

Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History
Vandana Kumar and Vijay Rajvaidya Interview

1

00:00:00.099 --> 00:00:06.689

Interviewer (I): So thank you Vandana for coming for letting us come to your home and talk to us

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00:00:07.779 --> 00:00:14.159

I: So we are from the University of... from San Jose State University and we are creating an oral history project

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00:00:14.469 --> 00:00:16.919

I: on the Desi voice of Silicon Valley.

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00:00:17.050 --> 00:00:21.180

I: So we wanted to talk to you about your perspective, your experience of

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00:00:21.540 --> 00:00:25.840

I: being Desi and the Desi impact in Silicon Valley. So

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00:00:25.860 --> 00:00:32.160

I: if you begin with, you know, with your name, who you are, what you do, and then your journey up until now in Silicon Valley.

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00:00:33.160 --> 00:00:37.079

Vandana (V): Well, thank you Mantra for inviting me to be a part of this project.

8

00:00:38.410 --> 00:00:46.020

V: My name is Vandana Kumar. I came to this country in 1986, February

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00:00:48.640 --> 00:00:50.640

V: 23rd

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00:00:50.680 --> 00:00:52.680

V: 1986 and

11

00:00:53.050 --> 00:00:54.969

V: ---

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00:00:54.969 --> 00:00:58.889

V: I came to this country as an arranged marriage bride. You know

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00:00:58.889 --> 00:01:06.640

V: it was ... those of us who grew up in India are very familiar with the institution of arranged marriage and

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00:01:06.640 --> 00:01:07.460

V: ---

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00:01:09.820 --> 00:01:15.479

V: it was the norm, you know, I came here. My husband was an engineer and in Silicon Valley.

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00:01:16.420 --> 00:01:23.159

V: We didn't call it the Silicon Valley then. He was he was in San Jose, California and the suburbs of San Francisco, you know.

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00:01:23.159 --> 00:01:25.159

It was-it was San Francisco.

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00:01:25.159 --> 00:01:26.770

V: ---

19

00:01:26.770 --> 00:01:29.369

V: So I came at a time ...

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00:01:31.210 --> 00:01:36.360

V: It was only a little over 35-34 years, about-about that time

21

00:01:37.150 --> 00:01:39.150

V: But it feels like a

22

00:01:39.579 --> 00:01:42.149

V: such a-such a long time ago

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00:01:43.119 --> 00:01:44.619

V: simply because

24

00:01:44.619 --> 00:01:48.148

V: technology has changed the way we look at the world.

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00:01:49.210 --> 00:01:52.439

V: What seems so far, what seemed

26

00:01:53.799 --> 00:01:55.799

V: so alien, so unknown

27

00:01:56.439 --> 00:01:58.589

V: seems completely unthinkable today.

28

00:01:59.649 --> 00:02:02.489

V: I grew up in a small town called Jamshedpur.

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00:02:03.219 --> 00:02:04.479

V: And

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00:02:04.479 --> 00:02:12.419

V: I never really went outside my small city. I mean to study or we went out for vacations and things like that, but

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00:02:13.810 --> 00:02:19.140

V: I had no exposure to the big world in the United States.

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00:02:19.140 --> 00:02:20.980

V: ---

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00:02:20.980 --> 00:02:22.480

V: Also

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00:02:22.480 --> 00:02:29.280

V: because my knowledge was limited by what I knew and what I had access to, which was the written word,

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00:02:29.320 --> 00:02:32.720

V: the printed newspapers that came to my small hometown, the

36

00:02:33.280 --> 00:02:37.619

V: libraries carried books about James Hadley Chase or

37

00:02:38.050 --> 00:02:43.859

V: showed the Western movies at the local movie theater. So it was limited to a very

38

00:02:45.420 --> 00:02:54.900

V: Hollywood-Hollywood version of America. And if you compare, it's not quite that.

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00:02:54.900 --> 00:02:57.520

Interviewer: Yeah Yeah I want you to talk about that. You know, you know,

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00:02:57.720 --> 00:03:04.000

I: what you knew or heard or read about and your actual experience.

V: So at the academic level

41

00:03:04.000 --> 00:03:10.160

V: you do understand that, you know, the exposure that I'd had was very limited. Meaning

42

00:03:12.240 --> 00:03:19.220

V: the movies weren't probably just the way that the whole country was, but that was all that I actually saw.

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00:03:19.840 --> 00:03:21.820

V: ---

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00:03:22.720 --> 00:03:26.980

V: So yeah, oh my gosh, you know it's -there's like so much to talk about,

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00:03:27.460 --> 00:03:28.510

V: but

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00:03:28.510 --> 00:03:33.689

V: I think Hollywood plays a big role in how the world sees America even today.

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00:03:34.120 --> 00:03:37.180

V: But today the big difference being that

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00:03:37.380 --> 00:03:43.280

V: with the internet being accessible even now in the remotest part of the globe,

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00:03:44.040 --> 00:03:45.880

V: ---

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00:03:46.720 --> 00:03:50.620

V: anyone who has a smartphone can actually find out

51

00:03:50.740 --> 00:03:57.880

V: details about any small town in any part of the world. And people are empowered to be with that information.

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00:03:58.380 --> 00:04:02.480

V: I felt you know - looking back, I can say that I didn't have that

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00:04:02.480 --> 00:04:03.240

V: ---

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00:04:03.240 --> 00:04:07.760

V: advantage. I had very lim- little and limited knowledge.

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00:04:08.380 --> 00:04:10.380

V: But when you are young

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00:04:10.380 --> 00:04:12.070

V: ---

57

00:04:12.070 --> 00:04:14.900

V: the worl- everything, life's an adventure.

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00:04:15.300 --> 00:04:21.060

V: And you take to everything with equal enthusiasm, you know.

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00:04:21.060 --> 00:04:22.780

V: There are no barriers.

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00:04:22.780 --> 00:04:27.020

V: And --- so even though I came from a really small place

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00:04:27.400 --> 00:04:29.800

V: to a place to a country that was

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00:04:29.800 --> 00:04:30.540

V: ---

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00:04:30.540 --> 00:04:32.980

V: so vast and

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00:04:33.000 --> 00:04:39.940

V: when I didn't know a single person actually. I did not know a single person in this huge country.

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00:04:40.480 --> 00:04:44.560

V: The nearest person that I did know was

66

00:04:45.340 --> 00:04:48.140

V: 10,000 miles away: my family in India.

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00:04:48.760 --> 00:04:52.320

V: So it can be an incredibly isolating experience.

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00:04:52.320 --> 00:04:54.010

V: And I think

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00:04:54.010 --> 00:04:58.260

V: that experience for the new immigrant has changed today

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00:04:58.260 --> 00:05:06.920

V: simply because distances have become so close. You know distances are not really there anymore.

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00:05:09.240 --> 00:05:16.040

I: So you said that it wasn't called Sil-Silicon Valley in the 80s, but you knew it was a suburb of San Francisco.

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00:05:16.040 --> 00:05:18.540

V: Yes.

I: So what did San Francisco mean to you at the time?

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00:05:18.540 --> 00:05:21.280

V: Oh, San Francisco, what a romantic place, you know.

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00:05:21.280 --> 00:05:25.200

V: What a beautiful city. It was featured in many Hollywood movies.

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00:05:25.320 --> 00:05:30.300

V: So it certainly had cachet. You know, it had that recognition, like

76

00:05:30.970 --> 00:05:32.970

V: it's this beautiful place.

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00:05:33.340 --> 00:05:35.340

V: ---

78

00:05:35.830 --> 00:05:41.130

V: It was America, you know. It was considered to be the land of opportunity. So coming here -

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00:05:41.130 --> 00:05:44.740

V: I mean it was not-not a hardship in any way, you know, I...

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00:05:45.060 --> 00:05:47.060

V: It's just like learning to

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00:05:47.650 --> 00:05:49.889

V: exist in a new place, learning to navigate

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00:05:50.940 --> 00:05:53.040

V: in a new environment.

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00:05:53.640 --> 00:05:55.060

V: And ---

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00:05:56.080 --> 00:06:00.560

V: Silicon Valley - I think that term was just about

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00:06:00.640 --> 00:06:06.860

V: being introduced at that time because of the mushrooming of all these

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00:06:06.860 --> 00:06:08.580

V: technology companies.

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00:06:08.620 --> 00:06:13.440

V: But I think the term Silicon Valley really came into its own a little while later

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00:06:14.139 --> 00:06:15.400

V: where

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00:06:15.400 --> 00:06:18.090

V: It - what is that-What does that really mean?

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00:06:18.220 --> 00:06:23.489

V: What does it mean to an average person even across the globe? Really, Silicon Valley

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00:06:24.160 --> 00:06:26.160

V: stands for innovation,

92

00:06:26.880 --> 00:06:29.000

V: the hub of innovation,

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00:06:30.080 --> 00:06:32.140

V: and the incredible

94

00:06:32.150 --> 00:06:34.150

V: diversity that's here in this

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00:06:34.790 --> 00:06:35.840

V: place.

96

00:06:35.840 --> 00:06:36.889

V: It's ...

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00:06:36.889 --> 00:06:42.249

V: It's amazing and it's amazing because of the energy that it brings.

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00:06:42.640 --> 00:06:46.120

V: I think immigrants no matter where they come from in the world,

99

00:06:46.960 --> 00:06:50.680

V: they bring with them a drive to succeed.

100

00:06:51.740 --> 00:06:53.419

V: A drive to

101

00:06:53.419 --> 00:06:56.619

V: make their mark in their new homeland and

102

00:06:56.990 --> 00:07:01.870

V: America has thrived across the ages because of this immigrant energy, and

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00:07:03.139 --> 00:07:06.909

V: in the Silicon Valley it brought energy of a

104

00:07:08.240 --> 00:07:10.240

V: certain kind:

105

00:07:10.700 --> 00:07:12.700

V: educated,

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00:07:13.400 --> 00:07:15.400

V: engineering people with an engineering

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00:07:15.400 --> 00:07:17.150

V: ---

108

00:07:17.150 --> 00:07:19.150

V: background.

109

00:07:19.370 --> 00:07:25.510

V: And slowly an ecosystem was built over here that allowed entrepreneurs no matter where they came from in the world

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00:07:26.030 --> 00:07:33.130

V: to find the talent, to find the legal help, to find everything that they might need to actually start a business

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00:07:34.040 --> 00:07:35.810

V: around technology.

112

00:07:35.810 --> 00:07:43.140

V: Even today I think even across the globe, the Silicon Valley is recognized for the talent that's available here.

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00:07:43.140 --> 00:07:44.780

I: Hmm.

114

00:07:44.780 --> 00:07:49.900

V: But you know, it's something that we grew into and I was happy to be actually a part of that

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00:07:50.660 --> 00:07:53.469

V: realization like "Oh, I actually lived in the Silicon Valley".

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00:07:53.720 --> 00:07:59.169

I: Mmm.

V: You know that was sort of an enviable place across the globe.

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00:08:00.350 --> 00:08:06.189

I: Great, so-so is it-is it right to say that you identify yourself as a Desi of Silicon Valley?

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00:08:07.039 --> 00:08:11.529

V: Absolutely.

I: And what does that mean to you?

V: So Desi is a Hindi word, which means

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00:08:12.350 --> 00:08:13.430

V: country.

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00:08:13.430 --> 00:08:18.669

V: You know, in colloquialism you, instead of saying "Desh," you say "Dess."

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00:08:18.740 --> 00:08:22.780

V: You, you, you may have grown up with the watching Hindi movies

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00:08:23.080 --> 00:08:25.660

V: That's if they always talk about going back to Dess.

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00:08:25.660 --> 00:08:28.080

V: You know, "Chal Aaj Desava Ki Aur"[Hindi: Let's go to our homeland], you know

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00:08:28.640 --> 00:08:30.640

V:---

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00:08:31.660 --> 00:08:38.600

V: So the word Dess is really, relates, I think, to the Indian American community in the Silicon Valley.

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00:08:39.020 --> 00:08:40.440

V: ---

127

00:08:40.440 --> 00:08:44.020

V: You know, I'm not exactly sure when that term came about.

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00:08:44.020 --> 00:08:45.480

V: ---

129

00:08:45.480 --> 00:08:48.640

V: We-we always called ourselves Indian American.

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00:08:48.640 --> 00:08:50.140

I: Hmm.

131

00:08:50.140 --> 00:08:54.330

V: But I think as the numbers grew with the late 90s,

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00:08:54.330 --> 00:08:59.639

V: we saw huge influx of Indians that actually came into the Silicon Valley.

133

00:09:00.850 --> 00:09:04.500

V: Now this was a different kind of immigrant because till that time

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00:09:05.260 --> 00:09:07.260

V: we'd had

135

00:09:07.480 --> 00:09:09.510

V: people who came to the United States as

136

00:09:09.510 --> 00:09:11.510

V: ---

137

00:09:11.590 --> 00:09:13.590

V: students and

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00:09:14.350 --> 00:09:17.400

V: after becoming, you know, getting their Master's degree or

139

00:09:18.040 --> 00:09:21.270

V: PhD or whatever it is, higher education that they came for,

140

00:09:22.210 --> 00:09:26.849

V: they got a job and then they started from scratch, you know.

