

Experiential learning has become requirement in pre-schools: Prajodh Rajan

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Published Oct 30, 2018, 1:42 pm IST

Updated Oct 30, 2018, 1:42 pm IST

The country has become the second largest market for e-learning after the US.



Mr Prajodh Rajan, Co-Founder and Group CEO, Eurokids International.

Mr Prajodh Rajan, Co-Founder and Group CEO, Eurokids International spoke to Deccan Chronicle about his plans in education sector. Excerpts from the interview...

General developments taking place in the education sector.

The education sector in India is poised to witness significant growth in the years to come as India will have the world's largest Tertiary-age population and second largest graduate talent pipeline globally by the end of 2020. The country has become the second largest market for e-learning after the US. Today there are few schools in India involved in pre-schooling, the K-12 schools and online learning. With only about 1% of the 165 Million children currently in preschool programs there is a huge potential in the preschool sector. Early Childhood education is a crucial step for a child as it is at this stage that she/he learns and grows to imbibe essential life skills through exploration and discovery.

The advent of technology brings with it the concept of smart classes. It is thus essentials for a preschool to bring about a well-balanced curriculum where technology acts as an enabler to learning. Integrated use of scientifically designed games, toys, and technology in our Pre-School curriculum makes learning fun and engaging for children. The need for experiential learning has become the requirement of the day in pre-schools and schools. A child first approach to learning thus becomes the mark of a good preschool.

EuroKids, join hands for workplace day care centres, please elaborate.

In today's world, we could see there is a rise in women employees, and most of them enroll their children in the DayCare centres. We have taken this initiative on the basis of newly enacted Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017 which increased women's leave entitlements from 12 to 26 weeks. We have tied up with leading corporates to venture into DayCare for the employees' kids right from six months to 17 months. In the last nine months, EuroKids has opened seven DayCare centres which are offered under three variants — on site, near site and community model. Under the community model, we will provide DayCare facility at EuroKids' pre-schools so that mothers who cannot carry their kids closer to the office can avail the same facility near their residence. EuroKids recently opened one such facility in Kolkata. At present, EuroKids Day Care Centre takes care of 60-70 kids and plans to enhance the number of centres to 100 from six in two years. Over time, the day-care centre would grow much faster and complement the pre-school business as the government enforces the Maternity Benefit Act strictly. Currently, we have opened two onsite DayCare centres at Cummins India factories at Dewas and Pithampur in Indore and one each at IIM Indore and SBI Global Innovation Centre in Navi Mumbai. Also, we have tied up with JSW Group, Marico and Tata Sky and set up a near-site day care centre at Kalina in Mumbai and another at Thiruvananthapuram for Oracle's women employees.

Women entrepreneurship in franchisee model, Eurokids has managed to carve a niche for themselves in this, what do you have to say on this?

About 80 per cent of EuroKids franchise partners are women. EuroKids has an award-winning franchise model, which focuses on entrepreneurship development through sustainable practices. This franchising model helps to create a community of people dedicated to providing the best pre-schooling experience to children across India.

EuroKids initiates its franchise partners into the network, with an orientation structure, that introduces the partner to the preschooling domain and showcases the finer nuances of this business. Additionally, it empowers the partner with EDGE 360 – the partner support mechanism, which helps her structure the pre-school with the appropriate infrastructure and ambience, shares detailed curriculum, marketing support, enables continuous teacher training and lead management during admissions so that the franchise can solely focus on achieving excellence at the preschool. This gives the womenpreneurs, and mom.ceo's the required assistance and support they need to become educational entrepreneurs. Furthermore, with an all-female staff at each preschool, EuroKids provides workforce opportunities across various levels to women. This is an ideal ecosystem to nurture women entrepreneurs, and it creates a steady increase in employment opportunities for Women, touching lives of over 10,000 women every day by providing employment.

Any expansion plans in your current network of pre-schools and K-12 schools?

We are planning to invest around Rs. 500 crore over the next five years to expand our pre-school and K-12 schools. As of now, we have 1,034 preschool centres in 350 plus cities across the country as well as in Nepal and Bangladesh. We are planning to increase it to 3,000 in major cities and tier II, tier III cities in the next five years. We are also looking at adding 20 more K-12 EuroSchools to take the count to 30 schools in six cities and setting up corporate day-care centres across major cities in the country.

Anything else that you may like to add.

The EuroKids curriculum has evolved through a journey of over 17 years to ensure holistic development of the child. EuroKids is a network of leading organized pre-school chains in India, driven with the 'Child-First Ideology' and a pioneer in undertaking the Balanced Schooling approach. We have always taken efforts and initiatives which are directed towards providing the child with a stimulated fun learning environment. Child's development and engagement needs are met in a home-like environment as they play, learn & grow and imbibe essential life skills.

At EuroKids, we believe that what we provide is a learning environment for the child where there is just appropriate tech-enabled learning. EuroKids has steadily evolved in its methodology, curriculum, understanding of children's needs, parental insights, teacher development, and enhanced partner selection processes. All of these bring to you, a preschool experience that provides the child with an excellent learning experience in an environment that becomes the Child's second home. The brand still retains its 100% child-centric ideology, showcases its focus on customer connect, preferred partner network and a brilliant workforce dedicated to redefining education.