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# Entrepreneurship as Empowerment

## International Conference on Promoting Entrepreneurship in Goa for Environmental and Cultural Sustainability

**September 21-22, 2018**



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## Executive Summary

The two day International Conference on Promoting Entrepreneurship in Goa for Environmental and Cultural Sustainability was organized at the Goa University on September 21 and 22, 2018. The conference was organized by banglanatak dot com in collaboration with the Bio Technology, Management Studies and Computer Science Departments of the Goa University, and International Entrepreneurship Forum, The Venture Academy, Essex Business School, University of Essex, UK. Around 300 entrepreneurs, students from around 15 colleges and high schools, academicians, aspiring entrepreneurs and government officials participated in the seminar.

The Conference has sessions on Creative Industry, Grassroot Entrepreneurship-SHG's and SDGs, Green Economy and Sustainable Data Management, Sustainable Tourism. The speakers were experts from fields like contemporary visual art, academia, social enterprises, information technology, financial services, business enablers, distillery, tourism and logistics. Apart from thematic panel discussions there was mentoring sessions on topics like "Access to Funding", "Team Building", Grassroot Entrepreneurship" and "Pitching it Right".

The two day conference brought to the forefront the fact that entrepreneurship is about value creation in society and this is where the difference lies between business and entrepreneurship. Most of the entrepreneurs emphasized on the importance of hard work and focus in one's entrepreneurial journey and the satisfaction one gets in pursuing his/her passion is worthwhile. Speakers irrespective of their field highlighted that it is high time we adopt sustainable ways of business.

The entrepreneurs motivated the participants by saying that now is the perfect time to start an entrepreneurial venture. One need not always start big; he/she can begin by solving a local problem utilizing local resources as well as local manpower. Social Enterprises should have a business strategy for sustenance and not be solely dependent on donations; this is something the speakers agreed upon.

The conference was the beginning of a journey to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem by forming a collaborative network, creating partnership(s) with institution(s) in Goa catering to the needs of the budding/ willing entrepreneurs. Plans were also discussed on organizing IEF Annual conference on Dec 16 to 18, 2019 in Goa and prior to that organizing one and half days conference including boot camp for the young entrepreneurs in Goa on Dec 13-14, 2019. It was planned that stories of responsible tourism will be published and showcased at various platforms at local, National and International levels.

## Introduction

The state of Goa is rich in cultural and natural resources. It is also known for music, design and sports. The state is one of the leading tourism destinations of the country. Entrepreneurship offers new possibilities for socio-economic development of the state. There is scope of promoting entrepreneurship in sectors like infrastructure and logistics, waste management, agriculture, responsible tourism, pollution control, sports, art and craft. There is a tremendous scope of revitalizing the rich cultural heritage of Goa through supporting grass-root entrepreneurship, facilitating access to and opening up opportunities for Goan art and craft development. A two day International Conference on Promoting Entrepreneurship in Goa for Environmental and Cultural Sustainability was organised at the Goa University on September 21 and 22, 2018. The conference was organized by banglanatak dot com in collaboration with the Bio Technology, Management Studies and Computer Science Departments of the Goa University, and International Entrepreneurship Forum, The Venture Academy, Essex Business School, University of Essex, UK. Around 300 entrepreneurs, students from around 15 colleges and high schools, academicians, aspiring entrepreneurs and government officials participated in the seminar. Apart from thematic panel discussions there were mentoring sessions by entrepreneurs and business experts to help young aspiring entrepreneurs with their queries ranging from how to find investors to how to use digital marketing platform for the growth of their business. Speakers included entrepreneurs from various sectors like information technology, finance, food and beverage, creative, social and environmental sectors as well as international business experts from UK and South Korea. Students were from Kings School, Goa University, Goa Engineering College, MES College, G.R. Kare College of Law, Goa College of Pharmacy, Government College of Arts Science and Commerce, National Institute of Oceanography, IIT Goa, Goa College of Home Science, Don Bosco College of Agriculture, Goa College of Music and Fr. Agnel College of Arts and Commerce. The conference was held in the New Science Block Seminar Hall of Goa University.

