

# Conversations Today

*Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises*

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students for CSR. We prepare  
them for working with the  
government and continue  
working with NGOs.”**

An exclusive interview with  
Dr. S. Parasuraman,  
Director, TISS

## From the Editor



### Dear Friend,

Independence Day is a time to celebrate the nation's achievements as much as it is a time to reflect on what lies ahead. We have come far as a nation, but we still have a long road ahead of us.

As we remember all the great "heroes" who fought and won independence for our nation, let us salute them and sing praises in their admiration. But in truth, we need new kinds of heroes today: individuals who can take the lead in many diverse fields and have lives that younger Indians can look up to as role models.

Let us all resolve to develop freedom in our minds, freedom in our words, and pride in our souls to be true Indians!

Vande Mataram!

—Latha Suresh & Marie Banu

# Releasing emotional blocks



*“For every tear shed, a day is added to your life”*

Continuing with our Positive energy series of focusing on an ancient saying, we are particularly moved with the saying “For every tear shed, a day is added to your life”.

Often one relates tears to only suffering and sadness. It is also considered to be emotionally weak to shed tears. How our society and culture has snatched away an important existential mechanism of crying and helping our emotions flow!

As we dwell on emotional energy, one aspect that comes up repeatedly is, when deep emotional patterns are cleansed, tears well-up. It is not a sign of distress, but one of release. On the same lines, when we experience abundance and bliss, tears manifest in such an experience.

Like the physical body has the process of perspiration to regulate the body temperature, similarly, tears have a role to play too. Though perspiration is uncomfortable, we still do not stop it, because we cannot. However, with tears which regulate emotions, we have learned to stop it. Like perspiration removes body toxins, crying removes emotional toxins.

There is a huge limiting belief around

crying. The belief is, crying indicates that you are sensitive and not emotionally strong. Hence, many of us wear the mask of being emotionally strong without crying and are unknowingly depriving ourselves from the natural process of regulating our emotions.

We begin repressing our feelings when we do not want them to ‘come-out’. In other words we do not accept them. Shedding a tear is acceptance. It is a choice we make to liberate ourselves from traps that we set on our own.

Learn to release your tears. Experience the healing properties of tears. Crying is a spiritual process, as it indicates an open and softened heart. The ancient saying of ‘adding a day to our life’ points towards life force energy flowing through us and adding a day to our life.

This cleansing of emotional toxins is essential to create physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harmony. The emotional toxins create blocks that hinder our movement forward. Removing these blocks may not be a one-time activity; rather it may require a regular check and maintenance. When the life force energy flows

unhindered, it nurtures every dimension of our existence and creates balance and centeredness.

Some guidance on emotional cleansing:

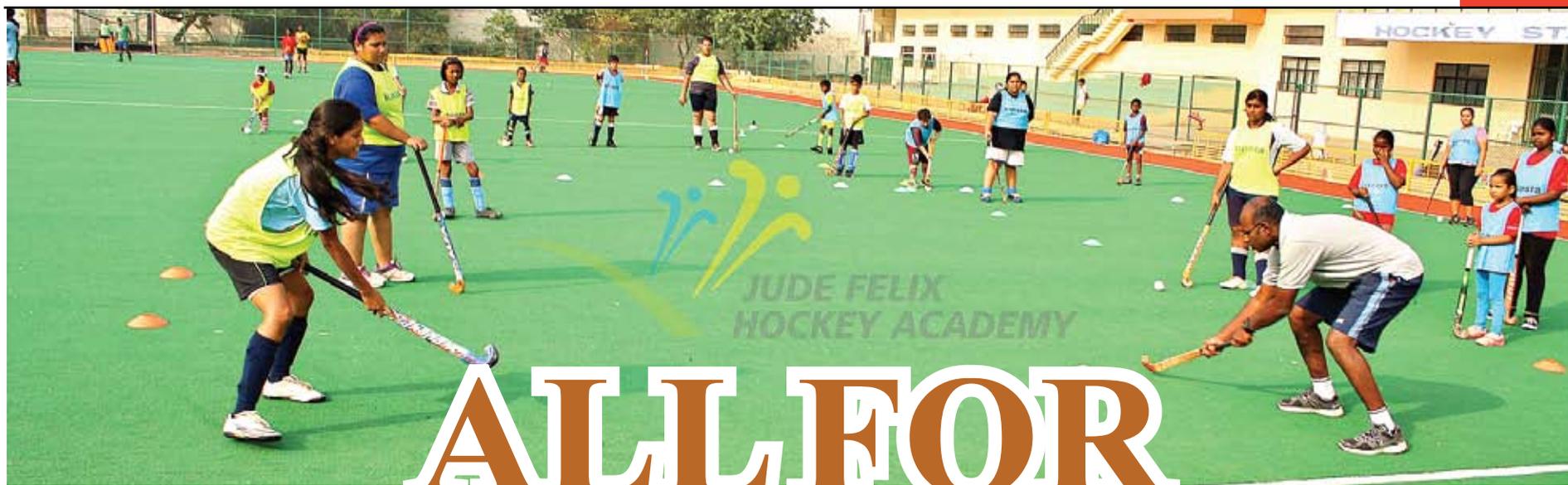
- Become aware of ‘how’ you are feeling during various situations and interactions and acknowledge the feeling/s, without branding it as good or bad, nice or not nice
- Next, accept the feeling/s, with humility and openness – whatever it is, it is OURS
- Then, recognize whether the feeling serves you or not, whether the feeling stems from ego or the feeling is an external projection on our self. If it does not serve you, release it either by sharing, writing it and tearing the paper, or crying it out of your system.

