most favorite interactions with any of the Chieftains of India Inc. Sir, you are an inspiration. And I'm most grateful for the lifelong learning you have provided and I hope a bit of that I have been able to talk about in this book!!

Ajit sir, you are just wow!! I think of you and have smile!! I have rarely met anyone so full of life!! The hours spent with you fly off like minutes!! I have seen first hand the kind of love your people have for you and it's been awe-inspiring!! I love the unending enthusiasm in your entire personality



— a reason why perhaps you chose someone who reflects the same aura, the legendary Kapil Dev as as your Brands Ambassador— and I can see the results of the same in the awesome growth story of AIPL-ABRO! May the country remain GLUED to you!!

Amit and Anurag, you both amazing brothers indeed symbolise the story of the Indian start-up stratosphere!! Just an idea and passion and there we are— Cardekho!! Being a car enthusiast myself, I have first hand experience how you made the entire process of buying a car such an easy and lovely experience! Thank you Indeed for being a part of this journey and sharing your story!!

Farah ma'am!!!! I always say!! You are the ultimate Show-woman. You took over the mantle of showmanship from Subhash Ghai and post that no one has been able to touch you!! Your entire personality is pure love!! You have been most kind in each of our interactions— interviews, multiple awards shows, personal exchanges!! You are the perfect example of breaking the glass ceiling!! You didn't break it actually, you smashed it and how! An industry where a woman directing itself was a rarity, you just entered and placed yourself right at the top!! As India grows, your story symbolises the equal partnership of the sexes!! Thank you for being there!!!

Gaurav you Rockstar! I have seen you as a student, a colleague, an entrepreneur and a client. Your charismatic personality and rise and rise has been a personal inspiration!! And thus when I thought of having someone in the book to symbolise the story of a B-school made entrepreneur, I couldn't think of anyone else! Your smile matches the class you bring in your work, of which I have been a first hand witness as a client! Thanks for being there!!

Guru!!! Ouff!! The shy student at IIPM from a small village in Punjab with stars in his eyes but endless humility and respect for one and all. From that time to the first time I heard you sing when the Badshah of Bollywood, SRK came to our campus, you had already become a symbol of confidence!! It was a personal privilege for me to be there for the launch of your first album and then see the phenomenon growth!! The day I read the New York Times article almost crediting you for having taken T-Series to the most liked YouTube channel on earth, I was so excited that I forwarded it to my entire contact list!! It's amazing to see your success story— a story of focus, sincerity, humility and roots!

Rakesh Agarwal sir, so many meetings with you and each time I have only come back thinking, how can someone who has achieved so much success be so down to earth and be so outright caring. Of course then I spoke to you for this book and

realised that is the philosophy of your business and for your people!! It has indeed been an honour to write about the success story of Amulya Mica, a household name in today's India!

Ritesh!! I didn't know him first! At first one of our new ventures sometime in 2018, took an office inside Innov8! Everyone was so happy and delighted! They insisted I come and visit the place to see what an amazing atmosphere he had created for his co-working venture!! Way back in 2003-4, I remember journalists and TV channels coming to visit our offices because they had heard about the bright colours inside!! For years ours remained the only office we knew of with such colours— blues, reds, yellows, oranges and green!! No beige, browns, off whites, greys! Even the wooden furnitures were spray painted! Many years later I heard some offices were experimenting a bit!! But I hadn't seen them. Not even globally. Innov8 finally broke that! Radiant colourful co-working spaces brimming with modern energy so needed for future Ritesh Maliks to prosper!! A Doctor to a symbol of startups and serial entrepreneurship!!! What a pleasure it was to get connected to him post that!! Keep innov8ing my friend!!

Dr. Smit Patel represents traditional industry breaking news grounds at its best! Stylish, forward thinking, risk taking, innovating all things that are not associated with the traditional industry of

chemicals! And that's why he is here!! The man who is creating ripples in his industry with his Sandhya Group and regularly winning accolades every where!! He speaks less, works more!! But works with elan and flamboyance rarely seen in his industry!! This Sandhya is actually focused on the sunrise the next day!!

What do I say about Sulajja Motwani!! She is the most beautiful mix of personality and vision! Each meeting with her — during events of our Magazines to Award shows, to the time she graciously visited our campus in Delhi coming down all the way from Pune to chance encounters at airports have been filled with smiles and as much talks about health and fitness as about business!! She inspires like no one else does!! Huge thanks for your presence in this book!!

Over various meetings one thing was clear! That if there was one intrapreneurial leader who I needed to have in this book, it had to be Tapan Singhel!! One man who created an empire purely as a leader!! Only because his vision is that of any top rung entrepreneur in the country. And beyond! Under his leadership Bajaj Allianz General Insurance is now a behemoth!! And he has been leading it from the scratch for all these years!! That's the kind of people all entrepreneurs look out for, feel secure about, and once they get they can think of newer pastures because they know the man in charge will

do more than they possibly could have!! These are the leaders of India Inc., who are insured forever!!!

I have no idea how many employees, friends and relatives including my father, I pushed and convinced to enroll into VLCC!! That's called a brand!! And I have had the good luck of not just meeting Vandana Luthra, the woman behind it, during our events (she came all the way to London to be a part of one of our Power Brands events) but also knowing a lot about her personally through a very close student and colleague of mine, Harshita, who has been family friends with her!! For years I used to get almost live telecast of her thoughts and dynamism from her! So obviously meeting and interacting with was sheer inspiration!! Her personality matches the business she is into and so does her fitness and presentation skills!! Knowing about her entire journey was one of the most inspirational parts of writing this book!! These are the people who keep the Curls & Curves of the Indian economy in shape!

And I hope that our growth story has just begun!

The Tiger Roars!!



## CONTENT

1.	Adi Godrej.....	21
2.	Ajit Gupta.....	47
3.	Amit Jain / Anurag Jain.....	67
4.	Farah Khan.....	91
5.	Gaurav Bargujar.....	109
6.	GuruRandhawa.....	133
7.	Rakesh Agarwal.....	151
8.	Ritesh Mallik.....	171
9.	Smit Patel.....	191
10.	Sulajja Motwani.....	217
11.	Tapan Singhel.....	243
12.	Vandana Luthra.....	265



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



**ADI GODREJ**  
CHAIRMAN, GODREJ GROUP

“Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision,  
passionately own the vision, and relentlessly  
drive it to completion.”

- Jack Welch

Someone whose commitment, integrity, farsightedness, intellect, knowledge, business acumen, philanthropic bent of mind, and true patriotism has made him an embodiment of these written words of wisdom— Mr Adi Godrej is the Chairman of the 124-year-old Godrej Group. He has been President of several Indian trade and industrial associations. He is the Past Chairman of the Board of the Indian School of

Business and Past President of the Confederation of Indian Industry. He has been a member of the Dean's Advisory Council of the MIT Sloan School of Management, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, and a member of the Wharton Asian Executive Board. Mr Godrej is also a patron of the Himalayan Club. He holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management. He is a recipient of several awards and recognitions, including the Padma Bhushan 2013 (the second-highest civilian award in India).

- Established in 1897, Godrej's roots can be traced back to India's Independence and Swadeshi movement founder, Ardeshir Godrej, a lawyer turned serial entrepreneur, who failed with a few ventures before he struck gold with the locks business. The Godrej Group comprises a varied business portfolio that includes real estate development, fast-moving consumer goods, advanced engineering, home appliances, furniture, security, and agri-care. While many businesses are privately held, the combined market cap of the Group's publicly listed entities is more than USD 15 billion. Ranked as the 2nd most trusted Indian brand, with annual revenue of USD 5 billion and an estimated 1.5 billion customers worldwide that use one or another Godrej product every day, the

Godrej Group is amongst India's most diversified and trusted conglomerates. The geographical footprint extends beyond Earth, with their engines now powering many of India's space missions.

The Godrej Group was established out of a desire to demonstrate economic self-sufficiency and excellence within India in the pre-independence decades. From safes that withstood fires better than international competitors to one of the world's first soaps; from vegetable oils to the ballot boxes for independent India's first general election, the Group has a proud tradition of making meaningful products and building businesses that serve the country's interests. Under Mr Adi Godrej's leadership, the Group always focused on people and the planet along with profits. Approximately 23% of the promoter stake in the Godrej Group is owned by philanthropic trusts that work on environmental, educational, and health care issues in India. The Group is also committed with passion and purpose to making a difference through their Good & Green strategy of shared values to create a more employable Indian workforce, build a greener India and innovate for 'Good' and 'Green' products.

"The best investment you can make is an investment in yourself... the more you learn, the more you will earn"

- Warren Buffett

As Mr Godrej takes a fond reminiscent walk down his earlier days, we listen to him in rapt attention “I joined the business when I was 21 years old after I completed my bachelor’s and master’s degree from MIT (The Massachusetts Institute of Technology), US where I was a member of the Pi Lambda Phi fraternity and a member of Tau Beta Pi. I returned and joined the business.” And one cannot but be awestruck imagining the farsightedness this young lad had at that time! And mind us, this was not 2022, but 6 decades ago— the early sixties of the last century, and the internet was yet to be discovered! We are interrupted from those ruminations as Mr Godrej continues, “I initially studied Mechanical Engineering, and then I switched to Management Studies with a minor in Mechanical Engineering. And then I did my Master’s in Management. There were no management schools and no scope for management education in India. There were no management schools at that time outside the US. I felt that would add a lot of value to our Group. And I learned a lot there. I was one of the first management graduates in Indian Business!”

India was mistaken in its lack of faith in management studies, and so it did not have any significant institutions that taught the subject well. Adi saw an opportunity in the United States and decided to utilize and leverage it to his advantage. So, he decided to switch his subject of focus

from Mechanical Engineering to Management, and he finally received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Management in 1963. For Mr Godrej at that time, the main challenge was to grow the business and use Management in its different forms throughout the organization and diversify in every possible way. He elaborates, "Then I started recruiting business graduates because the IIMs started soon after and added a lot of people to our organization. I was looking to get young talents to add value to management decisions. Various points of Management, to name some, the likes of 'Human Resource Development,' 'Research & Development,' 'Cost Management' – all various forms of Management I introduced into the Company."

Then he goes on to reveal one of the most priceless lessons that any individual who wants to become an entrepreneur or business leader can adopt, which can guarantee them the highest level of success in anything they want to do and are passionate about: "...One of the things I focused on is a constant improvement— continuous improvement— never being satisfied with anything. No complacency. I am not resting on any past laurels. Improvement was a continuous process. Always keep adding to improvements. There cannot be any peak or highest point in life, as I believe in continuous improvement. Even now, we believe in improvement. We must keep growing and take on

new opportunities when they come around. The way of doing business constantly keeps changing. New technologies come, and new management ideas come. And as I said, continuous improvement is the name of the game. One must be always open to learning. Always be open to change. And always be open to improvement. My children studied in Boston also. The best US Business Schools like MIT and Harvard had always kept up with the latest thinking... and ideas.”

Having completed his MBA, he was now set to be the first business graduate to work at the Company. This added to the already high expectation everyone had of him. Dealing with this sort of pressure from a young age helped Mr Godrej immensely as it made him accustomed to high-stakes situations and helped in make important decisions. When he finally joined, the Godrej Group was primarily concerned with the manufacture of locks and the production of vegetable-based soaps [Godrej launched the

**“ ...One of the things I focused on is a constant improvement—continuous improvement—never being satisfied with anything. No complacency. I am not resting on any past laurels.**

world's first soap made from vegetable oil in 1918]. Soon after joining the Company, Mr Godrej revolutionized how Godrej Group did business. As he had told us already, he implemented the knowledge and techniques he gained at MIT, such as improving Human Resources Management and the Company's marketing strategy. Also, as already stated before, he started hiring students from business schools such as the IIMs to modernize his workforce and shift away from family hegemony.

When he joined, the 'License Permit Raj' was in effect in India. This was the then Indian Government's attempt to move India towards a planned economy by giving licenses and permits to do business to only a select few. This was not conducive to the industry; however, the Godrej group thrived under this policy. However, this policy was repealed as India began to globalize and liberalize starting 1989-90. This crucial shift was perceived as a threat by most Indian businesses as they were more likely to face competition from international and domestic companies. However, Adi Godrej was one of the few distinguished business leaders who welcomed this challenge. While other businesses were treating global companies with hostility, Mr Godrej was quick to utilize the newfound opportunity and transform it into one of his most significant business achievements - the Godrej Group had some of the most successful international partnerships

under Adi's leadership as Mr Godrej explains, "We developed very successful people, leaders, and competitive businesses. Good management practices and competitive posture help us tide successfully through the wave of globalization. We welcomed the globalization of our business and international competition. We also had several joint ventures, which were very successful."

Among others, Mr Godrej considers Jack Welch and political leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela as his sources of inspiration – what does he think of the present Indian Government's dream to transform India into a USD 5 Trillion economy? - Is this attainable? And he thinks, "...yes, it is, provided we have good policies. If we have the right policies, it is achievable. And policies should be like 'Free Enterprise', be competitive, be successful, and always keep adding...never rest on your old laurels. I am a great believer in free enterprise. I don't think the Govt should interfere too much in business. And we should have an open policy."

The living legend Mr Amitabh Bachchan, a good friend of Mr Godrej, speaks about a time when Mr Godrej had set sail alone on his boat. However, he hadn't returned at the usual time, and everyone was panicking, and numerous people were sent to look for him. It was only until much later that Mr Godrej returned and revealed that he was deep into



the waters when a massive storm broke out and the tide rose dangerously high. When Mr Godrej noticed, instead of panicking at the sight of the approaching storm and trying to sail back to shore in the dangerous waters, he decided to weather the storm and only then return. Therefore, he was late and hasn't managed to return be back on time. This calm decision was the smartest thing Ken could do as rushing to beat a storm would be the most dangerous thing to do, but Mr Godrej was able to assess the risk and understand that this was a storm he would be able to withstand, and he did not panic. This reaction symbolises the mindset he has when he faces any problem, danger, or challenge in all aspects of his life— be fearless, do not panic, and become accustomed to volatility, that is the only way to succeed. Though no one will be able to see the incident live from Mr Godrej's perspective, he has this to say about it— “I decided to wait until the tide became favourable. It helped me in many things, both in my personal and professional business life.”

**“ ... I am a great believer in free enterprise. I don't think the Govt should interfere too much in business. And we should have an open policy.”**

“...that Nature might stand up  
 And say to all the world  
 This was a man!”  
 - Shakespeare

The husband, the father, and the grandfather in him also reflect those traits that we have seen in him as an entrepreneur, a business leader, and a visionary, whose dictionary lacks words like “complacency,” “content,” “satisfied,” or phrases like “I had done enough”! His wife, Ms Parmeshwar Adi Godrej, died six years ago, in October 2016, just a few days after they had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary – as Mr Godrej adds, “I have three children and six grandchildren. I have a perfect family life, and I look forward to it.”

Daughter Nisaba Godrej is the Executive Chairperson of Godrej Consumer Products. In the last fifteen years, she has been a key architect of GCPL’s strategy and transformation. She is also the Chairperson of Teach for India and sits on the board of Godrej Agrovvet, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra and Mahindra, and VIP Industries. She has a BSc degree from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Nisaba is passionate about education, the human mind, trekking, and



*Shri Adi Godrej with wife, Ms. Parmeshwar Adi Godrej.*

DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



*The President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee presenting the Padma Award to Shri Adi Godrej.*



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

equestrian sports. She lives in Mumbai with her children, Zoran and Aidan.

Daughter Tanya Dubash is the Executive Director and Chief Brand Officer at the Godrej Group. She is responsible for reinventing the Godrej Brand and has been instrumental in evolving the Group into a more brand-driven organization. Tanya is a Director on the Boards of several Godrej Group companies, including Godrej Industries Limited, Godrej Consumer Products Limited, and Godrej Agrovet Limited. She is also the Chairperson of Godrej Nature's Basket. She heads the Strategic Marketing Group (SMG) that guides the Godrej Masterbrand and portfolio strategy and chairs the Marketing Council comprising Group Marketing Heads. Tanya is a trustee of Brown University, a member of the Brown India Advisory Council, and also on the Watson Institute Board of Overseers. She also serves on the Customer Value Foundation and AIESEC India boards.

Additionally, Tanya is a member of the CII Council and is instrumental in driving the India@75 outreach program. Tanya was a member of the Board of the Bharatiya Mahila Bank between November 2013 and May 2015. She is AB cum laudé, Economics & Political Science, Brown University, USA, and an alumna of the Harvard Business School. The World Economic



Forum recognized her as a Young Global Leader in 2007. Tanya is married to Arvind Dubash, an Industrialist. They live in Mumbai with their children, Aryaan and Azahar.

His son - Pirojsha Godrej, graduated from the Wharton School of Business in 2002 & completed his Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University in 2004. He worked with Godrej Properties Limited (GPL) from 2004 to 2006. During that time, he was responsible for directing the Company's expansion strategy, which saw the Company increase its operations from 2 cities to 10 cities between 2004 & 2008. He completed an MBA from Columbia Business School in 2008 before rejoining GPL as Executive Director. In 2010, Pirojsha led the initial public offering of the Company through which Godrej Properties raised US\$ 100 million. In 2012, Pirojsha was appointed CEO of Godrej Properties. He has led the Company through a phase of rapid growth through which the Company has established itself as one of India's leading & fastest growing real estate developers. Under Pirojsha's leadership, Godrej Properties has been at the forefront of the sustainable development movement; in 2013, GPL received an award from the former President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam, for being one of the companies in India from across sectors to have driven the green building movement. The Clinton Foundation has partnered with Godrej Properties

for its large township project, Godrej Garden City, which was selected as one of two projects in India & seventeen from around the world to work with the Clinton Climate Initiative towards the goal of creating a Climate Positive Development. In 2015, the Economic Times selected him in their 40 under 40 list, a list of the most impactful business leaders under 40 years of age. He was also listed by GQ magazine as one of the 50 most influential young Indians.

The past achievements rest proudly on the shoulder of the present's innovation-driven and all-around excellence. and though Mr Adi Godrej disapproves of clinging to one's past laurels, as far as the Godrej Group is concerned, the Group's past laurels are worth celebrating as some of them had been precursors of civilizational changes, especially in the history of the Indian subcontinent and also around the globe! Starting from a humble background, in 1897, Ardeshir Burjorji Godrej set up a lock company after a few failed ventures. For him, the key to success turns out to be locked. Ardeshir Godrej began developing and selling locks after reading a newspaper article about the rising citywide crime rates, with the assistance of his brother Pirojsha Burjorji Godrej and this is how the grand and historical journey was initiated. And now, one should revisit the innumerable "firsts" of the Group.

With the world's first vegetable oil soap Chavi to be made without animal fat, the Group's made its contribution not just to Swadeshi but also to Ahimsa. In 1922 – out of their commitment to the common good and not for some monetary benefit (something so familiar in contemporary times with the advent of celebrities as being brand ambassadors) - Godrej's products were endorsed by stalwarts like Annie Besant; Rabindranath Tagore and even Mahatma Gandhi, who in a letter to a Godrej competitor, said: "I hold my brother Godrej in such high regard that if your enterprise is likely to harm him in any way, I regret very much that I cannot give you my blessings." In 1923, after the roaring success of locks and soap, Godrej Group forayed into furniture with almirahs (steel cupboards). Over the years, it has become a tradition to gift a Godrej almirah to newlyweds. The Group also made 1.7 million ballot boxes for India's first steps as a democracy in 1951. In 1952, the iconic 'Cinthol' was launched on Indian Independence Day. With Godrej No.1, Cinthol made the Godrej Group, the second-largest soap player in India. Gradually milestones kept adding up – safest of safes, refrigerators, hair colour, innovation and excellence in Real Estate, a diversified R&D based Agribusiness, market-leading mosquito repellent brands like Good Knight and Hit, gourmet, retails with Nature's Basket chains, one-stop furniture and interior designing solutions with Interior chains, to India's first key with a chip



- the Mechatronic Door Lock Key, and the Unique Dual Access Control Padlock. This first lock comes with two keys. The padlock even empowers the owner to block or grant access to the second key, along with their commitment to the environment and sustainable development with initiatives like “Planet Godrej” and, as we had mentioned previously, “Good & Green,” “Godrej One,” and “Net Zero Carbon Buildings” to pioneering India’s Clean Energy landscape by building the Calandria for a 700MW nuclear power reactor for the Nuclear Power Corporation of India within a record time of 30 months.

And the biggest of iconic milestones – in 2008, India sent Chandrayaan-1, its first uncrewed mission to the moon, becoming the fifth nation to do so. And the Godrej Group’s engineering expertise helped build the launch vehicle and lunar orbiter for the mission; the Group had also partnered with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on India’s first mission to Mars. Godrej Aerospace engines power the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, and their precision components calculate the satellite’s trajectory to the millisecond. The Group has also contributed to ISRO’s GSLV Mark III’s successful maiden experimental flight - supplying the L110 engines for the core first stage and thrust chamber for the CE20 Cryo engine to push India’s indigenous capabilities heavy-satellite launches. The Group

has also partnered with the Ordnance Factory Chandrapur to conceptualize and develop the Pinaka rocket assembly line to enhance production with high-quality and advanced-safety features.

The business was never about merely making profits, but it was about building a nation.

As a Group, the conglomerate constantly makes efforts to contribute meaningfully to the communities in which they operate. They have several philanthropic trusts which actively support education, environmental conservation, and healthcare principally through The Pirojsha Godrej Foundation

which holds approximately 23 per cent of Godrej. It is a public charitable trust that was incorporated in 1972, with a charter to support education, skilling, and environmental sustainability. The Godrej Foundation was incorporated in 2017—

**In 1922 –  
out of their  
commitment  
to the common  
good and  
not for some  
monetary  
benefit...  
- Godrej's  
products were  
endorsed by  
stalwarts like  
Annie Besant;  
Rabindranath  
Tagore and  
even Mahatma  
Gandhi...**

to support education, skilling, and ecological sustainability. The Godrej Memorial Trust was established in 1984; as a Public Charitable Trust founded to develop and maintain clinics, dispensaries, and other institutions to provide medical relief to individuals who are disadvantaged means. The Trust has run a charitable clinic at Okhla, New Delhi,

since 1984. It includes diagnosis and treatment by reputed doctors and surgeons in paediatrics, obstetrics, and gynaecology. The clinic is equipped with an X-Ray, ECG, and a clinical laboratory for investigations. The Trust also set up the 120-bed multi-speciality Godrej

Memorial Hospital in 2005. Established on a not-for-profit basis and operated on a model that provides healthcare at subsidized prices to those living in Vikhroli and the adjoining suburbs; The Soonabhai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation was set up in 1985 to oversee the conservation and preservation of the largest privately managed belt

**....And the biggest of iconic milestones – in 2008, India sent Chandrayaan-1... the Godrej Group's engineering expertise helped build the launch vehicle and lunar orbiter for the mission...**

of mangroves in Mumbai – which even earned the praise of HE Charles, the Prince of Wales. The first of its kind in India to formally adopt ISO 14001 standards for Environment Management Systems. The Management of the mangrove ecosystem of Pirojshanagar focuses on three interlinked components: research, conservation, and awareness research, including the facilitation of short-term, mid-term, and long-term studies undertaken by schools, undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral college students, and professional researchers. Conservation includes on-site protection of the mangrove ecosystem by providing security to the premises, development and Management of a mangrove nursery, regular plantation programs, development and Management of educational infrastructures such as nature trails, theme gardens, a mangrove information centre, a marine aquarium, and a watchtower. Awareness includes outdoor nature walks and indoor activities for organized groups such as schools, colleges, civic groups, corporate employees, professional associations, etc. The outdoor activities focus on plant diversity, wildlife (insects, birds, etc.), photography, interactive educational games, and participatory plantations. Indoor activities include film screenings, quizzes, presentations, talks, exploring the mangrove information centre, and indoor games.

The Group has also pledged its commitment

to Public Health: with a target to cover 100% in 810 villages across nine districts in Maharashtra. It is partnering with the Indian Government's aim to make India malaria-free by 2030 by creating awareness and driving behaviour change in high-risk rural areas. Their pledge to Employability: with a target of 1 million every year - improving earning potential by building core domain skills, focusing on entrepreneurship and life skills education, providing post-training support, and enabling social protection. To Waste Management: Partnering with local municipalities, social entrepreneurs, and residents for sustainable solid waste management with a target to treat 18000 MT of waste. And to Watershed Management: Partnering with NABARD to help restore the ecological balance in drought-prone regions and mitigate climate change risk for small and marginal farmers.

The Group and their world of diversification...

Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd. (G&B), the flagship Company of the Godrej Group, has played a vital role in India's economic history by driving excellence in design and manufacturing and delivering sustainable value for its stakeholders and communities. Today Godrej is in every home and workplace. Enriching quality of life every day, everywhere. Established in 1897 with over INR 11,500 crore (FY-2021) and over 14,000 committed employees, G&B's diverse presence across ten

industries - from complex engineering solutions to consumer goods like appliances, furniture, and security solutions - positively impacts the lives of one-third of India's population every day. Through international subsidiaries and joint ventures, the Company's products have also established a solid global footprint across five continents. As a values-driven company known for its integrity and a strong social conscience, it has built a compassionate corporate culture that empowers individuals, teams, and communities in which G&B operates. G&B has been consistently recognized as one of India's most respected companies. For over a century, their focus on customers has helped them constantly innovate; design products and solutions with clarity of purpose that are manufactured in a quality-driven and technology-led environment and distributed through a national and international network of partners. Solid and sustainable practices that help protect the environment are enshrined in the much-talked-about Good & Green policy that remains at the core of G&B's business operations. Some of the business verticals of the Group are Aerospace & Defence; Appliances; Chemicals; Financial Services; Food & Agri – under the aegis of Godrej Agrovet is a food and Agri conglomerate with 62 manufacturing plants, it is dedicated to improving the productivity of Indian farmers by innovating products and services that sustainably increase crop and livestock yields; Furniture, Furnishing & Fittings; General Engineering; Heavy Engineering;

Home & Personal Care: with a revenue of USD 1.5 billion (FY21), the market cap of USD 10.3 billion (FY21), and reaching to 1.2 billion consumers in 90 plus countries, Godrej Consumer Products is a leading emerging markets company; Intra-Logistics; Information Technology; Infrastructure; Locks & Security Solutions; Power and Energy and of course Real Estate: Godrej Properties brings the Godrej Group philosophy of innovation, sustainability, and excellence to the real estate industry. Each Godrej Properties development combines a 123-year legacy of excellence and trust with a commitment to cutting-edge design and technology.

In recent years, Godrej Properties has received over 250 awards and recognitions. Their projects over the years have delivered many “firsts” in the Indian real estate market. Their commercial office project, Godrej BKC, is the only LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum rated building in India’s leading commercial district, Bandra Kurla Complex, demonstrating Godrej Properties’ commitment to environmental sustainability. In 2010, Godrej Properties became a publicly listed company through a successful IPO in which it raised USD 100 million. Godrej Properties also created a fund management subsidiary in 2016; Godrej Fund Management raised USD 275 million in the year’s largest residential real estate-focused fund-raise in the country. They are one of India’s only national developers with a strong presence

across its leading real estate markets. In the financial year 2016, for the first time, Godrej Properties was India's largest publicly listed real estate developer by sales value, having sold over INR 5,000 crore of real estate that year. They also delivered 0.56 million square meters (6 million square feet) of real estate in seven cities across India in the same year.

Godrej Group's legacy over the years with locks, soaps, and homes - to name a few, is second to none. This proud legacy stems from an opportunity to build something exciting once again. They are introducing Godrej Housing Finance- where they aim to finance home loans that understand what's important to "you" – the consumers.

