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Millennial sensei

The Globsyn group has built its core expertise in developing youth for today's world

The Globsyn group is a smart organisation stabilised by an IT industry infrastructure backbone. Its promoter Bikram Dasgupta, a quintessential marketing guy, has a flair for working the information industry beat and staying alongside its success stories. Dasgupta has been a disrupter in the education system. Most teachers in mainstream academia complain that the best and brightest drop away from mainstream academics and are attracted by the information industry glamour of high pay, world travel and now they also have the get-rich-quick allure of start-ups.

Dasgupta's Globsyn business schools and Globsyn skill development are centred around the mission of taking geeks and earnest young men and making them job ready by skilling them in areas that the academic world is completely bereft of. Dasgupta has married his sales skills to a modest capital base, to build a behemoth in the virtual education world. "Our group has been able to keep adding value through education, skills development, technology and infrastructure," says Dasgupta. Today, 30 per cent of the group's revenue comes from its B-School, 35 per cent from skill development and the rest form the infotech and real-estate.

One of the pioneers of the IT revolution in India, Dasgupta's CV is impressive. He had studied in Harvard Business School after a stint in IIT Kharagpur. Then he joined IT major HCL's marketing team in 1979 and became country manager, market development, by 1984. The IT industry was then driven by large hardware sales; with the software dreams yet to take off. Driven by the industry's vast potential and the slowness of HCL, he quit with four colleagues to set up Pertech Computers Limited, better known as PCL in 1989, with a capital of ₹8



PHOTOS: SAJAL ROSE

*Dasgupta:
pioneer in IT
revolution*

lakh – to make or assemble computer systems at the initial stages of the personal computer boom in India. He also began the first steps in IT integration solutions.

"I was then 39 and did not have any money; so, I sold my wife's jewellery to put up my stake in the company," recalls Dasgupta. Sales were driving PCL's fortunes but, given that only large private organisations and the government were buying branded PCs, foreign exchange shocks were common, margins were thin and payments were slow. Dasgupta's efforts to build up a significant share in the organised PC market in India paid off, when he met Michael Dell, the founder of

Dell Computer in 1991, and bagged a \$50 million contract to make motherboards for Dell in exchange for the right to market Dell PCs in India. "It was one of the biggest contracts in the IT business in India and received huge attention from the media and government," Dasgupta recalls.

Initially, Dasgupta wanted to go it alone. But, then, he was invited to deliver a lecture at Bengal Gateway 95, organised by the Left Front government in Bengal, where chief minister Jyoti Basu offered him space in the proposed IT park, if he would set up a software company. "I told the government that I would build an entire building. And that was Infinity Building – the first IT Park in the country – which was completed in 1996 at Salt Lake, in tandem with Webel," says Dasgupta. It remains a landmark in Kolkata Sector V IT zone. Dasgupta also built other buildings, totalling about 1 million sq ft, which yield rents at market rates. Though Dasgupta is not comfortable discussing his real estate, its income is the stable bedrock for the other Globsyn enterprises.

Dasgupta's PCL saga ended in 1997, after which he set up his software engineer's finishing school called Techno Campus in Salt Lake Sector V in Calcutta. Subsequently, Globsyn Business School came into being in 2002, focussed on the knowledge economy. Today, the group encompasses three verticals – Globsyn Business School (GBS), Globsyn Skill Development (GSD) and Globsyn Infotech – and is valued at ₹800 crore, claims chairman Dasgupta. His 36-year-old twins, Rahul and Romit, both joint managing directors, are now taking the projects forward, under the guidance of their still aggressive father. Rahul, an alumnus of Durham Business School, UK, and a participant in senior management programmes from IIM-A and Wharton Business School, is managing director, Globsyn Skills and spearheads the marketing and business for the group's education business, while Romit, an MBA from Imperial College London, is managing director, Globsyn Infotech.

