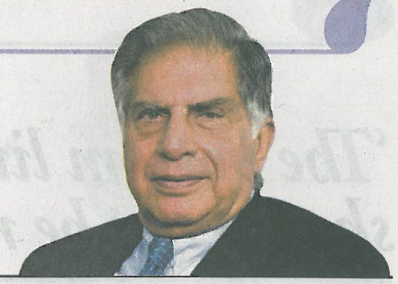
"The strongest thing you can cultivate as an entrepreneur is to not rely on luck but cultivating an ability to recognise fortunate situations when they are occurring."
— Jack Dorsey, co-founder, Twitter

Business need to go beyond the interests of their companies, to the communities they serve.
— Ratan Tata, chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons



Signposts

IIT-Mumbai 'start-up' fair on Feb 1

IIT Mumbai's students' media body surveyed 220 respondents from 2011 to 2013 and found that 40 per cent of the alumni surveyed from 2011-2013, moved from a job to a different field within three years. Some even quit within a year. Apart from setting up their own ventures, some have been pursuing higher studies. Considering the trend of students choosing to launch their own ventures, the institute's placement and entrepreneurship cells will hold a its first start-up fair on February 1. It will allow students to intern at startups of their choice and if both parties so wish, also join them as co-founders.

TiE workshop on networking issues

On January 31, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), Pune Chapter will organise a workshop, at the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Senapati Bapat Road, from 9am to 5pm. This workshop has been designed in three parts to enable participants to recognise their personal networking challenge and ways of overcoming it. The discussion leader will help participants to recognise networking goal for themselves and/or their organisation and create a strategy around it. In a pair of two, each person would introduce himself in a rotation, which is a much faster way to network.

Integrated water management systems key to a water secure future

Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) is one solution to the water crisis the city witnesses every summer. But integrated water management is the only long term and sustainable solution say, entrepreneurs Swapnil Potdar and Udyam Gokhale

BY RITU GOYAL HARISH
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Twenty-six year olds and engineers Swapnil Potdar and Udyam Gokhale love crunching numbers. When the two schoolmates from Nashik wanted to do something to contribute to nation building, they created a list. "The idea was to make India a better place" said Gokhale. Water management figured on top of the list they made. "India receives five times the water that it needs annually through rain but it is mismanaged and badly distributed , so the need for India is better water management," he said.

Eventually the young men realised that their endeavour would be to bring sustainable and integrated water management solutions to Pune, and in 2012, three years after they first conceived the project, Ira Sustainable Water Solutions was established. While the core competency of Ira lies in rainwater harvesting (RWH), both emphasise that RWH was not the starting point of this journey, water management was.

The research the duo conducted on the need for water management was exhaustive. They wanted to create a model that would become a benchmark of similar models followed by western countries that have highly efficient distribution networks, decentralised, and leak detection techniques. But the roadblocks were too many. "Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) doesn't have a map to show where the water is going. So while they claim transmission and distribution losses of 40 per cent to 50 per cent they don't know how to resolve it because they have no mapping of the city, " Gokhale pointed out.

Most of all, the ignorance that prevails among the users of water led Gokhale and Potdar to rethink their strategy. "People are unaware of where their water comes from and where it goes. If one family consumes 500 litres of water per day, how much do they actually 'consume' – may be just 10 litres. The other 490 litres just changes form. It either becomes sewage or silage and becomes laden with detergent." Potdar said.

ANIRUDDHA RAJANDEKAR

Udyam Gokhale and Swapnil Potdar

They also found that the inefficient sewage system of the PMC results in the dumping of untreated waste in the rivers of Pune that causes pollution downstream as well.

"We came to the conclusion that centralised distribution of water is not the solution for now. Decentralised approach to water management is the solution. Each entity like a housing complex, company, industry or commercial establishment needs to look at its own sources of water, have its own quality treatment and its own recycling and has to stop blaming the government" said Potdar.

Economic impact

Water forms an integral part of the economic process; and therefore water management has huge repercussions. Discussing the water crisis our country is facing, the duo said, "If integrated water management is implemented in urban and rural areas the agricultural output will go up since cities will draw less water from the dams and more water will be available to farmers. They can perhaps increase their output—two to three crops a year, which will decrease inflation. Most of all, people will stop migrating to the cities and burden on the cities will be reduced." According to the duo, an integrated water management project will include rainwater harvesting, a water treatment plant, filtration plant, and a sewage treatment plant.

The journey

"From being an employee to employing has been a wonderful journey," said Potdar, adding that they get their motivation from the fact that with every success they save more water. "We wake up in the morning with the aim to conserve water," said Gokhale. The company wants to conserve 5,000 litres of water in the next 5 years. "Our long term vision is to develop a sustainable model for cities, taking care of piped and clean water for everybody and cleaner, fuller rivers" he said.

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Change Pune's water model

The surface area of the dams that supply water to Pune is 1,000 square km. The size of the city is roughly 9,000 square km. Relying on 1,000 km catchment area located 50 km away to fulfil the needs of 9,000 square km(40 lacs population) is a very inefficient model, according to Swapnil Potdar and Udyam Gokhale.
If 9,000 square kmbecomes a catchment area for rain, Pune's water woes will be taken care of.

Top 3 challenges

- People think of RWH when it rains but January - June are the months to undertake RWH
- People don't want to spend on water
- RWH is a seasonal activity. December - March is a lean period

Investment

Investment - ₹30 lakh
In 2 years, their turnover has gone up by 100 times.
30 completed projects. 10 in the pipeline.
What does RWH cost?
For a 100-apartment society - ₹5-6 lakh(including RCC work) from design, to execution and handover. Maintenance of the system is approximately 2-5 per cent of project cost. It is easier to install a RWH system in under-construction stage.