Finally, attempt to live in the present moment, without any past or future references or predetermined notions handed down by society or books, without any expectations projecting yourself into the future, and without an ego that misguides and draws you away from your true self – the universal energy.

### Yours Energetically

*Dr. Bhulakshmi V and Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi are trainers and facilitators of the Positive Energy (PE) program. They are spiritual seekers with a vision of transforming their own energy state from surviving to being. In this journey they have gathered deep insights and are continuously working towards creating a pathway for more seekers. With years of exposure to spiritual practices like yoga, reiki, and personal development interventions like coaching, the authors are working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space.*

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# ALL FOR HOCKEY

Any student passionate about pursuing sports as a career option is often sidelined in academics. Although not a fact, this is the attitude that has tested the perseverance of many sportsmen in our country. The challenge of attitudinal stereotypes is much more intense when one strives to pursue games that are not 'so popular'. "I wanted to disprove these preset notions about sports persons," says Mr. Shanmugham Pandurangan, former International Hockey Player currently working for Canara Bank in Bangalore.

His passion for the game came early on during class 5. Disturbed by the widespread belief that sportsmen cannot be educated, Shanmugham decided to pursue his passion for hockey and simultaneously work on his academics to excel in both. With no gadgets restricting children's physical play outs during his childhood, he continued to play everywhere possible – on the streets, in the school. A position in his school team was the first milestone for Shanmugham, who says "I just kept playing and the game got over me even before I could realize."

Juggling academics and sports was no easy task. Pursuing BE from an evening college was a very challenging period in his life. Recalling how difficult those days were, he is reminiscent of all those memories. "I kept playing; first for the State team and then moved into the National team."

All along, Shanmugham wanted to be educated and did not want to subscribe to the established stereotypes. However, he was frustrated with the politics in sports and the dynamics that restricted the reach of a game. When he almost made his mind to give up on hockey, he got an opportunity to become a Coach.

While in a stadium after a game, Shanmugham met a group of children with Mr. Vishal Talreja, Founder of Dream A Dream, an NGO that propagates the use of sports to help children learn better. "My coaching spree started with these kids. From here, I went on to be a coach for Dream A Dream and Dhanraj Ballal Hockey Academy for the next six years. The success of the programme inspired me.

Hockey as a game excited me much more than before. Remarkable improvement in the academic performance of these kids further strengthened my resolve that games do not affect academics. I was happy to see Hockey setting the base for their future," recalls Shanmugham.

Once the programme was called off, Shanmugham began to explore coaching seriously and soon started coaching teams at all levels. Having learnt that coaching was an art in itself, he credits the students who groomed him as a coach. "After all, hockey was not an easy sport to learn too," he quips.