## 21st September: Inaugural Session

The audience was welcomed by Prof. Savita Kerkar, Head of the Bio Technology Department. Mr. Amitava Bhattacharya, the Founder Director of banglanatak dot com shared about the Conference objectives. He highlighted four focus aspects, namely creative industry, grass roots entrepreneurship, green economy and responsible tourism. He said that the conference aims to share international and national perspectives and encourage youth



*Prof. Savita Kerkar welcoming the speakers and the participants of the conference*



entrepreneurship through experiences shared by young entrepreneurs in Goa and guidance from successful entrepreneurs through mentoring sessions. With the brief introduction about the topics covered in the conference, the dignitaries, Prof. Varun Sahni – the Vice Chancellor of Goa University, Prof. Jay Mitra of the International Entrepreneurship Forum, Mr. Amitava Bhattacharya and Prof. Savita Kerkar, along with the international participants Mr. Nick Hixon, Ms. Gillian Donald and Dr. Su-Hyun Berg inaugurated the conference by lightening the lamp.



*Inauguration ceremony at the International Conference on Promoting Entrepreneurship in Goa*

Prof. Varun Sahni shared interesting views on entrepreneurship. He spoke about the importance of breaking status quo. To explain he quoted Waqar Younis saying “Reverse swing was once called ball tampering” and shared how new ideas face challenges. He emphasized the importance of exploiting existing technology to the most. He accentuated the importance of vision and action for entrepreneurs. Vision denotes a compass, with aspiration, clarity, and inspiration whereas an action comprise of the map to drive that vision. He quoted “An Entrepreneur should have his head on the cloud and feet planted to the ground”. Prof.



*Prof. Varun Sahni, Vice Chancellor of Goa University delivering his inaugural speech*

Sahni pointed out the need to be work for becoming 'better'. He stated everyone cannot always succeed to be the best and being good or merely good enough leads to mediocrity. Thus, striving for becoming better gives us motivation and inspiration to improve ourselves every day. He also pointed out the challenging life of an entrepreneur.



*Prof. Jay Mitra, delivering his inaugural speech*

Prof. Jay Mitra emphasized that action is far more important than just a vision. He quoted that "Every era has to reinvent itself" and encouraged focusing on how to achieve that. Entrepreneurship is value creation in terms of individual growth and its primary motivation should be better quality of living as well as improvement for the society. He felt that the main focus of entrepreneurs should be a social movement which generates social changes, reinvention, new ways of thinking and not only a new business creation.

The inauguration session was finally concluded by a vote of thanks by Prof. Yma Pinto, Head of the Computer Science Department.

## Panel I: Creative Industry

The first panel discussion was on creative industry. The session was chaired by Dr. Su-Hyun Berg, Senior advisor at Korea Chambers of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) and the speakers were

- Mr. Suresh Reddy, Founder and Chairman of Lycos
- Mr. R. Venkataraman, Managing Director and Co-Founder of India Infoline (IIFL)
- Dr. Subodh Kerkar, Museum of Goa.
- Dr. Su-Hyun Berg.



*Creative Industry Panel*

The speakers were from sectors of high interest for young people namely IT, Finance, Film, Television and Art. The importance of being flexible, adapting to changing situations, pursuing one's area of interest, building partnerships, making foray into uncharted areas were some of the key talking points.



**Mr. Suresh Reddy** shared about his journey. After working in different companies for 10 years he started USAGreetings.com. This was an online e-greetings company and later expanded and was available in different languages in every part of the world. He explained that one might start with a particular idea but that needs to evolve or change according to the needs of the market. Willingness to adapt is a key quality of an entrepreneur. He emphasized that Artificial Intelligence is tomorrow's big area of work. Mr. Reddy concluded his presentation with a statement that today's generation requires much open mind with the ever changing market needs.



