

IGNITE

CRISIS TO CREATION:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

It takes a crisis to
create change

INTERVIEW

With Prof. Chaitanya
Ravi, on the on-going
farmer protests

RESEARCH INNOVATIONS

Research in the time
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INTERVIEW

Interview with Prof. Chaitanya Ravi

IGNITE caught up with Prof. Chaitanya Ravi, Assistant Professor in Public Policy at FLAME University to ask him questions about the reasons for the on-going farmer protests in Delhi.

The on-going farmers protests in India against three controversial laws have captivated the attention of the public, media, policymakers, intellectuals, and celebrity influencers in India and around the world. The on-going debate has brought to fore the tremendous tensions in agrarian and developmental policymaking embedded in India's on-going transformation and its growing weight in the world order. Chaitanya Ravi, Assistant Professor in Public Policy at FLAME University explains the contours of the debate and speculates on its implications.



Q1. What are the government's main justifications for these laws?

The three laws have been justified as a market-based solution to liberalise Indian agriculture by breaking the monopoly control of the APMC system, eliminating middlemen and their fees, allowing infusion of concentrated private capital into farming, removing market barriers and improving supply-chain efficiencies thereby reducing wastages. Farmers can also market their produce online.

The overall aim of these reforms is the doubling of average monthly income for farmers in the short-term and the coming into existence of a more efficient private market for crop production and sale in the long-term. On a broader-level, the reforms continue India's post-1991 turn away from state-based solutions to public problems to more market-oriented ones.

“The overall aim of these reforms is the doubling of average monthly income for farmers in the short-term and the coming into existence of a more efficient private market for crop production and sale in the long-term.”

Q2. Why are some farmers so worried?

Farmers are concerned that the new laws, and the open-market system they usher in, will compromise the minimum support price (MSP), the state-determined price support currently paid on 23 crops including cereals, pulses, oilseeds and commercial crops during government procurement. They also worry that the new laws will weaken and eventually eliminate the mandi system, rendering them vulnerable to the volatilities of corporate procurement. Middlemen are worried about the loss of their commissions.

Q3. What are the broader implications of the debate?

The government has offered to suspend the implementation of the three farm laws for 18 months after 11 rounds of talks with farmer union leaders, but the latter have insisted on nothing short of a complete repeal. The debate ties into the broader debate on the degree of involvement of the State in the economy, role of private capital and incremental policymaking with extensive stakeholder consultation versus deeper, fast-paced structural reforms to overcome entrenched interests impeding forward movement.

The results of this debate hold enormous implications for the shape of agrarian policymaking in India and the nature of its developmental model.

The determined opposition from farmers groups and political

considerations regarding the rural vote in North India may convince future governments to consider more incremental agrarian policies with greater stakeholder input. The durability of the protests is also likely to make government more cautious about 'big-bang,' structural reforms that corporate India favors.



RESEARCH INNOVATIONS

Research in the time of COVID-19

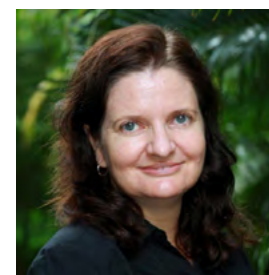
ANDREA D. PHILLOTT* AND SMRITI JALIHAL**

* Professor, Department of Physical and Natural Sciences

** Student, FLAME Scholars Program

Perspectives of a Research Advisor

When India entered a lockdown in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the main focus of many university faculty was on the transition to online learning. But it wasn't only courses based in the classroom that had to move to 'Zoom University'; research students completing undergraduate and graduate theses had to scramble as their opportunities for collecting data in the field or lab ended abruptly and potentially delayed completion of their projects and degrees.



For students just starting their research, the initial lockdown measures meant that their projects would likely to be replanned. This was especially true for students in the FLAME Scholars Program, a one-year postgraduate diploma which requires completion of an interdisciplinary research project and submission of a dissertation (or something similar). Students were optimistic that the lockdown would soon end and their original projects would

be feasible, but faculty advisors were more pragmatic, noting that many projects would have to change their topic and/or methodology significantly.

“We used the summer break to alter the project design to something more feasible, given the on-going lockdown conditions and uncertainty about future prospects for travel.”

“To mitigate the potential sense of isolation, we coordinated two, 2-hour research sessions per week as a group for discussion of project progress and challenges, as well as to establish a regular practice of reading, data analysis, and writing.”

I (ADP) had been advising three students in the preliminary planning of their projects. The topics were diverse: studying freshwater crab biology and distribution in a local population, comparing dragonfly diversity and abundance among different landscapes, and assessing the impact of environmental law and policy on coastal communities. These topics had been discussed for months or, in one case, years prior to the lockdown. The original project design required field work to collect samples, count and track animals, and conduct interviews. As the lockdown proceeded through the summer, students were still hopeful that their field work would be possible but I began mentally preparing to guide them towards considering different methods of data collection and alternative demographics of interviewees. Research can be a demanding and isolating experience, so it was also important that students have a regular avenue of support from their peers and myself.

We used the summer break to alter the project design to something more feasible, given the on-going lockdown conditions and uncertainty about future prospects for travel. For example, the project investigating dragonfly diversity and distribution through student field work was altered to identify areas of progress and on-going knowledge gaps in Indian odonatology through expert elicitation (the judgement of experts in the field). Instead of information about crab numbers and distribution being collected through field counts and tracking studies, the student designed a survey to collate the observations of citizen scientists. Interviews with coastal community members, many of whom would be challenging to reach by phone or online, were replaced with interviews of government officials, policy makers, and researchers.

Changing project focus and method of data collection was a time consuming and unhappy experience for most students. (A fourth student, who joined me at a much later time and began planning their project during the lockdown, certainly found it easier to determine their research methods within what we simply assumed would be long-term limitations due to COVID-19.) To mitigate the potential sense of isolation, we coordinated two, 2-hour

research sessions per week as a group for discussion of project progress and challenges, as well as to establish a regular practice of reading, data analysis, and writing. From the perspective of a Research Advisor, I'm very happy with their accomplishments and look forward to reading drafts of each thesis as their projects enter the final phases of research. I'm confident their final theses, and resulting publications, will be of a similar quality to those that were produced by their seniors in pre-pandemic/lockdown times.

Perspectives of a Research Student

I (SJ) was initially quite upset that my dissertation experience would predominantly be a remote one. My original project design would have allowed me an immersive research experience of living in a small coastal town in Maharashtra to conduct interviews during the summer months.

With the realisation that I had to change my project due to the pandemic, came some hard decisions. I had to decide whether to do phone interviews and/or collect data by another method. In-person and remote interviews require different skill sets, and it can be more difficult to gauge social cues via an online platform. The latter are also less common in my preferred career, so I was worried about not developing an important skill. I also had concerns about interviewing a different demographic—academics and policy makers—instead of community members as originally planned, because many experts in their field have already been interviewed for other projects or have been asked to give numerous webinars during the pandemic and online fatigue means fewer people are responding to such invitations. This would potentially slow down my project progress.

“I have learnt to better communicate through online platforms, with my FLAME and external advisors, which I think is a very important skill to have in today's time.”

I was helped through these decisions and potential obstacles by my FLAME advisor (ADP) and two external advisors. I revised my objectives and changed my methods according to what would be possible during the lockdown conditions, and Prof. Andrea Phillott held online workshops to help us learn how to complete research ethics approval forms, and collect and analyse different types of data. Despite it not being what I originally envisioned, my dissertation experience is helping me become more comfortable with uncertainty and more adaptable during times of change. As I am someone who likes to carefully plan and follow through with a schedule, this took some getting used to. I have learnt to better communicate through online platforms, with my FLAME and

external advisors, which I think is a very important skill to have in today's time.

