

CSR PARTNERSHIPS FOR
INNOVATION



INNOVATION WITH AKAMAI
FT. NEHA JAIN

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Acknowledgements

Contributor

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About Sattva Knowledge Institute

Sattva Knowledge Institute (SKI), established in 2022, is our official knowledge platform at Sattva. The SKI platform aims to guide investment decisions for impact, shedding light on urgent problems and high potential solutions, so that stakeholders can build greater awareness and a bias towards concerted action. Our focus is on offering solutions over symptoms, carefully curating strong evidence-based research, and engaging decision-makers actively with our insights. Overall, SKI aims to shift intent and action toward greater impact by influencing leaders with knowledge. All of our content proactively leverages the capabilities, experience and proprietary data from across Sattva.

Introduction: Welcome to the podcast 'CSR Partnerships for Innovation'. I am Chintan Vaishnav, Mission Director for Atal Innovation Mission at the Niti Aayog, and we are delighted to unveil this podcast series in collaboration with Sattva Consulting, hosted by their dynamic and hands-on CEO Srikrishna Sridhar Murthy. We are excited to embark on this journey with you as we navigate the fascinating realm where innovation meets CSR. So, thank you for tuning in, hope you enjoy it. In a world driven by innovation and fuelled by entrepreneurial spirit, India has emerged as a vibrant hub for cutting-edge ideas and groundbreaking initiatives. From villages to large metropolitans, the country is witnessing a remarkable surge in start-ups and innovation-focused ventures across diverse sectors. Innovation, when channelled properly, can create a large-scale societal impact. India has also been home for one of the most active CSR ecosystems, thanks to the regulation in CSR that was introduced a few years ago. We believe CSR can play a very important role in fuelling the innovation towards societal change and we hope to explore how the CSR ecosystem and the world of innovation are coming together to build a better India.

Srikrishna Sridhar Murthy (SM): [00:01:42] In this episode of CSR Partnerships for Innovation, we have with us Neha Jain from Akamai, who shares with us the story of how Akamai's flagship program got started, and how Akamai is evolving their CSR strategy at the intersection of technology and impact. With Akamai's focus on innovation and their earnest efforts to encourage mentor and fund entrepreneurs with incredible solutions. Neha shares how her story has evolved with Akamai's CSR innovation journey. Neha Jain is the Director of Operations and Innovation and co-chair of the CSR Trust at Akamai Technologies in India, which has been promoting innovative solutions to solve India's water crisis. Great having you on the podcast with us, Neha.

Neha Jain (NJ): [00:02:29] Great. Thank you, Sri, for giving this opportunity and it's my pleasure to be here and recording this podcast with you.

SM: [00:02:40] Neha welcome to our podcast and I am looking forward to our conversation. It will be great if you can introduce, you know, Akamai as a company and the role that you play at Akamai, before we get started.

NJ: [00:02:53] To start with Akamai, we are a company that touches lives billions of times for billions of people a day with the world's most distributed compute platform from cloud to edge, we make it easy for businesses to develop and run applications while we keep experiences closer to users and threats farther away. That's why innovative companies worldwide choose Akamai to build, deliver and secure their digital experiences. Talking about my role at Akamai, I've been here for 18 years. It's amazing to be to be with Akamai for 18 years. I've played several roles. I think I started as a sales executive. Again, I came through an acquisition of a company called Speedera Networks, which is again into content delivery. We're a very small office in Koramangala, and one day we got to know that Akamai has acquired Speedera and that's how I came to Akamai. Since then it's been a great journey. I started my career as a sales executive, moved on to doing a lot of different initiatives, like account management, did programs like Customer for Life, moved into marketing for some time, and then now my current role is heading the innovation program for Akamai, which is called as 'Wizards'. Now at Akamai, everybody plays different roles. I not only do the ideation program, but I'm also the co-chair for our CSR program in India.

