
Teaching Case

GREEN THE GAP: SOCIOPRENEUR WALKING THE TIGHTROPE OF RUNNING A BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION

Vimlendu had just finished counting the number of upcycled fashion products that had arrived in the New Delhi store of his company – Green the Gap. It was March 10, 2013 – a pleasant Sunday morning. Vimlendu was about to recline on his chair when suddenly he received notification of a new email on his phone. He was expecting an email from his friend and business associate Ram Singh. He was excited. His company Green the Gap was crossing the 2,000 likes¹ milestone on Facebook² and this was a big boost for the emerging venture. Vimlendu³ had started Green the Gap in 2008 as part of Swechha, the New Delhi-based non-profit and advocacy group he founded over a decade ago for fair wages for workers and sustainability. The name Green the Gap came from a Swechha education program⁴ for schools called Bridge the Gap.

He swiftly unlocked the keypad and found out that instead of one there were two emails. The first one was from Ram. It read, “Vimlendu Cheers for 2,000 likes, I’m en-route to the office, see you in 30 minutes”. A sudden rush of endorphins gushed through Vimlendu. He was happy and was waiting eagerly for Ram’s arrival. But this happiness was short-lived. The reason for the ephemeral nature of the happiness was the second email.

It was a legal letter from the US-based company Gap Inc. The letter contained a legal notice from Gap Inc. asking Green the Gap to change its brand name. According to the notice, Vimlendu’s company ‘Green the Gap’ was given 14 days to change its name and remove all references to the word ‘gap’ from its products, otherwise Gap Inc. would take further action to protect its trademarked brand.⁵

There was a whirlwind of thoughts in Vimlendu’s mind. He was not only apprehensive about his business, but also about the sustenance and livelihood of the people working in his NGO, Swechha, which was the backend of Green the Gap. There was a labyrinth of thoughts and worries in his mind. Like the ebb and flow of the sea waves,, his mind kept sifting through extremities of options – whether to accept the ‘legal’ request of Gap Inc. and change the name of his company or to start a journey of resistance against the lawsuit or to perhaps do something else?. He was edgy and was now waiting all the more for Ram to arrive so that they could together reflect upon strategy to respond to this new turn of events. It was only 10 minutes ago that he had received the email from Ram so there was still some time for him to arrive. But this did not stop Vimlendu from thinking. The lawsuit filed by Gap Inc. was just the first layer of his dilemmas. There were issues and challenges that in the usual context of business could have been tackled, but would now pose a serious problem.

¹ The ‘Like’ button on the social networking website www.facebook.com is a way for people to share content with their friends and people listed on their Facebook profile. Retrieved from <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/plugins/like-button/>

² This programme was a community based non-formal alternative learning program for children and adolescents which focussed on education, empowerment and employability and was largely led by volunteers and experts. The programme’s vision was to supplement the formal education of children, help them become socially empowered and increase their employability by developing their knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/greenthegap>, accessed on December 20, 2013.

³ CNN has termed Vimlendu Jha as the one of the Global Changemakers. A video profile of Vimlendu Jha can be accessed on CNN’s global website at this url: <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/international/2007/09/13/be.the.change.vimlendu.intro.cnn>

This profile helps in understanding the background of the Vimlendu Jha and the way a young millennial belonging to North-East Bihar in India spurred a sociopreneurial revolution. Further reference: <http://edition.cnn.com/CNNI/Programs/bethechange/vimlendu/>

⁴ <http://www.swechha.in/children-active-citizenship/pagdandi>, June 10, 2014

⁵ <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2013/07/25/indian-recycler-faces-legal-fight-with-gap-inc/>

Green the Gap had recently started its e-commerce website www.greenthegap.com and had a growing demand from both domestic and international clients. Vimlendu had thought that now it was time to expand and diversify into international markets as well. But on the contrary, he now had to tackle the legal situation that was lined up in front of him.

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Whether the economy is booming or in a recession or somewhere in between, people never stop being influenced by trending fashion designs and décor apparels.⁶ That is why the fashion industry in general and the apparel and décor industries in particular are expected to remain a dominant force in times to come. Fashion never stops playing an important role in the genesis of humankind and the industry makes immense contributions to our cultural and social spaces.⁷ It is an industry that personifies our identities, belongingness, socioeconomic needs, individual lifestyles, status symbols and even professional gesture requirements. The fashion industry is dynamic, complex and one that continually transforms itself in response to consumer needs.⁸ Around the world, millions of people contribute day and night to this industry and derive livelihood via this industry.

