

Ideas whose time has come

Two 'plans' shone the brightest at the Startup Battle held last week. And, the minds behind each are now working out strategies that will take them to the Global Startup Battle at Google HQ in California

NEVER A DRY DAY IN LIFE

TEAM BOOTLEGGER

Varun Devireddy, a business analyst at IL&FS, met engineering graduates Naveen Chintamaneni and Chirag Choudhary on Friday at the venue, Progress Software.

He had the "idea" for a year or so, but not the technical skills to put it together. That is where these fresh graduates of IIT-H stepped in. So, in 48 hours of time, Varun drafted the business plan while the students made a working app called the Bootlegger. These IIT-H graduates also have their own start-up called *Kady.co*.

CHALLENGES

Varun, who made a rather hilarious presentation in front of the jury, admits, "Yes, booze is expensive and our delivery service will add to the cost. So, we want our services to be affordable and optimise our resources, manpower as well as logistics. We also have to think about cheaper options of packaging. Our startup is still in the idea phase; but we are aware of the work that is ahead us."

Alcohol transportation is a sensitive issue. So, they are taking care not to flout any legal norms. "At all times, our service will be within legal limits. Our rules are clear. Alcohol will not be served to minors. ID proof has to be produced at the time of delivery. Hiring rules for delivery boys will also be stringent," adds Varun,

whose team is working on the video presentation to be sent for further selection.

FOR GOOD TIMES: Chirag Choudhary, Varun Devireddy and Naveen Chintamaneni

- Compiled by Barkha Kumari



IDEA

This android app will get you your choice of alcohol and food delivered to your doorstep. So, forget the hassle of standing in long queues in front of liquor shops, waiting impatiently for your turn to come before the clock strikes 10 and the shutters go down, leaving you dry. And, if you are a girl, fear of being spotted by your acquaintances is the most discomfoting.

Gradually, merchandises like mugs and T-shirts will also be delivered.

Bootlegger is targeted at IT professionals. "We have a potential customer base of 75,000 in Gachibowli, Hitec, Jubilee Hills and Banjara Hills. There are so many days when the techies get stuck in office and can't make it on time to the liquor shops," says Varun.

TIME FOR A SOCIAL CURRENCY



CATALYSTS: Sourabh Jain, Satish Garimella, Yatish Singh, Chandana Mallu, Harsha Potluri

TEAM PRATYEK

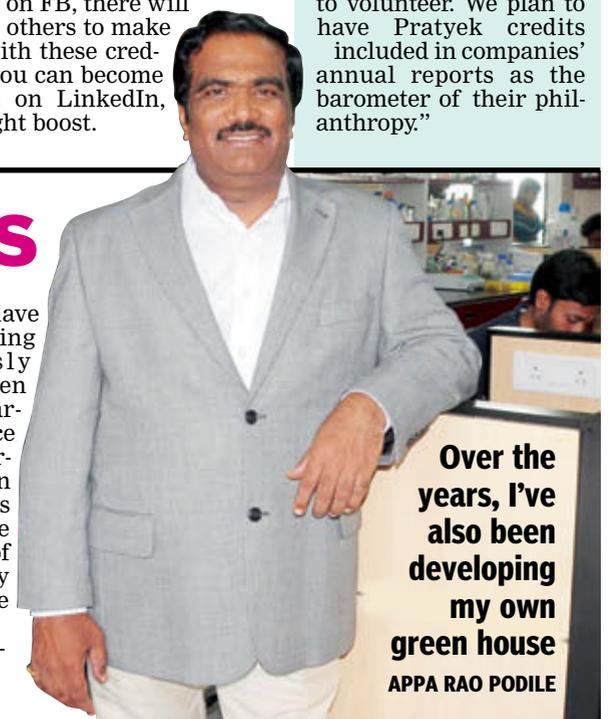
Despite being a country of 1.2 billion people and having 3.3 million NGOs, why can't we address our social issues? This question had bothered Yatish Singh, who has worked with government agencies and NGOs for years and is currently the associate director of rural marketing team at Dr Reddy's. At the event, he met techies Sourabh Jain, Harsha Potluri, Satish Garimella and Chandana Mallu who were equally willing to address these "questions".

CHALLENGES

The team plans to go live with its Website in December. And, a 100 Ek points is the target of the pilot as also getting NGOs, corporates and volunteers on board. By January, "we have to make a revolution". But not everybody, FB generation included, wants to brag about his or her charity to the world... To this Yatish says, "Honestly, the youth doesn't mind getting acknowledged today. Instead of reeling under peer pressure to get likes on FB, there will be a positive pressure on others to make a difference in society with these credits." On FB and Twitter, you can become a philanthropic icon and on LinkedIn, your resume will get the right boost.

IDEA

The 'vision' is a Website that finds NGOs of your liking within a 3-5 km radius. This will let you "utilise your spare time in the right way". And, each hour that you devote as their volunteer, you earn a social currency called Ek and a badge called Pratyek. This will be eventually linked to your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles. Unlike CSR, Pratyek is trying to mobilise the costliest resource called time. "Any corporate firm can make donations, but the real deal is to find time to volunteer. We plan to have Pratyek credits included in companies' annual reports as the barometer of their philanthropy."



Over the years, I've also been developing my own green house
APPA RAO PODILE

The organic warrior for plants

City professor Appa Rao Podile was recently awarded for his research on biological pesticides

AMRITA PAUL
DECCAN CHRONICLE

Hailing from a family of farmers in Guntur, Appa Rao Podile has seen people die after consuming foods that were exposed to chemical pesticides. That's why he spent over 25 years developing biological pesticides to tackle fungal attacks.

Also, the University of Hyderabad professor

recently received an award for his contribution to the field of agricultural microbiology. "I'm working on the use of biological bacteria to target fungal diseases and once we are convinced, we will select one or two from a sample of hundreds and use it on the plants. These bacteria also secrete certain hormones that will help the plant grow healthier and faster."

So, what are the challenges of carrying out such ambitious projects while working within a traditional university setup? "It's important to look out for endowment for research projects. Over the years, I've been developing my own green house and field facilities for my research," he says. And, what lies ahead? "I was recently awarded a grant of 1,50,000 euros by the European

Union, and have been working simultaneously with seven European researchers to advance this science further. The Indian government has also granted me an endowment of ₹70 lakh to carry out more research on groundnut-related bacteria," says Rao.