SM: [00:04:22] Wonderful. Thank you so much Neha, and 'Wizards' is definitely an interesting name for an innovation program. It would be great to hear from you a little bit about how does

Akamai see CSR in general and how that has evolved over the years, before we get into the the more specific focus on innovation - just a broader understanding of what CSR means to Akamai and how does how has that evolved over the last few years?

NJ: [00:04:48] Great question. So I think from the time I have joined Akamai, I've always seen CSR being the top priority for Akamai. Akamai believes in delivering business the right way, which means operating, keeping our core values in mind all the time, which are integrity and trust, respect and inclusion and giving back to the community in which we live in. So the company that has 'giving back' as one of its core value, CSR, is in our DNA. CSR in India started in 2013-14, whereas in Akamai it started from the day one the company got launched. So we believe in giving back to the community and Akamai provides a lot of support to volunteering activities, to providing, to empowering employees in their journey of giving back to the society. So those are some of the pillars on which our CSR model is based on.

SM: [00:05:48] Wonderful. I think it's always helpful when, you know, when it's more closely associated with the core of the company, then I believe then you can do more strategic, exciting, you know, kind of stuff, and you also talked about volunteering, which I think is definitely very, very interesting. So what has been the focus of Akamai's CSR in India, especially since the law has come?

NJ: [00:06:13] I'll just give you a little bit of history about how was Akamai evolved, right? So a lot of - and you can read a lot about Akamai on the Internet, but there is one story that touches my heart all the time when we talk about innovation and CSR - now, Akamai is based upon a very unique idea about solving congestion at the Internet. Now, this idea also came through an MIT challenge that was run and our co-founders picked up the challenge and solved it for Internet. Now, the company that has innovation into their hearts - that's the base of how the company was built. It comes very naturally to all of us. Now when we talk about CSR, CSR is not only delivering, you know, doing big programs and, you know, giving away to the society without thinking through it. It's very important for all of us to believe in the social impact that we are trying to create in the society. When I joined the CSR team, we always thought about, "Okay, what is the most burning issue? Where is that area where we can create the highest impact?" and education is what we started with when we thought about how can we impact the educational system in India. Not only by sponsoring a few schools or running different programs, we wanted to develop a holistic approach in the educational system which can create impact for a longer time. That's when we started with the program called 'Ganitha Kalika', where we started basic mathematical skill development for children at a very, very young age. Now, that program gave us a lot of leverage in terms of, more than leverage learnings in terms of what is the need of an hour, what are the different challenges societies face and what are the different challenges some of the NGOs face when it comes to launching a program like that. So education has always been our number one priority when it comes to planning our CSR events throughout the year. Now, after education, we also started focusing on community development and education, and those became our top three pillars of CSR, which is education, community development and inclusion and that's how we started developing our strategic innovations around those areas.

SM: [00:08:41] Fantastic. I've had the pleasure of knowing the work that Akamai does, you know, for many years in CSR, and what pleasantly surprises me is how early on in the CSR game you all embraced innovation as an approach to solving problems. Now when you tell me the story of Akamai, I can imagine why. But you started looking at innovation quite early on and working with interesting new ways of solving the problem, not just a traditional, you know - 'Work with an NGO,

solve a program' kind of an approach, but working in a more incubator, accelerator type of a model and moving in the into the space of funding innovation. So can you tell us how that transition happened? And also, you know, was it easy to convince your leadership, your board, your internal stakeholders saying, "Hey, we need to put money into innovation and working with, let's say, new models and start-ups, which could be risky potentially as well." So tell us a little bit of how that transition happened.

NJ: [00:09:49] That's a great question Sri, again and I have a story in terms of how this idea even came to my mind that, "Hey, we got to move to our strength, we got to play on our strength." Right? At one point in time when I kind of joined the CSR team, we were probably dealing with 20-25 NGOs, right? Now, every single time I went through the amount of work and program management and process that we had to follow, it was a humongous task, right? At times there was this feeling that, "Hey, we are following the process, we are onboarding them, but we're not able to spend the time that NGOs deserve." Or sometimes it was hard for us to even measure the impact that we would create.

