

# Financial Times

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## Salient Features of Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme

This government-managed scheme is one of the best investment options for retirees. We explain the key benefits and some of its limitations

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## KORAMANGALA

## 'Koramangala is a Vibrant Place With a Great Ecosystem'

With a vision to provide novelty in gifting and solve the problems of choice and uniqueness, Giftxoxo was started by four co-founders. Manoj Agarwal talks to FT about the venture

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# Cosmopolitan Koramangala Gets Diwali Ready Online

NIVEDITA MISHRA  
KORAMANGALA

Diwali, as is the festival known for a time in the year when people try to revive and reenergise their homes. Be it changing the colour of your walls, furnishing home or getting a proper home cleaning done, its Diwali that we wait for all year, to come.

These days most people have a lifestyle that does not permit them to take too much time to worry about essential household tasks that need to get done. But gone are the days when these problems worried people, now we have a service provider coming up for every single thing we need, that too on just few taps of a phone.

While there are online startups like Localoye, Urbanclap and Timesaverz for an overall house cleaning and other multipurpose tasks, there are other companies like Carzippi which specialises in car care services, and companies like Mywash, Laundrybasket and Laundromate specialise in the laundry, bringing an overall solution to people ahead of festivities.

Currently present in urban areas, these online platforms are targeting professional couples, who barely get time from their work to do household tasks. Varun Khaitan Co-founder of UrbanClap, a service market place says, "Our target audience is any middle-class working professional settled in an urban area. And, when you think about the fact that a lot of people have migrated to a new city, you also see that they do not have access to the same kind of information network (word-of-mouth) that enables them to easily find a service professional to help them out. That's why we bridge the gap between service professionals and customers by connecting them to each other, based on their requirements."

These service based startups are offering range of offers on their services, be it in the form of cheaper packages or cash-backs, or other discounts ahead of Diwali,

to attract more customers.

Echoing similar sentiments, Timesaverz cofounder, Debadutta Upadhyaya said "Primarily our customers are working men and women, hard pressed for time and upwardly mobile who love getting things done at the touch of a button." Timesaverz which launched its ComboBanaoDiwaliManao package comprising of services like home cleaning, curtain drycleaning, painting and beauty services at home, a month back has been steadily getting pre-bookings since then. "The bookings increased so much so that we had got most of our service partners booked for the entire month with regular job flows. The customer had the choice to choose any or all of the services which are the normal service requirements during Diwali at incentivised prices", she added.

Everyday cleaning services have always been accessible. However, when it comes to deep cleaning services- where professionals undertake the task of cleaning every nook and cranny of your residence using industrial equipment- these are required maybe once every quarter, but are hard to find. This is what these startups are offering and the demand they see has been phenomenal.

"The service sector in India holds a lot of scope. It is at least a \$100 billion industry and there is immense potential for growth over the next 5 years", said Varun Khaitan of Urban clap.

Talking about the expansion, he said, "When we decided to expand our services across different cities, Bengaluru was our



first choice because of the large section of educated, tech-savvy professionals who reside in the city. Additionally, Koramangala is home to a large number of migrants who are unfamiliar to the city, which is where we come in.

Debadutta Upadhyaya of Timesaverz, a startup which claims to have witnessed a 10X growth in order numbers in cleaning itself vis-a-vis last year, says, "Koramangala is one of our most active hubs and accounts for a significant majority of work orders from Bangalore".

"Cleaning followed by beauty services are the most in demand and the price range is between ₹1000-5000 depending on what specific service within the category, you want to avail", added Debadutta.

Discussing prospects of the service offering firms Debadutta says, As India becomes

more and more urbanised leading to a growth in nuclear families settling down in metros, the need for a convenient way to book services is only going to rise. An average consumer today is in the look out for options that can help them save time from multiple discussions and negotiation. Plus, the promise of verified partners fulfilling the job makes it easy for them to make the shift from traditional ways to get such things done.

While service offering firms are reaping the benefits, there are some startups who have created their niche segment and are also registering good traction. Carzippi, an on-demand car care service, which is hardly two-and-a-half months old claims to have seen a sudden spurt during Diwali week for cleaning services. Around 12 percent of the orders it is receiving are from in and around of Koramangala.

