

# The Great Indian Jugaad Challenge

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## Summary

**What this is about** – A national, competitive event series to showcase jugaad as a skill, in a reality web series format. The theme for the first event would be waste management

**Scale:** Targetting ~5,000 signups, with a cash prize of INR 50,000, series to be filmed over 6 months

**Looking for:** Jurors, Advisors, Mentors, Producers and Sponsors

## Context

Competition plays a particularly important role in countries with large populations. In addition to playing its role in distribution of resources, it also provides incentives to individuals to pursue excellence. This is particularly true for India, where society has become increasingly competitive over time.

Apart from the host of competitive examinations that students focus on from middle school through high school, another emerging area of competition is the segment of reality TV shows showcasing performance arts and other skills in a competitive setting.

Currently most of these focus largely on entertainment rather than application or dissemination of knowledge. Despite not having a stated goal of doing so, these shows have fostered significant innovation and enterprise in development of the skills needed to compete in them.

In addition to this, they have made substantial progress in changing attitudes across economic and social segments from driving young people to pursue excellence on set patterns towards encouraging talent in multiple expression formats. Further, they have also helped shift some of the focus from pure knowledge acquisition and reproduction to skill building and practise.

At the same time there is an international move towards de-skilling and DIY movements are becoming increasingly popular, with the extreme case being DIY replacements for currency and banking being tested.

India has a long history of DIY culture in the form of jugaad. As a society we are predisposed to finding our own ways of doing things, largely because we expect processes not to work. The ability to innovate in the face of unworkable circumstances and very little infrastructural support has been one of the core strengths of Indian society as well as economy.

In recent years, films like 3 Idiots and government initiatives like the Smart India hackathon series focussed on governance have given legitimacy to the pursuit of applications of knowledge as a path to popular success. Given this background, the premise of this document is that showcasing jugaad as a skill in replicable reality show format would be an interesting and in all likelihood a profitable venture.

# Structure

## Prizes

Our goal is to have at least one large cash prize of INR 50,000. This is a sizeable amount from the point of view of students and is comparable with similar events organized by others such as TechGig.

Should we find sponsors for the event, it would be great to have individually sponsored prizes/challenges as well.

## Participation

To enable a large number of people to participate it would be best to have the initial rounds be conducted completely online. The progression could take the following form, though this is subject to inputs from the advisory team

Round 1 – 5,000

Round 2 – 100

Semi Finals – 20

Finals – 4

Winner – 1

## 5 part web series

The purpose of the web series is to glamorize and amplify the process of innovative solution design and implementation, a.k.a. **jugaad**.

The format envisioned at this point, given the participation structure above is inspired largely from the skill oriented reality shows currently popular on the web as well as TV. The name itself takes off from a popular meme in show naming.

Another format worth exploring is a mini documentary format followed by Doordarshan in the 90s.

An ideal timeframe would be to target the period between Independence Day (15<sup>th</sup> August) and Republic Day (26<sup>th</sup> January).

This would make a 5 part series, one part for each phase.

## Judges

The standard for the competition would be set by the judges. Therefore selection of judges is exceptionally critical. Profiles of individuals would make ideal judges -

- Established changemakers looking for practical ideas to implement
- Academics and other intellectuals with established credentials
- Benefactors/Angel Investors looking for high quality talent to support
- Investors looking for innovative, indigenous product

Some of the pools from which we will be inviting judges

- Global Ashoka Fellowship network and other changemaker networks
- Personal networks of the initiating team (see below)
- Academics and researchers
- Successful entrepreneurs
- Visionary administrators

## Participants

The goal of the program would be to include young people from all economic and social backgrounds. The language used therefore would need to be largely colloquial.

Further the challenges framed and the solutions invited should be such that they do not limit participation to “technology savvy” entrants. Solutions involving the use of art, psychology, social sciences and other disciplines should be evaluated at par with technological solutions.

Pools from which participants could be drawn -

- Schools/Colleges - Students

## Mentors

An additional element to consider including is the concept of mentoring through the show. This has also been successfully tested in the reality format and has proven effective in building community cohesion both in practice as well as perception. Two models are possible here –

1. Mentors sign up with the participants – this allows the participants and mentors to choose each other
2. Mentors sign up separately and are assigned as part of the program – this allows the organising team to have a say in the quality of mentorship.