141

00:09:28.480 --> 00:09:29.580

V: Why do I say that

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00:09:29.580 --> 00:09:37.259

V: there was a new breed of people? Because this was a whole bunch of people that came to the United States on an H-1B on H1

143

00:09:37.720 --> 00:09:39.550

V: H1 visa

I: Hmm.

144

00:09:39.550 --> 00:09:46.040

V: which was the demand of the industry at that point because they were looking to get more people

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00:09:46.920 --> 00:09:49.760

V: working here on legacy systems and

146

00:09:50.710 --> 00:09:56.579

V: India was producing these engineers that were knowledgeable about the legacy systems and

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00:09:57.820 --> 00:09:59.200

V: this

148

00:09:59.200 --> 00:10:02.129

V: and this was, you know, it heralded a

149

00:10:03.190 --> 00:10:10.020

V: mass migration of engineers from India across the globe. What was called the Y2K

150

00:10:10.660 --> 00:10:12.010

V: problem

I: Hmm.

151

00:10:12.010 --> 00:10:14.669

V: where computer systems were switching over from

152

00:10:15.100 --> 00:10:20.730

V: two-digit years to a four-digit year and people had all kinds of, you know,

153

00:10:20.730 --> 00:10:22.730

V: ---

154

00:10:22.990 --> 00:10:28.020

V: there were uncertainties around this. Like what how would the computer systems handle it and

155

00:10:29.260 --> 00:10:33.100

V: was there going to be any apocalypse, you know, was there going to be,

156

00:10:33.100 --> 00:10:35.100

V: ---

157

00:10:36.160 --> 00:10:42.620

V: you know, malfunction or failure of computer systems on a massive scale. People didn't know that.

158

00:10:44.710 --> 00:10:50.309

V: But this influx this these people that went out across the globe including to the Silicon Valley

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00:10:51.340 --> 00:10:55.440

V: they came with jobs, they were young and

160

00:10:56.340 --> 00:11:02.980

V: in some ways they came with a disposable income, you know, which was different from the Indians that were there earlier because

161

00:11:03.720 --> 00:11:07.320

V: students who just graduated, by definition poor,

I: Of course.

162

00:11:07.320 --> 00:11:12.220

V: you know, and with less disposable income

I: Hmm.

V: It changed the

163

00:11:13.140 --> 00:11:14.980

V: dynamics in the Valley.

164

00:11:14.980 --> 00:11:16.980

V: You see till that time. We had a

165

00:11:17.400 --> 00:11:21.980

V: few Indian restaurants. Actually, when I came here there was one or two Indian restaurants.

166

00:11:21.980 --> 00:11:25.200

V: There was maybe one or two Indian grocery stores.

167

00:11:25.200 --> 00:11:26.860

I: Hmm.

168

00:11:26.860 --> 00:11:31.500

V: Now all these guys who came and they were largely guys

I: Hmm.

V: who came.

169

00:11:32.980 --> 00:11:36.140

V: They wanted to eat a good Indian meal,

I: Hmm.

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00:11:36.140 --> 00:11:38.580

V: No compromises, you know, I'm ready to pay, I want this good.

171

00:11:38.580 --> 00:11:42.180

V: Yeah, so all these all-you-can-eat buffets.

I: Hmm.

172

00:11:42.940 --> 00:11:48.360

V: So many of them! I mean, literally hundreds every ---

173

00:11:49.440 --> 00:11:53.000

V: around every office area there were all these Indian places because there was a demand.

174

00:11:53.650 --> 00:11:56.249

V: So they were willing to have, you know, pay for

175

00:11:57.000 --> 00:12:04.700

V: services like that. Now, when I came, I didn't have that same experience. If you wanted to eat Indian food you wanted, you know,

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00:12:04.740 --> 00:12:07.340

V: you learn how to make it, you learn how to cook it.

I: (Laughs).

177

00:12:07.340 --> 00:12:09.340

V: You want to learn you want to make "mithai"[Hindi: Sweet],

178

00:12:09.500 --> 00:12:12.000

V: you want to eat "mithai"[Hindi: Sweet]. Well, make it, you know.

179

00:12:13.600 --> 00:12:17.280

V: That's actually an experience I wrote about in our

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00:12:18.000 --> 00:12:20.780

V: magazine on our 30th anniversary

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00:12:20.940 --> 00:12:22.380

V: because

182

00:12:22.380 --> 00:12:27.680

V: You know India Currents was born ... I want to show you this now. I want to talk a little bit about it.

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00:12:27.680 --> 00:12:29.400

I: yes yes.

Vandana: Because

184

00:12:29.400 --> 00:12:31.400

V: see this started. ---

185

00:12:31.650 --> 00:12:35.180

V: Volume one, number one, April 1987.

I: Hmm

186

00:12:37.740 --> 00:12:40.070

Vandana: It started because there was

187

00:12:41.130 --> 00:12:43.130

V: no place for

188

00:12:43.650 --> 00:12:49.759

V: Indians to come together. We were looking to create a community. I was, I was one of the people

189

00:12:50.900 --> 00:12:54.540

V: and ---

190

00:12:55.020 --> 00:13:00.680

V: I talked about how isolating things can be, about the experiences of an immigrant could be at that time.

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00:13:00.680 --> 00:13:01.460

I: Hmm.

192

00:13:01.460 --> 00:13:07.300

V: Again I realize, you know, I think about somebody who might be watching this today is like what's she talking about?

193

00:13:07.300 --> 00:13:12.520

V: You know, but it was a different world. When you don't know anyone. There's no way to connect.

194

00:13:12.520 --> 00:13:14.520

V: ---

195

00:13:17.250 --> 00:13:24.229

V: Starting "India Currents" was the idea of trying to find other people like us because when you realize that

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00:13:24.600 --> 00:13:30.440

V: I'm feeling so lonely, surely there are other people out there that are feeling the same.

197

00:13:30.440 --> 00:13:32.440

V: I just don't know who they are.

I: Hmm.

198

00:13:32.600 --> 00:13:34.300

V: I don't know how to reach them.

199

00:13:34.680 --> 00:13:38.440

V: But surely they are there, and

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00:13:39.060 --> 00:13:45.960

V: the magazine in all of this started without any plans of it becoming a business.

201

00:13:47.340 --> 00:13:54.350

V: But it filled a need for us, and it clearly touched a nerve in the larger

202

00:13:54.840 --> 00:13:59.120

V: community, you know. It was, it clearly met. Yeah.

203

00:13:59.910 --> 00:14:01.910

V: Entrepreneurship is all about

204

00:14:02.100 --> 00:14:05.300

V: meeting the unmet need,

I: Hmm.

V: and

205

00:14:05.360 --> 00:14:09.500

V: today we can talk about "Oh, what a wonderful entrepreneurial idea", but

206

00:14:10.060 --> 00:14:17.300

V: we didn't know it was an entrepreneurial idea. It was something we did because it was a labor of love.

I: Hmm.

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00:14:17.300 --> 00:14:18.680

V: You know, something that

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00:14:18.680 --> 00:14:20.680

V: it fulfilled for us.

209

00:14:21.220 --> 00:14:26.980

V: But the beautiful thing that "India Currents" did is, it actually built a community.

210

00:14:27.920 --> 00:14:33.280

V: They became a platform that the community could rally around.

I: Hmm.

211

00:14:33.680 --> 00:14:40.989

V: It was the one place that you could all, anyone could come and come and share their point of view, and

212

00:14:41.480 --> 00:14:46.700

V: we were very accepting because we didn't really have any resources. We didn't really have

213

00:14:47.300 --> 00:14:54.160

V: even a background in publishing or journalism or anything like that. But what we knew is

214

00:14:54.500 --> 00:14:59.380

V: there was a void in our lives and sentiments, and

215

00:14:59.860 --> 00:15:02.500

V: we are looking to find others on this journey.

216

00:15:03.050 --> 00:15:05.109

V: Because surely they were there,

217

00:15:05.620 --> 00:15:10.100

V: and we would see them occasionally here and there. Not like today, where there are, you know,

218

00:15:10.640 --> 00:15:17.080

V: people everywhere. We are a visible minority today, but it didn't, it wasn't always like that.

219

00:15:17.080 --> 00:15:21.660

V: So people are always looking, you know, looking to find other people like us.

220

00:15:21.670 --> 00:15:22.720

I: Yes.

V: We have this feeling. I mean, that's a human need, right? And

221

00:15:27.220 --> 00:15:31.440

V: for our 30th anniversary, somebody, you know, my editor was asking me is like

222

00:15:32.180 --> 00:15:36.420

V: Ab(Hindi: now) Share your reflections about 30 years of the Silicon Valley,

223

00:15:36.740 --> 00:15:44.600

V: being part of India Currents, and I wrote a very small little piece. Did I share this with you already?

224

00:15:44.600 --> 00:15:46.220

V: I don't remember.

225

00:15:46.220 --> 00:15:50.060

V: But if it's okay, could I can I read this?

226

00:15:50.060 --> 00:15:52.060

I: Yeah.

227

00:15:54.820 --> 00:15:55.680

V: ---

228

00:15:56.200 --> 00:15:59.780

V: "1987, a new immigrant in a foreign land.

229

00:16:01.089 --> 00:16:02.950

V: Incredible loneliness.

230

00:16:02.950 --> 00:16:06.239

V: Phone calls to India are three dollars and fifty cents a minute.

231

00:16:07.089 --> 00:16:09.629

V: Aerograms cost 36 cents.

232

00:16:10.300 --> 00:16:13.200

V: It takes 28 days to get a reply.

233

00:16:14.440 --> 00:16:16.440

V: Were there others like me?

234

00:16:16.480 --> 00:16:18.480

V: How did they cope?

235

00:16:18.970 --> 00:16:22.560

V: I scan the local newspapers. No news of anything familiar.

236

00:16:23.800 --> 00:16:25.800

V: Iran-Contra crisis.

237

00:16:26.050 --> 00:16:29.760

V: India, if ever mentioned, was in the news of the weird.

238

00:16:30.520 --> 00:16:32.520

V: Dow Jones was at

239

00:16:32.880 --> 00:16:36.140

V: 2372. Was this my new reality?

240

00:16:38.589 --> 00:16:40.589

V: Mother to twin boys.

241

00:16:41.260 --> 00:16:46.289

V: Satisfaction of creating a family, a home, and yet nothing familiar to ground me.

242

00:16:48.399 --> 00:16:53.279

V: Craving the taste of home, craving the sounds of home. Rasmalai?

243

00:16:53.279 --> 00:16:54.850

Interviewer: [Laugh]

244

00:16:54.850 --> 00:16:56.850

V: Make it with cottage cheese.

245

00:16:57.160 --> 00:17:02.610

V: Croon to Lata and Kishore [music legends] on spooling cassette tapes. Were there others like me?

246

00:17:03.730 --> 00:17:05.730

V: How do I reach them?

247

00:17:07.360 --> 00:17:09.360

V: "India Currents" is born. A

248

00:17:09.850 --> 00:17:12.540

V: platform to share events and thoughts that are familiar.

249

00:17:13.240 --> 00:17:14.770

V: No plans,

250

00:17:14.770 --> 00:17:21.540

V: forecasts, or ROI. A hunger to share, the desire to explore our hyphenated identities.

251

00:17:22.689 --> 00:17:30.058

V: The challenge of finding resources, the thrill of discovering fellow travelers, the hunger to belong.

252

00:17:32.260 --> 00:17:33.400

V: 2017.

253

00:17:33.400 --> 00:17:35.459

V: After 30 years from then,

254

00:17:36.700 --> 00:17:41.730

V: vibrant social life, FaceTime Mummy every day, WhatsApp for free.

255

00:17:42.580 --> 00:17:47.850

V: Share life with family across the globe, a connected world. I

256

00:17:48.850 --> 00:17:54.809

V: scan the local newspapers now, featuring Indian Americans regularly. Read about the global

257

00:17:55.179 --> 00:18:00.089

V: rush to harness the middle, the buying power of the Indian middle class.

258

00:18:00.940 --> 00:18:03.940

V: The Dow Jones is twenty thousand six hundred sixty eight.

259

00:18:04.820 --> 00:18:11.559

V: I'm a mother-in-law now, I buy rasmalai at Costco. I stream Hindi music on my iPhone.

260

00:18:12.499 --> 00:18:14.889

V: "India Currents" celebrates 30 years.

261

00:18:15.889 --> 00:18:19.868

V: The original quest to explore our hyphenated identities

262

00:18:20.779 --> 00:18:22.339

V: stays strong.