The Godrej Group operates in sectors as varied as real estate, consumer products, industrial engineering, appliances, furniture, security, and agricultural products. Subsidiaries and affiliated companies include Godrej Industries and its subsidiaries Godrej Consumer Products, Godrej Agrovet, Godrej Properties, and the private holding Company Godrej & Boyce. Mr Adi Godrej heads the Godrej group alongside his brother Nadir Godrej (managing director of Godrej Industries and chairman of Godrej Agrovet) and his cousin Jamshyd Godrej (Godrej & Boyce managing director and chairman).

Well, as we intend to rest our brush and try to



look into this huge and extraordinary canvas of this extraordinary man, Shri Adi Godrej – we find shades and hues of every colours in him and how these colours have impacted billions of lives on this planet in all these years and counting.



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

**AJIT GUPTA**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
AJIT INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD.

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have  
greatness thrust upon ‘em.”

- William Shakespeare

The seed of entrepreneurship germinated early:  
Born to a joint family milieu, with 5 brothers, Ajit  
Gupta’s life was markedly different from the beginning:  
his walk from the world of a teenager, full of loud  
dreams and heroic aspirations to that of a young hard-  
working entrepreneur, who stands and thrives on the  
hard-hitting soil of pragmatism and reality was nothing  
less than a “(Robert) Ripley’s Believe It or Not” story.  
Just right after completing his XII boards, Ajit Gupta  
went to the United States of America! A teenage boy,  
who had not yet been to Bombay (now Mumbai), had not

had the experience of wearing suits yet, straightway went to the US. His father's friend helped him not only with a million-dollar business idea but also made his suits and passport available to him. The idea was to get solar films for glasses. It was around from 1982 to -83. A US company had innovated and had started the business, But Ajit Gupta's entrepreneurial farsightedness made him quickly realize that this business has huge potential here in India, with hot tropical climatic conditions. His father chipped in and gave him the much-needed funding – 10,000 dollars, which was around 1, 20,000 in Indian currency at that time. When finally, Ajit reached there, he almost had nothing with him to present himself to the company and convince them for an association, except his iron will, high self-confidence and unmatched sincerity, commitment, and promise in his eyes. The US Company had no distribution network in India till then, they accepted his proposal more than gladly. Ajit Gupta came back to India with a legal distributorship and agency of a product, which was still more or less fairly unknown here then. And as it happens with any novel product or business idea – much ahead of its time – the first year of its reception in India was nothing of much glory, it went rather bad. But Ajit Gupta was too ambitious and sincere a young entrepreneur to be bogged down by this temporary setback.

Let's hear as he fondly reminiscence: "I had a

two-wheeler then. I was the seller. I was the buyer too. I was a Marketing guy, sales guy, accounts guy – everything. I had to work hard. Had to convince a quite lot of people about the usefulness of the product.” The biggest challenge for Mr. Gupta was how to ensure the circulation of his money and set the business ball rolling. As mentioned earlier, the product was new in the Indian market of those days. And not many knew about its use and usefulness. So, on the one hand, Mr. Gupta had to set the accounts book ticking, and on the other hand, he had to ensure that demand was being created for it, and this was the toughest part at that time. Tinted glass, in those days, as Mr. Gupta can very clearly remember, used to be very costly and not many could afford it. But when this very shadowy film gets pasted over a plain glass –it almost gave the same result of tinted glass – but most importantly costs not even one-tenth of that of the latter. Moreover, not only did this initial good amount of savings guarantee, but it also guaranteed a long-term recurring savings on electricity bills by reducing the cost of use of air conditioners – and this was the crux of this product’s USP that Mr. Gupta had to make everyone realize and the job would be done.

He managed to get contracts from many buildings and big business houses. But it was indeed a hard ordeal to make them believe in him and his product and its benefits: it has the potential

to reduce the electricity cost of any building by 30%. Taj Group of Hotels, Siemens, and American Centre came forward with their contracts and many followed suit. Then in 1986 Maruti came into existence and it was indeed a “Eureka” moment. They initially offered two variants of their legendary Maruti 800 car and also offered them in AC and without AC options. One was having plain window and rear glasses and the other variant was having tinted glasses. At that time for the car with tinted glass, Maruti used to charge ten thousand extra from its customers. Whereas Mr. Gupta made it available only for 600 rupees! So quite expectedly, Mr. Gupta set sail on a travel spree across the length and breadth of the country; dealers’ network grew at a very fast pace and the film business boomed for the time.

**“I had a two-wheeler then. I was the seller. I was the buyer too. I was a Marketing guy, sales guy, accounts guy – everything....”**

There was another technical challenge in store for him. And as usual, he knew how to overcome! He got trained in the technique of fixing the film on any glass surface from the original US-based company. And he passed on the skill to every staff, whom he handpicked and trained: the nuances of

clearing the glass surface, sprinkling water on it, and then cutting the film roll in exact measurements, finally fixing it without leaving any air bubbles.

His penchant for education and the never-ending quest for knowledge

An entrepreneur's life is a never-ending saga of hard work and sacrifices. Ajit Gupta lost the first year of his regular college due to his over-burdened shoulders and the multifarious responsibilities that he handled for his business. But that can never be easy and convenient giving up the education, that he was so passionate about and anything of the opposite was also quite not possible under the most committed and sincere tutelage of his father. So after one year, he joined the evening college and even with so much workload on him, completed his commerce graduation through the 6 pm to 9 pm daily class routine and this shows the dogged tenacity of this achiever extraordinaire. He topped his evening college and also achieved 6th rank in the whole university that year. Soon after completing his graduation, he joined evening law school to complete his law education in 3 years. He had an insatiable appetite for knowledge and education. And a wonderful and extremely supportive family to back and compliment that passion of his. He is lucky to have such a family, but he believes more in hard work than just luck itself. He even had a car at his disposal at that

time – an ambassador, which got burgled off. But his dad was happy that it was gone! He got the car he wanted after that – a Maruti Van! As far as acquiring more knowledge is concerned, Mr. Gupta just did not know to stop! He wanted to glide into a full-time Business Administration program right after completing his Law. But his father had a different orientation to present in front of him: he told him to get married immediately and the lessons of married life can be no less than the best of the business administration courses ever! Well, he was a man with a great sense of humor and as Mr. Gupta reminisces in hindsight, he was spot on at that time. So, he got married in 1988 and is the proud father of two very sharp and intelligent kids.

**An entrepreneur's life is a never-ending saga of hard work and sacrifices.**

His elder daughter is working with him in the company and his younger son is busy finishing his studies.

Now as he looks back and connects the dots, just as the legend Steve Jobs used to do, he can only realize the worth of the education he got – and how important it is for one to get properly educated. He can clarify with autobiographical anecdotes: for instance, the



indelible, overwhelming, life-changing impact that his years at the Law school had had on him and the man that he became. The law education perhaps had the most telling and long-lasting impact on his business, his thoughts, his life, and the way he is. Law taught him how to think logically – the commitment towards being selflessly fair and reasonable under any circumstances. The Case Studies that he got to study in a fair bit of detail – made him the great listener that he is. One must and must listen to be successful in any profession whatsoever. Even if one disagrees and would reject the views of the person on the other side, still listening is a must. In judgments, judges use the most sensitive and polite of expressions. They, as a policy, don't go behind the person but their characteristic. Mr. Gupta also follows the same principle in his professional life. And he always prefers to be very straightforward right in front of the face of any individual he is dealing with.

The Second Innings, still batting Unbeaten...

What many call coincidence, some prefer to call miracles and miracles do happen! One day it happened in Mr. Gupta's life as well. He received a letter from a stranger from Coimbatore on a plain sheet of paper. It was about some new business plans. Mr. Gupta send him a fitting reply: he can come and contact him if he had 30,000 rupees with him. But little did he realize that 4

days later, a man would indeed appear in front of him with 30,000 rupees in his hand! Soon rest of his brothers also joined the business and sooner he realized the film business is good but it can't be enough to run the household of five of them. Thanks to the Liberalization policies of then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and his Finance deputy Dr. Manmohan Singh film business was hit. Mr. Gupta was quick enough to re-negotiate the price points and the revenue verticals with the US-based company, but they refused to give in to any kind of compromise whatsoever in the margins. Also by that time other companies started coming up with similar products and ideas –and Garware became Mr. Gupta's most formidable challenger in the business additionally as dollar prices started rising (it went up to Rs 26) they became cheaper as compared to the US-based products. But still, amidst all these tough challenges that Mr. Gupta confronted from all around, he was considered a name to reckon with in the film business of those days, and that too with the highest form of customer trust and recall. Even Garware distributors used to put his brand "Sunshade" in their products and sell them. Mr. Gupta made it a point that he never used the US name on the products that he sold and marketed in India; he always used his homegrown name.

But just like any other great business mind, Mr. Gupta knew the right time and the right place to

call it a day in his film business. He did it with emphatic decisiveness. And got his runaway fixed to take off into a new world altogether –the world of manufacturing adhesive tapes. And the rest, well the cliché goes: is history!

It all started amazingly and is no less exciting than a sci-fi thriller. Way back then, as Mr. Gupta was in the quest for his 2nd innings in the business, IIT, New Delhi came up with a tender. They needed a special kind of tape to put inside telephones. Mr. Gupta pounces on this opportunity. It was somewhere in the late eighties, that he started searching for that kind of special tape. He got to know about a supplier in Singapore and the company agreed to give him a margin of Rs. 200 – Rs. 500. But unfortunately, the order failed to pass the quality checks. Gupta Ji realized that the quality check did not happen successfully only because they had not found the correct

**But his father had a different orientation to present in front of him: he told him to get married immediately and the lessons of married life can be no less than the best of the business administration courses ever!**

requirement. He went to the factory and matched the correct requirement and the order went through and he never looked back after that.

AIPL (Ajit Industries Private Limited) was established in 1998-99. And his father was one of his most crucial pillars of strength in setting up the business. He started with a state-of-the-art manufacturing unit in Haryana. It was on his father's insistence that the company was named after him.

AIPL initially started with the manufacture of industrial tapes, self-adhesive tapes, and specialty tapes. No companies in India used to manufacture these materials then and it was an export-oriented industry. It started with a ratio of 2:8. 20 % of AIPL started manufacturing in its home turf while 80% were still coming as exports. Today, AIPL had grown into becoming the largest player in its segment. It manufactures some 150 – 200 types of tapes of every kind: foam, paper, plastic, single side, and double side – which cater to multiple industries across many segments – general industrial supply, automobile industry, paper mills, electronics, electrical, AC industry, construction companies, signage industry and many more.

Ajit Gupta is a very pragmatic man at heart. Though his passion is very much evident in everything he does for the business, he knows



*Mr. Ajit Gupta with Rajiv Narang (on his left) and other senior members of staff*





DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

that one should not attach any sentiments to Business enterprises. If there is a growing and fast-expanding market, then keep the business running and in case it's just the opposite never hesitate to wind it up. And Mr. Gupta is passionate at heart but he is never sentimental in his decision-making. His decisions are always guided by logic rather than emotions. So, his is policies for manpower. If anyone fails to meet his expectations at the workplace, he never loses his cool as he firmly believes in giving as many opportunities as possible. There is no aura of awe about his presence in his company and he knows well how to get the best out of his team.

In both his companies: AIPL and AIPL Zorro Pvt Ltd. he had been successful in building from a one-man army into a well-connected team of some 1000 individuals.

World Wide Web-the ultimate game-changer for AIPL

As Yuval Noah Harari, well known for his bestsellers like *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*; *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*; and *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, rightly says, a world emboldened by the internet will undergo an evolution – the changes that would come across every aspect of our existence in next 10 years will be more than what came in

last 200 years. And who knows it better than the man himself! For Mr. Ajit Gupta, the evolution led by the Internet is an enabler in every sense of the term, a massive opportunity, not a threat. “Aaj kaal ke mein dhekhiye kitna khamosh hain, aur online mein Kitna shor hain” – Mr. Gupta puts it in his inimitable style and the confidence that radiates from his demeanor, his farsighted business mind is bound to impress anybody who meets .

Mr. Gupta knows very well that ultimately the entire responsibility lies with him and it's he who has to ensure the 360-degree welfare of his workforce. And to ensure that, one of the most vital priorities for him is the medical and life insurance cover for all, especially medical, as most people get trapped in debts during health issues and the ever-increasing cost of treatment in our country. Along with that, the usual safeguards of ESI / PF, gratuity, etc are of course in place.

And what can be a more effective way to keep the healthy air of brotherhood and consolidated fellow-feeling freely flowing other than having chaupals” every three months at every factory? And in them, there is no corporate structure, there is no hierarchy of rank and responsibilities – everyone can speak their heart out, hear others speak, and get immediate resolutions to problems. One can speak, can sing, and dance even! If a junior staff member has lost his mobile and finds it difficult



to buy another, get one in the Chaupal! In another instance, when a complaint is heard from a junior that they don't have safety shoes, everyone gets a pair each right after that.

Mr. Gupta's penchant for cleanliness even further consolidates his bond with his workforce. In the MSME industry segment, as he points out quite correctly, factories and production units are not often kept very clean, and the highest standards of dust-free hygiene get neglected. But not at AIPL! AIPL factories adhere to the highest form of cleanliness and Mr. Gupta has a very unique and effective way of ensuring that. So, he used to go on rounds of the factory accompanied by one cleaner, another man with a dustbin, and another person with a money locker. And wherever he found anybody not maintaining the usual cleanliness standards, that person had to pay a fine from their pocket. And the money collected as a fine was redistributed as extra cash awards to those who had maintained their cleanliness successfully.

A staunch believer in a fit body and an agile mind, Mr. Gupta encourages the participation of all his employees in sports and other fitness workshops outside working hours. Through AIPL Foundation, he ensures that everybody gets proper training in their sport of choice for free of cost. So, from the top-level executives to the clerical staff, the message goes clear and loud.

And as sports can guarantee physical health, mental health needs also to be prioritized and addressed too. He thinks a lot about ways how to enhance the EQ of his workforce and how to make them more assimilated like a cohesive big family unit. There should be no ill-feeling toward each other, no fear of subordination, or any sense of repressed leg-pulling. Like the Chaupals, they further ensure that milestones mix freely between themselves, they get a DJ booked and dance together to his tunes regularly! And with a healthy, happy, stress-free, and loyal workforce, that is how Mr. Gupta can successfully dream of taking AIPL from 700 crores to 2000 crores.

And as before, again Yuval Noah Hariri comes to his mind. The change is coming through the internet. All should adopt the technologies coming

**“Aaj kaal ke  
Duniya mein  
dhekhiye  
duniya kitna  
khamosh hain,  
aur online  
mein Kitna  
shor hain”  
– Mr. Gupta  
puts it in his  
inimitable  
style and the  
confidence  
that radiates  
from his  
demeanor,  
his farsighted  
business  
mind is bound  
to impress  
anybody...**

in the next five years. Every new technology – like the CRM software for example – is always welcomed with outstretched hands at AIPL.

Besides its readiness to amalgamate and incorporate every technological advancement that comes its way, AIPL, under Mr. Gupta's leadership, is never oblivious of its role in saving the environment by curbing industrial pollution. Registered under plastic waste management rule 2016, AIPL has always been proactive and had driven its R&D especially directed toward sustainable solutions for a safer, cleaner & greener society. Through all these years, AIPL has always believed in recyclable and optimized use of natural resources and has considered itself a responsible Corporate towards the future against anything. And all his staffs more than readily agree that any word that comes from their boss, is good enough to be true, and can never be the other way round. As American educator, author, businessman and speaker Stephen Richards Covey puts it in his bestselling "The 8th Habit", one has to attach the highest value to spoken words – to one's voice. And this steadfastness to his voice not only helps Mr. Gupta to win hearts across his business relations but also makes his family life easefully beautiful.

As Mr. Gupta reminiscences some of the life-changing lessons that he had learned from others about what to do, and more importantly, "what

not to” – there was a tape company, that ran the same business-like AIPL. But among everything else they had a nasty habit of lying – they never paid or delivered on time, and as obvious, came to an abrupt halt with all the clients that the company had shifted to AIPL. As Mr. Gupta emphatically confirms - “I cannot give in 4 days, but I can give in 10 days and I always ensured that I made it very clear on the very first interaction” – and this very approach gets the appreciation and respect from all his buyers and suppliers alike.

He made it a habit to always deliver before time and always stand true to all his commitments and words and for that

reason, one has to learn and understand the reality well so that one does not ever OVER PROMISE. AIPL is a company that withstands and was founded on the pillars of honesty, clarity, and truthfulness. The 65-meter adhesive tape – most of the manufacturers willfully choose to give 60 meters –almost 70% of manufacturers practice this shameful cheating, but AIPL made it clear that 65

**And with a healthy, happy, stress-free, and loyal workforce, that is how Mr. Gupta can successfully dream of taking AIPL from 700 crores to 2000 crores.**

meters are 65 meters only – always and forever. And the fact that AIPL is one of the most recalled companies in its industry, distributors great the real pleasure out of it in the long run.

For the first 4 years, the company incurred losses, and many complained – but Mr. Gupta stood his ground as he enjoyed every bit of the challenge. And he is not at all apprehensive or afraid to teach and empower his juniors and colleagues. Some might still leave after all the time and hard work of Mr. Gupta in training them, but he is not afraid that they will leave, he is rather more concerned about those who stay back and who take the company forward. But even if someone is leaving, it should always be structured and graceful, with common memories of a lifetime of the days spent at AIPL.

And if asked how he manages to carry that big smile always on his face as well as on his sleeve, how he manages to stay always jovial, always humorous and fun-loving; and the way he is running the show, even his AGMs are total fun – the very big smile again resurfaces to explain – “I start the day with music, end with a book. Daily go to the park and exercise, not spending too much time on TV and work every day starting from 11 am.”

Well, that sums up the ordinary life of this extraordinary man.



*Mr. Amit Jain*



*Mr. Anurag Jain*

DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

**AMIT JAIN & ANURAG JAIN**  
FOUNDERS, CARDEKHO  
(PARENT COMPANY - GIRNARSOFT)

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

— Nelson Mandela

Made in Jaipur – For the rest of the World...

It's an amazing coincidence that Amit and Anurag were born on the same date (12 Nov), two years apart – (Amit being the elder) both attended the same St Xavier's School in Jaipur, before both joining IIT Delhi. Even both had job stints in Texas, US - Amit in Austin and Anurag in

Dallas - and both worked in Bangalore in different companies (technically, to be more precise, both Amit and Anurag were in Bangalore and moved to Jaipur in 2007. Before 2007, they were working for Austin/Dallas-based firms but in Bangalore only and used to spend 3-6 months every year in the USA on business visas on behalf of their company) before the bug of entrepreneurship bit them and bit them indeed hard. They came back to India in 2006 after their father was detected with cancer. It was then that they thought of setting up a business in their hometown and turned into serial entrepreneurs soon after.

Now almost after one and half decades, Amit and Anurag still remember every bit and piece of it: the days when they first started in 2007 in the garage of their family home, all focused and determined to create a tech-based software outsourcing success. And what did they have as working capital? What did they have then? Remember they dared to dream of a technology ‘start-up’ - the now immortal and most popular word was hardly known in those days – in Jaipur and not in other start-up hotspots like Gurugram or Bangalore. Jaipur was Amit’s and Anurag’s domicile – both were born and brought up there, so they were all emotionally inclined to start there only. They had the least idea that they are about to launch the first – one of its kind start-ups in Jaipur. Also, Amit and Anurag preferred



Jaipur because the quality of life is better and lifestyle is economical and also attrition rate was low. They had a rented table, the kind used at wedding functions, cheap chairs, a cooler, and the indomitable dream of building a billion-dollar company. They started with two laptops and no funding from their garage. With the help of former bosses and friends, their company took off and started getting projects, including a healthcare one from the Netherlands. They soon gathered a team of 20, and they made a profit in their very first year. Today the Girnar Group – Rajasthan’s first Unicorn has its presence in almost all the major cities of the country and also in three South-East Asian countries of Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia, with a total manpower of around 8500 plus. Though a significant proportion of the management of the Group sits out at Jaipur including both Amit and Anurag, they have a fairly big office in Gurugram, the Cyber City of India, which also houses a large portion of their key management.

So far heard, it may seem like it’s a fairy tale launch for these two-string-willed dreamers! But it can be like that. This business owes its origin to a visit in January 2008 to the Auto Expo in Delhi’s Pragati Maidan – where both Amit and Anurag went and were busy collecting brochures from stalls to stalls. It was then that the idea dawned upon them: why not aggregate all brochures which

they were collecting from stalls – they went back to Jaipur, started aggregating the data; launched the first version of the CarDekho portal within two months there. “We thought it would be good for car buyers to get all the data on one site. We started getting traffic of 300-500,” fondly remembers Amit, “When it touched a thousand, we got excited.” They did not foresee that if we fast forward quickly - that by the Auto Expo of 2014, they would have a stall of their own!

Of the multiple ideas they came up with at first, many failed. Their attempts to launch three more new portals along with CarDekho – an e-commerce portal for semi-precious stone and silver jewellery, aimed at taking their

father’s gemstone business online, and another one for astrological services, their grandfather being an astrologer, and another portal for stock trading did not make the cut they had expected. The jewellery business was shut down six months after the launch as Amit and Anurag realized that it would not scale up unless they had inventory

**Amit and Anurag ... first started in 2007 in the garage of their family home, all focused and determined to create a tech-based software outsourcing success.**

capital. And that time they were spending every hard-earned penny that they had very judiciously. So when they found that inventory capital was too costly, immediately it was decided that they would cease to continue with the other three portals as traction was very low in the other three portals as compared to CarDekho. Anurag rightly points out that people tend to go gaga about their success and ignore their failures. But it is mainly because of all the failures, the hiccups, and the roadblocks that they learned their success so well. And most importantly, if at all they had to fail, they figured, it was best to fail fast. Additionally, some other considerations also struck both Amit's and Anurag's tech-inclined minds. As Amit rightly points out in an interview, "We thought we should not let ourselves bleed too much. In the case of the astrology portal, my grandfather had to give predictions based on partial knowledge. People asked questions about marriage and careers. It involved people's lives and we felt it was unfair to risk that."

Both the brothers complemented each other in their lives, but they also shared their passion for cars. Back in 2008, they spent their first earnings on a 3 Series BMW that Anurag still uses. Amit has a Mercedes convertible bought a few years after that. Though their temperaments are different, they are both techies at heart. For many a year, people would always find them working adjacent

to each other, in two cabins side by side separated by a sliding window opening in the common middle partition, for a quick word with each other.

The key traits that any organization should acquire are Agility, Innovation, Persistence, which is perhaps a very important aspect, defined milestones – the clarity of thoughts that we just talked about, and of course, leadership qualities of the top management can do the rest of the magic. Both Amit and Anurag firmly believe that founders don't run the company. And that is the reason why they always made it a point to invest heavily in people. And keep adding value to each one of them – keep appreciating the tiniest of contributions whatsoever- and by doing this, they inculcated the culture of hunger and innovation. As Amit explains with his signature straightforward tone - “So we have the old ones contributing as well the ones with pedigree now driving the velocity of the organization. We call them intrapreneurs. They take calls of their own business. All the business verticals have their CEOs, and mine and Anurag's role is more of a group advisor and guide to all of them, we don't interfere in their ways of running their respective companies.” In a few years, we may witness a couple of unicorns coming out of the Girnar Group. The group is becoming a nurturing ground for budding future entrepreneurs. InsuranceDekho can just be the frontrunner among them. As we

read these lines, the company is on the verge of closing an independent fundraising round of its own – which would value the company at a few hundred million dollars and it is one of the contenders which will become a unicorn very soon.

Amit and Anurag had that steely determination in them since their very early days. And some failures could never make any impact on that. Their portals for cars, share trading, astrology, and silver jewellery were launched the same day in 2008, and their grandfather, who was also an astrologer himself, had identified a ten-minute “auspicious time” for it. However, only CarDekho could get going in that window period. “I still feel superstitious that had we started the other two also within those ten minutes, they too would have been successful,” adds Amit on a lighter note. But seriously, way back in 2009/10, only CarDekho was the number one traffic site in India and a feat that they achieved without spending a single penny on marketing. Most companies used to spend lavishly on their aggressive marketing strategies. Back then receiving funding and investments was a distant idea. And quite naturally, you tend to innovate and evolve when there is a lack of funds.

Similarly, CarDekho mastered the ways of acquiring customers practically at “no cost”. They learned SEO very thoroughly. Additionally, they

were successful in channelizing huge traffic by doing offline and online tactics on link building and microblogging. Their USP was “content”. The key was to create content – what type of content – where to publish that content – that was the part of that strategy how they ensured maximum impact with minimum expenses. They kept deferring investment proposals till 2013 – when they had a proper plan in place on how to spend the money. Because they strongly believed it is always good not to accept investments if you don’t have the blueprint ready for the spending, otherwise it will do no good other than diluting the equity unnecessarily.

**“So we have the old ones contributing as well the ones with pedigree now driving the velocity of the organization. We call them intrapreneurs... All the business verticals have their CEOs, and mine and Anurag’s role is more of a group advisor and guide to all of them...”**

As we had just mentioned, by 2010, CarDekho’s traffic started rising fast and was clearly on its way to market prominence. Encouraged, GirnarSoft

(the Parent holding company, of which CarDekho is a brand) launched BikeDekho, MobileDekho, and CollegeDekho, all to harness the recognition of the suffix ‘Dekho’. As we had just told, till 2013, not a paisa was spent on marketing. “The company had to understand how to increase traffic without spending money. When CarDekho started doing well, people started approaching us for advertisement space. They asked us to quote rates, but we had no idea what rates to ask for, so we said ‘you tell us’, remembers Amit.

In November 2013, the company raised \$15 million in A-series funding from Sequoia Capital. Since 2013, when the rounds of investments followed from the likes of Sequoia India, Hillhouse Capital, Sunley House, CapitalG, Ping An, Leapfrog Investments, Canyon Partners, Times Internet, Mirae Asset, Kreatif Media Karya, Axis Bank, Franklin Templeton, ICICI Bank, Harbor Spring, Ratan Tata, HDFC Bank, Gaingels, Dentsu and Trifecta. CarDekho, which is India’s largest car search platform, had announced a \$250mn round of funding in Oct’21 that included \$200mn Series E equity and \$50mn debt in its pre-IPO round. With that fundraise, CarDekho joined the unicorn club with a valuation of \$1.2bn and became the first unicorn based in Jaipur, Rajasthan. What a moment of pride for both Amit and Anurag!

The Series E is one of the largest ever fundraised by CarDekho and the proceeds are used to accelerate CarDekho's growth in the Used-Car segment, financial services business – now called Rupy, and insurance businesses - InsuranceDekho, and also to build robust products and technology functions, increase brand awareness, and expand into new markets.

In September 2014, CarDekho acquired the Ibibo Group's Gaadi.com and in 2015 bought Times Internet's Zigwheels, consolidating the online auto market under its banner. In 2018, CarDekho acquired Youtube auto content platform 'Powerdrift' – India's number one automotive video channel with 2 million-plus subscribers. It is worth recollecting a fact that is no less sensational and thrilling than what we see in the best Hollywood thrillers, the Gaadi acquisition deal was closed on the Highway when Amit and Anurag drove from Jaipur and Umang (Founder – Gaadi) came from Gurugram. They met at the midpoint of Jaipur Delhi Highway and it was done.