Now, the problem of 'Too many' was definitely in front of us, and as we matured in terms of getting a lot of learnings from Sattva as one of our partners, a lot of learnings from different organisations who were getting matured with their CSR initiatives, we also had in mind that we want to program that while that can create a larger impact in the society and is also a need of the hour and this happened to me at the airport, I was just watching all the different advertisements that I saw and there were a lot of CSR initiatives that companies were running and I realised that this actually creates an impact when you're sitting idle and we're looking at a cause that is not only - that's actually creating a larger impact is something that we wanted to do and always wanted to have a brand recall with it, right? It was like, if somebody thinks about this problem and who is going to solve it, can they associate Akamai with it? Now, that was that moment for me where I started thinking about, "Okay, which is the which is that area where we are going to create a bigger impact?" I remember having a conversation with you Sri, where we talked about, "Hey, we're doing a lot in education, in community development, inclusion, and I think whatever comes our way, we just take it on and we're trying to create an impact. But I still feel that we are not in the game." Technology is the strength of Akamai now. When technology and innovation mixes together, it can I think it can create a magic, and that's the magic I wanted to see when I run a program or when I run an initiative in Akamai. That's when we had a had a very intense discussion with Sattva saying, "Hey, how do we create that impact?" Now, Akamai leaders - they believe in doing the proper research, collecting the right data, having the right experience so that, you know, whatever we want to do, we can start having clarity of thoughts right.

Now, I think being an Akamai-an, it also gives me that power to be fearless, don't worry about the result, just get into it and try it, right? While I had that power and empowerment from my leadership team, I also had a lot of support that we got from Sattva, and then we started digging deeper into figuring it out what is that SDG, which has not been touched as much as others have been, and I'm remembering having round table discussion with you, which went on for four hours for us to discuss where we want to go - "Is it water, is it education, is it some other development? Is it inclusion, community development?" I think at that point in time the situation of Bangalore and the news that we were getting every day was there will be no water here, right? All of us will have to buy drinking water and there will be no water in the taps, and I think that was creating fear in all of us, right? "This is the need of an hour. This is the place where Akamai can create an impact with its experience that comes from the technology with the kind of resources we have. Maybe this is the area we want to go." And that's when we started doing our research. We went in

for three months of research to figure out what is the situation of water, what are the different companies - which are the different companies who are already in this area, and what kind of impact are they creating? Will we be able to survive in field which is so vast and huge? Will there be an impact that will even be noticeable, or are we going to drown ourselves? But I think we got support from you and a lot of our senior leaders.

NJ: [00:14:11] We all agreed that, "Hey, water is the area that we want to go after." And we wanted to do a pilot with keeping water in mind for a year and see which is the area that we want to go into. Now, again, water, as I said, is so vast we didn't know which area to pick. Should we go into urban water crisis or is it water management or is it tap water? Is it leakage? Is it agri? It was like a big playing field in front of us. Now, the approach that we always take, which is, "Hey, we need to have data. We need we are going to go by what some of the research and the work that's already been done in that area." That helped us to bring clarity that, "Okay, we are going to pick up one area, go very go with a very focussed approach and then learn from what we can actually give back to the society."

NJ: [00:15:04] That was the approach. Now as we started digging deeper - because my background is innovation and I was running this innovation program for Akamai - Wizards - which is all about allowing people to ideate. Now your idea can come from anywhere, whether you're technical idea, non-technical. We kind of give that flexibility to employees, and now I was trying to see if I can get that flexibility even in this program wherein the idea could be small or big. We don't want to go after a big fish or we don't want to go after an organisation which is already doing really well and they just need funds. I think all of us have a curious mind wherein we want to be playing an equal role, and I knew about that it's not going to be easy for me to convince our leader that, "Hey, here is a POC, here is a product we just need to invest in, you know, help them develop a business model." We had to go with an approach where we start from the scratch. Now we were able to get that experience of ideation program into how do we bring some of the accelerators or start-ups into this game and help them to grow with Akamai when when we are launching this program - that's how we started.

