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JUGAAD GOES ABROAD

NIKHIL MENON

*Pondicherry-born, Paris-raised Navi Radjou calls India his 'spiritual home' - while France is his cultural home and the US, his professional home. But India is also a source of inspiration for the forty-one year old who coined the term 'Indovation' in early 2009. Radjou's first book, *Jugaad Innovation: Think Frugal, Be Flexible, and Generate Breakthrough Growth* will be released next year in the States and India.*

How do you define Indovation?

Indovation - or *jugaad*, as we know it in India - is any frugal solution designed to address a specific socio-economic pain-point. The stimulus for Indovation tends to be a complex environment, characterised by diversity, interconnectivity, velocity, ambiguity and scarcity. India's always had all of those in large volumes. But now, these factors are being seen all over the world.

How has the concept evolved since you first coined it?

Indovation isn't just a product or service anymore; it can be a process or business model as well. It is already being used to solve the world's problems. GE's Vscan portable ultrasound machine was inspired by India. Then there's the Embrace low-cost baby warmer that uses boiling water instead of electricity or batteries and is available for a hundredth of the cost of existing models. A KPIT



BHARAT CHANDA

Cummins engineer stuck in Mumbai traffic came up with a plug-in kit (Revol) that upgrades a regular car to a hybrid in 4-6 hours, which the company is now developing with Bharat Forge. And PepsiCo India employees researched a rice seeding system that claims to

Navi Radjou, Independent thought leader, strategy consultant, and Fellow at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge

reduce water consumption by 30%. These companies have realised that it's not about the next big thing, but about making the most of the last big thing.

What's the difference between Chinovation and Indovation and which one's here to stay?

Chinovation is about agility. In China, they have a term called '*shanzhai*' which means rapid imitation. It's about seeing where the market is heading and getting there immediately. For example, Haier found a large number of washing machines in a Chinese town getting clogged because farmers were using them to wash sweet potatoes. The company responded by making machines with larger pipes, which could wash both clothes and potatoes! Place that along with Indovation, which is about affordability and accessibility, and you have the ability to solve many of the world's problems.

With globalisation leading to fewer constraints of scarcity, what is the future of Indovation?

I'm worried about it. There are two kinds of constraints- the kind that spurs innovation and the kind that hinders it. As companies globalise, we are seeing inflexibility arising from compliance and policy issues. Indovation is a bit like jazz - it's free flowing and builds on itself. The Western approach is like an orchestra - if you take the script away, people don't know what to do! Take GE; it was known for Six Sigma, but now they're moving away from it. I think we need a synthetic approach - integrate the Indian and Western approaches in a way that magnifies the best of each.