As both Amit and Anurag can vouch for it, CarDekho is a technology company at heart. And like any other technology company they believe in sowing new seeds every year – every year they keep experimenting and doing new things. And keeping the gestation period in mind, one has to





*(L-R) : Mr. Anurag Jain & Mr. Amit Jain*



*(L-R,Back): Shri Anurag Jain, Shri Amit Jain, Ms. Pihu Jain ( Amit's wife), Ms. Nilima Jain ( Amit & Anurag's Mother), Ms. Surbhi Jain ( Anurag's wife).  
(L-R, Front):Aayan Jain & Aabil Jain ( Amit's sons), Aryan Jain ( Anurag's son).*

prioritize ideas and sow seeds.

Let's have a look at Girnar Group Businesses

### New Auto Business

The new auto vertical of the group remains one of its key performers. With 100 million-plus sessions and a staggeringly high 55 million-plus unique users every month.

Girnarsoft's automobile properties include classified sites like CarDekho.com, BikeDekho.com, Zigwheels.com, etc. The parent company has followed an acquisition-led strategy to grow

its business, acquiring three companies in the automobile segment in 2016.

The web of network that it has reached today and the highest percentage of penetration that they have achieved, especially in the remotest parts of the country, particularly those areas which have very less direct dealer presence is indeed a feat of unmatched applause. 90 % of new car buyers in India visit one of CarDekho's platforms before buying a vehicle. CarDekho works directly with almost all automobile manufacturers, 3,500 new auto dealers, and more than 4,000 used car dealers, homegrown traders, and car market entrepreneurs accounting for up to 30% of annual sales for its strategic partners. The group has also introduced the college discovery platform CollegeDekho.com, TyreDekho.com, and TrucksDekho.com.

**The new auto vertical of the group remains one of its key performers. With 100 million-plus sessions and a staggeringly high 55 million-plus unique users every month.**

## Used Car Business

As a technology-driven auto-tech company, the

Girnar Group is a market leader and trendsetter in innovation in the auto space, especially in its business vertical of used cars. Today, from anywhere in India (in more than 100 markets), one, who intends to sell his car at a competitive and fair price, can book an online inspection through its app. The CarDekho inspector will visit the home, inspect the car and offer a price then and there and the car gets sold immediately.

In 2019 the company launched CarDekhoGaadi stores for buying pre-owned vehicles from customers. CarDekho currently buys cars from customers in more than 100 markets and has a catalog of 5,000+ certified pre-owned cars for online purchase – is the fastest-growing player in the industry and also the fastest among its

**90 % of new car buyers in India visit one of CarDekho's platforms before buying a vehicle. CarDekho works directly with almost all automobile manufacturers, 3,500 new auto dealers, and more than 4,000 used car dealers ... accounting for up to 30% of annual sales for its strategic partners.**

global competitors. In 2021, CarDekho launched online retailing of pre-owned cars with an online launch catalog of more than 2000 certified pre-owned cars for purchase. The same year, the company launched CarDekho Mall in Jaipur – one of the country's biggest used car showrooms with more than 500 used cars on display and ready for delivery. The company plans to expand its Used Car retail transactions business geographically and is set to increase its catalog to 10,000 cars shortly.

The company is retailing used cars from 8 other cities as well – Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Pune, this segment also collaborates with more than 14 financial institutions and 45 plus insurance companies to facilitate used car finance and insurance thereby ensuring a seamless and satisfying experience to both used car buyers and sellers. The group has already launched 2 CarDekho Refurbishment centers in Delhi NCR and Mumbai and has plans in place to open such centers in all major cities. With nearly 4000 cars sold per month, the business stand at No.2 autotech player in used cars business.

### Insurance Business

Girnarsoft's Insurance business –InsuranceDekho has become India's largest B2B insurance broker in the country and leading B2C insurance broker.

On 31st Jan'22, InsuranceDekho achieved the milestone of issuing 10,000 policies in a day. InsuranceDekho partners with 45+ insurance companies and works with 50,000+ Partners across 1300 cities covering 95% of pin codes pan India.

Financial Services  
Business – Rupy.

CarDekho's Financial Services Business recently launched Rupy, a specialized FinTech platform, which offers a whole new world of financing options to automobile customers and retailers. The Financial Services

business exited FY22 at an annualized run rate of INR 5,000 crores loan disbursals and has scaled up its distribution to 1,750+ channel partners across 80+ hubs all over the country. Rupy has 13% + market share in the used car financing market space which makes it number 1 used car loan aggregator. It also launched its own NBFC recently.

**CarDekho Mall in Jaipur – one of the country's biggest used car showrooms with more than 500 used cars on display and ready for delivery. The company plans to expand its Used Car retail transactions business ... to 10,000 cars shortly.**

## International Business

CarDekho is currently present in India, Indonesia (OTO.com), Malaysia (Zigwheels. my), and the Philippines (carmudi.com.ph). OTO.com is the number one auto portal in Indonesia in terms of traffic and revenue. Carmudi too is the number one automobile portal by traffic in the Philippines.

The company's auto and non-auto products are currently used in more than 30 countries globally. The company has now made a very strong and formidable footmark with the kind of international presence that it has achieved in the last few years. The company is at number one position in used car finance aggregation in Indonesia with market share of ~3%.

The CarDekho Group ended FY22 at an ARR of 2400 crores INR in Mar'22.

And as the results show, the Group has invested in a planned and aggressive way for the brand's promotions and is now backed by a big and futuristic marketing team and aggressive visibility across all media platforms, especially digital and social media. CarDekho has recently won two silver awards for the 'E For Elderly' campaign at the Abbys One Show Awards. Superstar Akshay Kumar is CarDekho's present brand ambassador and some of their earlier ambassadors were Rahul Dravid, K



L Rahul, and Mahesh Babu. The InsuranceDekho vertical has Farhan Akhtar as its ambassador.

The achievements are just endless. And Amit and Anurag's dedicated hard work had paid off most amazingly! With each passing day, CarDekho moves closer to its vision of making car buying,

selling, and owing journeys to be an enjoyable, transparent, and affordable experience for its customers. Banks are usually very conservative as far as investments are concerned. But India's top 3 private banks - HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank had walked the other way and shown their trust and confidence in Amit and Anurag by investing with CarDekho. Initiator of many "first" and trendsetters in the truest sense in its segment - CarDekho has been the pioneer in digitalizing the auto in India and, along with its group companies, it has become the numero-uno preferred choice for all auto stakeholders, including original equipment manufacturers, dealers, car enthusiasts, car buyers, and sellers.

**The company's auto and non-auto products are currently used in more than 30 countries globally.**

The fact that Amit was being nominated for the prestigious EY Entrepreneur of the Year



Award 2021, along with the likes of Falguni Nayar, the founder & CEO of Nykaa, and some of the previous winners of this corporate award including the names of Dr. Kiran Majumdar Shaw & Mr. Harsh Mariwala, says a lot about the impact that this techpreneur has on the business world all across the globe. But despite their fame and glory, in some ways, they remain Jaipur boys. The city has always had the advantage of lower startup costs than a firm based in Bengaluru. And they have run a tight operation indeed, hiring greenhorns and mentoring them because they could not afford experienced hands. The brothers are thankful for all the guidance they got from their mentors. “There is something to learn from everyone. A lot of people helped us and played a pivotal role in shaping GirnarSoft,” says Anurag. He also recalls the day they met Ratan Tata: “We had got a ten-minute slot with him, but he ended up spending an hour with us.” As Amit and Anurag look back in pride and bask in the shared glory of their success – how would they define this journey – and what would be the key takeaways from this journey that any other individual who wants to follow their path can take their life’s biggest lesson?

As we find them today, sitting at GirnarSoft’s buzzy corporate office - the usual daily scenario: It’s past 8 pm, and work shows little sign of letting up. Glass doors swing open and close in a brightly

lit corridor. Some play table tennis in a room next to the lobby. A few employees are leaving for the day. Some are stuck to their computers. As for Amit and Anurag, they are chasing more than mere revenues, they say, looking at where the future might lie. “If you don’t innovate, you will not diversify.” On a contemplative note, Anurag adds everyone has a window of time for an opportunity to be taken. Beyond this, what matters is the legacy to be left behind. In 2006 their father passed away due to cancer. Grandparents were alive. Father has had a huge role to play in their lives and he had an everlasting impact in shaping Amit and Anurag’s future as committed entrepreneurs with Jaipur at the center of their universe. After the death of their father, both felt it would be unfair to stay away from family. As they were brought into a joint family, that bonding was always there. The brothers named their first company Girnar after their family home, which their grandfather had named after a mountain top in Junagadh district of Gujarat, the place where Jains believe their 22nd Tirthankara Neminath attained moksha. Based on this name they started Girnar Software, their original company. Their main idea was never to become Infosys – as they wanted to start a product-based company and not a service-based company. Anurag further explains, “There is no religious connotation in naming it Girnar. It was the family home. We are not religious, nor are we atheists,”. The brothers still

live in a joint family set up in that family home, though their work rigor doesn't let them spend much time there. In their early days, they did not return home for three days at a stretch once, sleeping and eating in the office.

Both are technologists at heart with different interests. The idea was to fail fast and learn fast. Even today we believe in that and will keep believing it. Agility is the DNA of our organization and any organization that wants to grow and make it big must have this super promptness and clarity of thought to always be in the fast-decision-making mode. A visit to an Auto Expo changed their future forever. When Cardekho started to take off, gradually gained higher traffic - in less than two years it became the no 1 player in terms of traffic and became the best in the country in terms of SEO. It just never looked back from there and Anurag and Amit realized that often sky is not the limit...As we look at hindsight with sheer wonderment and awe, it is worth recollecting. And when the investors started to approach, Amit and Anurag's successful background helped a lot. They started getting term sheets, but they didn't accept any as we had told earlier. Their world starts from the customers and the main idea was to build a sustainable business and so they kept refusing term sheets. Then when they started selling leads to OEMs in 2013, they realized the game was going to get bigger

and they didn't want to lose out. So, after a lot of brainstorming - they finally shortlisted Sequoia for a \$ 15 million series funding A directly with them without ever approaching anyone. And the rest, as they say...

Today CarDekho is a complete 360-degree car transaction ecosystem. It's a one-stop solution for searching for both new and used cars, buying them, taking loans and insurance as well, and selling them back to CarDekho.

What's more, It just goes on and on as ideas keep flooding and execution takes place one after another. Their biggest success mantra is the "Identification of the gap" - either a new market or disrupting the market. Also, a lot depends on how passionate one is for the cause. One must have the Market readiness analysis ready all the time. How you will make money in footie has to be there. How will profits come is the single biggest thing that is important. And also one has to understand the biggest stumbling blocks – like the customer acquisition costs and how to create a scalable model. It's ok to not make revenue in the initial days, but how you will make revenue in the future needs to be identified.

Both Amit and Anurag had made it a point where they have always celebrated failures, learned, and moved on. What kept them going through all the

failures and the challenges they kept facing head-on?? It's their self-belief and the fact that they kept on chasing something "aspirational" one after another. Amit and Anurag firmly believe that "People" are very important for any business to thrive and become big, and personal bonding is what matters. One has to acquire the ability to bridge the gap – the right balance of personal yet professional relationships. As Amit rightly points out – "I always believed in leading by example. If you can't do it, I will

come with you and we will do it together. Servant leader!! Make sure your people are first, then you." That's the way to do it: "people are first, then you"! Both Amit and Anurag are not only running one of India's fastest growing business groups, their journey will also always be remembered, debated and discussed, researched and referred to by every student of business studies or every dreamer-entrepreneur, who wants to make it big!

**Today CarDekho is a complete 360-degree car transaction ecosystem. It's a one-stop solution for searching for both new and used cars, buying them, taking loans and insurance as well, and selling them back to CarDekho.**



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

## NO FILTER FARAH . . . A RAINBOW IN HER WAY!

The most amazing thing for me is that every single person who sees a movie, not necessarily one of my movies, brings a whole set of unique experiences. Now, through careful manipulation and good storytelling, you can get everybody to clap at the same time, to hopefully laugh at the same time, and to be afraid at the same time.

Steven Spielberg

Wit, humour, honesty, and of course a high dose of gifted IQ & EQ: That's how Farah Khan rules the roost and slays the world! Just like Steven Spielberg's beautiful explanation, each and every piece of Farah Khan's signature storytelling, through the reels or the dance steps, is quintessentially a 'set of unique experiences',

handcrafted with love, skill and mind-boggling sincerity.

A director with her penchant for multi-starrers (and the ability to manage superstars), an actor, a master of matching steps, a scriptwriter, a mother to triplets, a beloved judge on the small screen and a wife of a talented editor and filmmaker – Farah Khan continues to live life her way and amazingly never fails to make it all look absolutely fabulous!

The glory of unmatched success and being there at the zenith for so many years—importantly, as a woman— makes journey a fairy tale that has been decked with hard work, passion, sincerity and the ability to channel one's creative fervour into many ways and excel in each of them. What makes Farah more admirable is the spontaneous simplicity, the ever radiating warmth and humility that has the ability to make anybody around her feel special and truly cared for— in minutes! She has energy and with her gifted sense of humour she can makes wisecracks non-stop. She can gives you the feeling, which is rare from a celebrity, that you are not just an invisible 'spoke in the wheel' of her dazzling life. Not many can match this unique trait of hers, the outshining brilliance of her professional greatness, and the friendliness and approachability of a next door well wisher!



Think of some heartfelt and awesome films like *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai* or *Jo Jeetaahi Sikander* and you will realise that we remember them not just for their storylines but also for the way their songs were picturised and dance moves were choreographed. After all, what's Bollywood without song and dance! And the one person who changed the way Bollywood moves is not just one of the most loved choreographers and a winner of the National Film Award for Best Choreography, but also a very successful director of some of Indian cinema's biggest blockbusters like *Om Shanti Om*, *Main Noon Na*, and *Happy New Year*! Having judged close to 21 reality shows which include the likes of "Indian Idol" and "Jhalak Dikhlai Ja", she is even a household favourite, as a TV host.

The effortless clarity that Farah personifies, necessarily comes out of the authority that she has mastered her art over these years— be it behind or in front of the camera! Quite intriguingly, this seriousness of a master craftsman co-exists with her famously "crazy" side, where spontaneity and repartee reign supreme! Set aside the recent backlash and whirlwind of animated reactions in extremes that she faced for her jibe at home work-out videos of Bollywood celebrities during the pandemic hit lockdown days or her way of wearing her heart out on her sleeves— even her tweets (she has around 7 million Twitter followers

right now) are always hilarious! She happily gripes about anything and everything that can one think of or even everything that is unthinkable – starting from traffic jams and her take on co-stars to updates on her shootings and the likes.

The ‘metaphysical conceit’ has been a permanent trait of her dynamism and arguably it has given her all the laurels.

As Choreographer Terence Lewis put it, who was co-judge with Khan and Shilpa Shetty on Tv reality show Nach Baliye 5, that there’s a strong heart and mind under all that bonhomie. We quote him: “Farah is a riot; sharp, honest and witty,” he says. “At

the same time, she can be the Mommy on set. She’s fed us delicious home-cooked yakhni pulao. As a choreographer, Farah’s understanding of the camera is her biggest strength.”

**... her iconic journey a fairy tale that has been decked with hard work, passion, sincerity and the ability to channel one’s creative fervour into many ways and excel in each of them.**

The Farah Khan genre of film making is simple. She makes what she loves to watch! So we can find

a well-knitted blockbuster of a package in all her films that has been painted with broad and robust brush strokes. Farah loves to tell stories with an overdose of dramatic flourish, gorgeous visuals, sensational fight sequences, picturesque locations, rich overflowing emotions of every kind, a lot of ‘dialogbazi’ and of course song and dance sequences remain her celebrated strengths as always.

Look back in pride....

Farah Khan’s big break as a choreographer came in the most unexpected of circumstances. Celebrated choreographer Saroj Khan, who was

the original choreographer of Mansoor Khan’s directorial venture- ‘Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar’, reportedly had to head out to Kodaikanal, leaving the shooting of the song ‘Pehla nasha’ in a lurch. Farah had to take the baton in her hand as she was the assistant director of the film. A 27-year-old Farah showed no signs of nervousness as she took it over and gave the audience a memorable number

**Quite intriguingly, this seriousness of a master craftsman co-exists with her famously “crazy” side, where spontaneity and repartee reign supreme!**

in ‘Pehla nasha’. As she herself sums it up pretty well: “I’d joined the industry to become a director. I had no intention of being a choreographer. I used to do dance shows and choreograph for ads because I loved to dance. However, being a choreographer 27-28 years ago was not an option at all. But serendipitous coincidences happen in real life at anytime! I was assisting Mansoor Khan in direction because I wanted to learn to be a director. So that (Choreography) just happened, and because it happened, it just took off and for 10 years I only did that.”

In a time, when pre-set steps were the order of the day, Farah gave Pehla Nasha a dreamy, slow-motion quality, which at ones brought a breath of fresh air in the Bollywood of the 90s. Let us all be reminded of the fact that Farah Khan is not a dancer herself, though the camp song alongside Javed Jaffrey in 1987’s Saat Saal Baad indicates otherwise! She was the 4th assistant director in Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar (JJWS). There were almost 50 men and one woman in the team— and that was her! What she saw basically was only the actress or the hair dressers were women, rest all were men. Before this film, she had some experience in choreography, but mostly in ad films. But she hadn’t planned it like that and never thought she could make a career out of choreography. The most celebrated choreographer of those days, as we had mentioned, was to do the choreography



*Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri shares a laugh with Farah at a Bollywood Power Brands event.*





*Farah with her co-judge, ace choreographer Ms. Geeta Kapoor*



*Farah with one of her best buddies, Bollywood Superstar, Shah Rukh Khan*



*Farah with husband Mr. Shirish Kunder and their kids: Czar, Anya & Diva.*

of JJWS, and when she came everyone including Farah were at awe of her. But when the rehearsals started, she was doing the same routine, so typical of hindi films. JJWS was a very young and fresh movie and Farah didn't think that this is how it should be done. Luckily for her, Saroj ji had to leave in three days from where they were shooting—Ooty.

Mansoor Khan, who saw Farah making everyone practice every evening, asked if she could do it instead! Farah said, "I knew I could do it! And no, I wasn't nervous at all! It was rather, 'yeah!!!'"

**"I knew I could do it! And no, I wasn't nervous at all! It was rather, 'yeah!!!'"**

And the rest, as they say, is history! Farah points out, "People think my career took off from that point though I know, it did give me a boost but it never really took off. People were still wary. They thought I was for westernized songs and not traditional Indian songs. I just did 1942 A Love Story and Kabhi Haan Kabhi Na. And yes, Ruk ja aye dil deewaane in DDLJ. It's only after I did Virasat that I started getting everything. Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Dil Se and then there was no looking back".

Farah's success as a choreographer and



then later as a filmmaker and even as a reality show judge lie on the fact that the amount of improvised innovation she can bring in everything! For instance, at the time of *Main Hoon Na*, everything around was goody goody love stories. And in that milieu, she wanted to make a hardcore masala film, that she grew up watching, in a contemporary style. To quote her, “People need to offer something others can’t, else you will be always second and third choice as people will always seek out creative guys. The main problem lies with one’s attitude to work.” She adds, “People get success and they lose the plot.

They tend to think we are the industry.” But, as Farah sounds the warning bell, it can be indeed too costly at times as had happened with some of the biggest names in the industry. As per Farah, what everybody expects is a good attitude and learned professionalism. Industry takes less talented person if you have ethics. Farah reminisces fondly, “I came to the industry thinking I will be director not choreographer. Once I jumped into the tide of choreography, years just passed— back to back shoots, planning, travelling. But that was my film school— working with so many good directors, learning from them. From Kundan Shah I learnt everything about shot breakdown. Priyam taught me lensing, from Karan Johar I learnt scale. “After 9 years of Joh Jeeta Wohi Sikander, I thought now I will only

make films and started doing my script. I wanted to make films that I love to watch! No one loves Bollywood more than me.”

Film making for Farah is making herself stand in front of a many sided mirror – and each side reflects something different from the rest. Behind all the humour, fun and banter - a calm, well trained, calculative, thoroughly disciplined and hardworking brain

of a film maker is at work. Before any film hitting the floors she does her homework with utmost honesty, sincerity and dedication and can command the same level of commitment and sincerity from every professional that she is working with, be it in front of the camera or behind. And it's her enigma, the authority and gritty

experience in the medium which ensure that she gets the best out of everyone she works with. As Farah quite rightly explains “... I am the opposite of uptight. I am too cool and chilled out. To get

**Farah's  
success as a  
choreographer  
and then later  
as a filmmaker  
and even as  
a realty show  
judge lie on  
the fact that  
the amount  
of improvised  
innovation she  
can bring in  
everything!**

the best out of people, the strict reputation does help because they know that I mean business. My entire cast and crew knows that I can question them on anything, anytime and they need to know the answer to it. Someone was asking me, ‘What is a director’s job?’ It is to answer questions from morning to night and knowing the answers as well. ‘What should my actor wear? Where should I place this glass? Where to put the camera? How will my character enter?’ The same way, others who are working on the project should at least should know their own jobs. The Camera man should know his lighting; actors should know their lines. If they don’t know, then they are inefficient. I am not strict but I don’t like inefficacy. But, anyone who has worked with me will tell you that we have the most fun set. People are laughing, there has to be good food, etc. I am not the kind who is like I-am-a-genius-so-I- have-to-be-quiet.”

One of the real reasons for her success lies in the fact that how pragmatic she is and what an unbelievable level of professionalism she has under her command. She puts it simply, “I am fun to work with. And why should it be otherwise? We work at highest efficiency, but we bring in great fun. The approach should never be like just another job you are doing. We are lucky but seriously that is not at the cost of your efficiency. I used to save all my producers lot of money. One will never Never hear that 200

dancers were waiting whole day in my films. It's a criminal waste of time. If you are a captain and you have 300 crew under you and you have to take care of all their time and you should be clear to understand that time is money. As a film maker, I find it funny when directors say I want to make a film for myself. That approach is disastrous for a commercial film – which you have decided to make to recover money! The bigger a hit, the more critics want to tear it down that aggressively. At of the day, numbers don't lie. It's an unfair process! They are like, oh I had a great time and then it must not be artistic. It is actually good that I don't understand, nor did ever I tried to decode what actually "Want to make for yourself" means. If you want to that honesty, then make it on your iPhone! It's a moral responsibility that everyone's getting their money back. You have to clear in your head what you are doing. I love actors but I am not going to make a film of 100 crores based on guys who can't give even a ten crore opening."

The core of this contagious confidence of course comes from her family. Puri, who's also working with her on the new film, has seen how the family had changed her. "She's now much calmer and sober," he says and further adds, "When I met her again for Happy New Year, she'd written out the script on one of those lined green-paper foolscap notebooks. Then her daughter tore some up by mistake, so she wrote it again! She's

passionate about her relationships; it's either all or nothing. Directing a film like this is akin to doing the work of 20 people on the sets. But she was equally concerned about what went into her kids' lunchboxes and what we should be doing for the next birthday party."

Let's hear some of the most fascinating stories behind her iconic films and these stories itself can become blueprints for future film makers! And who could tell them better the Farah herself! "I was doing Bombay dreams.... I was living in London for 3 months. The script of Bombay Dreams was too dated, so I started writing on a piece of stationary a story of

my own.. I didn't think a slum boy can become a superstar - he can only become an extra. But what if he is born again in a filmy family and achieves his dream.. Karz was one of my favorite films. I wrote the story in a matter of hours . I kept the paper in a bag Forgot and was busy making Main

**"... After 9 years of Joh Jeeta Wohi Sikander, I thought now I will only make films and started doing my script. I wanted to make films that I love to watch! No one loves Bollywood more than me."**

Hoon Na . then after that started making Happy New Year. Shah Rukh didn't like the first version and obviously was very disappointed. So came back home and suddenly Sirish reminded me of that draft of mine, from that Bombay Dreams time. And then wrote I finished the script in two weeks— Bombay dreams helped a lot, London theatres scene, phantom of opera, Hollywood, Singing in the Rain, I incorporated everything. Review in London said it's a very Quentin Tarantino kind of film with lot of inspirations from all around."

Farah started film production company after her kids were born and made Tees Maar Khan – a film that made the maximum money of all her films even though it was written off! Now people say they loving it when they are seeing it again after a gap of many years! Under her banner, she has already completed a movie for Netflix, 'Mrs. Serial Killer', with Jacqueline Fernandez, Manoj Bajpayee and Mohit Raina in leading roles. And here too she adds a lot of her signature novelty into it – "This is the type of content which you can't normally do. It is thoda atrang (a little unusual), without having commercial stipulations on you like music, songs and all. Three's Company will be producing more stuff like TV shows and even concerts." –as farag beams with self confidence, all hard earned and cherished dearly.

When being asked what all suggestions she would like to offer to budding filmmakers – and too many of them look upto her all across the globe, quintessential “Farah’s take” immediately follows with a pinch of handmade salt of course– “ Young filmmakers are only giving us suggestions. In fact, we want suggestions from them. You should go for whatever works for you. I would surely want to send my kids a university and learn filmmaking. The whole experience of going there and watching great movies really works. I would have given my left arm to learn filmmaking back in my days, but we never got the opportunity. But, if it worked for me, does not mean that it will work for anyone. There are no set rules about filmmaking. Someone might just come as an assistant and pick up. If you can afford to go to a school, you should. I would love to go back right now and do a summer course and see the new age movies. I tell my kids, ‘Abhi 7th grade mein school chorr do aur film school jaao’. That’s the Farah Khan we all love and our level of expectations from her will always be limitless!



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



## GAURAV BARGUJAR

### BRAND SERVE

... For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
I am a part of all that I have met;  
but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

“Ulysses,” Lord Alfred Tennyson

Like the Greek epic hero of Homer’s  
“Odyssey,” Odysseus (Ulysses in Latin), a quality  
that binds this ever-smiling, honest, learned,

talented “master-of-all-trades” young man is his restlessness and his penchant for being able to drink life to the lees—to make the most of it. This man will always continue to explore and discover and keep rewriting with perfection the success story of his life and, of course, of Brand Serve and everything that Brand Serve stands for today!

Founder and Managing Director of Brand Serve Pvt. Ltd., Gaurav Bargujar’s deep understanding of his business makes him one of India’s most curious and creative entrepreneurs in his industry segment. Be it Events & BTL Activations, organizing Exhibitions or entering into Immersive Retail space with a new brand, MICE or A to Z of Out of Home Advertising, or even if it is about Creative Designing & Communications, Digital Marketing, AV & Photography, or even Celebrity Management or Business PRs – under Gaurav’s big broad umbrella one would find an ecosystem of Marcom – a one-stop “Metro Cash & Carry store” for every kind of marketing and communication need that an individual or an entrepreneur; a new start-up or an iconic more than 100-year-old business conglomerate; any profitable or charitable organization can think of.

An alumnus of Harvard Business School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Babson College, and The Indian Institute of Planning

& Management, after completing his business studies and working with the Marcom industry for a while and gaining that uncanny self-confidence, which has always been one of his most cherished strengths - executing a considerable number of successful events, he knew he had his heart set on highest aspirations and delving deeper into the industry. The “germ” of entrepreneurship forced him to enhance his relative skills further and finally come up with what he had been made for - the idea of starting something of his own.

Just like any other disruptor, Gaurav got his due dose of strength from all the support and motivation that his close friends and family put forward in abundance – especially from his best buddy and now wife Divjot Kaur Grewal (who is also currently the director of the company) and launched Brand Serve Pvt Ltd in January 2010. Never has he had to look back after that. Since its initial days, Brand Serve has been on a steady growth trajectory, and it just continues to expand and accommodate more significantly and better.