Catering to fashion consumers is complicated as unlike traditional products that largely serve a utilitarian function,⁹ fashion products serve an aesthetic and expressive function. Here, customers derive value from the symbolic meaning that is ‘experienced’, rather than only from the physical attributes of the product. The competition lies in the ability to deliver this aspirational purpose and ‘symbolic value’ as compared to the per se ‘use-value’ of the product.¹⁰ Understandably, such a distinction on the continuum of utility versus meaning has made the boundaries between symbolic and other traditional products blurred, provisional and contentious as well.¹¹

Since the 1990s, the fashion industry has become increasingly global due to some remarkable events, such as the removal of the multi-fiber trade restrictions¹² in 2005, the economic crisis of 2008, and the saturation of mature and traditional markets beyond 2010.¹³ These events and happenings have impacted the rules of the game of the fashion industry, leading to an increased importance of attracting customers due to increasing competition across the globe from domestic as well as international players.¹⁴

According to a report from Neverblue,¹⁵ if the ‘fashion industry’ was a country, it would rank seventh in the ranking of global GDP. The global apparel industry was valued at \$1.1 trillion in 2011, and was forecasted to grow to \$1.3 trillion by 2016. Womens wear is the largest segment accounting for 51.1%

⁶ <http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue7-focus4?page=show>

⁷ <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/smith-adam/works/moral/part05/part5.htm>

⁸ <http://thediplomat.com/2011/01/a-dynamic-fashion-world/>

⁹ P.M. Hirsch, Processing fads and fashions: an organization-set analysis of cultural industry systems, *American Journal of Sociology*, 77 (1972), pp. 639–659.

¹⁰ R. DeFillippi, G. Grabher, C. Jones, Introduction to paradoxes of creativity: managerial and organizational challenges in the cultural economy, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28 (2007), pp. 511–521.

¹¹ D. Hesmondhalgh, *The cultural industries*, Sage, London (2002), D. Hesmondhalgh, A.C. Pratt, *Cultural industries and cultural policy*, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11 (2005), pp. 1–13.

¹² Textiles Monitoring Body (TMB): *The Agreement on Textiles and Clothing*, Since 1 January 1995, international textiles and clothing trade has been going through fundamental change under the 10-year transitional programme of the WTO’s Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC). Before the Agreement took effect, a large portion of textiles and clothing exports from developing countries to the industrial countries was subject to quotas under a special regime outside normal GATT rules.

¹³ <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/3/prweb10530312.htm>

¹⁴ S. Ganesan, M. George, S. Jap, R.W. Palmatier, B. Weitz, Supply chain management and retailer performance: emerging trends, issues, and implications for research and practice, *Journal of Retailing*, 85 (1) (2009), pp. 84–94, MacCarthy, B.L., Jayarathne, P.G.S.A., 2009. *Fast fashion: achieving global quick response in the internationally dispersed clothing industry*. NUBS Research Paper Series.

¹⁵ Neverblue Fashion Performance Network, <http://www.fashionperformancenetwork.com/>

of the total value of the industry. India and China together will equal the market size of the USA by 2015.

The global apparel and non-apparel manufacturing market had a total revenue of \$765.6 billion in 2012, marking a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.9% for the period between 2008 and 2012. The apparel segment was the market's most lucrative in 2012, with total revenue of \$482.3 billion, equivalent to 63% of the market size. The future performance is forecasted to accelerate with an anticipated CAGR of 6.4% for the five-year period of 2012-2017, which is expected to drive the market worth to \$14,027 billion by the end of 2017.¹⁶ Transnational companies using export processing zones¹⁷ (EPZs) in developing countries are offered the cheap labor advantage of low or no taxes to finish items only for export. Therefore, EPZs offer benefit to the countries where they are located.

The textile and clothing (T&C) industry constitutes 4% of India's GDP, 12% of industrial production and 10.5% of total exports of goods. The second largest employer after agriculture, this sector provides direct employment to over 35 million people and indirect employment to 45 million. T&C production was estimated at US \$85 billion in 2012: US \$51 billion worth of goods for the domestic market and US \$34 billion for exports.¹⁸ The size of the Indian domestic readymade garment industry will double by 2017, thereby further contributing to the domestic and international economic growth and prosperity. Simplified and gradually supportive government policies, people's awareness in recognition of fashion brands and allied factors are all leading to growth in this industry.

