JUGAAD - THE DEI WAY

The formal meaning of the term 'Jugaad' is flexible, frugal and speedy approaches to problem-solving that use limited resources in an innovative and inexpensive way. The Dayalbagh Educational Institute (DEI) has interpreted the word Jugaad in a somewhat more liberal manner- perhaps it could be described as a Jugaad interpretation of the word Jugaad (consensus building among all stakeholders).

DEI traces its origins to a full century back. Its foundational principles of selfless service, better worldliness, and over-arching philosophy of "Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man" are deeply rooted in the spiritual and material ethos of the Dayalbagh ashram and way of life. Deriving from this philosophy, DEI has leveraged Jugaad approaches to problem-solving in the context of social systems in general and the needs of the most marginalized in particular. An additional benefit of such systems is that they usually have deep inter-linkages, and so innovations in one area affect an entire community of living beings (and even beyond).

Jugaad innovation has been used in designing and synthesizing a unique educational ecosystem at DEI that allows 360° transition between skilling and mainstream education. This flexibility allows students to pursue/transition between Certificate, Diploma or even Degree courses. 'Earn-while-you-learn' schemes inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset, creating future opportunities in wealth and knowledge generation. A common thread through all programmes is the emphasis on frugal and innovative use of resources to devise eco-friendly, mobile, smart and resilient solutions.

Another example where DEI has effectively deployed Jugaad technology is in its partnership with BSNL to set up last mile mobile connectivity in remote villages. This facilitated e-education, telemedicine, and e-commerce in rural and tribal areas; access to technology has empowered the local tribal women to create Self-Help Groups and set up sustainable nano-enterprises through frugal innovation and low-cost input.

Rural and tribal children too, have benefitted from DEI's experiments in frugal innovation. The Prakash Lab at Stanford University, renown as a pioneering innovator in frugal science has partnered with DEI in popularizing one of the lab's most widely known Jugaad innovations, a paper origami microscope ('foldscope'). This piece of Jugaad equipment has provided school children in even remote villages exposure to science at practically no cost.

By using low-cost Jugaad ideas and in-house technology, DEI has designed and developed its own Earth-friendly power grid. Rooftop solar panels and biomass plants generate enough electricity to make DEI self-sufficient in energy. Green mobility is promoted in the campus through the use electric vehicles which are themselves recharged using solar power.

Practiced as a way of life over a century, experiential learning through frugal ideation and implementation has nurtured a unique approach to problem-solving in both, DEI and Dayalbagh. In recent days, this led to two teams from DEI and Dayalbagh winning a virtual hackathon, the 'COVID-19 Challenge, India Turning the Tide', organized by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA.

DEI has brought its innovative approach to addressing one of the most pressing questions of modern society: how to mitigate the dangers that social media and unrestrained mobile phone usage pose to youth. At DEI, correct values, qualities and attributes are inculcated in children as young as 3 weeks old through the Superman Evolutionary Scheme. As children move through the DEI education system, they are exposed to Institute-wide Core Courses, and great emphasis is laid on working with their hands, whether in agricultural fields or in cleaning the Institute campus. This kind of training practiced from an early age helps discipline young minds and inculcates a spirit of selfless service, social sensibilities and dignity of labour, Jugaad hacks to living a fulfilled and meaningful life, following a "Golden Mean Path" and practicing better worldliness.

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