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
# FORCENETEZINE


Magazine of the military Veterans in the corporate


JULY 2020 - Volume II Issue 7



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**During past 3 months of Pandemic, 140 officers signed up with Hum Fauji - which is about 2 officers average per working day, when others in the industry faced huge client exodus!!**

'**FREEDOM TO BE**', first of its kind grand business summit for armed forces officers was streamed LIVE on Facebook on June 28th. Summit attracted huge interest with **delightful collaboration** with our Star Speakers from industry and was well received by the officers and their families.



**Col Sanjeev Govila**  
Summit Curator and Host

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HFI Welfare Foundation\*\*, is continuing its own small bit to contribute to the welfare of jawans and other causes handpicked by our officers for upliftment of the society at large. We aim to take it forward more strongly using our leadership position in the industry to contribute consistently for the armed forces community.

\*\* Registration amount received for summit has gone to HFI Welfare Foundation.

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# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

Half of this year, is behind us now.

We can look at it both ways. Firstly, we have been able to successfully meet all the challenges thrown at so far by the Covid situation, and the results are encouraging. It motivates us to be better prepared for what more challenges it can throw at us, and then successfully we will be able to see off this particularly difficult year. We can look at the silver lining in the cloud, and hope for a bright light at the end of the tunnel. Secondly, we need to sit and evaluate how gainfully we utilised the past six months that have gone by. Did we add value to our lives, may be at professional and/or at personal levels. Where have we been lacking, and how do we plan to make up for, or improve upon what we have achieved so far. Balance six months can pass off quickly in a period of inactivity, or can be long enough to gain something out of it. That choice is what we need to conscientiously and judiciously make at this juncture.

This situation has also brought in, and highlighted the need for staying and working together, and exploit the benefits of collaboration. Humans are intensely social creatures. We all need company and social contact. But for many of us, being at home for long periods with a small group of people – even those we love best – can become frustrating. However, at these times which preclude the scope of physical interactions to collaborate, we need to fully exploit the potential of the virtual world and maintain contact. Fortunately, we have now not only been able to realise the true potential of this virtual world, but also started exploiting it to the best possible means. Organisations have started realising that many of them can do without a large part of their office infrastructure, and have started planning for 'supervising hubs'. This will also bring in a lot of changes in the working lifestyle of the professionals, and impact a lot of industries. Tough situations bring in changes for good, and all those who adapt fast are the ones who are going to be the winners in the long run.

Collaboration in any organisation takes into account a lot of factors. When individuals work together openly, processes and goals become more aligned, leading the group towards a higher success rate of achieving a common goal. With increasing competition in the market, it's become increasingly important to encourage collaboration in the workplace. Collaboration spurs creativity, improves productivity, and increases employee satisfaction. With the right mindset and practices, collaboration can be a unique differentiator for any organisation. That is what, we as leaders should be aiming and striving for.

So, let us resolve today to collaborate. Remember, 'together, we win'.

Until next time, cheers to Forces Network - the Network that Works!!!

Regards,  
Lt Col Ranvir Singh

# Stars of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

**BY BIDISHA PANDEY**

**Lt Col Dinesh Tiagi** was commissioned in to 320 Medium Regiment in 1988. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and has also been an instructor at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. For his exemplary service, he has also been awarded the Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card. On completing 20 years of service in the Indian Army, Lt Col Tiagi pursued the Pre-Release Management course at IIM Indore with a specialization in Finance, and then began his journey with Kotak. At present, Lt Col Tiagi is Senior Vice President (Treasury Operations) at the Kotak Mahindra Bank.



## Life in the Army

Lt Col Dinesh Tiagi recalls, joining the Indian Army was not really the aim during childhood, but proximity to Cantonment area definitely kindled his interest and increased his motivation. He joined the Indian Army in 1988 as an Artillery officer, and was in fact, the first commissioned officer of his Regiment, the 320 Medium Regiment. Major part of his tenure was spent while posted in North East and J&K in CI Ops/LC. He also had an instructional tenure at the Indian Military Academy. During Op Parakram he was with a Light Regiment and the Regiment got Army Commander Citation for outstanding contribution during Op Parakram. Post Staff Course at Wellington he was posted in Delhi at important 'think-tank' directorates such as Perspective Planning and later with MI Directorate. He was also awarded the Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card during this tenure.

## Switching to the Security Domain

Lt Col Tiagi did not want to limit his career to administration and security and had an inclination towards Finance. Therefore, he utilized the six-month learning period at IIM Indore to understand the Finance industry, the terminologies and the products. On completion of the course, he joined Kotak Life Insurance and got involved with a project for enhancing productivity of Sales Force, later he was assigned business role in NCR region where he turned around branches that were low on productivity.

## Career Progression

Interestingly, Lt Col Tiagi, after working for approximately two years in Kotak, decided to join his brother in 2010 for setting up of a share market brokerage startup – VPS Share Company. Here they decided to disrupt the Brokerage Industry and introduced ‘Discount Broking’, a concept unheard of in India. During that phase only four firms offered such services in India, namely, Zerodha, RKS, VPS and Smart Trade. However, the lean period in the share market sector continued and ultimately, Lt Col Tiagi decided to move back into the corporate domain.

He contacted Kotak again, and joined the Kotak Mahindra Bank in 2014 to head Currency Desk at Treasury Operations. In 2015, Kotak Mahindra acquired ING Vysya, loads of opportunities came up, and Lt Col Tiagi was asked to head Forex and Derivative Operations team. After that he was promoted and currently heads Precious Metal Operation and Master Creation Unit at Treasury Operations. He also looks after control unit of Custody Business in his present assignment.

## A Day in the Life of Senior Vice President (Treasury)

The Treasury section is a very niche department in any bank, it is known as the Banker’s Bank, and is responsible for managing liquidity and investment of surplus funds. A typical day comprises of activities such indenting of Bullion depending on demand forecast, booking of trades with borrowers and lenders, settlement and Forex Trades. The risks need to be assessed on a day to day basis and decisions are to be made to authorize the transactions. Regular administration and HR issues keep coming up and need to be resolved. At the end of the day, all accounts need to be reconciled and all settlements and accounting completed before closure.



## Advice to Fellow Officers

Lt Col Tiagi states that the corporate and military are not very different. In the services, we all learn so much about planning and managing resources that these straightaway make you a winner. Add to this soft skills and leadership skills that one imbibes while in service and you become a unique class in corporate environment.



What is required is to be open minded with a passion to learn. One needs to adapt to the corporate culture, the organizations are mostly flat and therefore you need to be approachable. In addition to this, it is recommended that officers who are interested in the Finance sector get themselves acquainted with the terminologies and products in the market. There are a lot of great courses available online to build up on financial knowledge. The financial industry also has two verticals, the sales/business side and operations. One can decide which one of the two suits more and pursue accordingly. Lt Col Tiagi believes, your progress in corporate solely depends on how much value you bring to the table. Focus on value that one can deliver and everything else will follow. If you are competent, you will make it big, sooner or later.



**Bidisha Pandey** is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site [www.sassyweekender.com](http://www.sassyweekender.com)



# ForceNetPreneurs

In this series we plan to showcase a few entrepreneur members of Forces Network who have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as also to learn from them with a view to motivating more amongst our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full time vocation. Finally - we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

**BY BIDISHA PANDEY**

**Lt Col Jogender Singh Lakra** joined 6 Lancers in December 1987, and has held a number of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments. On completing 20 years in service, he attended a Pre-Release Course at Amity Business School. Lt Col Lakra is a co-founder of KSJ Dynamic Security Pvt Ltd. Today, the annual turnover of KSJ Dynamic Security Pvt Ltd is close to 100 crores making him one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the veteran community.



**Bidisha: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Army, and your subsequent Army career.**

**Jogender:** Joining the Army wasn't something I had ever envisaged or planned during my childhood. I was a sports enthusiast and participated in athletics and Kho-Kho at university and National level while in college. I was pursuing Physics (Hons) from Ramjas College, Delhi University when my friends and I decided to appear for the CDS exam, and we cracked it.

