

A Case Study based on Dilemma Faced by Dadu's Canteen in the XLRI Jamshedpur Campus and Way Ahead

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ABSTRACT

DADU's canteen (also addressed as "Dadu") is a fifty-decade old food outlet situated in the XLRI Jamshedpur campus. This case study provides an insight on how its operations and leaderships have changed over the years. Currently being as the second generation proprietary, Chitranjan ji being the son of the original entrepreneur take's the role of the owner. This case study aims at understanding the role of changing leadership and aspects of decision making by dwelling into the business aspects of Dadu's in terms of their demand, pricing against competitors like- bishu's and campus café, manpower (recruitment and training), performance management, and employee retention (social capital theory). Furthermore, COVID-19 pandemic also had a great impact on Chitranjan ji's business, but he had a good hold on his employees and was able to have things started soon after normalization. In present time, running a successful business in Jamshedpur campus Chitranjan ji has a new direction in front of him and he needs to decide if he would like to operate in XLRI Delhi campus or not. This case study is followed by a teaching note addressing the primary problem at hand by providing a plan of action for Chitranjan ji in near future.

Keywords: *Case study, decision making, leadership, entrepreneur, human resource management*

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INTRODUCTION



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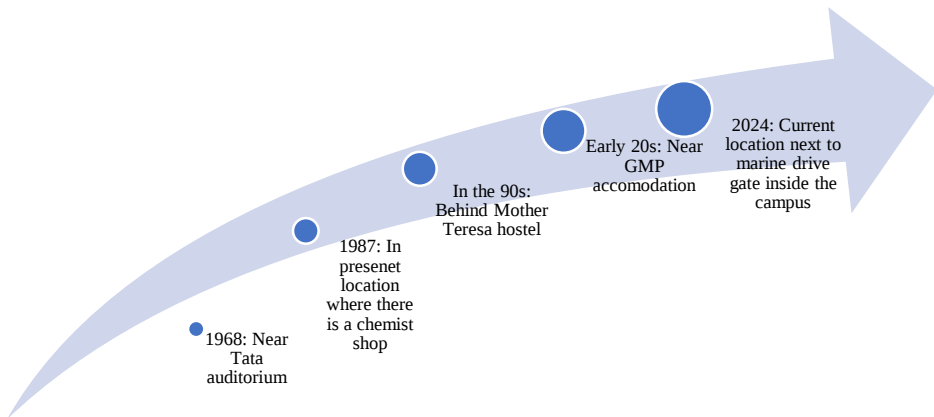
XLRI Jamshedpur is one of the prime management institutions in the country. Especially known for its flagship programs like- GMP, PGP, FPM and others. The courses full time residential programs, whereby, students spend their time on campus while undergoing their respective courses. At a given time, there are thousands of students on campus who rely by mess food, online food ordering apps and in campus food outlets for their daily food intake. One of the oldest food outlets found within the campus is “DADU’S Canteen”. In the coming parts will learn more about this food outlet, how it started and what it’s future looks like.

BACKGROUND

Currently DADU’s canteen is owned and managed by Chitranshi ji. Its operational hours are six days a week from Monday to Saturday with timings from 6pm to 6am. Initially started in year 1968, DADU’s canteen has changed several locations for its set up in the campus. Below shown arch reflects how over the years from 1968 to present (2024) Dadu’s outlet location has changed.



Source: Self. Photo from on-site captured by Author



Source: Self. Created by Author

These changes were observed as the campus developments kept taking place. With time when new hostels were built DADU's canteen changed its location. Starting from year 1968, the place outside XLRI Jamshedpur main gate in present the sports ground was just a piece of fertile land. From here this food outlets journey started as a small Daba. They used to grow their own vegetables on this land and prepare food for people. The set up consisted of two three

charpais to accommodate their customers. As the institute kept developing so did DADU's. in year 1987 they were provided a shop like set up inside main gate in present location of chemist shop by the XLRI management. In passing decades as new hostels and infrastructure built around in campus, DADU's canteen was travelled various location like behind Mother Teresa hostel, Near GMP hostels to the present location which is near the marine drive gate in new hostel area.

ORIGINAL DADU'S

DADU's canteen started its operation first under Chitranjan ji's father in year 1986. He was fondly called "dadu" by all the students and faculty back then in those years, and that's how this food outlet got its name. Dadu in his time was very famous within the student's community as he used to not only serve them food but entertain them through playing music and singing for his customers. In initial years of his life, he was a farmer by profession and use to farm cabbage, tomato, sugarcane in the ground outside main gate. Before starting this outlet in XLRI Jamshedpur campus, dadu use to run a mess in NIT Jamshedpur. Based on his previous work experience and seeing an opportunity he decided to start a full fledged food outlet in XLRI Jamshedpur campus. After dadu expired, his son Chitranjan ji took over the business in year 1993.

ASPECTS OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Demand

From its starting days DADU's canteen has enjoyed its popularity among the students. The major reasons for this have been their food taste and its cost. Over the years various students' committees have been actively involved in providing suggestions and feedback to Chitranjan ji. After covid pandemic it was SAC 2020-2022 who reached out to him for coming back to campus and starting the DADU's canteen again for the students.

