**Infinity Foundation’s Phase 1: The First Ten Years**

**Lessons learned from supporting other scholars/institutions**

1. Western academy – Harvard (Indology roundtables, Arvind Sharma, Aklujkar), Columbia (Non-dualism; Tibet House; Mandala Conf), U Hawaii (8-year program), U California SB (pioneering science & religion program hijacked by Templeton), UMass, UPenn (CASI), Cornell, Princeton…
2. CSDS/Kishwar
3. Indian Psychology – 8 years of conferences; Sangeetha Menon; etc.
4. HIST
5. Auroville/Pondy
6. Waves
7. Vedanta Congress
8. The above list is of sustained/institutionalized programs over multiple years.
9. There were also numerous one-off events and individual scholars supported.
10. Measuring the impact:
    1. Any game-changing intellectual property - thesis, books, paradigms?
    2. Any teams to produce collective impact?
11. Virtually nothing of sustained value:
    1. Mostly scholars interested in building personal careers with no collective energy as a movement; nothing pioneering.
    2. Internal academic politics
    3. Many UTurners
    4. Overall mediocre
12. IF spent $5 million of RM’s hard earned money.
    1. How is our cause better off today?
    2. However, I personally learned a great deal about the kurukshetra – an expensive education on do’s and don’ts:
       1. who is who; caliber of human beings in this field
       2. how the system works; who pulls the strings & how
       3. dominant theories, paradigms, protocols, agendas
       4. Zero help from Indians/Hindu leaders

**IF Phase 2: RM as Chief Researcher**

1. **Transition from Grant Maker 🡺 Think Tank**
   1. Taking burden on personal shoulders
   2. Huge personal risk: sticking my neck out
   3. Losing personal reputation: Impact on social life, family, friends.
   4. No more “good guy, generous philanthropist”, ribbon cutting lifestyle
   5. Re-branding: *“One of the most controversial persons”*
2. Physical engagement (not mouse-clicking hiding behind a keyboard):
   1. On-site engagement with grant recipients
   2. Encounters at major academic conferences, academic events, dissertations on India, etc.
3. Online activism: first major egroup (Indic Traditions; Yoga Psychology)
4. Blogging, petitions, etc.
5. Six Major books
   1. 15 more in the pipeline
6. Public image shift: *Philanthropist 🡺 Trouble-Maker 🡺 Non-Ignorable Original Thinker*
7. Facing challenges of being independent of all organized Hindu groups, political groups, academic cabals, conventional ideological camps…
8. Growing social media support.

**IF’s Latest Challenge: What happens after RM?**

Some Major options

1. Retire:
   1. Fold IF
   2. Become “ribbon-cutting celebrity”
   3. Give the assets away to some established institution – but to whom?
   4. [Table of IF assets and projections]
   5. Amounts to abandoning the cause because we won’t succeed.
2. Merge IF with some established organization:
   1. Idea would be to turn over institutional management while continuing to pursue my personal research.
   2. Has merit PROVIDED the right partner is found: None known yet.
3. Build IF into *generic* India-centric Think Tank.
   1. Many separate thinkers under one roof
   2. Loosely held together as “Hindu”
   3. Reminds me of IF’s Phase 1 – huge risk
   4. This was CSDS model, but: They could build on top of *pre-existing schools of thought* – Marxism, Freudian, Post-colonialism, Subalternism, Postmodernism, etc.
   5. But in our case there would be no core intellectual property or school of thought
   6. Discuss: The vacuum of any contemporary Hindu-centric school of thought
4. Build IF into Think Tank with *RM’s work* as the initial corpus
   1. Formalize a comprehensive spectrum of ideas, theories, vocabulary
   2. Develop university courses – positioned as an elective
      1. A school of thought alternative to Western ones
      2. Nurture leaders of many kinds: scholars, documentary makers, social media personalities, political leaders, corporate leaders, spiritual acharyas
   3. Develop online e-learning courses
      1. Develop 1 lakh students online 🡺 IK army