263

00:18:22.339 --> 00:18:29.949

V: The aspirations of a community have not changed. The hunger-the hunger remains. The hunger to belong,

264

00:18:30.440 --> 00:18:32.440

V: the hunger to connect.

265

00:18:33.049 --> 00:18:37.118

V: What started as a community platform remains a labor of love for me.

266

00:18:37.940 --> 00:18:39.940

V: Readers, writers, editors,

267

00:18:40.219 --> 00:18:45.879

V: advertisers, we could not have done this without you. Thanks to all that have been a part of this journey."

268

00:18:45.880 --> 00:18:49.340

I: Great, very well done, too.

269

00:18:49.820 --> 00:18:51.820

V: So it captures, you know, what

270

00:18:52.039 --> 00:18:54.039

V: life was like for

271

00:18:54.440 --> 00:18:57.080

V: me. It's a very personal experience.

272

00:18:57.640 --> 00:18:59.640

V: Then,

273

00:18:59.659 --> 00:19:03.429

V: you know, and what it became 30 years later. So in some ways,

274

00:19:05.060 --> 00:19:14.200

V: my experiences taught me a lot of things: the value of human connections, of interactions, and of the helping hand.

275

00:19:15.180 --> 00:19:18.340

V: And because I felt so lonely, I

276

00:19:19.820 --> 00:19:27.520

V: made it a point that anytime I would meet a young woman who was new from India,

277

00:19:27.700 --> 00:19:32.540

V: no matter where the scenario was, whether it was in a grocery store or a restaurant or at the library or

278

00:19:32.600 --> 00:19:34.600

V: any place, I always

279

00:19:35.059 --> 00:19:38.858

V: offered advice or help, maybe unsolicited, but I

280

00:19:39.649 --> 00:19:40.789

V: offered

281

00:19:40.789 --> 00:19:43.809

V: my number saying that if you have any questions,

282

00:19:45.349 --> 00:19:51.009

V: feel free to call me. I'm happy to answer them. Because that was something that I felt,

283

00:19:51.009 --> 00:19:54.980

V: I did not have. I did not have anybody to ask,

284

00:19:55.400 --> 00:19:59.300

V: if I were going to a store, what size is my clothes?

285

00:19:59.740 --> 00:20:01.700

V: What size?

286

00:20:01.700 --> 00:20:06.729

V: How do you know your size? What is a size 2 or 4 or 6? How do you

287

00:20:08.239 --> 00:20:10.239

V: know what size underwear to buy?

288

00:20:10.339 --> 00:20:17.559

V: And it's incredibly personal, it's incredibly ... but it's one that affects everybody and

289

00:20:18.589 --> 00:20:23.709

V: I wanted to offer that help. And as a result, you know, for a lot of people

290

00:20:24.409 --> 00:20:27.189

V: I built a vast network of

291

00:20:28.129 --> 00:20:31.539

V: largely women that I connected with. And

292

00:20:32.269 --> 00:20:33.379

V: that

293

00:20:33.379 --> 00:20:39.968

V: appreciated this, you know, and we have the concept of calling Didi, right?

I: Yes.

V: I became Didi to a lot of people. [Laughs]

294

00:20:39.968 --> 00:20:43.020

I: That's great. That's very needed-very needed.

V: Yeah. And

295

00:20:44.800 --> 00:20:51.940

V: we started, I was actually the founder of an organization called Bihar Samaj because I was from Bihar and

296

00:20:52.789 --> 00:20:57.278

V: I was also raising a family. Unlike today where we have such a vibrant community,

297

00:20:58.009 --> 00:21:01.659

V: we didn't have that that, but I wanted my children to

298

00:21:02.299 --> 00:21:08.108

V: experience some of the festivals the way I had experienced, the foods that were,

299

00:21:08.109 --> 00:21:10.959

V: you know, a part of our celebrations. And

300

00:21:11.599 --> 00:21:17.219

V: the music and dance that were part of the Bihar that I grew up in. I

301

00:21:18.070 --> 00:21:19.859

V: wanted to share all of that with them.

302

00:21:19.859 --> 00:21:25.679

V: So because there was nothing else then, you know, you start it yourselves. Like, okay.

303

00:21:25.690 --> 00:21:31.919

V: So we started. But today I think kids don't have any of, any such needs

304

00:21:32.859 --> 00:21:34.859

V: because

305

00:21:35.769 --> 00:21:42.478

V: the opportunities for knowing your culture, again with technology, which has brought everything so close. Whether it's YouTube,

306

00:21:43.119 --> 00:21:46.949

V: Google, or you know, Facebook that allows you to share so much.

307

00:21:48.489 --> 00:21:56.249

V: It has bridged these distances in a way that was not possible for me when I had a computer.
And

308

00:21:58.509 --> 00:22:01.529

V: we built strong relationships, you know, even doing

309

00:22:02.470 --> 00:22:09.359

V: festivals that were important for the place that I grew up in, you know, Dusshera and Holi, the festivals that you have, Durga Pooja.

310

00:22:10.059 --> 00:22:17.548

V: So we organized two events around the year, whole bunch of families that, you know, were raising kids just like I was,

311

00:22:17.548 --> 00:22:18.900

Interviewer: Hmm.

312

00:22:18.900 --> 00:22:26.260

Vandana: you know, would participate. We would cook, you know, local foods till it grew to a point, like

313

00:22:26.260 --> 00:22:29.640

V: okay, we can't do this anymore. It has to be catered.

314

00:22:29.640 --> 00:22:31.680

I: Laughs.

V: Laughs.

I: Right yes.

315

00:22:31.680 --> 00:22:35.520

I: So since you have been so involved and almost kind of initiating

316

00:22:35.520 --> 00:22:37.239

I: --- ---

317

00:22:37.239 --> 00:22:42.989

I: Like I said, described India Currents as a platform, of course, but you almost initiated a kind of a

318

00:22:43.869 --> 00:22:48.209

I: cohesiveness in all the Indians in-in the region so that they could all come together

319

00:22:48.940 --> 00:22:53.720

I: socially and then through a piece like "India Currents."

V: Yes.

I: Right?

320

00:22:53.720 --> 00:22:55.720

V: Yeah.

I: In that sense why-why do you think

321

00:22:56.320 --> 00:23:02.780

I: this whole, you know, the Desi culture is so, so vibrant in Silicon Valley? Why is it so vibrant here?

322

00:23:02.999 --> 00:23:05.549

V: I think India Currents has a big role to play

I: Hmm.

323

00:23:06.030 --> 00:23:11.879

V: and has had a big role to play

I: Hmm.

V: in that. I mentioned at the beginning, you know this feeling of

324

00:23:12.460 --> 00:23:16.650

V: disconnectedness that everybody had you know. I mean, I was an example, right?

325

00:23:17.860 --> 00:23:19.420

V: And

326

00:23:19.420 --> 00:23:21.420

V: knowing that

327

00:23:22.450 --> 00:23:27.030

V: what I again, I'd mentioned earlier, knowing that surely there were others like me.

328

00:23:27.030 --> 00:23:28.420

I: Hmm.

329

00:23:28.420 --> 00:23:31.019

V: What India Currents did is, it

330

00:23:31.740 --> 00:23:37.820

V: built a community. While we were all individuals at that-until that time,

331

00:23:38.140 --> 00:23:40.980

V: because there was no one place that we could all come together.

332

00:23:40.980 --> 00:23:42.460

I: Hmm.

V: And

333

00:23:42.460 --> 00:23:48.440

V: India Currents became a platform around culture.

I: Hmm.

V: And was something that as first-generation

334

00:23:48.970 --> 00:23:54.839

V: immigrants we all, it was a binding force. It wasn't a divisive force in any way.

335

00:23:55.750 --> 00:24:02.040

V: We all create, in fact, you know, I learned so much more about Hindustani music, Co-Carnatic music

336

00:24:02.040 --> 00:24:05.819

V: or about the classical arts of India after I left India.

337

00:24:05.819 --> 00:24:07.180

I: Okay.

338

00:24:07.180 --> 00:24:11.759

V: When I am starting-when I started living here,

I: Hmm.

V: I had that, you know,

339

00:24:12.880 --> 00:24:14.880

V: desire to know.

340

00:24:15.100 --> 00:24:19.050

V: And as I was raising a family here, I also realized like I

341

00:24:19.720 --> 00:24:23.819

V: want to give a strong sense of identity to my children.

I: Hmm.

342

00:24:24.550 --> 00:24:28.379

V: Because I had a strong sense of identity. You know, I knew I was

343

00:24:29.110 --> 00:24:31.110

V: Indian. I

344

00:24:31.450 --> 00:24:35.819

V: had Indian heritage. And I was very familiar with the Indian

345

00:24:36.610 --> 00:24:38.610

V: culture as I had grown up.

I: Hmm.

346

00:24:39.250 --> 00:24:43.050

V: And I was learning to navigate the space of being an

347

00:24:43.540 --> 00:24:47.360

V: Indian-American because there was no denying my Indianess.

I: Hmm.

348

00:24:47.360 --> 00:24:50.940

V: My accent, my skin color, my choice of words.

349

00:24:52.360 --> 00:24:56.780

V: Everything reflected that I was this hyphenated

350

00:24:58.790 --> 00:25:06.309

V: Indian. My children on the other hand would tell me that, "Mom, you are Indian. I am American." And

351

00:25:07.160 --> 00:25:11.169

V: I wanted my children to grow up with ...

352

00:25:11.929 --> 00:25:13.340

V: not

353

00:25:13.340 --> 00:25:16.809

V: apologizing for who they were. I wanted them to be proud of who they were.

354

00:25:17.600 --> 00:25:19.600

V: And

355

00:25:19.610 --> 00:25:25.329

V: I felt some of that was coming from that place of trying to distance. Say that

356

00:25:25.720 --> 00:25:28.280

V: being Indian is one thing and being

357

00:25:28.340 --> 00:25:30.340

V: American is another thing.

358

00:25:30.440 --> 00:25:33.070

But I realized we were really Indian-Americans.

359

00:25:33.070 --> 00:25:33.980

I: Hmm..

360

00:25:33.980 --> 00:25:41.349

V: And if we were in a place, and perhaps a lot of hyphenated cultures are like that, you have the advantage of taking the best

361

00:25:41.350 --> 00:25:44.380

V: of both cultures that you've had exposure to.

362

00:25:44.980 --> 00:25:48.020

V: So why not take that? And

363

00:25:48.040 --> 00:25:50.040

V: I think ... I

364

00:25:50.780 --> 00:25:57.459

V: wanted to tell my children through my work and through everything that I did, I think I've been ... I- I am

365

00:25:59.419 --> 00:26:01.779

V: I know that I am a role model for my children.

366

00:26:02.900 --> 00:26:09.099

V: But we create role models out of everyday people.

I: Hmm.

V: By people who embrace who they are.

367

00:26:10.060 --> 00:26:13.000

V: And I think I-I-I

368

00:26:13.100 --> 00:26:15.980

V: have this funny story that I tell a lot of people.

369

00:26:16.760 --> 00:26:19.280

V: You know when we had moved here, my children were

370

00:26:20.330 --> 00:26:26.650

V: you know, they were in elementary school. And my son we'd had this exchange about you are Indian, I am American.

371

00:26:26.900 --> 00:26:29.319

V: So I said, you know, let's go stand at the corner of [street names - inaudible].

372

00:26:31.760 --> 00:26:38.520

V: Ask every person who goes by what they think I am and what they think you are.

373

00:26:38.520 --> 00:26:40.140

I: Hmm.

374

00:26:40.140 --> 00:26:46.640

V: And we will, let's talk after that.

I: Hmm.

V: So my son thought about that first.

375

00:26:47.900 --> 00:26:53.860

V: And then he got really mad at me. He said, how are they going to know? I said my point exactly.

376

00:26:54.620 --> 00:27:01.440

V: If you are brown, people will always think of you. You're always going to be asked this question-

377

00:27:01.440 --> 00:27:03.440

V: where are you from?

I: Hmm.

378

00:27:04.220 --> 00:27:08.860

V: So you might as well embrace it,

I: Hmm.

V: you know. And

379

00:27:08.860 --> 00:27:09.940

V: ---

380

00:27:09.940 --> 00:27:14.540

V: because people judge just the way-on the way you look, so be comfortable with who you are.

381

00:27:15.260 --> 00:27:18.459

V: You're American, you know. I mean, born and raised in America.

382

00:27:18.460 --> 00:27:25.689

V: So you're going to think differently, but you have the advantage of living at home, having a grandfather live at home, having a multi-

383

00:27:26.030 --> 00:27:27.470

V: generational family.

384

00:27:27.470 --> 00:27:31.449

V: Having, you know, being familiar with the cultures that we are,

385

00:27:31.449 --> 00:27:33.449

V: ---

386

00:27:34.550 --> 00:27:40.119

V: that we have taught you about. Oh this is how things are done. This is how we celebrate Holi.

387

00:27:40.120 --> 00:27:42.459

V: This is how. Today Holi is such a big deal.