I have also gained greater self-motivation without the constant support of my peers around me. Ideally, I would have liked to have done the dissertation research with my classmates on campus, sharing our experiences, uncertainties, and progress with each other. However, the twice weekly research sessions my advisor in Environmental Studies has been helpful to recreate the 'we

are all in this together' feeling as much as possible. I'm excited to present my own study and hear about the research of my peers, especially in different disciplines (e.g., psychology, literary and cultural studies, and international studies) at the end of our final year at FLAME.

CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION





CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Entrepreneurial responses to uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic

ANIRUDH AGRAWAL

Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship



Market failure following the COVID 19 pandemic has caused a double whammy crisis on start-ups and entrepreneurs. The start-ups have experienced tough times due to a reduced flow of easy finance and have also faced considerable reduction in market demand. The COVID 19 crises has steered many entrepreneurs, start-ups, and MSMEs towards uncharted territories under high stress, risks, and mounting debt. My discussion in this article is focussed on understanding the ontology of uncertainty and reflecting on possible strategies to outcompete these uncertainties.

Some researchers argue that information asymmetry leads to uncertainty, i.e when the entrepreneurial actors walk into uncharted and risky territories, they are faced with situations comprising of

high level of information asymmetry and at times disinformation. The nascent entrepreneurs face high uncertainty and risks when their competitor know more about the market, its dynamics, and

relational networks. Entrepreneurs scaling their firms often face situations where they lack sufficient information to survive the competitor onslaught. Some scholars define uncertainty as simply the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) world. VUCA world is an extreme signal and firms' responses to such situations make them stronger and competitive. Each of these uncertainties require entrepreneurial responses. I will discuss these uncertainties in the light of the COVID 19 crisis.

Information Asymmetry

COVID 19 is a once-in-a-lifetime crisis which has effected everyone across companies and countries. The information on COVID 19 was never perfect. Those who were reading about the virus in February 2020 never imagined that it would remain as deadly, widespread, and long-lasting as it has become. Entrepreneurs experience information asymmetry when their competitors know more about the market, product, and institutional actors. Uncertainty because of information asymmetry can be detrimental to the development and execution of entrepreneurial

strategies. In the case of COVID 19, firms which studied the long-term presence and impact of the virus hedged losses greatly compared to those who believed that the pandemic would be short-lived. Better information help develop strategies which can give incumbents tools and resources to manage uncertainties. For example, a textile entrepreneur delaying investment in masks and PPE based on the information available in a leading Indian newspaper on 1 Feb 2020 may lose to competitor who invested in COVID 19 strategies based on information available with global pandemic research institutes, experts, and research journals at that time. Clearly, informed market research and focussed agility are key components when managing uncertainty due to information asymmetry in crisis times.

VUCA World

Entrepreneurship by definition is steering through the VUCA waters towards sustainable value creation. COVID 19 has steered multiple companies and individuals into this VUCA world. It is an extremely episodic event that may last between nine months and two years. It is therefore important for the entrepreneur to take hold of the venture, reduce venture expenses, keep the family support together to weather this episodic storm, and try to live through it. During these VUCA times, entrepreneurs must reflect on their strategy, positioning, communication, product, and service offering. Literature on VUCA specifically states mental and strategic conditioning of the entrepreneur has long-lasting impact on entrepreneurial venturing into VUCA environments. Prof. Saraswathy argues that Effectuation is one of the effective strategies to manoeuvre VUCA environment. Effectuation theory suggests that entrepreneurship is a process where decisions and actions are taken after assessing the resources available to achieve

the objective and continuously balancing the goals as a functions of available resources and results assessed from previous actions. Effectuation suggests focussing on efficient use of resources available, optimising the cash outflow during uncertain times, and actively seeking partnership while embracing the VUCA world. In addition, entrepreneurs must innovate by focussing on dynamic market signals during VUCA times. An example of innovation is a healthcare pharma firm focussing its entire product line to address the market needs for corona patients and preventions.

Informed decisions and effectuation are at time strategies that are at loggerheads with each other. Informed decisions require extensive market research and effectuation is all about taking decisions as information unwraps. Both the strategies need to be applied to addressing uncertainties arising out of COVID 19. While the multi-billion-dollar corporations are struggling to manage COVID 19 crises, startups like Zomato, Biju, Zoom, and established first generation unicorns like Amazon, Facebook, Blackboard, Flipkart gained tremendous traction. These firms followed effectuation by reducing costs and by leveraging technology extensively. One can certainly observe that cash conservation, agility in technology adaption, agility innovation and value addition, and, finally, client engagement are business fundamental that are even more important during uncertain times. Well-researched decisions countering information asymmetry provide long-term capital-intensive investment cycles which help firms sustain a competitive edge. While both the strategies are at the individual and firm level, positive actions by institutions and ecosystem enablers during times of crisis coupled with these responses have a multiplier effect on firm survivability, post crisis recovery and overall economic development.



CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Crisis to creation: through intrapreneurship

AMARPREET SINGH GHURA

Assistant Professor in Entrepreneurship

COVID 19 has emerged as the worst health and economic crisis of the last century. The pandemic meant negative consequences for output, jobs, and well-being. It dented the existing world order, global value chains, and labour and capital movements across globe. This created a sense of urgency to find an answer to some of the questions such as how bad is the impact on the economy?

What is the lasting structural impact from the crisis? And what are viable scenarios for recovery?

In reality, finding answers to these questions through any kind of projection won't help, especially when the virus trajectory still remains unknown. World economies have started showing signs of going back to normalcy. The Indian economy too is trying to normalize as it eases previous restrictions. One

extension question to the scenarios of recovery which still remains unanswered is how to be creative in this time of crisis? One logical way is through practicing intrapreneurship.

Intrapreneurship is a process through which individuals in an established firm pursue entrepreneurial opportunities to innovate without regard to the level and nature of currently available resources. Intrapreneurship focuses on formal or informal activities aimed at creating new businesses in established companies through product and process innovations and market developments. These activities may take place at the corporate, division, functional, or project levels, with the objective of improving a company's competitive position and financial performance. Corporate entrepreneurship is important because, if an organization focuses on only one of its business, it is obvious that over a period of time, that one business, that one focus, will ultimately be under attack and profits will eventually erode. For instance, consider Google. Its revenue in 2015 was US \$74 billion, which came largely from advertisements, while only \$448 million came from other sources. Ninety percent of Google's revenue comes from searches, and the company knows it. That's why it's been investing in new businesses for the past decade. While they lose significant money on those new businesses, Google structures the investments in a way so the company can see

where the money is going and pinpoint losses.

India is witnessing a transition between the generation cohorts and has 65% of the younger work force which includes millennials and Generation Z. These younger workers have experienced a difficult environment, where in fields such as education, medicine, business management, and law at present are less lucrative as career choices. Moreover, economic uncertainty and open discussion about low loyalty towards employers has changed the preferences of the younger workforce toward one that may involve more than one job or career over the course of their work lives. Young workers with strong with education are considering an employment which offers opportunities such as learning new things, working with newer and different methods, and offering opportunities which allows taking calculated risks. The inner self of younger generation consist of an innovator and an entrepreneur, as an outcome major of the younger work force have aspirations to transform individual hobbies into careers.