*Mr. Suresh Reddy, Lycos*

**Mr. R. Venkataraman** started by saying that the age old notion about getting a government job after college has changed. He spoke on the changing circumstances in business and the need of flexibility and also about the process of learning in the journey. The journeys are different for everyone and failure serves as a teacher. He advised a few steps to success like not to hurry or over emphasize vision, passion and hard work is important in entrepreneurial journey. Venkataraman said that crisis is important as it will teach one a lot of things and make him/her stronger.



*Mr. R. Venkataraman, India Infoline*



**Dr. Subodh Kerkar**, Founder of the contemporary art space - Museum of Goa, spoke about his journey from being a medical doctor to an artist and the role of 'vision' in his journey. He pointed out that changing area of work is difficult and requires a lot of learning. The lack of awareness and recognition to art was a factor that motivated Dr. Kerkar to take 'at to the mass'. His passion is to exhibit history and culture in a unique way. He felt that entrepreneurship gives opportunity to work in one's area of interest and thus be happy.



*Mr. Subodh Kerkar, Museum of Goa*

**Dr. Su-Hyun Berg** spoke about the Korean films and entertainment sector which is enjoying a surge in the world market providing business opportunities to many. Su explained how the public private partnership has helped the Korean entertainment sector grow substantially. Investors, directors technicians, people from all walks of life have come together to bring about a revolution in the entertainment industry. Over the years even policies and regulations have been changed keeping in mind the needs of the changing times.



*Dr. Su-Hyun Berg, KCCI*

## Panel II: Grassroot Entrepreneurship-SDGs/SHGs

The session was chaired by Professor Jay Mitra. The speakers were social entrepreneurs

- Dr. Madhav Sathe, Hon. Secretary, Bombay Mothers and Child Welfare Society
- Ananya Bhattachaya, Diretor, banglanatak dot com
- Suprajit Raikar, Founder-Proprietor, Raika Honey.

The session reinstated the critical role of social and community based enterprise in addressing a wide range of SDGs. The panel agreed that starting entrepreneurship where it matters the most i.e. grass roots is important. Social Entrepreneurship often means starting to work from the scratch and with limited resources. But it is important to have effective business strategy, revenue models and address market demands. Key recommendations were to develop strategy for networking for rural enterprises and to have focus. It was shared by all that the satisfaction one derives after working for the community is immense.



*Speakers of the Grassroot Entrepreneurship - SDGs/SHGs Panel*

**Dr. Madhav Sathe** had started his career as an anesthesiologist. He joined Bombay Mothers and Child Welfare Society at a time when it was not in a viable situation. Dr Sathe stressed on the importance of strategy and revenue models for social enterprises. He acknowledged that the donors are “investors” of change but at the same time any organization cannot sustain based only on donations. Initiatives need to be comprehensive, low cost, innovative and scalable.

Technology needs to be incorporated in a more efficient manner in developmental works through e-learning, smart classrooms, mobile medical facilities. Dr Sathe showed his concern regarding incubations only available in the urban areas whereas there are interesting innovative ideas regarding agriculture, animal husbandry, education in the rural areas as well.



*Madhav Sathe. Bombay Mothers and Child Welfare Society*



*Ananya Bhattacharya, banglanatak dot com*

**Ananya Bhattacharya**, Director, banglanatak dot com said that entrepreneurship and innovation plays an important role in achieving the targets of SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. Ananya pointed out that the biggest challenges are lack of equity and higher proportion of unemployment among youth and women. There is gender inequality as well, there are more women who are poor, and more women are out of work. If we could get access to work for all these women our global economy as well as regional economy will grow many folded and this is where SHGs can play a key role. Ananya then described how the flagship model of banglanatak dot com –Art For Life (AFL) has been able to make entrepreneurs out of rural women and that too through leveraging of traditional skills in art and craft. Capacity building, market linkage, and promotion are the three components of Art for Life. This initiative has led to revitalization of the art, empowerment of the artist and rebranding the villages as cultural hubs. This collective enterprise has not increased the income level of the rural women but also the overall standard of living has improved. India has 8.5 million SHGs and there is tremendous potential for channelizing their collective resources and energy to address the SDGs. Time has come to mainstream social entrepreneurship. Young people need to identify local problems and find solutions through new business innovations.

