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Context to the conversation

Viral speaks about the evolution of trends in how students make choices over the years. He also speaks about the distinction between how children in cities are making choices compared to those in Tier 2, 3,4 towns in India.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): If I could move the conversation a little bit to your observations of journeys in a way, you've also had a beautiful window seat to how different journeys have played out. And you also have a longitudinal view because you engage with somebody at a point and in a way you are in touch, I'm curious about what you've observed about some of those things. I think just maybe going back to just the process of decision making, if I may. What have you observed about, you know, how people made these decisions. And if you just plotted the decision making style over the years, what have you observed? What has stayed the same? What has changed? What's causing angst to people now versus what caused angst earlier?

Viral Doshi (VD): I think I would answer the question a little differently. I think you should look at India's evolution 30, 40 years ago if you want to plan a career. You didn't have too much of choices, and if you had a choice, also, parents would compartmentalize you, son you do either an engineering, law, CA or medicine, and if you need something else, you couldn't do it.

A) there was opportunities were limited, and B what was the parent looking at in 30, 40 is a security for a child. Over the years what has happened I have seen I remember there's been a it's been a shift, you know, every five, ten years. See a shift happening about 25, 30 years ago I think goal for everybody was to do engineering.

Then about 15, 20 years ago it became finance. Then I've seen about ten years ago became law. Then there's about five, eight, ten years ago it had been computer science and now shifted to AI. I think one thing is very interesting that 30, 40 years ago, the parents who would come to meet me, very few had been educated abroad for them, still wanted them to do conventional degrees.

But now the parents who come to me have studied abroad themselves. So because they have studied abroad, they allowing their children to follow their passion. So my first thing they need child who comes to meet me, I would tell them, where do you want to be in the future? And they will work backwards. I said after the 12th, whatever you do, do what you enjoy.

Eventually you do what you enjoy, you will excel and if you excel, you can go to any top postgraduate degrees afterwards. And I will give them wonderful examples of people who've done what they were passionate about and follow their passion. Now that was never allowed.

And today, also, I noticed my children from urban cities Bangalore, Delhi, Bombay parents who have studied abroad. They are now changing the mindset of allowing the children to follow their passion. Two reasons one they have got more security. Financial security of course, that's required. And number two, they have realized by doing humanities you can still make a career. But today still my students from third, fourth, fifth, sixth tier cities who come to meet me, they will still not go outside that compartmentalized box of CA, engineering, law or medicine because for them, they are growing one step of the ladder.

So maybe 30 years from now, they will also allow their child to do what they enjoy because they shouldn't have gone abroad. So it's a cyclical thing, I think. I think we have come a long way in our country. But as far as decision making, on what career paths to follow, I don't think too much has changed in that pattern.

The parents still play a very influential role, whether it was 30 years ago or today. Parents and sadly, parents try to fulfill their own ambitions through their children, isn't it? I couldn't get to IIT, so my child has to go to IIT. I couldn't do engineering. My child has to do engineering. And I tell them, you know, Mr. Mrs. So-and-so, your child can't do engineering.

He doesn't have the aptitude. No, no, he will do engineering. We have been told engineering is the best option or computer science is the best option today. So this is when you deal with parents because you do educate them in the best way. I've seen of telling a parent or a student what career path to follow show them role models always in that works like a charm.

When I tell them not many role models, I give them role models from their own school who went and did something, but they enjoyed and what they did. He did this. I didn't realize that so even I can do that. So I think that's become the change in people. Urban cities they have gone one notch above where they are able to allow their children to do what they want.

Still, I would say now that 20, 30 years behind other third or fourth tier cities, but that's a change in India. I don't know. I have seen the last ten years' number of students, for example, going overseas has gone up by 300%. Rising affluence, foreign exchange is freely available, internet has become a level playing field and more international schools.

Are you aware India has a third highest number of IB schools in the world? Number one is US, number two is Canada, number three is India, number four is China. 270 IB schools.

(DJ): Wow.

(VD): Forget that sir we have close to 800 A-level schools. Never existed 20 years ago. This is new India today for you and all these students who go to the international schools

Want to go overseas today? So I think things have changed. So you become much more competitive. So that's why the second third tier cities, which I was telling you earlier about, I think it will take them time to allow their children to follow their passion, decision making is still controlled by their

parents, much more so in the second third tier cities, a little less in the first tier cities, I would say like Bombay, Delhi, Bangalore.

They're still now allowing the student for their passion. It's in fun to see them. And I think sometimes I always wonder. I think it's more important to counsel the parent than the child isn't it. Parents need more counseling, then the child, isn't it?

(DJ): And they are harder to change children. I think.

(VD): Children are malleable. You can, you can change.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ:

End of transcription

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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