GBS had a modest beginning in 2002, with 54 students. Today, 2,500 odd alumni of the school have turned into business managers or entrepreneurs across the globe. And, it remains one of the reputed B-Schools of eastern India. While PGDM is its flagship course, the other courses it offers include PGPM (International Business), PGPM (Human Resources) and Executive PGDM built on innovation, research and technology, coupled with unique initiatives in the forms of mid-career knowledge connect and corporate connect. GBS has moved beyond the traditional forms of management knowledge dissemination to research-based delivery framework. "We create industry-ready leaders and managers," says Dasgupta.

"Dasgupta is a brilliant marketing person," recalls Harish Mehta, chairman, Onward Technologies, and also co-founder, NASSCOM. "In PCL, he had brought about a revolution in the marketing of IT products. His company would spend huge amounts on advertising its PC in national newspapers – such that markets had not witnessed then. My earlier company Onward-Novell used to supply networking software called Netware to PCL in the mid-1990s." However, Mehta has not been in touch with Dasgupta for over a decade and, so, couldn't comment on Globsyn.

Practice-based learning

Last year, GBS partnered the US-based ManpowerGroup, world leader in staffing and workforce solutions for a postgraduate programme in management in Human Resources. The collaboration will offer 20 aspiring student managers a two-year course, with an equal mix of academic knowledge and intensive practice-based learning in a live workspace environment, especially in the knowledge economy, which is based on competition for human resources. With this programme, GBS will reassess the frameworks of HR management currently taught in institution and merge them with development of individual skills and techniques to prepare young management professionals who can contribute to an



Rahul: creating skills ecosystem

organisation from day one.

"This innovation follows a number of unique initiatives that make GBS a leader in preparing managers ready for the corporate world of tomorrow. Through this partnership, our students will be exposed to global best practises applied by qualified practitioners," says Rahul. "Our role in the programme features practical application, underlying rationale and current issue of human resources, provide a foundation for good management skills over their career," adds Manpower Group director Vishnu Dev.

GBS set up a new campus last year at Amtala, close to IIM-C, at an investment of ₹35 crore. The new campus, sprawling across eight acres, has residential facilities for students, dedicated executive wings, sports and recreational facilities, teachers' residential block, along with conference and commercial facilities. "We wanted to create the environment for the academics in one ecosystem. This is how the B-school expands," Dasgupta says. "Initially, there was some issue about moving students from Salt Lake to Amtala, but things got sorted out when they saw the campus." The AICTE-approved GBS is now rated A++ by Crisil. Dasgupta claims all his businesses are profitable. The

EBIDTA margin is 15 per cent.

GBS' students look forward to placements in well-known Indian and multinational companies. Placements in 2014-15 have been encouraging, with a total of 141 offers made on campus by top recruiters like GlaxoSmithKline, PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG, Vodafone, HCL, Tata Teleservices and Berger Paints.

"Given the increasing interest in management education, some of the private management schools are providing good quality management education, with updated curriculum and excellent infrastructure," says Saibal Chattopadhyay, director, IIM-C.

"Bikram Dasgupta is a successful entrepreneur. The Globsyn brand is well known and growing. Its USP is multiple activities including the skill development with NSDC," says Ambarish Dasgupta, partner and head of management consulting, KPMG India.

Keeping its tradition of innovative approach, GBS has launched GBS Direct, India's first online admission system in May 2015. With the GBS platform in place, a student can hope to be informed, assessed and selected for a management course from the comfort of his/her home after the Aptitude Test and a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). "Globsyn has achieved a unique position as a corporate B-School," says Subir Sen, dean, GBS. "With the introduction of GBS Direct online admission system, we have achieved another first. This will be an immense convenience for youngsters at a critical stage in their life, who are confused about their choices and are often looking at various options at the same time."

The group formed Globsyn Skills Development (GSD) in 2012 – in a joint venture with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), with an ambitious mission of grooming 1 million youth in the next 10 years. This venture is structured as a for-profit enterprise. Since 2012, it has expanded its footprint across the country. GSD today works with the Central government, various state governments, educational organisations and private sector companies and has trained over 75,000 youth

across several sectors comprising banking, insurance, telecom, retail, security, and FMCG, among others. It has 490 centres in 21 states.