As a result, the industry has witnessed changing characteristics of the younger work force when compared with the older generation cohorts (baby boomers [born from 1946 to 1964] and Generation X [born from 1965 to 1977]). The younger Indian demographics coupled with the characteristics to become entrepreneurs, represents the opportunity for Indian organizations to create the

culture of intrapreneurship in the present crisis situation. The younger work force today will work in jobs that do not currently exist. Moreover, they are unconventional types of professionals who do not believe in 40-hour per week set in a cubicle work culture. Instead they are freelance contractors who work with great flexibility, and solve problems with particular expertise. These characteristics of younger worker makes us realize that creating the culture of intrapreneurship in the present crisis situation is possible by reaping the dividend of the younger demographic. Indian organizations need to develop a long-term orientation based on entrepreneurial initiative by engaging employees to practice intrapreneurship by permitting employees to use a minimum of 10 percent of their time on self-directed projects within the organizations by leveraging the resources of the parent organization. Organizations such as 3M started this practice in 1948 and many other organizations including Google practice this even today. Such intrapreneurship initiatives are not limited to large scale entrepreneurship, which is generally focused on creation of new businesses or development of new products, but on entrepreneurship on a daily basis with incremental innovations and aims at doing things in an entrepreneurial way. This will help organizations to implement intrapreneurship in the current crisis situation, while preparing for similar situations to come.



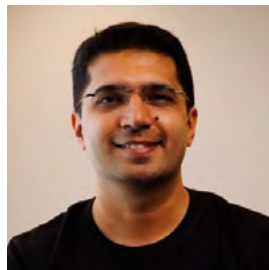
CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Rise of the Phoenix – creation in the post-COVID world

DARSHAN DOSHI

Founding Director - FLAME Centre For Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Most of us are likely experiencing the first pandemic in our lives. But COVID-19 isn't the first pandemic to occur on this beautiful planet. This phenomenon has happened before in 1918 and there are lessons for us to learn from history. So I took a look at how people overcame adversity, specifically the economic and societal effects from the Spanish Flu pandemic in an era that was pre-internet, pre-mobiles, pre-social media, and pre-globalization. Surprisingly, humans are tremendously resilient or as Nassim Nicholas Taleb calls "antifragile". Not only did we beat the pandemic but rebounded with the "Roaring Twenties," an era of tremendous economic growth between 1923-29. According to the Atlantic Council, a combination of technology and pent-up capital produced an economic renaissance then. Does this sound familiar now in April 2021?



Technology developments in the 1920s were widespread use of electricity, mass manufacturing, combined with government

initiatives such as the Federal Highway Act of 1921 (USA).

Similarly, in 2021, we are experiencing acceleration in technology development and its adoption such as 5G, artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, and blockchain, to name a few. Many sectors such as education, health, infrastructure, and manufacturing, are seeing interventions and reforms by governments around the globe. On the other side, adoption of new technologies by consumers and companies has been growing at an incredible pace. According to Vinayak Agarwal in an article on Startup India suggested the following sectors that could potentially take-off in the post-COVID world: these sectors include Software as a Service (SAAS), remote working tools, ed-tech, health and wellness, financial services, NBFCs, ecommerce and delivery-based services, OTT platforms, online gaming, pharma, life sciences, pathology, and managed office spaces. During the pandemic, start-up founders have adapted and responded to the challenges by coming up with innovative solutions. To give some examples within the FLAME community, Invento Robotics, that was part of the FLAME Origins Program, has created robots to enable hospitals to connect with their patients, perform tasks such as

disinfecting surfaces, and help doctors run video consultations. A report by CNN covering Invento Robotics can be found here (<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/11/tech/robots-india-covid-spc-intl/index.html>)

Devdatta Puntambekar, founder of Sattvarise and one of the top experts on augmented reality and virtual reality in India, went through the FLAME Origins Program and decided to pivot from his services business in order to work on a high-value problem in the medical education space using virtual reality-based immersive solutions. His new start-up, DEFTXR, has been growing multi-fold in the last few months inskilling medical students across India.

COVID-19 resulted in millions of people losing their jobs and has adversely impacted personal across India. Bhavya Gandhi, part of the one-year postgraduate program in entrepreneurship and innovation at FLAME, started Axe Capital to address this very problem. Axe Capital enables young professionals to achieve financial freedom through a variety of services and technology products.

Like Bhavya, I see many professionals—young and old alike—who have taken to entrepreneurship to make an impact and do more for themselves and society. The Indian start-up ecosystem is already the third largest in the world with an estimated 70000 start-ups (15000 of those being tech start-ups). I strongly believe we will see an exponential growth in the number of start-ups starting in India and serving the world in the next three to five years. This explosion of entrepreneurs may be due to the time taken by people during this pandemic to 'reflect' on what's important for them or due to novel responses to situations arising due to COVID-19 impact. The venture capital is there, waiting for innovative ideas ready to make their mark.

One-third of the world population was infected by the Spanish Flu resulting in an estimated 50 million deaths worldwide according to the CDC. India lost approximately 13 million people at that time. So far, COVID-19 has already taken a toll of 2.9 million people worldwide and saving lives is the most important thing for now. We can and we will re-build from there.



CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

RISE to power a new generation of start-ups in 2021

ARAVIND CHINCHURE
Chair Mentor, PGPEI Program

When the year 2020 started, no one could have predicted that within one month a pandemic would lash across the planet, sparing no country, consuming all markets as people lost lives by the thousands. The indiscriminate spread of the virus has also affected global enterprises in a way that no one had foreseen. Start-ups fell flat, years of investment and innovation was undone within a matter of months. Many successful start-ups were suddenly forced to reconsider their foundations.



What will define the success and growth of start-ups in the post-COVID-19 era is adaptability and finding new opportunities. Start-ups need to figure out where they can adapt, and what sectors they can pivot into. I find four untapped entrepreneurial opportunities in 2021: to develop products and

solutions for Rural and local markets, Industry 4.0 enabled smart

manufacturing, Sustainability, and Ecosystem platforms. In other words, RISE in the post-COVID world.

1. Rural and local is becoming the new urban and global.

COVID-19 has forced us to think about sustainable and inclusive development of both urban and rural economies. Existing start-ups are mainly focused on offering products and services to the 200 million customers in India's urban domestic market. The next big opportunity for entrepreneurs is to develop products and solutions for the local markets to fulfil the needs of rest of the 1.1 billion people living in rural and semi-urban India.

Mark Cuban, an American billionaire entrepreneur invested in a start-up called Cultivate which sells products of over 200 small businesses. He claims that the future will be far more local - both economically and environmentally - which is good for entrepreneurs, people, and the planet.

India produces a large quantity of agricultural and dairy products in the world. However, more than 40% of the food produced in India is wasted before it reaches the consumer. About 1.2 billion tonnes of primary agri-produce and 750 million tonnes of crop residues await fulsome utilisation. India currently processes less than 10% of agri-produce compared to the global average of 40%.

There is a need to connect and integrate sustainable farming practices, eco-friendly production methods, infrastructure and market linkages with end-to-end traceability in the entire food supply chain. Start-ups can develop farmer platforms, agri marketplaces, rural fintech, and other farm-to-consumer solutions.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), there are more than 550 million small landholders in the world. Affordable and simple precision farming, community platforms, and sustainable production and supply chain solutions incubated and commercialized by Indian entrepreneurs will be relevant to small landholders and MSMEs across the world.

Deshpande Startups Incubation Centre based in Hubli is providing an ecosystem to support the entrepreneurs working in the areas (agriculture, healthcare, and other) relevant to the 1.1 billion people living in villages and semi-urban towns in India. The FLAME Origins Startup Accelerator Program has supported the agri-tech startup Krishi Star, which is focused on smallholder farmers and delivering quality food to end customers by transforming agricultural value chains.

