

# 'Failure is important as it is a stepping stone to success'

## Q&A

Anu Aga

*According to director of Thermax, Anu Aga, the desire for innovation begins when students are nurtured right from schooling days. Although Indians score over the Western nations in terms of intelligence and hard work, Aga says the failure of society to promote innovativeness is a major cause of concern. The rot, according to her, starts at the school and college levels where more importance is given to cramming rather than experimentation. Partha Sarathi Biswas speaks to Aga about the need to nurture the spirit of innovation and also about the Marico Foundation's spirit of India innovation awards.*

**Why is innovation necessary for**

**It is indeed sad that Indians win Nobel Prize for their innovation outside the country but here they are not even acknowledged. That says a lot about the state of affairs of the school and college education system. Also, the rewards for innovativeness are paltry that discourages many from going into the field.**

—Anu Aga, director, Thermax



**India? Also, what are the major threats faced by it?**

In today's competitive world, innovation is the magic wand that sets you apart from your competitors. Although cost cutting is an important aspect of survival for industries, innovative methods ensure long term growth for the corporate houses. As for the nation, innovation helps in ensuring that the country makes

true progress at the right pace. In India, the major threat faced by the spirit of innovation is the denial of freedom of thought. Since the beginning we have been putting a lot of pressure on conformance and discourage free thinking.

**How effective is the education system in nurturing innovative thinking in all fields? What should**

**be done to ensure over all development?**

Unfortunately, the present day education system does not do much in terms of promoting the spirit of innovation among children. This is because many teachers discourage those students who ask out of the box questions. It is indeed sad that Indians win Nobel Prize for their innovation outside the country but

here they are not even acknowledged. This says a lot about the state of affairs of the school and college education system.

Also, the rewards for innovativeness are paltry that discourages many from going into the field. As a nation we need to allow failure, which is a stepping stone to success. We must remember that experimentation always does not result in success. However, even failures need to be recognised and honoured as they are equally important.

**Tell us something about the Marico Foundation and the awards.**

Marico innovation awards are basically to encourage and nurture innovation. These awards are given for innovate thinking in all fields. This time we have got some really good entries.