**Suprajit Raikar**, shared the story of his journey from a software professional to an entrepreneur. He has not only utilized local resources for his product but also involved the local community in production hence providing employment. He also makes sure that the byproducts are utilized in the form of soaps, lip balm etc. He markets his local product through online platforms. Suprajit shared examples of leveraging local resources, building local partnerships and aligning promotional strategies with market demands.



*Suprajit Raikar, Raika Honey*



### Panel III: Green Economy and Sustainable Data Management.



*Speakers of Green Economy and Sustainable Data Management Panel*

The session chaired by Jay Mitra explored entrepreneurial solutions to environmental challenges. The speakers were

- Imteyaz Ali, Founder, Sarthak Samudayik Vikas Evam Jan Kalyan Sansthan
- Mahesh Patil, Managing Director, NV Eco Farm
- Prof. PranabMukhopadhyay, Professor of Economics, Goa University.

The session on Green Economy and Sustainable Data Management focused on how we have destroyed our planet in the name of development. The only solution to this is greener business opportunities, replacing old methods with sustainable measures. Moreover data like quality of air, soil, agriculture should be made available for empirical studies so that research could lead to findings of sustainable ways and methods.

**Imteyaz Ali** explained his Bhopal Model. The project was started to clean Bhopal from plastic waste and to give dignity to the rag-pickers. He had started small with 5 centers, where he assigned 2 rag-pickers to each of the households in those centers. In order to make the process cost effective he built an economically scalable machine that cleaned segregated plastic. He adopted several measures that made his venture a success and a sustainable model. These included:

- Mixing plastic and heating to a certain degree to generate alternative fuel to cement industries, reducing coal usage
- Paying the rag pickers for actual weight they carry.
- Issuing ID cards to the rag-pickers and naming them “Sarbhak Karmi”.
- Reducing transporting cost by building a “Belling Machine” that compressed the plastic waste, also a shredding machine to shred non-recyclable plastic.
- Making products by recycling plastic like cushions/polywood furniture/marbles/pebbles.
- Using hair from salons and parlors to extract proteins and also for composting.



*Imteyaz Ali, Sarbhak Samudayik Vikas Evam Jan Kalyan Sansthan*

**Mahesh Patil** used his passion for nature and agricultural background to fill up the mining areas with creative garden like structures using the local community. He let go of his high paid job to follow his passion. He built an Agro Tourism model that empowers the locals. His experience in fertilizer industry helped him when he started organic farming. He produces bio-fertilizers and markets them. He believes that having passion is enough for vision to follow.



*Mahesh Patil, NV Eco Farm*

**Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay** spoke on data management for green economy. He said that a key challenge was unavailability of data to the public and thus suggested gathering data and putting it in public domain where data is used and not abused. He recommended “Do not only create new capital but also save and recreate existing capital”. He said that the state invests in irrigation and Green Revolution but not in making available data on soil, water quality, agriculture etc. which would greatly boost agriculture. Agricultural work was never seen as entrepreneurial. Sustainable development in green economy needs planning.

It is going to take time and requires local intervention and participation. Putting out exact data will reduce fake news. Pranab said that in the last 20 years agriculture and services sector has gone down and the manufacturing sector has gone up so as an entrepreneur one can easily find the gap.



*Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay,  
Goa University*

## **Mentoring Session on Access to Funding and Team Building**

In the afternoon a mentoring session on access to funding and team building was held by Suresh Reddy and R. Venkataraman. In this session the mentors made it clear that one should be very clear about his business idea as well as have proper business plan or else finding investment would be difficult. They also mentioned that one must network as much as possible



*Mentoring session by Suresh Reddy and R. Venkataraman*

with the right people to find the perfect investor. Coming to team building the mentor said that while hiring, experience should be given more importance than degrees. It is important for the team one is working with to understand the vision and mission of the organization.

