Cecil Antony
Managing Trustee-NSHM Knowledge Campus

Translating
VISION INTO REALITY

Cecil Antony has always believed that education is a powerful instrument to first empower self and then the society. Right from the start he has held strong opinions about the educational system and modules followed by institutions across the country. Though he believes in the power of institutionalized education, he also feels that some of the most successful people around the world never graduated from a higher learning institution. According to Mr. Antony, real success came from a combination of creativity and critical thinking. Influenced by the lives of Shakespeare, Tagore, Abraham Lincoln and Steve Jobs, much of his thought processes seemed to have been borrowed from the lives and thinking of these great men. As he did his B. Tech and went on to get a splendid break with SAIL, Mr. Antony never stopped learning. He amalgamated his own experiences to come to a conclusion that education is important and must be designed in such a way that the self-belief of a learner is increased manifold and, finally, when the time comes the learner finds himself equipped with the right skill set to help him create a meaningful engagement in life. That is why he always harboured a wish to contribute to the Education sector and shape a part of it in his way. He believed that a more liberal approach and multi-disciplinary insights could help address the problems. A possible solution to this issue was rather simple and sensible. He stressed on the nuances of LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) that had served the cause of industrial growth and the overall upward climb of the economy so far.

The Beginning

NSHM is an abbreviation of four Latin words: Notabilis, Sociatrix, Humanus and Maxime, which translates into English as "Noteworthy Collaboration for Best Development of Humankind". NSHM started off with an idea that the education system needs to be liberating and students need to be given inputs they would find meaningful, appropriate in the real world. Mr. Antony who was different from his counterparts tried to break out of his own comfort mould and pitch for the change in the system. After a year and a half with SAIL, he forayed into entrepreneurship and got a franchise for NIIT which was planning to start its first franchise in West Bengal. The glaring gap between learning and doing was what irked him and he promised to change that with the first chance he got.

It was on these ambitious lines that NSHM was formed. It aimed to make students learn how to earn, lead, reason and innovate. It built its curriculum so that students could act on challenges and change things that they found redundant to their world; seek opportunities and gain on their inner reserves of strength even as they set bigger challenges for themselves.

This model was well received and helped gain acceptability and credibility. By 1999, almost a decade after the start of the first franchise

outlet, 20 more centres sprang up across the state of West Bengal. A Hotel Management Institute was set up in 1996 which offered a three-year full-time diploma course, the first of its kind.

The courses continued to grow and so did their outreach. Finally after a good and successful run in the area, Mr. Antony moved to the domain of higher education and catered to industry demands at the regional and national levels and also beyond the borders.

The choice of Durgapur as the site for the Institute was a trifle difficult to fathom since Durgapur did not enjoy so much popularity and presence in the educational map of the country. However, Mr. Antony felt that Durgapur, with its well informed, energetic and professional minded residents could contribute well to the growth of the institute. Moreover SAIL was generous enough to lease him one of their unused properties at B-Zone, which was big in terms of space and other support facilities. A similar facility in Kolkata could have been prohibitively expensive in comparison for a fledgling Institute. Besides what clinched the deal was the presence of only one Hotel management college which was quite popular for students outside West Bengal. Another college of a similar kind in the area would bring in students with considerable ease. With these practical considerations in mind the first campus was set up in 1991 in Durgapur. Spread across 23.65 acres and 5.5 lac square feet built up space, the campus gave students the ideal ambience of competitiveness and eased pace.

The success of NSHM in Durgapur spurred another operation in Kolkata. The Kolkata campus is on a 2.1 acre land, right in the heart of the city near Tollygunge Metro Station and is on a 2.0 lac square feet built-up space.

NSHM started with only one course namely, Diploma in Hotel Management & Catering Technology which later got metamorphosed as a 3-year BBM (Hospitality Management) and presently it offers 30 programs across various sectors like Hospitality, Healthcare, Media, Engineering and Management.

The Hurdles

Success, of course, did not come easily and the Institute had to face a number of challenges, in the initial days. In the start-up phase during 1995-96 private limited companies were not allowed to operate in the domain of formal education, NSHM also needed to have regulatory compliances for parameters like space, lab infrastructure and other material and human resources. Requisite affiliations and approvals from all concerned authorities also had to be got and the campus had to be constructed. All these became even more significant as at that time hotel management was considered a low esteem career option.

Period of growth

The starting of the hotel management institute meant a journey of consolidation at every stage. So between 1996 and 2001, the institute recruited faculty with relevant qualifications and industry experience. Along with diplomas, the institute also started offering degree courses. With such varied academic courses, the profile of the faculty too changed dramatically. What had started with five faculty members soon grew into more than 350 members with their qualifications ranging from masters to doctorates. Along the way faculty members were also inducted from premier higher education institutions like the IIMs, IITs, NITs and other universities.

What has also propelled NSHM at the top of the heap in so short a time is undoubtedly the vision of its founder. Alongside the presence of a prominent faculty, changing attitudes towards education and opening up of other career option shave helped consolidate its position. Finally the leadership at NSHM contributed in a far more intensive way to the growth of the Institution. The leadership is in the hands of eminent academicians like an ex-Vice-Chancellor, scientists, directors and

Our faculty leadership works with their organizational objectives in alignment with half-yearly action plans under each of the stated key performance areas (KPAs). NSHM also has operating manuals (HR and Governance) to ensure free, fair and transparent work-environments for amicable outcomes, appraisals and rewards.

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deans from esteemed institutions like Viswa Bharati University, CSIR, Symbiosis, NIT, ISB and IMI.

Current scenario

NSHM today has a combined enrolment of more than 5,000 students. This is not a mean achievement considering that three years after it was set up the institute had only about 100 students, a figure which had gone up to 1,200 by the end of 2005. What helped matters were that the Kolkata campus came up in 2006 and more students also enrolled there. Over 150 companies today have students who have passed out of NSHM working for them.

A lot of what the students and the institute have achieved has to do with the state-of-the-art infrastructure that NSHM has. For instance, the campuses have modern labs in the areas of language learning, computer science and IT among others. NSHM also has industry linkages with associations and chambers and companies like Oracle, Microsoft, Avaya, Adobe and Autodesk.

At another level the success that NSHM has achieved can be gauged from the fact that its faculty has over 900 publications in international and national journals. Students have the option of going in for exchange programmes and also taking part in international study programmes. The internal environment is student-led and faculty guided.

NSHM's skills training foray began with NSHM Udaan Skills Foundation (NUSF), an accredited skills training initiative under NSDC, Ministry of Finance, GoI, with a mission to transfer employable skills to 1 million youths by year 2022. Besides, another dream came true in form of the establishment of a state-of-the-art Medical College and Hospital by the name of IQ City at Durgapur

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"Education is the knowledge or skill that can empower first the self and then society."
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