



earnest & young

Pallavi Singh Keshri

With one of the youngest population in the world, India is also blessed with some of the sharpest brains and personalities. It was only natural to have a column on these 'earnest' and young achievers; we were simply spoilt for choice. Trina Mukherjee picks one every month in this new column.

As we sift through intricate showpieces, soft bedspreads and elaborate wall-hangings in swanky shopping malls, little thought gets spared for the handmade crafts that are available back home. In India, there is beauty in diversity and that holds true for local crafts from specific areas as well. With no dearth of talent, Indians hone their crafts to perfection by incorporating traditional motifs in a contemporary avatar. Handmade crafts are prevalent throughout the country. All it needs is the perfect channel for exposure so that people from within the country as well as those living around the world can take a look and make them a part of their daily lifestyle. There is a great potential yet to be tapped, yet the difficulty remains as to how these unexplored crafts will get to see the light of the day?

Those who are seeking out to taste the unexplored can breathe a sigh of relief. There is a glimmer of hope in the form of an initiative taken by Pallavi Singh Keshri. Armed with an

MBA degree from the US, the Delhi girl, born and brought up in Patna is on a mission. Not everyday does one come across a youngster, who abandons the glitz and glamour of a corporate life in the Middle East and perches herself to her homeland, with the dream to offer help to her roots. Her vision is clear and focus firm. Taking a leaf out of technology, Pallavi's project called "Eyaas" is a platform through which she aims to provide sustainable development to scores of Indians, across various parts of the country whose handmade crafts are lying unexplored.

When quizzed about this interesting idea, the young entrepreneur said that she always wanted to work as a retailer for handmade products. The plan being capital intensive propelled Pallavi towards exploring online options. This allowed her to access the international crafts' market, by sourcing as well as selling products.

That's how 'Eyaas' was born. The term has its etymological origins in Arabic and means falconry which is a dying art form in the Middle East.

So what is 'Eyaas' all about? "Eyaas is a project which is very logistics intensive. Our initiative begins with sourcing the products and continues till they reach the consumers. Since we are sourcing from non-profit and independent artisans, who further deal with people in semi-urban and rural areas, it becomes challenging at every step-technology, logistics, packaging, dispatch etc."

Sounds very impressive, but then what is the crux of 'Eyaas'? Pallavi explains that she had merged the idea of sustainable development with marketing. Sustainability, in her words is, "a time concept, anything that can be maintained and systematically managed over time." She firmly believes that by creating a platform, the crafts-persons will definitely benefit since they can directly connect with consumers and together the two can form a group that can boast of an enhanced life by accessing a wider network of goods and services available to them.

Now this spells good news for our country where the talent pool waits to be discovered and brought to the forefront. But, then while these ideas look good on paper, one wonders as to whether they are feasible in practice?

The feisty youngster, looking unfazed, replied in a tone with characteristic panache, "Yes, it is correct that people we aim to promote and support through our endeavour are not well-versed with technology. However, we establish a one on one contact, in person. One way to meet these people is at crafts' fairs. Then we visit them at

their workplace to get an understanding of the environment and their needs and the way they lead their lives. This is a way by which bonds are built. Then there are several great resources like the office of the Development Commissioner for handicrafts and organizations which works through initiatives like The Craft Revival Trust. These resources are of great help to us in identifying crafts and craftsmen in regions.

"Eyaas, which is still in its nascent stage, does its marketing mainly through 'word of mouth.' Social media network like the Twitter and Facebook and various other blogs are of great help and makes our presence felt across sectors and masses."

With a firm head on her shoulders, Pallavi's strong resolve is bolstered by an immense pride that she takes in her cultural streak. This is what acts as an impetus in her life to make a difference by promoting something that's very Indian. An optimist, Pallavi feels that she being a modern girl can vouch for the fact that modern India in the cities is experiencing a Renaissance in the sector of handmade crafts. With a whole new league of designers, more and more products made with traditional techniques yet with a modern tinge to it, are readily available in the market.

With work taking up a sizeable proportion of her life, Pallavi still finds time to indulge in her passions. "I love the mountains and whenever there is time, I head for the hills to recharge myself," smiles the young entrepreneur, taking in a deep breath, perhaps



reminiscing about one of her enjoyable vacations up at the hills. Apart from travelling, Pallavi loves to read and confesses that she spends a major chunk of her income solely on books and DVDs since music is another absolute favourite hobby that she indulges in.

While the youngsters are busy taking long strides to keep abreast of the competitive race, Pallavi does not look keen to join in the bandwagon. "My family is in Patna and still involved with agriculture. We all are very strongly connected to our village and I make it a point to visit once every year."

She prefers to take each day as it comes, adding reflectively, "Life is what happens to you, while you are busy making other plans!" She wants to devote her entire focus on 'Eyaas', and wants to reach across to more people through www.eyaas.com.

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