## **Innovation Management**

Professor Jay Mitra took a special class for the students of Management Studies in the evening. The lecture was on Innovation Management in the Era of Industry 4.0. 100+ students attended the lecture.



## September 22: Panel Discussion IV: Sustainable Tourism



*Speakers of Green Economy and Sustainable Tourism Panel*

The session was chaired by Nick Hixson, Business Auditor and Enabler and the speakers were Tarun Bansal of Arya Niwas, Rajasthan and Amitava Bhattacharya of banglanatak dot com. The session pointed out the importance of using local resources and involving local people for ensuring sustainable tourism.

**Nick Hixson** asked the young entrepreneur to have guiding principles and lay them down. He also warned that most businesses fail in first 5 years. During start of a business it might seem like a jigsaw puzzle but with time one has to build a support system and network. In tourism business one must not forget that the customer is looking for authentic experience. Moreover community



*Nick Hixson, Business Auditor and Enabler*



involvement is important; multidirectional information system has to be there. Without community's cooperation one cannot move too far. Duplicating a model from elsewhere inevitably leads to failure. For sustainable responsible tourism to work out community should come together.

**Tarun Bansal** of Arya Niwas, Rajasthan, pointed out how the world changes rapidly and so businesses need to adapt. Coming from a family of businessmen Tarun did not have it easy, he had to continuously reinvent his work and find innovative ways to run the business. Over the years he has taken to sustainable measures like using locally made product, involving local artists in workshops, using greener alternatives like glass bottle instead of plastic. He mentioned that being eco friendly makes good business case and ensures sustainability.



*Tarun Bansal, Arya Niwa Hospitality*

**Amitava Bhattacharya** spoke about intangible cultural heritage and tourism and how it can be developed. He shared what has been achieved in West Bengal in terms of sustenance. He stressed that although rural community based tourism may not be 'glossy' tourism, but it is a celebration of cultural diversity and pluralism and brings pride to the village and benefits the communities. Amitava gave quite a few examples of Spain, Poland and Bahrain and also referred to recent UNWTO report to substantiate his argument. Finally he ended saying Tourism is celebration of humanity and is based on the fundamentals of inclusion and can contribute to bringing peace to the world.



*Amitava Bhattacharya, banglanatak dot com*

## Panel Discussion V: Entrepreneurship in Goa



*Showcasing of Young Goan Entrepreneurs*

Suman Mukhopadhyaya, Director of banglanatak dot com chaired the inspiring session on entrepreneurial stories from Goa. The entrepreneurs were

- Luke Sequeira, Founder of Numadic
- Clinton Vaz, Founder vRecycle
- Mac Vaz, Managing Director of Madame Rosa Distillery.

The session brought to the forefront the journey of three entrepreneurs from Goa, the challenges they faced in their journey and their learning from it. Suman Mukhopadhyay through his interactive session asked a speaker whether dropping out a must to start a business is considering drop out to be “cool” among the youth today. Suman also brought to the forefront as to how the speakers have influenced or motivated others to take up same kind of work.

By the end of the session the three speakers decided to collaborate with each other. Luke promised to take Mac’s Feni international through his clients and help Clinton by providing data.



*Luke Sequeira, Numadic*

**Luke Sequeira** runs Numadic which is a logistic coordination platform. Luke saw opportunity of cargo business in India and thus shifted his company from Canada to India. Luke shared how his entrepreneurial venture is addressing difficult challenges like stopping corruption. He asked the students to complete their college education even though he is an engineering dropout. Luke said that Goan youth is apprehensive about treading the uncertain path of entrepreneurship but it is high time that they start thinking out of the box and be innovative. His initiative Startup Goa is an online platform connecting the youth looking for jobs and internships to the startups in Goa.