According to a survey conducted by the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI), the size of the Indian apparel industry (in Indian rupees)¹⁹ is estimated to be around 2 lakh crore.²⁰ Out of this, unstitched apparel – like *saree* and *dhoti* – comprises 50,000 crore. The size of the organized apparel industry is 40,000 crore, while 110,000 crore is the size of the unorganized apparel sector.²¹ The most interesting trend in India is the dominance of menswear in the market, while the rest of the world has women's wear in the highest market proportion.²² As far as Indian women are concerned, they are moving from unstitched apparel to stitched apparel, and hence generating a vast potential market in modern women's wear.

There were three factors that were influencing the growth of the Indian apparel industry. First is the price of raw material, as cotton is freely exported from India, so its price is constantly rising. Second, government social welfare programs are pulling workers from this sector on their social scheme, so there is huge shortage of labor. Third, the discount war is destroying the established marketing channel. The downward drop in the value of the rupee over 2012-13²³ gives exporters the advantage to export more and earn more money. Exports are expected to rise from 72,000 crore to 80,000 crore (Indian rupees). There is on-going talk of a free trade agreement between India and the European Union.²⁴ If this materializes in the near future, it will be a big boost to the Indian (as well as global) economy. China exports approximately 10 times more than India, but constantly faces labor

¹⁶ Research and market brochure <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/2152367/>

¹⁷ EPZ – World Bank Definition. An export processing zone is one of many export promotion tools. Today's export processing zones have evolved from their original definition as "an industrial estate, usually a fenced-in area of 10–300 hectares that specializes in manufacturing for export". Many firms, called export processing firms, now benefit from the incentives offered in the zones without being physically fenced in.

¹⁸ Confederation of Indian Textile Industry.

¹⁹ 1 US Dollar = 62 Rupee, Retrieved from <http://www.moneycontrol.com/currency/mcx-usdinr-price.html> on February 09, 2014 at 12:55pm.

²⁰ 1 Lakh = 100,000 and 1 Crore = 10,000,000.

²¹ Textile weekly, volume 2, issue 26, June-2013, <http://textileweekly.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/vol-2-issue-26-24th-june-2013.pdf>

²² <http://www.indiaafricaconnect.in/maleshwar/index.php?param=news/3356/cinema-fashion/110>

²³ <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/rupee-fall-pushes-tata-group-out-of-100billion-club/article5386376.ece>

²⁴ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/India-EU-free-trade-agreement>

shortages. If India was able to tap even 10% of the Chinese fashion export market, Indian exports would double.²⁵

SWECHHA

Swechha is an organization that was started in 2000 with the aim of creating awareness about pollution and the growing discharge of industrial effluents in the River Yamuna. The River Yamuna, which is considered as the lifeline of Delhi, has recently been recognized as a highly polluted body of water in Delhi. Swechha aimed to make the people understand that several things can be done in various ways to clean the Yamuna. Within a few months of starting the movement, the campaign was able to mobilize more than 500 volunteers. As the support has been growing many fold within a year, Swechha was able to register itself as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in 2001.²⁶

The mission of Swechha was to raise awareness among the public through street plays, photo exhibitions, film screenings, workshops and public meetings in various schools and colleges. After the initial success, Swechha devised a whole range of programs focusing on various environmental issues and tried to reach and sensitize the maximum number of youth with a vision of mobilizing them for a common cause. Swechha also partnered with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), an initiative of the UNDP.²⁷ This association opened new avenues and opportunities for Swechha – to work on a broader platform with great support from domestic as well as international volunteers. Over the decade (2001-11), Swechha worked with 72 organizations nationally and internationally – all of them highly reputed and respected globally.

Swechha's ultimate goal was not only to raise awareness among youth and citizens of the nation, but also to actively engage them in tackling the problem. Change was the theme of Swechha; it brings change by engaging youth from all walks of life. Swechha defined 'change' as a revolution in people's attitude and perception and simultaneously in the environment – on social as well as human fronts. Swechha provided youth the platform to 'be the change' – to become a catalytic of change by providing necessary support and guidance.²⁸ It was this dynamic approach of Swechha that enabled one of its founding members, Vimlendu Jha, to take this spirit forward and create a social enterprise called Green the Gap.

