

# Family Enterprise *Quarterly*



## Editor's Desk



**Professor Sougata Ray,**  
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With great pleasure, we bring to you the next edition of the Family Enterprise Quarterly Magazine. As always, we have packed this issue with experiences, information, opinions, facts and thoughts shared by leading figures in the family business arena and we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy putting it together for you.

For the “C-suite wisdom section”, we talked to Sachit Jain, the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Vardhman Special Steels Limited on how he transitioned from the textiles business to the steel business and his thoughts on leadership, succession planning, corporate governance and professionalisation within family-run businesses. Smt Sailaja Kiron, Managing Director of Margadarsi Chit Fund, shares her inspiring story of how she broke into a male-dominated industry through sheer dint of hard work and perseverance in the “Women in Business section”. In the legacy builders’ section, we look at the life and work of Lakshmana Iyer Lakshminarayan of the Rane Group—the man who revolutionised the Indian automotive parts industry.

For this issue, we have summarised the case of Suprajit Engineering. This case by Sonia Mehrotra and Kavil Ramachandran is a must-read for business families seeking to build a robust family constitution that can act as a guide for the family and future generations to work and grow harmoniously. In the “From the Bookshelf section”, we have selected the book “The Struggle and the Promise: Restoring India’s Potential” by Naushad Forbes which is an in-depth analysis of studies by leading thinkers and statistical data and offers compelling arguments for a limited state role, the diversion of public R&D funding to firms and universities

instead of research institutions, private participation in higher education, freeing up of trade, higher autonomy for institutions, enhanced investment on innovation and design.

Maharaj Kumar Sahib Lakshyaraj Singh Ji Mewar of Udaipur features in the “Next Gen” section and provides insights into how his family is upholding the trusteeship and custodian values for the royal family of Mewar, a tradition carried across 77 generations. In the “Thoughts from the Alumni section”, we talk to Sirisha Limkar, Director, Limkar Group, who shares with us the initiatives taken by her to transform her business post her stint at ISB as a student of the Post Graduate Programme in Management for Family Business.

This issue also provides summaries of three research articles on the topics: “Daughters’ self-positioning in family business succession: A narrative inquiry”, “Family dynamics and relationships in female entrepreneurship: an exploratory study” and “Mapping women’s involvement in family firms: A review based on bibliographic coupling analysis”. We also look at the results that have been presented in the GEM Women’s Entrepreneurship Report 21/22, which offers a trend analysis of women’s entrepreneurship in 50 countries and five global regions, including Central & East Asia.

Last but not least, we shine the spotlight on GR8 sports in our vintage regional icon section – a Kashmir-based maker of quality willow bats, who are distinguished by their tenacity, hope, and technological innovations. Their vision of seeing five international cricket teams using the GR8 sports bats in the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2023 is quite exciting.

We hope you find the articles and insights published here both informative and thought-provoking. Enjoy reading. ●

## Contents





## Family businesses – Leading the ‘Make in India’ movement

Family-owned businesses are a vital part of India’s economy. Family businesses in India prioritize values such as trust, risk-taking, centralized decision-making, and cost consciousness. They also prioritize long-term stability over short-term gains, focusing on building an organization that will last for future generations. The family, as an institution, holds a unique place in Indian culture, making family businesses an essential part of the country’s economic landscape. They have embodied the spirit of Make in India long before the initiative was launched by the government. About 85% of all incorporated businesses in India are family businesses, making them a significant contributor to the country’s economic growth. However, to stay relevant, they must transition from promoter-driven to

### Viewpoint by TSCFE@ISB

**In Indian culture, the family is the fundamental cornerstone of society, and family businesses prioritize long-term stability, trust, and goodwill among consumers. They attach high importance to values and cultural significance, and intuition and relationships play an essential role in their growth and expansion.**

professionally managed while staying true to core values. ●

(Source: The Times of India, April 3, 2023)

## Lack of a clear successor or succession plan among top challenges for family businesses

Lack of a clear successor or succession plan is a top challenge faced by family businesses in India. Other family challenges include a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for family managers, including women, and a lack of conflict resolution mechanisms within the family business. Manufacturing enterprises reported these challenges more often than service enterprises, while small businesses experienced them more frequently than larger ones. In terms of business performance, micro-enterprises had the best performance metrics compared to their MSME peers. ●

(Source: Financial Express, January 23, 2023)

## Bridging generational divide in family businesses through communication

Family businesses often neglect to communicate and bond with their children due to busy schedules and business demands, leading to intergenerational gaps. Creating shared spaces and opportunities for communication can help bridge these gaps and establish traditions and trust. Someone with empathy and communication skills can champion the engagement and even engage an advisor to facilitate effective communication. Effective communication is crucial in building a legacy, harmony, and business growth. ●

(Source: Outlook India, January 5, 2023)

### Viewpoint by TSCFE@ISB

**Effective communication is crucial in reducing the transgenerational divide and conflicts in family businesses. Lack of communication and understanding between generations can lead to emotional voids, disconnect, and weakening of intergenerational bonds. Seeking professional support can help family members to connect deeply and understand each other’s needs, thoughts, and desires.**

### Viewpoint by TSCFE@ISB

**Succession planning in family businesses is important as it ensures the continuation of the business from one generation to the next. It helps to identify potential successors, train and develop them for leadership roles, and ensure a smooth transition of power. Proper succession planning can also prevent conflicts and disputes within the family and help maintain the legacy and values of the business.**



# Daughters' self-positioning in family business succession: A narrative inquiry

- Study by Donata Mussolino, Mariavittoria Cicellinb, Mario Pezzillo Iaconoc, Stefano Consigliob, and Marcello Martinez

The dynamics of succession in a family business are rife with gender implications; however, there is not much intellectual engagement around how the succession process itself is inherently gendered, nor has attention been paid to how daughters make sense of their position during and after a succession in a family business. In this background, this study draws from narratives of female successors in multigenerational family businesses and investigates how daughters position themselves as successors and leaders in a male-dominated family business. These multigenerational business families are, historically and implicitly, masculine industries, such as shipping, automotive, and aeronautical engineering. This analysis is part of a wider research project on small and medium-sized family firms which are in transition in leadership from a father-predecessor to a daughter-successor and are geographically located in the South of Italy, particularly in the Campania Region.

## Patterns of daughter-successor's self-positioning

The authors found that daughter-successors 'constructed' and 'positioned' themselves in accordance with the logic of closeness to or distance from the father-predecessor's leadership style and to

employees' feelings and affective systems. Self-positioning by daughters falls into four main patterns.

**The obvious choice:** If the predecessor/father is a benevolent leader, a smooth sense of continuity is felt in the organisation. Here, family and business overlap, and female successors emerge as a natural part of the system. In these scenarios, daughters are accepted as legitimate successors from the very beginning, and their initiation and succession happen in a planned and organised way. This results in compliance with the family's social and cultural systems, which enhance the daughter-successor's self-position as the 'obvious choice'.

**Daddy's girl:** Stuck between the benevolent influence of the father figure and 'non-acceptance' by the company's employees, a daddy's girl adopts and reproduces her father's decision-making style and behaviours to gain acceptance and legitimacy within the dominant masculine discourse. However, her alignment with gender norms is only partial.

**The backgrounder:** If the predecessor is an authoritarian leader, the new leader positions herself by breaking free from the existing leadership style. Thus, a backgrounder creates the change from an autocratic leadership style to one which

is marked by participation and openness. This also leads to the acceptance of the successor-daughter by the organisation's members and reflects the generational change.

**The troublemaker:** In settings where entrepreneurship is recognised as a male-gendered concept, female entrepreneurs are considered troublemakers. This pattern highlights that in entrepreneurial spaces where gender norms are highly dominant, daughter entrepreneurs must subscribe to the masculinized discourse. Daughter-successors then position themselves as being indifferent to the views of others, challenging pervasive gender norms and struggling with their fathers, brothers and other male employees.