2. Industry 4.0 has now become more important for manufacturing

Industry 4.0-driven smart manufacturing enables devices and machines to communicate to take effective decisions on production planning as well as on actual production based on triggers in the demand of the product, thus efficiently managing manufacturing as well as distribution. The investment in automation and remote operation has brought forward an unexpected outcome during the pandemic. In a recent survey of Fortune 500 CEOs, 63% were of the opinion that COVID-19 would further accelerate this technological transformation because the relevance of this technology has truly and thoroughly been reinforced.

Manufacturing companies are beginning to prepare for the post-COVID world. The focus for many manufacturers now is to adopt Industry 4.0 and digital solutions for smart manufacturing for their future resilience and growth. Industry 4.0 holds huge potential for start-ups that can unlock new human-machine capabilities and drive forward innovation, competitiveness, and profits of manufacturing enterprises.

Industry 4.0 is a trillion dollar opportunity for start-ups, but there are few entrepreneurship programs that prepare aspiring entrepreneurs to tap into the opportunities presented. The one-year postgraduate program on entrepreneurship and innovation (PGPEI) at FLAME University is an exception to this, as it offers courses on Industry 4.0, exponential technologies,

global megatrends, and other relevant topics to develop deep-tech products, solutions, business models, and platforms using the principles of Industry 4.0 to tackle Indian and global megachallenges.

3. Sustainability is the top priority

Achieving sustainability and reducing carbon emissions are becoming a necessary and important role of today's businesses. Even the respite earned during COVID-19 on carbon emissions will have little effect - we will still need to reduce emissions by 50% in this next decade to stop global temperatures from rising above 1.5oC. Startups have the opportunity to leverage this challenge and develop sustainable and eco-friendly products and solutions. The number of consumers who prefer eco-friendly products and services has grown in recent years. Now, the focus is to have an overall improvement in the products and adoption of sustainable production processes. With sustainability as a mission, start-ups should develop innovative products and solutions that use renewable sources of energy.

Ather Energy, for example, is an Indian start-up that created electric mobility widely available in major cities with fast charging infrastructure the Ather Grid public charging points. The predicted boom in the EV market increases the opportunities for startups to innovate in products and infrastructure to achieve sustainability and reduce carbon footprint, with emphasis on not just profits or customers, but on the planet as well.

4. Ecosystem and platforms are the way to go

The disruption caused by COVID-19 has highlighted the need of ecosystem and platform solutions for our social, education, health and business transactions. Platforms are increasingly becoming a part of our lives. Today, the most valuable start-ups are disrupting traditional linear business models and are instead pursuing platform-based models.

Ecosystems and platforms bring together different stakeholders and actors to build, scale, and serve markets in a way that is not possible for any single organisation. Start-ups can develop newer ways of value creation by enabling collaboration between organisations. They can create solutions to meet increasing customer demands so that all players can derive mutual benefit.

Zoho is one of the most successful platform companies in India. Zoho developed the Zoho One platform to run an entire business on the cloud using a suite of web and mobile applications, thereby making it an operating system for any business. In a post-COVID world, Indian start-ups have the opportunity to build platforms as a service for health, smart work, mobility and retail.

Start-ups that adapt and build upon their business models and make use of the new opportunities that an ever-changing world provides will thrive. Breakthrough ideas, fuelled by innovation in the current context, can help start-ups generate revenue and scale even during the difficult times of a global pandemic. RISE highlights the new opportunities that will help create a new generation of start-ups in India in a post-COVID world.



CRISIS TO CREATION: ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

It Takes a Crisis to Create Change

BHARAT DAMANI

Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship

Given a choice, there is resistance to change. When compelled to change, in hindsight, the change becomes a blessing in disguise.

The COVID-19 pandemic, a black swan event, essentially shut down the entire world, forcing countries and people to adopt measures they would not have taken in normal times. Some concepts which would not have been as easily accepted without the pandemic include developments in digital tools for business and interaction (Ernst & Young, 2017), technology-enabled decision making with hybrid models of business (Smet, et al, 2020), exploring local resources with a greater socio-economic perspective (Leung, et al, 2020), continued work-from-home options to become more resilient (Dhawan, 2020) and relooking at the concept of Small is Beautiful (Tonby & Woetzel, 2020).

The mobility industry became immobile and yet people interacted with each other across the world. Regulatory restrictions and inhibitions of remote interaction gave way to

the emergence and proliferation of new industries like online options for meetings, education, legal proceedings, medical consultations, accounting, audit, and compliance. These practices are now widely accepted and found to be rather convenient in various ways, especially when they save time, effort, and cost. People have discovered how time and cost are saved in the work-from-home model and how this saving can be put to better use to create a work/life balance with flexibility.

Moreover, the pandemic has changed the world of business and created a strong focus on the importance of mental health. Businesses are becoming more employee safety and comfort friendly. A reverse migration triggered by the global lockdown has brought families closer, forcing them to rethink the philosophy of life and to find alternate forms of livelihood and happiness. The previously-assumed need for migration is being questioned and options of self-employment and entrepreneurship have become reinvigorated (Ratten, 2020) as any crisis is a call for social entrepreneurship (Bacq, et al, 2020).

The combination of the lockdown, reverse migration, work-from-home, technology, and internet-based activities coupled with a

personal rethink on the philosophy of life is a potent recipe to redevelop the smaller towns of the country and create local employment, and, consequently, decongest exponentially growing urban centres. The immediate surge is in online portals for essential services like medicines, medical consultation, sanitizers, ventilators, masks, and deliveries, etc., e-learning in all areas be it for kids, children, formal education, hobbies, fitness, yoga, etc., along with webinars for professionals like doctors, lawyers, business people, entrepreneurs, and others.

This is the time to capitalize on the situation and catalyse radical change at the local level. Some of the migrant workforce returning to their native lands could potentially be entrepreneurial after their exposure to the urban centres of economic activity. Many are now well-versed in the use of technology and modern ways of doing business. They can take the circumstances to set up ventures with the help of local workforces. Such ventures could include areas of soft skills training, technology-based education, back-office activity, digital marketing, co-working spaces, or business centres equipped to service large clients and the like. Alternative opportunities could include heritage tourism, theme-based culture trips, handicraft/artisan and craftsmen-oriented tourism, and business ventures using urban networks to create market linkages for locals and farmers who do not have them. They can also cater to and promote local and indigenous knowledge-based activities, vocational training, the introduction of technology-based activities in their operations, simple measures of automation and data management, technology-enabled customer services, agro-processing, and use of agro-technology to improve farm operations.

People oriented towards manufacturing activity could become entrepreneurial by combining the principles of Small is Beautiful (Schumacher, 1973), Appropriate Technology (Date, 1981), and the Principles of Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2009) to identify opportunities which use locally available resources for the benefit of local and regional markets. These can include opportunities like garments, toiletries, furniture, fabrication products, appliances, footwear, organic agro-products, food processing, floriculture, etc.

Entrepreneurs can be ably supported by local universities who can play important roles in product design and development, prototype making, and pilots, roles which would immensely benefit the would-be entrepreneur and its own students in many ways, including employment. An appropriate industry/institution association could also lead to patents and start-up incubation and the infusion of urban concepts and practices in the local education

system. The urban reverse migrated entrepreneur would also introduce the urban lifestyle, gadgets, in-house amenities like water supply and sanitation, investment patterns, and thought processes into the rural household, improving quality of life standards. The pandemic-induced entrepreneurial initiatives can make change happen across education, skill development, employment generation, technology adoption, and livelihood creation along with the social, cultural and economic ecosystem instead of waiting for change to happen.

