

Time to teach some smart money management skills to you

SANGHAMITRA MAZUMDAR

MANAGING MONEY may be one of the most important skills one needs, but unfortunately it is something not taught in any school. As a result, teaching money management to children becomes the sole responsibility of parents. In this age of rising consumerism, teenagers and young adults demand greater independence in their purchasing power. And even as parents grant the wish, they keep worrying if their children are being wise and responsible with this new-found power in their hands.

In the absence of good money management skills, youngsters mostly end up making their parents foot huge bills that can disrupt the home budget.

So, how do you make your children understand money? How do you simply yet effectively converse with them on the topic of money? How can you instill in your children good money values early on?

The task is challenging, but parents can take refuge in technology. There are several specially designed money management and gaming apps, both free and paid, to help them out.

Around five years ago, a 10-year-old girl in

the US came up with the idea for Bankaroo, a virtual bank. The money-related app that started as a family project to help children learn how to manage their savings now has thousands of members from over 70 countries across the globe, says the website.

Available on iOS, Android, Windows, Blackberry and Kindle for free, the app keeps track of how children use the money given to them, sets goals (a football, a cellphone etc) and encourages the children to save money to acquire them, and teaches them "how to be money smart".

P2K Money, Kids Money, Save! The Game, Bank of Mom, and Savings Spree are among other apps that have been designed for children to promote healthy financial habits early in life.

In India, there is Slonkit, the only player in this market at present, and it targets parents of teenagers and youngsters as primary customers. Launched in December last year, it's a one-of-its-kind venture, which takes the concept of teaching good money management to a practical level. Slonkit has come up with a mobile phone application that is connected to an actual Visa card.

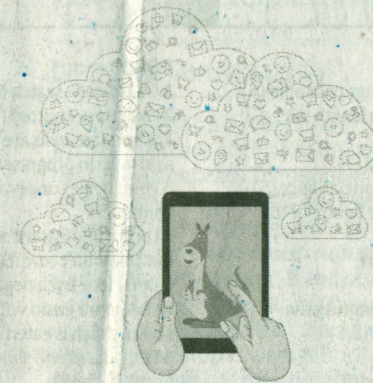
Founded by Javed Tapia and Murad Nathani, Slonkit claims to "bridge the expectation of a parent and the needs of a child,

and makes money management easier for both". The card powered by Visa and DCB Bank works on a pre-paid basis, and the amount of pocket money parents want to give their children for a month or week can start from as low as Rs 200. The app, the founders say, allows parents and children to begin the conversation on money and make it a part of their daily lives.

Nathani, who is also the CEO of Slonkit, says the concept is fast gaining popularity, as "it is essentially addressing and catering to their money-related issues; be it teaching kids good money habits or managing money smartly".

He says Slonkit was built after more than a year of extensive research, factoring in personal experiences. "As a young adult, I often struggled with making my money work for me. Over the years, I have seen this challenge in teenagers and young adults of today and I realised that it was time I did something to help them manage their money better. With Slonkit, we aim to empower GenZ and teach them the building blocks of money management....", says Nathani.

Available on iOS and Google Play Store for free, Slonkit app allows instant transfer of funds to the card using any bank's credit or debit card. Parents get customised alerts on



In the absence of good money management skills, youngsters mostly end up making their parents foot huge bills that can disrupt the home budget

all transactions made by their children, while the users receive updates and insights on how they can manage their money. It's safe since the card is not linked to the parent's bank account.

Unlike credit cards, suspending a Slonkit card is easy. If the card is lost, you just need to sign in to the website and click on the designated link to suspend or block it.

The app also has a 'Go Dutch' feature that allows users to split bills with peers on the platform.

Slonkit has a tie-up with DCB Bank, which says the venture has garnered over 35,000 registrations in a short span.

"With the fin-tech industry booming right now, there is definitely a large scope of acceptance for DCB Slonkit. The banking community is realising the need for extending partnerships for enhanced customer experience, and teens/young adults are obviously a very important target segment as they are the true consumers of digital solutions," says DCB Bank spokesperson Praveen Kutty.

He feels this industry has the potential for a larger market and more consumers once the concept has awareness.

Kutty, who is the head of retail & SME banking at DCB Bank, says Slonkit has been able to identify and offer an effective solution to the bank's intent to "channelise spending and have an understanding of savings" among youngsters. "Features such as anytime/anywhere money transfer and ex-

skills to youngsters

Unlike credit cards, suspending a Slonkit card is easy. If the card is lost, you just need to sign in to the website and click on the designated link to suspend or block it.

The app also has a 'Go Dutch' feature that allows users to split bills with peers on the platform.

Slonkit has a tie-up with DCB Bank, which says the venture has garnered over 35,000 registrations in a short span.

"With the fin-tech industry booming right now, there is definitely a large scope of acceptance for DCB Slonkit. The banking community is realising the need for extending partnerships for enhanced customer experience, and teens/young adults are obviously a very important target segment as they are the true consumers of digital solutions," says DCB Bank spokesperson Praveen Kutty.

He feels this industry has the potential for a larger market and more consumers once the concept has awareness.

Kutty, who is the head of retail & SME banking at DCB Bank, says Slonkit has been able to identify and offer an effective solution to the bank's intent to "channelise spending and have an understanding of savings" among youngsters. "Features such as anytime/anywhere money transfer and ex-

penditure insights establish the clarity of direction Slonkit has," he says.

Kutty also feels teaching the new generation managing their money smarter is a huge task, and most parents are not aware how to do it themselves. He says the Slonkit-DCB venture is an effort towards taking this task off the parents' shoulders.

As far as consumer feedback is concerned, most agree with Kutty about its usefulness. However, many have complained of some technical issues, such as problems logging in or the card not being delivered on time.

Nathani says the customer service team has been working to address every issue. "We are regularly tracking our NPS (Net Promoter Score), which has shown a strong positive improvement week on week — an indicator that the solutions being implemented are working.

Some of the issues we encountered were new challenges, which we did not expect. For example, the delivery address of the card was not serviceable via India's no. 1 courier co. Hence, an alternative had to be found and executed within a matter of days leading to a delay in card delivery. Now, we have two vendors that provide us national coverage as a solution."