In hindsight, it was the best decision ever. I was lucky to undergo diverse experiences in service. I imparted training to over 500 officers and 1500 other ranks as an Instructor in prestigious School of Technical Training. My team helped people get first aid, search for their belongings and their rehabilitation as a part of Operation Sahayata when earthquake had hit Latur District of Maharashtra in 1993. I was fortunate to get exposure to the AFVs technology during the one year Tank Technology Course at IAT Pune. Later, after doing DSSC from Wellington in 2001, I was posted as Brigade Major of an Armoured Brigade wherein I was extensively involved in the planning and formalising of operational and tactical level plans during "Operation Parakram", comprising approximately 4000 personnel, 200 armoured fighting vehicles and over 300 other vehicles.

My efforts in conducting training for 24 officers, 52 JCOs and 520 other ranks to prepare them to act as eyes and ears of the main task force based on the principle of "Recce pull" as the Officer In-charge of Corps Reconnaissance Training School were deeply appreciated.

**Bidisha: What was the vision behind starting your venture, and thereafter expanding it?**

**Jogender:** After serving in the Indian Army for years, I joined the corporate industry for some time which helped me to smoothen my transition from Army to the civil world, and after gaining some experience and skills, specially in manpower management, we decided to start our own venture. We always wanted to be job creators and wanted to train people and employ them, we wanted to do something to give back to the society. Therefore, we started KSJ Dynamic Security Pvt Ltd in 2009 with three verticals - manpower solutions, training and technology. In the initial years, we provided consultancy services with respect to contracts with government agencies. One of our memorable technology consultancy projects was the Safe City Project with the Government of Mizoram at Aizawl.

We specialize in providing manpower and security services on Pan India basis and have been fortunate to have bagged a number of prestigious projects with the premier agencies of the Central Government as well as Private Agencies which include Corporate, Residential Societies, Hospitals, Airport, Schools, PSUs, Malls and Private Agencies Gradually, we increased our scope, and provided manpower solutions at places like IG Stadium, DMRC, Indira Gandhi International Airport, UP 112 Police Building, JMRC, NMRC and other important places.



**Bidisha: What were the challenges you faced in this entrepreneurial journey?**

**Jogender:** Life in the Army is a very disciplined one with set procedures and hierarchy. If one gives an order as a senior, it is assumed that the set target shall be achieved. It is exactly the opposite outside, once you know what is to be done, that is the starting point, you need to follow up and keep putting in effort and motivation to get the end result. Therefore, a change in the mindset and way of working was required. Secondly, financial capital is always a risky area in any entrepreneurial venture, and ours being a

manpower intensive business, it further requires us to be extremely careful. While our payment from certain agencies might get stuck, we must continue to pay the personnel employed with us on a regular basis and look after their well being under all circumstances.

**Bidisha: What made your venture a grand success?**

**Jogender:** Our passion, determination and positive attitude. We knew that an entrepreneurial journey is never easy but we were mentally prepared to tackle the issues and never gave up. Secondly, we worked hard on our professional knowledge regarding compliances in various fields where we deployed our people. We scrutinised the contracts thoroughly and performed as expected. Thirdly, we ensured we deliver what our customer wants in the best possible way. In case of any issue, we resolved it at the earliest. Recently, even when everything got shut down due to lockdown, our personnel were still on duty at DMRC,Civic Centre, UP-112,various Corporate offices and other places. We ensured that the services don't stop and at the same time made our personnel comfortable by arranging proper protective gear and timely food, wherever they were. On 01 Oct 18, we were awarded for our services by Delhi Metro as the Best Facility Management Agency in Delhi Metro, and one of our stations, Mandi House, was adjudged the Best Maintained Station.

**Bidisha : Any regret so far?**

**Jogender:** None. I am lucky to have had complete support of my family and friends throughout this journey. By the grace of God, we have been able to grow at a very good pace till now!

**Bidisha : What are your plans for the future?**

**Jogender:** We would like to continue with the same zeal and positivity in years to come, and deliver services in a professional way in all kinds of environments. We shall build on and plan to grow in the manpower solutions area as the needs are on the rise.



**Bidisha : How hectic is a life of an entrepreneur?**

**Jogender:** As an entrepreneur, I have worked for hours at a stretch without any rest, but it is all worth the effort once you get the satisfaction from what you create. Being your own boss has its own pros and cons. The risk and ownership is high, but so is the reward. Despite all the hardship, I feel completely in control of my life as an entrepreneur as I am able to find out time for my friends and family, as required.

**Bidisha : What advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who would want to take up entrepreneurship?**

**Jogender:** Be prepared to hustle! Taking up entrepreneurship is a difficult decision. One needs to believe in his/her dreams, be positive even after repeated failures, continue to build domain expertise and develop networking skills. Also, try to minimize the risks you take financially, try to avoid hefty loans and start small. Lastly, be passionate about what you do and keep learning. That's the only way to grow.

In manpower solution business, we believe, "Set goals; praise and reprimand behaviours; encourage people, speak the truth, laugh, work, enjoy and encourage the people you work with to do the same as you do "

**Bidisha : Sir, thanks a lot for sparing your time, and sharing your experiences and life lessons with us.**

**Jogender:** Bidisha, the pleasure is always mine. I believe, that it is only through sharing, that we learn more.

*Authored by Bidisha Pandey, based on interaction with Lt Col JS Lakra, online and through e-mails.*



**Bidisha Pandey** is a blogger who believes every individual has a story and a lot can be learned from every story. More stories and interviews by her can be read on her blog site [www.sassyweekender.com](http://www.sassyweekender.com)

# Expatriate Interview

In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

**BY BIDISHA PANDEY**

**Capt Vishal Khandelwal** joined 6 BIHAR in September 1999 and then switched to the corporate sector in 2005. On completing the General Management Programme with a specialisation in Marketing from IIM Lucknow, he was hired by Shoppers Stop for its 'Hypercity' project. Since then, Capt Vishal has worked for many other major retail companies such as The Aditya Birla Group, Marks and Spencer, and Home Centre, both in India and abroad. He is currently based in UAE as the Regional Retail Operations Manager at Home Centre and has approximately 30 stores located in six different countries, operating under him.



**Bidisha: How has your corporate journey been so far?**

**Vishal:** My corporate journey began with Shoppers Stop in 2005. I was a part of the 'HyperCity' founding team and enabled the successful launch of the 1st HyperCity store in Malad, which is India's finest Hypermarket till date. I played a key role in the formulation of the organization's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), manpower planning, recruitment, training and store operations. After a year, I moved to 'Big Bazaar', and helped in modernizing the fresh food section that existed back then. Soon I was hired by the Aditya Birla Group as the Senior Manager Operations for 'More'. I was one of the core team members responsible for successful roll out of the first twenty 'More' supermarkets in India. After spending a considerable amount of time in the Food Retail industry, I decided to move to Fashion Retail and joined Marks & Spencer in 2010 as Regional Head for North & East India, where I worked on revamping the store design to maximize space productivity and the same model was replicated in many other outlets later. Finally, I decided to explore retail career outside of India and moved to Kuwait with the Home Centre as Country Head, Kuwait. Later, I shifted to UAE as the Regional Retail Operations Manager handling multiple territories. Overall, the journey has been extremely enriching and enlightening. I love my work and each day is a new day.

**Bidisha: What are the major challenges you faced in your journey so far and how did you overcome those challenges?**

**Vishal:** I think the first major challenge was to sharpen my financial acumen. I came from an Infantry background and therefore, did not have much knowledge on

financial accounting. Back in those days, learning platforms like Udemy and Upgrad did not exist. Therefore, I took the help of my friends who were experts and learnt gradually. The corporate sector is mainly profit driven and therefore being able to project the financial benefits of every decision you take helps immensely.

The second challenge was working with the youngest workforce. Majority of the people working in the retail industry, in sales, are youngsters in their 20s. Keeping them motivated, understanding their needs and making them comfortable is essential in order to grow as a team. However, I have been in this industry for approximately 15 years now and I can proudly say that I have been able to very well manage both these aspects and taken them in my stride.