Now it was not an easy journey. We did not know - what is the - I mean, do we even have start-ups like that, and if there are, do they need support from organisations? How do we even connect with them and how will this entire process work? Because I think if you see the NGO process was very simple, right? You want to spend in community development - there is a school that's getting built, go put your funds there and you know, yeah, we all can be really happy with the outcome, but this was a very unique situation for us and thanks to again Sattva, we had a lot of organisations that we shortlisted who were already working in this field and we came across IIT Madras. Now the good news is we had some of the alumni from IIT Madras who who've been there, who've been in that campus and it already had a name in the market and the trust that they've already developed. So, we kind of leveraged that and then we got introduced to ICCW, which just opened our eyes for us. When we heard Professor Nandakumar the first time about the kind of water issues we have in this country, we were blown away and, in my heart, I was happy that "Okay, right, we are moving in the right direction."

NJ: [00:17:40] We are solving the biggest problem that we have in front of us." And that's when we started developing a concept about, "Hey, while we want to get into the space, but how?" And that gave the birth to the program that we're talking about, which is innovation in the water space. We called it as an accelerator program for early-stage innovators. Now, the reason I'm calling again, early-stage innovators is, as I said, Akamai is married to technology and innovation.

And where there is technology, we feel very, very comfortable and our leaders want to be part of the innovation that we are going to see in the future. Now, the good news was ICCW already had an ecosystem which provided us access to a lot of start-ups who are doing really well, number one. But there are there were start-ups who were struggling. They had beautiful ideas, they had amazing concepts, but they did not know how to give that a proper shape or how do you basically take it to the next stage. And I think those were the ones we wanted to support and pull them up as we start our program. We started interviewing Start-ups. We took help from Sattva, we took help from a lot of engineering experts that we have in Akamai because all of them were talking technology and we wanted to make sure that we understand really well and we support them in the right way.

NJ: [00:19:11] Now, the process of filtration, when it started, I remember in a day we got like 100 applications and we were overwhelmed with the kind of applications we were getting. It was all over the place. It was very, very overwhelming. But I think with our experience of being able to filter ideas who we think are executable, our ideas that we think will see the execution are the ones that we picked up. And I can say we picked up the low hanging fruits because, one, it was something that we were trying for the first time and we wanted to make sure that we're doing it the right way. That's when we got an opportunity to filter four start-ups, and while I was talking to the start-ups and I realised that all of them have a lot of potential rejecting them or not giving them the support at the right time is not only going to demotivate the entire ecosystem of start-ups, but I'm not sure if they will even pursue these ideas. That's when we came up with why we have very limited funds in our CSR kitty, but there is lots that Akamai can actually give apart from funds, which is an opportunity to mentor them, an opportunity to speak to some of our business development folks or our technology or UX guys to figure out what should they do next - and that's when we launched something called as a boot camp.

I think in our first boot camp, we we had around ten participants who went through one week of exercise with professors who went through their plan. They gave they gave them an opportunity to present. They were told which area you're strong in, which areas you need to develop on, and also give them opportunity to participate in different programs, etcetera, right? But we were able to pick two start-ups to start with, and I think there were a lot of eyes on the program - we were doing it for the first time. We took a risk of starting with maybe 20% of our CSR fund with this program. But what our three year vision was that if this goes well, we should be able to spend 40% of our funds on this flagship program and make it a CSR flagship program for India. So that's how we we kind of started our journey with using technology as our strength, putting innovation into it, using empathy in terms of, "Okay, if we don't do it, who else will do it for them?" So choosing the right organisation was also very important and while we were onboarding them, a lot of learnings that we were getting from ICCW and Sattva also played an important role in in making this program successful.