With a flair and flamboyance of a roaring young business leader and entrepreneur, Gaurav stands with his team amidst every ebb and flow of the ever-changing demands of their industry: “I am a leader, and leadership is not a position or title. It is an action and example. A great deal of responsibility rests on my shoulders. I

effectively manage, lead, and inspire employees. Good leaders bring tangible benefits to a company, including the ability to motivate employees and align them with the company's vision. I try to fulfil every responsibility from the core of my heart and to the best of my ability. As the Managing Director of the company, I keep a young creative mind with extensive knowledge about the technicalities of the industry. I have ideated and executed 'n' no of successful events and Marcom activities for many clients, which helped me achieve the height and success in my career. I am passionate about what I do, and I wish to take myself and my brand to greater heights of

**... under Gaurav's big broad umbrella one would find an entire ecosystem of Marcom – a one-stop “Metro Cash & Carry store” for every kind of marketing and communication need that an individual or an entrepreneur; a new start-up or an iconic more than 100-year-old business conglomerate; any profitable or charitable organization can think of.**

success. 'There's certainly more to learn, yet more clients to work with, yet more to build using my crafts, skills, and the amazing team I have.'

Like any other self-made man, Gaurav, too, had his share of challenges he confronted head-on. The overall journey has not been easy. How did he start all of this? His first exposure was from his college days when he studied management and entrepreneurship at The Indian Institute of Planning & Management, New Delhi and gathered some rich work experience while working for Planman Marcom. But once he set forth on his entrepreneurial journey, he started from ground zero. It was a point in his life, when, he didn't have a single penny in his pocket, and then, gradually, from zero till today it has been a remarkable journey. Gaurav has come a long way indeed, starting with a single client, and now Brand Serve is closing down to a hundred-odd clients! In 12 years since this incredible journey was initiated, Brand Serve has been able to carve a niche for itself, having worked with the best and most iconic brands from every industry segment. To name a few that they have been working with are the likes of Bvlgari, Salvatore Ferragamo, Givenchy, Wrigley's, Calvin Klein, Burberry, Dior, Davidoff, Adani, Hermes, Exide, Emirates, HCL, HP, Nissan, Nikon, Visteon, Dior, Bosch, Burberry, Alstrong, Tata Steel, ADT, Metso, Swiss Army, Givenchy, - some of the names

from the celebrated and indeed a long list of the constellation of brands that Brand Serve had been associated with.

Whatever Brand Serve has achieved in this little more than a decade of its existence is enough to be called one of India's most dynamic and successful Marcom companies – rather a 360-degree round-the-clock business solution company! With offices in 5 continents – Asia, USA, Europe, Australia & Africa – Brand Serve has been credited with doing 22 international events in 16 countries across three continents. Apart from that, under Gaurav's futuristic leadership, Brand Serve is credited for being the only Indian Marcom agency that had the privilege to do an event with NASA – when it curated a tete-a-tete with the USA astronauts at NASA Centre for 200 people. Similarly, Brand Serve has been the first and only Indian agency that has done an event in Camping World Stadium, Florida, for the NFL. Brand Serve is also credited with being the only Indian agency to do an event at the Oval Cricket Ground in London.

Gaurav fondly remembers particularly about a campaign they did for Wrigley's, and that particular campaign was registered in the Guinness Book of World Records! The entire journey has been incredible, with all these illustrious feathers on his cap 12 years since he started. But what people

don't get to see is that behind this success, the enviable track records, everything that has been perfect – is the hard work and sweat and blood and toil that go into it: the detailed planning, the flawless execution, the sync of all the divisions put to work together and with almost no margin of error. Of course, he had his share of hard times and challenging days.

But what keeps him going is the very attitude of saying this with an abundance of confidence - “I don't take that as a reason to step back, but it helps me rule out the possibility of doing something. When I fail at something, it clarifies how all I need is another approach, not that I am not good at what I do,” he conveys.

Gaurav is grateful for his alma mater, as he calls himself fortunate to execute whatever he has learned from his IIPM days.

**“I am a leader, and leadership is not a position or title. It is an action and example. A great deal of responsibility rests on my shoulders. I effectively manage, lead, and inspire employees...”**

The roots and the nourishment....

Gaurav's roots can be traced back to Churu in Rajasthan, a town famous for having the maximum and the minimum temperatures in India. After finishing his schooling, he moved to Delhi - to give wings to his ambitions and hone his entrepreneurial skills. After academics, he completed his business and entrepreneurship studies at IIPM and

soon joined the Planman group to get into the applied field.

With an open mind and keen eyes and, of course, his innate entrepreneurial bend - he worked hard for a couple of years, getting enough of the industry exposure that he needed -

before finally deciding to put to use the entrepreneurial skills that he had mastered

over the years and accept the risk and challenges that every entrepreneur has to take at one point of time. And rest is now a real-life fairytale of India's most sought-after integrated marketing and communication company! The highest standards that Gaurav reserved for himself while he was studying and training - he carried that forward

**Gaurav fondly remembers particularly about a campaign they did for Wrigley's, and that particular campaign was registered in the Guinness Book of World Records!**



into his life as an entrepreneur as well. To date, he firmly holds to them. It's one of the most crucial reasons behind the success of Brand Serve and the success of Gaurav as a business leader and entrepreneur: holding on to the highest level of standards and that too with a dogged, no-compromise-no-matter-what, and goodwill-above-everything-else attitude.

Penning the “Bible” of Success for every dreamer-entrepreneur-leader

It's a journey worth revisiting and can be the “Bible of Success” for any budding entrepreneur who can dream big and dare to transform those dreams into reality! The standards he set for himself with his sincerity, commitment, and hard work were sure to pay back! As Gaurav reminiscences, “The first steps I took, I only wanted, and focused on, you know, relationships with clients, because I always say that whenever, you know, you go to a client and pitch a business, they would give you work on your face value rather than the brand for which you are working. They always value that relationship. They trust me more than a brand. The first time I pitched to a client independently, I went to him. I told him that I am doing something on my own now, so will you be giving me business, or how comfortable you would be doing business with me not associated with an established brand. So he gave me a compelling

answer, which I was not expecting at that moment. He said that we are working with you. We trust you and know what you are capable of giving us. And we know whether you will be standing by with your commitments or not.” - What more can an entrepreneur expect! And this very confidence in his abilities that his initial clients showed in him doesn’t come out of the blue just like that! Gaurav hard-earned this with his skills! And it can do wonders in the long run for any individual who has initiated his entrepreneurial journey with lots of doubts, challenges, and apprehensions. As Gaurav rightly points out, “So, it’s just like, uh, that thing

**“The first steps I took, I only wanted, and focused on, you know, relationships with clients, because I always say that whenever, you know, you go to a client and pitch a business, they would give you work on your face value rather than the brand for which you are working. They always value that relationship. They trust me more than a brand.**



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



*Power Couple: Gaurav & Divyot*



*Gaurav with his Company's as well as Life' Director Ms Divyot Kaur Grewal and their Lil princess, Krishna*

pumped me up and boosted my confidence. It was impactful realizing that the client trusts you more than you trust yourself when you're starting."

"An entrepreneur has no job description. Be willing to do anything and everything."

When Gaurav started his business, he had no specified work, which can be one of the most daunting tasks. It can be challenging to find the motivation to be your boss and set your incentives. So the first thing he did was to tell his clients, "whatever work you have, give it to me, and I will do it to perfection." He promised the best quality in the industry and at the best price. He says they valued that, but they didn't blindly trust him with their most significant events. Initially, they only talked about work for prices as low as 1,000 rupees. But Gaurav never rejected these offers and still tries to ensure he can serve any need of his clients even if it pays pennies. "The key to being a good businessman is not to leave anything," he says, "when I go with any clients to pitch something, I never say no to them. I've learned that the right of rejection has to be with a client."

He also believes that many entrepreneurs that are starting don't realize that the value of the work you do shouldn't be judged by the money you receive from it in the short term; instead, it should be determined based on the relationship you



create with your customers. “It’s always about the relationship. It’s like sowing a seed. You shouldn’t expect fruits in a day or a month, and it takes years. Then gradually, you can begin receiving the rewards of the work.” “You need to value the relationship and, in turn, the relationship will value you.”

Over time, the clients realized that a person of his calibre would be wasted if they only gave work worth a few thousand rupees. Now, those same clients are giving him crores of rupees for his organization’s work. He also started getting the references from one client to another, and his business took off.

“Irrespective of the quantum of work or the money involved in the project, you learn with every instance. So whether you are doing a job of 10,000 rupees or ten crores, there is an equal amount to learn in both cases. Your learning never stops.” Gaurav gives an anecdote he remembered involving one of his clients. Post doing the NFL event in Camping World Stadium, one of Gaurav’s clients watched the FIFA World Cup with the President of his Company. During that event, people came into the stadium holding placards. They stood together and joined them, and it was revealed that they had LED screens that created a seamless visualization of the graphics when a hundred screens were put together. After seeing

this, the first question that came into the client's mind was, "is it possible to do it in India?" If yes, then who can he get in touch with, and who has the capabilities to execute it flawlessly? Gaurav then calmly said, "I am blessed that he called me at midnight when he was done watching the event that night."

His client remembered that Gaurav had once said that if anyone else in the world can do it, then I can also do it. His client said that if there were anyone he would be willing to trust to take this risk, then Gaurav it would be. He would've never gotten that call if he hadn't demonstrated that he was always ready to go beyond his current limitations, willing to take risks and execute with finesse. "These are the things that keep pushing your limits and increasing productivity. And even then, when all is said and done, we always try to deliver more than we commit."

The qualities that matter.

When asked about what are the qualities that he thinks he has which helped him become successful – what he has to say after that first few seconds of trying to hide that initial hesitation on hearing good things about himself with that signature sweet smile, "I would say, self-belief and, an extra effort is a key and solution for every problem. So it would be best if you had self-belief, of course,

you cannot forget it. And everybody puts in efforts in their life, but you should know where and when to extend that push.” Those who have had the good luck of seeing him work, or have been to any of his events, know how true it is! As he further adds, “So that factor is most important. Most of the time, things don’t work out. So it is important to realize that we need to push ourselves more sometimes. We have the capability of doing it. So that extra effort, I’m talking about that additional 20%, 30% or 10% maybe, and knowing when to use it is the key.”

Team building and networking are two of the main pillars to sustained success in the Marcom industry. And with the kind of mind-boggling global exposure and the number of international events that Gaurav has pulled off (and pulled off to perfection!), who knows it better than him! At Brand Serve, Gaurav has ensured that a healthy atmosphere of debate and discussion coexist in peace with the corporate structure within the organization - where every member’s opinion of his team is valued, considered, and taken into account. Since the very early days, these brainstorming sessions helped Gaurav and his team beat the giants of the Marcom industry and surge ahead with a fantastic success rate. One of Gaurav’s leadership style hallmarks is the amount of freedom he ensures for every member of his team to work according to their comfort



pattern. He doesn't believe in imposing company-prepared schedules and hampering their creativity. As he says, "I trust my people to provide the best for the clients and the company. They don't need monitoring." And as he has seen during his training days at Planman, even small tokens of rewards and the smallest of recognitions can do wonders in boosting a person's morale – to motivate any bogged down or overworked team. Gaurav is also quick to point out what types of people count for a great team in the same context. It gives a deep insight into his arduous process as a human being and his ways of adding value to human resources:

**"Irrespective of the quantum of work or the money involved in the project, you learn with every instance. So whether you are doing a job of 10,000 rupees or ten crores, there is an equal amount to learn in both cases. Your learning never stops."**

"First and foremost, what I would look at somebody is how truthful, how honest somebody is. I don't like double-faced people. I'm either on this side or on this side of that. I'm never in the middle. Because I know what I've been doing to the best of my judgment and

abilities, and I want that in the people I work with. They should be honest about exactly how they feel. I don't like people standing with both their legs in different books. When you have to take a call or make a tough decision, you need to be ready, honest, and confident so that you can make a stand and decide then and there what to do, and that can only happen when you are always being truthful about your priorities and principles."

Gaurav finds his share of satisfaction from the words of appreciation from his vendors and, of course, from the clients. But it is always teamwork for him. Sharing the credit for the same with the team makes them feel like working harder for the next project. An exceptional leader himself, Gaurav confirms how he always practices this to keep the work environment healthy and productive with an insatiable hunger to scale higher and higher. Gaurav did not even let the global lockdown forced by the ongoing pandemic affect the company's goals. He and the team decided to make "Work from Home" a lasting working pattern to reduce carbon footprints. As he proudly confirms, "This will be our way to reduce the use of petrol and paper."

The word "risk" is perhaps one of the most loved words in Gaurav's dictionary. Nevertheless, Gaurav considers himself lucky when taking risks with his business. As he confirms, "It always

worked for me!” End of the day, there is no denying the fact that a leader/entrepreneur’s life, is like that responsibility on your shoulder, which can either infuse a lot of self-confidence to straighten your body up or at the same time may seem like a burden that brings you down and demotivates with devastating after-effects. When Gaurav embarked on his life as an entrepreneur, he observed how he did not just have to work with different kinds of people but also managed to keep them together and collectively lead them without conflicts. He initially found it taxing to match people’s wavelengths but, with time and experience, has mastered it as well.

Becoming an entrepreneur has its share of goodies and of course some difficulties. Just as Gaurav thinks that even after all his roaring successes and, of course, a healthy balance sheet of the company for successive years, there are various areas where there is ample scope for improvements – just like guessing the outcome of different business decisions is also something he had to work upon. Earlier, when he was working and training in another company, Gaurav didn’t have to bear the consequences of any wrong decision, neither the buck stopped with him for the same. But since the time he became an entrepreneur, he had to cope and accept and hold himself responsible for whatever he received as a result. “Of course, this part gets better with time.

Your judgments become a cut above, and the level of patience augments,” he rightly points out. But with that came his great leadership lesson, which was to care for the people who work for you. And we cannot agree any more with him when he says, “Happy employees account for happy clients. You cannot have the latter without the former.”

Quite unanimously, Gaurav’s Brand Serve happens to be a trendsetter and disruptor in the Marcom segment – a feat that this “little master” has achieved at quite a young age! However, how would he like to guide young guns in the country today? As for advice for the generation next, Gaurav believes that with the internet and data revolution, there can never be any shortage of knowledge anymore, especially with all the leading centres of business education across the globe. With the likes of Harvard, National University of Singapore, Babson, Cambridge, Oxford, INSEAD etc. becoming more and more prone to offer free online education – every newbie is a bundle of knowledge. What is essential, as Gaurav clarifies, “They need to back their knowledge with expertise by learning from an established lot of entrepreneurs. That will build renowned leaders around the world.”

The Passion should keep growing, and so should be the goodwill and the business – the only way to leave an everlasting and indelible mark....

Born to simple parents in a small town in Rajasthan - Gaurav started with nothing. And today, he has become a name to reckon with and a global citizen in the truest sense! And surely, many people reading this would also want some advice, some tips on how they should go about also starting something on their own and taking these risks? For Gaurav, the reply was quite spontaneous, and the spontaneity comes from his learning. Of course, his experience of the last 15 years almost in the industry – “You need to evaluate the market scenarios. It would be best if you were very updated with the technology. It would help if you were very updated with what has happened in and around you. Plus, it would be best if you have, you know, a positive faith. If you do anything with negativity, no matter how much work you put in, you can’t succeed. A positive attitude is imperative for growth; that goes without saying. Your surroundings should make you feel positive; you should have enthusiastic and positive people within your vicinity. So, of course, if you have a positive and motivated team, you will also have a positive mindset. Then nobody can stop you.”

And how should an entrepreneur, after all the hard work and everything, unwind himself, which is equally essential to get the whole system charged up – some good hobbies and a cozy, loving family are all that one needs! As Gaurav admits, “I love

travelling and, luckily, I'm in a profession, which allows me to keep on travelling. In the last almost 21 days, I have visited no less than five states. So, Traveling is one thing which I love."

But as expected, it can never be without any purpose with this man, whose dictionary does not have the word or idea of "being complacent" - even when he is unwinding or relaxing - "I also try to keep reading articles, stay updated on what the competitors are doing, which kind of innovation they've been bringing to the industry and all the clients, and how can we upgrade it? Also, maintaining an honest relationship with the clients is always an ongoing process, and I do that all the time." That's what Gaurav is and that's how he priorities and values his relationships! For Gaurav, business is never for money making, but it's always for relationship building and most importantly, keeping that relationship above everything else forever. Any budding entrepreneur listening?





DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



## **GURU RANDHAWA**

SINGER & SONGWRITER

... May your heart always be joyful  
May your song always be sung  
And may you stay forever young  
May you stay forever young

From “Planet Waves”, Bob Dylan, 1974

From Gurdaspur to the Globe: A journey of  
a million dreams of a rock-star who only dreamt  
big!

“Honestly, the Punjabi music has been vibrant  
ever since artists like Gurdas Maan, Babbu Maan,  
and many more have exploded on the scene and  
on the screens. I was exposed to music on TV and

radio, so definitely, it was a household scene. It has expanded beyond today's time, and I am glad so many good talents are coming out of Punjab. Yes, bringing the song to Bollywood adds more charm to it, and every person from a different part of the nation can hear it. It gives you a bigger platform. So, I believe it is the kind of music one creates that makes it or breaks it; it can be from any part of the world."

To put Guru's correct and passionate observation into context, let's take a walk down the annals of Punjabi music and understand how a lad from Gurdaspur has become 'Guru Randhawa.' For him, the sky was never the limit! It is rightly said that age is merely a number in one's mind. A number that seldom has a bearing on what one can accomplish. Singer Guru Randhawa is one such individual who lends immense credence to that reality. All of 30 years of age, this precociously gifted Musician has taken the Bollywood industry by storm! One of the famous independent singers, who has many peppy songs to his credit, is Guru Randhawa. And yes, he does contain 'multitudes'!

Ballads of love and war, fairs and festivals, dancing, music, and Punjabi literature are the characteristic expressions of the state's cultural life. The heady rise of Punjabi music is a result of several factors. The state has a long-standing

tradition of music and live performances. The massive Punjabi diaspora overseas brought closer by digital distribution is a big market for online sales and live shows. Producers of Punjabi origin who grew up in cities such as London or Toronto brought a distinct quality and production sensibility to the state. Independent artists like Babbu Maan; Sidhu Moose Wala, Jass Manak, Jassi Gill, Mankirt Aulakh, Diljit Dosanjh, Guri, Harrrdy Sandhu, Sharry Mann, Gurnam Bhullar, Akhil, Ninja, Yo Yo Honey Singh, Mika Singh, Ammy Virk, Millind Gaba, Gippy Grewal, Sukhe, Badshah, Babbal Rai, Bally Sagoo, Bohemia, Baba Sehgal, B Praak, Daler Mehndi, Diljit Dosanjh, Gurdas Maan, Garry Sandhu, Hans Raj Hans, Yuvraj Hans - to name some of them, had been names to reckon with!

The History of Punjabi music can be traced to its mixing with Hindi filmi ‘gaana-bazana’ and a place of its own in its indigenous non-filmi music industry. Through Punjabi folk music, poets have narrated love ballads of Heer-Ranjha and Sohni-Mahiwal, Mirza-Sahiba, and Sassi-Punhoon. Several musical instruments like Tumbi, Algoze, Chadd, and Chimta are unique to Punjab.

Punjab holds numerous religious and seasonal festivals. There also are multiple anniversary celebrations in honour of the Gurus (the ten historical leaders of Sikhism) and various saints.

Dancing is a typical feature of such festivities, with bhangra, jhumar, Giddha, and Sammi among the most popular genres. In addition to Sikh religious music, semi-classical Mughal forms, such as the khyal dance and the humrī, ghazal, and qawwālī vocal performance genres, continue to be popular. Different occasions have different songs - one sings suhag to express the bittersweet feelings associated with a wedding, tappe to celebrate Lohri and Baisakhi, and boliyan to sing while doing gidda. Then there's the Sufi Punjabi music, the bhangra, and the most commercial — Punjabi pop. There is a song for every occasion here.

**“... I am glad so many good talents are coming out of Punjab. Yes, bringing the song to Bollywood adds more charm to it...It gives you a bigger platform. So, I believe it is the kind of music one creates that makes it or breaks it; it can be from any part of the world.”**

Quite evidently, Bollywood, the dominant player in the Indian music scene, has always had

a Punjabi influence in its song-and-dance routine, largely courtesy of Yash Raj Films and Dharma Productions, both run by Punjabi families, the Chopras and the Johars. It made the mainstream audience associate dancing with the region's music. Thus, Punjabi songs started playing at weddings, parties, and discotheques around the country. Digital distribution channels, especially YouTube and the various music streaming platforms have helped Punjabi singers become immensely popular among a vast audience both at home and abroad in recent years. Punjabi music has also grown a massive influence on Bollywood, which seems to be now using more Punjabi tunes in its film tracks.

Punjab also has a robust independent music production scenario. The Economic Times said that in 2018, Punjab had become the most significant non-film music industry in India. Four years back, the industry worth 700 crore rupees was almost five times the size of the Telegu music industry. Punjabi music consumption has grown five times in the last year, says Prashan Agarwal, CEO of music streaming app Gaana. "Today, Punjabi music comprises a fifth of the app's overall music consumption." Some 40% of the app's traffic for Punjabi songs comes from Delhi-NCR, UP, and Maharashtra.

Guru happens to be an outcome of this milieu – of this cultural churning that inspired him to

dream – and to dream big!

“It all began from TV. I always wanted to be

**Quite evidently, Bollywood, the dominant player in the Indian music scene, has always had a Punjabi influence in its song-and-dance routine, largely courtesy of Yash Raj Films and Dharma Productions, both run by Punjabi families, the Chopras and the Johars.**

on TV. Whosoever is coming on TV has done something that nobody else has done. Only two TV channels were there in those days—one from India, and another from Pakistan, as my family belonged to the border area. I had a vision that I wanted to be a singer. From one single song from a region in Punjab to a bigger world – from a region to the entire country – a much bigger world. I was in Class 3 when I started singing. I knew from the very beginning

that I wanted and will be a singer. And now here I am! Travelling, shooting, meeting everybody – all around the world – this has been my life – a life that I live to the fullest, but nothing much has changed; my life is still the same! I still enjoy



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI





*The High Rated Gabru*





*Guru unveiling The Bollywood Power Brand Coffee Table book with Dr Arindam Chaudhuri and Dr Rajita Chaudhuri at Bollywood Power Brands event*



*Guru with Bollywood diva Manjari Fadnis and Dr Arindam Chaudhuri at Bollywood Power Brands event*

eating dal-chawal the most. Besides work, my life is quite the same.”

Here is the essence of this man! Someone who will never fail to surprise you with his humility, broadness, positivity, and contagious smile! Taking a liking for music from the age of 7 to climbing the ladder of success at 21, he acquired the confidence to secure a foothold in the Punjabi Music Industry. Born in Gurdaspur (Punjab), Guru did his graduation from The Indian Institute of Planning and Management (DELHI) and had a master’s in Business Administration. He also started pursuing Singing as a Profession right after high school. His education has always been his priority, as he beautifully explains: “ I got to know about my talent – that I can also sing – only at school. So if I did not go to school, I would not have known that I could sing also, and my life would have been so different then!”

Guru made his debut- as a Songwriter with ‘Same Girl,’ as a Singer with ‘Chhad Gayi’ and his debut album was ‘Page One. It has a multi-lingual format, and lately, he is famous for the track “Suit Suit” from the movie ‘Hindi Medium’ which marked his debut in Bollywood. He gained instant recognition and became an overnight star with his tracks ‘Patola’ (with US-based Bohemia) and ‘Suit’ (in collaboration with Arjun). Guru has sung in the IPL opening ceremony and on various other

platforms of National and International reputation. This shows that the artist strives hard to become a globally renowned artist in his genre while aiming to reach the pinnacle of success by delivering great music.

With 7 million followers on Facebook, 32 million on Instagram, more than a million on Twitter, and 4.8 million subscribers to his Official Youtube channel, every response to Guru's song and music has been euphoric!

'High Rated Gabru' has more than a billion views – 1000 million! - 'Slowly Slowly' has more than 300 million

**"I was in Class 3 when I started singing. I knew from the very beginning that I wanted and will be a singer. And now here I am! Travelling, shooting, meeting everybody – all around the world – this has been my life – a life that I lived to the fullest, but nothing much has changed; my life is still the same! I still enjoy eating dal-chawal the most. Besides work, my life is quite the same."**

**With 7 million followers on Facebook, 32 million on Instagram, more than a million on Twitter, and 4.8 million subscribers to his Official Youtube channel, every response to Guru's song and music has been euphoric!**

views (which got 33 million views in just 24 hours of its launch!), 'Patola' around 200 million, 'Ishq Tera' more than 400 million had viewed; 'Baby Girl' had more than 400 million hits, 'Lahore' has also more than a billion views; 'Ishare Tere' more than 570 million hits; and released just a few months back, 'Dance Meri Rani' newest version with Nora Fatehi has already got around 200 million

views! Guru is Youtube's most viewed artist in India, with more than 6 billion combined hits of all his songs and music videos! An impressive feat!

Having already made waves in the Punjabi industry as a singer & songwriter, Guru Randhawa marked his debut as a full-fledged playback artist in Bollywood. The hugely talented singer has showcased his phenomenally vast repertoire since a young age. Two tracks of Guru Randhawa in Bollywood have broken all records within a

year. After his song, ‘Suit Suit’ from the Irrfan Khan starrer ‘Hindi Medium’ made it to music aficionado’s playlists, Randhawa’s 2016 number, ‘Tu Meri Rani’ was recreated for Vidya Balan-starrer movie ‘Tumhari Sulu.’ Since then, Guru has also sung chartbusters for many Bollywood movies, including the likes of ‘Badhaai Ho,’ ‘Blackmail,’ ‘Saaho,’ ‘Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety,’ ‘Chhalaang,’ ‘Street Dancer 3D,’ ‘Dil Juunglee,’ ‘Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui.’

‘Patola’ was a historical song for Guru in another way. Back in 2015, with this song, Guru’s journey with T-Series (with 212 official Youtube subscribers, the diversified group with US\$ 120 million in the core business of music and films) started. Since then, it’s been no looking back, and as they popularly say, the rest is...a history of one of India’s most successful ‘Jodi’ of a music level and a musician-singer-songwriter ever! As Guru fondly reminisces: “The day I joined T Series, they had 9 million subscribers on Youtube. I’m their most-viewed artist in their history! I have got 6/7 billion hits on Youtube. It was a great collaboration from Day one; it has been like a family!”

So, let’s sum it up – one of contemporary India’s leader singer-songwriter-composer – who has made it big both in independent music and Bollywood music – who has collaborated with



some of the biggest names in the country as well as the world over, starting from Arjun and Bohemia to Neeti Mohan, Neha Kakkar, Tanishk Bagchi, Dhvani Bhanushali, Sukhe, Pitbull, Jay Sean, Tito El Bambino, Nikhita Gandhi — Guru has his hands full. When this book goes to print, he is busy completing his US tour. We already know the kind of response Guru generates all through the US concerts across every state he is visiting through his recent Facebook and Instagram posts. It's just the beginning - singer, composer, lyricist, style icon, performer, soon to debut in films as an actor — starting his own 'Guru Randhawa Edition' of eyewear, men's accessories, casual wear - he has many epithets to his credit. In some way, he is one of the fresh faces of the singing fraternity who has taken the wind off the insiders with his dynamic sense of camera presence and singing... it can go on and on!