388

00:27:42.720 --> 00:27:48.280

V: I mean universities across, certainly in California and many other places, now they have these color runs

389

00:27:48.280 --> 00:27:50.280

V: and fun runs and it's become a big,

390

00:27:50.920 --> 00:27:52.280

V: you know,

391

00:27:52.280 --> 00:27:54.230

V: cultural activity.

I: Hmm.

392

00:27:54.230 --> 00:27:57.120

V: But it wasn't then.

I: Hmm.

393

00:27:57.520 --> 00:28:03.920

V: But I think a lot of immigrants and a lot of students and a lot of people have had a role to play in that.

394

00:28:04.220 --> 00:28:05.720

V: And

395

00:28:05.720 --> 00:28:11.380

V: India Currents became the place that everybody would come to share their experience,

396

00:28:11.380 --> 00:28:14.500

V: their cultural experience. And

397

00:28:14.560 --> 00:28:16.560

V: this sharing group and

398

00:28:16.940 --> 00:28:18.710

V: there's power of

399

00:28:18.710 --> 00:28:21.340

V: multiplication, right? One person has an experience,

400

00:28:21.340 --> 00:28:27.459

V: we share it. We print it; Now, so many more other people know about it and it's an idea for them.

401

00:28:27.459 --> 00:28:28.100

I: Hmm.Hmm.

402

00:28:28.100 --> 00:28:32.800

V: Because now they're empowered. -- so-and-so has done it. Oh, what a wonderful idea.

I: Hmm.

403

00:28:33.530 --> 00:28:35.530

V: And you know, just

404

00:28:35.600 --> 00:28:41.709

V: earlier this month, my niece who was born, raised, everything is raising kids of her own over here.

405

00:28:44.030 --> 00:28:46.030

V: Biracial family,

406

00:28:46.250 --> 00:28:49.989

V: multi-faith family, all of this. In her son's

407

00:28:51.170 --> 00:28:52.400

V: elementary school,

408

00:28:52.400 --> 00:28:56.680

V: they organized Holi. Her husband is not Indian. I mean, she's

409

00:28:57.440 --> 00:28:59.739

V: Indian-American. Her husband is

410

00:29:02.120 --> 00:29:06.640

V: Jewish, of Jewish faith. They organized in their school

411

00:29:08.480 --> 00:29:09.940

V: Holi for all students.

412

00:29:09.940 --> 00:29:13.449

V: They let the parents know. They had the kids come in white

413

00:29:13.850 --> 00:29:21.280

V: t-shirts and made the parents, let them wear old t-shirts and [unclear]. They provided color,

414

00:29:21.860 --> 00:29:28.870

V: talked about Holi. She ... like if I think of the time that I started telling my children about that.

415

00:29:29.780 --> 00:29:31.780

V: 35 years later,

I: Hmm.

416

00:29:31.910 --> 00:29:34.449

V: how wonderful-how wonderful that

417

00:29:34.449 --> 00:29:35.540

V: ---

418

00:29:35.540 --> 00:29:42.879

V: a class of, you know, kids in Santa Monica are learning about Holi through

419

00:29:43.790 --> 00:29:45.620

V: a completely different family.

I: Hmm.Hmm.

420

00:29:45.620 --> 00:29:50.020

V: That so many people are so comfortable and so proud of their culture

I: Hmm.

421

00:29:50.330 --> 00:29:54.100

V: to be able to share, and I think the more we know about

422

00:29:54.710 --> 00:29:57.190

V: other cultures, it makes us

423

00:29:57.700 --> 00:30:01.680

V: less of "the other", you know,

I: Hmm.

V: here less,

424

00:30:03.400 --> 00:30:07.140

V: we are always afraid of the unknown. And

425

00:30:07.180 --> 00:30:11.260

V: there are all these entities that take advantage of the

426

00:30:11.300 --> 00:30:15.320

V: fear,

I: Hmm.

V: and I think the more we share our culture

427

00:30:15.500 --> 00:30:20.260

V: with other people and they understand where you're coming from, what it is that you're celebrating.

428

00:30:21.440 --> 00:30:23.440

V: We ...

429

00:30:26.000 --> 00:30:28.150

V: we are ambassadors for our culture,

430

00:30:28.150 --> 00:30:29.540

I: Hmm.

431

00:30:30.950 --> 00:30:34.300

V: and that's the point that you open. You had asked, I think, that

432

00:30:35.030 --> 00:30:36.770

V: what I sensed here,

433

00:30:36.770 --> 00:30:38.770

V: your question to me,

434

00:30:39.020 --> 00:30:41.020

V: what is the role of a Desi

435

00:30:41.330 --> 00:30:44.470

I: in Silicon Valley.

V: in Silicon Valley today?

I: Hmm.

436

00:30:45.590 --> 00:30:50.920

V: And I think I've come to that point where I think we are all ambassadors of our culture.

437

00:30:52.660 --> 00:30:58.900

V: And it's a responsibility, and one that we should not take lightly because

438

00:30:58.900 --> 00:30:59.960

V: ---

439

00:30:59.960 --> 00:31:01.880

V: we are still a small

440

00:31:01.880 --> 00:31:05.440

V: minority. Here in the Valley we are visible minority now,

I: Hmm.Hmm.

441

00:31:05.440 --> 00:31:08.940

V: but in the whole country there is still a very small community.

442

00:31:09.520 --> 00:31:13.880

V: But we come from, and we have such a rich heritage that

443

00:31:14.360 --> 00:31:20.620

V: the world is only going to be enriched when it learns about it. And so I think it's important for all of us

I: Hmm

444

00:31:21.140 --> 00:31:23.920

V: to be ambassadors.

I: Hmm.

V: To go around,

445

00:31:23.920 --> 00:31:25.540

V: ---

446

00:31:25.540 --> 00:31:27.740

V: explain, not explain, share.

I: Hmm.

447

00:31:27.740 --> 00:31:31.660

V: I think sharing is actually a better word to say that this is who I am and

448

00:31:31.960 --> 00:31:37.720

V: I do that and-and personal capacity also and-and so there are many, many, many other people.

449

00:31:39.710 --> 00:31:40.730

I: So.---

450

00:31:40.730 --> 00:31:46.540

I: You describe. I mean, these are the great stories to hear about the Silicon Valley and the community.

451

00:31:46.550 --> 00:31:48.430

I: But also like, you know

452

00:31:48.430 --> 00:31:54.009

I: If you ... you may have lived in other cities in the country, or have traveled or have family in other parts of the country.

453

00:31:54.010 --> 00:31:59.260

I: So what is unique about Silicon Valley that you think makes the Desis here

454

00:31:59.900 --> 00:32:03.489

I: different from maybe Desis in other cities, other parts of this country?

455

00:32:03.980 --> 00:32:07.510

I: Is there something unique that you have noticed over the years of Silicon Valley?

456

00:32:08.480 --> 00:32:10.480

V: I think ...

457

00:32:11.260 --> 00:32:14.080

V: There's, first of all, there's a sense of cohesiveness.

I: So, how does that happen? How does that

458

00:32:15.980 --> 00:32:20.320

happen?

V: So, how does that happen? It's a-it's an interesting question, I'm not sure I, we have

459

00:32:20.960 --> 00:32:22.460

V: an

460

00:32:22.460 --> 00:32:28.570

V: answer for that. But it was a certain kind of immigrant that came to the valley.

461

00:32:29.840 --> 00:32:34.540

V: It wasn't people interested in acting or in, you know,

462

00:32:34.540 --> 00:32:40.500

V: people who have interest in the entertainment industry who may have navigated or gravitated towards the

463

00:32:40.560 --> 00:32:43.540

V: Los Angeles area,

I: Hmm.Hmm.

V: the southern or people in the finance

464

00:32:44.070 --> 00:32:47.090

V: space that may have navigated move to the

465

00:32:47.840 --> 00:32:51.660

V: eastern part of the country where the financial capital is.

I: Hmm.

466

00:32:51.660 --> 00:32:55.480

V: This is where nerdy engineers came.

I: Hmm.

467

00:32:56.720 --> 00:32:58.720

V: And we know that India produces

468

00:32:59.040 --> 00:33:00.880

V: lots of engineers

I: Yes

469

00:33:00.880 --> 00:33:02.880

V: and doctors.

I: Yes

V: And

470

00:33:02.880 --> 00:33:04.880

V: ---.

471

00:33:06.780 --> 00:33:09.500

V: the-the-the

472

00:33:09.560 --> 00:33:11.560

V: timing of the

473

00:33:11.940 --> 00:33:14.600

V: H1 visa, I think,

474

00:33:16.260 --> 00:33:21.100

V: brought a whole .. but, well, I am phrasing this very badly. But,

475

00:33:23.060 --> 00:33:28.300

V: how should I say what makes these people different? I think largely because

476

00:33:28.740 --> 00:33:32.510

V: it's only, it's largely engineers who came here.

I: Hmm.

477

00:33:33.030 --> 00:33:37.399

V: Not a lot of other kinds of Indians, and they're also looking to connect.

478

00:33:37.399 --> 00:33:38.070

I: Hmm.

479

00:33:38.070 --> 00:33:42.650

V: They're also connected because a large number of their engineering schools in India are connected.

480

00:33:42.800 --> 00:33:46.580

I: Yeah.

V: So ... and then we're living in a place of technology

481

00:33:46.580 --> 00:33:48.580

I: Hmm.

V: where there is Facebook and this

482

00:33:49.220 --> 00:33:51.900

V: Google

I: Hmm.

V: and Apple and ...

483

00:33:51.900 --> 00:33:53.850

V: ---.

484

00:33:53.850 --> 00:34:00.500

V: So being connected was like, became part of their DNA and then we had a variable platform

485

00:34:00.500 --> 00:34:01.000

I: Hmm.

486

00:34:01.000 --> 00:34:03.160

V: where people were connecting.

I: Sure

V: And

487

00:34:03.179 --> 00:34:05.179

V: today people may not know me

488

00:34:06.059 --> 00:34:07.980

V: as individually, but

489

00:34:07.980 --> 00:34:11.929

V: people know the magazine.

I: Yes Yes.

V: They know the platform, it's like "Oh, India Currents."

490

00:34:11.929 --> 00:34:16.668

V: "I know about that. Oh, I-this was my life savior when I came to the United States,

491

00:34:16.710 --> 00:34:18.710

V: this was the place where I found myself,

492

00:34:18.899 --> 00:34:23.509

V: this is where I found, bought my tickets to India before you were buying it, everything online.

493

00:34:23.840 --> 00:34:26.760

I: Hmm.

V: You know, this is how I found specialty items."

494

00:34:26.760 --> 00:34:29.520

I: Yeah

V: This is where people bought their

495

00:34:29.560 --> 00:34:35.940

V: clothes. This is where people found out about teaching culture to their generations of, you know, they're raising a

496

00:34:35.940 --> 00:34:39.820

V: family. I want to teach them how to dance. I want to teach them how to

497

00:34:40.380 --> 00:34:45.680

V: sing Indian classical music.

I: Yeah, this is something I want to ask. Like when I was reading up

498

00:34:45.800 --> 00:34:48.380

I: about in general, there is this huge

499

00:34:48.590 --> 00:34:54.190

I: flourishing of Carnatic music for example, right? And even Hindustani music but Carnatic music is thriving in this region.

500

00:34:54.190 --> 00:34:57.220

I: In fact, some people said that it's doing better than in-in

501

00:34:57.740 --> 00:34:59.480

V: In India.

I: In India.

502

00:34:59.480 --> 00:35:03.620

I: And especially in Chennai regions, doing better than there. But, you know,

503

00:35:03.740 --> 00:35:08.740

I: typically the engineers are very tech focus, tech-savvy people.

V: Vijay.

I: But why are they

504

00:35:08.740 --> 00:35:14.000

I: connecting like that? Yeah.

V: Apologies. We're talking about engineers, I think it's really important to

505

00:35:14.000 --> 00:35:16.660

V: bring in engineers in this conversation.

I: Yes..

506

00:35:16.660 --> 00:35:18.560

V: I think we are pioneers,

507

00:35:18.560 --> 00:35:24.880

V: and that's why I said the reason it's different here

I: Yes

V: is because of India Currents. Because since

508

00:35:25.670 --> 00:35:28.539

V: 1987, we have built this,

509

00:35:30.380 --> 00:35:32.030

V: an

510

00:35:32.030 --> 00:35:37.630

V: ecosystem where they could thrive.

I: Hmm.

V: Because if somebody was teaching Carnatic music

511

00:35:38.090 --> 00:35:41.470

I: Hmm.

V: in their home, how are they able to find students?

512

00:35:41.470 --> 00:35:42.380

I: Hmm.

513

00:35:42.380 --> 00:35:45.940

I: Right.

V: Could they afford to advertise in the Mercury News?

514

00:35:45.940 --> 00:35:49.040

I: Hmm.

V: Or the New York Times? No.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: No, they will look at ...