SM: [00:22:02] Fascinating story and glad to have been part of it and also watch it evolve. You know, it's been really, really inspiring, and I think 2 or 3 things that I pick up from what you're saying is, one, clearly the connect, you know, was innovation and technology from an Akamai perspective and water, because in the context of the the city you were sitting in or the ecosystem that you are sitting in, you know, you kind of went through and made that choice and the whole thinking around not just bringing in money, but the passion for innovation, technology and mentoring, because that's significantly contributes beyond money many times to these early stage entrepreneurs I think is absolutely wonderful point.

Before I move forward in terms of some of the learnings and some probably examples of Start-ups that have worked well for you, I want to just go back and pause for a minute and ask you saying, you know, when you finally decided to sign off on this particular program, was there any resistance from your leadership saying, "Hey, should we reconsider this? Should we go in this direction?" I know you said that, you know, everybody was happy to try. They were excited by this because the culture, but also from a compliance angle. While CSR law clearly says this is possible, there are many companies who look at it and say, "Hey, is this going to give me more compliance burden, you know, to be able to kind of do this?" So just want to get your view on was there any discussion internally on why are we doing this rather than, you know, move away from NGOs because that's an opportunity cost, and two, from a compliance angle, how did you kind of look at it? Was there any challenge or were you able to kind of wade through that better?

NJ: [00:23:47] I still remember when we talked about a flagship program, the first question that came on the table was our flagship program is part of CSR. A lot of questions around, "Hey, what's in it for us?", "Are we going to move away from the supporting other causes like education, community development?" People really enjoy being part of - I mean, we've been this is this is a traditional CSR system, right? Wherein, as we said, that education is always number one priority for for anybody you talk about, right? People enjoy going to the NGOs and supporting these little causes, right? Definitely there was questions about, "Is this is this under the law?", "Will we be compliant?", "Are we increasing our burden in terms of paperwork?", "Will this be approved?", "How will we reimburse the funds, etcetera?" But I think what also helps us is the passion and the passion to do something which is going to have a larger impact in the society. We don't want to go after something that everybody else, everybody is anyway doing, right. I mean, there are so many initiatives that government was doing in the education sector and I think that's that with with all the Pradhan Mantri Yojanas and all of those things that we were seeing in front, we we saw that, you know, we are not gonna - nothing is going to fall apart if we change our track a little bit, right?

That was one thought that some of us had in our mind wherein there were others who felt very passionate about playing in the technology field, right? And when when it comes to, "Hey, this is the time for us to not only innovate in the in the content delivery space or in the internet space, here is an opportunity for us to innovate in a space which is going to have which is going to see a larger impact in the society which is very unique." - and I think anything that's very unique, people want to try it and see, "Hey, you know, how is this going to play for us?" But I think with the help of Sattva and and some of our partners, we were we got a lot of clarity that how can this be a part of CSR and how can we still achieve our CSR goals while we change the track a little bit or try to adopt new ways of utilising our fund in the right way? At the same time, I think while we were taking risk but we had a plan in place, we did not put all our eggs in one basket at the same time.

NJ: [00:26:24] We said that, "Hey, we're going to try it with 10% of our funds." We started with two innovators to start with, and we also said that, "Hey, we're going to review it on a quarterly basis." Now for us, this close monitoring reporting back to the to the CSR board was very, very important and to also make sure that we create the rhythm, we create that momentum and talk about it to all our employees as well. We were anticipating that when we say that, "Hey, we're going to launch our flagship program in water space", we knew a lot of folks would come back and say, "Hey, what will happen to the NGOs that we're already funding? What will happen to the programs that we've initiated? Are they going to die or where will they get the funds from?" We had to create that strategy, I think we also then started thinking about a proper exit strategy of the programs, right? You cannot indefinitely support a program forever, right? You need to make your partners also independent that, "Hey, Akamai supported a program for two years. What do

you do if Akamai is not in the picture?" I think that risk management was another factor that we added to other programs that we were running and we were making our partners more self-sufficient, saying that, "Hey, in case Akamai exits out of a particular program, what is the strategy that you have to make sure that your program is sustainable?"