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STUDENT RESEARCH

Sadkon-ka-Zaiqa : The Street Food of Lucknow

MAANYA MONNANDA & VARNIKA HATHI
Undergraduate Students

As a group of 15 students whose skills lie in various areas, the Discover India Programme gave us an opportunity to study a topic none of us ever fathomed we would. Months of brainstorming later, we finalised on studying the street food of Lucknow as our research project. Even though singling out a final topic was challenging because of the varied interests and skills, the decision had to be a unanimous one and something that excited us all. We thought of a common interest, a binding factor that connected the 15 of us. The answer was simple: food.

When it comes to studying food in India, cross-cultural factors play a huge role. Our aim, however, was to explore a city where the food culture has remained relatively untouched throughout centuries. One of the oldest cities in India, Lucknow is known for having retained its traditional and authentic street food cuisine for over five centuries now. Our on-field experience in this city began in the month of February, 2020 under the guidance of Prof. Aadil Masudul. We chose to adopt a historical, socio-cultural as well as a philosophical perspective while conducting the research, both,

off-field and on-field.

Our study focused on asking questions pertaining to the origin of popular Lucknowi dishes. It also emphasized on the belief systems that guided and influenced these street food joints as well as the traditional cooking techniques that continue to be practised. Lucknowi food is known worldwide for its deep historical roots in Mughal and Awadhi culture. The city, with its complex religious and social background, is home to an endless number of street food joints specializing in authentic as well as fusion dishes.

The findings of our research project were guided by a research methodology that we laid out beforehand. Majorly qualitative, and involving both primary as well as secondary sources, our tools of data collection aimed to contribute towards a structured research design. The primary sources include tools like online pre-field surveys, interviews and oral histories. The secondary sources on the other hand, focused on the books, journals, archives and articles that we referred to throughout the course of our research

journey. With a purposive sampling and ethical guidelines in mind, we set out to obtain authentic and credible information which could further be critically analysed.

While studying the history and origin of dishes, it was clear that the popular joints as well as the food items spanned across a large timeline. Dishes such as the biryani, galawati kebabs, sheermal etc. are original to this city of Nawabs; While dishes such as chaat, kulfi, makkhan malai travelled to Lucknow and integrated into its identity. Several other newer joints only opened in the last decade or so.

With regards to the deep- rooted beliefs that guided the street food vendors of such a culturally and religiously rich city, a variety of ideologies were discovered. From vegetarianism and environmentalism, religious value systems, innovative cooking styles, secret recipes and specific business approaches, Lucknow's street food culture was an amalgamation of all this and more. The same can be said about the various cooking techniques followed. While some recipes remained intact over the years, other vendors kept theirs a secret.

Adaptation and continuation of traditional cooking techniques that use copper vessels, tandoors, and homemade equipment were observed on-field and credibility was analysed by referring to scholarly archives. While acknowledging such aspects of cooking methods and historical tracing were rather tangible and visible to the naked eye, the philosophical dimension of our research was relatively implicit. The direct interactions only gave

us a limited view of the beliefs followed, but drawing inferences from the ambience, body language and other additional factors played a huge role in the findings and facilitated our small-scale ethnographic research.

Throughout the course of our research project, our findings went beyond the content and research aspect of the experience. Apart from analysing the aims and objectives of our research, a large chunk of our learnings were multifaceted. While every group member had a unique take away from the experience, a lot of our learning areas were common. An interesting thing to note here is that

none of us had ever been to the city of Lucknow and more than half of the group belonged to the southern parts of India, making the Lucknowi culture an unfamiliar one to us all. In the process of going into the depths of Lucknowi food and our interactions with the joint owners and food scholars, we gained a metahistorical perspective. Apart from being exposed to a variety of ideologies and beliefs, credits to the research project, we also learnt to respect the difference of opinions within the group. Ironically, the attempt to explore 'food' through a daedal lens was also an attempt at creating an amalgamated identity for it. Not only did we discover the authentic food gem of India, the city of nawabs, kebabs & aadab but also discovered ourselves in the context of a different culture.

A man with short, graying hair, wearing a light blue and white striped button-down shirt, is looking intently at a black laptop. He is seated in what appears to be a classroom or lecture hall. In the background, a green chalkboard is visible with some faint white markings, including a matrix equation $\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ b_2 \end{bmatrix}$. The text "RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT" is overlaid in the top right corner in a bold, black, serif font. A vertical orange bar is positioned to the left of the text.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Determinants of Purchasing Performance

GITESH GHAVAN

Assistant Professor in Marketing

Gitesh Chavan has a Master's Degree in Instrumentation and Control Engineering with distinction and was awarded the NITIE Fellow in 2018. During his doctoral research tenure he published research papers in scholarly peer-reviewed ABDC A category journals, has presented in several international conferences, and has case studies to his credit. He has also completed an MDP in Marketing and Human Resources from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, and earned an Associate (ATCL) Diploma in Communication Skills from Trinity College, London.



Chavan's doctoral work was carried out under the guidance of Prof. Ranjan Chaudhuri (Fulbright Fellow, 2012 and Associate Professor, NITIE). His research attempts to bridge an existing literature gap by investigating the determinants of purchasing

performance of EPCs. With this central idea, his work attempts to address the following research objectives: 1) To identify and study the determinants of purchasing performance of EPC's, 2) To understand a conceptual framework of purchasing performance

of EPC's, and 3) To understand the interaction among purchasing performance factors across various industry verticals of EPCs concerning new task buying, straight rebuying, and modified rebuying.

The research uses both qualitative and quantitative techniques to determine the factors which affect purchasing performance and the extent to which these factors influence the overall purchasing performance function.

Prior to joining academia, Chavan worked in Australia, the USA, the European Union, and the Middle East, in cross-cultural, cross functional teams. His competencies are in the areas of sales and business development of automation solutions and services, marketing strategies, branding, project engineering, and management in industrial automation (such as safety systems, PLC, SCADA, HMI, DCS, automation, C&I project execution, and MAC project pursuits). During his tenure with American Multinationals he received numerous commendations and accolades for his performance including a Bravo Award at Emerson and Honeywell, in Houston, Texas. His industry experience of more than a decade across multiple geographies led to deeper research on industrial buyer/purchasing behaviour in the B2B domain.

Purchasing has received great attention over the years. The dynamics of business environments have changed, and purchasing departments have to manage supplier relationships in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguity (VUCA) era. The role of purchasing function has undergone considerable change, from clerical function to strategic function with the integrative buyer/supplier relationship and developed the notion of strategic purchasing. Considering the broadening scope, researchers have defined purchasing as a function of information exchange which adds value regarding vital feedback to the entire supply chain.

Purchasing of EPC projects majorly includes market research, procurement, and contracting and site material management. Purchasing capital ranges from 40% to 60% of the total cost of works projects. In comparison to manufacturing companies, EPCs function differently. End customers employ EPCs for an effective management of large-scale, capital-intensive engineering projects by generating competition amongst them. EPCs cater to different industry verticals under one roof and take complete ownership of engineering projects from design phase to engineering phase. Purchasing in EPC is optimized by dividing engineering projects into complete assets, main components, and basic components. As the design of every project is unique, and most of the purchasing are new tasks, EPC purchasing becomes all the more challenging. Looking at the academic literature and the models developed for purchasing performance, various contributors have defined and perceived purchasing performance differently, especially concerning manufacturing firms. However, literature until date lacks a comprehensive study on purchasing performance measurement in EPCs.

