

Our Achiever

Technology Business Incubator (TBI)

The need for instruments such as TBI has been recognised the world over for initiating technology led and knowledge driven enterprises. Studies also show that such mechanisms help not only in the growth of technology based new enterprises but also in improving their survival rate substantially (from 30 per cent to over 70 per cent). TBIs also facilitate speedy commercialisation of research outputs.

The TBI of National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), Dept. of Science and Technology, (DST) provides varied services such as Market survey/ marketing assistance, Business planning and training, Organising management/ technical assistance, Assistance in obtaining statutory approvals, Information dissemination on product ideas/technologies, Syndicating finances, Arranging legal and IPR services, Using facilities of the Host Institute (HI) at nominal charges, Work space for a limited period, etc.

The TBI besides providing a host of services to new enterprises (and also to existing SMEs in the region) also facilitates an atmosphere congenial for their survival and growth. The essential feature of a TBI is that the tenant companies leave the incubator space within 2-3 years. Their main objectives are:

- Creation of technology based new enterprises,
- Creating value added jobs & services,
- Facilitating transfer of technology,
- Fostering the entrepreneurial spirit,
- Speedy commercialisation of R&D output,
- Specialised services to existing SMEs.

The Incubator

Centre for Innovation Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) is an initiative by IIM Ahmedabad to promote innovation and entrepreneurship by translating high-tech and mass-impact innovation in various disciplines of science and engineering into products, processes and services. CIIE was setup in 2001 with the support of IIMA, Gujarat Government, and Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. CIIE facilitates incubation of new enterprises with innovative technologies by providing physical, technical, intellectual and networking support. Other objectives of CIIE include research in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship and dissemination of knowledge through case writing, entrepreneurship clinics, venture conclave etc. The Incubator is currently supporting a diverse range of technologies in various domains including aerospace, cleantech, electronics/semiconductor, IT, telecom, medical and social entrepreneurship. To date CIIE has founded 14 incubate companies and Aura Herbal Wear is one of them.



Aura: Humbly Herbal!

Herbal dyeing of organic fabrics - this heritage and treasure of India dates back to approximately 4000 years. The task of rediscovering the heritage lost in the maze of materialistic mundane began for an entrepreneur in the family kitchen and his first clients were none other than the family members and close friends. The Entrepreneur belongs to Ahmedabad - the Manchester of India - whose meandering lanes lead to Narol – an industrial area where scores of industrial houses situated among regular greenery lead you to the doors of Aura Herbal Wear. A very quaint office housing the fiery owner welcomes you. Separated from it is the factory premises - an area emitting gurgle of operating machines. Unlike factories and production houses there is no stench of accompanying chemicals and processes. The Aura is very much herbal!

Welcome to a very-very colourful world of herbal fabrics spilling from very-very quaint clothesline tied to poles and also piled one upon another requiring you to crane your neck to have a glimpse of the last one piled close to the ceiling. The workforce is engaged in weaving, dyeing, manual washing of fabrics, block printing, designing, cutting, stitching and final display of beautifully made garments. The aromas emitting from pomegranate skin, *herda*, madder, indigo, onion, etc, mesmerize you. The entrepreneur born in the colourful state of Rajasthan is set to sprinkle the vibrant herbal colours all over the world.

We are talking about Mr. Arun Baid – the 43-year-old entrepreneur driven by instinct, inspiration and innovation. Aura Herbal Wear an incubate company of Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE), is the second enterprise for Mr Baid who detests the deceitful dish being served in the name of natural and vegetable dyes. Read on to know the story of the revival of the ancient heritage, the work of dyeing and preparing organic fabrics which begin and finish naturally and have no role of solvents and chemicals at any stage what-so-ever.....

From India to Indonesia

Mr. Arun Baid basically belongs to Rajasthan. He was born on 9th April 1966 and brought up in Gangashehar, a city in Rajasthan. His father was Chief Executive in Kanoria



Synthetic Textile Mills. From Gangashehar he moved on with his family to Indonesia in his early childhood as his father was posted there.

Mr. Arun Baid Moving to a new country, a new environment both deprived him as well as provided him with new opportunities. He was deprived of his primary education due to lack of such facilities in Indonesia at that time, but he was provided with the opportunity to explore the natural beauty bestowed in abundance there. He strongly believes that the seeds of affection for nature sprouted in the picturesque surroundings of Indonesia. They later moved to Calcutta (now Kolkata) where he pursued his primary education. Ahmedabad was the next juncture where he completed his higher education and graduation in commerce after which he perused his MBA in Marketing from Mumbai in 1989. He has a sister who is now married and settled in Mumbai and Mr. Baid has now settled down in Ahmedabad. His life and business partner is Sonal Baid. Infact, he credits her for the introduction of the herbal dyeing concept as his entrepreneurial avenue which has since then been their journey together.



