

Marking a Legacy as an Edupreneur: Dr. Madhu Chitkara

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study reflects the journey of a woman academician turned into edupreneur in the field of higher education in a developing economy. Dr. Madhu Chitkara has developed a high-quality educational ecosystem for nurturing talent by co-establishing and leading the development of higher education institutions in India. At the time of the case, she has achieved a number of milestones and is trying to chalk out the future steps so as to pass on the legacy to next generation leaders. The case is written to illustrate an example of a woman entrepreneur in the field of education and provide insights on her philosophy, leadership style, and strategy.

INTRODUCTION

As 2023 marks a New Year, Dr. Madhu Chitkara dives into deep thoughts of how her small steps towards being an academician has led to a NAAC A+ Accredited University which has several 'Centers of Excellence', achieved strong stand on several rankings like QS Asia University Rankings, Times Higher

Education Impact Rankings, WURI, Green Metric, NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework), The Business India, Outlook-ICARE India, Dataquest, Business World, India Today, and other national rankings, bagged 'The Confederation of Indian Industry National Award for Excellence in Water Management', and many such prestigious recognitions.

On the journey, she has led several international collaborations, held Global Week for students for bringing internationalization at home, facilitated faculty interactions, and has also adopted five villages to work on sustainability issues, taken care of emotional health of students with 'Centre of Happiness'. With clear focus on research & innovation, she has been emphasizing on the areas such as farming, lifestyle, health, assistive technology by filing more patents, paper publications, copyrights, start ups at university level. Her passion is into making the world better for living.

While She is happy to acknowledge that many action points of NEP 2020 are already in place at Chitkara University yet she is pondering over opportunities of enhancing and implementing NEP 2020 with more rigor to increase academic outcome. She acknowledged the contribution of around 500 academicians at the 'Excellence Awards' February 2023 for their contribution to the world of academia.

At the same time, the words of her life partner, co-founder, the renowned academician and entrepreneur Dr. Ashok K Chitkara were ringing in her ears that "Life is a journey. So, it was their belief in education, knowledge and abilities that has given them enough wisdom to make generations of their students settle well in corporate world because of their education and knowledge."

The actual founding of the Chitkara University, Punjab (See Exhibit 1) is on 2002, with establishment of Chitkara Institute of Engineering and Technology, Punjab. In just 20 years, shared vision of Dr. Madhu Chitkara and Dr. Ashok K Chitkara has manifested itself into two universities, two international schools in three states and one UT with 25,000 students, 1,500 faculty members and more than 1200 support staff. In year 2013, based on having a flair of highly exceptional acumen of being an entrepreneur, Dr. Madhu Chitkara was honored with South East Asia Award by Washington School of Business. She has also been recognized as a visionary edu-leader of India by former Lt. President, Sri Pranab Mukherjee during Rethink INDIA Fifth Estate Summit 2017.

Twenty years earlier, standing on milestone of setting up Chitkara University, Punjab in 2002, Dr. Madhu Chitkara and Dr. Ashok K Chitkara announced that their goal for Chitkara University is "To be a globally recognized organization promoting academic excellence through interdisciplinary applied research and to expand realms of knowledge through innovation."

The Formative Years

Dr. Madhu Chitkara vividly remembered her first day on the job as the newly appointed teacher of a government school. Her sharp focus on creating academic excellence pushed her to take turns in life and place herself on the journey of entrepreneurship. Dr. Madhu Chitkara expresses herself:

I would like to define myself as an accidental entrepreneur. I am the first in my family and that too a woman, to take up education as a profession, initially as an employee, and later as an entrepreneur. I call myself an 'accidental entrepreneur' because so much was not planned. I have been instrumental in creating more than 68 relevant industry-linked programs in the fields of Engineering, Management, Architecture, Art & Design, Nursing, Healthcare, Education, Mass Communication, Hospitality, Law, Psychology, Liberal Arts, and Pharmacy & Marine Engineering at Graduate, Postgraduate and Doctorate Level.

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