

with

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Q The commercialisation and high cost of quality education at all levels is becoming a growing concern in India. The Global Schools Foundation, Singapore has seen exponential global growth, during the last fifteen years. What have been the major drivers of your phenomenal global growth initiatives?

A The Indian educational system which is centuries old has evolved from the ancient Gurukul system to the present model which is entirely student centric learning. We have indeed come a long way and somewhere the entire system has become a bit commercialized with the mushrooming of innumerable private and public schools and universities. The focus of these institutes being more on profitability rather than imparting knowledge, but if you flip this argument the other way around then schools are competing to provide quality education at a reasonable price which is good for the public. Hence there are two sides to this argument. We are witnessing a lot of positive impact on the education system in India and my hope is that this will only get better from now on for our future students.

We are lucky to be a part of this phenomena where we have the opportunity to positively impact students globally. This year we have completed 15 years and more than 50,000 students have been a part of our journey. Our single minded mission is to create a global citizen, ready to take on the responsibilities and challenges of the future. We keep our students at the center of all our activities.

To achieve this we have developed many unique models of learning like the 9GEMS model which is dynamic framework aimed at fostering all-round character development in students through an integrated, holistic approach to learning. We have a very dynamic leadership team that constantly guides and mentors our students and staff to excel.

Q The Global Indian International Schools in Singapore have consistently been ranked amongst one of the best International schools in Singapore, with the lowest attrition rates. What are the main factors attributing to this grand success?

A At Global Indian International School we value our employees and staff. Over the last 15 years we have had more than 100 employees who have been long service employees working between 5 - 15 years with us. Our employees and staff is the backbone of our continued success. They strive to provide a stimulating learning environment to our students. Our extraordinary community is one of the things that makes GIIS such an amazing place for students to learn, grow and develop into future global citizens. Each member of our

community not only contributes to the vibrancy of our community, but in doing so supports a remarkably synergistic effect. The knowledge, skills, and values learned at GIIS stay with students throughout their lives.

Q In India, a wide disconnect between Industry and Academia, remains. What are your views on the same? What are your suggestions to bridge this gap?

A As per the recent statistics, the education sector in India is poised to witness major growth in the years to come as India is predicted to have the world's largest tertiary-age population and second largest graduate talent pipeline globally by the end of 2020.

India's economy is also expected to grow rapidly and industrialization would require a gross incremental workforce of 250 million by 2030. India could potentially emerge as a global supplier of skilled manpower. Therefore it is imperative to upgrade our educational system so that we can encompass the changes and train our young students to be adaptable in the global economy.

I would advise the schools to regularly revise the curriculum to embrace industry changes.

Academia can also look at existing pedagogies and see if the same can be improved and made more practical in approach. So far there has been immense reliance on the classroom methodology and a theory-heavy approach, however, the need is to make the entire approach more practical case studies; regularly calling guest speakers from different industries and letting students interact with them can prove to be extremely beneficial for everyone.

Based on the workforce requirement we have started Robotics and Coding from Nursery classes onwards we also have STEM labs to make science interesting and provide an experiential learning to our students.

Q GIIS has set up high standard schools across seven countries, including in Malaysia, Japan, India, UAE, Vietnam and Thailand? What are the major challenges of local languages & culture and competitive education institutes you have faced?

A Indian entrepreneurs is by default flexible and adjustable to any new environment. Keeping our core values of GIIS and integration to the local culture and Govt norm has been a standard practice for us. Thus across all our locations from Japan to Abu Dhabi, we have support from the local government and the community alike.

Q Bill Gates, Co-founder, Microsoft Foundation, recently said- the Indian education system was his biggest disappointment about the country, and that "It should be far better". Please comment.

A The comment that Gates made was a reflection of the British system of education mainly the Macaulay Education system. If you consider ancient education system in India, that matches the Finnish education system in today's time which is

world renowned. We are in dialogue with the Finnish education policy makes and they have shown interest in understanding our Indian model of education.

Q In 2005, GIIS had presented a white paper on a proposed CBSE-International (CBSE- i) curriculum to the Indian HRD Ministry. Now, CBSE-i has been executed and is well aligned with the IB (International Baccalaureate) syllabus and meets the expectations of International colleges. How does this model differ from the normal CBSE curriculum available in India?

A Yes we had given suggestions to improve the CBSE-i curriculum but unfortunately the CBSE - i was withdrawn by the board.

Q GIIS's approach to education has gone much beyond the conventional subjects and classroom teaching. How successful have these been?

A We at GIIS constantly believe in keeping pace with the global trends so that our students have the necessary skills and attitude to be the global citizen. We have introduced non traditional format of education like Entrepreneurship, Robotics, Coding & Innovation bootcamps and participating in workshops like these help in shaping the entrepreneurial mind-set among the participants.

The educational approach at GIIS is thus very unique. Rather than structuring the learning around a strict curriculum, our educators focus on trying to create learning experiences that prepare students to be happy, balanced, productive, and innovative citizens of tomorrow. We also teach them soft skills like - leadership, personality development etc. ■



As Interviewed by:
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