"We are getting pre-bookings for cleaning services during Diwali week and seeing twice the booking for this duration as compared to other weeks", Suman Howlader, CEO & Founder of Carzippi said

Carzippi which targets individual car owners is running promotional radio and Facebook campaigns to attract more attention for services this Diwali, with a 25 percent discount on all its services. But Car wash and interior cleaning is where the company has seen more orders compared to polishing with an Average order size of around ₹1100.

Howlader, hopes to see a good response to his venture as he says, "Currently, the market is very fresh and there is hardly any presence of similar services. With the growth of ecommerce and preference for doorstep services, we see a multi-fold growth in this segment".

# K'Mangala Startups: An Inclusive Model Accommodating All

MEDHA GUPTA  
KORAMANGALA

KORAMANGALA seems best model of providing platform to innovator and budding entrepreneurs coming from different backgrounds. Against the traditional notion, its not only those coming from well-established institutes who are marking their space, but others also are contributing similarly in image building of country, as pro-startups.

This fact has emerged in the expert committee report of NITI Aayog released in August 2015. The report was based on Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

It says, "One of the most interesting findings from the Koramangala Cluster study was that start-up clusters foster a culture of Inclusive Innovation. What seems to count here is talent, skill and experience, rather than a degree from a national institute of importance. While all entrepreneurs were highly educated with graduate or post-graduate degrees, they came from a mix of engineering and non-engineering backgrounds and only 16 percent came from institutions of national repute."

The survey exclusively dug over the trends in Koramangala. It found that 85 percent of entrepreneurs were from lesser-known colleges. Barely 16 percent were from elite universities. It further digs and finds that 44 percent of entrepreneurs hailed from non-engineering backgrounds.

As per the report, few companies have already noticed this fact and trying to devise system proactively to leverage this high-ability underutilized talent.

The report gives remarks, "Encouraging entrepreneurship



among this subset of meritorious students could be one solution to the employability problem."

The report also highlights the fact that this inclusive trend is visible in other areas too, like the areas from where these new talents are coming and making space for themselves.

It says, "In diametric opposition to this bias, research on software firms in India has demonstrated that employees hired from remote geographic areas actually outperform employees hired from non-remote locations."

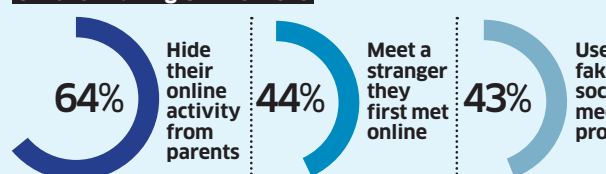
Going by this trend, a question will obviously emerge. How these talents then acquire skills? Answer lies in report itself which says that most of youths going for startups prefer to work in other companies.

The report said, "Look at the experience level of start-up entrepreneurs reveals that on average, most have worked for a few years thereby acquiring skills necessary to found and grow their own businesses."

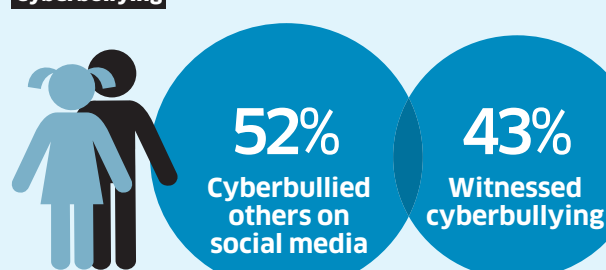
## Teens Face Online Risk

Eight out of 10 children in India are active on social media networks, and most (77%) registered on Facebook before they turned 13, according to an Intel Security survey of online behaviour and social networking habits of teens and teens aged 8 to 16 years. Of the children who are active on social media 69% have published photos, 58% have posted their email address, 49% have posted the name of their school, 46% have posted their full date of birth or phone number (42%). More from the survey...