515

00:35:49.360 --> 00:35:52.760

V: They, we were able to deliver a target audience

516

00:35:52.760 --> 00:35:53.390

I: Hmm.

517

00:35:53.390 --> 00:36:00.339

V: for small businesses. Now, whether it was the local restaurant that offered all-you-can-eat lunch buffet for \$5.99

518

00:36:00.339 --> 00:36:01.070

I: Hmm.

519

00:36:01.070 --> 00:36:09.520

V: or a Carnatic music teacher who was teaching music in her garage

I: Hmm.

V: or the Kathak

520

00:36:09.580 --> 00:36:11.580

V: dancer who was teaching

521

00:36:12.380 --> 00:36:15.009

V: Kathak dance in in her home.

522

00:36:15.009 --> 00:36:15.980

I: Hmm.

523

00:36:15.980 --> 00:36:17.630

V: So,

524

00:36:17.630 --> 00:36:23.799

V: we started, you know, now that they were able to advertise for a very nominal price in our

525

00:36:24.620 --> 00:36:25.910

V: magazine.

526

00:36:25.910 --> 00:36:27.910

V: The magazine was being sent out to

527

00:36:28.340 --> 00:36:30.340

V: 30,000 people,

I: Hmm.Hmm.

528

00:36:31.000 --> 00:36:34.140

V: 30,000 homes,

I: Hmm.

V: at no cost.

529

00:36:34.140 --> 00:36:35.820

I: Hmm.

V: And we had a very unique model, you know.

530

00:36:35.830 --> 00:36:40.200

V: We were printing, mailing, distributing, at no cost to the end-user.

I: ---, Hmm.

531

00:36:40.200 --> 00:36:42.200

V: And ---

532

00:36:43.040 --> 00:36:46.330

V: It's getting into people's homes, it's getting into...

533

00:36:46.330 --> 00:36:48.330

V: ---

534

00:36:49.850 --> 00:36:52.839

V: So I'm getting into people's homes. The thing about

535

00:36:53.900 --> 00:37:00.889

V: any advertiser was that they could be guaranteed. Like, I'm getting to a place that people are actually interested.

536

00:37:01.170 --> 00:37:04.609

I: Hmm. Hmm.

V: And they saw their businesses grow.

I: Hmm.

537

00:37:05.460 --> 00:37:08.030

V: That the whole bunch of other people who were also

538

00:37:08.220 --> 00:37:12.439

V: quietly doing things in their homes also wanted to be visible

I: Hmm.

V: said, "Hey, me too."

539

00:37:13.070 --> 00:37:20.719

V: "I also offer these services. You can come to my space, too." The Bay area is very unique geographically.

I: Hmm.

540

00:37:20.970 --> 00:37:24.949

V: Because in about half an hour to 45 minutes, you can really go from anywhere to anywhere.

I: Hmm.

541

00:37:26.190 --> 00:37:28.190

V: And

542

00:37:28.770 --> 00:37:31.640

V: if you are living in San Jose, well, you can find a teacher near you.

I: Hmm.

543

00:37:32.340 --> 00:37:36.140

V: You don't Have to go to Berkeley,

I: Hmm.

V: which is what earlier people would have to do.

544

00:37:36.870 --> 00:37:38.870

I : Yes.

V: And

545

00:37:38.880 --> 00:37:45.739

V: I think that's also a difference between here and LA, Los Angeles.

I: Hmm.

V: Which is so widespread

546

00:37:46.080 --> 00:37:52.699

V: that there wasn't a place, for one place for people to come,

I: Hmm.

V: come together, you know.

547

00:37:52.700 --> 00:37:57.620

V: Even for us to distribute in that area was hard because it's so widespread.

I: Hmm.

548

00:37:57.620 --> 00:38:00.860

V: But the Bay Area was concentrated all around the Bay.

549

00:38:01.500 --> 00:38:04.310

V: You know, people were constantly moving,

I: Hmm.

550

00:38:05.000 --> 00:38:09.800

V: and we were able to get ... we are also based here and I think that helps.

551

00:38:10.280 --> 00:38:14.860

Vijay: Coming back to your first question.

I: Yes. engineer.

Vijay: Yes..yeah. Engineer. I have a very -- --

552

00:38:15.040 --> 00:38:21.220

I: Before saying that, would you introduce yourself?

Vijay: My name is Vijay Rajvaidya, and I'm also a co-publisher now

553

00:38:21.870 --> 00:38:25.489

Vijay: with "India Currents." "Now" I say because my

554

00:38:26.180 --> 00:38:32.560

Vijay: career was with clients. So here I speak with some authority.

I: Laugh.

Vijay: Like some authority, not all.

555

00:38:32.560 --> 00:38:35.140

Vijay: Vandana speaks with full authority because she has been in this

556

00:38:35.140 --> 00:38:37.740

Vijay: single platform all her life.

I: Hmm.

557

00:38:37.740 --> 00:38:41.600

Vijay: I did switch, made a switch. So the point is that, like

558

00:38:42.980 --> 00:38:46.540

Vijay: Vandana mentioned, this place developed as a

559

00:38:47.580 --> 00:38:52.249

Vijay: center or hub for the innovators and the technology innovators, by the way,

560

00:38:52.250 --> 00:38:57.350

Vijay: not in some other field, technology innovators. And from India

561

00:38:57.350 --> 00:39:02.569

Vijay: a lot of technologists came over here. It so happened that in India

562

00:39:02.850 --> 00:39:07.699

Vijay: the similar focus was happening in the geography called Bangalore

563

00:39:07.699 --> 00:39:08.660

I: Hmm.

564

00:39:08.660 --> 00:39:09.799

Vijay: or

565

00:39:09.799 --> 00:39:12.189

Vijay: Hyderabad or little bit in Chennai.

566

00:39:12.189 --> 00:39:12.980

I: Hmm.

567

00:39:12.980 --> 00:39:16.560

Vijay: The northern cities came later on.

I: Hmm.

568

00:39:16.640 --> 00:39:23.520

Vijay: So when the American companies sourced these younger people who were to come and work for

569

00:39:23.520 --> 00:39:29.040

Vijay: them over here. It happened that they were more from these southern cities of India.

I: Yes.

570

00:39:30.260 --> 00:39:31.920

I: Yes.

Vijay: Southern India, South Indian.

571

00:39:31.920 --> 00:39:35.180

I: Hmm.

Vijay: That is where you find so much of Carnatic music,

572

00:39:35.220 --> 00:39:37.220

Vijay: focused development and all,

573

00:39:37.580 --> 00:39:40.900

Vijay: because-because they were South Indian and in the food also.

574

00:39:40.900 --> 00:39:44.100

I: Yes.

Vijay: I guess in culture everywhere, so this is the

575

00:39:44.120 --> 00:39:50.040

Vijay: distinctness of it.

I: Hmm.Hmm.

Vijay: Second thing is technology brings more innovators.

576

00:39:50.049 --> 00:39:54.999

Vijay: I mean, you have innovators in finance industry also, but by the nature of it the

577

00:39:56.089 --> 00:39:59.589

Vijay: finance industry is conservative.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: By nature, it is conservative.

578

00:39:59.589 --> 00:40:05.480

I: Yes.

Vijay: Technology by nature is looking for ... entertainment is also very

579

00:40:05.480 --> 00:40:09.940

Vijay: innovative, actually. But innovative ... it is, but there is only one big huge Hollywood over there.

580

00:40:09.940 --> 00:40:11.940

I: Hmm.

Vijay: So there, people maybe went over there.

581

00:40:13.120 --> 00:40:16.600

Vijay: From that point of view, this place was distinct.

582

00:40:16.600 --> 00:40:21.180

Vijay: Yes.

I: But-but the practice of cultural forms ... I mean, like okay, engineer.

583

00:40:21.189 --> 00:40:26.420

I: It's like, you know, making great salaries, you know, maybe two-household incomes.

Vijay: true. true.

I: or everything but

584

00:40:26.420 --> 00:40:33.920

I: then why this need to you know find the music class for the kids? Why the need to teach an instrument and

585

00:40:33.920 --> 00:40:38.480

I: then start a class or not, and then send kids. Why this?

Vijay: Yes.

586

00:40:38.480 --> 00:40:41.900

Vijay: Did you notice one sentence what Vandana said that

587

00:40:42.020 --> 00:40:45.220

Vijay: in the beginning itself that she learned about

588

00:40:45.760 --> 00:40:49.620

Vijay: Hindustani music, Indian culture after coming here.

I: Yeah.

589

00:40:49.730 --> 00:40:53.829

Vijay: So what happens when the culture surrounds you, you'll pick it up.

590

00:40:54.040 --> 00:40:59.940

Vijay: But when that culture doesn't surround you, your longing makes you to learn.

I : Yeah, that's true.

591

00:41:00.020 --> 00:41:04.800

Vijay: Isn't it. So that is exactly what happened.

Vandana: Yeah, and I think all of us. ---

592

00:41:06.530 --> 00:41:08.979

V: We may have learned ourselves.

593

00:41:09.740 --> 00:41:12.369

V: But we definitely want to make sure our children

I: Hmm..

594

00:41:13.040 --> 00:41:15.000

V: knew about it.

595

00:41:15.000 --> 00:41:17.699

V: Yes, you know only when they're young, they're under your control [Laughs]

596

00:41:19.180 --> 00:41:22.940

V: So you can expose whatever things you think are important to them.

597

00:41:22.940 --> 00:41:23.360

I: Yeah

598

00:41:23.360 --> 00:41:29.660

V: As children grow up and develop their own interests and as they become adults then they're going to do

599

00:41:29.660 --> 00:41:31.120

V: whatever they're going to do.

I: Hmm.

600

00:41:31.120 --> 00:41:37.439

V: But it's very interesting. And certainly, I think I've had the opportunity to see that dance

601

00:41:38.380 --> 00:41:44.310

V: classes that were advertised here, students that joined because of the dance classes that were advertised here have

602

00:41:44.710 --> 00:41:46.770

V: gone on to complete their

603

00:41:47.380 --> 00:41:49.090

V: graduation and get jobs.

I: Hmm.

604

00:41:49.090 --> 00:41:55.169

V: Gone on to even get, you know, get married, have kids, have a family. Then-then their children,

605

00:41:55.870 --> 00:42:01.739

V: sending them to dance classes that are advertised here.

I: Hmm.

V: So in a way that legacy

606

00:42:01.739 --> 00:42:02.560

I: Hmm.

607

00:42:02.560 --> 00:42:05.560

V: continues and ---

608

00:42:05.580 --> 00:42:09.600

V: Because I think all of us. I've actually met people here,

609

00:42:10.270 --> 00:42:12.270

V: young women, maybe in their 30s,

610

00:42:12.640 --> 00:42:16.620

V: who said they grew up with "India Currents."

I: Hmm.

V: Always taking it for granted.

611

00:42:16.620 --> 00:42:20.600

V: It was something that was always there on their coffee tables in their, in their homes.

612

00:42:20.940 --> 00:42:22.360

V: But I

613

00:42:22.360 --> 00:42:25.649

V: knew that their parents really liked, you know, what was written.

614

00:42:26.200 --> 00:42:29.520

V: What was there in the magazine and we always used it for,

615

00:42:30.310 --> 00:42:32.310

V: you know, finding resources.

I: Hmm

616

00:42:32.410 --> 00:42:39.510

V: We became like the yellow pages then, you know, the yellow pages for the Desi community, you know, trying to find

617

00:42:41.140 --> 00:42:43.140

V: food services,

618

00:42:44.440 --> 00:42:45.700

V: culture,

619

00:42:45.700 --> 00:42:47.760

V: events. You know, when we had our 25th

620

00:42:48.460 --> 00:42:55.320

V: anniversary celebration, the Consulate General of India had come to the event, and he said a sentence that I

621

00:42:55.320 --> 00:43:02.700

V: absolutely loved. Because he said, if an event is not listed in "India Currents," is it really happening?

I: Yes. I remember

622

00:43:02.700 --> 00:43:04.700

I: reading that.

623

00:43:04.700 --> 00:43:06.700

I: I know the gesture.

624

00:43:06.720 --> 00:43:12.860

V: So I think we built that reputation, that if an event was happening it had to be listed in "India Currents."

I: Yeah

625

00:43:13.340 --> 00:43:17.720

V: And it really became the go-to source. Now many people also told us,

626

00:43:17.730 --> 00:43:20.069

V: I don't have the time to actually go to all of these events,

627

00:43:20.320 --> 00:43:25.860

V: but I love looking through the pages and seeing what all is happening.

I: Yes.

628

00:43:25.860 --> 00:43:31.980

I: I do that, too.

V: And you know, you see that "Oh, you know, oh, there's a play, there's a dance."

629

00:43:32.080 --> 00:43:38.580

V: "There's a, you know, fair, there's a book reading" and we're seeing, we are a vibrant, you know,

630

00:43:39.760 --> 00:43:41.350

V: culturally aware

I: Yes

631

00:43:41.350 --> 00:43:44.490

V: community here.