## Practical Implications

- Early socialisation of daughters in the family business can make the succession process easier and more gender egalitarian. It can also ensure the survival and success of family businesses.
- Participatory work culture, a collaborative spirit and mutual support creates a conducive organisational work environment that goes a long way for those women who are successfully managing family businesses.
- Self-positioning can be accomplished through compliance, negotiation or struggles—all processes embedded in settings characterised by different gender beliefs and norms. •

## Source:

Journal of Family Business Strategy 10 (2019), DOI: 10.1016/j.jfbs.2019.01.003

# Family dynamics and relationships in female entrepreneurship: An exploratory study

- Study by Sunita Dewitt, Vahid Jafari-Sadeghi, Arun Sukumar, Roopa Aruvanahalli Nagaraju, Razieh Sadraei and Fujia Li

**F**amily dynamics and relationships are the crucial determining factors for women in their decision to choose entrepreneurship as a career choice. Yet, there are gaps in our understanding of why women continue to choose familial commitments in contrast to entrepreneurial aspirations. In many developing countries, where rapid socio-economic changes are happening, women are empowered to pursue entrepreneurial goals, yet they continue to remain away from self-employment. This paper tries to understand whether there has been a shift in family dynamics and decision-making that supports female entrepreneurship, including support mechanisms that either hinder or encourage female entrepreneurship. The findings of the research indicate that certain societal expectations which are deep-rooted in traditional and cultural values of society have a negative influence on female entrepreneurs' journeys. This study has been conducted in Beijing, China and draws from qualitative interviews with fifteen female entrepreneurs.

**Marriage/ Relationship perception:** There is a collectivist perception of marriage, which affects a wife's career choices and her entrepreneurial journey. There is no possibility of

divorce, which reflects a long-term orientation towards marriage; more crucially, it reflects a disadvantaged social perception which makes it difficult for a female entrepreneur to start a new family or achieve higher career status. However, there is a growing trend among younger generation entrepreneurs who aspire for more independence and are demanding more support for careers. Nevertheless, the family continues to remain an important aspect which determines the career and professional development of a woman.

**Family orientation:** Joint family systems are common in China, which often translates into myriad pressures and changes in the life of female entrepreneurs. Many times entrepreneurial pursuits are considered risky, and women are pressurised to pursue alternative career paths. Despite various pressures, the family also emerged as the primary source of support for women starting or running a business.

## Gender stereotyping

Family norms and traditional gender roles have seen a change since China transitioned to a market economy; however, the perception of women as irrational, dependable and sensitive beings remains in conflict with

workplace masculine leadership roles. Family is prime to the relationship, where behaviours are not just learnt but reinforced, and people (family) continue to define the nature of the relationships. This is complicated by gender stereotyping (female) and cultural construction, especially in male-dominated societies. Female entrepreneurs feel disadvantaged because of traditional gender norms and stringent gender expectations. They are more vulnerable to rumours, which often and unnecessarily translate into questions about their capabilities. Female entrepreneurs face many stereotypical barriers while setting up and operating their businesses in transitional economies. Gender stereotypes are culturally embedded and hinder female entrepreneurship, with some women continuing to accept stereotypical roles as this leads to social acceptance in their view.

## Practical implications

- Creating conducive familial systems for female entrepreneurs, on which they can rely for help, inspiration, knowledge, encouragement, and support is crucial.
- Better communication with an equitable distribution of household chores and responsibilities is how husbands can support their wives in their entrepreneurial journeys. ●

## Source:

Journal of Family Business Management (2022) DOI 10.1108/JFBM-01-2022-0013

# Mapping women's involvement in family firms: A review based on bibliographic coupling analysis

● Study by Amaia Maseda, Txomin Iturralde, Sarah Cooper, and Gloria Aparicio

Very little is known about the importance, uniqueness, recognition and contribution of female family members within family firms. To address this gap, this review paper has mapped research on women's involvement in family firms (WIFF)—the most common form of business entity worldwide—which appears to provide an enabling environment for women to act as leaders and entrepreneurs. The scholars have conducted a two-tier review of 225 papers, consisting of a bibliometric analysis (quantitative methods to examine the patterns of publication within a field) and a literature review. The results of the review revealed five thematic clusters, which have been elaborated below.

## Female entrepreneurs and family firms

This is one of the most studied streams of research in the WIFF literature, and the focus is on examining the supportive environment that women have and its influence on their entrepreneurial intentions. There is a general agreement that effective and instrumental family support is crucial for women's entrepreneurship. The relationship between family social capital (networks for business contacts, information channels, and family values and culture) and family involvement, is perceived as the most

important determinant of women's entrepreneurial development.

## Women in family-firm governance

Two main issues emerge in this cluster: determining factors, and effects of gender diversity on firm outcomes. While some studies argue that firms with female directors perform better on market indicators, other work also indicates that a patriarchal setup might reduce the importance of female directors.

## Family-business dynamics

Literature on the interaction between family dynamics and business dynamics reveals the complexities of family firms, leading to a deeper understanding of the 'hidden' dimension of the role of women in business. While familial ties are an important source of flexibility in business, the family also imposes obligations which can contradict economic rationality. In this background several issues of contestation emerge, such as work-family conflict, work and family roles, work-family benefits and organisational responses to work-family conflict.

## Women in business succession

Studies on succession have revealed that primogeniture and gender bias

emerge as determinants in family business succession. Other literature highlights factors influencing the succession process from a gender perspective, and those that facilitate (or hinder) women's leadership in family firms. For instance, the leadership style of women has been an area of focus, especially when daughters enter family firms—they must gain respect from both the business and family perspectives, which can be difficult if parents do not view their daughters as professionals.

## Temporal and spatial dimensions of women's involvement

This cluster focuses on the development and diversity of the family-firm field in the broader context of place and time, with an additional focus on the prominent role of some women who were far ahead of their time. The development of cutlery firms in the 19th century is an example of how middle-class women were engaged extensively in entrepreneurship and innovation, through association with family firms. Other examples reflect how widows have emerged as partners and managers and have taken family businesses to great heights.

## Practical implications

- Striving to develop strong financial and social capital for female entrepreneurs is crucial.
- Dimensions, such as culture, education, and religion, should be considered important contextual factors in understanding women's entrepreneurship, their recruitment and presence in positions of power in businesses. ●

## Source:

International Journal of Management Reviews (2021), DOI: 10.1111/ijmr.12278



# GEM 2021/22 Women's Entrepreneurship Report: From Crisis to Opportunity

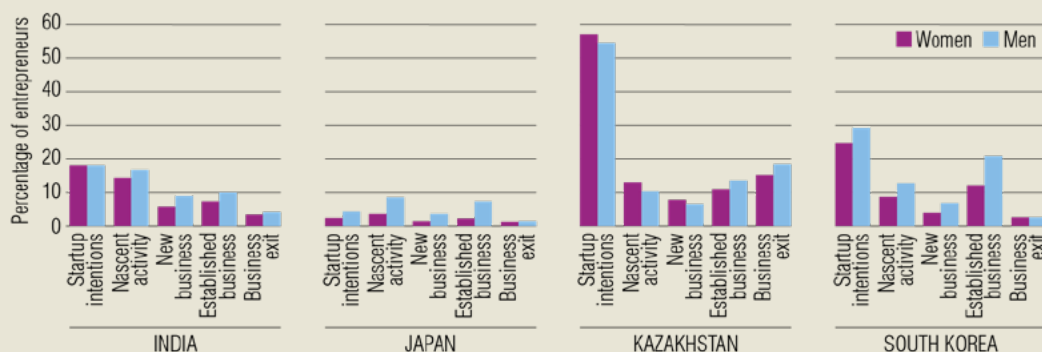
Women entrepreneurs worldwide continue to forge ahead and show surprising resilience in the face of constant challenges to the survival and stability of their businesses. Women have proven that they, too, can grasp the opportunities presented by chaos and change. However, even though increasing numbers of women are creating value-adding businesses that will ultimately bring wealth to their economies, support for women entrepreneurs—culturally, structurally, and financially—remains inadequate. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) conducted an inquiry to highlight the significant progress made by women entrepreneurs in certain areas, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their business outcomes, and the remaining gaps, challenges, and opportunities that need to be addressed. The results have been presented in the GEM Women's Entrepreneurship Report 21/22, which offers a trend analysis of women's entrepreneurship in 50 countries and five global regions, including Central & East Asia. A few key findings from the Central & East Asia section of the report are:

## 1) Startup rates, intentions, motivations & business stage

(Exhibit 1)

More than 50% of the women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan reported having startup intentions, the highest among women in Central & East Asia. Women in Japan had the lowest early-stage entrepreneurial activity rates. The study revealed that South Korean women had the highest Established Business Ownership (EBO) rates. Women showed lower business exit rates than men in all countries except South Korea.