GREEN THE GAP

Green the Gap was formed by the founding team (see Exhibit 1) of Swechha in New Delhi as a means to not only raise awareness among the people on environmental issues, but also provide employment opportunities to the disadvantaged section of the society. Green the Gap applied innovative methods to reuse waste material and convert it into high quality useful fashion apparels and products. It offered customers a niche market where they could make choices about their shopping habits, which had thus far been limited in the case of waste material.²⁹

Green the Gap basically did upcycling work, i.e. transforming old tires, tetra packs and waste clothes into fashionable, high quality products. Green the Gap was in the business of transforming unused and waste items into products and apparels that would find a place in people's homes, offices and wardrobes. For instance, products included elegant wallets made from waste tetra packs, waste cloth from factories and used tyres. Green the Gap made 'funky and cool' college bags from recycled cloth,

²⁵ CMAI Report: Buoyant about apparel industry's growth, Friday, 28 June 2013
<http://www.fashionunited.in/news/fashion/cmai-report-buoyant-about-apparel-industrys-growth-280620135660>

²⁶ <http://www.swechha.in/about>

²⁷ <http://www.unv.org/en/perspectives/doc/discovering-the-river-of.html>

²⁸ Swechha Mission – <http://www.swechha.in/about>

²⁹ <http://greenthegap.com/about-us/>

jute, flex tyre tubes; coasters from tetra packs and rubber and stationery items from recycled jute and much more.

Green Gap Enviro Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (Green the Gap) was established in 2008 to market and sell these products. The company sold products ranging from home décor to fashion accessories (see Exhibit 2). On the production side, it had about 20 employees and owned two stores, one in Delhi and the other in Mumbai. There were several other stores that were selling its products across India. Green the Gap was a crucial means of livelihood for the tailors and workers who (primarily) belonged to the disadvantaged section of the Indian society. What made Green the Gap products unique was the design and quality of the work and the training and management of the people working at Green the Gap. Green the Gap provided a unique opportunity for customers to purchase numerous kinds of products made out of waste and unused materials – all at a single place.³⁰ Its clientele includes some big institutions like NSD, the British Council, the American Embassy, Cox and Kings and CRISIL.

GAP INC.

Gap Inc. was founded in 1969, with a single store in San Francisco. Gap Inc. was a leading multinational giant in retailing, specialized in offering clothing, accessories and personal care products for all segments and classes for men, women, children and babies. It had more than 137,000 employees and 3,100 company operated outlets and more than 350 franchise stores around the world.³¹ The portfolio of brands that Gap Inc. had personified included fashion not only in the United States, but also across the globe. Gap Inc.'s co-founders, Doris and Don Fisher, inspired generations of employees with a simple aspiration to “do more than sell clothes”. Their promise continued to guide employee's commitment to the communities where they lived and worked.³² Gap Inc.'s story was not going to be limited to just selling clothes, and Doris and Don Fisher attempted their best to make this certain. They envisioned integrity would become the hallmark of their business.

DILEMMA AND SHACKLES

The US-based company, Gap Inc., had filed a lawsuit against Green the Gap stating infringement of copyrights and allied violations by Green the Gap. The filing of this lawsuit had opened a Pandora's Box for Vimlendu. Vimlendu, a social entrepreneur in emerging markets, was worried about what should be done and how he should best manage this situation. Vimlendu had been a leader, a winner and a fighter throughout his life – making his way past the shackles and troubles. But this time it was very different and the stakes were too high. The company (Green the Gap) that he had nurtured with all his mettle and the efforts of his team was in the doldrums. His leadership and managerial acumen were put to the test against one of the largest giants in the fashion industry (Gap Inc.).

On March 10, 2013, Vimlendu received a legal letter from Gap Inc. The letter contained a legal notice from Gap Inc. asking Green the Gap to change its brand name. According to the notice, Vimlendu's company 'Green the Gap' was given 14 days to change its name and remove all references to the word 'gap' from its products, otherwise Gap Inc. would take further action to protect its trademarked brand.³³

Vimlendu was tense and had to act swiftly as time was running out. On one hand were his aspirations, company, customers and future growth plans, and on the other, was the realization that legal proceedings (regarding the response to be given to Gap Inc.'s legal suit) could not be left pending or

³⁰ Green The Gap – The coolest way to recycle, Monday, 10 September 2012, 11:54 <http://www.tanyamunshi.com/lifestyle/green-the-gap-the-coolest-way-to-recycle/>

³¹ <http://www.gapinc.com/content/gapinc/html/aboutus/keyfacts.html>

³² http://www.gapinc.com/content/gapinc/html/social_responsibility.html

³³ <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2013/07/25/indian-recycler-faces-legal-fight-with-gap-inc/>

neglected. He was indecisive and his thoughts were scattered among different prospects and options. His mind kept sifting through extremities of options – whether to accept the ‘legal’ request of Gap Inc. and change the name of his company or to start a journey of resistance against the lawsuit or to perhaps do something else. Each option had its own pros and cons, but still the decision was not so easy. This was because there were other issues, beyond the boundary of the lawsuit filed by Gap Inc., that were also at play. He had to think about his current and future customers. Green the Gap had recently started its e-commerce website www.greenthegap.com and had a growing demand from both domestic and international clients. Vimlendu had thought that now it was time to expand and diversify into international markets as well.