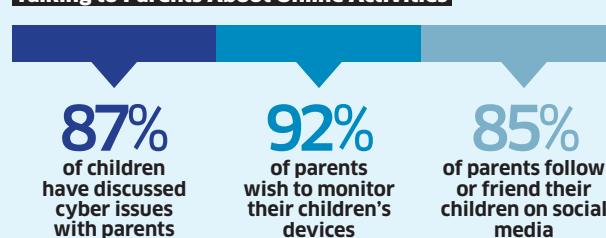
### Children Taking Online Risks



### Cyberbullying



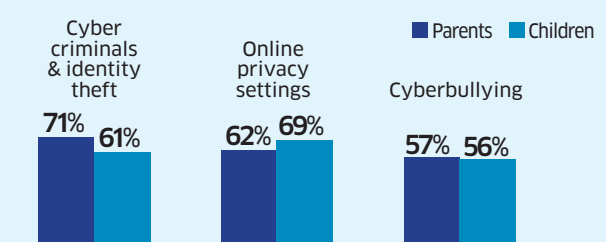
### Talking to Parents About Online Activities



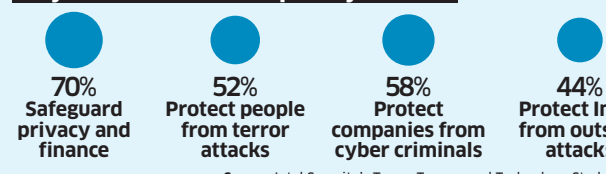
### Parents Worry About...



### Parents, Children Talk About...



### Why Children Want to Acquire Cyber Skills



Source: Intel Security's Teens, Tweens and Technology Study 2015

# 'Wish to Further Strengthen our Presence in B'luru'

*WATER purifier major Kent has identified Bengaluru as one of its growth areas and wants to increase its presence there. In an interview with Sanjeev Sinha, Dr Mahesh Gupta, CMD, Kent RO Systems Ltd, talks about their plans for the Bengaluru market and also shares his overall business outlook.*

According to industry sources, Kent has identified Bengaluru as one of its growth areas and wants to up its presence there. Why you are so much upbeat on Bengaluru and what are your expansion plans for the city and the neighbouring areas?

Bengaluru is no doubt a focus area and on the expansion radar of Kent RO. The brand is already having its presence in Bengaluru, but we want to further strengthen our presence in Bengaluru by increasing our distribution network. Being the IT capital, city has wide acceptance for technologically superior products. Second, the increasing awareness for clean and safe drinking water has furnished a fresh demand for our products. Therefore, besides increasing our brand presence through more outlets in the city, we are also looking at new retail points in satellite areas which are coming up as the new residential destinations.

What are your other plans and the overall growth targets?

After water purifiers, we are working on air purifiers, which we intend to launch in the next two months. Kent RO has a brand philosophy of 'Drink pure, eat pure and breathe

pure'. Hence our entire products range will be based on these factors. During FY2014-15 we have clocked a turnover of ₹680 crore, which we intend to take to ₹800 crore in the current fiscal.

Kent claims to have taken the RO technology to the next level through its double purification (RO+UF/UV) methods. Your comments!

Kent holds the credit of introducing path-breaking purification technologies. It is known the world over for water that is safer than boiled. Its patented double purification technology of RO + UV removes dissolved impurities like arsenic, fluoride and pesticides, besides removing bacteria and viruses. Moreover, unlike normal RO purifiers, KENT RO purifiers give the purest water while retaining essential natural minerals. This ensures that water purified by it is not just the safest but also the healthiest. This makes KentRO the No.1 recommendation of doctors for protection from waterborne diseases.

Recently, issues have been raised about water wastage through RO purification. What is your view on this?

When we take a bath, we need clean water to get rid of all the dirt and odour. We also need clean water to wash out all the stains and dirt from our clothes. Similarly, we need clean water to get rid of all left-out food, bacteria and viruses while washing utensils. In other words, we need clean water to get rid of all impurities in every instance. The same logic

applies to drinking water. To obtain pure water out of the various water sources like ground water, tap water or overhead tank water, we need to wash this impure water with pure water. This is the principle on which the RO purification technology works. So, we need to view the rejected RO water in the same way we see the rejected water from other usages. In most parts of the world this water is called grey water, not waste water, and is used for other household usages like mopping, pre-rinsing / cleaning utensils, vehicle washing and in some cases even watering plants, landscaping etc. depending upon the quality of source water.