I: Yes.

V: And people, they value that.

632

00:43:45.040 --> 00:43:50.640

Vijay: If I may add a comment to that earlier question today, why would they send their children to learn

633

00:43:50.640 --> 00:43:51.190

I: Hmm.

634

00:43:51.190 --> 00:43:56.819

Vijay: music lessons? So it comes from what, when I was saying earlier, the identity part of it.
I: Hmm.

635

00:43:57.010 --> 00:44:01.889

Vijay: So there is a desire to have your identity. You are looking, you look different,

636

00:44:01.990 --> 00:44:06.539

Vijay: so you have that identity and take pride in that identity.
I: Hmm.

637

00:44:07.090 --> 00:44:11.610

Vijay: But when you want to take pride, you need to have some anchor, what are you anchoring into?

638

00:44:11.610 --> 00:44:12.730

I: Hmm..

639

00:44:12.730 --> 00:44:14.730

Vijay: Fortunately, we come from a

640

00:44:14.950 --> 00:44:18.000

Vijay: community, society, culture, or the country or the

641

00:44:18.640 --> 00:44:19.690

Vijay: region,

642

00:44:19.690 --> 00:44:21.990

Vijay: which is an ancient civilization.

643

00:44:21.990 --> 00:44:22.570

I: Hmm.

644

00:44:22.570 --> 00:44:27.750

Vijay: There is a lot of cultural development over there.

I: Yes.

Vijay: in every part of it, right?

645

00:44:27.750 --> 00:44:31.709

Vijay: In the subcontinent of India. So we have something available.

646

00:44:32.290 --> 00:44:35.850

Vijay: Immediately, the attention turns to, let me connect to that.

647

00:44:35.850 --> 00:44:36.860

I: Hmm.

648

00:44:36.860 --> 00:44:43.200

Vijay: You know, that is what gives you the reason to take pride in your identity. It becomes the reason for that.

649

00:44:43.200 --> 00:44:43.700

I: Yes.

650

00:44:44.500 --> 00:44:55.680

Vijay: So, we all --- my boys took jazz classes for, in saxophone in the school and at home in tabla.

651

00:44:55.680 --> 00:45:00.820

I: Hmm. Yes.

Vijay: So it was tabla and jazz combined. That is how we did it [Laughs].

652

00:45:00.820 --> 00:45:02.180

I: Hmm..Hmm... it is wonderful.

653

00:45:02.180 --> 00:45:07.380

I: Yeah, so, you know, I mean you have touched upon this, you know, in all the stories have shared, but

654

00:45:08.090 --> 00:45:14.110

I: how do you think, you know, being in Silicon Valley that influenced your identity as a Desi?

655

00:45:15.110 --> 00:45:18.879

I: Silicon Valley's role. Like when you came, how different it was. Over the years the way

656

00:45:18.880 --> 00:45:22.119

I: it has transformed, and with so many Indians coming in,

657

00:45:22.640 --> 00:45:27.490

I: your network has increased. Like social, personal, and professional networks.

658

00:45:27.590 --> 00:45:30.909

I: So how do you think Silicon Valley influences your identity today?

659

00:45:32.030 --> 00:45:34.030

Vijay: I ... if I may take take a crack at it first?

660

00:45:35.270 --> 00:45:37.270

Vijay: That also goes to my identity. I

661

00:45:37.790 --> 00:45:39.790

Vijay: This is my personal experience.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: I ...

662

00:45:40.310 --> 00:45:46.149

Vijay: when I go and I was in tech industry, went everywhere in the world. I was at the front-end marketing

663

00:45:46.150 --> 00:45:48.150

Vijay: sales, so I was traveling all over the world.

664

00:45:49.040 --> 00:45:54.220

Vijay: The pride it gives you, that you're coming from the center of technology.

I: Hmm.

665

00:45:54.220 --> 00:45:57.740

Vijay: Oh, my god. Your head is high.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: Everytime.

666

00:45:58.280 --> 00:46:02.640

Vijay: And all over the world, you are identified with that, whether you want it or not.

I: Hmm.

667

00:46:02.800 --> 00:46:07.080

Vijay: So that right away gives you that difference, you know.

668

00:46:07.080 --> 00:46:13.120

Vijay: You know something. Little bit above ... everybody less or more..everybody is less or more.

669

00:46:15.040 --> 00:46:19.300

Vijay: Technology will make.

I: Technology..

Vijay: Yes. Even this morning, when I am talking on a technology

670

00:46:20.060 --> 00:46:24.880

Vijay: subject with a friend, and they're discussing that something the director of IIT

671

00:46:24.880 --> 00:46:27.400

Vijay: You know, IIT brand in India.

I: Yes. Yes, of course.

672

00:46:27.480 --> 00:46:33.540

Vijay: and the whole thing becomes very full of gravity and attention because they said that we were,

673

00:46:33.890 --> 00:46:36.520

Vijay: we are associated to the people in Silicon Valley.

674

00:46:36.520 --> 00:46:37.580

I: Hmm.

675

00:46:37.580 --> 00:46:41.919

Vijay: They know how much pride it brings.

I: Sure.

Vijay: So the identity, right?

676

00:46:43.130 --> 00:46:45.970

I: And that connected with the fact that you are of Indian origin.

677

00:46:46.609 --> 00:46:49.059

Vijay: Exactly.

I: How does that connect?

678

00:46:50.000 --> 00:46:53.080

Vijay: There-there is a

I: I mean, it's a, unlike

679

00:46:53.860 --> 00:46:58.860

I: people from India, you know, who have come at a similar time, but in different parts of the country, somebody in

680

00:46:58.860 --> 00:46:59.920

I : Minnesota, somebody in

681

00:46:59.920 --> 00:47:00.670

I: Alabama, right?

682

00:47:00.670 --> 00:47:04.750

I: I mean not to under, then downplay any other, any other region of the country,

683

00:47:04.750 --> 00:47:11.060

I: but their identities as Desis and your identity as Desi of Silicon Valley. They're very different.
So, how does that

684

00:47:11.060 --> 00:47:13.060

I: Silicon Valley influence you?

685

00:47:13.420 --> 00:47:16.860

Vijay: There's an anecdote that I used to tell you about. When I was traveling,

686

00:47:17.660 --> 00:47:20.800

Vijay: that's technology the store room where I landed in Sydney,

687

00:47:21.820 --> 00:47:24.600

Vijay: Sydney in Australia. It was an afternoon flight.

688

00:47:24.600 --> 00:47:26.520

Vijay: There is nobody at the airport for, anyway.

I: Hmm.

689

00:47:26.530 --> 00:47:33.909

Vijay: So like this, and I get a cab, and this is an Australian white guy, and he looks at me and he says,

690

00:47:34.610 --> 00:47:36.610

Vijay: "Indian?"

I: Hmm.

Vijay: And I said, yes, and

691

00:47:38.630 --> 00:47:42.069

Vijay: next ten minutes he is just talking what makes you Indians so

692

00:47:43.280 --> 00:47:47.300

Vijay: much superior in technology and mathematics and physics?

693

00:47:47.300 --> 00:47:49.300

Vijay: Isn't it, that's it.

694

00:47:50.760 --> 00:47:55.720

Vijay: We have, it's in. Laughs..so to you. You wanted to say.

695

00:47:56.420 --> 00:48:03.440

Vandana: I think there is something to be said for the branding of Silicon Valley. And

696

00:48:05.750 --> 00:48:09.100

V: in ... you grew up in India, so you know that.

697

00:48:09.100 --> 00:48:10.550

V: ---

698

00:48:10.550 --> 00:48:16.810

V: You know, you grew up at slightly different time, but when I was growing up if you were a smart

699

00:48:17.780 --> 00:48:19.840

V: person, smart student,

700

00:48:20.360 --> 00:48:21.680

V: you did.

701

00:48:21.680 --> 00:48:25.690

V: You became an engineer or a doctor.

I: Hmm.

V: You definitely studied science,

I: Laughs.

702

00:48:26.210 --> 00:48:28.210

V: you know? So

703

00:48:29.000 --> 00:48:31.449

V: that was my dad, too. I was

704

00:48:32.900 --> 00:48:34.900

V: considered a smart kid, and

705

00:48:35.150 --> 00:48:38.860

V: I always loved language and literature.

706

00:48:38.860 --> 00:48:44.559

V: My mother is actually a professor of Hindi.

I: Hmm.

V: And I wanted to do something different,

707

00:48:45.320 --> 00:48:47.060

V: but I

708

00:48:47.060 --> 00:48:51.249

V: don't think, I didn't really have that option.

I: Hmm.

V: You know, because I was a smart kid.

I: Hmm.

709

00:48:51.250 --> 00:48:55.360

V: So I had to study science. So I actually have a degree in chemistry.

710

00:48:55.360 --> 00:48:56.390

I: Okay.

Vijay: Laughs.

711

00:48:56.390 --> 00:48:58.390

V: And ...

712

00:48:59.450 --> 00:49:02.140

V: and I know that many people like me,

713

00:49:03.320 --> 00:49:09.370

V: who went into doing science and engineering, and, you know, became doctors.

714

00:49:09.890 --> 00:49:12.369

V: Not because that's what they were driven towards.

715

00:49:12.920 --> 00:49:14.630

V: Though that's where the

716

00:49:14.630 --> 00:49:16.899

V: opportunity was

I: Yes

V: in those days.

717

00:49:18.020 --> 00:49:20.199

V: Things are really changed. I think you know that

718

00:49:20.720 --> 00:49:26.120

V: opportunities have opened up in every aspect. Kids who are growing up in India today are not, don't have the same

719

00:49:26.120 --> 00:49:27.820

V: choices that I had.

I: Hmm.

720

00:49:27.820 --> 00:49:29.820

V: But certainly for

721

00:49:30.440 --> 00:49:35.409

V: many, many years that was the norm.

I: Hmm.

V: You know, if people

722

00:49:36.680 --> 00:49:41.180

V: were considered smart. They actually became engineers. They were the ones who went into

723

00:49:41.180 --> 00:49:42.430

V: administrative services.

724

00:49:42.430 --> 00:49:46.800

V: They were the ones who went on to a higher, you know,

725

00:49:47.930 --> 00:49:49.930

V: government officers also.

726

00:49:49.970 --> 00:49:55.480

V: Not politicians, not elections, but, you know, in the other administrative side. As a result,

727

00:49:55.480 --> 00:50:00.280

V: I mean, India has so many engineers that they sent to the

728

00:50:00.829 --> 00:50:03.759

V: United States, and these engineers have their

729

00:50:04.339 --> 00:50:08.049

V: own way of thinking.

I: Hmm.

V: You know, it's the nerdiness continues.

730

00:50:08.049 --> 00:50:08.980

Vijay: Laugh.

731

00:50:08.980 --> 00:50:10.760

V: Which is the ...

732

00:50:10.760 --> 00:50:16.089

V: the approach, you know. There's a certain approach that you find in people with an engineering background.

733

00:50:16.670 --> 00:50:23.560

V: Their approach, it's-its methodical.

I: Yes.

V: And it's also, and in some ways, then it's also a recipe for success

734

00:50:24.140 --> 00:50:29.560

V: because you create a plan and then you create a path to reach that plan,

735

00:50:30.230 --> 00:50:34.540

V: to achieve that goal. And that application

736

00:50:35.180 --> 00:50:42.200

V: was also happening in the cultural space. A lot of these engineers, a lot of people that were writing for us or

737

00:50:42.200 --> 00:50:43.000

V: that were teaching

738

00:50:43.000 --> 00:50:49.540

V: music. They had a day job; they were engineers.

I: Yes. Yes

V: And by evening they were tabla players.

I: Hmm.

739

00:50:49.760 --> 00:50:51.760

V: Or they were, you know, playing

740

00:50:52.220 --> 00:50:56.740

V: Veena, or they were playing other things or acting.

741

00:50:57.829 --> 00:51:03.699

V: Other things. But it was those ... it was the engineering job

742

00:51:04.550 --> 00:51:08.469

V: and the engineering mindset that actually allowed them the

743

00:51:09.380 --> 00:51:11.440

V: freedom to do all these other things.

744

00:51:11.440 --> 00:51:12.560

I: Hmm.

745

00:51:12.560 --> 00:51:19.959

V: And I think a new generation of people don't have those constraints, you know. There are people that I know- I know people

746

00:51:20.599 --> 00:51:26.529

V: here, whose children are now pursuing music full-time as a career.

I: Hmm.

V: Or acting or

747

00:51:26.960 --> 00:51:29.080

V: theatre designing or, you know, like the ...

748

00:51:29.700 --> 00:51:35.980

V: They're not going just towards engineering, not trying to become engineers or doctors.

I: Hmm.

749

00:51:36.120 --> 00:51:44.680

V: Although their parents would naturally strive to say this. This is what gave me a life of success,

750

00:51:44.680 --> 00:51:46.100

V: this is what you need to do.