He was envisioning the future of Green the Gap in emerging (and international) markets and assessing the challenges and opportunities that could be leveraged by small businesses like his – particularly in a scenario when the Indian economy was opening up and more FDI was being allowed.³⁴ And just when he was thinking this, yet another thought struck his mind – would the entry of these MNCs be ‘actually’ beneficial for small businesspeople and social entrepreneurs or would there be a flipside to it.

This was a nested dilemma, *“It would have been good if Green the Gap would have had a big foreign fashion player as its partner, it could have acted as a shield against the Gap Inc.’s litigation”*. Vimlendu’s mind at that moment was like a tsunami of thoughts – swirling across options, information and dilemmas. Opening the market for larger companies could be beneficial, but it could also create major problems for smaller companies such as Green the Gap. Just when Vimlendu was thinking about partnerships, mergers, entry of foreign players into domestic markets, his customers and stakeholders of Green the Gap, it struck him that these shackles were secondary concerns. The primary concern was still to foray Green the Gap from the legal turmoil that was created by the litigation by Gap Inc. This lawsuit had the capacity to do reputational damage to Green the Gap (since Green the Gap had both national as well as international clients). It might hurt the company’s international exports and reduce its profitability and viability. But then again, there are two sides to every coin. Was there a way Vimlendu could surface from the deep waters and steer his company away from this labyrinth of problems by actually changing the rules of the game and using this litigation scenario as a blessing in disguise? Were his lone efforts sufficient to deal with this situation? Did his personal leadership and management style need a re-positioning or was he agile enough to fulfill his dream of increased value creation for as many people as possible via his company?

³⁴ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Govt-unleashes-big-bang-FDI-reforms-opens-up-defence/articleshow/21110866.cms>

EXHIBIT 1

Senior Management of Green the Gap



Vimlendu Jha
Founder and CEO



Ram Singh
Production Manager



Clea Stone
Head of Marketing and Business
Development



Satish Rana
Sales Manager Delhi



Rajesh Dubey
Sales Manager Mumbai



Deeksha Bhatia
Head of Operations



Jack Todd
Social Media Guru

Source: <http://greenthegap.com/about-us/>, Accessed on February 08, 2014 at 11:25am.

EXHIBIT 2

Screenshot of Green the Gap Website's Front Page



Source: <http://greenthedgap.com/>, Accessed on February 08, 2014 at 11:40am.

Teaching Note

GREEN THE GAP: SOCIOPRENEUR WALKING THE TIGHTROPE OF RUNNING A BUSINESS

SYNOPSIS

It was March of 2013 and e-commerce and e-retailing were two marketing and business phenomena that were becoming the new way of doing business in Southern part of Asia. Yet another phenomenon that was growing was the global desire to buy sustainable products and go green. Green the Gap was a company that operated in the Indian sub-continent and that was trying to amalgamate business sense in retail, innovation and sustainable development. Green the Gap applied innovative methods to reuse waste material and convert it into high quality useful fashion apparels and products. On March 10, 2013, Vimlendu received a legal letter from Gap Inc. Vimlendu was the founder of Green the Gap. According to the letter, Vimlendu's company 'Green the Gap' was given 14 days to change its name and remove all references to the word 'gap' from its products, otherwise Gap Inc. would take further action to protect its trademarked brand. Vimlendu and Green the Gap were in grave business dilemmas. How should Vimlendu deal with this situation? Were his lone efforts sufficient to deal with this situation? Did his personal leadership and management style need re-positioning or was he agile enough to fulfill his dream of increased value creation for as many people as possible via his company?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

The academic and business centric concepts and theories deliberated in this case will facilitate students to in gaining new skills and understanding in the following areas:

- Sustainable and social entrepreneurship: The rationale and highlights of socially responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship, or sociopreneurship,¹ can be acknowledged and understood through this case.
- Emotional Agility and impact of psychological adroitness on new ventures.
- Talent management: The rationality of choices related to the management of entrepreneurial and millennial talent can be taught and understood through use of this case.