Chavan's research was the first empirical research which has established in B2B and industrial buying domain by exploring relationships linking Internal Customer Needs (ICNs) ("WHATs") which constitutes Product Related Factors (PRF) with Engineering Requirements (ERs) ("HOWs") which constitute Buyer Related Factors (BRF) and Organization Related Factors (ORF). His research also includes three different of buying types (i.e., New Task, Straight Rebuy and Modified Rebuy) defined by (Robinson Faris & Wind, 1967). To gain additional insight into the behaviours of various EPC industry verticals for different types of buying, this researched focused on industry verticals like oil and gas, metals and mining, and construction. His research was unique as PP models for EPC firms have not been published nor validated empirically, nationally or internationally. Thus, this exploratory study will add to the body of existing knowledge by not only identifying the emerging factors which constitute to the construct of PP of EPCs but also by filling the gap between theory and practice concerning the evaluation of PP of EPCs.

Chavan's research sets out to answer some questions. Specifically, how the PP evaluation technique varies as per buying situations (i.e., New Task Buying, Straight Rebuy, and Modified Rebuy) and studied Industry Verticals (O&G, M&M, and Construction). The results show a significant pattern across various Industry Verticals. Based on the underlying theory that these relationships exist, this research is able to propose its usefulness and practical managerial implication, not confining it just for job-evaluation but also for helping EPCs assign the right individual for the right

buying task. Thus, this research can be used for merit rating of purchasing professionals.

In extant literature, cost quality and delivery flexibility were some of the common factors which were proposed in PP models of manufacturing firms. However, from the results obtained, new emerging factors related to the buyer such as Buyer Personality, Buyer Knowledge, and Internal Environment factors such as related factors including Decision Making Unit (DMU), Company Policies, Strategy, Technology Decisions emerged from the industry expert opinion. The factors were also ranked to understand the critical impact they have on the PP of EPC evaluation.

The conclusions drawn from his research are divided into two parts: conclusions related to theoretical development and conclusions related to practical implications. From a theoretical development point of view, this exploratory research offers a comprehensive methodology for identifying the factors which affect the PP of EPCs.

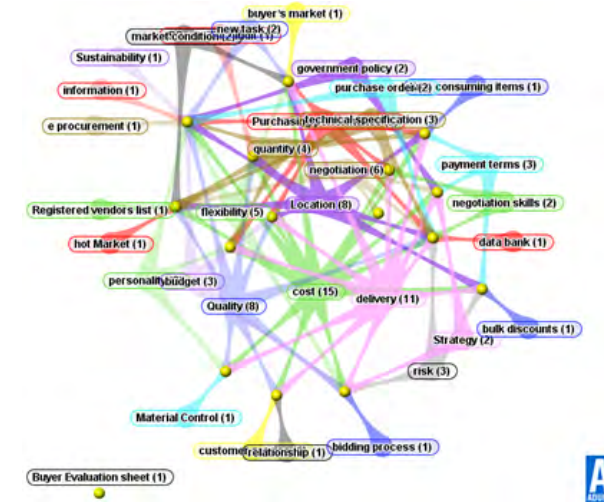
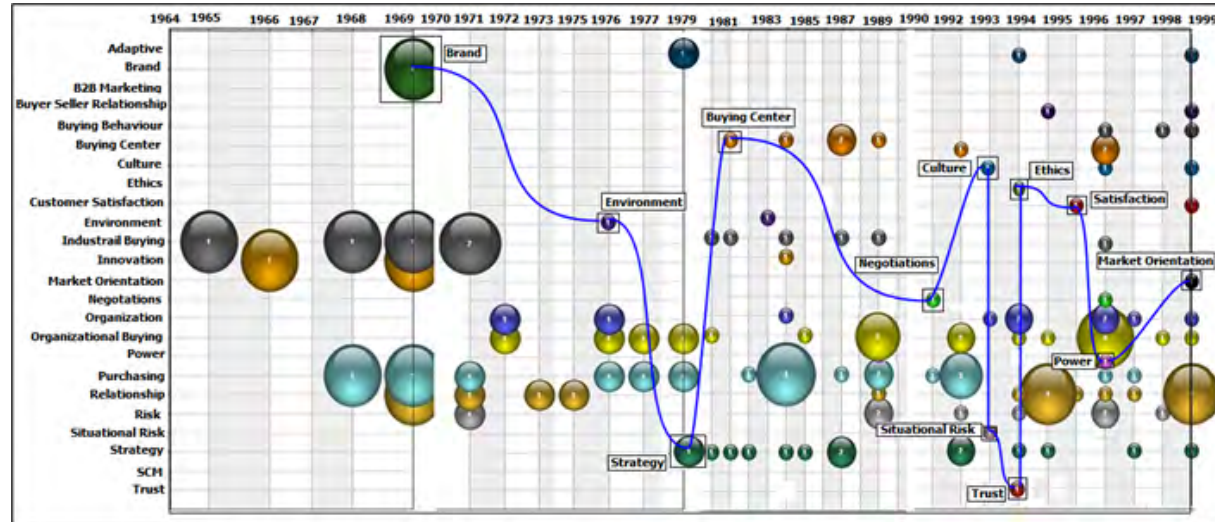
Chavan attempted to identify primary constituents of the construct of purchasing performance. He used a unique Natural Language Processing (NLP) Technique to extract important terms or key terms from discussions and interviews which the researcher had with industry experts. He also used text mining and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to integrate sub-factors which form important individual concepts of purchasing performance. The research has been carried out on a global level taking into account views of experts from countries like USA, UK, Australia, UAE, and of course India.

Companies lack understanding of powerful methodologies and practical tools to gather and analyse data, which can improve their value chain by refining and optimize their products and services (Maritan & Panizzolo, 2009). Chavan attempted to model industry perspective on PP using Fuzzy Set Theoretic and Quality Function Deployment (QFD) approach. This research contributes to the body of knowledge of purchasing and industrial buying through the development of a comprehensive methodology for assessment of factors which affect the PP of EPCs. The methodology provides scope for selection of critical factors which affect PP of EPCs and conceptualize them in a PP model with the help of AHP and QFD. The outcomes of this work may lead to a matrix which can be used to evaluate the PP of EPCs.

Post his doctoral degree from NITIE, Chavan continues his passion of teaching subjects at FLAME University including Sales and Distribution, Business to Business Marketing, Marketing Research, Marketing Management, and Pricing Strategies, and has continued his research work with his doctoral mentor Ranjan Chaudhuri. Chavan has also been collaborating with many eminent academicians across the globe and adding value to the body of knowledge through his research publications. His research work has been published in the *Journal of Business Research (JBR)*, *the Journal of Knowledge Management (JKM)*, and *the Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (JBIM)*.

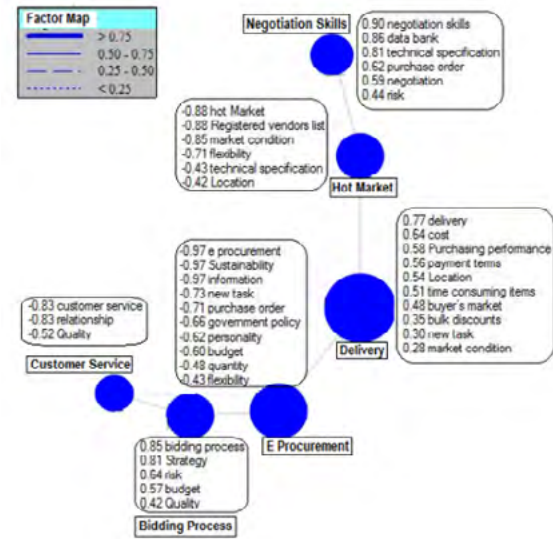
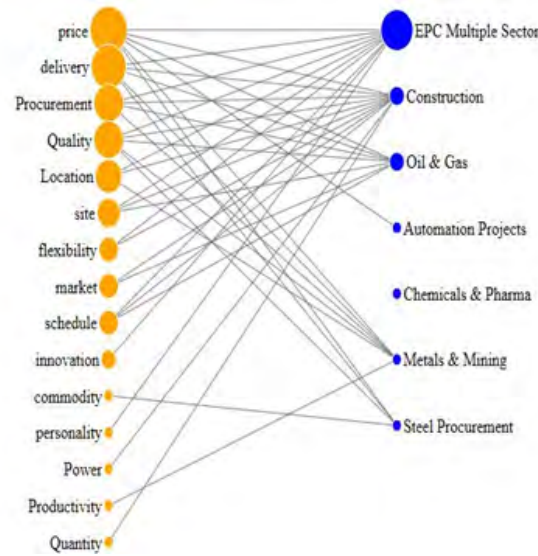
Few Research Outputs of Doctoral Thesis.