Are there any concerns about mineral loss in RO purifier?

It's true that conventional RO purifiers remove natural minerals while removing dissolved impurities. Kent, through its multi-purification mineral RO technology, counters this problem effectively. Kent purifiers have an innovative TDS controller that helps retain essential natural minerals in the purified water, thereby offering a distinct advantage over conventional RO purifiers.

There are so many RO brands besides innumerable advertising claims in the market today. How should consumers decide which brand to buy?

One should first check out the technologies used in water purifiers and go for one which possesses the following functions: (1) Removes all kinds of impurities, namely suspended

particles, microbiological impurities (bacteria, viruses & pathogens) & excess dissolved salts, (2) Is suitable for all types of raw water like tap water, bore well water and stored tank water, and (3) Retains essential minerals in water. However, apart from focusing on the right technology, one should also buy a quality product because in India there is hardly any water standard prescribed to make water purifiers, causing the market is flooded with cheap and inferior products. In the absence of such standards, a consumer is not able to differentiate between a quality product and a spurious product. So while going for a water purifier, a customer must ensure that the product he is buying should be matching to certain international standards like NSF and WQA, among others.



DR MAHESH GUPTA

### OUR BUREAU

BELL CURVE may still be the most preferred method of performance appraisal with several companies swearing by it, but increasingly companies are disbanding this model or tweaking it to make their system of rating and rewarding employees more flexible and feedback-based.

While companies like KPMG and Microsoft have discarded the bell curve model after decades of use, others like Whirlpool Corporation, HCL Technologies and Mphasis are tweaking their appraisal mechanisms to make it in line with the demands and expectations of the modern-day workforce. Employees complain that bell curve isn't transparent enough at the end of the year and ratings seldom remain confidential when given out.

Companies that are customising the bell curve want to make performance evaluation less punitive and more reward-based.

Infosys, which has shunted the bell curve in favour of an open ranking system, credits it for a drop in its attrition rate to about 13% from over 20% till the second half of 2014.

## The Buzz Around the Bell Curve

**COS LIKE CISCO**, Accenture, Google, Microsoft, Adobe and KPMG have discarded the bell curve method and similar performance management systems



**COS THAT ARE** tweaking it include Infosys, Whirlpool, HCL, Deloitte and Mphasis

**COS THAT ARE** customising the bell curve want to make performance evaluation less punitive and more reward-based



**COS ARE NOW** looking at using HR tools to provide constant and ongoing feedback on employee performances which can be sent throughout the year and not just once in an annum

**AS MOST COMPANIES** saw it, bell curve was a distributive model rather than an enabling model

"One of the big reasons for this (attrition) to come down is because we consciously got rid of the bell curve," said Richard Lobo, senior vice president, human resource development, at India's second largest software exporter.

"Here (in Infosys) we are trying to kill the race business that was very prominent in the company till sometime back," he said. "We were losing a lot of good people to this race to come first," Lobo said. Under its new system, Infosys has put the task of employee appraisals in the hands of managers.

Under the bell curve, or 'normal distribution' model, a company would have a small and equal number of 'high performers' and 'poor performers' with the vast majority of people staying close to 'average'. This makes it a rigid system that demands a low performer for every high performer.

To make the system more flexible, several companies are opting for a constant feedback mechanism instead of a somewhat arbitrary stack ranking at the end of the year.

IT major HCL Technologies is taking a cautious approach while moving away from the bell curve. The company with an employee base of over 1.7 lakh is identifying departments to move to a feedback-based performance appraisal system. "There are a few teams where the feedback is more than 3-4 times in a year. For these, we are not following the bell curve, instead we will follow the absolute rating," said Prithvi Shergill, chief human resources officer (CHRO) at HCL Technologies. "We are slowly trying to move to a culture of dialogue and feedback," he said.

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