Specifically, the students will be able to appreciate:

- A new type of entrepreneurship that addresses value creation in term of the triple bottom line viz. social, economic and environmental².
- E-retailing and e-business challenges in the context of emerging economies, such as India.
- Fundamental drivers and business life cycle for social businesses.
- Transformation and integration of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) with main stream businesses.
- Ethical operations of a company.

¹The term 'sociopreneurship' refers to a stream of entrepreneurship that combines business intelligence, innovation and determination to move forward. Sociopreneurs look at problems as an opportunity to establish a new business model which will benefit in the surrounding community empowerment. [Reference: <http://cisak.perpika.kr/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2013-29.pdf>, Accessed on May 22, 11:52 pm]

² Savitz, A. (2013). The triple bottom line: how today's best-run companies are achieving economic, social and environmental success-and how you can too. John Wiley & Sons.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGY

This case emphasizes on the connection of entrepreneurship management problems, and the ethical and entrepreneurial dimensions applicable to the work environment, with a particular focus on social and ethical operation of a business. Students should be requested to read the case before the class. Also, with the case the students could also be asked to read the following pre-readings:

- Julian Birkinshaw, J., Foss, N. J., & Lindenberg, S. (2014). Combining Purpose With Profits. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 55(3), 49-56.
- Gerald C. Kane, Dough Palmer, Ann Nguyen Phillips & David Kiron (2014). Combining Purpose With Profits. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 55(3), 49-56.

The case facilitator could then commence the session by presenting the following video clip about 'Green the Gap' and the protagonist of the Case Mr. Vimlendu Jha to set the tone and context of the class:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZc5dyBsI2g>

This video is a detailed account about the company (Green the Gap), the protagonist (Mr. Vimlendu Jha) and the innovations that drive the social business. [Accessed on May 31, 2014 at 11:50 am].

The screening of the video should be followed with the actual case discussion. There can be two possible approaches for the discussion of the case.

One could be to divide the class in groups of four or five students each and then allow the group to identify, discuss and recommend what should be done to solve the dilemma in the case. The focus should be not on the final recommended solution per se but rather on the path and thought processes leveraged by students in connecting with the protagonist, empathizing with him, understanding the business concepts and dilemmas at play and finally taking a decision with the given set of constraints.

The other approach could be to 'not' divide the class in groups but instead engage the whole class in the case discussion – all the students together. This kind of discussion enables equal spread of limelight across the class and invokes contribution from all the corners of the classroom. A suggestion that really worked for us is that – the students should be given as much independence as possible for discussing and analysing the case from as many different business perspectives as possible. This approach sometimes really helps in extracting most out of the case and generating augmented learning for the whole class.

Both the approaches of case discussion were tried before writing this teaching note and both have their specific advantages and takeaways (as aforementioned). The choice of the approach of case discussion depends upon the teaching style of the instructor.

COURSE POSITIONING

- MBA/postgraduate/undergraduate courses on strategy, innovation and entrepreneurship. Here it can be used in the middle of the course to highlight the challenges presented by an entrepreneur due to changes in the business environment. This case would also act as an effective tool to illustrate the importance of efficient communication of innovations.
- MBA/postgraduate/undergraduate courses on information systems. The case can be taught at

a position in the course where the modules of management information systems (MIS) and technology enabled management, are being discussed.

- MBA/post graduate management program courses on human resource management/organizational behaviour. The case can be taught at a time when the talent management module of the course is being discussed. The case can also be used in teaching the management of millennial (Generation Y) and entrepreneurial talent. Further to discuss re-positioning of leadership style and the use of emotional agility for being a resilient entrepreneur.
- MBA/Executive courses on public policy management. This case can be taught at a point when the implementation of public policies and strategies is being taught.
- MBA/postgraduate/undergraduate courses on change management and business ethics. The case can be positioned at a time when the ethical conduct of a business in changing business conditions is being discussed.
- MBA/postgraduate/undergraduate courses on Business communication, marketing. The case can be positioned at a time when the social media/digital marketing strategy of a firm is being discussed

CASE DISCUSSION

Business Dilemmas in the Case:

Vimlendu was thinking about partnerships, mergers, entry of foreign players into domestic markets. Just then, Vimlendu received a legal letter from Gap Inc. According to the letter, Vimlendu's company 'Green the Gap' was given 14 days to change its name and remove all references to the word 'gap' from its products, otherwise Gap Inc. would take further action to protect its trademarked brand. Vimlendu and Green the Gap were in grave business dilemmas. How should Vimlendu deal with this situation? Were his lone efforts sufficient to deal with this situation? Did his personal leadership and management style need overhauling or was he agile enough to fulfill his dream of increased value creation for as many people as possible via his company?

