

Reading room

Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World by General Stanley McChrystal

In his book, McChrystal and his colleagues show how the challenges they faced in Iraq can be relevant to countless businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations. The world is changing faster than ever, and the smartest response for those in charge is to give small groups the freedom to experiment while driving everyone to share what they learn across the entire organization. As the authors argue through compelling examples, the team of teams strategy has worked everywhere from hospital emergency rooms to NASA. It has the potential to transform organizations large and small

"YOU HAVE TO BE AN ALL-ROUNDER!"

Dr. Srija Unnikrishnan, Principal of Fr. C. Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, offers her message and much more to engineering students in an interview with Shraddha Kamdar

Even with being busy with various things, she welcomed me without hesitation one afternoon for this interview. Not one to ask for a list of questions in advance, she was confident and graceful enough to know her college and her students well to answer any question that I might put her way. No wonder, since she has academic experience of 33 years and has around 60 publications in national and international journals and conferences to her credit. She has worked in various capacities in the world of education, even as part of several university committees and paper setter for the UPSC Engineering Services Examination, among many others. FPI Knowledge is happy to present **Dr. Srija Unnikrishnan**, currently the principal of Fr. C. Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra.

Excerpts from an interview:

How do you encourage students towards academics even when the syllabus is not updated often?

See, it might not be possible for the Board of Studies to update the syllabus every now and then. That said, I believe that the engineering programme the way it is structured right now offers the right foundation for a student in any stream of engineering. Once the basics are in place, picking up anything new for any student should not be a difficult task. That is how students can keep up with the dynamism of the industry while keeping their basics in place. In addition to that there are several initiatives that we take up in the college which encourage the students in different ways.

Can you provide a few examples of such activities?

During placements, we seek feedback from the companies which come to the campus, and we share this feedback with the students. In addition, we have devised a placement readiness programme for the students, and we offer suitable training to them to be ready for the process.

We also encourage students to take up competitive coding. It is

very challenging for them to participate in various competitions, and even within the college we ask the student bodies and committees to organise such events.

Now, teachers are also quite technology savvy and know how to use it effectively in class. So classroom sessions are hardly boring when the interaction is promoted and queries are discussed openly. Students enjoy this process.

In fact, if students want to write academic papers, they are free to do so upon topics across streams, and they are also free to approach any faculty member in the college for guidance. All the teachers are available to all the students for solving problems across branches.

What kind of national and international technical competitions can students participate in?

There are so many competitions, and each one is extremely challenging. Apart from working on a challenge, students are also interested in participating to add on to their CVs. The project statement is put up online, and students work on them, seeking guidance from the teachers whenever needed. They also travel within the country

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Dr. Srija Unnikrishnan

and abroad to present their work at the competitions. Recently our students fabricated an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and competed in the advanced class category of SAE:2015 Aero Design East held at Lakeland, Florida, USA. The team was globally ranked first in the presentation round and sixth overall. It was first among all the Asian country teams.

Similarly, our students have worked on several competitions working on Formula 1 cars, all terrain vehicles, robotics and so on. These competitions provide a great platform for exposure to the outside world, and students learn how to perceive and work with others. This way, they also build soft skills.

Despite having such exposure

and working on such real-life challenges, do you find that students are still geared towards the 'marks mentality' where nothing matters more to them than marks?

Yes, they are, and we cannot blame them. In our current system, marks are extremely important, since every essential phase in their lives begins with the marks they score. Not only at the time of admissions, but even at the time of placements as all. Some companies have a cut off percentage, below which score they will not interview a candidate. Even if some of us believe that marks are not the true indicator of a person's abilities, we encourage our students to score at least a certain minimum percentage every year, so that they at least

have a chance.

However, we also have examples of those students who have not been on top academically during their student years, but have blossomed within the industry. We have several such alumni coming over and talking to the students. When the current students hear from the young alumni, it creates a deeper impact. Some may have even lost years when in college, but are doing so well presently, that they are able to offer a whole picture to the current students. That makes a lot of difference.

According to you, how important are soft skills in today's day and age?

Soft skills need to be developed from the placement point of view,

and even later on in life to take you ahead. How you present yourself and express yourself matters, in every industry. That's why we offer the support to all our students. After all, it is only like polishing them. Other than that, the companies also offer orientation sessions for the new hires once the placements are done. These sessions are done here at the college and offer students an insight into the actual work.

What advice do you give students when they are unhappy with the company they have received offers from?