**Exhibit 1:** Entrepreneurial activity and Established Business Ownership rates for women



Source: GEM 2021/2022 Women's Entrepreneurship Report

## 2) Impact of the pandemic on women entrepreneurs

(Exhibit 2)

In the region, more than 70% of women entrepreneurs in India reported new business opportunities because of the pandemic. Women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan reported an effective government response to the pandemic about 20% more than the men did. In South Korea, Kazakhstan, and Japan, more women entrepreneurs have plans to launch new digital technologies as compared to men. Only in India, a larger percentage of men have plans to launch new digital technologies as compared to women.

## 3) Trends in market focus and innovation

(Exhibit 3)

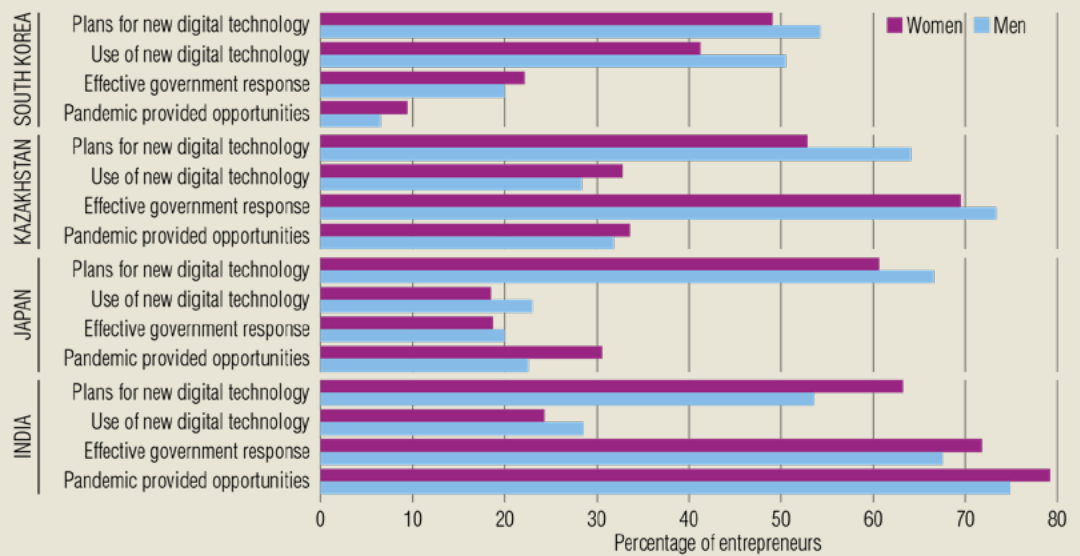
Women in Japan and South Korea represented about half of the total number of entrepreneurs offering innovative products in their local markets, while in India 60% of women entrepreneurs were offering innovative products to international markets. In Kazakhstan, women entrepreneurs offered innovative products only at the national level.

## 4) Women entrepreneurs and the business environment

(Exhibit 4)

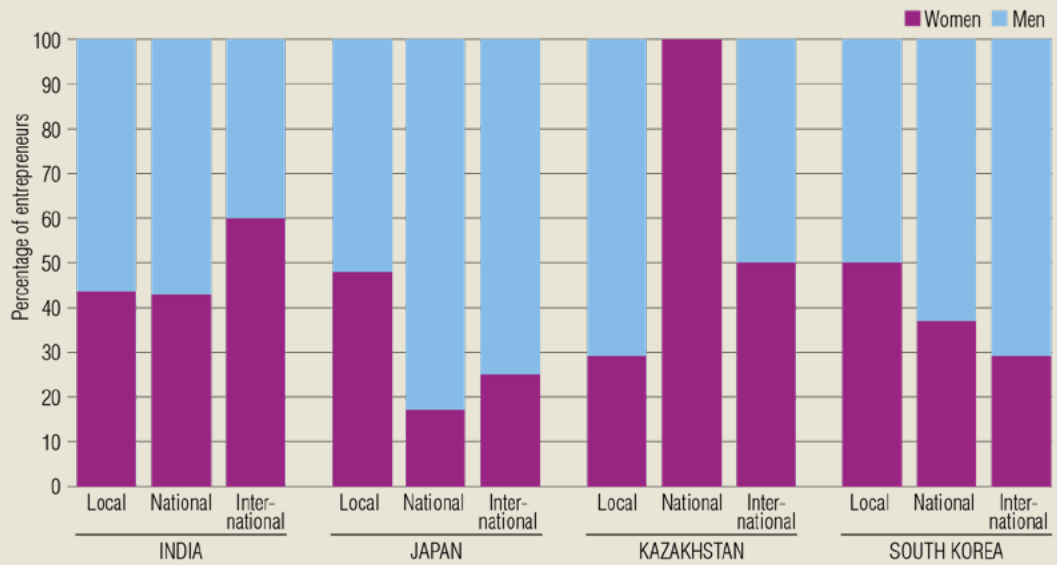
Women from India and Kazakhstan were almost on a par with men from these countries in their perception regarding the ease of starting a new business, but the number of women who thought this way was significantly lower in Japan and South Korea. Women were also on a par with men in all four countries about not being deterred by fear of failure. Opportunity recognition was most robust for women entrepreneurs in India (82.6%) and was the lowest in Japan. ●

**Exhibit 2:** Impact of the pandemic on entrepreneurs by gender and country



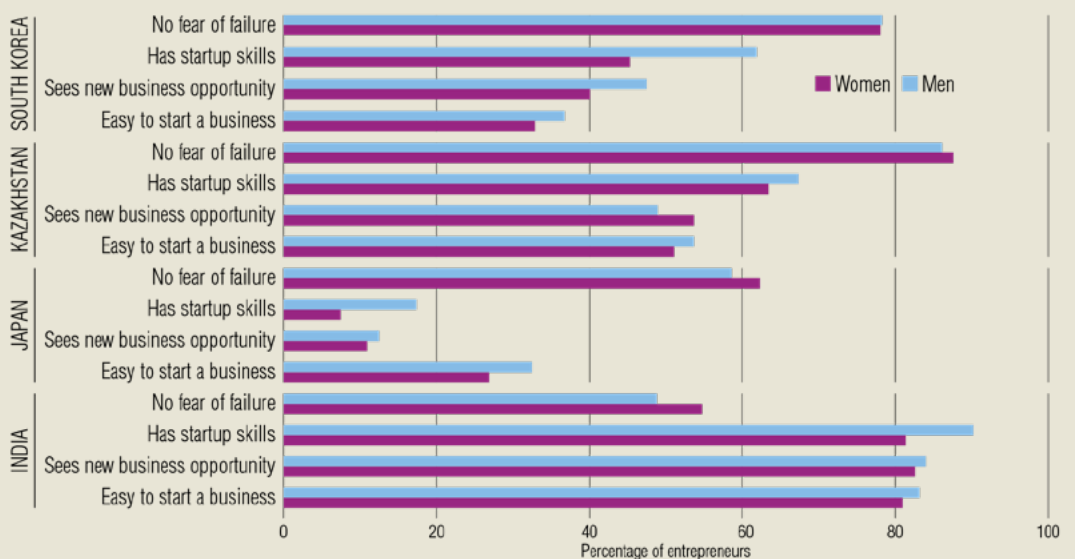
**Source:** GEM  
2021/2022 Women's  
Entrepreneurship Report

