



## Rendezvous with Dr. Shubhro Sen

### **Education is and will be the most powerful tool for individual and social change, and we must do all that it takes to facilitate it – Shiv Nadar**

The School of Management and Entrepreneurship at Shiv Nadar University seeks to impart academic excellence while developing management professionals with a strong global orientation. The team at MBA Rendezvous got the opportunity to speak with the Director of the School of Management and Entrepreneurship (SME) and the School of Extended Education and Professional Development (SEEPD), Dr. Shubhro Sen.

Dr. Sen has a PhD in Marketing and Strategic Management from the Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley and is a serial entrepreneur who has co-founded and led multiple U.S. and India based start-ups. In his three decade career, he has been in advisory roles with the Government of India, Singapore and Czech Republic, he has taught students in some of the top B-schools in Illinois, California, and Massachusetts. He has, also conducted many seminars and executive education workshops across the globe: US, Europe, Singapore, and India. Prior to joining SNU, Dr. Sen was the Director at the Tata Management Training Centre, the corporate university for the Tata Group.

He spoke at length about the I-Global MBA program and the opportunities it presents. He also shared his views on the importance of entrepreneurial thinking and the importance of being oriented technologically and globally. Read on to find out more.

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### **Team MBA Rendezvous : How does the I-Global MBA Program prepare students to become Industry ready “glocally”?**

**Dr. Sen** The global focus is actually embedded throughout our program. One way is through the types of cases selected, live business examples, and projects our students engage in virtually every class. We use many cases from Harvard and other global repositories which expose them to real-time scenarios and challenges that are globally relevant. Such cases provide a great ‘mini-encapsulation’ of an industry. Often these featured companies are transnational, operating in different countries and provide students with a good perspective on how international businesses take decisions how and commerce takes place every day . Our program features cases that illustrate the global nature of business today – global finance, global production, multi-national customer delivery processes, or global outsourcing. The overarching goal is to make our students industry ready for the global business stage.

The second aspect is through internships. At SNU, we have two types of internships – Industry Internships & Rural

Internships. The industry internships that our students undergo are tightly monitored. There is coordination between the faculty coordinator and reporting manager at the organization and the students are graded based on their performance. The reasons we take this so seriously are because we want our students to gain maximum relevant work exposure which develops sector specific expertise. Secondly, the students should ideally become an attractive talent proposition to the company where they do their internships.

Coming to the rural internships, this is something that only a few top schools in India are doing. The rural sector is the fastest growing sector of the Indian economy. As India embraces industrialization, these are the people who will account for a bulk of both consumption and small scale production. Today, every large FMCG company is keen to appeal effectively to the rural customers and understand the dynamics of the rural market. Our students get to work with rural-based NGOs and do a business-related project in these NGOs. In this way we are preparing them for the India of the future.

The third way is through international exchanges and immersions. We have built a robust network of colleges with partners in the USA, Europe, Australia, and China. We are especially focused on our partners in China. We offer international language training for our students such as Mandarin and Spanish for more impactful business communication in niche international segments. Although such courses lie outside the formal curriculum, yet many of our students still undertake them successfully despite their busy schedules.

In addition, this admission year, July 2019, we are offering a special global immersion fellowship. Our entrance standards are pretty high and anybody who is good enough to be admitted will automatically get a global immersion as part of the program. These are a few ways in which we implement the theme of internationalization in our programs.

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## **Team MBA Rendezvous : How does the I-Global MBA equip students for the future @ pace of ever-changing technology?**

 **Dr. Sen** This is a great question and something we are very cognizant of. This is the exposure /these are the skillsets most in demand today. It helps that many of our students are engineers and have prior work experience. This allows us to orient new technology centric offerings towards consulting, IT services and the digital domain which are increasingly becoming ubiquitous.

When someone asks me what would be the tagline for our program(s), I say – our students are the future ‘Charioteers of the Digital Economy’. Today the technology horses are going in so many different directions – 3-D printing, Nanotechnology, Crypto Currency, Bit Coin – and they are all converging. At best what we can do is, to teach our students to be the best horsemen of the future and enable them with the basic awareness, training and to “ride” all these different trends and technologies, to victory !

