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How serial entrepreneur Krishna Handa inspires and mentors other women in business innovation and social impact

By Rekha Balakrishnan 18th May 2018

As the founder of Claris Capital – a venture capital and private equity company, and Brihati Foundation, Krishna Handa is a serial entrepreneur who is not averse to taking risks, and believes in creating more leaders than followers.

Krishna Handa Krishna Handa has a simple philosophy in life. It hinges on the need to look for solutions. “I have always believed in being a doer than a dreamer. I see challenges as a means to seeking something new, and not necessarily as roadblocks. This is the thought process I hold very dear to my heart, and I refer to it when I explore new things or work on my ideas,” she says.

As the founder of Claris Capital – a venture capital and equity company, and Brihati Foundation, Krishna is a serial entrepreneur who is not averse to taking risks and moves forward with the goal of creating more leaders than followers.

Coming from a Gujarati entrepreneurial family, and then marrying into a business family, entrepreneurship seemed to be a given.

After completing her Bachelor’s degree in Biotechnology and Bio-chemistry, Krishna studied law to get a wholesome view of regulatory procedures. To gain insight in business administration, she enrolled in Suffolk University, Boston, where she earned her MBA degree, and learned the nuances of policy making.

Around this time, the field of generic drugs piqued her interest as she was a student of biotechnology. “However, I wasn’t sure about the course of action. I came across an article about Apple Inc., and how it was outsourcing the development of product parts to China. That somehow clicked with me. At 25, I studied the market and concluded that there is an opportunity in the contract R&D space, especially in the field of niche generics. My idea was to start a B2B company that can keep up with cutting-edge specialty contract research & development technology. This was the genesis of Dorizoe Lifesciences,” she says.

She recounts the ‘pitch’ experience with a lot of fondness. “The person I was presenting to was a woman, and I could say that she understood my apprehensions and anxiety as a new business owner. We talked and discussed my plans. After a fruitful conversation, I was told that

I got the deal. Later, I found out that the client I was pitching my idea to was also a new entrepreneur like me and maybe that's why we hit it off," Krishna adds.

Dorizoe provides end-to-end product development services to its clients engaged in niche generic injectables segments comprising general parenterals, lyophilized, oncology injectables, oral liquids, ophthalmics and semi-solid formulations.

The birth of Dorizoe led to many ventures, some took off while others died along the way, Krishna had countless experiences as an entrepreneur.

"I built an apparel brand called 'Ello'. It was super rich in design, and took off very well initially. Since one brand couldn't sustain the business, I had to try many other brands. However, this was the time when my daughter was born, and I decided to take time off from business, dedicating my time to her. You must lose something to gain something else. I opted to focus on my child first," says Krishna.

Unwavering in both enterprise and optimism, Krishna founded Claris Capital in 2016. A venture capital company, it aims to motivate aspiring, young entrepreneurs to get started in entrepreneurship at an early stage.

Going further down the serial entrepreneur path, Krishna started the Brihati Foundation, an extension of the philosophy of being a solution seeker.

Brihati works in the areas of sustainable urban development by making citizens an active part of the process. The foundation believes that through unique doable and impactful interventions, individuals and communities can be empowered to create a people-friendly society, responsible for its own sustainable development. Its focus areas are urban planning, waste management, conservation of heritage, and sustainability.

Krishna has mentored around 100 women in her professional and personal capacity. She follows a holistic approach that looks at both skill and all-round development.

In the future, the serial entrepreneur looks forward to helping innovative businesses gain a foothold. "In doing so, we will try to reach out to more Tier II and III cities, as there aren't many platforms for new enterprises in these areas. Simultaneously, I want to expand the work of Brihati, and focus on creating awareness about urban planning and waste management through mobilising communities. I wish to help build businesses that are synonymous with innovation, wealth, and job creation, thus creating a greater social and economic impact," she says.

There's surely no rest for women like Krishna, who continually stay inspired and spirited to be on top of their game.