Having coached the state team, other professional leagues for more than 10 years now and also the Qatar national team, Shanmugham embarked on a whole new venture when he learnt about the Jude Felix Hockey Academy (JFHA). JFHA was the brainchild of Jude Felix, an Arjuna Awardee, Olympian and former captain of the Indian hockey team. "I was in charge of running the programme here. This was a bigger challenge. The academy aimed to use sports as a medium to impart skills to under privileged children from the neighbouring communities. The first experiment with 180 kids at Saint Mary's orphanage was very successful," elaborates Shanmugham.

The academy was founded by a group of international and national hockey players, who were unified by their passion for the game. With support from philanthropists running out, the founders decided to register it as a Trust. With no prior knowledge of managing a non-profit entity, the team had to learn the hard way. With only 40 children in the beginning, they thought of managing the training programmes with equipment borrowed from different players. Soon, the need for a professional approach was strongly felt. "Our work was represented by the children's performance. So, we were at it. Training these children was certainly like training any team at the national or international level. I began to look out for guidance to learn non-profit management."

In 2013, Shanmugham and his colleague enrolled for the SEOP programme at CSIM Bangalore. "We did not even know about writing proposals or raising funds. It was at this time that CSIM exposed us to a range of things. The faculty, interactive video presentations, discussions on social initiatives across the globe motivated us. CSIM brought us in touch with living legends who have added value to our society. We saw our network created automatically and got our direction," he says.

One critical learning for Shanmugham was to ensure proper functioning of an organization, whether for-profit or otherwise. Fund raising and volunteer management, he says, have come in very handy at just the right juncture for the academy.

JFHA has now grown to impact hockey circles. Its journey from 2008 was apparently noticed due to its high standards in coaching or organizing tournaments. "Our professional approach worked much in our favour. We were able to show that sports is a miracle healer. We were happy that we were able to give back to the game that has brought us all this way," he recalls.

Despite the standards set, JFHA is now faced with the challenge of retaining its volunteers, for not all volunteers are players. The academy wishes to see many kids play the sport. Although they are not expected to stick to the game, the children do. "Hockey's popularity has to start from long and short term perspective plans. There is nothing wrong with Cricket garnering this kind of attention. A lot of ground work has gone in, complemented by the structures created to promote the sport. Hockey needs such impetus," emphasises Shanmugham who feels that money does not do everything.

Lamenting the absence of sports facilities in government schools and the non-implementation of sports policies, he feels that professional approach to all games can change their visibility and image.

—ShanmugaPriya. T



# Partnering for social cause: Vazir

One often hears stories of migrants from rural India making efforts to achieve a dignified living in the metros and large urban conglomerates of India. In particular, metros like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore have many people from other states. They live under tough conditions, because they need to focus on making both ends meet. They find comfort within their own newly formed groups. Their children grow up and pursue lifestyle aspirations that are more ambitious. Generally, the next generation of all migrants focuses more on going up the financial and social ladders. It becomes a major, welcome change when they move from a small house to a single bedroom home! They struggle to progress, because life is just as competitive for the second generation as for the first. The struggle is tougher on fair, ethical and honest people who do not believe in short cuts to success or in working to earn quick bucks. A large part of the labor force in urban India comes from such backgrounds. They constitute a vital resource pool that directly contributes to the growth of India.

Here, we talk about Vazir, who had a humble, if not deprived, background. He went to become an entrepreneur. Let us study how he worked with partner within his ecosystem to give back to society by supporting a kids' school and furthering the higher education of a selected few children.

## Early days:

Vazir was born to a traditional family in Brahmavara, a village near Udipi in one of the South Canara districts. He was the youngest among three brothers. His father

was a tailor. Traditionally, most of the workforce from South Canara has moved abroad, especially to the gulf countries, to earn a higher income. However, Vazir's father decided to move to Mumbai. He was highly patriotic and felt that the Indian soil provided equal opportunities to all those who are committed to the motherland. Vazir's father, his immediate brother and he moved to Mumbai. They lived in a small house at Khar (East). His father set up a tailoring shop and employed a couple of locals to facilitate him in running the shop.

Vazir and his brother studied at a Kannada Association-run school at Bandra, as it was less affordable. However, they had to commute a considerable distance every to attend school. Vazir was ambitious, and was studious. He completed his graduation in commerce and then pursued law.