**Exhibit 3:** Gender composition of the level of innovation by country



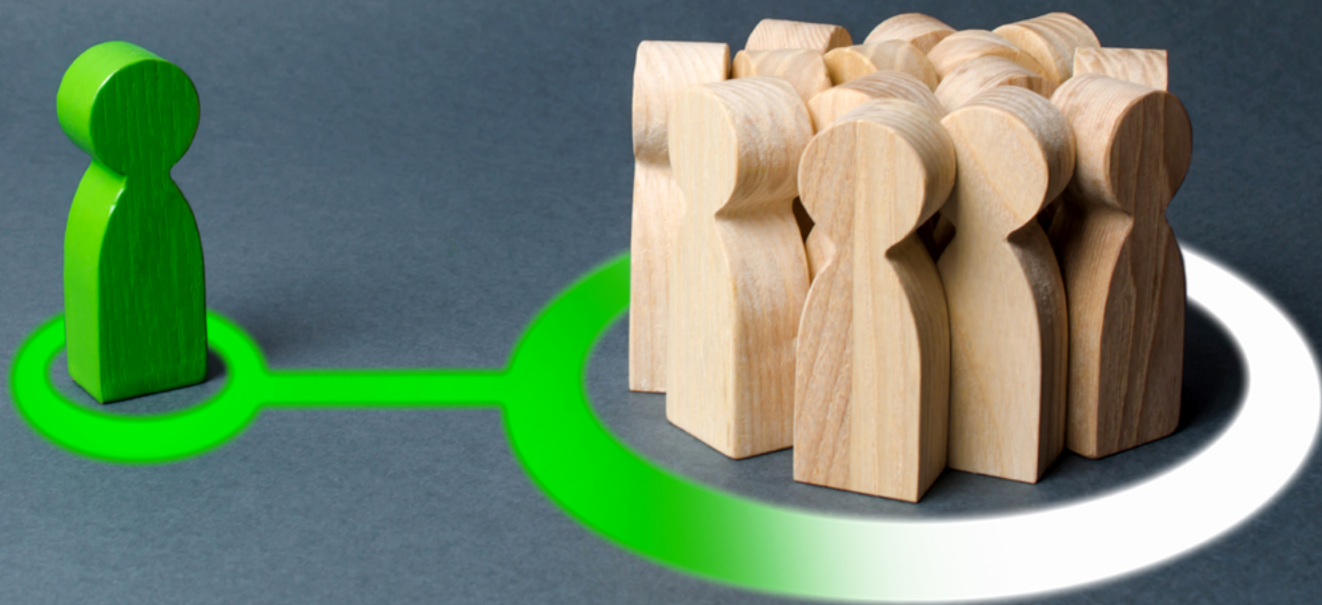
**Source:** GEM  
2021/2022 Women's  
Entrepreneurship Report

**Exhibit 4:** Entrepreneurial perceptions as per gender and country in Central & East Asia



**Source:** GEM  
2021/2022 Women's  
Entrepreneurship Report

# Suprajit Engineering: Ensuring Family And Business Continuity



**S**uprajit Engineering Limited (SEL) is the product of Ajith Rai's entrepreneurial vision and industry foresight.

Foreseeing a boom in the Indian automobile industry, he established an automotive mechanical control cable manufacturing unit. Suprajit Engineering Limited was, thus, incorporated in 1985 as a private company and set up its first operating plant in Bommasandra, Bengaluru. Over the next three decades, SEL transitioned into a multi-product, multi-business, multi-brand, multi-customer, multi-location global company with an annual revenue (2019) of INR 16.28 billion. The

structure of the Suprajit Group also evolved over the years with five wholly owned subsidiaries operating under the umbrella company—SEL. These subsidiaries were helmed by professionals and enjoyed significant entrepreneurial autonomy.

The Rai family consisted of Ajith, his wife Supriya, a practicing dental surgeon, and their three sons Akhilesh, Ashutosh and Ashish. As the business flourished, Ajith was keenly aware that the sustainability of the business depended on the family's ability to work together in harmony. He wanted to ensure that the business grew and perpetuated beyond the first and



second generations of the family. In 2007, he attended a couple of academic family business conferences on the development of a family business constitution and was very impressed by Prof. John Ward's approach towards it. Very quickly, he became fascinated with the subject and spent considerable time reading about the family constitution (FC), its tenets and the steps needed to develop them.

In 2013, after years of refining his own thoughts on the subject, Ajith broached the topic of creating an FC with his family members. His family members who heard about the concept for the first time were initially sceptical. They felt they were a cohesive family unit and did not require an FC. As Ashutosh recalled, "My first reaction was that we are great as a family and bringing any kind of legal talk will only distance us." As the patriarch and founder of the business, Ajith knew he could impose his mandate on the family, thereby precluding any of their reservations, but he also knew that the FC could only be successfully internalised and implemented if it were a product of family collaboration and acceptance. He encouraged the family to read more about the subject, attend workshops on it and air their views on it uninhibitedly.

By February 2016, after multiple family meetings, e-mail exchanges and revisions, Ajith was ready with the first draft of the FC. An external family business consultant was also engaged to help develop the clauses defined in the constitution and refine them from a legal standpoint.

It took over two years to finalise the SEL FC that enshrined the family's core values, code of conduct, vision and mission of the business and policies relating to leadership and ownership succession. It also codified the organisation structures for the family

council (FC), the family business board and the family trust (FT). All lineal descendants and their spouses were given a place in the FC with clear-cut rules on eligibility, remuneration and benefits. The family business board was created to act as the bridge between the FC and the SEL company board of directors. A large part of the shares owned by the family was transferred to a family trust (FT)—governed by a family office (FO)—to ensure a smooth transition and effective management and distribution of wealth over generations. The family members also agreed to a formal review of the FC every three years to keep it relevant and responsive.

On December 22, 2018, the Rai family gathered for a formal dinner at their home in Bengaluru to individually sign the SEL FC that now comprehensively bound them all to the oath of nurturing their family business and unity for years to come.

- A robust family constitution can not only preempt intra-family conflict and protect the interest of the family but also protect the interests of the larger shareholder community.
- Building consensus on the policies, mechanisms, and structures defined in the FC is easier when it is an outcome of proactive efforts rather than a reaction to an immediate problem.
- A family trust can be an effective tool for the management of wealth, investment of money, and distribution of assets and can help build a sustainable business and family legacy. ●

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*He wanted to ensure that the business grew and perpetuated beyond the first and second generations of the family*

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# Lakshmana Iyer Lakshminarayan

(1917 - 2001)



**B**orn in the year 1917, Lakshmana Iyer Lakshminarayan—popularly known as LLN—is best known for his huge contribution to building the Indian auto components industry to the behemoth it is today. As the Chairman of the Rane Group for over four decades, LLN also played a decisive role in transforming what was merely a trading company into one of the premier automotive components manufacturers in the country. The group owns several state-of-the-art manufacturing complexes, and manufactures and sells automotive parts such as steering and suspension systems, brakes, friction materials, valve train components, occupant safety systems, and light metal casting products, to almost all automobile companies in India and abroad.

