



## INTERVIEW WITH MR. SURIL DESAI | CRYPTOCONTROL.CO

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Welcome to our comprehensive interview series – **Humans of Blockchain™** where we get the best in the business to answer diverse questions.

This series will clear the air of doubt in the blockchain space today by focusing on bringing more transparency to the readers.

Our guest, today, is **Suril Desai, Lawyer, Associate at Nishith Desai Associates**. He answered all our questions with patience and detail.

Suril is an experienced lawyer who is currently **spearheading the regulation front related to cryptocurrencies/ blockchain for his dad's firm – Nishith Desai Associates**.

Not wasting much time, let's hear it out from **Suril Desai** himself.

## 1. We would love to know more about you Suril. Your journey and how you got into the blockchain space?

I am a **Lawyer**, spent 6 years in Silicon Valley, moved to India and did law at Government Law and then at the same time I was doing some research for my Dad's Law Firm Nishith Desai Associates, I was researching Privatisation of Space Exploration in 2008/ 2009.

In 2011 a friend told me "**you are researching in space but start looking at Bitcoin and Blockchain.**" I started looking into Bitcoin and I had absolutely zero experience for finance, "I didn't know what was a credit or a debit, I was that bad." "I had no institutional knowledge baggage" and when I read Satoshi's paper, I was like what is this ? But at one point everything just struck and I came to the conclusion that this is political, "its like we have seen protests in the past where people come out on the streets but now we are in a age where protests are more digital" Fast forward to 2013, that is when the first Bitcoin conference was held in Bangalore, until then I was just hearing how Bitcoin is the new scam and that people should stay away from it, the press was also like the step child of the economic system. I thought there was more to it, I was a big user of Napster and many torrenting sites which decentralised data and was there for everyone to share.

## 2. What are your views about the existing banking system?

**It's cheaper to send a million dollars across the border than it is to send \$10.** The cost of transaction is almost 25-30%. "**Banks are designed to cater to the needs of affluent people.**" Banks are designed for Brick and Mortar not for the Internet that is why you need a chequebook where you need to sign and keep offline records. At the same time you have things like Facebook, where you accept the terms which is a big lie on the internet. "**I Accept**" agreements are contracts which you don't have an intention to sign but you still do which makes it an invalid contract.

## 3. What benefits do you think cryptocurrencies have over fiat?

When I saw Bitcoin and the paper, I immediately saw that this could change a lot of things. **Bitcoin is like a Formula**, it's like a pythagorus theorem, are you going to go debate if the pythagorus theorem is valid or not, Do you know pythagorus? Have you seen pictures of him? The same goes for Euclid, who said that the distance from point A to point B is a straight line. Now these theorems are backed by proof. **FIAT has no proof.** A Handful of people deciding the rates of interest and tax rates. Bitcoin, however, was an exploration into the unknown.

Bitcoin is **programmable money**. I went deeper and then I saw its **digital barter** in a way. Money is a store of value such as stocks, your email account or your usb stick. Most money in the world today has a huge debt burden on it, in this tug of war the **middle class** is the one who gets affected the most. The poor get subsidies and the rich get tax rebates. **Centralisation** in itself can be related to a nucleus, if the nucleus gets too strong it'll split.

## 4. Do you think the current cryptocurrency market crash was a bubble which got burst?

I am 38, I grew up in the age of computers. Multiple innovations have helped lead the **Internet** to this stage today. Then Suddenly in 2000, when the dot com bubble crashed, all the regulators and policy makers said that the internet was a **bubble** and is dead now. But what happened after that ? **Google, Amazon.** Now all the regulators said that the Internet was a bubble, and now Bitcoin is a bubble... we are living in a **world full of bubbles** then, you have a housing bubble, stock market bubble, Intellectual property bubble, student loan bubble, credit bubble and we are living in a age then whereas everything is a bubble.

## 5. What changes you think the present world economic order needs?

The banking system has not changed in like **200 yrs.**

I want three rights. The right to elect my central bank governor, the right to elect what my interest rates should be and the right to decide my tax rates. Any country who does this first suddenly changes the whole **paradigm**. Satoshi's theory had PoW where the people actually had all these rights by being in control of the network. If I have defrauded anyone, automatically the **record is there** on a decentralised ledger.

#### **6.How do you think blockchain can help in financial inclusion?**

Blockchain carries the potential to open **millions of bank accounts** in the shortest possible time and at the **lowest possible cost**. Also the ease of opening a crypto wallet as compared to a bank account tells you how efficient **blockchain** is. This is one use case which I think can disrupt banks and their way of functioning in the near **future**.

#### **7.What is the legal status of cryptocurrencies in India?**

Cryptocurrencies at the moment are **not illegal to own**. For if they were there would be no exchanges in India. Though **RBI** has passed a circular which prohibits the banks from dealing with crypto, which our law firm is currently **challenging in the Supreme Court**.

#### **8.What shortcomings do you think the existing blockchain ecosystem has?**

There are **three possible shortcomings** which I see in the existing ecosystem:

- Scalability Issues
- Security
- Short-sightedness of Investors