## Changing fortunes:

This was when a leading domestic soft drink brand that was growing aggressively offered a salesman job to Vazir. He discontinued his BGL law course to join this company. It was his bad luck that the company had labor problems, and he was jobless soon. It looked like his decision to discontinue his education was wrong. He decided to fight back.

He worked at different jobs in a printing press, the PWD department and a hotel. It was while he was working as a receptionist in a hotel that his life took a major turn of events.

By nature, Vazir was extroverted and was used to helping people out. He had frequent interactions with European buyers of garments who stayed at the

hotel. Because of his discussions with them, he developed a keen interest in the garments industry. He decided to look for opportunities to learn more about the trade.

By this time, his family, which had prospered a little, had moved to a larger single bedroom flat at Santa Cruz. With his father, Vazir discussed the information he had obtained from the garments buyers he met at the hotel. He developed a sound understanding of the processes involved in the manufacture of garments and in buying and exporting them.

Vazir decided on a "high risk high return" approach to business, instead of staying content with marginal growth and a secured life. However, he felt that he was still not ready, and decided to work in a garments factory that has substantial exports. He got a job to work as executive assistant to a promoter of a large export house that was doing around Rs. 100 cores of business then. In three years, Vazir learnt most of the nuances of the trade and grew fast in his job. The promoter was extremely happy with him, as Vazir understood buyers' needs and excelled at maintaining the kind of sound relationship that furthered the business.

## Loyal to the core:

Vazir believed that loyalty as a core value and in hard work as a way of life. The promoter gave him a loan to buy his own flat, making him hopeful of leading a comfortable life in Mumbai. The promoter bought him a first class train pass, considered a status symbol among professionals in Mumbai in those days. Vazir was a young bachelor and all these amounted to multiple

achievements for him.

At this point, something significant happened in his life. It is important to note here that buyers from abroad used to buy garments from trading houses in Mumbai and Delhi that were made in Tiruppur, Ludhiana and other industrial belts of India. This system existed mainly because in those days, trading houses had a flair for trading, while manufacturers generally lacked that tact. This was a convention driven by cultural differences and other aspects of social inequality. Language was another important barrier, as many of the locals could not speak in any language other than their vernacular.

The previous two decades had seen a phenomenal growth in the trade of garments from Tiruppur. A number of foreign buyers were exploring the possibilities for opening their own offices in Coimbatore, Bangalore or Tiruppur to cut out intermediaries in the supply chain. They needed a local person from the region to represent their interests.

One buyer from Switzerland, impressed by Vazir's zeal, offered him a job. Vazir was to set up an office in Tiruppur for the buyer and directly handle buying volumes for exports. Though it looked like a dream opportunity for Vazir, he declined, stating that his employer was generous and that taking up the offer would constitute a clear conflict of interest. The buyer suggested that the trading house could continue to handle the order management with Vazir at Tiruppur for quality control. At a later state, they could consider evaluating a more direct relationship. Again, Vazir declined that the suggestion made for a convenience-based arrangement that still infringed on his loyalty to his promoter.



Vazir told the buyer he would be accept the offer if the promoter also approved of such an arrangement, a circumstance which did not arise. The buyer left his contact details with Vazir and asked him to connect whenever he was ready to re-evaluate the proposal.

#### Dramatic change of events:

About two decades back, a dramatic series of events worked out in favor of Vazir. Ongoing social unrest and communal disturbances disrupted the lives of Vazir and his family. Though his promoter was helpful, Vazir felt that the pressures on his family were too high. Suddenly, Vazir and his family were reduced to having nothing. Fear of the future engulfed them.

Vazir had informed his promoter about the opportunity given to him by the buyer from Switzerland. He had asked for the promoter's views, as Vazir felt the need to go independent to achieve his growth aspirations would arise at some point in time. Vazir thought that this juncture, when he was facing an uncertain future, could be the right time to put into action his ambition for pursuing growth elsewhere.

The promoter gladly welcomed the idea, but on the condition that Vazir would not be appraising his products on behalf of the buyer. The dilemma could be resolved only if Vazir could take over the buyer's business and solicit new suppliers. It was a challenge for the buyer, who had a long relationship with the promoter's company, and critical for that company, as it would lose a significant volume of business, and thereby, profits. By what you could call the work of the hand of god or chance, both the buyer and the promoter decided to sail with Vazir. In fact, the promoter released Vazir's home loan document in a day to expedite his move to Tiruppur.