Always an Entrepreneur

Arun Baid was never the one to work for someone else. He never had the inclination to take up any job despite the opportunities existing. It was always the task of being his own master that attracted him. His first enterprise centered around collection of textile wastes from different industries, which also constituted harmful lethal chemicals, and then recycling it and converting into a raw material for another industry. During the course he discovered that around 8000 chemicals are being used in this Manchester of India for dyeing.

An appalled Arun Baid decided to bid adieu to this lucrative but deadly industry. He realised how fatal and lethal



Weaving threads for d denim

these chemicals are for the environment and the mankind. When they found that most of the waste they were picking up was discharged by textile industries, they decided that there was a strong requirement to research and find alternate ways to process the

textiles where in the synthetic chemicals that are highly toxic and creating havoc in the environment need to be eliminated.



The Perfect Colour!

indigenously to dye fabrics. He found the know-how very impressive and effective. An awed Arun Baid plunged into researching, experimenting and

Going Green

Some deep pondering, a lot of research and the love for environment then came to the rescue of Mr Baid. His desperation to find an alternative to the chemicals being used in the textile industry took him back to a technology that was used thousands of years ago and that was then used effectively and

re-developing the lost art and technology. In the process he tried to locate people who might be carrying on the legacy but the results were disheartening as all efforts proved to be futile and all searches came to a naught. They came across people who were either totally into chemical dyeing or those who partly followed natural dyeing but resorted to chemical



processing at some stage or the other to get the desired effects and results.

The Twin Tasks

Arun Baid had twin tasks: One, to find the perfect methodology of dyeing, details of which were not available anywhere. Secondly, he wanted to undertake large scale dyeing or mass production as any

Dyeing shades to meet the tastes!

industry would require dyeing of clothes to the tune of hundreds of meters and not merely a metre or two. So, they started working, experimenting and processing on one metre length fabrics, failing many times and wasting more than hundreds of meters in the process.

But a never say die attitude paid off and Mr Baid found successful ways of processing around more than 1000 mts/day, on all kind of varied textiles made from natural and organic sources. The revival process was painstakingly researched, revised, redesigned to suit his requirements. The response was tremendous, everybody was fascinated to an idea of revival of 4000 year-old-technology. People asked him to do it on commercial basis and not pursue it merely as an art.

The Business plan

Since herbal dyeing was a new concept in the market they had to run a small market test

through a showroom to check and ensure the viability and acceptability of the product before entering into the mass production. However, within a couple of years they



Drying the fabric the modern way

recognised the immense possibility of the products to create a market. Encouraged by the new development he prepared to carry out the business on large scale and prepared a



business plan with all technical/non-technical details of products, process, market, pricing strategy, financial feasibility, budget, economic assessment and human resource requirements.

The Tough got going

The initial research period spanned to three years calling for an investment of Rs. 1 crore that was totally self-

Block printing the ready fabric

and saved from his earlier enterprise during the entire tenure of its existence of 18 years. It also included personal loans. A determined Arun Baid ensured that his new enterprise begins herbal and also ends herbal – as not only is the process herbal but the entire water used in the process is recycled and reused. Thus Aura was born in 2002. A vehement

funded. This was what he had earned



Finished fabrics ready for clients

Arun Baid demarcates his product as purely herbal dyeing and not vegetable dyeing or natural dyeing. The herbs and other ingredients used for dyeing of fabric are separated after the final process and again used as organic manure. The herbs, flowers and fruit skins are procured from the local market while the organic yarn to weave the cotton fabric is obtained from different areas such as Mahima organic store in Indore, MP,

from South as well as Maharashtra.

Once the production got rolling it was now time to popularize the product and create a market for it. Exhibitions, boutique and a permanent shop were the answer to it. It took one year to get the profit rolling. The first year turnover was Rs 6 lakhs, gradually

progressing to Rs. 20 lakh, 60 lakh, 80 lakh, 1 cr, 1.80 cr consecutively. The present turnover in the year 2008-09 is Rs. 3.20 cr.



Perfect tailoring!

No Recession Only Expansion

They have been recently funded by “GVFL” (Gujarat Venture Fund Limited) for further expansion of the capacity. After this expansion the current production capacity is expected to increase by 2 to 3 times. The aggressive marketing tools include website promotion, international and domestic

fair participation, by launching

catalogues. A marketing channel has also been established in the UK.

The GVSL funding is being used for major expansion of the company as Mr Baid plans to take it totally to another level. The present manpower which is 85 is also expected to go up to 250 people after expansion within next two or three months.

