Lofty valuations push founders to try harder: Angel investor Asha Jadeja Motwani

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Shweta Sharma (HTTPS://TECHCIRCLE.VCCIRCLE.COM/AUTHOR/SHWETA-SHARMA) | 9 JANUARY, 2019

Asha Jadeja Motwani's stated aim is to disrupt the status quo with technology-driven innovations. Based in Silicon Valley, Motwani made a name for herself as a venture capitalist. Over the past two decades, she has bet on more than 100 companies including Google, PayPal and Cisco, both through early-stage VC firm Dot Edu Ventures and as an angel investor. Apart from technology, she also invests in for-profit social impact startups .

Motwani was in India this week for a three-day event called MakerFest, a global initiative

for innovation and entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. But while Motwani has backed startups in neighbouring Pakistan, she is yet to open her account in India. In an interaction with TechCircle, Motwani spoke about her growing fascination with the Indian startup ecosystem and how she plans to get more involved with local ventures.

Edited excerpts:

What is your view on the overall sentiment of early-stage startup funding in India?

It's very positive. Look at how many angel investors there are in India. Rajan Anandan (Google India's managing director) is investing in 30-40 startups a year. This is happening because of optimism and I think it is fantastic.

Do you think valuations are frothy in the Indian startup ecosystem, especially with respect to technology businesses?

I don't know if valuations are frothy, but it's fine even if that is the case because right now there is lot of foreign money looking to park in India. We had a bubble in Silicon Valley in 1999-2000 because there was too much money looking to be parked. Silicon Valley's bubble is done and gone. I think we'll have the same situation here in India. But so what? At least it is training our entrepreneurs to fail and come up again.

How are you targeting Indian startups? Are you planning to invest in them?

Of course. As I do not live in India, I am currently piggy-backing on people who know the Indian ecosystem well like Deep Kalra (MakeMyTrip group CEO) and others. If they are investing somewhere, I would love to be a part of it.

Are there any particular sectors that you are exploring?

IT, artificial intelligence, Big Data and perhaps even some amount of robotics as it enables simpler healthcare.

What do you look for in your portfolio companies and how often do you interact with them?

I am personally a little bit delinquent in meeting my companies as I am not here physically. So I will invest in Indian companies along with local friends so that they can look after the company.

Are you planning to start a fund in India?

I am thinking about it. I will put in $5 million if the government promises to chip in with the

same amount or probably double. Sooner or later the government will need to have real entrepreneurs investing in the startup ecosystem. You cannot have a 'babu' (bureaucrat) sitting there and investing.

This interview is part of our InvestorSpeak series in which leading angel, seed or venture investors share their insights on the startup ecosystem in India.

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EY partners with IBM to launch security operations centres in India

Photo Credit: Pixabay

Anirban Ghoshal (HTTPS://TECHCIRCLE.VCCIRCLE.COM/AUTHOR/ANIRBAN-GHOSHAL) | 9 JANUARY, 2019

Global professional services company EY on Wednesday said that it had partnered with Bengaluru-headquartered IT services company IBM to launch new security operation centres (SoCs) as part of its managed service offerings in India.

The SoCs, according to the company, will be equipped with advanced threat detection abilities powered by IBM's QRadar platform and will be used to detect, respond and address advanced cyber-attacks and risks encountered by organisations.

"Organisations are taking significant steps to strengthen their cybersecurity posture given the increasing cyber threats that continue to evolve across the business landscape," Burgess Cooper, partner for cybersecurity at EY India said.

He added that the SoCs will also provide continuous real-time monitoring of systems and data for organisations and help in building their cyber-resilience.

IBM's QRadar platform, according to its chief transformation officer for India, Vikas Arora, brings in cognitive abilities that can automatically investigate threats.

According to EY's Global Information Security Survey (GISS), 77% of Indian organisations in 2018 are working beyond their cybersecurity essentials and are rethinking their cybersecurity framework and architecture to support the business more effectively and efficiently.

The survey report also notes that Indian organisations have become more mature about the importance of cybersecurity for daily operations.

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