Mostly, students do not go only by the name and reputation of the company during placements, but look at several other factors. They check how much scope there is for learning, and choose accordingly. Over the years, the placement policy that we have developed in also such that students get a fair chance and what they want, and it is difficult for them to be placed in multiple companies in the same category or at the same level. The students are aware of this, and they then choose accordingly.

After all, engineering is now increasingly being perceived as a basic degree but the candidates have a certain high level of analytical and problem solving skills. Often, students opt for securing work experience for a few years and then get back to higher studies, no matter what the area.

What is your message to aspiring engineers and engineering students?

Engineering is a very interesting field irrespective of the branch you choose. There is a lot of interdisciplinary learning that happens in engineering, and the four years of the bachelor's programme prepare you for the challenges that you might face throughout your life. After all, you have to be an all-rounder!

K.B.College of Arts and Commerce for Women, Thane

- HARSH UTSAV'15

Indradhanush at K.B College(Thane) in winter



INDRADHANUSH STUDENTS TEAM



Shri Param Bir Singh - Commissioner Of Police, Thane, Dr. Renu Trivedi - Principal K.B, Dr. H. S. Cheema CEO



Dr. Harsh Khanna, Mrs. Pushpa Narang, Narendra Rane - Chairman Siddhivinayak Trust, Dolly Bindra - Film Actress, Dr. H.S. Cheema - CEO EES, Dr. Sai Kiran Khanna - MD EES, Dr. Renu Trivedi - Principal K.B

Excellsiors' Educational Societies, K.B. College of Arts and Commerce for Women is the only NAAC accredited 'A' women's college situated in Thane functioning for past couple of decades. The college has excelled not only in academic performance through university rank holding and overall passing result of above 90% but also cultural activities performed. K.B. students were able to bring down Indradhanush to their cultural annual fest 'HARSH UTSAV' 2015 on 22nd December at Gadkari Rangayatan Auditorium.

Every year after brain storming for months together the theme for each year cultural fest 'Harsh Utsav' is decided. Accordingly the theme evolved for annual cultural prog 2015 was Indradhanush- Mere Amber Ka.

The theme based Annual programme was performed for more than 5hrs and more than 250 participants that involved the depiction of cultural and traditional diversities of states in India from North to South stretching from West to east. The entire exhibition was in the forms of dance, projections, documentaries, skit, fashion show,

epilogue etc. Cultural and traditions legacies of number of states and Union Territories was rekindled in the hearts of audience to reassert the extraordinary and beautiful highlight of diversity with unity in India. The coverage of the states and union territories ranged from Jammu Kashmir Bumrao dance to Tamil Nadu bharnatnatyam and Gujarat Garbha and tippani along with to assam tribal dance of Bihu, UP, Chath Pooja and Kathak, W. Bengal manifestation of victorious Durga over the evil rudra. The prog was event of interest to attend to all the esteemed and distinguished guests present at the show who promptly provided consent to be a part of after hearing the theme. Among number of guests k.B. College was honoured to have Police Commissioner Shri Parambir Singh, T.M.C additional Commissioner Shri. Rankhamb, Siddhivinayak Trust Chairman Mr. Narayan Rane, most talked about Big Boss celebrity and versatile bollywood actress Dolly Bindra. Harsh Utsav in K.B. College is

not only about the Annual Prog, it also comprises of the celebration for 4 consecutive days earlier to it. This involves the number of unique days celebrated viz school day, horror make up day, cartoon day, retro day etc., literary competitions viz elocution, debate, extempore etc. art competition lviz theme based Rangoli, Mehendi, Salad dressing, flower art etc. dance and singing and Miss K.B. personality Contest.

'Overall prog was a hit and most befitted bidding bye to year 2015 in India' was the remark given by all eminent guests and the management of the college. Principal Dr.Renu Trivedi, Vice Principal Sumathi B. Cultural Incharge Ms. Vaishali Garkal, Student Council Incharge Ms. Manjusha Kulkarni and the staff were overjoyed with the fact that the entire auditorium was up with all patriotic slogans like Vande Mataram, Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Jai Ho, Mera Bharat Mahan, three cheers for the college hip hip hurray so on and so forth.



Dr. Harsh Khanna - Chairperson EES, Shri Param Bir Singh - Commissioner of Police Thane, Dr. H. S. Cheema - CEO EES



Dr. Harsh Khanna - Chairperson EES, Shri Ashok Kumar Rankhumb - Addl. Commissioner TMC