So I think sustainability was another word that got added to our programs, and thanks to rethinking about changing our route a little bit and doing a flagship program as well. So to summarise, yes, there were inhibitions, but I think we're very tight when it comes to creating processes and that's what kind of helped us quite a bit. We had milestones. We had risk management, we had monitoring and control in place, and at the same time, we also were reviewing this on a timely basis. We generate our CSR quarterly report and it's not like a huge report which I have to invest a lot of time in. But just one email which talks to employees about what we've done, what our plans are, what is the success that we are seeing in each of the areas, what is the impact that we are creating. So keeping everybody up to date on what our next steps are and what we've achieved so far, I think that kind of created the confidence in people that, "Hey, we're trying something new. At the same time, we are also not dropping anything that we are already supporting."

SM: [00:28:59] Wonderful. I think making a big bet, but moving in a very calculated kind of manner so that you manage the risk along the way, I think is an important learning, you know, if any corporates want to kind of move in this direction. Coming back to the accelerator itself, I know over the last few years you've now made this a bigger part of your CSR, you've supported many start-ups. What are those one or two innovations that you're very excited by, proud of or you know, of associating with them and where you feel, "Wow, this is, this is interesting, you know, stuff that we've have done."

NJ: [00:29:35] I think I've been amazed every time I look at how many start-ups we've supported, and I just like that diversity of things that people are doing, right? I remember the first time when they talked about how water conservation was all about being able to get clean drinking water, and I want to make sure that everybody in India should have enough water to drink and consume and they should live happily. But when I was exposed to how do you support Aqua or how do you support agriculture through recycling of water, I think that was that was pretty innovative for me. Jaljeevika was one organisation which was kind of doing a lot of innovation in that space and trying to share the stories with a lot of farmers who would then benefit out of it, and not only will their business prosper, but I think the quality of aqua would also improve. That was pretty fascinating. I never thought that there could be a robo which can get into the pipes and actually figure out the leakages and come back and give us the data. Now, when that that presentation was done to us, I always had one question in mind, which is like, "Okay, we'll find the leakage, but who's going to fix it?" Right?

I think that was that was the point where it was where I was getting stuck and I was telling them, "Hey, can you also look for a start-Up who will go and fix it?" Now, again, it's because it's very easy for us to hear it out and then give solutions, but I really appreciate the fact that we're using AI in technology, and using that technology to create social impact, and that's what we see with the start-ups today. I think one of the start-ups, Solinas, that we've supported, it's nice to see that they've got funding now and that they're doing really well and the product will be out in the market. So we've seen a lot of success stories. There are some which could have done better and we we continue to mentor them. We are also committed to supporting them, doesn't matter if - we generally give them a six months of time to generate a POC and give and create the impact.

But at the same time we don't take our hands off and say, "Okay, now our contract is done and you can move on." Akamai is still committed to providing them the mentoring. We still work with ICCW to create a consortium of start-ups who are in this field and how can they mutually support each other, right? The learnings that our cohort one start-ups have had, how can they actually mentor our cohort two and cohort three? That's the future looking goal that I have for start-ups now. The idea is not that by the end of five years we should have had supported 50 start-ups, we may have had worked with maybe 20, but can those 20 work with each other and create the ecosystem wherein, hey, if Solinas needs FEEM, can they work mutually together and create a new innovation altogether? I think that would be a win for me, and that's the kind of platform Akamai wants to provide through their innovation program where people come together and, you know, create a larger social impact by working in collaboration.

SM: [00:32:54] Wonderful. That clearly means that, you know, you want to continue this flagship program.

NJ: [00:33:00] Oh, absolutely. It is. I mean, if I can talk about the numbers, we started with 10%, the second year we did 20%, and this year we're doing 40% of our CSR is going into our flagship program and we already have I think for this cohort we've already selected six start-ups to go with. This is going to be the largest cohort and because of the three years experience we've had, six doesn't sound much to me. In the beginning, if somebody would have said, "Hey, six start-ups." - it's a huge commitment, you know, me meeting them, talking to them, reviewing their plans, etcetera. But now I think, again, as I said, we're very strong when it comes to creating process. And as my title is program management, I want to make sure that everything is - you got to give them clarity - once you have your milestones drafted, you have the clarity and they are open to learnings and being able to get to put in the feedback that's been provided to them. I think that makes it very easy for us to work. So absolutely very, very happy with the way we are running our programs. Like every time we meet them, there is so much of learning not only for them but for us in terms of how they talk to us every time, go back, they make the changes and come back with a revised and a better proposal. So that's very interesting.