**Bidisha: Did you have a vision in mind as to what you would like to do post your career in the Armed Forces?**

**Vishal:** I was a Short Service Commissioned officer and therefore I knew I had to switch to the corporate sector someday. I did not have a specific job or role in mind but I wanted to be in the core business team, and therefore I had picked marketing as the specialisation while doing the General Management Programme at IIM Lucknow. Shoppers Stop hired me for the 'Hypercity' project during campus placements during the course and my journey in the Retail Industry began.

**Bidisha: What were the major highlights of your tenure in the Indian Army?**

**Vishal:** The Indian Army is undoubtedly one of the best organisations to work for. It was my honour to be a part of Op Vijay and Op Parakram. During the last few years of service, I was mainly carrying out duties of Adjutant in the unit, that really shaped me as a strong leader.

**Bidisha: What would be your advice to officers preparing for the transition to the corporate world, especially if they wish to pursue a career in the retail domain?**

**Vishal:** I personally feel that there is a lot of similarity between a career in the Armed Forces and in the Retail sector. Both need extremely strong and confident leaders, capable of handling large workforce at multiple locations. Both require one to be agile and nimble, one should be on his/her toes 24\*7, 365 days of the year. Therefore, Armed Forces officers have the basic qualities needed in the Retail Industry. However, to make a career in retail, one should have some background in marketing, and understanding of customer service and analytics. I would recommend officers interested in retail to read these three books for better understanding and appreciation- Made in America by Sam Walton (Founder of Walmart), Pour Your Heart Into it by Howard Schultz (Chairman Emeritus, Starbucks) and Why We Buy by Paco Underhill. Also, a lot of courses on Retail Management are available online these days, one can go for them. Additionally, retail has aspects like HR, Supply Chain and IT ingrained in it. Therefore, officers having an inclination towards Supply Chain can do globally recognised supply chain certifications by APICS. Similarly, those interested in IT can do certification on Information security.

**Bidisha: What would be your advice to officers who plan to move to a new country post-retirement? What are the major factors one should keep in mind for the same?**

**Vishal:** I would advise officers to start their career in India and learn the craft in whatever industry they choose. Opportunities shall keep coming in for those who are good at what they do. Secondly, one should always practically calculate the cost of living in any country including medical and education expenses and not just get lured by the currency conversion rate. As a thumb rule, I believe, one should be able to save as much as one earns in India, that should be the minimum savings level after all expenditures, only then does the relocation make sense. If one is not able to save that much, it is better and more comfortable to continue in your own country with friends and family around (above recommendation is mostly for Middle East).

*Authored by Bidisha Pandey, based on interaction with Capt Vishal Khandelwal, online and through e-mails.*



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*"The secret is to work less as individuals and more as a team. As a coach, I play not my eleven best, but my best eleven"*

**- Knute Rockne**





# Women Power

Spouses of Defence Officers have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such spouses of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

**BY RANVIR SINGH**

**Ms Vimi Singh**, though a qualified lawyer, decided to make her mark in business as a home stylist and home décor consultant. She has founded 'Navya Everything Beautiful', and 'Navya Living & Design'. Her expertise has been exploited by many prominent persons and celebrities, for their homes, offices and resorts. Apart from this passion, she is also an accomplished rally and off road driver, having won many awards at National level in this field. She also ventured into the business of restaurants, and has co-founded Wabi-Sabi, a platform to promote art and creativity. She is also the brand ambassador of Zoya Jewels, an offshoot of Tanishq from the TATA brand of jewellery. She can be reached at [www.instagram.com/vimiksingh/](http://www.instagram.com/vimiksingh/), and [vimiksingh@yahoo.com](mailto:vimiksingh@yahoo.com)



**Ranvir: Please tell us about yourself and what you do, and how you started.**

**Vimi:** I am an extrovert, totally in love with life and very eager to know more, learn more and do more. I am an Army Officer's daughter married to an Air Force officer, now retired. I graduated from Government College Chandigarh and then went on to do my Law from Punjab University. I however realised pretty early that I was not cut out for the legal profession in spite of my love for the subject and was instead always drawn more towards doing business. I have also been a fitness consultant and columnist with prominent news papers like Indian Express and the Hindustan Times.

I had immense love for beautiful homes and a keen eye for beautiful decor products which laid the foundation of my business as an interior decorator. I opened my first store in Meharchand market at Lodhi Road in 2011 and subsequently went on to have four more, in Chennai, Manali, Goa and part in Hyderabad. In addition we also provide a platform for talented ladies who manufacture beautiful handicraft items to sell them through Navya.

I am also an avid motor sports enthusiast and a rally driver, probably the only woman gypsy offroader. I started with competitive driving three years back and have since made my little place in the motorsports fraternity. I have won many trophies for the best woman driver and have secured podium finish even amongst boys. I am also a

social influencer and work for promotion of brands. Lately I was the brand ambassador for ZOYA JEWELS, an offshoot of Tanishq from the TATA brand of jewellery.



**Ranvir: What is your vision behind starting your businesses?**

**Vimi:** I always wanted to do up beautiful homes and was more drawn to shop for products for decorating homes and spaces, so I decided to open a store where I could share my taste with like minded clients. I have re-modelled many celebrity homes and resorts and that validated my keen eye for knick knacks. A glimpse of my works and collections is available on my Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/navyavimi/](http://www.facebook.com/navyavimi/).

**Ranvir: Did you have this passion even before marriage, or was it something that got ignited after marriage?**

**Vimi:** I was always a restless soul wanting to do and try more and new stuff, so I guess I always had the fire in me. Since I was married young, my time to work came only with the support and encouragement of my father and my husband and I found my wings.

**Ranvir: What challenges have you faced so far?**

**Vimi:** I haven't had a very rough ride by God's grace. I have had a smooth journey so far, but I guess making a place for yourself in a society where you can be lost like a drop in the ocean is a challenge enough.

**Ranvir: And, how did you overcome these challenges, even if very few?**

**Vimi:** As I said earlier, I am an extrovert and people's person, so I found it easy to have friends and connects with clients and thereafter everyone was very forthcoming with help and support.

**Ranvir: Would you like to recount the work you have done for some celebrity, and other renowned personality which has been much appreciated?**

**Vimi:** I have been lucky to have bagged quite a few good interior projects. I have done the home of the actress Tisca Chopra, not once but almost every time she is looking for a fresh look, she calls me to help. I have also worked for Vipul Shah, the Director of

Comedy Circus. I have also been giving small inputs to Maria Goretti, Mini Mathur, and my products from NAVYA have been sourced by many stylists for various TV shows. Apart from that I have done quite a few industrialist's homes and resorts in Corbett and other places in Uttarakhand. My contract terms however forbid me from sharing more personal details.



**Ranvir: What makes you different from other home stylists, and what are the various aspects of decoration you focus on?**

**Vimi:** I am different because I do not impose my tastes on the client. I go with their requirements and their choices, making sure that I give good aesthetic expression to them. My forte is to redecorate and restyle the homes with what ever is there. I do not believe in big budgets. I excel in giving a new look to the same old things by aesthetically placing them and reusing them.

**Ranvir: I have also learnt that you ventured into the business of restaurants too. Tell us something about that experience, and the challenges faced there.**

**Vimi:** I always wanted to have a quaint cafe with a very personalised touch to client requirements. So, I opened a cafe in the posh Meharchand market at Lodhi Road in Delhi, and we had the best crowd visiting, with quite a few celebrities becoming our regular customers. It was also a hub for most journalists to sit there and have their discussions over coffee. I was very privileged to get fantastic reviews by food critics and bloggers, and was well covered in magazines and newspapers. We were unfortunately struck by the sealing drive held in Delhi and then it became difficult to operate under the difficult circumstances. It was a very happy journey. The only challenge I felt was to constantly keep up to the expectations of the customers and never let them down.

**Ranvir: What is Wabi-Sabi, which has been co-founded by you?**

**Vimi:** Wabi-Sabi was my brain child which started as a support for all my creative friends. I wanted to create a platform where their work could be showcased. It is

totally sponsored by my outlets NAVYA, and we have been holding our sessions now at a prominent art gallery in Siri Fort complex.

