



Vinod Gupta, Founder, InfoGROUP and DatabaseUSA.com

Chat on Chaat
with Ritu Marya



Ritu Marya, Editor in Chief, Entrepreneur India Media

“I think Indian start-ups are as good as American start-ups”

Born in a village near Saharanpur, Vinod Gupta, IIT graduate and an Indo-American entrepreneur, started his business by borrowing \$100 in 1972 and won over America with his commendable research on data science. He later went on to be hired as a consultant by 42nd American President Bill Clinton, after he left his office, a relationship that has continued. He has a history of giving and raising funds for Bill and Hillary Clinton during their campaign and has also got mentioned on latter's autobiography. A staunch believer in quality education, Gupta, has made several benevolent donations to help advance education penetration in India and recently Akhilesh Yadav, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP) awarded him with UP Pravasi Bhartiya Sammaan 2017 for his contribution in the field. Entrepreneur's Editor in chief, Ritu Marya, caught up with Gupta, for a *Chat on Chaat*.

From Saharanpur to White House and back, tell us about Vinod Gupta, the entrepreneur, the philanthropist?

I had a job but I realized early that if you want to be happy then you need to run your own show. I started my own venture with only \$100; failed twice and became successful only the third time. My companies, which conventionally dealt with big data, became big and I got familiar with people in the White House. Following this, I realized I could do much to help improve quality of education in India and, we started our education foundation and I had Bill Clinton to inaugurate it.

Today, we have polytechnic school, nursing school and also high school.

In entrepreneurial journey, how important is education?

My father was a doctor and valued the importance of good education above everything else. Post my school education, I went to IIT and then to the US, where I pursued my career. I look back and realize that it was my education, that changed my life. In 2001, I was in India and we began our education foundation. So one day, I was taking a walk down the village and somebody called out my

name; I saw he was selling vegetables. I asked him how he knew me and he told me, he went to school with me. Later he asked me, how you got out of here? I told him it was the education.

People from India would rather think of working in a big corporation in USA. So, why did you choose entrepreneurship?

In US, I first joined a job and realized, if I wanted to be in control, I have got to be taking the decisions. In those days, if you failed at something, people would mock at you saying that you

are not cut for it. But, I learnt not to give up.

Do you follow the start-up investment cycle in India? Are they doing it right?

I think Indian start-ups are as good as American start-ups but the only difference is that the American market is much bigger. And today, most of the products and services are global. So you can start something in India and then grow that somewhere else.

Some advice to Indian students who are passionate about entrepreneurship.

You should get a good education and then grab a job. Work for a couple of years and learn how the business works and then think of something that has a demand. After five years in the field, you can easily find your partners and finances.

One advice to your younger self

(Laughs out loud). Why mess with the winning formula? ☺