The Rane Group was founded as Rane (Madras) Ltd. in 1929 with LLN's father-in-law, TR Ganapathy Iyer, as one of the major shareholders. LLN joined Rane (Madras) Ltd. in 1940, and at the death of Iyer in 1946, he picked up the reins of the trading company. Rumour has it, a consignment of 300 Renault cars received by LLN in 1948 and sold exuberantly throughout the country, is what made him realise the potential of the automobile industry in India. LLN's playing field was the India of the 1950s when the License Raj held sway—a time when the domestic automobile industry was struggling on account of the excessive taxation on passenger vehicles. But LLN was determined to move from just selling cars to servicing them and eventually to manufacturing and selling automotive parts. Based on what his friends and colleagues say, LLN could convince an Eskimo to buy a refrigerator, if he wanted. The Rane

Group's position today as a Rs 4,400-crore business is a result of LLN's confidence and determination.

LLN's legacy extends beyond the automobile industry. In the 1960s, he established the Margaret Sidney Hospital in Nanganallur to provide world-class medical facilities to the residents of the area. He also made significant contribution in the field of education—from supporting the Meenakshi College for Women and the Ganapathy Iyer Girls Higher Secondary School in Gopalapuram to instituting the Rane Foundation to provide financial aid to poor and deserving Indian students in their educational endeavours.

In 1989, the reins of the Rane Group passed on from LLN to his son, L Lakshman. LLN passed away in January 2001. In 2018, the Rane Group organised a centenary celebration for LLN's contribution to the group and the automobile industry. He is remembered as the one who established the remarkable Rane culture, which combined ethics, integrity, professionalism, and growth blended with financial conservatism—an element that has enabled Rane Group to go from strength to strength. ●

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*Based on what his friends and colleagues say, LLN could convince an Eskimo to buy a refrigerator, if he wanted. The Rane Group's position today as a Rs 4,400-crore business is a result of LLN's confidence and determination*

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**Sachit Jain,  
Vice Chairman and Managing Director,  
Vardhman Special Steels Limited**

## Great leadership can inspire ordinary people **to achieve extraordinary outcomes**

**S**achit Jain is the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Vardhman Special Steels Limited (VSSL), which is a part of the Vardhman Group with an annual turnover of over \$ 1.25 billion. Under his able leadership, VSSL transformed into a growth-oriented company, the turnover more than quadrupled, and its market capitalization grew over twenty times.

With a work experience of over 31 years, Sachit is the Founder and President of the Baddi Barotiwalla Nalagarh Association (the largest industrial association in Himachal Pradesh), former Chairman of the CII's Northern Region, and former president of the Ludhiana Management Association.

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*The commonality that I brought to the business was my way of managing and leading the business. I believe that the role of the top leadership is to articulate a vision, give people an action plan, and then the tools and the freedom to get there*

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Sachit is an MBA and gold medalist from IIM Ahmedabad and holds a degree in engineering from IIT Delhi. He has also pursued higher-ed programs at Harvard and Stanford. He

is also the author of the book "Ready for Takeoff- A Leadership Story". At a personal level, he is a sports enthusiast and is involved in different sports such as golf, table tennis, swimming, trekking, and yoga.

***Y**ou have been associated with the Vardhman group for over 30 years. What were the origins of your journey with the family business? Also, could you describe your initial years of working and the challenges you faced?*

Suchita, who is the daughter of the group chairman and MD, and I got engaged in October 1989. Often people don't believe me when I tell them that ours is an arranged marriage. I was from a middle-class background, had recently completed my MBA from IIM and was working with Levers in their Calcutta branch. Immediately after our marriage, I joined the Vardhman Group. At the time, we were expanding outside Punjab and a new spinning mill was being set up at Baddi in Himachal Pradesh.

So, I moved from selling soap to setting up a spinning mill project, to running it, and then eventually running a full location that employed eight thousand people. When I started, I was barely twenty-five, in a town with very basic infrastructure tasked with



managing people who were at least 15 years my senior. Luckily, my stint with Levers had given me some experience in managing subordinates who were older than me.

*Let us fast-forward to 2010 when you took over the Vardhman Special Steels business, which was neither the largest nor the most profitable. What was the thought process behind that decision?*

Not profitable would be an understatement! It was a tiny company that my father-in-law, the senior management, and even external consultants like Ernst & Young had almost written off. I have always believed that you can't let a business hang on. So, you either grow it or sell it; we had tried to sell this business earlier but could not find an appropriate buyer and then the only option really was to grow it.

I was 42 then and was based out of Ludhiana managing some corporate functions for the company. I was itching for something more challenging to do. When the opportunity to take independent charge of the steel business came my way, I looked at it as a means of greater professional fulfilment and my chance to make something out of a dying business.

*A*mong business families, relationships are already complicated because of the convergence of both personal and professional responsibilities and expectations. You had to face the added complexity of being the son-in-law. What was that experience like?

I think if my wife had other siblings, particularly male siblings, then the situation would be very different. As she was the only child, my father-in-law came to view me as someone who

could partner with her in the running of the business.

It was not all easy going, though. My father-in-law and I came from such different backgrounds and education systems, and had such different approaches to business that I found it very difficult initially, traumatic even. It was like being thrown into the deep end, where one had no option but to learn to swim. Where we converged, however, were our aspirations for the business and our value systems. Where we differed was the style and that was not an issue really because at the end of

to articulate a vision, give people an action plan, and then the tools and the freedom to get there.

### *How did you go about building a new team for the steel business?*

Let me start by saying that though certain skills were missing, the core strength was already there. We had old hands working for us who felt a great sense of belonging to the company but suffered from a defeatist attitude as, till that point, they had been treated like stepchildren. They were just waiting to be inspired! Though we hired a few people from outside, my general approach was and is, to work with existing teams. I truly believe that great leadership can inspire ordinary people to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

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the day, he was the captain of the ship and everybody was expected to follow the chain of command.

### *The textile and steel businesses are almost like chalk and cheese. Were there any transferable skills and knowledge between the two businesses?*

I look at steel as a stronger, thicker, yarn. In that sense, the businesses are identical. The difference lies in the technology. The technology and machines used in steel manufacturing are very different from those used for textile manufacturing. Also, the culture in each is unique. For instance, the cleanliness maintained on the textile shop floor is such that one can almost eat off the floor, which is not the case with steel.

The commonality that I brought to the business was my way of managing and leading the business. I believe that the role of the top leadership is

### *Would you consider it an advantage or a disadvantage that the business was part of the Vardhman Group?*

It definitely was an advantage. Vardhman Special Steels was a tiny company that might not have survived as a stand-alone entity. Our CRISIL rating was higher than what it would have been if we were a stand-alone company. It was easier for us to raise funds and even though the Vardhman Group extended no corporate guarantees, all the banks and financial institutions had an implicit understanding of the fact that the Vardhman Group had never defaulted. We also use and pay for corporate services of the group like IT, legal, corporate finance and audit services, and benefit from not having to develop these in-house. The textile business also acts as a training ground for our people, where they can pick up best practices and be exposed to how the other businesses in the group are operating.

***You have built and grown the company from a market cap of Rs 30 crores into a Rs 1000 crore plus company. What comes next?***

One development that I am very excited about is our partnership with Aichi Steel, which is an affiliate of the automaker Toyota Motor Corp. They have acquired a minority stake of 11.4% in Vardhman Special Steels with the plan to make it the second source of steel for Toyota. Second, we want to achieve our ambition of reaching the eight hundred to million thousand tons mark in the next 10 years, which requires setting up of a new factory. Third, we want to achieve forward integration from steel manufacturing to forging. Fourth, we might want to get into additional lines of specialised steel.

Apart from that, I am very clear that I want to step down from the MD position within the next ten years, so an item on top of the agenda is also to groom the heir and have clear succession planning.

***Do you want your daughters and sons-in-law to take over the business, or would you prefer professionals run the business?***

My eldest daughter is working with me in the steel business and the younger one has joined the textiles business. My son-in-law has set up his own venture and is busy with that. I have always advised them that they should not succeed me as the MD of the company and let a professional take charge of the company. That said, I will not thwart their professional desires, and it's up to them to ultimately decide what they want to do. At the moment, both of them are displaying the right commitment and attitude to their work and the people whom they work with.