We have had some very successful gatherings and more and more creative people have become a part of it. It gives me great pride to see this baby grow and flourish. I have a famous photographer Mr Ravi Dhingra and a prominent artist Mrs Ritu Chopra as part of the main team.



**Ranvir: As you said that you indulge in adventure activities too, so please do tell us something about that too.**

**Vimi:** I started as an adventure driver, where I did many challenging drives to the Spiti Valley, Leh, Pangong, Pso Kar, Pso Moriri and higher reaches of Uttarakhand, and then the hunger to do more was growing. I took up serious offroading in 2017 and found my calling and started participating in competitions where I was quickly able to make a mark for myself. Of late, I have taken to autocross and rallying, where I drive a 1600 cc modified rally prepared gypsy. This is my passion and my stress buster too. I drive for a team called the DESERT RAIDERS CLUB. I can say with confidence that I have made a decent place for myself in the motor sports fraternity. I have participated in many big and small events like the Jaipur Rally Cross, The Ultimate Desert Challenge etc, and I plan to drive as a professional, and do more serious rallying in the coming few years.

**Ranvir: What are your future plans?**

**Vimi:** I am a positive person and keep planning for the future, because only when you have dreams and goals, will you be driven to achieve them. So I have plans to make my stores NAVYA a even bigger brand and keep my fire for my motor sports charged.

I have lately been involved in giving a platform to all creative men and women to showcase and retail their products through our store so I plan to make that a bigger programme so that I can be a step in the success ladder of all my talented and creative friends.



**Ranvir: How do you plan to tackle the challenges thrown at you in this COVID-19 situation?**

**Vimi:** Without a doubt, Covid 19 has thrown a lot of us out of gear. Businesses are suffering and so are our all sports activities amongst other things. Now, learning from the situation, we plan to make our store presence more prominent by going online and I will also be using this time to train for my motorsports events coming up next year.

As I have a dream to make the journey of other women entrepreneurs easy, so I am working on how our stores can be of assistance to such talented women. So, maybe this time that we all have got to introspect, re-plan, rework and reconnect with ourselves and our approach to life and work, should be constructively used, and the moment we get out of this pandemic situation we should have solid plans to execute and make a more meaningful life and stronger work system.

**Ranvir: What advice do you have, especially for spouses of defence officers, who desire or aspire to be similarly independent?**

**Vimi:** I sincerely believe that if you have the desire to do something you will find a way to do it. I started doing a lot of things from the very first year of marriage, when my husband was posted in the far flung airbase of Tezpur way back in 1993. I always kept looking for ideas to keep me constructively occupied and always found something or the other to do in every station that we were posted in, till I settled down and took to doing business seriously and making my mark. So, my advice is that don't let place, children, husband's job or any other pressure of the service life kill your dreams. Pursue it with full resolve. I always tell the women that you are an individual answerable for making you life meaningful, and what is meaningful according to them is each one's personal call. So keep dreaming, keep working, and keep achieving. We are lucky that men in uniform are generally very progressive and supportive of their wives, in every way, so make the most of what this service environment has to offer.

*(Based on inputs during interaction with Lt Col Ranvir Singh)*

# Knowledge Bank

## MY JOURNEY TO PMP CERTIFICATION

**BY AJAY PRAKASH SHARMA**

Every year a large number of well trained, disciplined and professional officers from Indian Armed Forces retire from service. Such a highly disciplined and loyal work force with tremendous experience should ideally be a dream work force in the civil world. However, we still find a number of retired officers struggling to get jobs or settling for jobs which do not do justice to their capabilities and skills. In my opinion, most of the officers possess in abundance the skill set required to get a challenging and satisfying job in their second inning but are unable to do so, as they fail to showcase their skills to the prospective employers in the language understood by them. It is here that the certifications help as they communicate to the potential employers the capabilities that the officer possesses in a language which is acknowledged and valued in the corporate world.

Project Management Professional (PMP) certification given by Project Management Institute (PMI) is one of such most sought after certifications in the World and helps an officer showcase his acumen in managing projects. Initially we, as officers, feel that we lack any knowledge of project management and I got a number of calls from officers after I passed PMP exam asking how they could show that they have requisite experience in managing projects which is a requirement while filling the application. I would recommend all officers who are having such doubts to peruse the definition of project as given by PMBOK Guide and you will realize that all of us have knowingly or unknowingly managed a number of projects and this gives us all the experience which is expected by PMI.

For the sake of clarity and better understanding, I will divide my PMP journey and lessons learnt notes into three parts- preparation for the exams, the actual exam experience, and some other important aspects. I will try to include all the aspects which I remember and try to give a comprehensive info for the benefit of all, especially as I am one of the few persons presently who trusted God and had faith that the internet connection would hold as I gave the proctored exam from home at a remote place in the Country.

### **Preparing for the Exam**

I was contemplating appearing for the PMP exam since beginning of the year but did not act on it because of pure lethargy. I finally started giving serious thought to it in the month of March 2020. I spoke to officers in the Forces Network, and they helped me clear the cobwebs in my mind and gave me clarity of purpose. I started my preparation on 02 Apr 20. This was the day Col Sandesh started his first online course and I started attending it. Thanks to the lock down, I could dedicate more than usual

time to the studies. Here I would like to make a point that the 35 hours of training are very important to understand the PMI way of thinking. So, this should not just be taken to satisfy the PMI requirement but also to actually enhance your knowledge and understanding. I was fortunate to have Col Sandesh as an instructor who knew how to make faujis understand a not so easy concept by giving normal, day to day work examples and conducting very interesting and interactive sessions. So, be careful while choosing your trainer and make full use of this training. It will be good if this trainer guides you while filling your application also and keeping you motivated throughout the preparation period the way my trainer did.

As has been pointed out earlier also, reading PMBOK Guide first time can appear to be quite a daunting task, as it is a very boring and monotonous book. Its thickness and format also does not inspire much confidence or interest. What I did was that I read each chapter as it was covered by Col Sandesh on a daily basis. This not only helped me understand the PMBOK Guide and the language better but also helped me clarify the doubts next day. So, in about 14 days, I had a good clarity of PMBOK Guide which is very essential to pass the exam as it is not possible to remember all the details otherwise. After completing the first read of PMBOK Guide, I read Rita Mulcahy to better understand the concepts. It is a wonderful book and a must read for any PMP aspirant. After this I again read PMBOK Guide and this time could easily understand the language and the logic in it. I read Rita Mulcahy once again to solidify the knowledge which I had gained till now. I read another book call 'Read and Pass PMP Notes' by an Indian author called Maneesh Vaidya. This is a book written in an easily understandable language with colorful illustrations (good change from the monotony of PMBOK Guide and Rita). But this is a 'could read' and not a 'must read'.

After this I started attempting the questions given in Rita. It is very important to not only understand the reasons as to why you got certain question wrong but also why you got the right ones right. It helps you to identify your knowledge gaps and concentrate on weak areas rather going through the complete material again and again which becomes very boring. There is a plethora of apps available for getting questions on mobile also. Just download any one of them with highest rating and you could solve questions whenever you have some time available. For mock tests, I tried a few questions from Rita Mulcahy fast track question bank which I got from few of my friends. But I found the mock tests from PM Prepcast really good as the type of questions as well as their explanations were really good. It costs around Rs 9000 and has a validity of 3 months. I also attempted certain free tests like the tests available from Oliver Lehmann. Further, once your application is approved and you make the payment, you get access to a mock test from PMI also with 200 original questions from past PMP exams which actually helps you measure your preparation level.

Another thing which I did after I had a fair bit of confidence about the subject was that I started looking into the ITTOs on a regular basis and I specially concentrated on unique aspects of the ITTOs. For example, I would look into why flowchart is a specific tool for quality management processes and what information can it provide, or why

an approved change request from PICC can go to three specific processes. This really helped me build up my knowledge base. I would like to clarify that I did not attempt rote learning of any of the 49 ITTOs which I found to be impossible for me. Understanding the logic for why something is where it is, is really helpful in attempting questions also.