So if someone reads the above lines in front of Guru himself and asks him about what he has to tell — how is he feeling? Is he feeling at the top of the world? — All he does — is smile heartily and then recounts and relives those initial years — those struggling days:

“When my first song ‘Same Girl’ came out in 2012, all the thanks in this world goes to Arjun as he rightly deserves for making it happen. The

song's rights were with Arjun, as he gave me a break after I met him at a party. Then, I had no work. So I needed work. I used to do just free shows, and even at 500 or 1000 rupees, I used to go and sing and perform anywhere. So somehow arranging money for my tickets, I went to London to meet him. He called me and made me listen to a beat – and I immediately wrote the lyrics there only. I knew it was a big opportunity, and I didn't want to let it go. I came back to India, and a few days later, he sent me a ticket! I went back to London and shot the video. It was my first sponsored ticket! The video came on UK TV, and then it was on Youtube. Youtube was not that big a platform then – but I was happy that I had visibility. All my fan moments are very close to my heart. Everything that they do is very heartwarming. Especially when they take time out of their schedule and make a painting of me or anything like that, I'm always thankful to them.”

Guru smiles-- that signature child-like smile, which radiates warmth and sincerity and unadulterated commitment to everything that he says or does. We cannot help but feel amazed by the endearing personality of this great young man!

“My music is all about what I see – what I feel – what I hear: nothing personal. My life changes every day – the people I meet, they change every day – so it's a continuous process. And for me,

nothing is permanent in this world. And for me, my viewers and my listeners – all those who shower their love on me, without knowing me, only listening to my songs are my biggest assets, my priceless possession. Fame is transient; money is transient – nothing remains, but this love only stays, and it keeps you going against all odds and keeps you grounded for good reasons, of course.”

*I go right to the edge; I go right to the end  
 I go right where all things lost are made good again  
 I sing the songs of experience like William Blake  
 I have no apologies to make  
 Everything's flowing all at the same time  
 I live on the boulevard of crime  
 I drive fast cars, and I eat fast foods  
 I contain multitudes  
 Pink pedal-pushers, red, blue jeans  
 All the pretty maids and all the old queens  
 All the old queens from all my past lives  
 I carry four pistols and two large knives  
 I'm a man of contradictions; I'm a man of many moods  
 I contain multitudes....'*

“*Rough and Rowdy Ways*,” Bob Dylan, 2020







DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

**RAKESH AGARWAL**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
AMULYA MICA.

“Success and profitability are outcomes of focusing on customers and employees, not objectives.” — Jack Ma

Rakesh Agarwal, MD of Purbanchal Laminates Group of the company was born and brought up in Tinsukia, Assam. The family of Rakesh Agarwal originally hails from Rajasthan, and it was his father Om Prakash Agarwal had migrated to Tinsukia for a career opportunity. Rakesh was desirous of becoming Chartered Accountant and for this reason, he completed his graduation in Commerce from Northeastern Hill University (NEHU), Assam. However, fate seems to have

different plans for him.

During Diwali of 1991, he received a gift of ₹50,000/- which was a considerable sum from his father O P Agarwal. Rakesh was overwhelmed by this gesture of his father, and he decided to invest the hard-earned savings of his father to some good use. Rakesh exploring the options for investment looked for guidance to a senior and highly respectable family member Shri Banwarilal Agarwal, and under the tutelage of his father's younger brother, Kapoor Chand Agarwal from Dimapur, Nagaland, he learned the business. It was Kapoor Chachaji who trained him in every aspect of the business, including the manufacturing of the products.

Banwaribabu has been the founder and chairman of Century Ply Board, known for his foresight and knowledge about business guided young Rakesh to set up a sawmill, which was quite a promising business then in the Northeastern Region. For this, Rakesh organized and managed to collect an additional sum of ₹. Six Lakhs from friends and families. From this point a CA in making ended up becoming an entrepreneur.

Initial Years: An uphill task

The first business Rakesh setup was in 1991, for which he hired a sawmill at Dimpaur, Nagaland,

and later under the guidance of Banwaribabu, he expanded his business to set up a veneer manufacturing unit called Purbanchal Veneers in 1993 at Langtang, Assam. The unit was set up in a picturesque but backward tribal area of North Cachar Hills, which is now part of the Dima Hasao District. The geography and the approach were quite challenging and additionally, the area was facing political turbulence despite of the difficulties in operations, Rakesh managed to do a profit of 2 Crore within three years of entering the business. Rakesh reminisces that those days of hardship have helped in transforming a young man into a determined entrepreneur.

Plans to expand were short-lived and the additional unit under the name of Purbanchal Udyog which was a face veneer manufacturing unit setup at Chotanapjan, Assam which began operations in 1995 was closed by December of 96 due to changes in Government policy in terms of a ban on forest products. The sudden shut-down and setback for a new business would have shaken weak-hearted person, but Rakesh was probably made of different mettle. The setback in business became a motivator for the young man and the desire to succeed as an entrepreneur was strengthened.

With the indomitable spirit of never say die attitude and under the guidance of Banwaribabu,

Rakesh set up a new plant in the barren land of Kutch alongwith Alok Agarwal and the guidance of Hari Chachaji, his mentor. Hari Chachaji had always been the strong supporting pillar for him. He had always guided him in the right direction and provided him assistance in every way possible. Within 36 days, Rakesh moved lock, stock, and barrel from extreme East and re-setup the business on the extremely West coast of the country. In the new location, the Veneer manufacturing business under the name of Landmark Veneers was set up. A fresh start of importing lumber and peeling was started at the present-day location. Many of his old team followed Rakesh to the new plant, which was an added advantage to the new business, and it helped to become productive faster.

**The first business Rakesh setup was in 1991, for which he hired a sawmill at Dimpaur, Nagaland, and later under the guidance of Banwaribabu, he expanded his business to set up a veneer manufacturing unit called Purbanchal Veneers in 1993 at Langtang, Assam.**

## Testing of an Entrepreneur Continues!

When Banwaribabu directed Rakesh to setup the plant at Kutch, he knew that the Gujarat Government's policy favoring and encouraging new businesses in the arid land of Kutch shall benefit the new company by way of tax holidays and support. The new site being closer to the ports was an added advantage for the business which had a high dependency on the imported raw material that was bulky.

Having ironed out the initial hiccups, Rakesh expanded into plywood manufacturing in 1998, and Amul Boards Pvt. Ltd., was set up at the same location. It's said that God tests those individuals who have the resilience and strength to fight. Kutch having many advantages has one major disadvantage the area tends to face storms and high-speed winds during monsoon. Within a year of having set up Amul Boards, a devastating cyclone led to severe disasters to property and human lives and even Amul Boards was badly hit. In 2001 January the region witnessed an 8-point on Richter scale earthquake with the epicenter being 30 km from the Amul plant. 14 employees in the plant lost their lives and the entire region was raised to rubbles. Rakesh along with his family and the entire staff stayed in temporary accommodations for almost two months.

It was the determination and desire to succeed which led to the rebuilding of the plant and with special Government support the business was reset up and production began.

## Never Looking Back

Post the teething trouble of setting up business at the new location, having faced two major natural and life-threatening disasters, Rakesh decided to expand further.

In 2004, in the adjacent plot, a Laminate unit was set up. Purbanchal Laminates gave the organization the impetus it needed, and it helped establish the Amulya mica brand in the market. Amulya mica soon spread over across the country and even export started. The USP offered by Amulya mica was the widest range of designs and thicknesses besides the quality.

Rakesh believed in offering his consumers the best product and within a matter of five years, Amulya mica got established among the top 10 brands in the 4500-crore laminate industry. Rakesh vision, desire to succeed, and hands-on style of operation helped to establish a network of distribution partners, and even after almost one decade, almost all the channel partners continue to be part of Amulya mica associates.





*A priceless moment captured through the lens: Rakesh Agarwal with his entire family.*



*Rakesh Agarwal with his wife Mamta and their two children, Shailja and Abhishek.*



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

Rakesh's personal touch and being supportive of any individual in a crisis have helped him to create lifelong bonds. The entrepreneurial streak in Rakesh has been the reason for him to explore uncharted waters and today Amulya mica products are being exported to almost 24 countries. In one of the countries, the company's products are being sold under companies' brand name, which is a rarity in the export business. Today, Purbanchal Laminates has received a Star Export House status from the Government of India.

**Rakesh believed in offering his consumers the best product and within a matter of five years, Amulya mica got established among the top 10 brands in the 4500-crore laminate industry.**

### On Personal Front

Rakesh is a family man, he could be considered an ideal son which parents wish for in the present day, a loving husband, and a doting brother and father who, despite professional commitments never neglected his family and always gave his

attention to them whenever required.

He started to work at the tender age of 20 years, established the business, and faced many adversaries yet he succeeded. He attributes his success to his parent's blessings. He strongly confirms the Indian beliefs and value system and even today stays in a joint family along with his parents. There have been occasions where he has stayed along with his parents for longer periods during their medical treatment giving priority to them instead of his business and his family.

Rakesh's support is in terms of his wife Mamta who also hails from the Northeast. All through ups and downs Mamta has stood with Rakesh as the rock of Gibraltar and has managed single-handedly the entire

**Rakesh is a family man, he could be considered an ideal son which parents wish for in the present day, a loving husband, and a doting father who, despite professional commitments never neglected his family and always gave his attention to them whenever required**

family during long periods when Rakesh was out of Gandhidham developing and expanding his business. ‘Mamta Bhabhi’, as she is fondly called by friends and families, has focused on bringing up her two children – Shailja and Abhishek. Mamta has created her own identity and today she runs a successful upmarket boutique, “Attire” at Gandhidham.

Rakesh’s father Omprakash Agarwal leads a semi-retired and contended life and visits the office almost daily for at least an hour. He is the Chairman of Purbanchal Group of Companies. In later years, Rakesh’s younger brother, Mukesh Agarwal has joined the Group and expanded the timber business to newer heights. Rakesh opines that without the support of Mukesh, who is dedicated and hardworking, the Group could have never reached the levels, that it has.

Rakesh belief in Indian values is very strong. His love for the Northeast and his parental state Rajasthan is so strong that he has recreated and maintained the culture of both states. Rakesh celebrates Bihu with the same fervor as Holi, and he invites artists from their respective states. Socially active amongst the Agarwal Samaj, Rakesh member of the Core Executive Committee of the Samaj association at Gandhidham. He has a soft corner for individuals hailing from either state and has always tried his best to help any individual



seeking his help. This trait shows he has never forgotten his difficult days, and he has never disconnected from his roots. He mentions that howsoever high you fly you should always remain grounded.

A firm believer in Shri Salasar Balaji, Rakesh begins his every new venture only after seeking his blessings.

Rakesh lifestyle is quite simple and is an early riser. He is a tea-totally and is vegetarian in his food habits. The glamour has not changed his habits and his lifestyle and even today he starts his day with Yoga and prayers. Meditation is part of his routine, and he states that Yoga and meditation give him the energy for the entire day. Even today, he puts in an average of 10 hours in his business. Rakesh has a regret that he never completed his CA but his interest in educating himself is always there. Despite his busy schedule, he has completed a couple of short-term courses in management, leadership, etc., from IIM. An avid reader has a small library on diverse topics and subjects including autobiographies of great individuals, which he says is a good motivator. He opines that Bhagwat Gita offers answers to all his problems in business and time permitting he ensures reading it.

Contributing back

Rakesh Agarwal's thoughts are we are a product of society and the environment. He believes that we should have a symbiotic relationship with the environment as well as the society we live in.

We should give back to the environment for whatever we draw from it. He feels this relationship is a must for making the world a better place for our future generations. Rakesh hailing from the green rich state of Assam has recreated greenery in the arid region of Kutch and all around his house, office, and plant it's unimaginable that this is the same place that has just a few mm of rain in a year.

Rakesh also firmly believes that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not the only compulsion of any business but it should be integrated wit into the working values of any company. As part of CSR activity, the company has undertaken a "Tree Plantation" drive, since the company's philosophy is to give back to the environment that we have taken from it to maintain balance in nature. The company aims to "plant one Tree for every 36 pieces of Plywood which we manufacture."Rakesh as part of CSR has initiated a drive of tree plantation and has involved his entire organization, his business associates as well as his family and friends. In joint participation with an NGO - Give India, Mumbai and Grow Trees Foundation, Mumbai, and Seva



Nidhi Trust, Anjar and collectively till January '22 he has planted one lakh trees at different locations in the country.

Rakesh opines that a nation shall progress if all members of the society grow. He organizes both in the individual capacity as well as part of the organization activities which helps in improving sanitation facilities, supports education for children from marginalized sections of the society, provides aid to physically challenged individuals, etc. During Covid, his organization donated 11 lacs in PM & CM (Gujarat) Care Fund, also supported migrant workers and villagers in the vicinity of the plant by providing food and water.

A few of the activities undertaken by Rakesh are:

The company has provided funding of a substantial amount to build a Cancer Hospital at Sterling Ram Krishna Specialty Hospital, Gandhidham (Gujarat) which is the first of its kind in the Kutch district of Gujarat.

Every year on Foundation Day, the company organizes Blood Donation Camp, where all staff, workers & executives from all levels of management voluntarily donate Blood to serve society in a better way.

Under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the company has constructed toilet Blocks in Vedi Village, Bhimasar Village, Sinay Village & Padana Villages of Kutch District of Gujarat and stopped the open defecation. It will continue in the future to build the toilet Blocks.

Believing in the principle of Yoga for healthy living and happy working, the company celebrates International Yoga Day on 21 June every year by distributing 5000 Yoga Mats, Water Bottles & Yoga Brochures in Pan India.

He is an Advisor Director at DAV School, Gandhidham run and managed by Arya Samaj. DAV School is expanding its branch at Anjar, for which the foundation stone has already been laid and Rakesh is part of the initiative.

Rakesh supports various causes and undertakes philanthropic activities even in his capacity such as providing support for education and marriage of girl child, and financial support to children of his employees for their higher education. He is modest about these activities and considers that God has made him capable so he should help, and he never seeks any gratitude from individuals whom he has supported in the past.

Rakesh has written a book with the title “Covid-19 : Learning & Precaution “ – a few

inspirational thought & experience by providing pre caution & safety methods , faced by the whole world against deadly disease Covid -19 for next generation. He circulated free 6000 copies of this book Pan India. For this he received so many appreciation & good wishes.

### Associations and Accolades

Besides being active in social life, Rakesh is equally active in many professional associations and bodies.

His list of associations with such professional bodies is quite vast; yet to list a few, he is a committee member, of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Gujarat chapter; he is also a Member of the All India Management Association (AIMA), Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industries (FICCI), Federation of Indian Ply and Panel Industries (FIPPI), Indian Plywood Industries Research & Training Institute (SPIRIT). He is also a Panel Member, of the Federation of Kutch Industrial Association (FOKIA); and he is on their committee of “Land Revenue and Legal”. Rakesh Agarwal had also served as a member of the Board of Governing Body of Indian Plywood Industries Research & Training Institute (IPIRTI)

In his capacity, Rakesh has received many

accolades, rewards, and recognition, prominent amongst those is: the Distinguished Entrepreneurship Award in the MSME sector received from Ph.D. Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the year 2017. He has been appointed as Brand Ambassador of Corporation Bank, Gandhidham, Gujarat, which is a rare gesture by any public sector bank, and Brand Ambassador of Fab India, Gandhidham, Gujarat. Rakesh has also been recognized as one of the Most Promising Entrepreneurs 2021 by The Economic Times Edge, which is an initiative by The Economic Times, a leading financial daily in India.

**Rakesh supports various causes and undertakes philanthropic activities even in his capacity such as providing support for education and marriage of girl child, and financial support to children of his employees for their higher education.**

For CSR activities, Amulya Mica received the award from Assocham CSR Excellence Award-2017 from Assocham, Delhi, and

Greentech CSR Award-2018 from Greentech Foundation, New Delhi.

### Journey Continues

Rakesh while summing up turned philosophical and quoted William Wordsworth's famous poem, "Daffodils" to sum up his life and his desires. He said the main theme of the poem which I like is that Nature's Beauty is a mix of happiness and loneliness. Wordsworth is shown to be lonely, but when he thinks back to the Daffodils 'dancing' (Nature's beauty) he is happy and content.

He said, "I'm quite contented, but I have miles to go before I rest." He continues with a smile on his face and determination in his eyes, "My next aim was to cross Rs.500 Crore as the Group turnover which is around 350 crores in March 2021". He plans to get into IPO within the next two years and he is already building up the organization and his team for the new challenges he has set for himself.

One thing is for sure, for Rakesh Agarwal nothing is impossible.... his life is evidence of this saying.



# AMULYA MICA JOURNEY







DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



## **DR. RITESH MALIK**

### **FOUNDER, INNOV8**

.... After the cattle-truck incarceration of the commuting train, you arrive with some relief at your mini-fiefdom which, according to UK law, must occupy at least eleven cubic meters: the office desk and its environs. With the possible exception of our beds, many of us spend more of our lives here than anywhere else. But if work is a territory that is too familiar to be colonized by knowledge, as Primo Levi suggests, then the office desk is a true terra incognita. No un-intrepid explorer has yet planted his flag on its laminated top. Like much to do with modern office life, it is an American invention – and

its design, contents, and location are a little primer in office politics.

Billy Wilder's classic film *The Apartment* (1960) is, among other things, a narrative about the role of the desk in post-war office life. As the film begins, the camera pans across a huge office made up of serried rows of identical desks, all facing the same way and receding into apparent infinity. In America, this layout was known unflatteringly as the 'bullpen', to suggest either the stockyard or the sweaty, crowded area where baseball pitchers warm up. Somewhere in this endless sea of desks, the camera finds our hero, C. C. 'Bud' Baxter (Jack Lemmon), a lowly insurance clerk in a large corporation called Consolidated

Life, working at desk number 861 on the nineteenth floor.

Desk number 861 is, like all the others, a descendant of the Modern Efficiency Desk, first made in 1915 by Steelcase Inc. for the New York offices of Equitable Assurance. This desk, which was a simple, rectangular table with small drawers, replaced the cabinet-like desks, with their high backs made up of little drawers and cubby holes, which dominated office life before the First World War.

- Joe Moran, "Queuing for Beginners", 2008, Profile Books Ltd.

As a noted author, columnist, and historian Joe Moran, who is a professor of Cultural History at Liverpool John Moores University, traces and explores the history of offices in Europe and the US in the above-mentioned book, let's take a look at what was the situation on India.

Nachiketa Chakraborty, a famous contemporary Bengali lyricist, music composer, songwriter, music director, singer, and a self-proclaimed non conformist, has penned an amusing song on this (written in 1998, the original song is in Bengali, this is the Hindi transcreation by the lyricist himself and also sung by him, one can listen to this on any popular music streaming platform):

Daptar baara baje, do baje tiffin  
 Dhekha jo teen baje, signal green  
 Jutoh ko talasheh pao,  
 jivan hain dhup chao  
 Reh gayi kursi bechaari!  
 Yu'hi nazreh churateh,  
 maine kadam barateh  
 Char baje ghar ko sawari...  
 Mein mulazim hoon sarkari,  
 mein mulazim hoon sarkari  
 Office mein baitha baitha  
 film ki kahani padu  
 Tada seh chuth gaya Sanjay  
 Aur file'lo ki bhir dekho – kise choru kise padu  
 Dur se'hi lagti hain Himalaya!  
 Strike hain yiha dekho, har ghari, har pal  
 TA/DA lench ki laadai  
 Kahih bhuleh se bhi kaam kar diya aek din  
 Boss mere deteh hain badhai  
 File lo'ko pass karu, kuch demand karu  
 Respectable bhikhari hum mein !  
 Mein mulazim hoon sarkari, mein mulazim hoon sarkari...

So, in essence, one can easily understand the problem. “Offices”, in general, used to be something to be panicked about! And from the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century – the broad picture remained the same more or less in India at least. A place to be afraid of, to detest going, and given the choice not a single individual, say from a thousand or even a lac, would voluntarily go unless being compelled to! Indian offices, especially the Government offices remained a spot of great humiliation, joke, and public shame for the overall atmosphere totally under the air of an ominous, unprofessional, dirty, and stinking squalor of the interiors and which influenced most notoriously all the human being who inhabited them.

Fast forward to 2016! One man dreamed to change this history of “Office shame” and dreamed to make offices one of the most loved places that every individual will long to go to! This transition was not easy, let me tell you! From a place of dread, fear, and panicking phobia to make it into an amazing place that everyone would yearn and long to go and spend the maximum time there! But Dr. Ritesh Malik dreamed and he dreamed it big! In 2016, when “Shared Economy” was gradually becoming the buzzword here, Ritesh started a co-working platform called Innov8.

Ritesh Malik was born in a small city in Punjab called Khanna in 1989. His joint family consisted of 37 doctors; his father was a Paediatrician and his mother a Gynaecologist. Aspiring to be anything other than a doctor, as Ritesh himself confirms, would be like labeling yourself the ‘black sheep of the family. He attended the Delhi Public School, Mathura Road. During the final years of high school, he decided that he wanted to pursue Economics. However, when he conveyed this decision to his family they told him that it was an unnecessary risk to take and advised him (as expected and as he was destined to become, before he changes his very destiny!) to become a doctor instead.

Here, Ritesh contemplates in retrospect - striving toward a safe and secure future is what leads to mediocrity and unhappiness in one’s life. He goes on to say that many Indian parents unknowingly make this disastrous error of judgment as far as their ward’s future career choices are concerned and they don’t even realize the devastating impact that this does on the impressionable mind of the teenage kid - hearing such words as a teenager led to self-doubt, low self-esteem, and insecurity; the last years of high school can send anyone spiraling into an existential crisis. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ritesh decided to listen to the more experienced elderly in his family and took the All India Pre-Medical

**One man dreamed to change this history of “Office shame” and dreamed to make offices one of the most loved places that every individual will long to go to! This transition was not easy ... But Dr. Ritesh Malik dreamed and he dreamed it big! In 2016, when “Shared Economy” was gradually becoming the buzzword here, Ritesh started a co-working platform called Innov8.**

Test. However, the fact that he secured his spot in the top 2,000 selected participants out of the 1000,000 that sat for the test was a feat that displayed his knowledge, dedication, and skill in whatever he sets his mind to and was an early indicator of his success to come.

A few years later, after completing his MBBS from Dr. MGR Medical University, located in a village in Tamil Nadu in the Theni district, Ritesh found himself working and studying in the belt of Nilgiri forests in Veerappan. It was in these forests that he realized that India is not limited to just Delhi and Bombay.



*When the inspiration meets those he has been inspiring, Ritesh amidst a bunch of schools kids*



*Ritesh's parents (L-R) : Dr. Renu Malik and Dr. Ravi Malik*





DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

He says, “India is in those 7 lakh villages and rural areas where 67.5% of the country resides.” It is at this juncture that the bug of entrepreneurship bit him, and bit him deeply. He came to the humbling conclusion that as a doctor if he gave it everything he had, he could only reach around 100 people a day due to the physical limits of time and energy. However, by leveraging technology he could potentially reach out to millions of Indians. And so, he decided to take the path least trodden and pursue his entrepreneurial ambitions. His parents did not support this decision (though his dad helped him a lot during these tough times) and so he was forced to fight with the family and go solo. However, he wasn’t a confused high-schooler anymore, he was ready. Ritesh incorporated a company in the up-and-coming sector of Augmented Reality in 2012, while he worked at the Sir Gangaram Hospital in Delhi as a house surgeon.

Ritesh is extremely passionate about building the startup ecosystem of India & believes that the only way to achieve our vision for a 5 trillion \$ economy is to boost the software development & export from the national soil. For the same, he actively works with govt./non-govt institutions to build entrepreneurial endeavors by storytelling, encouragement of seed capital & building college entrepreneurial communities.

Ritesh's leadership and contribution to the Indian startup ecosystem are widely recognized by the startup industry and media fraternity with recognitions like Forbes 30 under 30 Asia (2016), Fortune 40 under 40 India (2018), PWC & SPH 40 Influential Indians, Business World 40 Under 40 (2017), St. Gallen's Leadership Award (Switzerland), Entrepreneur Magazine 35 Under 35 India (2017),

Star of Delhi award by Hurun Report, CEO of the year by Economic Times, 'The Coworking Wonder' title by Entrepreneur Magazine to name a few. He has also been featured on the cover of the Elite Magazine for May 2019.

An extraordinary speaker that he is, Ritesh regularly comes on national & international media channels like AajTak, Al-Jazeera, CNBC, CNN, Zee News, NDTV, Moneycontrol, India TV, India News, Zee Business, ET Now, etc. on issues related to healthcare, technology, startups & economics. He has also spoken at Harvard extension school and

**... "India is in those 7 lakh villages and rural areas where 67.5% of the country resides." It is at this juncture that the bug of entrepreneurship bit him, and bit him deeply.**

the Harvard community and Babson College - to share his entire journey.

A venture which started with Ritesh's sheer love and thirst to promote entrepreneurship in the country is now one of the leading names in the co-working ecosystem of India. Innov8 was incubated & seed-funded by Y-Combinator, a San Francisco-based startup accelerator (Summer School 2016), with a vision to offer a platform to connect & build communities of freelancers, entrepreneurs, corporates, technology innovators, and investors under one roof and in a social environment.

Post the initial funding, the endeavor received the patronage and support of Vijay Shekhar Sharma (Paytm), Rajan Anandan (Google/Sequoia), Kunal Shah (Freecharge/Cred), Ambiga Subramaniam (MuSigma) among others, and in just 3 years since initiation, Innov8 became one of the largest co-working companies of India. Innov8 was sold to Softbank-backed OYO in 2019. Today, with 22 campuses Innov8 is India's second-largest coworking space impacting thousands of entrepreneurs, freelancers & enterprises to achieve zenith productivity. Innov8 is now present in over 13 cities of India with an AUM of over a million sq feet.

His first tryst with entrepreneurship was at

the time when he formed a company called AdStuck. To quote the man himself, “ I started my entrepreneurial journey in 2012 with an augmented reality startup called Adstuck, which created a product called Alive App. This was eventually bought out by Bennet & Coleman. I remember when I was in school, there was a time I used to read the newspaper solely because of the alive app. It allowed me to scan a barcode in my Blackberry phone and see the news come to life in the virtual realm.” This was the beginning of his entrepreneurial career.

However, being from a medical background, Ritesh can't help but diagnose people to help them. So, he coined the term APS— Asian Parents Syndrome— a disease that is rampant in India. The symptom of the same is parents deciding the future of their children by projecting and forcing their dreams and ambitions onto them. He believes this to be detrimental not only to our children but to the economy as a whole, because “any work done without passion is not worth doing.” According to him, it is also a misallocation of resources and, therefore, decreases the efficiency and value one brings to the world.

The second disease that Ritesh diagnosed was what he called the Garfield phenomenon. Its symptoms are a feeling of hatred towards Mondays and a generally negative outlook toward

one's work. Garfield resented Mondays in the same way that unhappy workers also dread Mondays. So if one starts feeling Sunday blues in the evening because of your work the next day, then you might also be suffering from the Garfield Phenomenon.

However, Ritesh assures us that this is not our fault and there is a reason for it: as we had already discussed this in detail in the beginning, there used to be a general paranoia about going to the office along with other practical put-offs like electricity fluctuations, AC hygiene, wifi problems, all of which add to the woe. And as Ritesh had observed, 50% of awake hours are spent out of your home.

For people that work in an office, most of this time is spent there. So Ritesh thought, "How do I solve this problem?" And the rest is history. He started Innov8.