Pools from which mentors could be drawn

- Schools/Colleges - Teachers

## **Outcomes**

### **"Glamorization" of jugaad as a worthwhile activity**

Despite being extremely popular as a strategy, jugaad has lately undergone a deglamorization, with consumerist advertising portraying it as a substandard alternative to industrial manufacturing and corporate process. This is in direct contrast to the fact that the largest corporations are employing jugaad philosophy in their own management strategies.

A desirable outcome from the program would be to recontextualize jugaad as an initiator and incubator for indigenous innovation and bring some structure and rigor to it.

### **Encouraging skill building along with knowledge acquisition**

The colonial hangover in the Indian education system that limits learning to knowledge acquisition and reproduction has been the subject of much criticism lately. However, given that competitive examinations for intake into major universities in the country still focus on this old model, students are forced to follow it. If an alternative was available where application could receive public focus and appreciation, it would enable educators to offer students more options. It is therefore a desirable outcome for the program to target a prestige perception equal or greater than popular competitive examinations.

# **Outputs**

## **5 part series**

The series itself would be one of the outputs of the program. At the very least it would provide a precedent for future attempts. At best it could become a successful brand.

## **Entry videos**

Entries for initial rounds should be through audiovisual content submitted by participants. This content would also add to the series content base. The target would be to get in the neighborhood of 5-10000 units of content in this format.

## **Documented solution ideas**

These would be released under creative commons or similar open licenses.

## **Revenue**

An entry fee of ~INR 100 per participant would be ideal to prevent frivolous entries as well as to generate revenue for future events. Surplus revenue can be used to augment rewards or series production quality. For individuals who wish to participate and cannot afford it an individual sponsorship model can also be explored.

## **Publicity**

The series would be a great publicity tool for participants, organizers as well as sponsors.



## Initiating Team

[हैकरग्राम](#) – A Distributed Autonomous Organization (DAO) operating since 2013 as a collective of individuals and organizations engaged in building functional sustainable communities. हैकरग्राम members have been experimenting with hackerspaces/makerspaces in rural and remote areas to enable entrepreneurship and innovation. The primary focus has been on eliminating the necessity of formal education, particularly English language dependency in learning complex concepts in the area of technology, social sciences and art.

[Techzone Academy](#) – A startup working on bringing professional technology training and services to rural and remote areas, based out of Almora, Uttarakhand.

[The Bong Cafe](#) – A startup focussed on creating community spaces structured around food, art and culture from the greater Bengal region.

## Confirmed Jurors

1. **Prof. Jaideep Prabhu**

[Jawaharlal Nehru](#) Professor of Business and Enterprise at the [Judge Business School](#) at the [University of Cambridge](#), England. Professor Prabhu is also the Director of the [Centre for India & Global Business](#) (CIGB). He is the co-author of *Jugaad Innovation: Think Frugal, Be Flexible, Generate Breakthrough Growth*, described by *The Economist* as "the most comprehensive book" on the subject of frugal innovation.

2. **Dr. Sreedhar Ramamurthi**

Co-founder - Environics School of Management Sciences, Managing Trustee - [Environics Trust](#). Dr Ramamurthi is an earth scientist with over three decades of experience in sustainable livelihoods and environmental advocacy.

3. **Bill Theis**

Principal Researcher, Microsoft Research. Prior to his present position at [Microsoft Research New England](#), Mr Theis spent a decade as part of the [Technologies for Emerging Markets Group](#) at [Microsoft Research India](#). His research focuses on building appropriate information and communication technologies that contribute to the socio-economic development of low-income communities (ICT4D).



# **Open Invitations**

## **Advisors**

We invite individuals and organizations interested in providing their inputs on structure, design and implementation to share their thoughts with us and to be associated publicly with us in an advisory capacity. Our goal would be to have a consensus on structure and operations from a publicly declared advisory group prior to beginning execution. We therefore request advisors to confirm their interest by May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and to finalize the advisory group for sharing on the website by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Sponsors**

We intend to invite brands with a youth focus to associate with the program. Specifics on sponsorship opportunities would be determined in consultation with the advisory team.

## **Producers**

Individuals and organizations with experience in producing web content would be sought to execute the public facing side of the program. Early stage interest is welcome from interested parties. However a final selection would be dependent on consultation with the advisory team.

## **Contact**

All expressions of interest including comments are requested to be sent to [info@tgijc.com](mailto:info@tgijc.com)

## **Legal**

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