A large number of resources are available on YouTube also which can teach you specifically about some important processes/tools. So, any doubt can be cleared through these. I specifically liked this gentleman from iZenBridge.

### **Attempting the Online Proctored Exam**

I was apprehensive about appearing for the online proctored exam from home because of two reasons. Firstly, there is a requirement of a stable internet connection, and secondly, PMI does not allow you to keep any writing material with you during the exam, hence, brain dump (ie. writing down certain formulas/processes prior to beginning of the exam on the provided scratch pad), making network diagrams, or mathematical sums on a piece of paper would not be possible.

First issue I resolved by relentlessly pursuing my internet provider to ensure the internet stability which culminated with him changing the router. All said and done, I basically prayed for uninterrupted internet connection for four hours and luckily my prayers were heard.

As far as second issue was concerned, I got in touch with a few persons who had attempted the proctored exam before me. They told me that they hardly got any questions wherein scratch pad was required. There were no complex mathematical or network analysis questions. This gave me confidence to go for proctored exam, and, as it turned out, I got only one network analysis question which could be solved using online white board and no question wherein I needed to use the online calculator.

The online proctoring process is very simple. A few photographs of self, passport and the surroundings of your working space are required prior to the exam. Then the proctor will start monitoring you and will check the surroundings through web cam. In my case she wanted me to plug off the TV which she could see in the background and show her the disconnected plug which I did. Apart from this I did not interact with her as I was monitored by her throughout the exam through the web cam except for once when I got the message to not to cover my mouth with my hand (a general habit for me while thinking).

In this type of exam, an optional 10 minutes' break is given after first 90 questions. You are required to submit these 90 questions (irrespective of whether you take the break or not) and you cannot go back to these 90 questions for review. In my case I completed the first 90 questions in 110 minutes and balance 110 in 130 minutes. Since I was more careful in first 90 questions, I had kept a lot of them flagged for later



review and wasted a lot of time in this. In the balance 110 questions, I did not flag any questions for review as I knew I will not have any time left for them. Now a lesson in this- I used to finish the mock tests in less than 3hr 30mins on a regular basis but I could hardly finish the actual exam in time (I just finished 10 secs before the scheduled time). This is because in actual exam I was more conscious of the questions and reviewed even simple questions before moving on. One should keep this aspect in mind while preparing.

### **Some Important Aspects**

Summarizing certain important aspects which may be beneficial to the reader:-

- A dedicated effort of 3-4 hours per day for 3 months should be sufficient for preparation.
- I specifically paid Rs10,482 for PMI membership and Rs37,573 after my application was approved. All this was in dollars as I did not find any option to pay in Rs. Apart from this, I spent Rs 9000 on the PM Prepcast for the mock tests.
- PMI prohibits internet connection through mobile hotspot while attempting the exam, so keep that in mind while taking a decision.
- About 15 questions will be from Agile. No need to take this aspect very seriously but be clear on considerations for Agile as given in PMBOK Guide (I don't think there is any requirement of reading the Agile supplement provided- I did not) Just be clear on the various requirements of Agile and that should be OK (eg. Unlike waterfall, agile welcomes changes throughout).
- Be very clear on change management aspects. 30-35% questions were on this.
- Don't fret too much on mathematical sums. The questions involving maths were too simple.
- If you want to practice on online white board, you can do so on MS paint or Powerpoint. Otherwise, the actual tool is available on MBA.com also for practice.
- While giving online proctored exam, no other person is allowed even to enter the room, so plan accordingly.
- I found the difficulty level of questions in actual exam to be little higher than the mock tests I attempted.
- Generally questions will have two easily discardable solutions and two closely contending ones. The test is to select the correct one out of these two.

## Concluding Thoughts

Each individual has his or her own style of learning and may take more or less time based on the availability of free time. My recommendation will be to start at the earliest and conclude by attempting and passing the exam as any break or diversion will mean more time being spent to catch up as these terminologies and concepts are not the ones we use in our normal functioning and being out of touch for a longish duration is not advisable. As you would already be aware, PMP exam will go a major overhaul and new format will be applicable from 02 Jan 21. It's better to finish it off before that. Also, if you can ensure a stable internet connection, taking exam from home is way too comfortable than going to the center, especially for people like me who have to travel to a different city to appear for the exam.

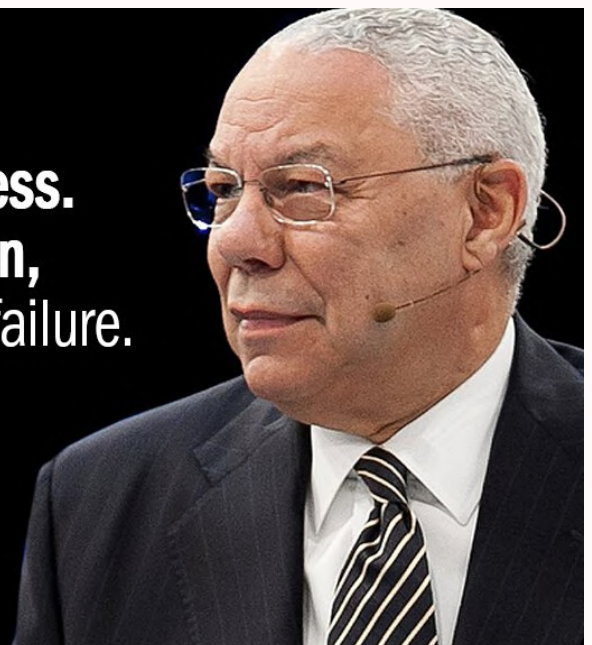
ALL THE BEST



***Col Ajay Prakash Sharma** is a 1999 commissioned officer serving in AOC. An alumnus of National Defence Academy and Defence Services Staff College, the officer has served in a variety of Staff and unit appointments. The officer has also served as a Staff Officer in MONUSCO responsible for logistics of a Brigade sized force. The officer is presently commanding a unit in Eastern part of the country.*

**There are no secrets to success.  
It is the result of preparation,  
hard work, and learning from failure.**

*– Colin Powell*



# Book Review

## Fluid - The Approach Applied by Geniuses Over Centuries: by Ashish Jaiswal

BY SURESH CHANDRA

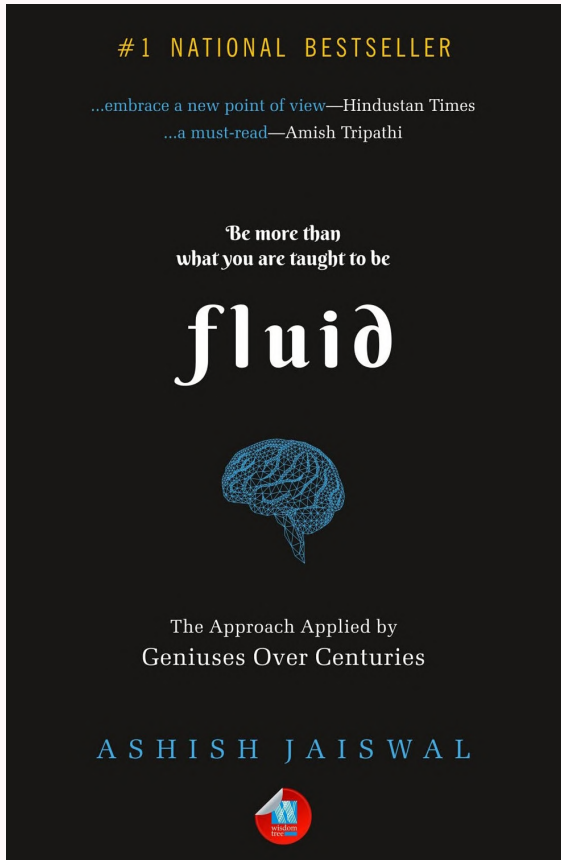
**About the Author:** Ashish holds a doctorate and a Master's in the field of Education from the University of Oxford and is currently a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (OxCHEPS). OxCHEPS is an Oxford based independent think tank that works on improving understanding of higher education. Ashish has spoken and taught all around the world on the shift needed. He advises schools, colleges, universities around the world on innovative curriculum and pedagogy. He writes for several publications, including The Guardian, India Today and The Hindu and has been covered by international media including BBC - Oxford, CKLN - Toronto, 33voices, USA, Gulf Today, UAE, NDTV, The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Asian Age and The Indian Express.