**Clinton Vaz**, aimed at addressing the challenge of waste management. He shared his story about how he started working with waste management in the year 2002 by cleaning the Sal River. His interest in waste management took him to Sweden where he learnt the basic methodology of waste management and applied it in Goa after coming back to India. It turned out to be a huge failure as people lacked awareness about waste segregation. He has worked closely with Panjim's waste management for about 4 years. He has designed low cost “matkas” for composting in individual houses. He felt that decentralized methods work better when it comes to waste management. He shared how he refined his approach by learning from his mistakes. Towards the end of his speech Clinton gave a few advices for the budding entrepreneurs like one should start out small, build your facility and the money will flow later, look at other players as partners and not competitors, focus on a hub and spoke model than just growth, respect your employees.



*Clinton Vaz, vRecycle*

**Mac Vaz** started out by saying that “fire in the belly” is something which he did not have in the initial years as he was a third generation business man. He was always keen on joining the defense services and joining his father's business of Feni making happened by chance. It was nationalism and love for his country that motivated to take Feni to the world and make it popular worldwide. Mac emphasized on the importance discipline in any kind of business one would venture into. Mac shared his innovative promotional strategies.



*Mac Vaz, Madame Rosa Distillery*



## Mentoring Session on Social Entrepreneurship

The mentors were Imteyaz Ali and Amitava Bhattacharya. These two mentors emphasized on the fact that social organizations should not only depend on donation, it should have a business strategy and generate revenue or else the venture will not be sustainable or scalable. Mobilizing the community is another important factor in social entrepreneurship as without the community one cannot go far with such business. The revenue generated through social enterprise may not be huge but adds value to the society and the return is community's progress.



*Mentoring session by Imteyaz Ali and Amitava Bhattacharya*

## Mentoring Session on Pitching It Right

The session was undertaken by Prof. Jay Mitra, Nick Hixson and Suman Mukhopadhyay. Suman made it clear that one's business pitch should be short and crisp, the one pitching should be confident about his idea and the idea should be something which solves a problem if not at a larger scale then at least in the local area. Nick Hixson said that one can never really predict how a pitch is going to go just like an exam paper and regarding this he quoted boxer Mohammed Ali "everybody got a plan till they get a punch in the face". Both Nick and Suman agreed on the fact that market research is important; before one pitches he must do his homework



*Mentoring session by Suman Mukhopadhyay and Nick Hixson*



## Concluding Session



*Concluding session*

Prof. Jay Mitra, Nick Hixson, Su-Hyun Berg, Amitava Bhattacharya, Prof Savita Kerkar, Suman Mukhopadhyay concluded the conference by summarizing the two day conference and their critique on it. The participants shared their feedback on the conference as to how it had benefitted them in numerous ways. Some said that the conference had provided them with motivation and zeal to start something of their own. The audience were encouraged to send queries related to entrepreneurship to [esm.goa2018@gmail.com](mailto:esm.goa2018@gmail.com) and a team of experts will get back with suggestions. Dr. Su said that she has never come across any conference where the audience was so receptive and participatory in nature. Nick Hixson had mentioned that the journey of entrepreneurship is a bumpy one and never is it going to be what you think it ideally should be but it's worthwhile. Prof. J. Mitra mentioned that entrepreneurship is more collective in nature than competitive. At the end of the concluding session a way forward was suggested by the speakers. Prof. Savita Kerkar was happy about the positive response of the conference and that after the two day event her students have been inspired. Suman Mukhopadhyay wanted the case studies of Goan entrepreneurship to be highlighted nationally. He said that the examples show how idea is area specific and grows in that particular ecosystem. The following were discussed as next steps:

- Creating partnership(s) with institution(s) in Goa catering to the needs of the budding/willing entrepreneurs.
- Organizing IEF Annual conference on Dec 16 to 18, 2019 in Goa and prior to that planning one and half days conference including boot camp for the young entrepreneurs in Goa on Dec 13-14, 2019.
- Publishing stories of responsible tourism and showcasing at various platforms at local, National and International level.