Coming towards managing the direct competition in the campus, Chitranjan ji says it is the students who have been our backbone. one such example is when students through their WhatsApp groups pass on the message of special dishes made at dadu's on a particular day. On average 50 footfalls are confirmed at the food outlet and food is prepared accordingly. In term of setting up a price

for their food, they rely on student inputs and follow a strategy to keep their prices lower than their competitors or at par with them. *Student/ Customer reviews: Dadu's serves the best cold coffee on campus – HRM batch 2021-2023; I love dadu's because he customises my omelette and makes it the way I like it – GMP batch 2022-2023.*



DADU's canteen price of cold coffee in comparison to various food outlets in XLRI Jamshedpur campus-

DADU's = ₹. 60/-

Campus café = ₹. 75/-

Bishu's = ₹. 60/-

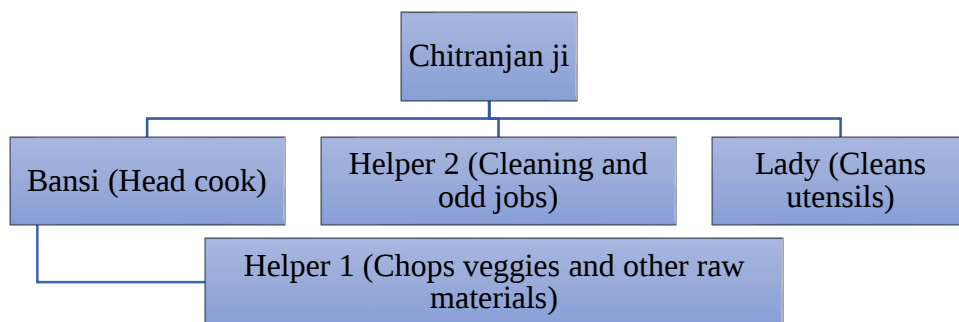
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Manpower

Back in year 1968 it was a family managed food outlet, whereby, dadu, his wife, two sons and a daughter use to divide work among themselves along with one or two outside people for assistance. When dadu died in 1993, his son Chitrnanjan ji took over the operations as the lead. After few years when his mother also died, his sister got married and brother sifted elsewhere, Chitrnanjan ji started to look for more people to be employed in DADU's canteen. Currently there are 4 people employed by him in the food outlet.

Chitrnanjan ji had seen his father bringing young boys around the age group of 15-18 years from their village near Baripada, Odisha to help with the daily chores. In their village there is a contractor who provides labour to them. Majorly all his distant relatives and villagers are people working in food industry for generations. His head cook was one such example. Banshi, the head cook use to work in Ramada hotel and learned his cooking skills from chiefs there. When the village contractors asked Banshi if he wanted to join DADU's canteen he happily agreed to it because his family personally knew Chitrnanjan ji's family and because of the work constraints he faced there. At Ramada if he was late by 10 minutes, he used to face a salary cut, which wouldn't be the case here while working with dadu's. Chitrnanjan ji is a fatherly figure to all his

employees and provides them with advance salaries and financial aids when needed.



Source: Self. Created by Author.

For training his employees he follows two methods- Shadow training and Technical training. Here, the helper 1 who handles the raw material preparation by chopping them learns through his observation and shadows the head cook. Serving as an assistant he closely works with head cook and is trained to learn the necessary cooking skills and recipes. So, that he is ready to fill in when the head cook is on leave. In these times, when there are more than three other food outlets in the campus being relevant and updated with recent food recipes is vital for dadu's. for this, during summer internship months when students are not there in campus, Chitranjan ji sends his head cook to work in other big hotels and cities. For these two months the head cook can keep whatever salary he earns by working in those hotels and is again employed back

once the students arrive on campus. Last year itself, Bansi the head cook again back went to work in a hotel and learnt how to prepare momos and oreo shake. This helped DADU's canteen to be the first food outlet in campus to be serving those items.

Performance Management

Chitranjan ji finalises an employee's salary based on their competencies. Out of the four people currently employed at dadu's, 3 of them have fixed salary given on monthly basis. The head cook Bansi is paid ₹.15,000 p.m., his assistant helper 1 is paid ₹. 8,000p.m., the helper 2 who is responsible for the cleaning work is paid ₹.6,000 p.m., while the lady who cleans the utensils is paid on

daily basis in cash or kind. He himself doesn't charge any salary and his income is dependent on the sales done by them in that month. Apart from the fixed salary, employees are also given food to take by home.

Employee Retention

Chitranjan ji says, none of his employees will leave working for him if his competitors in campus like- campus café or Bishu's try to give them more money. The simple reason for having this kind of assurance comes to him from the social capital his family has invested in over the years. Most of his employees have been with him for years now, and all of them hail from the same village as him. There is an understanding between them and Chitranjan ji who provides them with the flexibility they needed at a workplace. When his head cook, and others are back after the summer internship break his employees are not only happy that they got to earn some extra money while having a secured job to come back to, but they are also able to explore the world outside the campus.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON DADU'S CANTEEN

Due to the pandemic the campus was shut down which severely impacted dadu's business too. For those two years DADU's canteen was also closed completely, his employees had left for their villages and there was no fixed source of income. During that period XLRI faculty members provided monetary help to Chitranjan ji which made things easier for him. He not only ensured to employee back his employees, but also gave them 50% of their salary or food grains. He was constantly in touch with them and provided them guidance regarding how to survive through these tough times. Some of his employees either started selling vegetables or they got involved in fish harvesting. Once things normalized DADU's canteen started again with its operations.

WAY AHEAD

This year itself in 2024 SIP season, when XLRI Delhi's placement committee visited Jamshedpur campus they told Chitranjan ji about not having a food outlet like dadu's in Delhi campus, and they would want him to open there. He

is yet to explore the Delhi campus himself and provide an answer to the Delhi placement committee.

If you were in Chitranshan ji's place, how would you react to this? If you were to open a food outlet in Delhi campus what will be your plan of action?



Source: Self. Photo from on-site captured by Author