My daughters are the fourth-generation members of the family

business and my view is that by this stage, the group generally tends to become larger in scale and the family members are better suited for the governance and shareholders roles. However, to be effective in those roles, they have to be active in the business today and understand the values of the company and the key stakeholder relationships.

***Your company has a very high level of corporate governance, as evidenced by the quality of the company board. But this also curtails the freedom to operate. Has that happened to you and how did you react to it?***

My intention has always been to be the best at what I do. I wanted to build a strong company and for that, I needed a strong board. Many Indian companies often overlook this aspect. It is

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***My daughters are the fourth-generation members of the family business and my view is that by this stage, the group generally tends to become larger in scale and the family members are better suited for the governance and shareholders roles***

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important to realise that as an MD, my actions can take the company sky high, but a blunder can also result in a crash. A strong board is an antidote to that. In fact, in 2014, the board overruled me on a particular decision. I was shocked and disappointed, but I could deal with it knowing that they were my well-wishers and had the company's best interest at heart. In hindsight, they actually prevented me from making the biggest professional blunder of my life. ●



**Sirisha Limkar,  
Director,  
Limkar Group**

## The “why” always drove me more than the “what”

**S**irisha Limkar loves connecting with her customers and serving them through her family’s retail business of home appliances. She was part of the Dean’s List at the Indian School of Business and is an avid student of the dynamics of families and businesses. Empowering herself and others along the journey, exploring the world through travel, and exploring the inner self through meditation keeps her gusto alive.

In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, cycling, sketching, gardening, poetry and getting creative. A black belt in Karate, she has won many gold and silver medals in State and National level Karate championships.

### *What motivated you to join a traditional retail family business?*

Growing up with my parents! Their ideology, vision, spirit and tenacity to improve themselves every single day so that they could construct a better tomorrow for not just themselves but also for the smaller universe that they had the potential to impact.

When I sit down and chat with my father, I see his zeal to create better things, a hunger for excellence, and the stamina to push boundaries, and I am inspired by it. What is more remarkable is that this passion does not stem

from the thought of making just more money but boils down to building a team of people who believe in similar values of serving the world in the area one has chosen. As a result, despite having the best academic education, the experience of working across continents and with larger corporations and the freedom of pursuing a career of my choice, it was never a hard decision to come back and implement my learnings to aid and influence the growth ring of my family business tree.

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### *With genuine intentions and hard work, that is blended with wisdom and knowledge, one life is enough to establish something meaningful*

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The “why” always drove me more than the “what”. Today, when our customers come and share how they used to walk in our stores holding their parents’ hands and now they walk in holding their kids’ hands, I feel proud and humbled at the same time.

Looking at the business my parents have created gives me the bold confidence that with genuine intentions

and hard work, that is blended with wisdom and knowledge, one life is enough to establish something meaningful.

### *What are your role and designation? Has it changed since the MFAB days? Please share a few instances where you could bring about major improvements in the business.*

I am mostly involved with sales, financial management, marketing, business development, growth, innovation, and human resource management. After completing the MFAB course from ISB, I am now working towards building a better human resource platform to raise a healthier workforce.

I have started stores in new locations. In one of the existing stores, revenues improved by 62% the year I got back. I have initiated family meetings to encourage debates and bring out any conflicts in the open. My focus is also on streamlining operations, improving our people picking processes, training, instituting performance-based remunerations mechanisms, and building a competitive but sporting spirit among our stores to drive growth.

I aim to build a customer satisfaction centred compensation instrument that will drive our team towards a



more purposeful business. Working towards building a creche to enable our female workforce so that they can be assured that their kids are in a good environment and are taken care of while they invest their time with us. Also, working on an omnichannel presence amongst other things in the pipeline.

***D***id you face major resistance/ challenges in the process?

Having dreams and working towards them is one side and facing obstacles is the other side of the same coin. But hey, who said it was a cakewalk! When I got back, I used to be bubbling with ideas and raring to implement my learnings. Wanting to change for

the better, I try learning continuously through smaller discoveries. I have realized that it takes a tremendous amount of patience to hold on during rough times. The more you are aligned with your inner motivations and drives, the easier it is to hold on to them. And I always try to remind myself that reciprocity is universal.

***H***ave you initiated any new ventures or growth vehicles?

Yes, I have added two more lines of business (LOBs) that are similar to the existing ones to effectively use the goodwill that we have earned and the

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*Having dreams and working towards them is one side and facing obstacles is the other side of the same coin*

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customer base that we have built over decades. These side bets of mine give me a sense of accomplishment, as they are generating decently good returns.

***H***ow has the MFAB programme benefitted you?

ISB and MFAB have been a mentally churning journey, in a good way. Eye-opening, in fact! This experience has helped me hone my business acumen and given me the self-assurance to take saner and quicker decisions. The lifetime blessing is in being able to reach out to scholarly professors and industry experts across the globe and being able to connect to them in your moments of dilemma and crises. Being able to network with knowledgeable peers and alumni posse is insightful. It is a comfortable mix of leading and being led. ●



**Sailaja Kiron,  
Managing Director,  
Margadarsi Chit Fund (P) Ltd.  
Executive Director,  
Kalanjali**

Working with people is the biggest skill set **that one needs to acquire to be successful**

**S**ailaja Kiron is a B.A. in Literature from Ethiraj College, Chennai and an MBA from PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore. As a member of the Ramoji family, Sailaja joined the family business in 1990, and was inducted into the Board as Executive Director at Margadarsi Chit Fund (P) Ltd., a flagship company of the group started in 1962. In 1995, she was elevated to the position of Managing Director of Margadarsi.

Sailaja is also the Executive Director of Kalanjali, a sought-after destination for ethnic wear and traditional wedding trousseau. She is passionate about promoting the handloom industry and the use of vegetable dyes in the hand block printing for Kalanjali garments.

She is the recipient of multiple awards including the “SCWEC Women Entrepreneur Excellence Award 2010”, the “Hyderabad Women of the Decade Achievers Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship” from ASSOCHAM Ladies League, the DEVI Award conferred by Indian Express, The Businesswomen of the year award 2017 conferred by Reliance broadcast network in December 2017.



***Could you give us a brief history of the founding and growth of Margadarsi Chit Fund (P) Ltd? How did you get involved with the firm?***

Margadarsi was founded on October 01, 1962 by Sri Ramoji Rao Garu. At the time, raising money was difficult, and he thought a Chit Fund company could be a good mechanism for the middle class to meet their financial needs.

This concept soon caught on with the people of Andhra Pradesh. As the fundamentals were sound, the operations were transparent and were in the interest of people, the goodwill for Margadarsi grew enormously and it became a household name—a name “synonymous with trust”. In the year 1989, I got married to Kiron, Sri Ramoji Rao Garu’s son. We both were MBAs from PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore. From the beginning, I was very clear that I wanted to be in the business and both my husband and my father-in-law encouraged my ambition.

***The legacy of Shri Ramoji Rao Garu can be daunting for anyone. What kind of impact did it have on you as a daughter-in-law?***

Ramoji Rao Garu is a visionary who made legendary contributions in the fields of cinema, journalism and financial services. He works tirelessly, but enjoys his work immensely. Taking inspiration from him, I was passionate about my work from day 1 and never counted the number of hours I had to work.

When I joined, Margadarsi was a 27-year-old company with a turnover of Rs. 100 crores. My father-in-law’s advice to me was to respect my senior colleagues, learn from their enormous

experience and be mindful of the fact that change would be difficult for someone in their 50s. Working with people is the biggest skill set that one needs to acquire to be successful in not only business, but in family relationships as well.