Just like the global perspective, technology awareness is also naturally embedded in our programs. We have specialized classes and workshops on IT Consulting, Digital Marketing, and e-Commerce. This year we have introduced a new course in our under graduate program – Transformative Technologies and the Digital Economy. Each week, through talks and presentations from internal and external experts, our undergraduate, Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) students get immersed in a new technology. At the end of the term they have to choose a technology and present an entrepreneurial venture based on that technology.

Our overall theme is to **lead like an entrepreneur**. Every organization wants entrepreneurial thinking, someone who can take ownership and risks, is accountable and thinks of the organization as a whole. We try to instill these entrepreneurial skills through the various courses we offer in entrepreneurship. We want our students to think about it at a group ideation level – how can I use new technology to transform society and generate income. We have a process to

convert these ideas into ventures and hope that some of these propositions will become actual profitable ventures.

Currently we are doing this with our undergrads and will gradually do it for our masters students as well. We have a very vanguard bachelors program for the undergraduates – Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) – which is quite unique in India. Towards the fulfilment of this aspiration, we have been granted full support and resources by our founder and management.

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## **Team MBA Rendezvous : How does the I-Global MBA at SNU transform students towards becoming entrepreneurs?**

 **Dr. Sen** As an institution and as individuals we are very committed to entrepreneurship. We have been founded by India's greatest entrepreneur and are called the School of Management and Entrepreneurship. I am a serial entrepreneur myself and have started many ventures, both in the US and in India.

SNU was among the first ones among thousands of applicants across India to be selected by the Atal Innovation Mission of the Niti Ayog. We have an incubator on campus with an integrated mentorship and resource ecosystem that is aligned with the entrepreneurial thought process and business cycle. The students who come in are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs as part of the subjects they study. We have specific core courses with an entrepreneurial theme as part of our MBA – Creating & Managing New Ventures, Negotiations & Evaluations, and so on. In every class students are encouraged to think like entrepreneurs. Often, our projects are with the companies that the students are already working in, so that they can continue to work with that project over the successive timeframe.

Next are the student competitions. Every year we have business school competitions where 500 to 600 students from across the schools in India come and participate in our annual event — Moksha. In fact our bachelor's students have also started an event this year. As part of our entrepreneurship cycle, the finalists at Moksha events are automatically given a final spot in the incubation centre (which has its own entrance competition started in 2017). Previously, there were 175 entries out of which 10 promising proposals were selected. Now we have taken another 8 proposals and currently have 18 projects in incubation.

From our program perspective, this is a natural avenue for our students. They can come up with their ideas and enter competitions to get a spot in the incubator or seek guidance from mentors there. We have the most active Entrepreneurship Cell because we have linked it to the incubator itself. The environment constantly spurs people to think like entrepreneurs. Our ecosystem is fairly vibrant on the entrepreneurship side. We hope to see game-changing business results in the future years. A few companies have already picked up investment interest from angel investors and are in their initial proof of concept stage.

Another advantage we have, is that our incubator is supported by the Government. Thanks to this, we have an advanced technology stack which many institutes and incubators cannot easily access. We have equipment such as advanced 3-D printers for additive manufacturing projects, advanced machine learning workstations and software and so on. We hope this will spur innovation at a core level. We have the resources, intellectual fire-power and bright students who we hope will develop high-end innovations with a sound business overlay.

Our students have a wonderful pathway. We do not yet have a special program for entrepreneurship but we are considering starting one in the near future.

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## **Team MBA Rendezvous : How do Pedagogy & Curriculum at SME aspire to**

## transform a student into a leader?

**Dr. Sen** Our pedagogy and curriculum are focused on three pillars – Entrepreneurial Leadership, Technology Leadership, and Global Orientation.