751

00:51:46.100 --> 00:51:47.339

V: I

752

00:51:47.339 --> 00:51:51.798

V: have friends whose children say to their parents, like, well,

753

00:51:52.200 --> 00:51:58.700

V: you have achieved this success so that I can try and pursue my passion.

I: Hmm.

V: I have the

754

00:51:59.600 --> 00:52:02.200

V: luxury of pursuing

I: Hmm.

V: my passion.

755

00:52:02.360 --> 00:52:06.680

V: But I understand parents' concerns. Everyone wants their children to stand on their own feet.

756

00:52:07.170 --> 00:52:13.369

V: People may have all come. And I ... and I'm sure you've done, come across many people who say, "I came to this country with,

757

00:52:13.619 --> 00:52:18.229

V: you know, one suitcase."

I: Hmm.

V: And I remind my children of that all the time.

758

00:52:18.230 --> 00:52:22.849

V: I said, "Your dad came to this country with one suitcase.

I: Hmm.

V: And today we have all of this.

759

00:52:22.890 --> 00:52:26.869

V: It's because of his education, hard work, diligence,

I: Hmm.

V: that

760

00:52:28.020 --> 00:52:32.020

V: we have been able to achieve this."

761

00:52:33.440 --> 00:52:35.180

Vijay: The... If I can add to that, the ...

762

00:52:35.180 --> 00:52:41.660

Vijay: the identity, our identity, got associated with technology because we came from Silicon Valley.

763

00:52:41.660 --> 00:52:44.329

Vijay: You know, that-that is very ...

764

00:52:45.210 --> 00:52:47.960

Vijay: not only from our point of view that we came from here,

765

00:52:47.999 --> 00:52:54.109

Vijay: but that happened because of the importance that other person attaches to the technology.

I: Hmm.

766

00:52:54.299 --> 00:52:57.109

Vijay: You understand that-that demand side, I would say. Because

767

00:52:57.960 --> 00:53:05.509

Vijay: I said ... and I can make this point from personal experience also, by giving with that ... by giving you the example of another

768

00:53:05.730 --> 00:53:06.930

Vijay: industry.

769

00:53:06.930 --> 00:53:12.649

Vijay: You know, when once I had gone on my business to Israel, I landed at Tel Aviv,

770

00:53:12.800 --> 00:53:17.980

Vijay: and this is the very long time back, and I

771

00:53:18.920 --> 00:53:22.780

Vijay: am at immigration counter and this girl, who is may be in her 20s,

I: Hmm.

772

00:53:22.940 --> 00:53:24.720

Vijay: okay? She looks up at me.

773

00:53:24.739 --> 00:53:29.059

Vijay: I am coming from America, but she looks up at me, and didn't identify me

774

00:53:29.059 --> 00:53:31.969

first of all as an Indian.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: While I have an American passport.

775

00:53:32.640 --> 00:53:42.240

Vijay: Second thing she says astounds me. She said, "Oh, you look like Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor used to be an icon in

776

00:53:42.340 --> 00:53:45.120

Vijay: Bollywood, and I look like him because of moustache.

777

00:53:45.180 --> 00:53:49.140

Vijay: And by the way, he was dead six years, seven years, ten years before.

I: Laugh.

Vijay: I mean,

778

00:53:50.520 --> 00:53:56.040

Vijay: the amazing thing was that she was doing this. And the moment I walk out of there, again the taxi driver,

779

00:53:57.020 --> 00:54:01.900

Vijay: he says "Indian" and then he sings me a song "Mera Joota Hai Japani".

I: Okay. Laughs.

780

00:54:02.160 --> 00:54:09.520

Vijay: So then, there the entertainment industry was, kind of in their minds in one, but we got associated with it.

781

00:54:09.520 --> 00:54:15.060

I: Yes. Yes.

V: That's the soft power of India.

I: True-true.

782

00:54:15.300 --> 00:54:21.520

I: So, you know having had this great conversation, how do you see, you know, the future of

783

00:54:22.170 --> 00:54:28.039

I: the Desis in Silicon Valley or Silicon Valley's future with respect to Desis?

784

00:54:29.130 --> 00:54:34.400

V: I think Desis are going to continue to play a very important role in the Silicon Valley.

785

00:54:36.240 --> 00:54:40.519

V: We have now raised a generation of overachievers.

786

00:54:40.520 --> 00:54:44.840

I: Laughs.

V: A lot of people in the

787

00:54:44.960 --> 00:54:51.880

V: technology space. I mean, you know, I also want to say that in some ways, this is a skewed

788

00:54:51.880 --> 00:54:53.880

V: demo-demo

789

00:54:54.690 --> 00:54:55.859

V: demographic.

I: Hmm.

790

00:54:55.860 --> 00:55:02.660

V: Because not everybody from India was allowed to come to Silicon Valley, right?

I: Sure.

V: There's self-selection.

791

00:55:02.660 --> 00:55:07.100

I: Hmm. Yes.

V: As people with a certain skill set,

792

00:55:07.349 --> 00:55:13.969

V: were able and had the ability to come. India is not across the border, right? We have crossed the seven

793

00:55:14.400 --> 00:55:17.629

V: seas. Nobody is just jumping borders and coming into this country.

794

00:55:18.089 --> 00:55:24.379

V: They're coming because they have a skill set that this country and the businesses in this country demands.

795

00:55:25.760 --> 00:55:34.520

V: So these are people who have inherently, who have arrived here and, specifically talking about Silicon Valley,

796

00:55:34.580 --> 00:55:40.480

V: with a certain ability, skill set, knowledge, education,

I: Hmm.

V: language.

I: Hmm..

797

00:55:42.620 --> 00:55:48.820

V: The families that they are raising here, they are coming with this additional privilege.

I: Yes

798

00:55:49.340 --> 00:55:52.240

V: It's not like everybody. I have friends who say "Oh my god,

799

00:55:52.240 --> 00:55:55.839

V: India is a country of people all-all of like this." I said, "No

800

00:55:55.840 --> 00:55:59.680

V: no, India is not a country full of people like this is."

801

00:56:00.470 --> 00:56:03.609

V: Silicon Valley is like the crÃ"me de la crÃ"me of

802

00:56:04.160 --> 00:56:08.500

V: India that's arrived here because they've had the privilege to come here.

I: Yes

803

00:56:09.020 --> 00:56:11.859

V: And now with family immigration, people are

804

00:56:12.140 --> 00:56:17.890

V: able to bring their families no matter their skill sets into this country, and over time,

805

00:56:17.890 --> 00:56:21.760

V: we're going to see a more diverse community. But at the moment, it's very

806

00:56:22.120 --> 00:56:25.060

V: technology driven.

I: Hmm.

V: And

807

00:56:25.550 --> 00:56:26.600

V: I

808

00:56:26.600 --> 00:56:32.260

V: tell my children, I said, "You have genes, man."

I: Laugh

V: You know, you know with privilege it comes with,

809

00:56:32.260 --> 00:56:37.539

V: you know, genes. You come with a background where your parents have the ability to support you in

810

00:56:38.270 --> 00:56:40.270

V: enrichment, education.

811

00:56:40.580 --> 00:56:42.580

V: You come from a family that

812

00:56:42.740 --> 00:56:45.609

V: understands the value of education and the

813

00:56:46.160 --> 00:56:50.889

V: opportunities that it opens up. So I, you know, education is a great

814

00:56:53.570 --> 00:56:58.299

V: opener of the worlds to so many opportunities and I think

815

00:57:00.470 --> 00:57:02.180

V: immigrants

816

00:57:02.180 --> 00:57:08.740

V: from other, you know, from all over the globe and certainly from India are going to continue, to continue to be here and

817

00:57:09.260 --> 00:57:11.530

V: Indians are going to play a big role in

818

00:57:12.410 --> 00:57:14.410

V: the legacy of the

819

00:57:15.110 --> 00:57:16.130

V: Silicon Valley.

I: Hmm..

820

00:57:16.130 --> 00:57:21.220

V: And what the new version is going to be, what they doing wrong with our is going to be, because that's also

821

00:57:21.220 --> 00:57:23.980

changing, right?

I: Yes.

V: From the

822

00:57:23.990 --> 00:57:27.789

V: the name Silicon Valley came from the silicon chips.

I: Yeah

823

00:57:27.790 --> 00:57:32.380

V: And today it's more, you know, the AI and the ... the social media

824

00:57:32.960 --> 00:57:34.190

V: that is

825

00:57:34.190 --> 00:57:35.600

V: connected and

826

00:57:35.600 --> 00:57:38.920

V: connected the globe, and these are used by

827

00:57:39.740 --> 00:57:41.530

V: individuals. You know, a Cisco chip

828

00:57:41.530 --> 00:57:47.869

V: may have been inside a computer.

I: Hmm.

V: But people didn't know Cisco, but people know Facebook

829

00:57:47.869 --> 00:57:54.588

V: and they know Google and they know Apple. The applications that are on every person's phone.

830

00:57:55.290 --> 00:57:56.430

V: And

831

00:57:56.430 --> 00:57:59.359

V: so I think the-the charm, the,

832

00:58:00.720 --> 00:58:02.929

V: not novelty, I want to say,

833

00:58:05.339 --> 00:58:11.509

V: the cachet of Silicon Valley is going for me, but I think it's also going to be, it's going to move us.

834

00:58:12.030 --> 00:58:15.560

V: Because the pace at which technology is moving,

835

00:58:17.099 --> 00:58:24.139

V: we're going to see big changes.

I: Hmm.

V: You know, in an average person's day-to-day life. It's when you affect

836

00:58:24.680 --> 00:58:27.980

V: that -

I: Hmm.

V: that you become a household name.

I: Yes. I

837

00:58:29.000 --> 00:58:33.480

I: Just like "India Currents" has become.

V: Laugh. Just like "India Currents" became. In our own small way,

838

00:58:34.260 --> 00:58:36.260

V: I think, I

839

00:58:36.750 --> 00:58:44.540

V: think we-we did play a role. I do recognize that-that "India Currents" did play a role in building this community. And

840

00:58:45.119 --> 00:58:49.999

V: even today, I get a call from somebody at NPR who's looking to do, you know, an

841

00:58:50.550 --> 00:58:52.550

V: afternoon special with

842

00:58:52.650 --> 00:58:56.359

V: parents who are empty nesters and they want to connect with an Indian family.

843

00:58:56.359 --> 00:58:58.020

V: And I have this phone call.

844

00:58:58.020 --> 00:59:00.229

V: So, why do you want me? It's like,

845

00:59:00.229 --> 00:59:05.700

V: well, I grew up with "India Currents." You know, that was our go-to source

846

00:59:05.700 --> 00:59:14.460

V: to find any resources, and now I'm working at NPR and I'm still coming to "India Currents."
So, that was a lovely talk

847

00:59:14.500 --> 00:59:19.820

I : and we are talking about legacy right?

Vijay: So what you asked about going forward

848

00:59:19.880 --> 00:59:21.880

Vijay: and this, how will this go?

849

00:59:22.349 --> 00:59:28.759

Vijay: Let me start with the small. First of all, there is a difference. We are actually standing at a watershed moment.

850

00:59:28.760 --> 00:59:35.810

Vijay: I mean, this is, this was different before and now it's going to be different, certainly analogous like what the difference would be.

851

00:59:36.030 --> 00:59:37.650

Vijay: But going with

852

00:59:37.650 --> 00:59:39.650

Vijay: another anecdote,

853

00:59:39.720 --> 00:59:46.159

Vijay: you might be familiar with the name Suhas Patil. He is one of the - the second

854

00:59:47.040 --> 00:59:49.790

Vijay: billionaire of the Silicon Valley in 80's.

I: Oh.

855

00:59:50.960 --> 00:59:52.190

Vijay: So

856

00:59:52.190 --> 00:59:55.240

Vijay: there he is among the first five

857

00:59:56.540 --> 01:00:04.029

Vijay: successful entrepreneurs from India, technologists from India.

I: Okay.

Vijay: He was asked once, quite some time back --

858

01:00:05.390 --> 01:00:06.980

Vijay: his company --

859

01:00:06.980 --> 01:00:11.230

Vijay: Somebody asked him why there are so many Indians in it?

I: Hmm.

860

01:00:11.960 --> 01:00:15.939

Vijay: Okay. Yeah, so he answered, they were making silicon chips.

I: Hmm.

861

01:00:16.130 --> 01:00:22.240

Vijay: So he said that silicon chips is also known as integrated circuits. right?

I: Hmm.

Vijay: IC,

862

01:00:22.240 --> 01:00:27.760

Vijay: IC, he said, "This is IC. It's just Indian and Chinese. That's it."

I: Laughs.

Vijay: Laughs.

863

01:00:27.760 --> 01:00:33.600

Vijay: Because they are the ones who bring the skill there. So that was at that time,

I: Hmm.