***Margadarsi is now synonymous with you. What part of your legacy are you most proud of?***

I wanted to take the Margadarsi services to millions of people and therefore embarked upon its expansion in all districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. We also launched the company in States of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Today I can proudly state

me, this perception changed. And today I not only enjoy the support of my family and my employees but also the Chit Fund industry.

If you are the CEO/Chairperson of a company, it is critical that you are kind of omnipresent and for that you require the support of your family, which I was very fortunate to enjoy. At the end of the day, however, success comes by being more competent, aware, and adaptable to change.

***How are you grooming your daughters to prepare them to be responsible successors to protect and grow the family legacy?***

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***If you are the CEO/Chairperson of a company, it is critical that you are kind of omnipresent and for that you require the support of your family***

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that Margadarsi has been a friend in need for millions of families who have been able to educate their children, perform weddings, build homes and plan for their retirement. Many small businesses have grown into Rs 100 crores turnover businesses by partnering with Margadarsi.

***Was there any resistance when you joined the business and if yes, how did you overcome it? As per you, what are the key factors for women to be successful in business?***

When I started, there were very few people who believed that I would last in a male-dominated industry. But as they saw my passion, commitment, and success in taking my team along with

***What are the differences that you notice in the societal mindset from your generation to theirs?***

All my 3 daughters have seen the commitment with which I have been working all these years. They understand that they are caretakers of the wealth that their grandparents and parents have created. Keeping that in mind, they are being intensively groomed and mentored in the businesses that interest them to carry the legacy forward.

When I started working, few women were inclined to be in business even though many of them were educated. Today, most women want to either do something creative or be in commercial activities to ensure their economic independence. ●



**P**hilanthropist, educationist, sports patron, business leader and seven times Guinness World Records holder, Maharaj Kumar Sahib Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur has, since an early age, voluntarily and consciously dedicated himself to public service, upholding the cause of righteousness.

He is the trustee of the Vidyadan Trust managing the Maharana Mewar Public School in Udaipur. As Executive Director of HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur, Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur has discharged his responsibility towards promoting heritage tourism and generating employment in the hospitality industry.

He has also been awarded the 7th Bharat Gaurav Award at the UK House of Commons at Parliament in London for being a source of inspiration to the youth of the Nation. Over the years, he has received numerous awards for the extensive philanthropic work that he undertakes. In October 2019, he also received the Alumni Awards for Social / Environmental Responsibility by the Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, Australia.

He is also the Managing Committee Member of the Hotel & Restaurant Association of Northern India, Executive Committee Member of the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association of India, Member of the Indian Heritage Hotels Association, Advisor of the Imperial Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Honorary Member of Udaipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Tourism Sub Committee 2020-21, was Chairperson of the Udaipur District Cricket Association and Brand Ambassador of Round Table India.

A free-spirited traveller, a scientific sadhu, a rational philosopher who dreams of a world without boundaries making chaotically creative energy.

**Maharaj Kumar Sahib Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar,  
Executive Director  
HRH Group of Hotels,  
Udaipur**

I am not in the proving  
game **but in**  
the improving  
game



***The Mewar dynasty has existed for 77 generations. What are the factors that have contributed to sustaining a family legacy for so long? What have been the unique identity, purpose, and values?***

All the 76 generations, right up to my father, have not compromised on our core values and that has safeguarded the family's legacy over centuries.

The basic, first and foremost principle is upholding our righteousness and staying true to our traditions, our land, our people, our commitment, and to the duties that were inherited. To give you an example, our value systems tell us we need to educate societies at large and to that end, we opened our first girls' school in 1864, over 150 years ago. Today, we run multiple educational institutions and are ranked amongst the top 10 schools in Rajasthan. By imparting knowledge, we are ensuring the sustainability of our intangible heritage.

***Being a scion of the 1500-year-old House of Mewar must be a great source of pride, but it must also be a daunting prospect at times. Can you tell us a little about it?***

I am exceptionally proud of my identity. I am very happy. I am humbled and honoured. Keeping this in mind, I choose to substitute terms like daunting or burden with terms like challenge and opportunity. My position in life allows me to meet and interact with people who have different perspectives on life. It challenges me to look at myself or my family from a different angle. But when I say challenge, it is not about me having to come and prove something, rather the idea is to improve. So I am not in the proving game, but in the improving game. What can I do to improve myself? How can I make the lives of my family members better? How can I enhance the lives of the people who I encounter and those who are dependent on me?

Often people look up to us as providers of jobs or as life support systems; the fact that we can help them achieve those gives me a lot of satisfaction and joy.

***You have studied at some of the best educational institutions in the world, have been exposed to the most modern societies, and yet are grounded in traditions. How do you harmonise modernity and traditions?***

The idea is not to just go through life, but rather to grow through life. These institutions are the melting pots of the world's talent and were an invaluable learning and growing experience for me. That said, my journey always has been towards greater understanding and knowledge irrespective of the institution.

To that end, I am pursuing an MBA at Udaipur and feel that my international and local education both have provided me with invaluable learning opportunities. In fact, my experience at my local university has been immensely enriching as people are open and willing to share their lives, knowledge, and experiences with me.

***In a royal household, upholding tradition is very important. Please share with the readers a few specific steps taken by the family to groom the successors across generations and you, in particular, to uphold the "custodianship" values of the House of Mewar.***

What we have to understand is that our tradition is as much your tradition. We all have choices. Some people decide to follow traditions and some decide to stop. My being a Maharaj Kumar or being anyone else does not change my ideology that I am an Indian. I come from a civilization that is exceptionally old, and it is a choice that I make when I decide to acknowledge and respect my own culture

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***The idea is not to just go through life, but rather to grow through life***

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*The only thing that I have tried to change is to bring out the passion in the people who are working in this industry. Passion is everyone's colour*

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and tradition. But that choice is available to all of us.

Also, our traditions are universal, be it respecting one's parents, fulfilling our responsibilities, looking after and caring for people, or following our faith. I am doing nothing outside the norm. But that also does not mean that people judge me for what I am doing simply because a larger number of people have decided to do something else. Because today practising some customs of our forefathers is becoming rarer today, it stands out, and not because of anything else. Traditions to me are ways of keeping ourselves simple, clear, transparent, and together.

*Today, many business families have to walk the tightrope, trying to balance individual freedom and family unity. What are your thoughts on this?*

The fact is that everybody needs a bit of space, and individualism has to be balanced through good communication with the family. Your family is the ultimate anchor that moors you, as you challenge and find yourself.

I would like to give my example to illustrate this. As a child, I was an individual who looked for a corner in a round room to bury myself in. One of my biggest realisations was that if I had to navigate these challenges, I needed to do it myself. I had to be my own best friend. In that sense, you do need space to walk your own path and overcome impediments that come your way.

That said, I always had the full support of my family and they encouraged me on my journey. In fact, my mother played more of the role of a friend rather than that of a mother. So, I reiterate my point, that yes, you are the only person who's going to help yourself. But the support system is going to come from your family.

*What does "trusteeship" mean to you?*

Trusteeship externally and internally begins with trust. Trusteeship is doing everything that should be done with utmost sincerity, utmost honesty, and utmost truth, whichever sphere that you may be in. You may be a waiter or an owner; whoever you are, you have to trust in yourself, your work, your colleagues, and your family. You have to put that level of faith because, without it, it is very difficult to achieve your task.

*As the Executive Director of AHRH Group of Hotels, what are some of the major changes brought about by you at the operational and strategic levels?*

I do not consider myself that important that I can boast of bringing about change. The only thing that I have tried to change is to bring out the passion in the people who are working in this industry. Passion is everyone's colour. There are two times that I absolutely meet all people working at HRH Group—when they join and when they exit the company—and I always ask them what was the reason they started in this industry and what was their driving passion. I feel technical changes like upgrading mattresses or deciding the coffee flavour would have taken place anyway. My existence or non-existence does not impact these decisions.

