

## **Are You Only “A Unique Identity Number” ABC of Uniqueness**

You must have all read the news that the Founder Managing Director, Infosys, Mr. Nandan Nilekani has taken over the Government of India mission for development UIN number for the 1 billion plus population of the country. This is a major project launched by the Centre which will help in providing every Indian a unique identity, which can be used both by the individual as well as the State for mutual benefit. Apart from the demographic advantage this identity number will help the common man in these daily chores eg. You can open a bank account as well as use the identity to bail out a person in difficulty as well as exercise your adult franchise in election time. The task is so critical that a person of Mr. Nilekani’s eminence sacrificed his personal benefits for the national cause. Let us all salute the brave decision of Mr. Nilekani.

The question that we must address one and all especially the youth is – what is so unique about me? Have I anything outstanding, meaningful and positive contribution to make to the family, society or institution where I am studying? If you do not possess any unique qualities then what steps are you taking to develop those qualities, which will help you stand out amongst the crowd? What role models you have before you to emulate and imbibe those unique inputs which will strengthen your inputs in your journey towards uniqueness. Have you anything to learn from the past industrial legends like the Tatas and Birlas or scholars like Dr. C.V. Raman, Prof Bhatnagar, Prof. Khurana or social reformers like Maharshi Karve, Jyotiba Phule, etc.? Have you tried to study the lives of living legends like Dr. Abdul Kalam, Prof. Amartya Sen, C.K. Pralhad or the dynamic Ila Bhat of SEWA fame?, to emulate the qualities and virtues which have contributed to their uniqueness. If the answer is no, then it is high time you must look into the mirror and reflect your journey thus far and further.

How does one go about developing a framework for acquiring the qualities of a unique personality? The current literature in English as well as regional languages like Marathi, Hindi... are rich in providing guidance to those who are lost in their journey of life. Management experts like Steven Covey have researched deep into human behaviour and have identified unique habits which have shaped the lives of great people, which can be summarised below:

Habit 1: Be Proactive: Principles of Personal Choice

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind: Principles of Personal Vision

Habit 3: Put First Things First: Principles of Integrity & Execution

Habit 4: Think Win/Win: Principles of Mutual Benefit

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood: Principles of Mutual Understanding

Habit 6: Synergize: Principles of Creative Cooperation Continual Improvement

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw: Principles of Balanced Self-Renewal

Habit 8: From Effectiveness to Greatness

The saints and mystics of Maharashtra have produced rich literature, which addresses the very soul of the matter. Sant Ramdaswami a 17<sup>th</sup> Century saint and inspirational guru of Shri Shivaji Maharaj has written a poetic treatise entitled the Psalms of the Soul (*Manachi Shlok*), which bears the process of reaching out to the sublime while following a simple code of everyday life. In fact, it is customary in Maharashtra to ask young children in Maharashtra to recite these shloks to condition their behaviour towards the society.

However, now that a new academic year has begun let us attempt to teach a new alphabet and grammar of the English language which will help us move closer to the process of building up strength of character to shape your unique qualities. Thus A is not only for apple, but attitude and approach; B not for ball, but for bravery and brotherhood; C not for cat, but for competence and challenge and so on...

Even if you spend few minutes of the day to understand and live by these alphabetical explanations then you would have made some headway in developing the special personality traits which will help you stand out in the crowd.

Remember 'U' is for uniqueness of else YOU are wasting your time.