

## Ordinarily Extraordinary-Interview of Innovative Entrepreneur

Mr. Rohith, Oneness Solution, Bengaluru



**DRDO Head(Left) transferring Patent Certificate and Approval Certificate to Mr Rohith, CEO, Oneneses Solution(Left)**

**Dr. Poornima K:** Good morning Rohith, can you please introduce yourself to our readers?

**Mr.Rohith:** Hi am Rohith, basically an Engineering graduate. I have done my graduation in the Electrical and Electronics domain from well reputed BMS College of Engineering, Bengaluru. I was working with a Multinational Company as a state-charge.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Are you a first-generation entrepreneur? Are your parents from into business background? Who inspired them to join this business?

**Mr.Rohith:** I am a first-generation Entrepreneur. I am basically from Bidar, Karnataka. My parents are neither into

business nor from the business community, they are from the farming community. When I was working as an engineer, I had an interest to do business as somewhere I developed inclination to do business. Initially, I started a spice business in small volume catering to the domestic market across India. Later I showed interest in exporting spices to other countries.

**Dr. Poornima K:** What made you start this venture, specifically into this industry/business?

**Mr.Rohith:** Once I got an order from Canada. After delivering the spices to them through proper package and with high quality, I got rejection of the entire bulk. The only reason for

the rejection was, that the package material that we used was plastic. Being an environment-conscious country, they outright rejected it. I faced loss due to this. This happened in 2019. I took this as a challenge and converted this into my business idea. After much thought and brainstorming, I ended up starting a venture into eco-friendly biodegradable package materials.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Can you please share the thought-provoking ideas that made you avoid paper and ending into biodegradable package material?

**Mr.Rohith:** Even though we witness many businesses that sell paper cups saying that it is an alternative to plastic, the ground reality is, that almost all the paper cutleries and package materials do have plastic as major ingredients to bind them. Also, if we look at the paper, almost 19,000 trees are cut every day in India which leads to deforestation. This is not going to make any sense to save Mother Earth. That was the time when I made up my mind to go for 100% biodegradable package material.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Can you please share the journey of converting your idea into a final product/s?

**Mr.Rohith:** Once I decided on the core product/business, I went back to my hometown and looked for alternative eco-friendly package material. Initially, I was not having any plan to start manufacturing. However, I did not find anyone who are really into this business. For further research and development of an idea into a product, I went to the DRDO center in Hyderabad. I requested a scientist there to help me convert the idea into a product. It took almost one year to develop the final product for commercial use. The major raw materials for my unit are Maize and Sabudana(called Tapioca Pearl in English). Maize is grown in larger areas in the northern part of Karnataka. Sourcing of the material is

easy for me. This made me set up my manufacturing plant in Bidar. The first batch of the product was rolled out after 6 months of product development with the support of DRDO.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Have you got any kind of handling support from any government or its agencies?

**Mr.Rohith:** Yes, I am indeed privileged and have a sense of gratitude to DRDO Scientists for their unstinted support and also to DRDO for approving my product and issuing a certificate. The initial R&D support and lab testing were done at DRDO, Hyderabad. It is more than seed funding support.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Can you brief out the product profile?

**Mr.Rohith:** We are majorly focusing on all package materials used in various industries for various utilities. On average our product will be biodegradable within 180 days. As I told you earlier, we make pellets using maize and Sabudana, which are safe to use even in packaging eatables. We manufacture multi-purpose carry bags ranging from carrying fruits/vegetables, groceries, bakery items, meat, curry pouches, and dustbin covers. Apart from this, we manufacture shower caps and aprons.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Share the information on your customer.

**Mr.Rohith:** To be frank, we have a bigger market outside Karnataka. We also export our products to Russia, USA, France and Canada. Recently we got an order –cum invitation from the Malaysian embassy. This month (November last week, 2021) I will be traveling to Malaysia. The hotel and hospital industries and residential apartments are using our products. In the domestic market, we have regular customers ranging from Indore (Clean City of India), Pune, and Hyderabad. The

customers who purchase directly from us are Bakery, sweet shops, hotels and restaurants, snack shops, and medical stores. Also, we are happy to share the information that a few temples that are under the Mujarayi Department have shown interest, and Srikanteshwara Temple, Nanjanagudu, one of the biggest temples in Karnataka already using our products.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Share the information on your marketing activities.