**Ritesh's leadership and contribution to the Indian startup ecosystem are widely recognized by the startup industry and media fraternity with recognitions like Forbes 30 under 30 Asia (2016), Fortune 40 under 40 India (2018)...**

If one is still not sure about what does Innov8 do? Well, their website answers this question best—

“Our culture is our brand and our design is our philosophy.” Innov8 Coworking offers beautifully crafted workspaces where people can create, connect, and grow their businesses at prime locations in multiple cities pan-India. Innov8 hosts people from diverse backgrounds such as digital nomads, entrepreneurs, freelancers, corporate employees, and startup enthusiasts.

From personal experience, Ritesh knows how hard it is to start a business from scratch especially, without much support and a dearth of funding (at least in the initial stages). To help others facing this exact problem and to give equal opportunities to

**.... I remember when I was in school, there was a time I used to read the newspaper solely because of the alive app. It allowed me to scan a barcode in my Blackberry phone and see the news come to life in the virtual realm.” This was the beginning of his entrepreneurial career.**



up-and-coming entrepreneurs, he started Innov8. After all, access to grassroots entrepreneurs is an essential tool for a developing economy.- to help them in a stage where they need it the most, as he did. He decided to create a platform just for budding entrepreneurs. This platform is an ecosystem that enables people to launch

and grow their ventures and is conducive to new ideas and creative solutions. Once the ecosystem is created, all that needs to be done is plug the entrepreneurs into the ecosystem and they will be ready to thrive.

With no background in business, Ritesh's message is clear: you do not need an MBA to be a successful businessman. All you have to do is focus on industries you're passionate about and solve problems that you find there. He says that the most important thing he looks for in people is their Ethics— simply put, how one behaves when no one is looking at them. He believes everything else can be taught, but ethics cannot be taught to an adult. Having your principles in order will reduce time spent on decision-making, increase efficiency, and make you trustworthy. It is essential to be successful in any field or industry.

His goal is to influence and transform millions of lives.....

After selling Innov8 to OYO Group, Ritesh has focussed on developing a philanthropic trust to support non-profits close to his deep passion e.g. education, cybersecurity, startup policy regulations, village empowerment, etc. He's the founding member & seed donor and Trustee at Plaksha University, which is a 50-acre campus under construction at Mohali. It is an upcoming charitable not-for-profit university for the future, being set up by a global community of

entrepreneurs, business leaders, and academicians to reimagine technology education and research. The vision of the university is to nurture the next generation of fearless leaders who will solve the toughest challenges on our planet. As

**“Our culture is our brand and our design is our philosophy.”  
Innov8 Coworking offers beautifully crafted workspaces where people can create, connect, and grow their businesses at prime locations in multiple cities pan-India. Innov8 hosts people from diverse backgrounds...**

Ritesh explained, the growth in technology is slower than the industry's growth. So at Plaksha, he aspires to create engineers who can catch up and keep up with this disparity, for instance by focusing on AI/3D printing and guaranteeing access to students of Tier 1-3 cities, he aims to change as many lives as possible by covering them all.

**After selling Innov8 to OYO Group, Ritesh has focussed on developing a philanthropic trust to support non-profits close to his deep passion e.g. education, cybersecurity, startup policy regulations, village empowerment, etc.**

He also presides on the board of AAH, which is India's largest helpline for cybercrime & Muskaan Dreams, which empowers govt schools with technology. The Foundation was formed in 2017. It is an 80G-certified, non-profit organization in India that works for the education and empowerment of people by imparting the knowledge of cyber safety via its initiative Akancha Against Harassment. In 2020, Ritesh has co-founded a section 80G, not for profit company called ADIF (Architects of Digital India) Foundation to build policy regulations around

technology companies operating in India for building a sustainable & truly holistic technology ecosystem in India & to ensure a level playing field for all players. As Ritesh explains, India's startups are unique and have distinct needs, from fundraising to policy frameworks. The Aatmnirbhar Digital India Foundation – that is what the ADIF is now called - has been created specifically to best represent the aspirations and interests of India's dynamic startup ecosystem. To make India a world leader in the technology ecosystem by ensuring a level playing field for Indian organizations and to enable the flow of Indian and international investments to build products and services for Indian and global consumers.

During 2020/21 Ritesh & his family-run hospital Radix have been on the frontline helping covid patients (IPD/OPD). Additionally, remote care through the free consultation & procurement of supply of vaccination, oxygen concentrators, essential medicines, etc.

To end, what can be more apposite than the last stanza of Ritesh's favorite poet Robert Frost:

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Well, these alone pretty much sum up this great man's journey so far and for him, the sky is never the limit!



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

## DR. SMIT PATEL

Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work.

And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you will know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

- Steve Jobs

The great inheritance of the celebrated legacy.

Well as Steve Jobs suggests in his invaluable words of wisdom, Dr. Smit Patel has indeed done wonders to his “great work” and can



very well settle! With his dream to manufacture Phosphorus-based chemicals, the dynamic and visionary business leader, Shri Kantilal Koli established the Sandhya Group in 1984.

And the way the group has consolidated the dream of its founder and had grown from strength to strength – with its obsession for quality, consistency, and prompt delivery – had made them a force to reckon with in this industry segment and a market leader in both domestic and international markets. As a brand, Sandhya Group caters to multiple industries and its products have varied applications reaching across 45 countries to leading multinationals around the world. The 4 states of the art manufacturing plants, strategically located in Gujarat, India, have an impressive storage capacity and high-end testing equipment for product analysis - a strong product portfolio and an ever-growing distribution network ensure that the company provides quality chemicals with a fast turnaround time. As Dr. Patel loves to say, “For us, it is all about Phosphorus!” – Sandhya Group strongly believes in value addition by forwarding integration for various agrochemicals / industrial and specialty chemicals, which has strengthened the company’s global brand presence to a huge extent.

“From the days of my childhood, I have keenly observed how my father, Shri Kantilal Koli was

always driven towards the idea of becoming an entrepreneur and how he successfully established the first chemical plant under the name of ‘Sandhya Dyes and Chemicals’ in the Sarigam Industrial estate. Having witnessed my father’s determination and perseverance from a young age, the inclination towards becoming an entrepreneur became an essential part of growing up.”

This story encompasses the inspirational journey of “Sandhya Group of Companies” that was conceptualized in the year 1984 as we had mentioned, with a vision of serving Phosphorous Based Specialty Chemicals and Agrochemicals. Having an even mix of young minds along with the experienced professionals in the management team assists the entity to respond to the ever-changing market trends and demands in the agrochemicals & specialty chemical industry.

It has a strong product portfolio, strong brand presence, and a wide distribution network has helped Sandhya Group to explore the untouched domestic and international territories and increase its prominence in new markets. Apart from having four state-of-the-art manufacturing units spread across Gujarat, it has marketing offices and warehouses at strategic industrial locations that empower the company to be prompt to the customers and be a dominant player in the industry.

Headquartered in Mumbai, the journey initially commenced with four members and was very challenging, however with grit and tremendous efforts from all quarters, today Sandhya

**As a brand, Sandhya Group caters to multiple industries and its products have varied applications reaching across 45 countries to leading multinationals around the world.... As Dr. Patel loves to say, “For us, it is all about Phosphorus!”**

Group stands as a family of 600+ professionals. The group has amassed experience of more than two decades offering a wide range of products - phosphorous based Industrial Chemicals, Specialty Chemicals, and Agrochemicals. Over the years, a significant investment towards building quality infrastructure has ensured that lifeline moves rapidly towards becoming Sandhya Group as a manufacturing conglomerate across

the country.

Today, under Dr. Smit Patel’s leadership and the highest level of business acumen, Sandhya Group of Companies over the past years has grown in

strength with the different plants at different strategic locations at VAPI and Sarigam as we had mentioned - offering a multi-product range from phosphorous based Industrial Chemicals, Speciality Chemical and Agro Chemicals carrying a niche for itself by vertical integration offering cost-effective quality inputs. A team of dedicated professionals has ensured that the manufacturing facilities are regularly upgraded to meet the international accreditation for exports to regulated and unregulated markets. He created a wider distribution marketing network across pan India as well as across the globe in more than 45 countries. Dr. Smit Patel has also implemented an SAP system in the organization for the latest in office automation and security of the company.

Dr. Patel's contribution has made the product globally acceptable which read numerous awards in the various field from Governmemnt agencies as well as from private organizations and NGOs too. Due to his financial wisdom, the company has never suffered any financial setbacks. He was the secretary of the pesticides manufacturer association of India and as a joint chairman of the export import committee in the Vapi industrial association (VIA) and Chairman of the Sarigam Industries Association (SIA). Besides this even associated with social welfare activities in Yuvakoli Patel Samaj and also in P K S Sarvajanic high school at Bhilad.

Dr. Patel believes in significant investment towards building quality infrastructure has ensured that the Group moves rapidly towards becoming a manufacturing conglomerate across the Country. And all the recognitions that came his way, makes

**Headquartered in Mumbai, the journey initially commenced with four members and was very challenging, however with grit and tremendous efforts from all quarters, today Sandhya Group stands as a family of 600+ professionals.**

it clear that how flawlessly he is on the right track. Dr Smit Patel was awarded the prestigious Export awards for the years 2005-2006 and 2008-2009, 2012-13 by CHEMEXCIL, Government of India. And since there, he just never looked back! In 2012-14, the Rashtriya Udyog Ratna Awards by Quality Brand India; the Global Indian of the year Award. In 2013-14, Rajiv Gandhi Shiromani Awards; in

2014-15, International Gold Millennium Award; in 2015-16, the Golden Star Awards in Chemicals, and the World Quality Congress Awards. In 2016-17 - ABP News CSR leadership awards; award for the Highest Exports in Chemicals Sector; the

Glory of India Awards, Dubai; Highest Exports in Chemical Sector, UK; Best Global Brand in Chemicals Sector – Hong Kong and the Best EHS and Super Achievers Chemical Sector , Mumbai; the Best Export Company for the Year; the Best Chemical Company in Gujarat , Vapi; the Best Entrepreneur Awards , Delhi. In 2017-18, it all started with the Best Export Company of the Year, Delhi – followed by Highest Export In MSMS Sector by SMS Chamber of Commerce, Mumbai, the Best HR Company for the yrs 2017 from Zee News Network, Goa; the Best Manufacturing Chemicals Company in MSME Sector, the Most Admired Entrepreneur for the Year, Delhi; the Best EHS company – National Environment Health and Safety Congress Awards; the Best Chemical Product Development Company, Mumbai; the Best Brand product of the Year 2018; Best Export of the Year 2018; the Highest Direct tax payer of the

**Dr. Patel's contribution has made the product globally acceptable which read numerous awards in the various field from Governmemnt agencies as well as from private organizations and NGOs too.**

Year 2018; Best Chemicals Company of the Year 2018; Best Chemicals Company in Gujarat for the year 2018; Highest Export of the Agro for the yrs 2018; Best HR company of the yrs 2018. The Power Brands Company of the Year 2018; and the award for the Best exporter of the Year in Asian Countries. In 2019, the dream run continues under Dr Patel's enigmatic leadership - Best Chemical Product Development Company, followed by Best Brand Product of the Year; Highest Direct tax payer of the year, Best Crop Care company of the Year; Best Agro Export of the Year award – UK, Best Chemical Company of the Gujarat, Ahmedabad; Best EHS Company of the year , Bangalore' Best Agrochemical company of the year followed by the India SME Excellence award 2020, Mumbai....The list just seems to be unending! But the person that Dr Patel is, all these awards and recognitions from every corner of the globe had made him all the more humble and all the sincere and hardworking - "There have been many high points in my journey as an entrepreneur and they have taught me incredible lessons. However, the low points have taught me the most important lessons that I always carry along with me. To keep up my spirits through rough patches, to never give up, to always have hope, to be patient, to stay determined, to innovate, to stand strong as a true leader, to be industrious, and to lead by example are all the values that tough times have always taught me.





*Dr Smit Patel with his brother.*



*Dr Patel and his bestest half, Ms Jinal Patel with their kids.*



*Dr. Smit Patel being honoured by Bollywood Diva & Former Miss Universe  
Sushmita Sen at an awards function.*

As far as the success stories are concerned, some of the most prominent ones have been when our company, Sandhya Group, was presented with the prestigious Export Awards for the years 2005-06, 2008-09, and 2012-13 by Chemexcil, a Government of India Export Promotion Council (as we had already stated above). These achievements have strengthened my belief in the fact that hard work always pays off and when there is a will, there is always a way.” - And we cannot help but just admire and cherish the fact that we are getting to know this man through his words and his deeds!

Amidst all these incredible laurels and glories, let us fondly look back to his upbringing and the significant roles his parents and teachers played in making him what he is today – and who could say it more emphatically than Dr. Patel himself – “I have had the best of schooling experiences in Gyandham and I strongly believe that his alma mater has been a significant contributor to my successful career. All the respected teachers of both Primary and Secondary schools are driven by their will to bring out the best in the students and assist them in academic as well as co-curricular pursuits. Sir Col. V.S. Bedekar, the esteemed Principal of the school has always mentored me and all other students of the school to be able to fulfill our cherished dreams.” And this is what he has to say about his parents and we quote him –



“My parents have completely shaped my past and present and they will continue to be my greatest inspirations in the future. I believe that whatever a child does or grows up to become, is because of his or her parents who tirelessly contribute to their growth and development in the best possible manner. My father, Shri Kantilal Koli, at the age of 74 plus, continues to pave the way for Sandhya Chemicals to become a manufacturing conglomerate across the nation. The hard work of my parents and their inclination towards raising me as a responsible and realistic person has helped me to take practical decisions in life and business and to always be committed to the scope of growth.”

Besides his parents and teachers, Dr. Patel values the contribution of two more persons in his life as truly life-changing - “My wife, Mrs. Jinal Patel, has always stood beside me like a pillar of support. Being an entrepreneur and having innumerable responsibilities on me to keep the company thriving, it was always difficult for me to spare enough time for the family front. However, my wife never let me feel so. She has always managed every aspect of the family and our home in the best possible ways. Without her contribution, I would not have been able to work to my fullest potential. Despite my frequent travels and my busy schedules, my wife kept the home front strong and supported. They say, “Behind

every successful man there is a woman” and I truly believe in this saying. I would also like to mention the name of my brother, Mr. Snehal Patel, who is the person taking care of all the technological needs of our

chemical plant and the projects we are involved in. Without his expertise and his innovative strategies, we would not have been able to reach the digital milestones that we are currently equipped with. He holds a Master of Science degree from the University of California and he brings along the entire experience that is required to set up and maintain the technical aspects of our company.”

Besides these quintessential pillars of his life, there have been friends too who stood by him all the time and offered every kind of unconditional, selfless help - to motivate him and all of them had made him what he is today. So

**... These achievements have strengthened my belief in the fact that hard work always pays off and when there is a will, there is always a way.” - And we cannot help but just admire and cherish the fact that we are getting to know this man through his words and his deeds!**

Dr. Patel thinks it was a huge blessing to have such friends all the time around him.

The ongoing pandemic had undoubtedly wreaked havoc across every aspect of our lives and had indeed most brutally impacted every form of business all across the world. While many small and medium companies and business entities cease to exist because of the pandemic, many big companies went through a sea change in their approach to their businesses. Quite naturally it comes to our mind how Dr. Patel managed to keep things guarded amidst such a holocaust like a disaster - How he is seeing pandemic? - What impact has it had on your business? - What are his plans to adapt and change for the “new normal” world now as far as your industry is concerned? - After what he has to say, and the confidence, self-belief and the amount of sincerity and hard work that goes into such a reply – is just beyond anything that one can ever integrate and imagine of! – “There is no denying the fact that the pandemic has been a tough phase for all industries but what it has taught me and my company is the lesson that keeping ourselves future-proof is the way to move ahead in life and business. I have always believed in staying ahead of time and implementing futuristic strategies. Our organization is integrated with SAP system which has helped us to have complete automation in our office. Apart from the basic technological

implementation, we are also equipped with technical expertise in the form of our human resources who ensure that the business keeps thriving, despite all kinds of challenges. The new normal was difficult to adapt to but once we developed our techniques and applied our practical knowledge of things to the new norms, nothing could hold us back.” And he is also quick to add the role that internet played in this resilient fight that the group put up against the pandemic – “The internet is our biggest support system in this pandemic situation. When everything had closed down physically, we were able to reach out to all our clients through online meetings and discussions. Since our business is product-oriented, having access to advanced technological developments helped us to stay connected with the world even when it had almost come to a standstill. Doing business took on a new meaning and with virtual interactions, things became even more interesting and lucrative. We could network with more people from far-off places and increase the reach of our business. All in all, it has been a blessing in disguise for us.”

Dr Smit Patel as a disruptive entrepreneur had taken Sandhya Group to new heights running. His work experience and educational background boast strong analytics, business research, and leadership skills. The depth of his business acumen and leadership qualities can be summed



as his Leadership and business development – the way he had been able to take Sandhya Group to new heights; his belief in Team Building to hire and retain the best resources available; his impeccable communication skills – the way he translates his vision and align it to the organization vision and his deep understanding of technology and platform where analytics and technical solution are deployed. Besides handling the responsibilities of all the group companies - Sandhya Organic Chemicals Pvt Ltd; Sandhya Dyes and Chemicals Pvt Ltd; Sandhya Industrial Chemicals Export Pvt Ltd; Sandhya Agro Chemicals Pvt Ltd; S M Chemicals Vapi Pvt Ltd; Sandhya International and Sandhya Industrial Engineers – Dr. Patel is also associated as Trustee and mentor with Shri P K S Sarvajanik High School, Phansa ( Bhilad); YuvaKoli Patel Samaj; as Secretary to Pesticides Manufacturer Association of India ( PMFAI); Joint Director for an export-import committee of Vapi Industrial Association ( VIA); Director for Export import committee of Sarigam Industrial Association ( SIA); as one of the Agro Board Committee members of Bombay Chambers of Commerce - along with managing the work of Sandhya Charitable Trust; Sandhya Multi Speciality Clinic; Sandhya Foundation – something which is very close to his heart. Giving back to society is a priority as well as a responsibility for the business houses and Sandhya Group is committed to playing a matured

role in this regard. As he has quite unequivocally confirmed the everlasting impact of the iconic JRD Tata on him, Dr. Patel is actively associated with Social and Welfare activities, the development of rural and backward classes of people, physically handicapped people, and helping all needy ones.

“The business ethics of JRD Tata have heavily influenced my approach towards entrepreneurship. The fact that business can also be conducted ethically and profit-making can be a noble cause when attained honestly and distributed among those who are needy, has largely contributed to my ideas and philosophy of business. As per JRD Tata’s social concern, I believe that an organization can be profitable even if does not compromise on ethics and values. I also follow his practices of trying to reach out to the social and environmental implications of a business. This is precisely why our company, Sandhya Group, invests 10-11% of its yearly revenues in CSR activities, which include conservation of water and energy, blood donation and eye camps, women empowerment through employment, encouragement of sports, and outdoor games among the youth, etc. Sandhya Group is also a zero-discharge company, with ISO 9001 and 14001 certifications as well as OHSAS 18001 certification.”

With a focus on education and women empowerment, over the time it has numerous

activities and programs covered under CSR initiatives like organizing blood Donation Camps, Construction to avoid major accidents and loss of life; Building Computer labs in Govt schools; Free Eye Camp; Distributing Artificial Leg for handicapped; Distribution of Bicycle to the needy, distribution of education Scholarships; Free Distribution of Books and Computers to Govt School children; Heath marathon for all ages. As the Group website proudly confirms – “We believe in giving back to society to make it a better place – one small endeavor at a time. As a part of our CSR activities, we try and contribute our ideas and efforts towards various critical areas such as Education, Environment, Entrepreneurship, Women’s Empowerment, Infrastructure and Sponsorship. At Sandhya Group, our respect for human rights, makes us value our employees, and acknowledge their efforts towards work as well. We consistently invest in modern technologies and solutions for sustainable energy flow and economic growth. Sandhya Group has supported innumerable social and community initiatives in Valsad District, Gujarat India. Our prime focus is to provide financial assistance to schools for construction and renovation, hold Eye camps for health awareness, donate computers to help keep students abreast with the latest technologies, and offer a scholarship to poor students, ensuring education for as many as we can support. Our clinic, Sandhya Clinic is dedicated to spreading

awareness and treating Diabetes. The first of its kind clinic dedicated to a single cause houses state-of-the-art machinery for the patients. A clinical dietician and a nutritionist help the patients reclaim their health through professional guidance and nurturing care. A brisk walk marathon is also organized by us (with enough time dedicated to training as well) for relatives of the patients who would like to participate and show solidarity to the patient as well as help create awareness in their circles. We also promote sports among the youth – cricket being our favorite has been promoted by us for over 30 years through various championships, matches, and other activities.”

**“.... our company, Sandhya Group, invests 10-11% of its yearly revenues in CSR activities, which include conservation of water and energy, blood donation and eye camps, women empowerment... etc. Sandhya Group is also a zero-discharge company, with ISO 9001 and 14001 certifications as well as OHSAS 18001 certification.”**

The Indian Chemical industry has been the mainstay in contributing to the GDP of the country along with being a major employment source. The knowledge-rich and capital-intensive chemical industry play a key role in driving India's agricultural and industrial development and with the latest reforms, initiatives, and increased investments, this growth is phenomenal. As per experts, this is the most viable time for the industries to thrive and expand as the Indian economy is growing at a massive speed. Following the current trajectory, India promises to be a strong contender to control the world market in the coming times.

As one of the premier Industrial states, Gujarat is a well-known hub of the Indian Chemical industry, contributing to over 50% of its production. Termed India's 'Petro Capital', it has been the leading state in terms of attracting investment for the industry. It contributes significantly to the country's Petrochemicals production (62 %), chemicals production (51 %), and pharmaceuticals production (35 %). Its business-friendly policies have made it the first choice for investors.

Based on such a conducive and business-friendly environment, the Sandhya Group overall – with products like Industrial Chemicals, Antioxidant's phosphates, Phosphate Esters, Agrochemicals,

Defoamers – is now a leading phosphorus based chemical manufacturer, with expertise in large scale production of specialty chemicals and agrochemicals. It has almost a 4 decades-long strong business association with a large number of multinationals in India and abroad. Exports contribute to 40% of total turnover. Just as we mentioned before, an ISO 9001, ISO 14001 certified and under progress for OHSAS 18001 certification – it is a zero-discharge company and has always prioritized unconditional earnest focus on environment and safety. Overall, these years, Sandhya Group has made a measurable impact as a passionate advocate for all the products under its flagship. Having a state of art manufacturing plant with a large storage capacity it has matured over the years in terms of quality and quantity and the manufacturing of Phosphorous Trichloride (PCl<sub>3</sub>). Following the system-oriented process and embracing industry-best practices in its operation has allowed the Group to be the preferred choice for its client all cross globe. It uses sophisticated testing equipment for analysis, complaint handling mechanism, CAPA, and a team of R&D to develop new products as per customer's requirement. Meeting with the Regulatory Compliance as per customer needs is a mandatory process that has always been implemented in Sandhya Group.

The advent of technology and innovation has

brought a sea-change and being a part of the tech drive is a necessity, rather than just an option for today's business. As industries are in a constant state of change, the chemical industry is one of the top industries that are prone to changes and mergers. Many companies are thinking about how to quickly integrate acquisitions to release promised synergies and onboard new revenue sources, and how reduce complexity? Streamline workflows across the entire global value chain; how to resist commoditization by embedding themselves more intimately within customers' innovation and operations cycles; how to rapidly enter, differentiate, and win in new markets.

The new-age technologies are bridging the gaps and are providing innovative solutions that are helping the chemical industry to be progressive. The digitalization of the business has already made a huge impact and yet carries the potential to simplify countless hurdles. Specifically, the Internet is itself the biggest boon to the industry as it enables professionals to reach out for the best. ERP solutions like SAP have been the most favored application for the chemical industry as they optimize and collate data from every unit and maintain only in a repository reducing the manual effort to a great extent. Aligning to the old school of principles, the Sandhya group has taken the hard road to success. It has always adhered to key elements that have resulted in prosperity



and success in the business. Embracing values like superior performance, integrity, entrepreneurship, respect, customer orientation, and co-working, the entity is expanding its horizon at a rapid pace.

Although tirelessly working for the continuous growth and expansion of the Group and as the Group gets bigger and bigger with his aggressive and successful business policies – he is also equally contemplative about the safe and secure future of the business – the legacy that he wants to leave with the next generations. When asked “How the next generation will respond to this business? What are your plans for them?” – He has his thoughts cut out - “The future of our country is Agrochemical business. This is the field in which we are planning to expand and grow our reach. Our second generation is being raised in an environment that is helping them to understand the nuances of the ethical business from an early age. Their skills are sharpened to know the technicalities of running a full-fledged business and helping it grow further. We are preparing them in a way that will instill the values of leadership from a young age so that they can take over these expansion plans at the earliest.” And what role does government play in his plans and actions for the present as well as for the future – “I believe that the government should focus mainly on Make in India plans and promotions so that local businesses thrive and expand in the

country. Import of Chinese products should be discouraged and products that are made in India should be fully encouraged. This will also enhance the economy of the country and will reshape the business landscape as well. When more Indian businesses will be promoted, a greater percentage of the youth population will be inclined towards starting new ventures or carrying forward the legacies of their family.”

And we would like to end this incredible tour de force of Dr. Patel’s life and the business empire he has built with his words only – and these words will not only shape up future entrepreneurs and business leaders but will make them better and fitter human beings: “I firmly believe in the saying, “Health is wealth”, which is why despite hectic schedules our entire family dedicates some part of the day to mental and physical fitness. Reading books helps me to focus better on my work and it also keeps me updated about business developments across the globe. Our mental health is extremely important for our well-being. In these times when stress and lifestyle disorders are creeping upon us, we should take utmost care of our mind and body by meditating, walking or jogging, stretching, and doing lightweight exercises. The goal is not to achieve a perfect body but to maintain fitness that can help us stay agile and take up all possible challenges, whenever they come our way.”

This shows the determination of this great man and his way of ensuring an enduring legacy in the Chemical Industry in our country.



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

**SULAJJA FIRODIA MOTWANI**  
FOUNDER AND CEO OF KINETIC GREEN  
ENERGY & POWER SOLUTIONS LIMITED

*“Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your values,  
Your values become your destiny.”*  
- Mahatma Gandhi

“In a very personal space, I always looked up to my grandfather. He was my hero. I learned how to work here following him only. Seeing his life so closely. He was an amazing human being. I had never seen somebody who is so simple and who is so honest. And who compassionately helped everybody. He did not care about the value judgments of others. He was what he was. He was very humane but in a very simple and genuine kind of way. And he was a dynamic entrepreneur. Anything he came across – anywhere in the world, he would always say, oh that can be made easily in our country / developed in our country at a much lower cost. He always wanted to do something better for India and contribute to the country’s development. And technology always excited him. He collaborated with some of India’s most esteemed automobile companies including Bajaj Auto Limited (in partnership with the Bajaj Family), Force Motors Limited (under technical license from Mercedes Benz), and Kinetic Honda Motor Company (in collaboration with Honda). He had contributed a lot to the transport system of the country. He is my hero, my idol forever.”

It’s is not only the fondest memories of a proud granddaughter about her granddad; it’s a priceless historical account of memories of one of contemporary India’s leading business leaders in the electric automotive industry, and a disrupter and green energy entrepreneur Ms.

