

Srinivas Venkatram

PROFILE

EDUCATION

B.Tech, IIT Bombay (1987)

PGDM, IIM Ahmedabad (1989)

CAREER

Co-Founder - INFAC (1989)

INFAC grew from a two-man partner team to India's largest industry research company with over 900 clients.

The company was later sold to CRISIL.

Founder-CEO - Illumine (1996)

Illumine is a practice-based lab that –

- (i) works on the emerging space/vision of knowledge for enablement (KfE),
 - (ii) builds practices, methods, tools and knowledge products that translate the KfE vision into scientific and scalable methods,
 - (iii) designs and delivers 'knowledge-based change' into institutions, communities and individuals (which in turn evolves methods),
 - (iv) is transforming into an incubation lab for future independent knowledge interventions/ molecules in society
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AREA OF WORK

Srinivas is a pioneer in the science and practice of knowledge-based change & evolution

He has been concerned with DNA-level challenges of 21st century institutions & collectives, such as:

- How is collective evolution in the face of change to be achieved?
- How can individuals & systems 'knowledge-ize' rapidly, as automation destroys process-based work?
- How can individuals learn to find meaning & fulfillment at the work place?
- How are careers to be redesigned in a flat/networked institution?

All these challenges are in their essence reflexive knowledge challenges, involving an interaction of subjective & objective knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED CHANGE

- The theory view

To address these challenges, Srinivas has worked towards articulating and developing the space of Knowledge for Enablement (KfE). *In his view, Knowledge for Enablement is the critical enabler for addressing the challenges of a world facing a radically new weltanschauung.*

KfE helps people widen their vision of knowledge – from a data/information/concepts/analysis view to a wider view that includes organizational sense-making, knowledge-rich engagements, capacity to respond, collective identities, cognitive empowerment, and meta-cognitive capacities.

This widened perspective of knowledge gives user-groups a wide range of new levers to solve the DNA level challenges.

Parallel to this, Srinivas has also led the development of new technologies, methods and practices which help people assimilate knowledge on a scalable basis. These inventions are the foundation of creating knowledge-based change at scale in institutions, communities, & society at large.

Together, this combination of a widened vision of knowledge and new methods of assimilating this knowledge at scale may be called “Knowledge for Enablement” (KfE) – the science and practice of knowledge-based change.

He is currently working on a book on “Knowledge for Enablement” – which communicates the vision of KfE to intellectuals, practitioners and change makers.

He has made available several of his writings in accessible formats such as Micro Books, Explorer Guides and Maps of Becoming (think tools for the evolutionary adventurers) that help people not just intellectualize, but assimilate knowledge.

He has also published some of his practical philosophical writings in the leading journals of the Ramakrishna Order. For example, “From Teaching to Enabling Assimilation” – published in Prabuddha Bharata, “Contribution: An approach to Karma Yoga” – published in Vedanta Kesari, and “Vedanta and Cognitive Empowerment” – published in Vedanta, UK.

He has shared his ideas/ vision in leading international forums such as ‘The Positive Economy Forum’ and the ‘Society of Organizational Learning’. He has been interviewed on BBC Radio 4 for his views on how businesses can be re-humanized. He has also addressed several groups in leading institutions all over India such as NASCOMM, IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, ISB Hyderabad, and the Institute of Culture, Kolkata.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED CHANGE

- The practice view

1: Building a contributor ethic in society

- Working with educational institutions including 500 colleges of Gujarat Technological University, IIT Delhi, IIT Jammu and Centurion University Bhubaneshwar (impacted over 7,00,000 students)
- Working with companies to build contributor leaders on a large scale.
- Also introducing numerous in-company programs to build a contributor ethic in the workplace

2: Building an inside-out approach to educational change

- Built the Awakened Citizen Program which awakens students to a new vision of themselves, as individuals with infinite potential & possibilities (reached over 5000 schools, 16,000 teachers and 1 million school children annually)
- Launching a new platform for parent-child engagement focused on helping parents strengthen their children for a changing world
- Working on a teacher motivation program which will help trigger a teacher-led shift in teaching standards (design pilots currently on)

3: Enabling institutions to evolve and change positively

- Creating strategic value possibilities through knowledge-ization & humanization of work
(this involves envisioning new knowledge-based strategies in organizations and helping adopt/ assimilate these strategies so that new orders of knowledge capability are created)
- Evolving the collective mind to adapt to a changing world
(this involves designing and building large-scale knowledge interventions that bring about precision shifts in thinking)

Worked at scale with some of India's leading corporations such as Aditya Birla Group, Asian Paints, Bharat Petroleum, State Bank of India, Shapoorji Pallonji Group, Tata Consultancy Services, and others.

4: Building 'capacity to respond' in communities

Enabling communities to deal with knowledge challenges in a wide variety of contexts such as –

- career seekers (aspirations and pathways)
- rural housewives (nutrition)
- petrol pump attendants (self esteem)
- police personnel (dealing with workplace stress), etc.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED CHANGE

- The innovations and methodologies view

1: New knowledge and cognitive practice spaces that help build practitioners in the large scale cognitive evolution of society

Created several new practice spaces in the area of Knowledge for Enablement such as –

- Cognitive ethnography
- Cognitive measurement
- Knowledge modeling
- Customer & market engagement modeling
- Learning & assimilation architecture

These new practice spaces are needed for all forms of large-scale changes in thinking, cognition and knowledge assimilation.

2: New cognitive solutions, at scale

Worked on new scalable cognitive solutions that help build “reflexive knowledge” at scale. Reflexive knowledge solutions include new self-awareness models, career discovery models, collective engagement models, and others.

3: Knowledge Interventions, at scale

Developed the theory and practice of knowledge interventions which bring about precise and measureable shifts in mental models, thinking and cognition.

4: Discovery Learning, at scale

Has developed several models for discovery-based learning at scale, new models of competence & self-esteem building, content delivery models, etc. these can help change education/ training from a ‘tell’ focus to a human-centered ‘discovery’ focus.