SM: [00:34:28] What from our ecosystem point of view, other corporates, people like Atal Innovation Mission, universities, you know, how do you think as an ecosystem we can do this more and better? Because clearly there is you know, like you have discovered, larger impact can be created by bringing in more innovative solutions, technology led solutions, you know, to solving most of the societal environmental problems out there. So what should we do as an ecosystem? What would you like the ecosystem to do? You know, to do this in a much more structured, better way?

NJ: [00:35:07] The one word that comes to my mind after listening to your question is collaboration. The problem is so huge, and I don't think that just 1 or 2 corporations can solve it. I think the country, this country has is a very unique position where we have the best of innovations, the best of engineers, the best of technology. The field that we can play in, it's so fertile, and if we are able to build those consortium where corporations can come together for a bigger cause and create a bigger social impact, I think that would be a win-win for all of us. When it comes to collaboration, we not only - it not only gives an opportunity for us to learn from each other, and I think it also creates a space for smaller organisations who want to come up and play in this field. I feel very satisfied. I feel very accomplished when I go back and look at what we've achieved as an organisation in CSR through our flagship. It's very heartening that, you know, a program that we were just testing and seeing whether it will work has taken up a great shape. I

think the next step would be to bring in a lot more organisations and work together and create a bigger impact in the society. The learnings for us has been - 'Start small, be fearless. Mistakes happen, but you always have an opportunity to correct them, but try it.' I think it makes a difference and it will make a bigger difference if organisations start thinking and starts to collaborate and bring together to make a difference in this world.

SM: [00:36:46] I think what is also, you know, very unique in the story that I've heard from you today is the fact that I mean we've seen many different function heads leading CSR, you know, from marketing to HR to corporate affairs and others. This is a very unique case, I feel, where a head of innovation is heading CSR, you know, and leading the CSR in an organisation which I think explains, you know, also how much you know you've all been able to do. Clearly the passion that Akamai has for innovation is very visible from the work you do and just the, you know, the conversation we just had. We really hope that you spend more time in airports, you know, to keep coming up with newer ideas, and we are able to actually create that, you know, collaboration between organisations. So thank you very much, you know, for the conversation today and good luck for, you know, for all the wonderful work that you're doing in this space.

NJ: [00:37:45] Great. Thank you so much for having me here, and while you were saying that I'm able to run the internal innovation program for Akamai at the same time as you know, creating impact in CSR world as well. Now I'm thinking for me personally, it'd be a great win if I'm able to have a couple of our start-ups present at our Wizards finale. So basically what happens is we have ideas coming in from the employees. They go through different rounds of selection and the top twenty five ideas get to go through the presentation round, and from those twenty five, we select eight ideas that get presented to Tom Leighton himself, along with our board members. Now if I can get one slot to have one of our CSR start-ups present and talk about the innovations and water, I think that be a great win for us. So yeah, maybe that could be my goal for this year to have internal innovation program and have CSR also come together and work in collaboration.

SM: [00:38:49] Oh absolutely, and that's definitely a wonderful opportunity for the two worlds to kind of come together and, you know, and understand each other. Our hope is that your tribe grows, you know, in the in the CSR ecosystem. So thank you for spending time with us, really appreciate it.

NJ: [00:39:05] Thank you.

Outro: *We hope you enjoyed this episode with our expert guest, and we thank Atal Innovation Mission for partnering with us on this series of conversations for the CSR Ecosystem. Please make sure to subscribe, like and follow us and explore more of our content from Sattva Knowledge Institute, all linked in the episode description.*