Bubble Map 1965 to 2000. (Chavan & Chaudhuri, 2017)

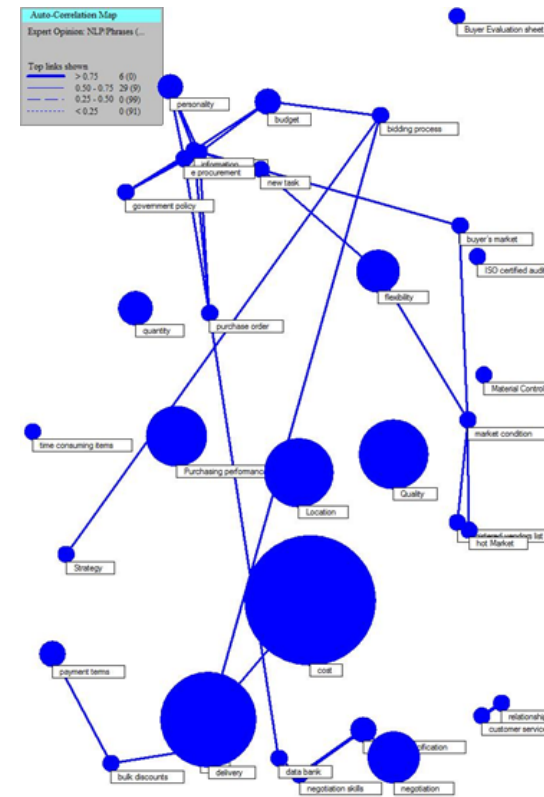


Integrated Aduna Factor map

Descriptive Statistics of EPC



Factor Map



Auto Correlation Map

A photograph showing two people in business attire shaking hands over a desk. The desk has a laptop, a folder, and some papers. The background is a plain wall.

FACULTY BIOS

MICHAEL HATCHER

Ph.D. - Philosophy | University of Southern California - USA

“ Michael Hatcher has a B.A. in Philosophy from Biola University, an M.A. in Philosophy from California State University, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from University of Southern California.



His research is in epistemology and philosophical theology. In epistemology, he develops resources for frameworks on which an important kind of belief is as much under our control and susceptible to appropriate praise and blame as are paradigmatic actions. These resources include an account of temporally extended activity, an account of attention, and an argument that an important kind of belief is grounded in activities of organizing one's attention in certain ways. In philosophical theology, with an overall hope to shed light on what it could mean to put on the mind of Christ (cf. Philippians 2:5), he inquires into what it could mean to pray without ceasing (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17). Here too he hopes to leverage my accounts of temporally extended activity and attention.

From the Fall of 2017 until he joined FLAME University in 2020, he taught courses in Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, History of Philosophy, and Logic at Valparaiso University in the US. At FLAME so far, he has taught Critical Reasoning and Introduction to Applied Ethics. ”

SWAPNAJIT CHAKRABORTI

FPM - Information Systems | Indian Institute of Management - Indore

“ Swapnajit Chakraborti did his B.E and M.E. in Computer Science from Jadavpur University and entered the industry in 1995. During his tenure in the field, he had the opportunity to work with some of the leading electronic design automation software companies in the area of VLSI chip design and simulation tool development. Apart from software product development and management, he was involved in active research as a member of IEEE committees, published papers at various international forums, and was granted US patents.



After serving in the industry for 19 years, he shifted his attention to academics, specifically on emerging areas of technological disruptions, e.g. analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, big data etc. He chose to do his Fellow Programme (doctoral) from IIM Indore in Information Systems & Analytics. His doctoral research was focused on the application of text mining technologies for extracting competitor intelligence. His interest areas include business analytics, data mining, text mining, machine learning and application of these techniques towards solving business problems. He has published in leading journals, including ABDC A-category journals, conferences and also guided doctoral students in pursuing their research. He received the Microsoft Research silver medal for his dissertation at the ACM SIGAPP symposium in 2015. He considers

teaching to be the noblest profession and looks forward to an exciting experience at FLAME after serving at reputed B-schools such as SPJIMR and Great Lakes. ”

RAGINI MOHITE

Ph.D. – English Literature | University of Leeds - UK

“ Ragini Mohite received her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Leeds in English Literature, and my B.A. (Hons) from the University of Mumbai. Her research interests include twentieth-century literature, transnationalism, and world literature. She is currently working on research projects in these areas. Her monograph, entitled *Modern Writers, Transnational Literatures: Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats* has been published by Clemson University Press. Her research ambitions increasingly lean towards poetry, archival research, and interdisciplinarity.



She has been an archival researcher, taught the IGCSE and IB curricula, and has taught at the University of Leeds. She has been a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Leeds Humanities Research Institute. In addition to research, she is also a reviewer. Her essays have appeared in publications like Stand magazine, International Yeats Studies, South Asian Diaspora, the James Joyce Broadsheet, and the Hong Kong Review of Books. As a teacher, she believes in centring students' ideas and the collaborative dialogue between learners, enhancing conceptual skills, and in critical rigour. As part of her pedagogical approach, she practices research-informed teaching, and aims to make her classrooms inclusive, respectful, and productive spaces. ”

SASIKIRAN RM

Ph.D. - Communication | University of Hyderabad - Hyderabad

“ Sasikiran RM holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the Department of Communication, S.N. School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, where his thesis 'Telugu Print Cultures and Vernacular Modernity' focused on the evolution of modern print cultures in the vernacular and their complex relationship with colonial modernity. The thesis also focused on the reception and expression of modernity in the vernacular. He was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fellowship by JNMF, Delhi for his doctoral studies. He was awarded travel grants by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) & European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) to present at their conferences held in Sydney, Australia and Lugano, Switzerland. He also presented his research in national institutions of repute like the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS), Shimla and Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru.



His research interests include the areas of Vernacular Media History, Cinema and Gender, Communication and Cultural Studies and Transmedia Studies. Prior to his doctorate he received a PGDM-Communications from MICA, Ahmedabad. During his studies there he was awarded the AAI Raman Memorial Scholarship, the Scholarship of Academic Excellence, and the MICA Rural Research Award.

He previously taught at Annapurna International School of Film and Media, Hyderabad in the Media and Management Studies Department. He worked in the corporate sector for nearly six years in several capacities across IT, Renewable Energy, and Digital Marketing areas before moving full time into academia. At FLAME, he teaches Communication Theory, Culture and Communication, Media Laws and Ethics. ”

AILEEN BLANEY

Ph.D. - Film Studies | Trinity College Dublin - Ireland

“Aileen Blaney did her undergraduate degree in English and French literature at the National University of Ireland, Galway before going on to complete an M.Phil and Ph.D. in Film Studies at Trinity College Dublin. Her doctoral research was supported by a UK/Irish programme of collaborative research initiated to build cross-border connections as part of the Irish pece process. The thesis explored the memorialization of conflict in Irish and British films, made possible by the dismantlement of decades of media censorship laws. Following this, she had the opportunity to pursue postdoctoral research in Chung-Ang University’s film department in Seoul, South Korea.