The arena of business lies at the juncture of a lot of disciplines including social sciences, decision sciences, modern marvels of science and the public sector. This amalgam allows the case to be discussed from various perspectives. But in every case discussion, there are a couple of common and central themes that inadvertently have to be discussed. For this case, these themes encompass, the efficient management and use of business skills and emerging technologies, the issues of emotional agility and self-leadership of an entrepreneur and the role of government in creating and promoting a conducive business environment. Exhibit TN 1 summarizes the gist of case solution in the form of a board plan. This could be helpful for visualizing the use of space during the case discussion in the class. The following descriptive discussion blocks help in further analysis of the key issues and dilemmas presented in the case.

Discussion Block 1: EFFICIENT USE OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Q. Was there a way in which Vimlendu (and his team) could have leveraged emerging Information and Communication Technologies to makeover his way out of the situation which he had landed himself in?

Vimlendu and his team found themselves in a difficult situation after they received a legal notice from Gap Inc., demanding that they change their firm's name from "Green the Gap". However, this situation did create an interesting opportunity for his firm to promote products across the globe. Since Green the Gap was a sociopreneurial venture, which produced goods from recycled waste products, it

could have leveraged Information and Communication Technologies, through Social Media networks such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, and through search engine optimisation, such as Google Search advertisements. Digital technologies open up a whole new market for emerging businesses³. In contemporary society, people spend large amounts of time on social networking sites⁴.

Vimlendu could therefore focus on leveraging digital marketing tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, Online Buzz. This would have allowed it to spread its message to society in general. Vimlendu could have uploaded videos and advertisements onto social networking sites, explaining how the products are made and how they can benefit our planet. He could post videos of interviews with the workers of Swechha and allied activities on these social networking sites, to help the world understand that 'Green the Gap' was not only a business but also a whole socio-economic ecosystem. Green the Gap could also have used social media networks to reach out to people and defend itself against Gap Inc. [in case Vimlendu decided to go forth and fight the legal battle with Gap Inc.]. This initiative of his could have been further amplified if it was clubbed with use of social media analytics since social media metrics and analytics could be used to predict future market trends through the use of forecasting tools⁵.

Adopting both outbound marketing and inbound marketing to create awareness about waste recycling⁶ would have been of further benefit in attracting customers to Green the Gap. Since the success of any online business depends on its ability to project relevant products to potential users screen space so that there is an increased possibility of their making a purchase. Green the Gap could have subscribed to an advanced semantic services, employed Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Software as a Service (SAAS) software to analyze browsing history so that only relevant products will be displayed to the customer. This approach would have also helped the company in providing personalized discounts and offers to its (current and prospective) customers.

The number of mobile users was booming in India⁷ and across the world⁸ and mobile commerce (M-commerce) was an important area of digital business, which could have been exploited to create business opportunities. Mobile application software (apps) can be highly customised and are easily available with a single click. These applications, which can be personalised according to past purchases, could provide the customer with the motivation to make further purchases. Other techniques that could have been considered were Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and viral marketing campaigns.

Additional Readings:

- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Geho, P. R., & Dangelo, J. (2012). The Evolution of Social Media as a Marketing Tool for Entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurial Executive*, 17.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet?. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 18(1), 38-52.

Discussion Block 2: EMOTIONAL AGILITY AND SELF LEADERSHIP

³ Tapscott, D., Lowy, A., & Ticoll, D. (1998). *Blueprint to the Digital Economy: Creating Wealth in the Era of E-business*. McGraw-Hill Professional.

⁴ Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.

⁵ Geho, P. R., & Dangelo, J. (2012). The Evolution of Social Media as a Marketing Tool for Entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurial Executive*, 17.

⁶ Leung, A., Cai, Z. W., & Wong, M. H. (2006). Environmental contamination from electronic waste recycling at Guiyu, southeast China. *Journal of Material Cycles and Waste Management*, 8(1), 21-33.

⁷ <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=85669>

⁸ <http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/infographic-2013-mobile-growth-statistics/>

Q. Did Vimlendu’s personal leadership and management style need overhauling or was he flexible enough to fulfil his dream of increased value creation for as many people as possible via his company?