Where I can make a difference is to impact the fabric of the person, and to keep people motivated and passionate towards the hospitality industry. Otherwise, people in the hospitality industry will become the least hospitable people. But at the same time, we are a human industry and my job every day is to make sure that the 'human' in this human industry stays alive. ●



## GR8 Sports

# Wood for the Good of Cricket

The Kashmir valley in India offers a variety of activities, including mountain biking, heli-skiing, gondola rides, shikara rides, and golfing. However, the latest attractions are the bat-manufacturing villages, where cricket bats—famously used by cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni—handmade from Kashmiri willow clefts. These days, most people travelling or visiting South Kashmir make it a point to stop by the Sangam village via National Highway 44 and shop for professional cricket bats from the GR8 Sports shop.

GR8 Sports is a second-generation manufacturer of cricket bats, sports accessories, and sports apparel. The founder, Abdul Kabeer Dar, was a passionate businessman and cricketer from Sangam, Islamabad-Kashmir. He created the first finished bat from Kashmir willow in a small factory and had been supplying unbranded bats to well-known Indian brands until 2010, however, he was still struggling to reach the international market.

Abdul's eldest son—Fawzul-Kabiir—after graduating in 2010, joined the family business and along with his younger brother Niaz-ul-Kabir, made the first push towards manufacturing cricket bats for the international market. Fawzul toiled for almost 6 years to create a mechanism that would allow precise compression of his bats to meet the specifications of the



International Cricket Council (ICC). Out of the 2.5 million bats made by 400 other family business units engaged in this industry in the Kashmir Valley, GR8 Sports is the first manufacturing company to meet the ICC standards. Despite operating in a “dying industry” for 47 years, this family firm stands out for its tenacity, optimism, and technological innovations it has brought to sports equipment manufacturers and enthusiasts.

GR8 Sports is the first bat

manufacturer to develop an AI Mechanism of Bat Compression called ‘Computer Monitored Compression’ in the world. With Fawzul’s drive to carry forward his family business professionally and innovatively, Gr8 Sports has grown from a single unit to four in 2018 and today exports 150 professional cricket bats per day. The firm employs 67 people, including the three renowned craftsmen who created bats for the master blaster Sachin Tendulkar and ‘King’ Virat Kohli.

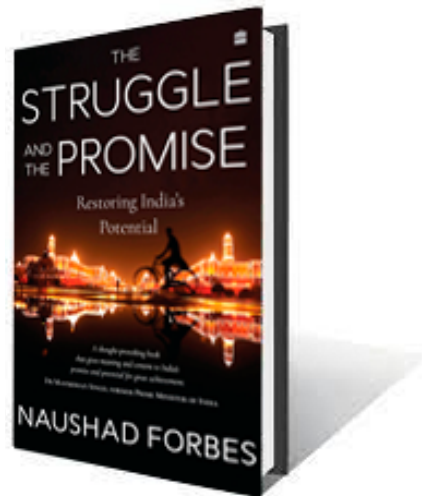




Fawzul would often ask his father, “Why are we not exporting our bats?” His father would calmly respond, “One day, we will.” His words came true when a Kashmiri willow cricket bat—handmade in a small manufacturing unit behind the Sangam village shop—made its debut in the most recent T20 World Cup held in Australia in 2022. UAE’s Junaid Siddique hit a colossal 109m “six” off a ball from Dushmantha Chameera of Sri Lanka. It was the longest six of the entire tournament and the bat used was none other than a “GR8” bat. That was when Fawzul realised that the “one day” his father

used to refer to was finally here. Since then, importers from around 17 countries, who had previously turned down his bat, have called and requested GR8 Sports equipment. Fawzul can also recall many memorable occasions when foreign sportspersons visited the factory and narrated stories of their accomplishments with his Kashmiri willow cricket bat. The company envisions seeing five international cricket teams using the GR8 sports bats and other equipment in the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2023, which India will host. Fawzul also believes that one day, every international cricketer would use a “Make in India” cricket bat.

Although the GR8 Sports brand has gone global, it still maintains deep roots locally and believes in the ethos of giving back to society. The family firm presently supports three potential international cricketers from different districts of Kashmir. The firm has taken the responsibility of sponsoring them, helping them with coaching and providing them with all the required cricket equipment. ●



## The Struggle and the Promise

Naushad Forbes

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*Book offers compelling arguments for a limited state role, the diversion of public R&D funding to firms and universities instead of research institutions, private participation in higher education, freeing up of trade, higher autonomy for institutions, and enhanced investment on innovation and design*

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behind protectionist trade policies but be confident in competing with the world's best.

The book is punctuated by interesting examples that effectively illustrate the arguments that Dr Forbes makes. For instance, he posits that public research and development (R&D) funding in private universities and firms can be a key driver in creating

In his famous budget speech of 1991 Dr Manmohan Singh, the then finance minister used a quote from Victor Hugo—“No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come”—and then went on to say, “The emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea. Let the whole world hear it loud and clear. India is now awake.” In his book *The Struggle And The Promise*, Dr Naushad Forbes (Stanford PhD), co-chair of the Forbes-Marshall industrial group in India and the former President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), references this speech—describing it as a watershed moment for India. He tries to comprehensively analyse why India is still struggling to reach this promise and what the government, industry and institutions can do to bridge this gap within a cultural context that is uniquely Indian and forms the foundation of its promise.

He advocates for low state involvement and believes the state must confine itself to things it only can and must do like public healthcare, primary education, running the criminal justice system, judiciary, taxation etc., and suggests that where the state steps back industry should step in. The industry, he contends, should be at the forefront in realising the nation's potential and commit itself to a broader development agenda that is underpinned by the highest ethical practices and promise of inclusivity across the board. It should not hide

talented human capital and innovations that could be commercialised. To illustrate this, he cites the example of Stanford University, where the output of research investment cannot be seen so much in brilliant scientific discoveries, as it can be seen in the brilliant students it produced, who founded great companies like Hewlett Packard, Google, Yahoo, Twitter, Apple and hundreds more. He also uses the example of Alphabet, whose R&D expenditure alone (\$26 billion) is more than what the whole of India spends in R&D, to demonstrate how Indian firms need to step up their R&D spending.

Through in-depth analysis of studies by leading thinkers and statistical data, the book offers compelling arguments for a limited state role, the diversion of public R&D funding to firms and universities instead of research institutions, private participation in higher education, freeing up of trade, higher autonomy for institutions, and enhanced investment on innovation and design. A common theme that runs throughout the book is that of inclusivity being the foundation for all action – inclusivity of ideas, competition, people, criticism or dissent. Peppared with R K Laxman cartoons and anecdotes, the book not only offers the reader an interesting peek into the interactions between the polity, bureaucracy and industry but also more importantly presents a well-researched, persuasive action plan for India to deliver on its promise. ●

## Indian School of Business

Indian School of Business (ISB) is a global business school offering world-class management education across its two campuses - Hyderabad and Mohali. The School has grown at a rapid pace since its inception and already has several notable accomplishments to its credit. It is the youngest school ever to consistently rank among the top Global MBAs, one among the select 100 global b-schools to have AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS accreditation, one of the largest providers of Executive Education in Asia, and among the most research-productive Indian management institution. A vibrant pool of research-oriented resident faculty, strong academic associations with leading global b-schools and the backing of an influential Board, have helped the ISB emerge as a premier global business school in the emerging markets. For details visit [www.isb.edu](http://www.isb.edu)

## Thomas Schmidheiny Centre for Family Enterprise

The Thomas Schmidheiny Centre for Family Enterprise, at the Indian School of Business has emerged as the foremost authority on family businesses in South Asia. It undertakes teaching, training, research and outreach activities covering all major topics on family business. The Centre collaborates with global academic institutions and leading family businesses in India and abroad for exchange of insights and knowledge among diverse stakeholders.

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