Vazir came to Tiruppur to set up an office for the Swiss buyer. He did not know Tamil, the local language of Tiruppur, and he had no friends in the town. He did not have a place yet, nor did he have transport. He had just been married. Sheer grit made him move to Tiruppur. In spite of these obstacles, Vazir progressed thanks to the opportunities the town and its trade potential offered! In a matter of a few years, he had promoted his own company with the blessings of the

buyer, becoming an independent manufacturer and directly handling export orders to clients including that first Swiss buyer. This progress reflected the spirit of entrepreneurship in him.

#### Giving it back to society:

Vazir felt that his growth from being a nobody to becoming a successful independent businessman was due to the following factors:

1. his drive and hard work even in trying circumstances
2. his values and belief in the virtues of honesty, openness and transparency
3. most importantly, the trust and opportunity his employers gave him and his own ability to maintain both loyalty and individuality
4. the spirit of Tiruppur town and the ability to ride on a wave of growth in the industry.

He brought his parents, his brothers and their families to Tiruppur and helped them to settle down comfortably.

Some time ago, a trust running a kindergarten school near Tiruppur had sought financial help from him. He had been giving money every year to that trust, which was run with the support of a lady from Switzerland by a local person named Mahesh. When Mahesh died, the Swiss lady could not run the trust and was looking out for local partners. At this point, Vazir and Nicolas, a buyer (a key supply chain player in business) from abroad who procured material to order from Vazir, joined hands in taking up the opportunity. They promised to support the trust. Vazir now runs the school, which has 40 children. Nicolas and his friends support the initiative.

It is worth noting the level of mutual understanding and trust Nicolas and Vazir had. While they shared business interests and were able to discuss issues in a fair and transparent manner, their relationship went beyond business to do something

socially good for the geography from where procurement took place. Their joint success substantiates their ability to offer value not only for their immediate stakeholders, but also to create value for the society they lived in through their mutual partnership. In fact, Nicolas had been similar work at Thailand. The degree of harmony between him and Vazir, for whom he is a procurer, is phenomenal.

His support may look small at a casual glance, but the impact is meaningful. Every year, they sponsor two boys and two girls at a school in Avinashi. These children receive all support until they complete their education.

The system works like this. A foreigner emotionally and financially adopts each child and sponsors his or her education. The adopter funds all necessities like books and other accessories and school fees. All of the children have done well in their studies.



Over the years, the first batch of students has reached the seventh grade. The system runs smoothly. The trust gives complete details and access to the donors.

The donors visit the school regularly. They celebrate Deepavali, Christmas, New Year and Pongal. The key buyer and supporter of this program, Nicholas, participates in all activities. In fact, Nicolas conducts a similar initiative in Thailand.

You should note the depth of the partnership Vazir established with his buyer to set up social initiatives and run them successfully. The two of them are hopeful of making this a sustainable initiative by funding as many children as possible until they complete higher education.

All the financial support is routed and

handled through a legal structure. The trust that Vazir runs has his family and friends from India as trustees. They can take financial support as it comes and file necessary documents. In fact, Vazir, Nicolas and their friends have plans of taking this activity, "Take Care Kids – India", into a large organization over the years and attain a stage when an orphanage can be built. He feels this is the best way to give back to society. Incidentally, it will also establish the best standards of "Responsible Procurement Programme" which Europeans passionately talk about when they participate in social programs.

#### Conclusion:

Vazir feels that those who were benevolent to him were human and agonistic about social factors. This is the same manner in which Vazir wants to fashion his "giving" and his highly human approach to impacting the needy and helping them realize their dreams. It may be difficult to believe, but Vazir personally spends time on each child's selection and progress and personally reports to donors so that they can see the impact. Today, he feels sorry that he could fund only four students out of the initial, fully funded batch of 40. However, he is convinced that the rest of the 36 are also progressing well, as other benevolent people continue to support these children. As this author said in the case of another champion, it is not just operational size that matters! It is intent, impact and a genuine approach that motivate many others to do something useful to society. As the cycle spreads out, more projects come up, and most of them would also scale up. What society needs to be more equitable is people like Vazir who enjoy "giving back" to society and are true champions of social responsibility. There is no law that compels him to do this. There are consultants suggest that time spent on social work can be charged in monetary terms using normal cost factors. However, that approach ignores the huge difference that would be made to the world if we have many more people, like Vazir, who volunteer to impact society through positive change!

