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INTERVIEW

'Our aim, essentially, is to become intel inside'

Founded in 1996, iDiscoveri is now among the leading enterprises in the spaces of school education, enterprise leadership development and outdoor education. Anustup Nayak, partner, iDiscoveri, shares with Vikram Chaudhary of the Financial Express about how the education company continues to innovate on its cutting-edge curriculum and teaching methods and is poised for significant scale up across India and other countries. Excerpts:

Over the last decade, we have started looking inwards to elevate our school education standards ...

Yes, this is actually the fruit of liberalisation. And as far as education is concerned, I would call it the rise of parental activism. There is a lot of parental involvement in their children's education now and part of the reason is that parents themselves are more informed. Moreover, with the rise of the middle-class, there is a lot of disposable income parents have, which they invest into newer forms of education for their children. Even until the 1990s, they were happy with the system that existed, at least as far as primary and middle education was concerned.

So, in this space, where does iDiscoveri fit in?

In 1996, iDiscoveri started off as an idea about utilising education to awaken our society, our schools, our workplaces and, overall, our lives. We would like to call ourselves a social enterprise with a mission to renew education in India. From that time until now, we have become a growing collective of individuals who combine a deep personal interest in education and solid expertise in psychology, curriculum design, teaching methods, organisational leadership and outdoor education. Many of these individuals are alumni of leading institutions such as Harvard, Cambridge, IIM, MIT and XLRI. Our management team has played leadership roles in corporate workplaces such as Procter & Gamble, Boston Consulting Group and Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Which are the areas of education you operate in?

We have three domains of work: schools, enterprise and outdoors. When it comes to school education, we partner with schools across the country to raise the bar of how children learn and how teachers teach, through

XSEED, which is a comprehensive platform for student curriculum, assessment, teacher education, instructional leadership, etc. We also work on custom education projects with governments and private foundations. As far as enterprise leadership is concerned, we work with leading corporations to elevate the quality of their leadership and impact their business results, through Crucible, which is a sustained intervention of training, executive coaching and action projects. We also run the iSynergy programme for building effective teams. For outdoor education, we work with children aged 8-17 to instil confidence for life, through Yourekal, which is an adventure-based summer programme that combines experiential learning in the outdoors with relevant life skills.



These are the resources or the solutions that you provide, what about methodology?

We don't just drop our material and let them be. Every quarter we go to a school or whoever takes our solutions, we assess them—and not just the children but teachers as well—give a feedback, prepare an audit report for the management and figure out areas where there has been improvement and where it is needed.

So, say, I run a school, after how long can I see positive results?

That depends, sometimes you will be able to see results even in few weeks! And as we partner with you over a period of, say, 2-3 years, you will see a complete change in your school's overall quality. Our model, essentially, is to become intel inside—putting in a high quality processor in your existing desktop.

How many schools are you with ...

We are present in 700 schools across the country and are proud to say that as many as 2,50,000 children are today 'learning' in novel ways.