The Hurdle

Intensive R&D which required both time and investment was the major initial hurdle that he encountered. However, after successful R&D, to establish a set up was the next challenge wherein financial support was the major problem. Along with it training the people and creating requisite expertise in them was difficult. Patience paid off finally.

The milestones

Arun Baid lists some of the major milestone of his company as:

- The standardization of herbal dyeing process
- Mass production and atomization of the process

- Developing a wide range of herbal color palate to cater to different industries need
- A wide range of organic herbal dyed textile and made ups to offer to the end user
- Achieving 100% growth every year in terms of turn over
- Becoming public limited company from a private ownership
- Catalogue launch to create “AURA” as a brand
- Creating marketing set up in UK
- A wide range of organic herbal dyed textile and made ups to offer to the end user
- Tie up with TAJ spa’s worldwide to supply them all spa utility textiles

For Quality, Uniformity & Productivity

The steps below are taken to ensure quality, uniformity, productivity, etc:

- Standardization of the herbal dyeing process
- Mass production and atomization of the process
- Quality check at every stage of the process and by departments

Clients from far & near

Most of the aura clients are international. To name a few - ETHOS from Paris, Tenfold Organic Textiles from USA, Karma living form USA, Fresh for life from Canada, Nature’s Child from Australia, Eco Ltd from UK, Adili from England & Taj Group of Hotels – SPA.



The recycling plant separating water & herbs for reuse

The Future Strategy

Arun Baid visualizes a great future for herbal fabrics. He, however, has a dream that will not materialize easily and that is to see the entire textile industry following herbal dyeing only. “There is no alternative to it”, a zealous Arun Baid aspires.

The dream may not materialize easily but the entrepreneur is well equipped with an integrated marketing strategy to realize the goals and targets. The strategies include identification of right market and target audience, diversification at an appropriate time, market study, segment spotting, pricing level, promotional activities through various tools like website, trade fairs, face-to-face meetings, continues R&D in product development, working on deadlines, creating confidence level in buyers, excellent service, focusing attention on product features and benefits and create products as per the need of the market, achieving brand recognition, distribution decision, SWOT analysis of the company, sales analysis, generating enough funds for different task, etc.

No Business, Only Pleasure

A nature lover with his partner having same interests makes it easier for Arun Baid to spend all his free time close to nature. Yoga is another passion that they pursue. But something which is very close to his heart and which is still a task that he aims to pursue is educating, spreading and motivating school children to go green. He is keen to spread the fruits of his labour and wants that his work should an inspirational entrepreneurial avenue for the next generation. Involvement with several NGOs and teaching livelihood activities to needy women is another avenue that he dedicates his free time to.

The Success Mantra

Arun Baid attributes the entire credit for the resounding success to hard work. The goal has been achieved with undying passion, hard work and love for nature. “Hard work done logically and intelligently will surely bring the success provided your intentions are clear”, a determined Arun Baid advises. He also believes in the motto Live and let live! and adds “Nothing is impossible if you have the real passion and desire and if you are ready to dedicate yourself to achieve your goal with total commitment.”

Advantage Aura!

- ◆ No pollution is involved whatsoever as colours are directly derived from medicinally rich herbs, flowers, stems, roots, etc.
- ◆ No carcinogenic remains present at all. Instead has rich medicinal properties due to the usage of medicinally rich herbs.
- ◆ All herbs used are known to cure allergies and have anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory properties.
- ◆ The process is only possible on natural fabrics e.g. silk, cotton, wool, etc. So no synthetic fabric used..
- ◆ Only natural / manure bleaching is done
- ◆ No detergents used while washing
- ◆ Strengthens the textile fiber, hence they last longer
- ◆ Organic textile along with herbal dyeing successfully completes the ecological cycle.
- ◆ Immense scope of earning carbon credit through Clean Development Mechanism Scheme (CDM)
- ◆ Almost zero carbon footprint in the entire process

Machineries in use

For Weaving

After being organically sized, the yarns are woven in the weaving unit having 4 Schulzer looms of 154” with weaving capacity of 50000 meters of fabric per month.

For Dyeing

The current capacity of dyeing and printing is approx 5000 - 10,000 meters per day for which the following machines are being used:

- 8 automatic/semi automatic dyeing machines
- 3 yarn dyeing machines
- 2 auto dryers with finishing
- 1 garment dyeing machine
- 2 knit dyeing machine
- 2 screen printing tables
- 2 block printing tables
- Washing machines
- Roll packing machine

For Stitching

- 20 Juki auto machines

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Note: The author may have used various references in the preparation of this article. For further details please contact her.

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