

Interview with Ms. Sandhya Vasudevan



Ms. Sandhya Vasudevan with students of IMT-Nagpur

IMT Nagpur was privileged to have Ms. Sandhya Vasudevan as a panelist for Drishticone, 2015 – a one day CxO Conclave. She is COO and MD of Deutsche Bank Group in India and former head of service centers for DBOI. She is also the Global Head of Business Engineering within the Global Business Services division of Deutsche Bank, and part of the Asia Management team of GBS. She has over 24 years of rich industry experience in the field of Operations, Financial Services and the IT Enabled Services industry and has worked in organizations such as Guardian Royal Exchange, Thomson Reuters and AXA. In talk with Ms. Sandhya Vasudevan, some excerpts:

Q. Talking about innovation, diversity is very important but at the same time, it is difficult to maintain the culture. So what is more important?

Ans. If you have a lot of diversity without the rules of engagement in a very clear common vision it can be quite dysfunctional. However, if you are able to link that effectively, it works very well. I will use the example of a company, which is probably not in the forefront right now – Nokia went from being a small local manufacturer to a major phone company. They believed in diversity not on gender basis but on perspective. They would pick and ask anyone that if they

have to use a phone, what kind of functionality they needed. So, that kind of participation is what diversity is about and the common desire was to make phones that made sense to the client.

Q. How was your journey in strengthening the foundation of Thomson Reuters from 200 employees to 9000?

Ans. It was a nine years journey, a journey of growth and change. It is also a space where you look at content and technology. What you create is what you sell. You need to understand your client; how you make money and what you are doing to contribute towards that objective. When we bring in people, more specialized more technical, we get a large number of employees who understand new standards coming out of global level, which we take for granted these days. Therefore, it was a fun filled journey with immense amount of learning.

Q. What was your vision behind initiating the Bangalore chapter for women leaders?

Ans. I got active around the women issue shortly after HP lost a female employee. She made use of the company transport facility but the driver misbehaved and then she was murdered and that is when I got involved. I found myself in the spaces where I needed to speak up from a gender perspective. In last few years, the conversation that has evolved and I am one of the few who is fortunate enough to be successful in my career irrespective of my gender. Therefore, it is part of your responsibility to contribute so that others can learn from that experience.

Q. Anything you would like to say to the youth today.

Ans. Do not be cynical is my advice to anyone of any age. You have an opportunity to change things. If you become cynical, you will not be able to change. As soon as you become cynical, you are not a change agent.

Q. How do you see the Indian economy in coming years, after its glorious growth to 7.4% in last quarter?

Ans. The economic weight of Asia will be same like Western Europe and if that is the case, the growth of India is certain and that will be quite massive. Our GDP is about \$1.82 trillion so we have a long trajectory. I do not see it as a quarter-to-quarter conversation but 20 to 30 years conversation.

Q. How was your experience in IMT-Nagpur?

Ans. I love it, it is a beautiful campus and I think the hospitality is fantastic. I love the energy of young people. That is frankly the reason why I said yes to the invitation. I am hoping to learn something significant before I leave.