

*“I cherish my MSU days”*

Satyanarayan Gangaram Pitroda a.k.a Sam Pitroda, the “Father of the Telecom Revolution in India” speaks with Vrunda Bhatt, a student of the Faculty of Journalism and Communication studies, about his days at MSU, and the decade of innovation and development.

Q1) What do you cherish most about your days at MSU?

I cherish my MSU days. I studied there for nearly six years, from 1958-64. I completed my Masters in Physics and Electronics from MSU. Then, Smt. Hansa Mehta was our vice chancellor. The environment was absolutely terrific. I had a great time at the university. We had loving and caring teachers. I am very thankful to MSU for giving me a firm foundation in the field of technology.

Q2) Coming from a small town Titlagarh, Orissa, in your early years you may have encountered a few difficulties...

I was born in 1942, and raised in one of the poorest of the poor villages in rural India. I believe in miraculous incidents which can change your life. It's just sheer hard work. Life is a journey. I am much more of a believer in a work-centric life, than a pleasure-centric one. My day starts at 7am and ends at 11pm. Even during a bath, I make the work plan for the day. My idea of spirituality is that I should never have a dull moment in my life. Even now, I start a day by cleaning floors. I believe that if you are work-centric, life's ups and downs will not bother you.

Q-3) What, according to you, are the inherent issues that hinder equitable development in India?

We must recognize that we are a developing society. We are not at the stage of development of Europe, America, and other developed countries. If the youth of the country take up responsibility, development can be expedited. Our country has a lot of young blood but the youth need to be educated, skilled and empowered. They have to understand responsibility is never given, it is always taken. If you look at the history of recent developments India, we have people like Dr. Verghese Kurien, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Dr. Homi Bhabha, Dr. M S

Swaminathan and others who made a difference in Milk production, Space, Atomic energy, Agriculture, etc. We need to find such people in our young.

Q-5) What is your vision about the future of innovation in India as the chairman of the National Innovation Council?

Innovation is on everyone's agenda - corporate, banks, universities, hospitals, and nations. The government of India has declared 2010-2020 as the decade of innovation. The Prime Minister has set up a National Innovation Council of 17 people which will define drivers for innovation. Innovation is all about doing things differently to improve productivity, efficiency, market share, profits, comfort, products, processes, etc. At times it requires you to redefining yourself. I think the challenge is huge but at the same time opportunity is equally big.

Q6) What would be your message for students of Journalism and Communication?

Work hard. There is absolutely no substitute for hard work. Students of this generation need to put in more effort. There are no quick fixes and instant successes.

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