Vijay: that skill

864

01:00:33.640 --> 01:00:38.700

Vijay: was the thing that went in there.

I: Yes.

Vijay: but there were a lot of barriers to come here.

865

01:00:38.740 --> 01:00:43.220

Vijay: When I came here, my god, they won't let you come in. Immigration people

866

01:00:44.030 --> 01:00:49.389

Vijay: were very hard to get through the visa, the student visa itself, and they all came through the visitor visa.

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01:00:49.389 --> 01:00:52.200

Vijay: Suhas Patil also came through visitor visa and went to MIT.

I: Hmm.Hmm.

868

01:00:52.400 --> 01:00:55.620

Vijay: Okay, so these are all the barriers at the time because

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01:00:56.450 --> 01:01:01.990

Vijay: we were at the higher level. And by the way, again, "Indians Currents" has, to digress a little bit, we have

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01:01:02.860 --> 01:01:06.720

Vijay: documented that history, how the immigration has moved.

I: Hmm.

871

01:01:06.920 --> 01:01:13.080

Vijay: There was time in 40s when immigration was not allowed from India because Britishers didn't want it.

872

01:01:13.140 --> 01:01:17.180

Vijay: We were the colonies, and they were afraid some of them will come here and raise the independence thing

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01:01:17.180 --> 01:01:20.840

Vijay: over here.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: So we were totally blocked. It is in the 60's that we

874

01:01:20.840 --> 01:01:27.120

Vijay: started releasing that.

V: After the Civil Rights Act was passed was really when the immigration

875

01:01:27.120 --> 01:01:29.580

V: from India was restructured.

Vijay: So, India's

876

01:01:29.620 --> 01:01:32.460

Vijay: connection with Silicon Valley happened with a lot of

877

01:01:32.500 --> 01:01:34.500

Vijay: difficult, structural difficulties.

I: Hmm.Hmm.

878

01:01:34.660 --> 01:01:40.600

Vijay: Still it overcame that. Why? Because they're two things: skill was there and demand was there.

I: Hmm.

879

01:01:40.600 --> 01:01:44.500

Vijay: So it did overcome. Going forward, this -

880

01:01:44.510 --> 01:01:46.959

Vijay: this barrier is vanishing.

881

01:01:47.750 --> 01:01:52.689

Vijay: Regardless of what you hear about H-1B visa and all. That is just a transition of the

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01:01:53.140 --> 01:01:55.820

Vijay: mechanics, not the structure.

I: Hmm.

883

01:01:55.820 --> 01:01:59.400

Vijay: Because today the world is so connected that there can be a collaboration

884

01:01:59.740 --> 01:02:02.420

Vijay: without person coming in, working all his life over here.

885

01:02:02.420 --> 01:02:06.160

I: Yes, Yes.

Vijay: That is a kind of, what you call it, a little -

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01:02:06.760 --> 01:02:09.680

Vijay: little thing, you know, a little obstacle that is not the worry.

887

01:02:10.700 --> 01:02:15.550

Vijay: Politically, India and America have aligned so much now in the world stage,

888

01:02:16.220 --> 01:02:21.790

Vijay: that these two democracies have got the center of gravity now. Because 1.3 billion

889

01:02:23.180 --> 01:02:29.349

Vijay: people from the open society has joined this 300 million from the open society at that level.

I: Hmm.

890

01:02:29.349 --> 01:02:35.060

Vijay: So the barriers are truly going away in the collaboration. I don't say barriers are going away in travel.

891

01:02:35.260 --> 01:02:41.380

I: Hmm.

Vijay: But barriers are going away in collaboration, the technology and the politics has brought together. What does it do?

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01:02:41.400 --> 01:02:47.480

Vijay: It does exactly to us that now this Silicon Valley thing, technology thing, if you go under the bottom, Silicon

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01:02:47.480 --> 01:02:51.680

Vijay: Valley, it is technology, of course.

I: Yes.

Vijay: So this technology base is expanding.

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01:02:51.680 --> 01:02:54.160

I: Hmm.

Vijay: The collaboration is expanding.

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01:02:54.400 --> 01:02:59.340

Vijay: So, India is playing a very big role in America in technological development as

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01:02:59.420 --> 01:03:02.880

Vijay: well as globally.

I: Hmm. Okay.

897

01:03:02.880 --> 01:03:08.280

Vijay: Because where America could not have the influence, India does

I: Hmm.

Vijay: because of its soft power.

898

01:03:08.280 --> 01:03:14.600

Vijay: So there is a lot of confluence taking place at this time. Lot of real and defined watershed moment.

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01:03:14.780 --> 01:03:17.560

I: Yes. That's ...

Vijay: That's-that's the difference.

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01:03:18.140 --> 01:03:19.160

I: And

901

01:03:19.160 --> 01:03:20.410

I: before we conclude,

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01:03:20.410 --> 01:03:26.770

I: I'll just say one thing, and we have talked about it, too, that we see a lot of Bollywood being represented as

903

01:03:27.020 --> 01:03:31.329

I: if that was the only export from India, but I must say that "India Currents",

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01:03:31.400 --> 01:03:35.049

I: thankfully, I think it captures the intellect of the Indian community here.

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01:03:35.049 --> 01:03:37.740

V: Thank you, thank you.

I: It is-it is very important I think.

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01:03:37.740 --> 01:03:41.020

V: It's so lovely to hear that.

I: Yeah, very important.

907

01:03:41.320 --> 01:03:43.320

V: Yeah, we stay-stayed away from Bollywood.

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01:03:45.380 --> 01:03:47.960

V: It has plenty of presence.

I: Yes. Right.

909

01:03:47.960 --> 01:03:54.180

V: Yeah, and I think I mentioned to you the responsibility that we bear as

910

01:03:54.880 --> 01:03:56.700

V: ambassadors for our culture.

I: Yes.

911

01:03:56.700 --> 01:04:01.400

V: I cannot stress enough the importance of that.

I: Yes.

V: And so we've always

912

01:04:01.580 --> 01:04:02.630

V: elevated

913

01:04:02.630 --> 01:04:04.630

V: the culture, the arts,

I: Yes

V: and the heritage of India.

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01:04:04.970 --> 01:04:08.530

I: That's very important and especially as a community plan.

V: As a, as a community.

I: Because

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01:04:09.100 --> 01:04:13.289

I: academically, there is a lot of good research from Indians, by Indians.

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01:04:13.330 --> 01:04:17.279

I: But as a community platform, this is very ...

V: And I think, you know,

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01:04:17.350 --> 01:04:21.749

V: the really proof is in the pudding. Simply look at the number of

918

01:04:22.420 --> 01:04:24.450

V: students who are taking these classical

I: Hmm.

919

01:04:25.180 --> 01:04:31.619

V: dance forms of music, dance even in the summer season, and you, I don't know if you are aware

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01:04:31.619 --> 01:04:33.619

V: but the summer is the time when all the

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01:04:34.900 --> 01:04:37.170

V: 'arangetrams' happen. Now, the -

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01:04:37.900 --> 01:04:39.900

V: the graduations

923

01:04:40.390 --> 01:04:44.730

V: from all these schools; students who are leaving, finishing high school going on to college.

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01:04:44.730 --> 01:04:50.540

V: They achieve a certain level before they head off to the college.

I: Hmm.

V: And now so many colleges have their

925

01:04:50.540 --> 01:04:56.660

Indian dance team.

I: Yeah.

V: Yeah, all of this some of that continues. [Unclear] plays a big role.

I: Yes

V: And

926

01:04:59.020 --> 01:05:03.119

V: makes it more popular.

I: Hmm.

V: But culture is constantly evolving

927

01:05:04.330 --> 01:05:07.409

V: and I think it's hard to pin down.

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01:05:07.840 --> 01:05:13.540

V: Even classical, and this is a conversation that's happening among the classical dancers. Even in South

929

01:05:13.540 --> 01:05:19.040

V: India is like, what is truly classical? Can you do Bharatanatyam only a certain way?

I: Hmm.

V: Can you move

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01:05:19.040 --> 01:05:23.660

V: out from that? So this is, but culture is constantly evolving.

I: Yes

V: And

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01:05:24.490 --> 01:05:32.100

V: our magazine was, it has remained a community platform and our content is constantly evolving because

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01:05:32.830 --> 01:05:34.740

V: our community is constantly evolving.

I: Yes.

933

01:05:34.740 --> 01:05:42.209

V: And to be truly reflective of being a community platform we morph and change. And that's why today we are a

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01:05:42.820 --> 01:05:44.080

V: digital platform.

I: Hmm.

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01:05:44.080 --> 01:05:47.200

V: One that's connecting, certainly the Desis

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01:05:47.280 --> 01:05:49.280

V: in the Silicon Valley.

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01:05:56.760 --> 01:06:02.400

Vijay: There's a very good example of that, thinking of the Valley and expanding to whole California. You had two editions:

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01:06:02.400 --> 01:06:03.960

Vijay: Northern California and Southern California.

I: Hmm.

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01:06:03.960 --> 01:06:09.540

Vijay: We had two editions, right?

I: Yes.

Vijay: And then when we went digital, it expanded to

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01:06:10.180 --> 01:06:16.960

Vijay: America, and you used to say, what was the slogan before?

V: We used to call ourselves the complete Indian American

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01:06:16.960 --> 01:06:20.440

V: magazine.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: But today we got a different, we have changed the slogan

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01:06:21.140 --> 01:06:22.490

V: then.

943

01:06:22.490 --> 01:06:27.909

V: Yeah, our tag line today is "Home of the Global Indian."

I: Yes.

Vijay: Why? Because our -

944

01:06:28.700 --> 01:06:35.649

Vijay: if you look at the leadership in the digital it is very easy to measure the reader-readership.

So our

945

01:06:35.990 --> 01:06:40.270

Vijay: highest readership is of course in Silicon Valley, in San Francisco, and the Bay

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01:06:41.119 --> 01:06:42.650

Vijay: Area.

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01:06:42.650 --> 01:06:46.450

Vijay: Second-largest is by the way not in LA.

I: Hmm.

Vijay: It is in New York, United States. Okay.

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01:06:50.450 --> 01:06:52.750

Vijay: Then third would you assume that it is LA? No, it is not. Paris is the third.

V: Paris, France.

949

01:06:57.890 --> 01:07:04.900

Vijay: Can you believe that? Probably Indians over there are more starved of their culture. Because French are generally known to be chauvanistic about their culture.

950

01:07:10.900 --> 01:07:15.660

Vijay: So they look to India Currents. That is my, unsupported totally

I: Laugh

Vijay: Theory. No validation, nothing.

951

01:07:15.660 --> 01:07:17.660

Vijay: Laughs. That is why. Yeah. That is why we have become a global platform. And so our tagline changed because of that.

952

01:07:22.540 --> 01:07:27.240

V: I think we had to change it to reflect what we were seeing.

I: Yes

V: on that

953

01:07:30.200 --> 01:07:33.040

Vijay: Right,

V: yeah, and I think we are

954

01:07:33.140 --> 01:07:36.320

V: We are at a point, like he described in a watershed moment.

955

01:07:36.830 --> 01:07:38.660

V: We are at that point of

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01:07:38.660 --> 01:07:40.190

V: rediscovering and

957

01:07:40.190 --> 01:07:41.480

V: reinventing ourselves

Vijay: Yes.

958

01:07:41.480 --> 01:07:48.040

V: as a fully digital magazine.

I: Hmm.

V: And one that addresses the needs of the diaspora and

959

01:07:48.380 --> 01:07:52.180

V: the more you talk to immigrants, no matter where in the world they are from,

960

01:07:52.430 --> 01:07:58.419

V: you find that the concerns are all the same.

I: Hmm.

V: They all crave the sounds of home.

961

01:07:58.550 --> 01:08:00.639

V: They all crave the tastes of home.

I: Hmm.

962

01:08:01.130 --> 01:08:07.630

V: They crave, you know, finding other people like them, so they can make the dish that they grew up with

963

01:08:08.140 --> 01:08:09.920

V: in their homes.

I: Hmm.

964

01:08:09.920 --> 01:08:13.220

V: And it doesn't matter where in the world they come from, Mantra.

I: Hmm.

965

01:08:13.460 --> 01:08:15.240

V: You know, that desire is the same.

966

01:08:15.250 --> 01:08:15.640

I: Yes.

967

01:08:15.640 --> 01:08:18.100

V: And that's what unites us.

I: Hmm.

968

01:08:18.100 --> 01:08:23.340

V: And there is power in discovering that we have so many things in common.

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01:08:23.360 --> 01:08:25.640

I: Hmm.

V: And I think "India Currents" has played a

970

01:08:26.359 --> 01:08:31.939

V: wonderful role in bridging,

I: Hmm.

V: building these bridges across communities.

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01:08:32.520 --> 01:08:35.449

I: Thank you very much for your time.

V: Thank you for

972

01:08:36.750 --> 01:08:41.899

V: giving me the opportunity to share the "India Currents" story with you.