### The Review

The grim picture of the Indian education system is evident when results of the board exams are declared. On one side we have sky-high marks being scored by students and on the other side we have some suicides by failing students. Last year a lady's post caught the attention on social media when she proudly declared that her son had scored 60% marks in the CBSE class 10th examination. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) of 2018 indicates that 75% class 3 students in government school across the nation cannot read and perform basic calculations. He speaks about how the Indian education system is creating rote learners, unemployable and unskilled graduates.

The shiny-black-minimalistic cover of the book forces you to pick it up from the bookshelf and one's eyes are drawn straight to short messages on the book cover - ... a must read - Amish Tripathi. The author is of the view that "most of our current practices of education are dangerously outdated and we need to bring a paradigm shift in the way we are preparing ourselves for the coming future". This is the key idea of the book and the Ashish assimilates lessons from the approach applied by geniuses throughout history and offers a fresh model of learning and thinking. Francis Bacon said, "**Some books should be tasted, some devoured, but only a few should be chewed and digested thoroughly**".

**Fluid** by Ashish Jaiswal is one such book - to be chewed and digested thoroughly. The book is enlightening and insightful.



**Author:** Ashish Jaiswal

**Publisher:** Wisdom Tree  
October 15th 2018

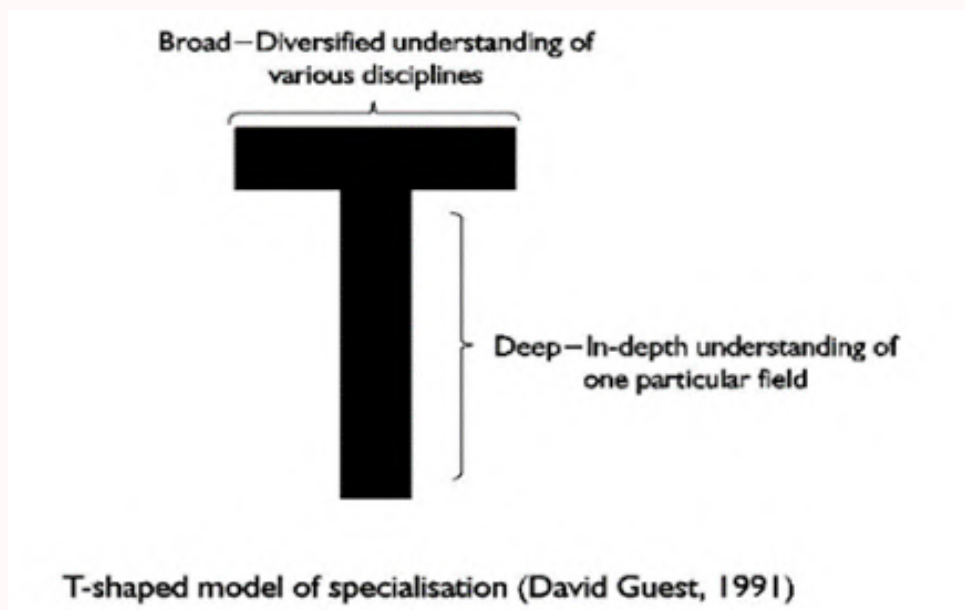
**ISBN:** ISBN-10: 8183285279  
ISBN-13: 978-8183285278

**Goodreads Score:** 4.44 / 5.00 from 542 ratings. 96% of people liked it.

**Author's Profile:** @ashishjaiswaled  
<http://ashishjaiswal.com/about/>

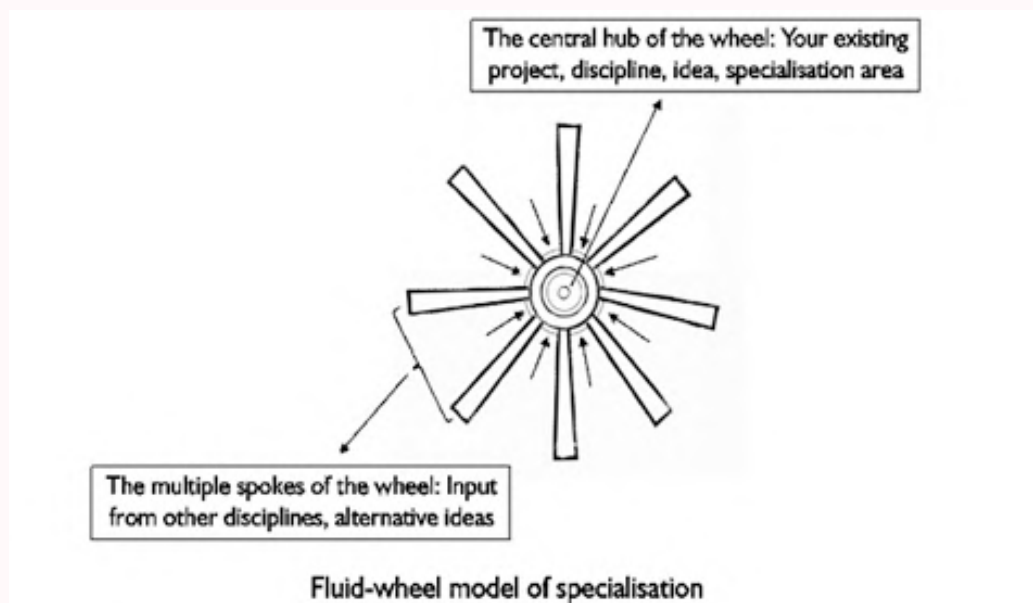


The book commences with a couple of anecdotes to highlight our discipline-centric approach to education. It explains the anti-fluidity of the current system of education. It says that we are driven by island-centric education - that is - we converge all our energy and intelligence to move in one direction only. Gaining expertise in a particular field is the main goal of our education. We are made to believe that being a "Jack of all Trades" is no good and in this age of specialisation it holds no value. This, the author calls, is the "T Shaped" model of specialisation where an individual should keep on acquiring in-depth knowledge in one particular discipline—represented by the long arm of the 'T'.



Looking back into history, Ashish cites the examples of Charles Darwin, Aristotle, Leonardo Da Vinci, Goethe, Amartya Sen, CV Raman, Peter Geddes, Frank Lloyd Wright, Edwin Land, Steve Jobs, etc who did not follow a set path and explored the universe and exposed themselves to diverse fields of education. Some of these celebrities were world-famous artists as well as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) experts. Living in our own bubble we feel that Non-STEM subjects have little value. But if we look in the past, our myths are dispelled since most well-known architects, painters, mathematicians were absolutely amazing writers, painters, and poets too. This is the reality that challenges our rigid (non-fluid) approach to education. Our education system must be **"fluid"** meaning **"be more than what you are taught to be"**.

Ashish writes that the integrative nature of the final learning of a specialist is exactly like the charkha woven yarn, which encompasses all material into it. Hence, he termed his model as the **"fluid-wheel"**. Each specialist of a discipline should draw his/her own fluid-wheel. The central hub of the fluid-wheel can be imagined as an individual's core specialisation area, whereas the spokes can represent all the various disciplines from which an individual can draw. The author goes on to give examples/samples of the fluid-wheel pertaining to some specialisations like "smart-city specialist", "cardiologist" etc.



The author does not believe in the theory of "right-brain" and "left-brain" - wherein one type is suited for STEM and the other type for non-STEM subjects. He quotes Neil deGrasse Tyson, the American astrophysicist who says that "these fake divisions between science and art is taking our civilization away from true learning".

An important finding of the author is that India should get credit for Da Vinci's Vitruvian man. The undiscovered Hans Purush from Vishnudharmottaram Puranam mentioned by Rishi Markendeya was one of the perfect men discussed in the Purana. In fact, the author wants to stress the point that human knowledge is circulatory. The world has been benefited not by one single country or race but by the combined

intelligence of all spread over the thousands of years. For example, the architectures around the world are the best example of combined intelligence and cultures of humanity. The best example mentioned by the author is our India Gate which not only incorporated western architectural influences but also the elements of Indian architecture in terms of the dome on the top and canopy structure in front.