Yes, Vimlendu’s personal leadership and management style was flexible, but it was not sufficient to fulfil his dream of increased value creation for as many people as he would have wished via his company. When he received legal notice from Gap Inc. it became apparent that he was in severe difficulty and that he needed to be more flexible to overcome this situation. To be emotionally agile, “Effective leaders need to manage their negative thoughts and feelings”. In Vimlendu’s case, he was facing difficulty in overcome the dilemma and steering his company through the repercussions successfully. But as the case progresses, one sees that the emotions and reactions of Vimlendu were not surface level but were deep and despite his personal shortcoming his vision and passion were driving him to do what was best for his company – Green the Gap.

Ideal way to deal with this situation for Vimlendu would have been to consider all the possible options available and if possible learn from the lessons that the age old adage, ‘David vs Goliath’ has been bestowing since time immemorial⁹. David vs Goliath stress the importance of adroit thought process and agility by underdog to overcome a big bully.

Additional Activity for Students:

To augment the experience of learning of students in the class, the case instructor could ask student to take the ‘Emotional Agility Assessment’ which is available free of cost on the following link:

<http://hbr.org/web/assessment/2013/11/evaluate-your-emotional-agility> [Accessed on May 31, 2014 at 16:16 hrs.]

This is a psychometric test developed by Susan David and would help in simulating the experience of emotional agility in the class.

Additional Readings:

- David, S., & Congleton, C. (2013). Emotional Agility. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(11), 125
- Reynolds, P. (2014). Emotional Agility. *Harvard Business Review*, 92(1-2), 20-20.
- Baumol, W. J. (2002). Entrepreneurship, innovation and growth: The David-Goliath symbiosis. *Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance*, JEF, 7(2), 1-10.

Discussion Block 3: ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTION OF COMMERCIAL INITIATIVES

Q. Imagine you are the Joint Additional Secretary of India’s Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion DIPP and have been asked to present your views on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in e-commerce in India. What would you have recommended – increasing or decreasing the FDI? Kindly give reasons.

The politico-economic situation in India was improving and becoming more suitable for doing business¹⁰. An augmented FDI would have affirmatively benefitted the growth of commerce and specifically ‘e-commerce’ in India.

⁹ <http://99u.com/articles/6957/david-vs-goliath-why-small-businesses-exceed-expectations>

¹⁰ <http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/india-still-second-fastest-growing-economy-chidambaram/article4959820.ece>

There are several reasons that suggest that increasing FDI will be beneficial for India and I have outlined these below:

- FDI will enable partnerships between Indian companies and multinational corporations (MNCs) and it will strengthen the position of both partners¹¹.
- E-commerce was an area where foreign multinationals had great expertise and experience whereas India's retail industry was relatively new to this field and would benefit from expert guidance¹².
- In the retail e-commerce sector, it is necessary to have an excellent supply chain network to deliver goods directly to the consumer's doorstep. Augmented FDI could help to develop infrastructure facilities in India, which would generate employment opportunities as well. With the assistance of FDI, the Indian retail e-commerce sector would be able to make major investment in warehouses, logistics and modern management practices. Support from the government would also improve the transportation channels, supply chains and logistics.
- FDI would help to nurture and promote business in order to meet the demands of all customers at the right time.
- FDI will increase the size of the retail e-commerce market. This may lead to a reduction in business for existing retail e-commerce businesses, due to the number of global companies participating in India. In India, people still want to touch and feel a product before they buy, so with an increase in FDI, global companies will have a struggle on their hands if they wish to capture the Indian retail market¹³.
- Capital investment hurdles can be reduced, to some extent, by partnerships with major global organizations.
- Cottage industries produce handicraft products but these do not presently have access to both the national and international market places. Through the development of e-commerce we can provide a platform that will enable these types of industries to sell their products globally.
- The talented workforce that is available in India can work collaboratively with larger global enterprises funding FDI.
- India was growing but fiscal and trade deficit were still a problem¹⁴. An increase in FDI could bring more foreign exchange to the country thereby mitigating the deficit problems (and even help in the appreciation of Indian Currency - Rupee).
- Increase in FDI would have increased the number of players entering the India e-commerce market, which would have further lead to augmented quality (increasing competition facilitates availability of quality products at cheaper prices).

¹¹ http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/100-fdi-will-help-foreign-telcos-buy-out-partners-113071600842_1.html

¹² <http://pages.ebay.in/community/aboutebay/news/pressreleases/corporate/fieo-ebay-paypal-tieup.html>

¹³ Javorcik, B. S. (2004). Does foreign direct investment increase the productivity of domestic firms? In search of spillovers through backward linkages. *The American Economic Review*, 94(3), 605-627.

¹⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/31/opinion/why-indias-economy-is-stumbling.html?_r=0