



The future Disney of India

- ChuChu TV



grew to 200 employees. They ran this for several years successfully and finally had to wind this down in 2010 when IT market was hit by recession.

It is the experience gained in running Buddies Infotech that fuelled Vinoth's confidence to kick start the ChuChu TV channel.

HOW CHUCHU TV EVOLVED

Around the same time when Buddies Infotech was going through the rough tides, the Buddies team started working on making music videos and uploading on the YouTube. Vinoth also was enjoying playing with his 4 year old daughter Harshita who

to make a nursery rhyme video with ChuChu as the central character. He created a video of the Chubby Cheeks nursery rhyme which was all done ingeniously at his uncle's home with his cousins giving the voice over and singing. He uploaded the video in YouTube and within two weeks, it had 2 lakh views! This video got the official tag from YouTube. He created one more video, "Twinkle twinkle little star" and it got even more views and with just the two videos they had more than 5000 subscribers!

YouTube called and appreciated him for the great job and wanted him to do more. With his background in animation projects, music in his DNA and the need to do



As you enter the swanky office in the heart of Chennai, you can see rows of people working on their computers with huge sparkling screens displaying a lot of colourful animations. At the entrance, there are big cut-outs of four cute little characters, who are very popular with the toddlers across the world - ChuChu, ChaCha, Chiku and Chika. This is the story of the most viewed YouTube Kids Edutainment channel, the ChuChu TV. It was founded by the young, energetic and chirpy Mr. Vinoth Chandar.

THE EARLY DAYS: BuddiesInfotech.com

Vinoth completed his BCA from Madras University and always had a passion to do some business in the IT industry. After graduation, he along with his four friends of many years, set up a small 100 sq.ft. DTP centre which included CD writing, scanning, animation projects etc. They aptly called it Buddies Infotech. This later evolved into an IT services company. They executed a lot of projects for US clients and got 5 star ratings consecutively for most of the projects. They moved to a bigger space and steadily

is fondly called as Chu Chu. The idea of making a video to entertain her was always playing on his mind. In 2011, he was inspired by the video "Charlie bit my finger" which went viral and decided

something to entertain his daughter, Vinoth started another venture. Topped with his own confidence and creativity and the unflinching support of his Buddies team, there was no doubt that this venture would hit the roof!

In 2013, Vinoth Chandar along with his partners B.N. Krishnan, Ajith Togo, Suresh Bhoopathy and Subbramanian formed ChuChu TV Studios LLP and there has been no looking back since then.

CHUCHU TV GOES UP THE HILL

Making videos to entertain toddlers and sustain their attention and bring them back to viewing again needs a lot of creativity and can be quite mind racking. Vinoth pulled in his partner Krishnan who is poetic and creative to support him as the Creative Director for ChuChu TV.

Very quickly they realized that they had to do something different to catch the attention of their very young worldwide audience. As they were musing, they realized that most of the nursery rhymes had an unhappy or dark ending. As Krishnan explains, "Most of the old popular nursery rhymes are actually satires of real life situations or historical happenings. These are not the apt content for the tender brains of the tiny-tots." So they decided to change or twist the ending of the nursery rhymes to give a more positive feel and also leave the kids with a message or teach a value. A typical example would be the popular Jack and Jill Ver 2.0 that they created which speaks volumes of what they are trying to do. Here is what Krishnan added to the rhyme as the second paragraph.

"Where there is a will there is a way
You got to walk all the way
Try and try with your head high
You will succeed faster"

This two minute video floored the audience globally and took the Brand ChuChu to the next level. The viewership and subscribers sky rocketed. The young parents found these videos very appealing to kids and educative and supported them with feedback and comments. Peppy music, great animation, pleasing colours and a positive message! What more can one

ask to satisfy an infant's mind! This became ChuChu TV's USP. They got appreciation from NDTV at this juncture and ChuChu TV rose to the top position of viewership in YouTube.

SENSITIVITY OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM

ChuChu TV is very sensitive to the requirements of the global viewers and have improvised the rhymes to appeal to the audience in various countries. They had to neutralise and add new characters so the rhymes don't appear racist. Like adding a 'Brown sheep' also in the Baa Baa black sheep rhyme, replacing the "very fair" with "Flows in the air" in Chubby Cheeks rhyme, adding two dark skinned kids 'Chiku' and 'Chika' to the Chu Chu family, etc.

Interestingly, one of their videos, "Johnny Johnny Yes Pappa" Ver 2.0 became a hit with a whopping 1.6 bn views within a week! All their videos have a neutralised voice, accent and generic slang to appeal both to the Asian and western viewers.

"INNOVATION" – THE SUCCESS MANTRA

They did not stop with just tweaking the old nursery rhymes. They have released a lot of their own original videos on teaching the kids numbers, colours, five senses, months, weeks, and days of the week. YouTube is already filled with a lot of videos for kids in the edutainment sector and hence they had to think of innovative ways to make their videos stand out and make an impact. They researched what was available and found a lot more content and colour could be added to the videos. This became their mantra to compete in this market segment. They personalised the themes, made it more educative, colourful and easy to remember.

As Vinoth puts it – "Whatever is made different, gives success"

NOT A BED OF ROSES ALWAYS:

Just like any other start-up, team ChuChu TV also have challenges that they are wading through to take this venture to the next level. There is huge competition out there. Hence speed, innovation, embracing new technology, data analytics and connectivity to the western world are all very critical for their continued success. The team is addressing all these points and are very confident of winning through. His message to other young entrepreneurs are two main things - Being patient to wait for the efforts to yield fruit and to take up something where you have the domain expertise and can lead from the top.

CHUCHU TV TODAY:

ChuChu TV has created a global impact in the last 6 years and has made a paradigm shift in the way children across various countries are learning and getting groomed in their very early years. From just creating and posting ChuChu TV videos on YouTube, they have diversified multi-fold now. They have signed up with international video on demand service providers like Amazon Prime, Roko, Netflix and Apple TV. ChuChu TV has introduced various channels to cater to different age groups/user segments – Chuchu TV Surprise (Stories), ChuChu TV Lite (Streaming videos), ChuChu TV Pro (Downloadable formats). They have now expanded from English to other foreign languages like Spanish, French, Brazilian, Portugese and have a few million subscribers in each country. It is a stupendous effort to be delivering all this with their 200 employees sitting in Chennai. They are also in the process of enhancing their content beyond rhymes to activities, games, learning tips etc. They are going into merchandising with ChuChu TV toys, apparels, books and already signed up with super markets like Walmart, Target and the like.

Their aim is to create a whole kid's eco system like a "ChuChu World" which will have a theme park, ChuChu series,

short movies, ChuChu fun zone and more categories to cover more age groups.

ChuChu TV has won YouTube viewership Awards in every single Channel that they have launched. ChuChu TV channels have more than 38 Mn subscribers right now and has crossed 24 bn views. They have won the Platinum Award from YouTube for their flagship channel. They were the 5th in Asia



to cross 10 mn subscribers mark. They are in the Top 10 of the most subscribed channels in YouTube across the world. They crossed 10 mn subscribers with just 120 videos on the channel which speaks volumes about their content. Kudos to this very unassuming, down to earth and energetic team who have been able to make a huge impact in the international market sitting right here in Chennai. The opportunities are huge here and our best wishes for ChuChu TV to evolve as the Disney of India in the near future!

Hema Rao