Sulajja Firodia Motwani – about her grandfather, Shri. H.K. Firodia - the man who founded the Kinetic Group, the flagship company of Kinetic Engineering Limited, who is one of the most celebrated and inspirational industrialists in the Indian Automobile Industry, and who almost single-handedly laid the foundations of the now flourishing Indian Automobile Industry and bequeathed Kinetic Group an illustrious legacy.

**“In a very personal space, I always looked up to my grandfather. He was my hero. I learned how to work here following him only. Seeing his life so closely...He had contributed a lot to the transport system of the country. He is my hero, my idol forever.”**

The Firodia family – having an experience of 60 years in the automobile industry – has their roots firmly fixed on the Gandhian principles of nationalism and life. They had actively participated in India’s freedom struggle and the business was started after the independence with a vision of service to the nation and with aspirations to contribute



extensively towards “mobility to the common man”. The main impetus for Shri H. K. Firodia to enter the automobile industry a few years after India got independence was his dream to harness technology and make and develop affordable and economical automotive and make it indigenously (many decades before the phrase ‘Make in India’ came into use!). He wished to develop technology and lay the foundation of an advanced public transport solution, which would be pocket friendly to the masses in India. Building on this very benign foundation laid by his father, Padma Shri Mr. Arun Firodia - the present Chairman of Kinetic Group, which is India’s leading manufacturer and exporter of two-wheelers, is an epitome of a combination of a brilliant Engineer and an astute Businessman. “My father is the best auto engineer that the country has produced,” says Sullaja and we could only agree with all our reverence for the man. Arun went on to start the flagship company, Kinetic Engineering and is credited with building the first indigenous moped, Luna. But, more importantly, he gave India its first gearless scooter, KH-100, a year after forming a joint venture with Honda Motor Company in 1984. Apart from being a leading industrialist, Mr. Arun Firodia is also a prominent Social Activist. He succeeds the rich tradition of his distinguished father and has been a driving ‘force’ behind India’s automobile industry expansion. India will always cherish him as the man who introduced the

world's most advanced Scooter to India – the KH-100 as we had mentioned, in a Joint Venture with Honda Motor Company of Japan. In a nutshell, whatever the

Firodia family did, 'service to the nation' and 'contribution towards nation building' remained at the center of it forever. Sullaja Firodia Motwani is carrying forward the legacy of this family heritage but at the same time, she has her allegiance to the environment at large and toward her vision and dream of a sustainable world driven by green automation and mobility.

**The Firodia family – having an experience of 60 years in the automobile industry ... had actively participated in India's freedom struggle and the business was started after the independence with a vision of service to the nation and with aspirations to contribute extensively towards "mobility to the common man"**

“We had dinner time conversations with my

grandfather or father, where they talk about the economy and business and, um it was always about the county and all of that. It's not about petty family politics and things like that all day about the larger things about the world. So that always excited me and I was from early on very keen to be part of the business. I somehow, my grandfather and father saw the spark in me, always encouraged me.” - She believes in ‘leading from the forefront and the Firodia blood that runs through her, gives her the entire spur to take ahead the family’s heritage in automotive towards green mobility for the masses.

“While there are the likes of Tesla, who are developing EV technology to create high-performance electric cars for the discerning; we at, Kinetic Green, are striving to create EV technology and innovative solutions to facilitate a large-scale deployment of this green technology for the masses. I strongly believe that in developing nations like India, only when we can bring this technology within the reach of millions, the society will see its social impact of lower pollution and affordable green transport.”, - this is Sullaja’s observation (we will come back to this again) as she believes selling a few thousand electric cars won’t make that big an impact, but reaching out to people with affordable green energy-driven two and three-wheelers – empowering millions of them – would have a huge

impact on the environment, on sustainable living for all species. And when she says, ‘and that is what I am trying to achieve, we can see that spark of determination and commitment – the heritage that she inherited.

Just like her father, Sullaja went on to pursue a management degree from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. Sulajja has been a Topper throughout her academic career. A Merit Rank holder in her SSC, Sulajja decided to pursue a degree in Commerce at the renowned Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce (BMCC) at Pune. As a BMCC student, she stood First in the entire Maharashtra State in HSC and graduated with a 2nd Rank in the University. Sulajja then

**“While there are the likes of Tesla, who are developing EV technology to create high[1] performance electric cars for the discerning; we at, Kinetic Green, are striving to create EV technology and innovative solutions to facilitate a large-scale deployment of this green technology for the masses...”**

pursued her higher education in Business Management in the USA and holds an MBA from the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University, USA. Later, she also served on the Board of Trustees of the University and was invited to the President's Committee for India for several years. She holds the record at Carnegie for being the youngest MBA at 21. "The average age in my class was 28," says Sullaja, who landed a job with an investment consultancy firm, Barra International, in California. During the four years at Barra, she managed sales and also got exposure to finance. As Sullaja happily recalls, "And it was a very good experience too, firstly go to Carnegie Mellon, then kind of get the job on my own, to work on my own, to be an employee and learn. So I was working in the consulting field and would travel four days from California to New York, Boston, or Philadelphia. And this was in the 90s with no mobile phone, no GPS, or internet. So we were looking at maps and leaving, you know, using landlines and answering machines, so it was a great experience to live independently kind of! I got a promotion. I got picked up in a special core team. I was the only non-American, non-white person on the sales team. It was an international company but in sales they only had Americans. Little 22-23-year-old Indian girl!"

After her grandfather was diagnosed with cancer, Sullaja had to cut short her stay in the US



*The 'creator' with her 'creations'.*



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI





DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



to come back to India. That marked a turning point in her journey. While working with Barra International, she met and married Manish Motwani, who was with Sun Microsystems. What made the decision easier to make for Sullaja was that her husband, too, willingly gave up his most promising future at a time when Silicon Valley was going through a massive innovation and expansion drive. Though both were Green Card holders, they gave up their citizenship as well. She was heading to join the family business but Barra would never like to let her go. The company entrusted the 25-year-old with the task of setting up its Indian operations. “It did my confidence a world of good,” says Sullaja, who finds it a great misfortune and missed opportunity of a lifetime that she couldn’t get to train under her grandfather who passed away in 1995, the year she came back to India and joined Kinetic and the rest...well we all know what it is....

## **Her journey**

She is the Founder & CEO of Kinetic Green Energy and Power Solutions Limited, a pioneer in electric vehicles in India. Under her leadership and with a vision to bring green mobility to the masses, Kinetic Green has risen to be the leading manufacturer of Electric Three Wheelers in the country. The company aims to be a global leader in light electric mobility, specializing in electric

3-wheelers, 2-wheelers, and golf carts with a focus to bring “green mobility for the masses”.

She is also the Vice-Chairperson of Kinetic Engineering Ltd. She is responsible for the Kinetic group’s overall business strategy and development. Kinetic Group’s business interests include Automobile Manufacturing, auto components including Powertrain Systems, Green Energy, Multilevel parking solutions, Elevators & Escalators. Kinetic’s partners include companies like Hyundai, Lamborghini, Taigene Electrical, Magna, etc. Sulajja plays a key role in steering the Group’s business strategy and in its implementation across group companies.

Sulajja joined Kinetic Group in 1995 and has 25 years of experience in the Automobile industry. She has been at the helm of Kinetic’s two-wheeler business and subsequent restructuring of the group that paved way for a focus on automotive systems and new areas like e-mobility. She has experience in marketing and sales, finance, and setting up and managing joint ventures and technology collaborations. She is a passionate, hardworking, and aggressive professional who never saw her gender as a weakness but took on many challenges successfully in the male-dominated automobile industry.

Sulajja set up Kinetic Green in 2014, with a

conviction that electric vehicles will be the future of automobile technology owing to increasing pollution, tighter emission norms, and fuel security concerns. At that time, this was a nascent industry and hardly any player had been successful in mass marketing electric vehicles. Government policy was not formulated and owing to higher costs, customers were not coming forward to adopt this technology. As she explains in one of her interviews, “We have worked a lot with the Centre

**She is a passionate, hardworking, and aggressive professional who never saw her gender as a weakness but took on many challenges successfully in the male-dominated automobile industry.**

to bring in focus on electric two- and three-wheelers as India sees 85 percent of its population use them along with buses for mass transportation. A developing nation like India needs to see EVs reach the masses not just classes. The first three-wheeler we developed had almost 65 percent import content but now except for the cells, we are buying everything locally including batteries. The Kinetic Group has played a key part not only

in manufacturing e-three-wheelers but also in policy formation, and supply chain development where we worked with suppliers to provide our domain knowledge and design the specs for Indian driving conditions. When we entered the e-three-wheeler space, there was no market for such products and a lot of effort went into creating the narrative. We worked with the UP government to bring in e-three-wheelers for better livelihoods and health. In Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, we worked with women in the Naxalite belt to provide them with e-three-wheelers. Kinetic Green was set up as an independent company as opposed to the division of an existing company. It has its business model since an EV is altogether a different animal where people need to be passionate and have a different approach.” - Sulajja, armed with her conviction and experience, set up a new venture to build a focused business in this area and began the project with a team of 2! She struck a relationship with CSIR and their two labs, CMERI and CECRI to develop electric vehicle technology. She set up a DSIR Certified advanced R and D center for Electric vehicles and built a team of professionals who shared the passion and conviction about e mobility. She took an active part in Government’s policy formulation to get Government support for favorable policies for electric vehicles in India.

A challenging target was taken to develop an electric auto at a customer price of Rs. 1 lakh

(plus battery) with a vision that Kinetic's vehicles should be cheaper than regular autos and thus, attract customers without any subsidy. This vehicle was successfully developed along with a focus on technology and supply chain development, team building, setting up a dealership network, and a low-cost manufacturing base.

To popularize electric vehicle technology, Sulajja thought of an innovative marketing platform- to position e-autos as socially desirable, not only as they are green but also attractive means for self-employment. She collaborated with various State Governments, Government welfare schemes, and NGOs to promote e-auto as means of poverty alleviation and self-employment for the unemployed poor. The company won a large contract from the UP Government where over 8,000 e autos were provided to poor cycle-rickshaw pullers as means of a dignified livelihood and social upliftment. Kinetic Green implemented the project successfully by delivering vehicles across 65 districts of UP and setting up a vast servicing and charging network. The cycle rickshaw puller, who earned a meager Rs. 200/day with manual labor now earns over Rs. 800/day as a proud owner of an e-auto!

Similarly, the company delivered vehicles to hundreds of women for self-empowerment in collaboration with various NGOs and Banks.

This was done in UP, Delhi, and Adivasi belts of Chhattisgarh. Sulajja allied with “Chaupal”, a leading NGO to deliver 100 e-autos to poor youth and women from slums across North India. She also joined hands with the SC/ST Corporation to provide vehicles to unemployed backward class youth.

Sulajja has worked tirelessly to forge these alliances, implement them successfully, and get support from various banks for loans to beneficiaries from poor strata of society. This has also made a big difference to the society where thousands of poor women are now gainfully self-employed as owners of e-autos. She has also established a network of 150 exclusive dealers to promote e-mobility across the country.

With all these efforts, Kinetic Green crossed a turnover of Rs. 110cr during 2016-17 and has established itself as the largest seller of electric three-wheelers. The company is now eyeing a top line of Rs. 400 crores in the coming year. The company's plans include a wide range of electric two, three, and four-wheelers with a strong focus on bringing electric mobility to the masses.

Along the way, Kinetic Green has created mass employment directly to hundreds and indirectly to thousands through its supply chain and at its dealerships and service stations across the

country. Further, for its 25,000 e-auto drivers the company has created dignified employment while contributing to the reduction of pollution. This has saved millions of trees and the passengers of e-autos have enjoyed billions of affordable green rides.

With an emphasis on the development of indigenous technology and “Make in India”, she recently tied up with Tonino Lamborghini, SpA, to bring global design and technology for electric and solar golf carts and tourism vehicles, which she now plans to manufacture in India and market globally.

**With all these efforts, Kinetic Green crossed a turnover of Rs. 110cr during 2016-17 and has established itself as the largest seller of electric three-wheelers.**

Going a step further, she now has entered into a partnership with leading players like BPCL and Ola Electric, to set up Battery Swapping Stations to make EV battery infrastructure at every 2 km in Indian cities. Her goal is to bring 10,00,000 EVs to Indian roads in the next few years. And when asked about how she sees the future, she sounds as confident as it can be – “It is a disruptive



opportunity which also means it throws open opportunities for new companies. We have been one of the early players and have set up a unique business model that can build up in a very strong way. The focus will be more on growth and capital investment. At the same time, there will be challenges as EVs become mainstream and more competition will come in. Yet, there is space for many players as the market is quite large. So this is the future of automotive technology. I have set up the company with the view to bring green mobility to the masses. So thinking ahead for family heritage with automotive and service to the nation but taken to a new sector, which is more interesting, future of the technology. Developed economies are much more into electric cars and all. But for our country, it's not about only cars. If you sell them hundred or thousand or 10,000 Teslas in a year, that won't make a difference to the country, but if you sell lakhs of electric three-wheelers and two-wheelers - which is what most of the Indians are commuting in, then the impact on the pollution and the environment can be massive. Yeah. And the savings to the people of the country through fuel (and maintenance etc,) will also be meaningful. So in a developing nation, like ours, that you want to bring technology and be a first (mover), you know, in the country then it has to be developed for the masses for the bottom of the pyramid, not the top of the pyramid."

Sulajja has shown an exemplary vision to enter a new field with nascent technology, a total conviction in her idea, and worked very hard to turn that dream successfully into reality to establish her company as a leading player in the electric vehicle industry. And she has, literally built and spearheaded this entire green movement by harnessing the power of the legacy and her heritage - “Kinetic is a very strong name in the automotive sector, very strong brand. So that’s the biggest thing— people believe in the brand and see it as a reliable, trusted brand, we could attract talent from the industry because they can then we are a respected corporate house. I had run the two-wheeler business of the group. So I knew the supply chain, how to scale up the automotive business, all these things were kind of the building blocks, but we built as a completely new company. Because a new business model needed to be evolved— we can he can make it an asset-based business model, not traditional engine based automotive company will make the engine in-house to make the transmission in-house.”

And essentially Sujjaja wanted to start a new brand and not go on with the Kinetic name alone. She explains it beautifully in these lines – “There’s a lot of investment and a lot of capacity for creation that goes on in setting up a project. But for the EV sector, primarily it is only about software and technology, and design. And so what

we focus on here was designing and developing the electric vehicle range, and also developing credit equality, and we got the components are made from our supply chain partners. Essentially, we were doing everything in-house and a partnership with technology companies and sharing the knowledge and the designs with them, and, within the company, we have an asset-like manufacturing strategy. An electric vehicle has only 150 parts, one vehicle 150 component as opposed to 400 components in an engine-based vehicle. And so it's more aggregate and less moving parts, easy to have a final assembly, which is, uh, to make it in-house. So we do the time and operations of welding, painting, and assembly house, and all the components are built by our suppliers. So to have such an asset-like model, we set up a new company with this new principle. And this is the latest—if you look around the companies like Amazon, Flipkart or Ola, Uber, or Oyo. They don't have any assets. They're simply solution providers, platforms for other businesses to thrive. So historically it has been all about having stores and assets and massive infrastructure, but the business models of today are more about solutions and linkages and about creating a platform. So we started up a new subbrand called Kinetic green which has a new manufacturing facility and a new team of 150 people—EV enthusiasts. So they come from this three-wheeler electric passion. And we set about

setting up, the design that we worked with CSIR, which is the council for scientific and industrial research. They had 32 labs like NCL and other labs that should all belong to the CSR and family. We developed our first solution with them and our first electric auto had 70% parts imported, this is five years ago, and now we have 95% parts made locally. So we have developed the local/domestic supply chain and don't rely on any imports now."

### Beyond Bread: Contribution to the Society through Leadership

Sulajja has been invited to steer many important industry forums and associations that play a key role in policy formation and advocacy. The leadership positions held by her include:

- Co-Chairperson of Electric Vehicle Task Force at FICCI,
- Head of the Electric Three-Wheeler mobility of SMEV (Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles).
- Member of the National Executive Committee of CII
- National Chairperson of FICCI Young Leaders Forum
- Member of National Steering Committee of FICCI
- Selected to lead as Chairperson for FICCI - Maharashtra

- Member of the prestigious Governing Body of CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India)
- Member of CSIR Society, the highest Science and Research Development Body chaired by Prime Minister of India
- Industry nominee on the Development Council for Electrical Mobility of India from the Ministry of Heavy Industries
- Board of Advisors of iCreate – International Centre for Entrepreneurship & Technology, an initiative of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Director on the Board of Invest India, apex Investment Promotion Agency for the Government of India
- Chairperson of the Advisory Board of AIESEC
- Member of the Impact Task Force- national Apex body for skill-building and promotion of collaboration between Science, Education, and Industry
- Sulajja is also the Brand Ambassador for Plan International, for their “Save the Girl Child” initiative
- Founding Member of the Pune International Centre, an independent “Think Tank” which deliberates on issues of national importance and contributes to policy-making in India.

## Honors & Awards

Sulajja Firodia has received several Honours and Awards for her accomplishments that benefitted the community and industry:

- World Economic Forum recognized her as a “Young Global Leader” and as a Global Leader for Tomorrow
- Featured as a business “Face of the Millennium” by leading magazine India Today
- Voted among the top 25 business leaders of the next century in a poll of industrialists conducted by Fortune India
- Received the Society Young Achiever’s Award for Business
- Won the Young Super Achiever Award by Business Today
- Received the unique and coveted “MTV Style-icon” Award
- Awarded as “India’s Most Powerful Women” by Business Today
- Received Top Management Consortium’s Award of Excellence
- Won Outlook Business’ Women of Worth (WOW) 2019 Award
- Received Zee’s Dare to Dream Award for excellence as a Woman Entrepreneur
- Awarded the Business Woman of the Decade by the Global Women’s Economic Forum
- Recognized by Rotary International with

### Vocational Excellence Award

- Received Aiesec Hall of Fame award
- Won the Nari Shakti award for her work for the Environment
- Won design Excellence Award for best Automobile Design
- Won ISGF Innovation Award, for innovation to promote sustainability
- Won Pride of Pune award, for being a Role Model for young entrepreneurs in Pune
- Won FICCI FLO's Top 25 Women of Excellence award, in the Entrepreneurship category

She is a fitness enthusiast, national-level badminton player, and marathon runner and passionately pursues adventure sports including skiing, scuba diving, mountain biking, and sky diving. She is a loving mother to her 18-year-old son, Sidhant. She also believes in giving back to society and is involved in various philanthropic activities. In an interview given in August last year, she lays the growth plan that she has in mind – “While it is early days yet, thus far, we have sold around 30,000 vehicles. We have a cumulative topline of Rs 350 crore. Last year, we had a sales decline because of the Covid-19 situation but are targeting a Rs 200 crore topline this fiscal. Our revenues have been around Rs 70-100 crore for the last 3-4 years. We are now in an acceleration phase and see the market as a



multi-thousand crore opportunity. We have already invested around Rs 100 crore in Kinetic Green. The promoters have invested around Rs 50-60 crore in equity and Rs 40 crore in other forms of financing. But now we have just signed a very aggressive plan to invest around Rs 300 crore in the next 3-4 years through promoter and Series A funding.”

More power to you and more success. What a journey it has been!



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

## **TAPAN SINGHEL**

MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO, BAJAJ ALLIANZ  
GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY

*“Listen to your customers and your employees, they are the most important thing and define your business.”*

*“I truly believe that each of us must find meaning in our work. The best work happens when you know that it does not just work, but something that will improve other people’s lives.”*

*— Satya Nadella, CEO-Microsoft*

Mr. Tapan Singhel in all the avatars in his life, as an administrator, a visionary business leader, an orator, and an intellectual, perfectly embodies the glowing spirit that animates the aforesaid words of Mr. Satya Nadella.

### The magic of the magician

An M Sc in Physics with a specialization in Spectroscopy and Lasers from Benaras Hindu University Mr. Singhel hails from a completely non-business background. In light of his present stature and the boundless wisdom that has shaped and contributed to his life's work, one would find it very hard to believe that the same man could not clear some of his papers in his first year of B Sc Physics honors. Mr. Tapan Singhel has been with the Bajaj Allianz General Insurance since the inception of the company in 2001 as one of its founding employees. He was an integral part of the team that was responsible for exponential growth in the retail channels of business. Rising through the ranks, from being the Regional Manager to Zonal Manager (East, North, Central & Delhi), he went on to become the President and the Chief Marketing Officer. Mr. Tapan Singhel took over as MD and CEO of the company in April 2012. Last year marked the completion of a glorious journey of 2 decades of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance. Out of these two decades, Mr. Singhel has been the captain of the company for

the last ten years

Under his guidance in the last 10 years, the company has moved from strength to strength, whether it comes to sales, distribution, or customer engagement, with a clear-cut digital-first approach. As the MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited, Mr. Singhel has ensured growth, profitability, and cost leadership in the industry – he carries the unique distinction of being the leader who delivered underwriting profit, quarter after quarter, and year after year. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has more than 50% share of the industry's profit.

At present, he chairs the CII National Committee on Insurance and Pensions. He recently won 'The lifetime Achievement Award' at the 25th Asia Insurance Industry Awards 2021. He has won 'CEO of the Year' for India and Asia-Pacific region at the IDC Future Enterprise Awards 2021. He was honored as the 'Personality of the Year' at Quantic's BFSI Excellence Awards 2021, India

Insurance Summit & Awards 2019, 22nd Asia Insurance Industry Awards 2018, and Indian Insurance Summit 2017. He was also awarded the title of Best CEO at Insurance Asia Awards and was recognized as the Most Promising Business Leaders of Asia 2018 by The Economic Times. He has been

recognized as LinkedIn's Top Voice in India in both 2018 and 2019. His profile has been featured in the LinkedIn Power Profiles India list from 2015-to 2018. Under Mr. Singhel's dynamic leadership, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has become one of the largest private insurers in the country, with offices in over 1000 towns and cities. Mr.

**Bajaj Allianz  
General Insurance  
has more than  
50% share of the  
industry's profit.**

Singhel fondly reminisces – “I remember those early days when we were setting up offices. There were no such fancy offices.

We would find some small business centers and small shops and we would set up our office there. We would sit there and talk to our customers and clients and give them long presentations. And after the presentation, the customer/client would look at us and say, ‘Yeah it’s good, it’s very nice, it’s very impressive – but I will not give you business right now, because I am not sure that you will not run away!’” - How amazing! In the two-decade-long journeys, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance rose from being a humble start-up to becoming an industry leader. One has to just look at what the stats speak for the company: as of today, the company enjoys the faith of close to 13 crore customers, and over 7000 employees and can boast

of a robust distribution network of more than 80,000 agents, almost 9,000 motor dealer partners, and over 240 bank partners. Still, Mr. Singhel refuses to be complacent and refuses to rest on past laurels. For a visionary like him, even the sky cannot be the limit!

In keeping with the general proclivity of a technocrat with a natural love for innovation and technological advancement, Mr. Singhel has ably guided his company in such a way as to make it possible for the doorstep delivery of insurance solutions to its customers. He has introduced the use of the 'EEZEEZTAB', which has significantly empowered their employees, partners, and advisors and it has also enabled them to leverage this new age mobility tool to easily reach out to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities – ensuring deeper penetration for Bajaj Allianz General Insurance company as well as upholding the larger financial inclusion agenda of the country. Through its digital and virtual offices, it has reached out to over 1000 new Tier 2 and 3 towns across India. Not only this, the Company is taking its relationships with the customers beyond insurance, by offering them a plethora of digitized customer-centric initiatives.

Under Mr. Singhel's able leadership Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, once again registered strong financial results for FY'22 by posting revenue of Rs. 13,788 crores for the period, posting a



net profit of Rs. 1,339 crores. The company also reported a healthy Combined Ratio of close to 100% and a solvency ratio of 344% during the same period.

### ‘Home and the World’ of the Insurance Industry at a Glance

Currently, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company has an array of insurance products to offer – ranging from Motor insurance and health insurance to Travel, property, pet dog insurance, House, Furniture, and even a cover for cyber crimes and fraud which are rampant these days.

What makes Mr. Tapan Singhel an extraordinary leader and administrator and which has been the company’s biggest differentiating factor from the rest – is the great importance that Mr. Singhel attaches to ensuring the highest standards of customer service. His unique understanding of the market dynamics has helped him steer the organization to great heights

These are some of the qualities that have given the company an extra edge in this highly competitive industry. The humanist that Mr. Singhel is, under him, the Company changed its brand identity to ‘Caringly Yours’ to reposition itself in the minds of Indian consumers as a brand that protects and cares for its customers.

The company not only helps its customers protect their most prized possessions but also aims to solve their day-to-day worries. With this, the Company not just aims to take its service to the next level but also seeks to provide the best customer experience at every touch-point and make insurance a ‘pull’ rather than a ‘push’ product.

If we look at the Indian Insurance (Life and Non-Life) Market as a whole we will get to know how significant Mr. Singhel’s contributions have been. The insurance industry of India has 58 insurance companies, of which 24 are in the life insurance business, while 34 are non-life insurers. In India, the overall market size of the insurance sector was US \$ 280 billion in 2020. India is ranked at the 10th position among the 88 participating countries in the life insurance business, as published by Swiss Re. India’s share in the global life insurance market was 2.61%, in 2018. During the same period, the growth in global non-life insurance premiums was 3%. However, the share of Indian non-life insurance premiums in global non-life insurance premiums was 1.1% and India ranked 15th in the global non-life insurance market. So we can see how the Indian insurance sector is underperforming, as compared to the developed and emerging economies. Insurance penetration and density, which are the key performance indicators of the

insurance industry, are especially low in India.

This certainly justifies the moves of Mr. Singhel, who had been instrumental in pushing for the digitization of the company. Furthermore, there is a significant gap between insurance coverage and value, which highlights the high-risk state of the country. Since these vital parameters of insurance coverage and value are fast improving at a static growth rate, insurance penetration in India (measured as the ratio of the insurance premium paid and GDP of the country) has increased from 2.71% in 2001 to just 3.7% in 2018. Although this is a significant development, considering the volume of business, but still it lags in comparison with the penetration levels in the rest of the world (6.13%) and the emerging Asian economies (5.62%).

The man and his principles that had made him what he is.....

For Mr. Tapan Singhel, “People” are not assets in the first place; neither are they tools or machines. One has to respect them. He firmly believes employees are happier when they are given opportunities to integrate. In his idea of equality, to quote him, “We are born a human being and must be respected equally – no matter at what position a person is. Given the equal opportunity, everyone shines and they can contribute in a



*Mr. Singhel with his family*



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



*Leader extraordinary*

DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



meaningful manner.”

As Mr. Singhel often contemplates his life, he thinks that one has to ask oneself if his work makes an impact at all. For him, a business leader’s responsibility doesn’t end with ensuring a healthy Balance Sheet for the company. It starts there, but a true leader has to go the extra mile and go beyond the everyday work to ensure that they can make a difference in society in a way that leads to the overall betterment of the nation. In fact, he often talks about generating at least a million jobs for the citizens of our country and protecting each and every citizen against any exigency.

Mr. Singhel is a very humble, down-to-earth, and simple person who loves to take time and hold conversations with people on diverse topics. He loves to communicate his point of view, opinions, and learnings with a larger audience through his blogs and social media.

Mr. Singhel lucidly explains the reason why he thinks it is necessary to take the cover of insurance to every common household, to the bottom of the pyramid, where it matters: “When a flood happens, say the economic loss is 20,000 crores, as an insurer, insurer’s loss is only 4,000 crore, who gives the balance 16000 crores? Not the rich people, the average middle-income group bear the burden. So we must work for their

betterment.