I would like to add a fourth pillar that is as important to the genesis of the “I” in the I-Global Program. This is the focus on the “I” or the ‘Focus on the Individual’. It is very important for the individual to realize and understand his/her leadership potential and capability. The sooner we realize this potential, the more beneficial it is for us as an individual and for the organizations where we contribute through our ideas and work.

I say this from personal experience because I am a serial entrepreneur myself and I often feel that had I been more self-aware in my early years, I would have been more effective as a CEO at the early age of 30.

Secondly, I have led the global leadership training at the Tata Management Training Centre for their top 10000 employees across 80 countries. When I was leading new curriculum development I realized, based on my industry exposure, consulting, and advisory experience, that it is extremely important to turn the mirror on to the leader through introspection and a SWOT analysis at an early stage in one’s career. I started implementing this practice with first time managers who found it very useful. Thus, I decided to bring this aspect into the MBA we offer. We put our students through personal development training which includes self-awareness modules, experiential learning, psychometric and behavioral assessment.

Self-awareness, self-acceptance, and understanding your strengths and weaknesses are some very important qualities to have to be a successful leader. The last 2 batches of the I-Global program have been through this process and with time we are certain that we will see great outcomes. We are quite young as an institution, but the intent and investment from our side is 100% into the future of our graduates.

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## Team MBA Rendezvous : What is that you are looking for in an aspiring student who is willing to join SNU?

**Dr. Sen** The biggest thing we look for in a student who is willing to join SNU is his/her ambition to succeed and the desire to truly create an individual mark in the social and business ecosystem. I would like to say that we seek the answer to the question – ‘Are you willing to stand out and make a mark in the world?’ We seek true enthusiasm and spark, whether it be as an entrepreneur or as a leader.

Firstly, I want people to have a larger view beyond the program. There is no doubt that the program itself and the learning you get as part of it are very very important. But ultimately we look for people who want to make a mark in life and present a positive attitude. We are looking for people who are curious and active rather than passive learners. Our students thus far are very industrious and sharp and we are confident of their career success.

Our overall focus remains on High quality as befits a top tier business school. Our program features all the elements to be found in the very BEST global programs ---for a fraction of the fees. As such, we are confident of becoming a globally accredited, ranked Business school in both India and globally Therefore, we do not compromise on the absolute entrance standards, even if it means having smaller classes and cohorts,

Secondly, we are hoping that these confident and ambitious students are internationally oriented. In turn, we will help them to be more sophisticated, globally ready and polished.

Thirdly, we want students who want to make an impact and a genuine difference to our society. It could be as an entrepreneur or as a leader.

In nutshell, we look for individuals who are self-motivated, have a larger ambition and the drive to make an impact on the organization they would join or with the company that they start as entrepreneurs.

## **Team MBA Rendezvous : What would be your message to MBA pass out students who are about to join the industry?**

**Dr. Sen** My message to the students is to be confident about what you have learned. This is independent of what level of institute you come from. You still need to make the best of it. Sometimes it is very easy to criticize what an institution did or did not do for you. In addition to the subjects you study, you need to appreciate and value the larger learning and opportunity you got. Because this is something you have not only chosen but also paid for. If you are not confident in displaying what you know, you will not reap the full reward for your investment.

Today, the world has changed for India and Indians. I have been part of the global set up for almost 40 years and I can say that Indians belong anywhere they go. Our preceding generations have paved that way for us. We have accomplished so much everywhere we have ventured. Indians have made a mark everywhere, be it the US, Europe, or Australia. So, the students should feel confident in going wherever they want and should consider themselves second to none in terms of potential and desire to succeed.

Lastly, college is the place where we learn how to learn. What we learn through the MBA program is just the starting point. The business world is changing radically before our eyes. So, it is very critical that students continue to learn through curiosity. It is an amazing time in terms of new technologies and the evolving business world. There is so much opportunity. So, students should aspire for continuous learning through the easily accessible knowledge sources that exist. The ground is shifting and they need to be moving constantly. If they don't do so, they will be left behind or at a less optimal position. So please keep learning and be lifelong learners.

To Learn more from Dr. Shubhro Sen [Visit Here](#)

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