Partner ecosystem

India today is at the threshold of a demographic transition with the country slated to have more than 65 per cent of its populace in the working age bracket by 2025. In line with the government of India's vision of Skill India and deep commitment to the development of skilled resources in the country, GSD is working closely with the Central and various state governments, to help implement their skill development initiatives. NSDC has nine JV partners for the training in the country. "We are amongst the top partners and the government has plans to train 300 million youth by 2022," says Rahul. He has been the architect of GSD's unique partner ecosystem framework and plans to have 2,000 centres in two years. As a top training partner of NSDC, GSD's training includes National Urban Livelihood Mission, National Digital Literacy Mission Scheme and various states' employment missions.

"The course not only trains in the basic banking practice, it also guides to interact with the customers in rural areas," says Deep Maity, who attended a two month BCBF training (Business Correspondence Business Facilitators – a financial inclusion course of the government) under GSD at Haldia and is now working in HDFC Bank. "I got the job six months after completing my training."

"India has 600 million people below 40 years of age," says Ujjal Biswas, minister for technical education & training, West Bengal. "In West Bengal itself, the tally is 63.7 million. I believe that, with the right amount of training in partnerships with companies like GlobSyn Skills, eastern India can easily be the Skill Capital of India."

GlobSyn has pioneered changes in the education and skill development ecosystem for growing the IT industry. Global Finishing School (a Global Skills SBU) is now working for some of the best domestic and



Students at the campus: ready for industry

international companies in India like Cognizant Technology Solutions, Wipro, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, TCS are among others. GSD also works with the police department, insurance companies, hospitals, private hotels, etc, and provide them training in various domains based on Knowledge Finishing School framework. It has a pool of 500 empanelled faculty to provide training with development team. Recently, the company has sent its 50 Sector Skill Council (SSC) certified trainers to provide skill training to students in Bangladesh colleges. In Bangladesh, GSD is partnering with Ernst & Young, which has a contract with the World Bank and the Bangladesh Computer Council to impart ITes Foundation Skill training and Top-up IT training to undergraduate students.

"We are happy to have GSD as talent partner for our Bangladesh project," says Anurag Malik, partner, E&Y, commenting on the successful training programme. "We look forward to working with the organisation in the coming months too, to provide us with a large number of SSC certified for our project in India and Bangladesh."

GlobSyn initiated another innovative concept in 2014 by launching

GlobSynEduSkills – a merger of relevant and practical education with qualitatively good skills, interwoven with technology to make the youth of the country industry-ready. "We at GlobSyn believe that educated people must be skilled and people with skills need to be educated to be relevant to the industry," says Dasgupta.

GlobSyn Infotech has expertise in software product and services for treasury management and payment solutions, technology services and technical support for critical product and applications for banking, insurance, mobile devices, retail, communication, etc. The company has strong focus in the areas of banking and financial services, with its global customers spread through the US, the Far East and the Indian sub-continent. It has full-fledged development centres in the US and India. GlobSyn Infotech is a partner of D+H (erstwhile Fundtech) and offers its swift interfaces in the Indian market. The product is a generic, automated, real-time notification engine. "There are more than 15 private and public sector banks are our customers in India," says Romit. Yes bank, Union Bank, Bank of India, Vijaya Bank, etc, are amongst the coveted customers of the company.

GlobSyn focusses on meeting the needs of dynamic and rapidly changing business environment aligned with technology. The company is now looking for a strategic tie-up or acquisition overseas in the domain of analytic, bigdata and digital marketing. "We think these areas have enormous potential for growth," Romit clarifies. "We are looking at several companies primarily in the US where the market is huge. But we cannot give any timeframe now".

Dasgupta has shown himself to be in step, or perhaps, a step ahead of his times and being well-positioned to be at the forward edge of the national thrust for service industry and IT related training. Now, if his sons can show the same prescience, then GlobSyn is well on its way to become global.

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