

HOT SEAT

# A worthy inheritor

He is a fine example of a young achiever respecting unrestricted freedom and using it constructively.

**Abhimanyu Gupta, Director, Actis Technologies, discusses with Renuka Vembu his new initiative of taking telemedicine to rural India**

**A**bhimanyu Gupta was never bound by his parents. He and his two siblings got more than their share of freedom during their childhood days, be it in choosing a vocation, playing a sport or dealing with people around. His father, Manmohan Gupta, was a very enterprising man who started Actis Technologies. Though both his parents were working, they were undemanding towards their three children and brought out the best in them. This independent platform and freedom to perform also taught the youngsters a very important lesson early on in life—to shoulder responsibilities for all their actions. Learning and rectifying the mistakes gave them a clear-cut vision of right and wrong.

While both his brother and sister were settled in the US, Gupta completed his schooling in Mumbai and started working when he was just 18 years old. The glimpses of US he got to see through his siblings fascinated him and he wanted to go to there 'to see the outside world for himself.' But determination, the drive to do something different and the love for technology, which was readily available when he ventured into his father's business, grounded him to Mumbai. He explained, "The one thing that I had even at that age was direction and focus, which came naturally. Learning and gaining experience and knowledge was always important; I was oblivious to what my friends were doing because I thoroughly enjoyed my work, which was fulfilling and was taking me up the success ladder."

## The inheritance

During his initial days, he spent time interacting among workers in the floor shop, assembling Over Head Projectors (OHPs) and understanding the nuances of the job requirement. That gave him a good insight and a lot of technological know-how into how OHPs were built, which later assisted him in designing, developing and marketing them. He then started selling multimedia projectors and LCD panels. Even though joining his family business was by chance and a temporary arrangement, Gupta could not resist the motivation, the space to perform and the creative impetus cutting-edge technology brought to him, and finally, the work got the better of him and he was totally consumed by it.

The next step of adding a new line of business and concentrating on expansion, employing additional staff and opening new offices for the same, changed the face of Actis Technologies. Gupta started adding cutting-



edge audio visual products to their already existing range—to provide turnkey solutions for a host of communication environment—boardroom, video conference room, training room, auditorium, executive briefing centre, visitor experience centre, network operations centre, paging, background music, cafeteria, broadcast, digital signage, home theatre, hotels, house of worship, smart homes, and

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many more. This was a collaborative effort on the part of his entire team comprising engineers, programmers, project managers and sales and marketing executives, which entailed a lot of study and in-depth research in choosing the right product for their basket.

This gave a new dimension to their business; they were no longer in box selling alone, instead they turned into a complete AV solutions provider.

## Healthcare for rural India

The company, with nine offices and nearly 500 partners in India, has installed high-end video conference solutions across a wide spectrum of industries, ranging from education to government enterprise to healthcare. Their expertise in this field, experience in building distance learning centres and their understanding of the problems faced by hospitals in reaching to people in remote areas, has prompted them to be associated with several hospitals like Lilavati in Mumbai and Ramdas in Pune, to make healthcare accessible to rural India.

## The growth path

Being the Director of the company, Gupta looks after all aspects of the business—design and installation, sales and marketing, administration, HR, business development, operations and the over-all management. From employing three people to more than 200 now, and from box sales to complete audio visual solution provider and setting up the channel network, have been his most significant achievements. The credit for successfully shaping his entire career graph and giving him a sense of direction undoubtedly goes to his father. Gupta humbly said, "He encouraged me and helped me. There are some things that become a part of you, and it may not necessarily have been taught. There are many such things I learnt by observation, and the true significance of which, I only understand now—hard work, discipline and humility. The other things like a good acumen for business are something I just have to thank my genes for."

The journey for Gupta has been challenging yet exciting. A bigger vision for growth has meant more challenges and competition, higher expectations, greater stakes, and the need for bigger and bolder decisions. He felt that the formative years were crucial for imbibing a sense of mutual trust and confidence. "Great team work, synergy and persistence have helped us override the numerous problems that have come our way. I believe in 'hand plus heart' approach, meaning hard work alone is not enough, you have to have a passion about what you do, and that is when it all makes a difference." The key lessons learnt through this path have been—being proactive and a good listener, encouraging team work through synergy, empowering employees, empathizing with people and constantly changing to the changing environment.

Technology is Gupta's passion, and travelling and Yoga his interests. His close knit family comprises his wife who helps with the business and his little son who 'is a source of joy and the apple of his eye.' ■