The book has many examples including that of Prof CV Raman who was not only the pioneer of determining the effect of light as it passes through a transparent surface – but that he also was an expert Mridanga player. You are not only inspired by the various accounts of famous personalities but are motivated to apply them. Original letters, diagrams and illustrations make these applications that much easier to understand.

Ashish talks about the "Bronx High School of Science" in New York that has the distinction of producing the highest number of Nobel Prize winners in the world. In its eighty-year existence, the Bronx School has produced a total of eight Nobel Prize winners, including seven in Physics and one in Chemistry. Analysis of the Bronx School's curriculum reveals that the students at Bronx not only study pure sciences but are also required to take compulsory courses in the social sciences, foreign languages, and fine arts. In addition, the school offers a staggering range of more than 160 distinct courses as electives to its students. In addition to the curriculum, he goes on to analyse the other activities that help create well rounded scholars at Bronx. Martin Chalfie, (Nobel Prize - Chemistry 2008), an alumnus of Bronx says, "**The best training I received in college did not come only from my sciences courses, but from the social science and humanities courses I took**".

The book is an out-of-the-box thinking on education and the author has challenged the stereotypes existing in present day education and motivates us to confront the regressive education boundaries built by society, educators, and governments. In just 210 pages, the author has said many things which the reader might not be able to digest in one go. The rigidity of our present-day education system forces the reader to think "how can we inspire the stakeholders in education to be fluid in their approach".

The book is a good read with its stories, ideas, anecdotes, and inspiration – Fluid is an experience everyone should experience.



Be more than  
what you are taught to be

fluid

## Some Quotes from the Book

*"Those who understand the Indian schooling system are well aware of its 'double-faced', two-track nature."*

*"The educational journey of these wanderers inspires the idea of being fluid."*

*"Be formless, shapeless, like water. Now, you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot. Now, the water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend." - Bruce Lee, 'The Lost Interview', 1971*

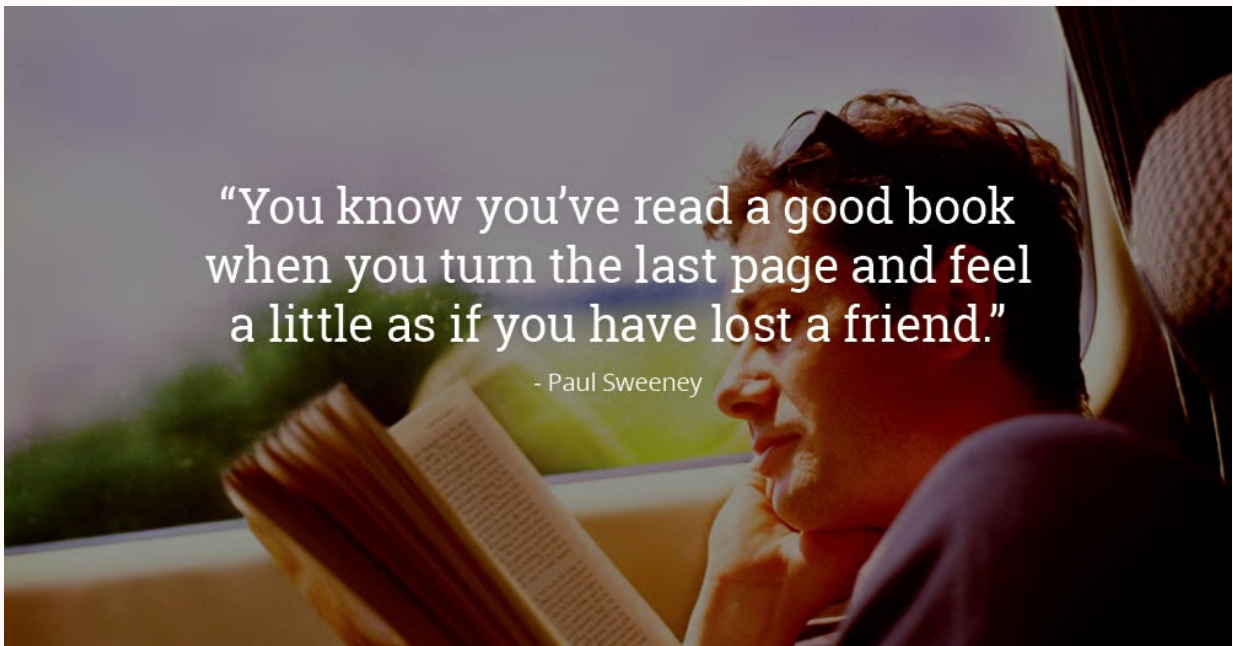
*"Great minds who have changed the fate of humankind are actually the ones who failed, faltered or remained uncertain, yet never bothered to stay to a rigid line. They were more. They were fluid."*



**Col Suresh Chandra** was commissioned on 11 Jun 1988 in the 94 Field Regiment. He commanded 121 Light Regiment and superannuated from service on 30 Nov 2017. An MTech (CSE - IITD), he has been instrumental in the design and development of the ACCCS / Project Shakti. He was an instructor in School of Artillery and DS, JC Wing, Army War College. He has also served with the Wargaming Centre, SWC and was Col GS (Systems) Western Command. Post retirement he divides his time between mentoring underprivileged kids in Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science of Class XII level, and freelancing as a cyber security and data analytics expert. He is available at [sureshchandra@protonmail.com](mailto:sureshchandra@protonmail.com)

*"You know you've read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend."*

- Paul Sweeney



# ForceNet Connect

## **A FORCES BRAT LOOKING TO BE A SECOND GENERATION MEMBER: HELP FROM BROTHERS IN ARMS FOR DECLARATION OF NCC 'C' CERTIFICATE RESULT IN TIME**

Aayushman Singh Gangwar from Manipal University Jaipur was looking to fill up the AFCAT form for which the last date was 14 Jul 2020. It's been his dream to join the Forces, just like his Dad. He volunteered for NCC Air Wing from his college and spent many sleepless nights coping up with the pressure of attending college classes as well as the weekly NCC parades and activities, with the unit being nearly 35 kms away.

He appeared for the 'C' Certificate exam on 23 Feb 2020 and lo and behold - the COVID 19 pandemic created havoc in the country. The last day for submitting the form was approaching and there was no news of the Certificate being issued. He discussed with his father, who put up the request on the Forces Network. Within a day there were number of reverts guiding the boy about the requirement of the Certificate at the time of filling the form and motivating him to go ahead for his passion with or without the Certificate. These were from Officers whom neither the boy nor his Dad ever knew- and the advice was absolutely uncoloured.

The very next day his Dad was connected to Colonel Rathore, the Director at the NCC Directorate who patiently listened to the query and found out from the office (as it was not part of his immediate responsibilities) the latest position and informed the boy's Dad,

The very next day his Dad was surprised when he got a call from the DDG himself. The DDG, Air Commodore Kumaraswamy is not a member of the Forces Network but was informed by another member Maj Gen Bipin Bakshi. Air Commodore was rightly concerned and he explained the process very patiently to the parent about the likely date of the result being declared. Mind you this conversation took place at 10:30 pm on a Sunday.

One is a part of many School, College and other groups, but the concern shared for a brother -in-arms on the Forces Network is unparalleled. It's not that the other groups are not well meaning or do not share your concern but nothing beats the Forces Network.

## **MOBILE HASSLE**

Ashutosh Sekhri had been approaching Vodafone for the past eight months, requesting for his number to be converted to prepaid or discontinued. He had also



twice submitted all requisite documents for the purpose, but no action was being taken. Instead his postpaid bill was getting generated each month. He had complained more than 10 times, regarding the issue. He even received a notice from the company for non payment of the bill.

Disillusioned, he finally reached out to the Forces Network community and sought help on the matter.

Mukesh Rao, who had the required acquaintances in Vodafone, assured him of the desired help. He then got the things moving, and within eight days of the issue being projected by Ashutosh, the matter was completely resolved.

