

What made Sabirul a leader of entrepreneurs?

Relentless drive towards his goal is just one of his qualities. This is the quality that propels a leader and people behind him or her towards the desired goal. Sabirul never stopped despite his initial losses and setbacks. He went from door to door to find someone who will patronise what he held as a dream. But when that did not work, Sabirul established his own firm with a couple of friends and found the kind of platform he needed to keep going, writes **Suchona Latif**

HE became an entrepreneur at the age of 14. He is just 23 and happens to be the youngest millionaire of the world. More importantly, he is leading thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs to chase their dreams! In 2010 Sabirul Islam was recognised among the JCI 10 Outstanding Young Persons of the world. He is now going on with his Inspire1Million mission, as a part of which he delivered motivational speeches in Bangladesh in recent time. Sabirul is 'the' role model that comes to my mind when I utter or hear the word - leader.

Some people believe leaders are born, while others think that leaders can be made. Management theorists have been arguing on this notion for years. You are free to take either of the standpoints. I will just shed some lights on my philosophical perspectives in this regard. As we all know, he is a global motivational speaker having spoken at over 750 events worldwide and he is also the author of the bestselling books 'The World at Your Feet and Young Entrepreneur World' that was launched in February 2012. He is arguably one of the most talked about and influential figures in the arena of entrepreneurship. His success as a leader is unquestionable. His influence is vivid enough to inspire lives towards endeavour and aspirations.

Sabirul is one of those people who didn't give up despite having unsmooth starts in his life. He kept pushing himself towards hard work, enterprising attitude toward life and cre-

ativeness despite those bumps and shakes that would have intimidated most of us in our quest to success. Let's take a look at the leadership qualities of Sabirul so that we can decide whether inborn genius or formal education shapes leaders paving the path of success for so many youths around the world.

Believing in yourself is the most important leadership quality in my consideration. I have noticed this in Sabirul. And this is what makes a leader - a leader! Sabirul became a junior trader at 16 and his inspiring books were sold over 60,000 copies to date. Sabirul launched his Teen-Trepreneur board game at 18, to educate young people about business, which was sold to over 550 schools in the UK and in 14 countries worldwide. But if we look at his background and early life we can see that just like many other super-successful leaders in this world, there was hardly anyone who believed that his ideas were even worth a dime. But did that stop him? NO! Sabirul reminds me of Fred Smith - the founder of FedEx who submitted his business plan as a thesis work to his supervisor when he was a student of Yale University and his ideas were right away rejected. But he never gave up and continued believing in himself. Look where Fred Smith is now. And this is just what happened in case of Sabirul.

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Sabirul Islam

his initial losses and setbacks. He went from door to door to find someone who will patronise what he held as a dream. But when that did not work, Sabirul established his own firm with a couple of friends and found the kind of platform he needed to keep going. Sabirul's global presence has now landed him his own 13 week TV series in South Africa, a youth business TV show to encourage growth in

entrepreneurship across Africa. When you have this kind of qualities, it is guaranteed that there will be many others willing to stand under your umbrella.

The third quality of leadership I have noticed in Sabirul is the capacity to think big - out of the box! By the time Sabirul turned 20, he set up Teen-Speakers, a speaker's bureau consisting of 39 of the world's most successful and influential young people, all under 25 striving to empower youth worldwide with a message that 'Generation Y' has what it takes to be successful-- which led to Sabirul's new book to be published in February 2012, titled 'Young Entrepreneur World' interviewing 25 of the Teen-Speakers, sharing their ideas about what it takes to be successful on a personal, business and political scale. He is like one of the leaders who dare to think about something that no one has done before or the world has never seen before. He is yet to reach the success levels of entrepreneurial moguls like Steve Jobs. But it is hard to disagree that there is a lot in common between Steve and our hero Sabirul, since both dreamed of the unseen and unprecedented. Sabirul is inspiring thousands, if not millions, of youths around the worlds - something that many would not have expected... at least, not from someone with the background and exposure of Sabirul. The ability to think big gets others to trust you and hold high expectations with you. Eventually, you discover yourself as a leader. That is what Sabirul did.

So where do we get from all these? Did

Sabirul get all these qualities through formal institutional education? Surely not! He is more of what we call 'a self-educated man'... just like many of the great leaders in this world. Hence, should we conclude that education has nothing to do with leadership qualities? I guess not, because when I look deeper into what Sabirul is doing right now, I feel that his writing books is just the first step towards institutionalising the thoughts, experiences and inspirations that he intends to infuse into the youth worldwide. In other words, I believe Sabirul realises that there will not be too many people with his kind of guts and enterprising charisma to go forward with an ambitious dream. Rather, once you have a brilliant idea, philosophy or approach for achieving brilliant things in life, you need a formal institutional avenue to educate thousands and millions on that.

And here is my verdict... I do believe that some people are born with the qualities achieve brilliant things in life and to lead others. But a formal infrastructure to educate, train or inspire people on that can create more leaders. The readers are free to disagree with me. But this is my opinion as a would-be business graduate of Bangladesh, who wish to do something like Sabirul instead of following the beaten path of approaching conventional nine to five jobs in multinational companies (MNCs).

The Financial Express, 6-10-13, Page-12