**Mr.Rohith:** We are not spending much on marketing. Despite ecofriendly, still, many of domestic customers are not ready to buy. This may be due to plastic materials available for a lesser price than ours. Educated people only think twice and are not so keen on using our products.

Our marketing is pure, good word-of-mouth spread by people who are making videos of our product and spreading it on social media. Anyone can come and test our products (*He has shown the test in front of the interviewer*). As we have got approval from DRDO, no doubt about quality aspects and the impact of the usage. It is 100% safe.

Apart from this, we also presented our products in various national and International exhibitions. Also, MSME and the Institute of Directors, KASSIA have given me a platform for me to spread the goodness of our venture.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Apart from individual industries, can you share your satisfaction and happiness when you receive support from clients?

**Mr.Rohith:** Of course, I should not forget the support and appraisal I got from a few bureaucratic like DRDO scientists, the Indian Navy, which is the largest client for me. DC of Mysore, Rajamaata, Smt Pramoda Devi. Mysore Palace uses the dustbin covers purchased from us. Without a second thought,

they gave orders to me by looking at the quality certificates from DRDO and our product appealed to them. In the Hospital, and Health sector, Dr. Manjunath, Director of the world-famous Cardiology Hospital Jayadeva, Bengaluru has appreciated our products and we are supplying aprons and head caps to them. Also, among big corporates Shell (MNC) is our customer. I may fail in my duty to thank, a few Garment owners who purchase my company products. Very soon you can witness our products for serving prasadam at Mantralaya temple, in Andhra Pradesh.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Have you ever been recognized by any Organisations/trust for your noble cause and venture that creates eco-friendly products?

**Mr.Rohith:** Yes, recently, MSME and ICA awarded me as an Innovative entrepreneur.

Apart from many Educational Institutes and their Entrepreneurship Development Cell/Institutions Innovation Cells had invited me to deliver a talk on my Entrepreneurial Journey.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Please share about operational and HR details.

**Mr.Rohith:** As of now, I and my father are involved in procuring materials after a thorough quality check. We have a production unit in Bidar which employs 10 people. In the Bengaluru office for receiving orders and maintaining routine activities, I have employed 5 persons. Usually, on Saturdays and Tuesdays, we will be having more orders. We take orders and make tailor-made bags as per client requirements.

Have you ever been recognized by any Organisations/trust for your noble cause and venture that creates eco-friendly products?

**Dr. Poornima K:** Do you have any plans for expanding your business?

**Mr.Rohith:** Yes, very soon we will be coming up with a mineral water bottle. It is still in the testing stage. Apart from this, we are continuously working on reducing the cost of production, so that we can attract many, as the majority in India are price-sensitive.

**Dr. Poornima K:** What is your piece of advice for society to use biodegradable/eco-friendly products?

**Mr.Rohith:** As per 2021-22 statistics India alone contributed heavily by using 35 Million metric tons of plastic. Out of this, only 20% was recycled. The remaining was burnt which when burnt produces dangerous Methane gas. When this waste was dumped, even the smoke caused to death of birds in the surroundings. Be environment conscious. Also, when burnt

**Dr. Poornima K:** How have you got the confidence to sustain the business?

**Mr.Rohith:** Before we got into this business, many came with adulterated material in the name of plastic-free and fake brands. Also, a few tried it with sugarcane skin. It is not in the market in commendable volume. Ours is 100% safe and is approved by DRDO. We have confidence that even if it is slow initially, definitely we will make a niche in the market.

**Dr. Poornima K:** Finally, what is your piece of advice for youngsters in general and aspiring Entrepreneurs in Specific?

**Mr.Rohith:** For anyone who wants to get into Business or start a business, first you should be ready to accept the challenges be truthful to yourself, and keep on learning and updating.

Be truthful, be responsible, and save Mother Earth.

**Dr. Poornima K:** *Thank you Rohith for your time and for sharing the information and experience with us. Thank you and all the best.*

**Intrviewer:** *Dr. Poornima K, Associate Professor, MA Department, Acharya Bangalore B-School*