Another wonderful example of how seemingly difficult situations, get sorted out quick and fast, due to Forces Network's environment of care and concern.

## **VISTARA VOES**

Lt Cdr Pawan Kumar had booked tickets in Nov 2019 in Vistara, for a trip from Delhi to Kochi in the month of March 2020. However, due to the unexpected change in circumstances due to Covid, the conduct of trip was not possible. He contacted his travel agent, who was somehow able to manage to get the reservation shifted to the month of Jun.

Unfortunately, there was no improvement or change in situation seemed in sight in the month of June, due to lock down conditions. When approached again, the agent was not able to obtain further extension from the Airlines.

Pawan then decided to seek help from the Forces Network members, and posted his concern in the Group.

Capt Uday Shriwas immediately came forward for his help. Since he had a stint earlier in Kingfisher Airlines, he approached his friend in Vistara, who had worked along with him in Kingfisher, and apprised him about the requirement.

Finally, with Uday's intervention and the help of his friend, the Airlines issued a credit note to Pawan till March 2021, giving him enough scope to utilise it. A problem which was not getting solved through seasoned travel agents, got quickly attended to, and solved through the camaraderie of the Forces Network.

Three cheers to Forces Network, the NETWORK that works!!!

*Compiled from mails received in the Forces Network Group - Editor*

# Stories

## Beyond Mystic Laws

**BY DINESH DUTT SHARMA**

*You don't need money or fancy toys to be fulfilled. The world is full of things that can delight you - the sound of a spring robin, the scent of a flower, the smile on a child's face. Today, make it a point to count the things that delight you - and I bet you will find that most of them are the simple things and don't cost a thing.*

Apart from these bountiful gifts of nature, another thing which doesn't cost much and yet is becoming increasingly rare like the endangered species is the essence of humanity. Simple gestures of kindness, compassion and caring are practically on the verge of extinction because as our scriptures predict, this is Kalyug.

I remember my organization as one institution where the feeling of camaraderie and brotherhood was extremely pronounced and evident in small gestures like sending across tea or a meal to the strangers who would shift into the flat across yours or down below. Lending almost everything from curtains to buckets was an expected norm and any one shifting into a new residence was assured of the next few days' meals being catered for, courtesy the families living around. Each new occupant was welcomed like a dear member of the family and when the older residents left, the courtesies were reciprocated equivalently. But times have changed. Today, you would find people peering through drawn curtains to assess new occupants. Probably a week or two after one has well settled in and the initial pangs are over, the person living across the door would meet you on the common staircase or at the entry of the block with a great show of warmth ask you to knock unhesitatingly for anything if required.

Times have changed indeed. Imagine my dismay when packing up to move out of my last station, I was visited by a couple, who had lived next door for the past two years, for the first time. They had a very simple request. They wanted to change all their broken and damaged furniture with the serviceable counterparts from my house before I handed over the flat to the allotting authorities. So much for good Samaritans and friendly neighbours!

Unfortunately, it is not just a question of friends and acquaintances. This extreme self-centred existence has become an epidemic and has influenced even the nearest and most intimate of relationships. The other day I had to attend a workshop which was extolling the virtues of a mother's selfless love. The moot question is, that is it really selfless or is it something we want to believe and cling on to? A mother who extends a hug and showers blessings to the child because he has secured the marks she

expected, is she selfless? Or the mother who promises a treat because the child has done what she has asked him to? Then again, we have the mother who refuses to speak to the child because he or she has erred? And the mother who denies her blessings and support because the child does something she disapproves of?

There is no such thing as unconditional love. It is an ideal situation which like in the Charles and Boyles laws of gases can never really exist. It goes against the very nature of existence, because our every action is motivated by the need for self-sustenance and self-gratification. The neighbours who help a fellow being to settle in know that they will in turn be helped while moving out. The love of parents is rewarded by satisfaction and pride in the child's success. It may not be providing a material gain but it goes a long way to satisfy their emotional needs. A child's success and obedience, massages their ego and gets them appreciation in society. There is no harm in being inspired, not by altruistic but practical desires. It is the law of the Universe that what goes must come back and what comes must be given back. So, I feel that if we give unconditionally, without any expectation from a relationship, we are in a way depriving the other person of the opportunity to return the same and assisting him to become a more hard core and materialistic human being.

A good, emotional relationship is a two-way street, needing reciprocation at a mature level, give and take - both the persons have to be involved in nurturing it. What is essentially going wrong is that we start expecting without returning and taking without giving. That leads to stagnation and it blocks all channels for the free flow of humanity. Every individual becomes aware that in order to receive, he must also give. Only when he nurtures others, will he bloom into complete existence. Only when he sends some positive vibes out into the world, will they multiply and come back to him. There is immense potential of goodness locked within each one of us. We need to unlock it and set it into motion like a giant irrevocable wheel and positive energies will come cascading back to us. That is the only true law of Dharma and Karma.



**Col Dinesh Dutt Sharma** was commissioned in to Army Service Corps in 1985. He has served in all corners of the Country and in prestigious appointments. He is presently on his first leg of re-employment.

# Matrimonials

## Brides Desired

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Raj Kumar Yadav for his son. The son was born on 27 Mar 1991, and is 173 cm tall. He has done B.Arch and Masters in Landscape Architecture, and presently working as Project Landscape Architect with a leading Architect firm in Gurgaon. Father is a retired officer, and pursuing his own business. Mother is a home maker who was into teaching profession earlier. His younger brother is pursuing Masters in Fashion Management. The family is settled at Gurgaon. A well settled girl from a liberal, educated and reputed family is desired.

Lt Col Raj Kumar Yadav can be reached at +91-9717016161 and raajkumar\_yadav@yahoo.co.in for additional details

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Suitable match is sought by Col S R Nikam for his son. The son was born on 25 Nov 1990, and is 5'4" tall. He has done BDES, and presently working as Product Manager at Hamburg, Germany. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. The family is settled at Pune. An educated and working girl willing to relocate to Germany is desired.

Col S R Nikam can be reached at +91-9860850619 and snikam.xthrill@gmail.com for additional details.

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## Grooms Desired

Suitable match is sought by Col A Venkata Raman for his daughter. The daughter was born on 20 Feb 1991 and is 5' 5" tall. She is BTech and MS Supply Chain Management qualified, and is presently employed as a Project Manager/Consultant. Father is presently re-employed post retirement, while the mother is a home maker and an educationist. Her younger sister is a Research Associate post her MA Economics in USA. The family resides at Raipur. A well settled boy preferably in a non-military profession any where, and preferably from a family with good background is desired. A match from a Hindu family preferably from South India is desired.

Col A Venkata Raman can be reached at +91-7590075300, +91-8122622889 and jeyahey@gmail.com for additional details.

Suitable match is sought by Lt Col Sanjay Borse for his daughter. The daughter was born on 23 Jun 1993 and is 5' 4" tall. After her MCom and CMA, she is now working as Financial Analyst with a MNC at Pune. Father is a retired officer who is having his own business, and mother is a home maker. Her younger brother is ex-Merchant Navy and having own agro business. The family is settled at Pune. A serving Army/Navy/Air Force officer is desired as a match for the girl.

Lt Col Sanjay Borse can be reached at +91-9561493561, and marsagrovetentp@gmail.com for additional details.

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Suitable match is sought by Brig Pradeep Arora for his daughter. The daughter was born on 6 Jan 1990 and is 152 cm tall. She has done B Com and MBA Finance (PGDM). After having worked with Deloitte, she is now with EnY at Gurgaon as American Tax Professional. Father is a retired officer, and mother is a home maker. The family is settled at Dwarka, Delhi. Her younger sister is in Class XII. A suitable boy aged 30-34 years, with height above 152 cm, with a stable job in Delhi, Gurgaon, or Bengaluru, or from service background, and open to moving abroad/other cities, is desired. Horoscope match is preferred. Caste and religion, no bar.

Brig Pradeep Arora can be reached at +91-8411021797, and pradeeparora20@gmail.com for additional details.

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Harry S. Truman

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