She moved to India in 2012 to work for India Foundation for the Arts in Bangalore and went on to teach Film and Photography Studies at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology (2014-20). In recent years, her research has explored documentary photography, photo portraiture in political hoardings in South India, and the affective economy of images circulating on social media. In 2018, Bloomsbury published *Photography in India: from Archives to Contemporary Practice*, of which she is co-editor. In the coming year, he looks forward to extending her research engagement with photography in India and teaching Film Theory, Film Appreciation, Documentary Theory, and Academic Writing at FLAME. ”

JOYITA ROY CHOWDHURY

Ph.D. - Economics | University of Utah - USA

“Joyita Roy Chowdhury is originally from West Bengal, India, and joined as an Assistant Professor of Economics at FLAME University in the Fall of 2020.



She holds a Ph.D. degree and an M.S. in Economics from the University of Utah in the US. She has an M.Phil degree in Development Studies and Economics, an MSc degree in Economics, a BSc degree in Economics, all from the University of Calcutta. Before joining FLAME, she was a Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics at Hobart and William Smith (HWS) Colleges, New York.

In her teaching, she tries to expose her students to diverse economic perspectives because she feels that pluralist thinking in economics helps us better understand real-world issues. The Economics Department of FLAME University is an excellent fit for her teaching and research program, given her interest in teaching at a liberal arts institution with a commitment to diversity.

Her research interests lie in applied microeconomics with a particular focus on the role of institutions in addressing resource and environmental issues. She applies different methods and use different perspectives of economics to study contemporary problems. She collects survey data and conduct behavioural experiments in rural villages with real-world subjects.

Also, she analyses longitudinal data on current socio-economic issues and uses it to contribute to social and economic change. Her recent research examines the labour market impacts of natural disasters, focusing on gender issues and rural households in India. Besides her main research topics, she has written co-authored papers on the economics of natural disasters, crime and economic development, and tourism economics. ”

TANNISTHA SAMANTA

Ph.D. - Sociology | University of Maryland - USA

“Tannistha Samanta is a sociologist and an aging studies scholar by training. She received her Masters and Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology, University of Maryland College Park in the US. Prior to that, she studied for her graduate level degrees at JNU, New Delhi and the University of Calcutta. Broadly, her research lies at the interdisciplinary crossroads of family, sociology, and gerontology where her focuses on living arrangements, social capital & health, older adult sexualities, and theory development under the umbrella of aging studies. In another line of inquiry, she is interested in examining the complex nexus of motherhood, sexual politics, and biomedical markets.



Currently, she serves as a co-editor to the *Journal of Anthropology & Aging* (the official journal of the Association for Anthropology, Gerontology & the Life Course). Prior to joining FLAME University, she was faculty in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.

Her work has been funded by research grants from the United Nations Population Fund, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Government of Gujarat, Population Foundation of India, and recently, the University of Haifa (Israel). In the past, she has been a recipient of several awards from the Centre for Gender Equity & Health (University of San Diego), the Population Reference Bureau (Washington DC), and the RAND Corporation (Santa Monica, CA). She has published in top sociology and population aging journals including *Journal of Aging Studies* (Elsevier), *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B* (Oxford University Press), *PLoS One*, and others. She has edited a leading volume in gerontology entitled “Cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary perspectives in Gerontology (Springer 2017). And she has held invited visiting positions with the CEPT University (Ahmedabad), Centre for Excellence in Aging Research (Australian National University), and the School of Arts & Sciences, University of Saskatchewan (Canada).

She is committed to student engagement and contributing to an emerging community of young researchers. In this role, she has mentored several masters and doctoral students and have served on academic committees and curriculum development boards. She is excited about her new role at FLAME and looks forward to strengthening its vision to emerge as a leading research university. ”

DEBANANDA MISRA

Ed.D. - Education, Practice and Society | University College of London - UK

“Debananda Misra is Associate Professor, Public Policy at FLAME University. He received his EdD degree in Education, Practice and Society from the University College of London. Prior to joining FLAME, he has worked with the Indian School of Business for ten years in its advancement function and prior to that for six years with Yahoo! and GE.



He is interested in studying various aspects related to higher education at national, international, and organisational levels. In particular, he examines the relationship of higher education institutions with their surrounding regions and communities and how these institutions contribute to social, cultural and economic development at the regional and national levels. His doctoral dissertation examined the role of regions in the development of new public universities in India.

Beyond this work, he is also interested in how organisations embrace ‘publicness’ and is keen on the hybrid nature of organisations and how it allows them to go beyond their core functions to engage with communities, governments, and the public to achieve both business growth and to deliver social/public impact. ”

DWAIPAYAN SEN

Ph.D. – History | University of Chicago – USA

“ Dwaipayan Sen is Associate Professor of History at FLAME University. He received his Ph.D. in History and M.A. in Social Sciences from The University of Chicago, and he holds a B.A. in History and English from Oberlin College.



His research and teaching interests cover a broad spectrum and include British colonial rule in South Asia, the history of Indian nationalism, the politics of caste, and the partition of British India.

He is the author of *The Decline of the Caste Question: Jogendranath Mandal and the Defeat of Dalit Politics in Bengal* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), as well as articles in journals including *Modern Asian Studies*, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, *History Compass*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*. He has also contributed essays to fora like *The Wire*, *India Seminar*, and *Himal*.

His current book project is provisionally entitled *Rethinking the Colonial Censuses: Indigenous Agency and the Work of Enumeration*. This study aims to re-evaluate extant interpretations of the census as a tool of colonial domination, and seeks to demonstrate the extensive role played by various indigenous and subaltern actors in the implementation and consequences of this administrative mechanism.”

SITARAM SONI

Ph.D. - Mechanical Engineering | IIIT - Jabalpur

“ Dr. Sitaram Soni is an eminent designer, engineer and educator. He has vast and varied experience of about 30 years in research, industry and academia. Before joining the FLAME University, as Professor and Director IQAC, he has held positions of principal of two engineering Institutes as well as the position of vice chancellor.



He is an avid quality centric individual. He has successfully led the institutes to accreditation by NAAC and NBA with higher grades. A thought leader in education quality, he has been advising to many institutes for Quality systems design and accreditations process implementation.

Dr. Soni has many innovative initiatives to his credit with paradigm shift in the process of educating the young students and to revamp the technical education. He has been instrumental in developing the 'Centres of Excellence' in various institutes. He is an early adapter of the 'Make in India' initiative for the skill development and designed 'Skill Training for Employability Program' (STEP).

He also developed many IOT enabled systems to popularize the modern technology such as programming, rapid prototyping and robotics in school students, and to teach complex concepts using various software and simulation tools. He also developed the concept of FUNgineering, a series of activities to popularize the algorithmic thinking in STEM education for school children using various interactive software and affordable robotic systems.

His expertise includes Design, Games, Aesthetics, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Animation. He has worked on various projects for Indian and foreign MNCs, research and academic institutions like IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, and IIIT etc. during his academic and professional tenure. He has had academic assignments and projects with ETH Zurich, Switzerland and Chalmers University Gothenburg, Sweden.

He is member of many international and national societies like ASME, ISTE, IE(I), ASI, IDSA etc. He has many publications in international journals published by ASME, Elsevier, Inderscience etc. He is a regular speaker in the field of AI, accelerated learning, mechanism of mind, humour, creativity and design.

His interests are TQM in education, data analytics, deep learning, brain computer interface and, atomic processing and intelligence. He is believer of the philosophy that everything is connected to everything else, and that is the source of creativity, innovation, humour and human ingenuity.”



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