The consumer must say “It’s good to be insured” to take insurance there is a great social issue”.

Mr. Singhel has often spoken about and stressed the need for insurance and says that a customer must feel good to be insured. He often states that insurance is an excellent risk mitigation tool and is so affordable, and is a must-have for everyone. For example – a death-only personal accident cover of Rs 1 lac may be obtained at a small sum of just Rs 45 per year, an insurance cover against Covid would cost something around Rs 600/700 a year.

The change of mindset will usher in the change in the scenario...

However, there is a negative perception of insurance, and misconceptions about the settlement of claims make people apprehensive about opting for insurance. However, if one were to look at data this seems to be misplaced if you see the entire industry has a combined ratio of more than 100% i.e a huge amount of claims are getting paid. Then Mr. Singhel mulls, maybe it is just not this, he continued even more strikingly ‘Once I spoke to a psychologist friend about this topic, who suggested that the human brain is not wired to see risk.’ The younger you are, the less



you see risks.

Both these elements actively contribute to lower penetration and hesitancy to buy insurance. And the only way to change this mindset is to have conversations about insurance. Mr. Singhel strongly believes that distribution is the backbone of the insurance industry. The more conversations the distributors can have about the significance of insurance and how it is the most cost-effective method to mitigate risks, we will see more acceptance of insurance as a whole.

**...“People” are not assets in the first place; neither are they tools or machines. One has to respect them.”**

Mr. Singhel truly believes that insurance is the business of doing good because it gives you the privilege to be there for your customers in the direst hours, to support them, wipe their tears, and make a real difference in people’s lives.

Sneak peek into his life.... the life worth celebrating!

Mr. Tapan Singhel grew up in Kolkata, where he

studied science at prestigious La

Martiniere for Boys School. With a wistful smile across his lips, Mr. Singhel reminiscences how under the spell of childish fancies and whimsicalities he would often imagine himself as a grown-up man in the colorful guises myriad of professions, from being a conductor of a bus to becoming the President of India! He grew up learning about the tidbits of the lives of illustrious scientists. He would be all the more fascinated to learn that some of them even got the coveted Nobel Prize. Contrary to popular career choices of his time, which invariably remained confined to being either doctors or engineers, young Tapan dreamt of becoming a scientist. This scientific curiosity is still at large even today and fuels his passion for innovation, and asking the question “Why not”

The vicissitudes of life, however, led young Tapan to the age-old but prestigious BHU. However unknown to Tapan, the campus was waiting for him with an exciting and thrilling array of experiences. Tapan felt very much at home playing sports, being part of extra-curricular activities, handling student unions, and even staging protests and lockouts. In displaying street smartness seasoned with prudence, young Tapan would prove himself to be second to none.

It was again a fortuitous path that took him into the world of the insurance industry. Before taking a flight to the US to conduct research, Tapan, in a spirit of self-examination and a quest for some thrill, chose to take an insurance entrance examination. For him, it was no more than a casual IQ test. But destiny had other plans: Tapan passed the exam with flying colors and got a posting in the Mumbai office of New India Assurance. Tapan took to the insurance industry as a fish takes to the water. Needless to say, what followed was the making of a legend in the field of the insurance industry.

His success in valuing people and relationships is something that Mr. Tapan Singhel counts as one of his key achievements. He is always respectful about the affective forces that inform human life; he eschews the mercenary value which sometimes impels certain business honchos to use people and only value money. Tapan however, only deeply values people. He is still a scientist at heart, which makes him privilege a rational scientific bent of mind over everything else. Not unlike the brilliant but industrious scientists, Tapan considers perseverance to be one of the chief guiding principles of his life. The innate humility of the man inextricably ties him up with the so-called 'old school' family values. Thus he believes in his heart of hearts that it is most important for a man to ensure that even beyond his life on earth people

remember him as someone whose contributions made a genuine difference in their lives.

A section from his blog, ‘My Take’, his memoir, will further illustrate the point:

“When I reminisce about my academic life, the days I looked forward to the most were the sporting tournaments. As a young boy, I enrolled in various matches held in my school, albeit at times it was to surreptitiously escape from classes. Back then, I used to view sports as a fun activity that allowed me to break from the otherwise monotonous curriculum of the school. Although my initial tryst with sports was a result of the carefree enthusiasm of boyhood, it soon transcended into something more important as I started appreciating the fine lessons that sports teach. Many hours that I spent on the field, practicing and strategizing with my teammates, taught me a few of life’s most valuable lessons. My basic foundation of team spirit, leadership, failures, and success, can be traced down to sports. On the solid foundation laid in the sports ground, I have learned how to remain calm amid the roaring passion that naturally comes while playing. I have learned how to read the conditions, form strategies, decisions making, take calculated risks, and most of all - the spirit of sportsmanship. These lessons have helped me in life and business.”

Leadership is all about team building and trusting your team. Mr. Singhel cites the example of Bayern Munich's 7 players, who were in the 2013 FIFA World Cup Winning national squad because they developed a relationship while playing for the club. Mr. Singhel spends a lot of his time and energy nurturing the next generation of leaders – pushing them into difficult situations

**“.... My basic foundation of team spirit, leadership, failures, and success, can be traced down to sports. On the solid foundation laid in the sports ground, I have learned how to remain calm amid the roaring passion that naturally comes while playing....”**

deliberately. He believes that giving serious responsibilities to young people with confidence and then encouraging them to go ahead without fear is the first step toward building up a pool of future leaders.

What is the future of work – his understanding of the “new normal” world...

He firmly believes that physical brick-and-mortar offices will inevitably disappear or will become things of secondary importance in the foreseeable future. That would indeed mark a tectonic shift in the way “offices” or “office spaces” are perceived in the general consciousness of the populace. A vibrant spirit of cooperation and collaboration can be the only animating force in the industries of the future. He is emphatically averse, “If you don’t collaborate you are over... If you don’t collaborate

**... insurance is the business of doing good because it gives you the privilege to be there for your customers in the direst hours, to support them, wipe their tears, and make a real difference in people’s lives.**

you will not be able to reap the benefits for years. Every future industry should be collaborative. Employees who will survive are not the muggers. Those who can solve problems fast – not arrogant and collaborative will only win the race in the long run.”

To educate his staggering number of followers on LinkedIn (around 7 lac) and to add to their level of awareness of the modern world’s existence, Mr. Singhel regularly writes

with intelligence, warmth, and élan. He never forgets to mention that it is the banal existence of normal lives lived amid myriad challenges and stray moments of joy that is the perennial spring of his inspiration. The glitz and glamour of icons and their celebrity could never seduce the mind of this down-to-earth man.

**A vibrant spirit of cooperation and collaboration can be the only animating force in the industries of the future**

Mr. Singhel, needless to say, is the nucleus of the advisory board to the insurance regulatory body. His wife is an MBA, and both his daughters are well established in life, one being a doctor, and the other an engineer. He also has two sisters (one is a doctor in Calcutta, and the other, is a professor in Delhi).

Whilst one side of Mr. Singhel is deeply rooted in the scientific and rational approach, he firmly believes that having empathy and genuine concern are the hallmarks of a good human being. He firmly believes that one must smile and keep smiling irrespective of what the situation is and always look to derive positive learning from any setbacks. One should always live life with child-like



enthusiasm.

For him, wealth creation is not directly proportional to happiness creation. As a part of his job – he is an extrovert /but loves to spend time with himself, his deeply cherished moments of solitude and peace which he calls his, “no disturbance time”. He believes that the most important journey that one can embark upon is inward and he has embarked upon an ever-learning journey of spiritualism

What better way to end this, than quoting the man himself: “Remember – knowledge transfer is multi-dimensional. Only when we are open to learning from an inanimate object as much as we are from an established subject matter expert – do we grow and evolve as human beings! I believe that in your biggest apprehension often lies your greatest opportunity! So rather than shrinking away from taking on a new perspective from someone younger than you, be open and flexible to embrace their ideas, who knows it might lead you to your next aha moment in life!”

Whenever we look back in pride and wonderment at the illustrious professional career of Mr. Tapan Singhel for the last 3 decades, we cannot help but get reminded of the very last line of G B Shaw’s comedy *Arms and the Man*: ‘What a man! Is he a man!’ Indeed...Mr. Tapan Singhel is

indeed an extraordinary confluence of erudition, humanism, leadership prowess, and business acumen.

•



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI

**VANDANA LUTHRA**  
FOUNDER, VLCC HEALTH CARE LTD.

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops - at all*

*I’ve heard it in the most chill land  
And on the strangest Sea  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.*

*-Emily Dickinson*

Mental and Physical Wellness as a “concept” has been relevant since ancient times. The artefacts found at the sites of Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Rakhigarhi prove the same. Predominantly, the old wellness methodologies have primarily focused on an individual’s fundamental needs within the need/hierarchy, focusing on health, nutrition, and relaxation. As we saw rapid and multifarious progress of our civilization, especially the technological advancements, “wellness” as an idea has taken up a multi-dimensional definition, branching out as an individual’s desire for social acceptance, exclusivity, and collective welfare.

As we walk down memory lane to revisit the extraordinary journey of life and times of Vandana Luthra – at the core of her dream, she too had a well-knit cohesive idea of “wellness,” which was never about getting all decked up for a party or any celebration, instead it was about getting fitter, healthier, and to cleanse the body organically. After she got married, Vandana hoped to boost Health and Wellness in the adjoining locality where her family lived. The keen observer that she always is, coupled with a curious mind, she quickly understood that not many people had any concern regarding wellness, nourishment, diet, and health. An urge to solve this problem, to bring in the much-needed change in people’s mindset, led her to establish the Vandana Luthra Curls and Curves company or VLCC as it is now known.

Over and above, her untiring enthusiasm for crafting exciting hairdos and trying different things with new hairstyles was also included in VLCC's services. This small endeavour of a dreamer and believer gradually grew up into this giant of an empire— a leading Wellness & Beauty services and products organization, serving customers across 310 locations in 143 cities spanning 12 countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Gulf Cooperation Council region, and East Africa. Throughout the last 30 years of operation, the VLCC brand has become synonymous with Wellness & Beauty in Indian households and has among the most significant scale and breadth of functions within the beauty and wellness services industry in India and other countries it operates.

**.... Vandana Luthra  
– at the core of  
her dream, she  
too had a well-knit  
cohesive idea of  
“wellness,” ...**

To be more precise, the urge from within to start a business dawned upon Vandana Luthra when she had just given birth to her second daughter. But the world then was a different world altogether. Set against the socioeconomic backdrop of 1989, a woman starting a business of her own did not sound sweet to the ears

of the time—it was too daring to be heard! The patriarchy, as always, expected women to stay indoors and take care of children and do household chores. Many were not even given a proper education, let alone a secure job. Against all odds, Vandana’s efforts to make her dream come true faced much criticism from society. But Vandana, a person with unmatched sincerity and commitment towards her family, children, and dreams, was just not willing to give up.

VLCC was not just any company that was created to mint revenue perpetually.

Earning profit was not something that Vandana prioritized. The very idea of “VLCC”—what it stood for and was born out of—was Vandana’s commitment and impassioned wish to make others’ lives more comfortable and beautiful in every aspect: the way one feels, sees, thinks, and

**...(VLCC) — a leading Wellness & Beauty services and products organization, serving customers across 310 locations in 143 cities spanning 12 countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Gulf Cooperation Council region, and East Africa....**



looks. She was always inclined toward skincare and Wellness; this quality came to her through her proud inheritance. As Vandana remembers fondly, her parents warmly hosted numerous individuals in their locality to watch the TV at their home during her young days. In addition, Vandana's mother was an embodiment of hospitality and warmth, and she used to extend her most sincere support to many through her trust, Amar Jyoti.

The initiation – a continuous process of prized inheritance

1989 was a year to remember. Vandana Luthra's 3rd child— VLCC—

was born this year. She was a first-generation entrepreneur. Her father worked for Siemens for 40 years. Vandana Luthra's initial training was in Delhi; then, she went overseas to Europe to further her training. Inspired by Germany's professors, infrastructure, and business models,

**The very idea of “VLCC”— what it stood for and was born out of— was Vandana's commitment and impassioned wish to make others' lives more comfortable and beautiful in every aspect: the way one feels, sees, thinks, and looks.**

she got the idea for a One-Stop-Shop for any problem a consumer might have from head to toe— be it skin, hair, nails, fitness, or wellness. In India, people would have to find ten different places for each problem, wasting their time and money. It is noticing this disparity, devising a plan you solve it and then executing it that sets successful entrepreneurs apart. So, after she finished her training in Germany, she began her work in Safdarjung, New Delhi, in 1989, and her aim of starting a Wellness and preventative healthcare centre was far ahead of its time.

Toil and toil... and toil

Vandana had to overcome numerous obstacles right from the very beginning of her journey. When she started, people didn't understand what Wellness meant and instead focused more on curative healthcare— waiting for illnesses or health-related problems to strike, and only then seeking treatment. By contrast, Vandana's preventive method in India focused not on cures or medicine as much on a healthy lifestyle that prevents any need to seek treatment. It is only now that people's focus is shifting, and Wellness is being looked at as a necessity rather than a luxury. She encouraged people to invest in themselves and their health consistently throughout their whole life, rather than waiting for something to go wrong and spending vast amounts of money in lump-

sum to fix it.

Such a new idea became well accepted because it was convenient and comfortable, and they had the best technology and equipment from Europe. Vandana would train the people herself, and the program became very scientific—after they caused complete transformations, the word

**She gives a large amount of credit to her customers; she says she “always had happy customers,” and each satisfied customer would bring 100 more.**

spread was the best marketing they could hope for. So, she did not want to follow the glamour route and pay celebrity brand ambassadors, and she believes the consumers are the best brand ambassadors. She gives a large amount of credit to her customers; she says she “always had happy customers,” and each satisfied customer would bring 100 more. With a staff strength of over 4,000+ professionals, including medical doctors, nutritionists, physiotherapists, fitness experts, and cosmetologists, we estimate that we have catered to over 10 million customers in the last five years alone. VLCC manufactures and markets more than 170 body care, hair care products, and

functional and fortified foods consumed in-house (in treatments and therapies at VLCC wellness centres). They are also sold through 100,000 outlets in India and more than 10,000 outlets across the GCC region and Southeast Asia, even from e-commerce channels.

Another side of her struggle story lies in overcoming resistance from within and from outside. Initially, she faced hurdles when she decided to work with the medical fraternity. The customers were expected to carry medical reports and blood reports if they wanted to join VLCC. There was a team of doctors and nutritionists for each customer because VLCC decided to bridge the gap between medicine and Wellness. Doctors can diagnose and recommend solutions, but it is only by collaborating with VLCC that it becomes more accessible for customers to implement these scientific methods in their day-to-day lives. After all these points were made, the consumers eventually gave in and decided to take Wellness seriously and accept the medical fraternity's involvement in it.

They have doctors, cosmetologists, nutritionists, and physiotherapists working in unison with each customer. All the fitness experts at VLCC are physiotherapists and focus immensely on fixing simple things like bad posture, which can gradually be detrimental to your health.



DR. ARINDAM CHAUDHURI



*The President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee presenting the Padma Award to Ms Vandana Luthra*



*Vandana and the two generations of her family*



They also educate customers that start gaming without any knowledge or experience. Each program is tailor-made for each customer based on scientific methods and added credibility that allows everyone to trust VLCC with their health. They continue to grow this reputation with their recent tie-up with the Indian Medical Association. They have a research and development team continuously working and implementing the latest technology and research into their programs.

Collaboration with the medical fraternity is especially useful in the internet age. Everyone considers themselves a doctor and dietitian because they have Google at their fingertips. As the company's website states, VLCC is the only company in its industry whose Wellness & Weight Management programs carry the "Recommended by Indian Medical Association (IMA)" stamp of approval. IMA is the national level organization of modern medicine doctors, with a membership base of over 330,000 doctors.

Vandana's journey can be explained in her own clear words from one of her interviews: "I started VLCC in 1989 as a single salon and a dream of introducing a new manner of how we go about and fulfil our beauty and wellness needs. At a time when women would visit a 'beauty parlour,' we went ahead and started speaking with doctors and nutritionists to explain our vision. The idea of a



technologically advanced transformation centre that provides a solution from head to toe was perceived as futuristic. We, however, overcame all odds and criticisms we were faced with and today are a globally recognized brand.”

We cannot but agree wholeheartedly with Vandana as we observe with wonderment that presently, VLCC is well recognized not only

**VLCC is the only company in its industry whose Wellness & Weight Management programs carry the “Recommended by Indian Medical Association (IMA)”**

in India but also in the global wellness industry for its comprehensive portfolio of harmless chemical-free beauty and wellness products and services.

It’s no wonder that it enjoys the

highest consumer trust and recall level. Though competing with other homegrown competitors, VLCC has one of the largest networks of operations within the beauty and wellness services industry.

With its most dynamic R&D team and aided by Vandana’s relentless and untiring quest for updated knowledge and information from every

corner of the globe on her areas of interest, additionally with the wellness services and personal care products businesses, the brand also operates a very successful skill development initiative under the aegis of the VLCC Institute of Beauty & Nutrition. The brand operates 94 VLCC Institutes of Beauty & Nutrition across 67 cities in India, making it one of the largest professional training academy chains in the beauty and nutrition segment in the country. They train over 7,300 students annually and offer entry-level and skill enhancement courses in multiple disciplines in the beauty and nutrition segments. These efforts combine to create an outlook on wellness that was advanced and extremely effective. We can learn a lot by merely learning the basic principles of wellness as Vandana sees it and understanding how VLCC enables its customers to benefit from them.

Lifestyle Changes are the backbone of Wellness.

Diets are temporary. Keto diets, high protein diets, and low carb diets are nonsensical without consulting a medical professional to see if they are right for you. The internet tries to sell everything as a shortcut that suits everyone, but the reality is that there is no shortcut, and one size does not fit all. Wellness is a lifestyle and should be a part of your life. VLCC allows customers to do exactly that by teaching habits such as reading labels

when grocery shopping and using DNA tests to determine what kind of exercise they should do, be it yoga or gymming. This leads to an essential topic about VLCC and Wellness and fitness in general— weight loss.

### Weight Loss— the crux of it

Vandana says that the problem with these weight-loss ‘shortcuts’ and diets that are extremely popular online is that all the weight you lose will be gained back once the diet ends. “People shouldn’t be obsessed about losing weight.” The anxiety and obsession can lead to more weight gain or psychological and physical exhaustion. This view of weight loss is not sustainable. Therefore, VLCC has counselling sessions to ensure the psychological and mental well-being of the customers are also taken care of as it is as important as their physical health. They also host group counselling sessions and interactions between new and old customers of VLCC, which allows people to trust the process and motivates them. The way to approach weight loss is to make the process simple, natural, and easy to follow.

We wrongly blame the food and vilify it, but in reality, we are the ones that make the food terrible by over-consuming or adding excess salt and sugar. Moderation is the key to weight loss and not starving yourself or remaining hungry all the

time. All these principles are told to the customers during their first counselling session, free of charge. This free session is a way of allowing the customers to test the waters and to know if VLCC is a good match for them. Some customers are also told to cut sugars by 50% and exercise, even if it is just going up downstairs, and lose 3 to 5 kilos before starting a proper program with VLCC.

The reason people come back is that Vandana has built a friendly and welcoming brand. Many clients suffer from depression due to being overweight or bad interpersonal relationships like marriages. VLCC is a safe space and a relaxed environment; the counsellors are friends rather than counsellors and are trained exceptionally well. Any customer that has lost weight with VLCC is also provided with relationship managers as a part of the life-long maintenance program for free. This program maintains a tightly knit community that is ever-growing. It also illustrated the importance of the high quality of employees required for the business model to succeed.

“We like to hire happy people.”

This industry has a place for people, from dropouts to doctors, says Vandana. However, it is happy and positive people that you tend to connect with most. They can be trained anytime, but they cannot be rigid and must be ready to

learn. Another essential quality is confidence. If you are not confident in this industry, it won't be easy to help and guide others.

Woman Entrepreneur: Past tensed, but future perfect.

Being one of the most successful entrepreneurs in India is an even more impressive feat when you are a female. Vandana faced numerous challenges throughout her life and those regular ones that men face. She had lived independently overseas for so many years; therefore, she felt trapped when she finally returned to India. Then she fell in love and got married. This was another major paradigm shift. She wasn't used to cooking and cleaning because she was raised in a privileged and liberated household. So, these new responsibilities and the fact that she was a young mother just one year into her marriage drained her completely. However, these experiences taught her a lot. She learned how to be patient, how to manage her finances, how to be self-sufficient, and that she should keep loving those around her no matter what. Only after five years of marriage did she finally decide to start working. Though her in-laws weren't over the moon about this decision, she had her husband's full support. She could have instantly had an independent life but instead kept trying to win her in-laws' support until they finally gave in.

Her first outlet was opened in 1989. She took over a business on the verge of shutting down and used all her own money to renovate it, and the rest is history. She thanks God, luck, and timing for her success. When she started her business, obesity was rising, and women wanted to work and look good. But it takes a little more than luck to become this huge.

Behind the success story of VLCC, a meticulous and scientific approach to beauty and wellness services was needed to build a brand like VLCC. Above all, Vandana Luthra's indomitable will to give a complete overhaul to the beauty industry drove her to create her legacy. She left no stone unturned in her thorough research on conceptualizing a beauty company that people can trust. Although in the initial years, VLCC was a wellness centre with her futuristic vision, it was expanded into a prominent business company with expansive multinational operations - all because of the efforts and blood and sweat of an ambitious woman who had the foresight to combine medical expertise with nutrition and cosmology as we had already mentioned before to cater to growing lifestyle demands of the corporate working life of men and women.

Under Luthra's leadership and able guidance, VLCC has emerged as a significant employment generator across India, providing services from

slimming packages to lasers at affordable prices. Even after three decades since this extraordinary journey was started, Vandana Luthra remains a critical part of the empire today. To ensure that the company is up-to-date and relevant, as we had explained already, the buck stops with her R&D team and her extensive travails to keep pace with the constantly changing world of beauty and to provide her prized clientele with exciting state-of-the-art products and up to date services. The untiring and zero-tolerance-for-complacency entrepreneur that Vandana is, she is constantly hustling to keep VLCC at the top, so much so that VLCC is an integral part of Pradhan Mantri's Jan Dhan Yojana. The company has expanded at record speed and now has GMP-certified manufacturing plants in Haridwar and another in Singapore.

Her penchant for perfection and simplicity made her a household name across the length and breadth of the country and the global arena of the industry. Mrs Luthra's philanthropy sets her apart from many Indian entrepreneurs. Her upbringing in the socially active milieu of her parents (especially her mother, as we had discussed already) coupled with her self-belief and conviction of endorsing beauty, health, and well-being have translated into her socially relevant humanitarian efforts. She is the co-chairperson of an NGO called Khushi, founded by Kapil Dev



to empower, educate, and ensure the well-being of the underprivileged. Among the different charitable work that the NGO carries out, it provides education and free lunch to more than 3000 children and conducts vocational coaching schemes and telemedicine centres. Vandana is also an active member of Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, through which she promotes yoga, mental health, and self-growth. What is more than

impressive for this “Wonder Woman”

Vandana Luthra practices what she preaches; constructing a healthy lifestyle by exercising and meditating is extremely important to her!

**Her penchant for perfection and simplicity made her a household name across the length and breadth of the country and the global arena of the industry.**

Under Vandana’s keen eye, the company has been involved in various governmental efforts like providing wellness training and education at schools in different states, facilitating admissions of downtrodden children into job-oriented courses, and launching campaigns like Stand Up – India to fight obesity. Vandana Luthra is a member of the Steering Committee of India’s Ministry of

Skill Development & Entrepreneurship on the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana. The Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust has started two schools with more than 800

students. With her expertise in healthcare and fitness, Vandana Luthra has authored two excellent books. “A complete fitness program,” published in 2011. And in 2013, she wrote “A Good Life”.

Though she considers every smiling and happy customer the biggest and most significant award that she ever hoped to get, she has been honoured

with many distinguished titles over these three illustrious decades of her most amazing and empowering journey. In 2013, Mrs Luthra

**Under Vandana's keen eye, the company has been involved in various governmental efforts like providing wellness training and education at schools in different states, facilitating admissions of downtrodden children into job-oriented courses, and launching campaigns like Stand Up – India to fight obesity.**

was honoured with Padma Shri by the Indian government for her service to the trade and industry. She was also the former chairperson of the Beauty and Wellness Sector Skill and Council (B&WSSC) [Mr. Sandeep Ahuja from her team is handling the responsibility of vice-chairperson of B&WSSC]. She is also the winner of prestigious awards like Rajeev Gandhi Women Achiever, Asia's Greatest Brands & Leaders 2017, Women Entrepreneur of the year by The Enterprise Asia, and Trailblazer award. She has also been featured in the Fortune magazine's 50 most powerful Women in Business in India five times a row and featured in 50 Power Businesswomen in the APAC region by Forbes Asia. What an incredible manifestation of the enigma of 'the' Vandana Luthra!



# **Tiger Roars is a fascinating journey of 12 inspiring success stories mirroring the rise of India— stories picked up carefully from the hinterland to the glamour capital of India, from start-ups to old money**

Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri is the Honorary Director of IIPM Think Tank & teaches Leadership & Economic Planning. His public seminars are a rage, with thousands attending. He has been invited to speak at HBS, Imperial College, CUHK, IIT etc.

With 4 million + fans, Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri is the world's most followed management icon & economist on FB!

He is the author of #1 monster best-sellers Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch & Discover The Diamond in You. He is also the author of Planning India, 3 books in the Power Brands series, What Marx Left Unsaid, Beyond God & Capitalism & the best-selling books-The Great Indian Dream, Thorns To Competition & Cult.

In 2007 his film 'Dosor' got selected at the prestigious CANNES FILM FESTIVAL. Out of his 9 films, he won National Awards for 3 - Faltu, The Last Lear & Do Dooni Chaar. In 2017, he started the Power Brands Bollywood Film Journalist's Awards-the first honest & transparent awards in Bollywood where the winners are awarded through open ballot voting by the leading film critics of India.

A passionate Media Personality & Journalist, he is the Editor-in-Chief of DailyIndian.com, The Sunday Indian, Business & Economy, 4Ps Business & Marketing and The Human Factor. He has been a columnist with about two dozen papers in India. Since 2001 he has been presenting an Alternative Budget on TV.

In 1995 he founded Planman Consulting which helps Fortune 500 companies to start-ups looking towards the next big leap, with 360 degree Consulting solutions.

In 2002 he founded Aurobindo Chaudhuri Memorial Great Indian Dream Foundation. Sachin Tendulkar has in past supported GIDF.

In 2017 he launched the Power Brands LIFE (London International Forum of Equality) to focus on access to free education, medicare & equal justice and eradication of religion, income inequality & gender discrimination.

In 2018, he started the Global Wage Equality Crusade to further the cause of the book, 'What Marx Left Unsaid'. In August 2021 he started the World's Greatest LIVE ONLINE Training Initiative - A Billion Leaders, where he personally teaches LEADERSHIP & HUMANITY



***Disruptor who made IIPM the largest B-School on Earth | Former Advisor to Planning Commission, Govt. of India's Consultative Committees on Education & Social Sector | 11 Books | 9 Films | 3 National Film Awards | 3rd Dan Black Belt in Kick Boxing | Anti-theist | Ph.D. in Leadership | RJ | Journalist | Teacher***

***[www.abillionleaders.com](http://www.abillionleaders.com)***