— This is part of the book "Incredible Champions" authored by N.Chandrasekaran and published by Partridge Publishers 2014.

## Editorial

### Latha Suresh

### Marie Banu

## CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INITIATIVE AND MANAGEMENT



**C**entre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani. It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship. **CSIM offers training and consultancy to social enterprises – for-profits and non-profits – to facilitate**

**them to apply successful business practices and yet retain their social mission.** It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives. CSIM operates in Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

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**CSIM also facilitates Social Audit for social enterprises through Social Audit Network, UK and SAN, India.**  
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# Worthy Leaders Of Change



In 1963, leprosy was a dreaded disease. With chances of survival at a meagre percentage, the only option that was available was rehabilitation. With this objective in mind, the Swedish Red Cross began one such rehabilitation centre in Katpadi, Vellore. In 1976, Worth Trust was formed to continue the efforts of the Red Cross and spearhead the rehabilitation of leprosy patients in the area. "Gradually, leprosy ended up becoming a lesser potent disease than what it used to be. So, we then turned our attention towards polio," explains Myke Nunes, who is today, Deputy Manager of Worth Trust. "Pretty quickly, polio started getting eradicated too. So, we felt that the time was ripe to focus on people with visual impairment, and speech and visual impairment." However, as medical discoveries advanced, and treatment for most illnesses became readily available, Worth Trust decided that speech and visual impairment remained one of the more critical areas of concern and decided to focus a bulk of its attention, there. "We also started turning our attention to cerebral palsy patients, in an effort to look into their rehabilitation."

'Worth' is an abbreviation for 'Workshop for the rehabilitation and training of the handicapped'. In the last 25 years, the NGO has painstakingly worked towards helping physically challenged people, have a better life. "Someone with a physical disability is always expected to match up to a society that's somehow tailor-made only for normal people without physical challenges," explains Myke. "Even in schools, those with physical challenges have to cope with an environment for normal schoolchildren. Even while applying for a job, chances are one in five hundred candidates is physically challenged. No employer would want to risk his productivity by giving such a candidate, a chance at the job. That's exactly why rehabilitation of the physically challenged is such a critical requirement in today's day and age; because we felt that the onus should not lie on the physically challenged person to match up to a society only for normal people."

One of the biggest talking points about Worth Trust is the fact that it is one of the few NGOs in the world that doesn't take donations for its functioning. "We have never accepted any money as donation, since we are perhaps the only NGO in the world today, which is self-sustained," says Myke. So, how does this work? "We have two wings," he elaborates, "Our first wing is the rehabilitation wing, which takes care of the needs and rehabilitation of physically challenged people. The money that goes into funding this

wing comes from the profits of our business wing, which strives towards employing people with physical disabilities in order to make them industry-ready and employable." The Rehabilitation Wing of the trust includes the Technical Training Centre, School for Hearing and Speech Impairment, Early Intervention Centre for Infants with Hearing Challenges and Day Activity Centre for Children with Intellectual Challenges, to name a few. This, while the business wing includes divisions like Worth Industries, Worth Plastics, Worth Braille, Worth Mobility Aids and Worth Digitization. "Our Worth Braille deserves special mention since we continue to remain the only organization in the world that manufactures the world-famous Perkins Braille," says Myke. Worth Braille has so far, assembled and sold close to 200,000 Perkins Braille. Worth is also a sub-contractor for Brakes India. This has meant that nearly every automobile in the company has an automotive component that hails from the production line of Worth Industries. The speciality of these business centres is of course, the fact that all their employees are physically challenged.

Its business and self-sustenance apart, one of the more notable aspects of Worth Trust is the fact that nearly half its students are employed in its business units. This ensures that they become employment-ready and that their production skills are fine-tuned to the rigors and demands of any engineering-oriented industry. In the last 25 years, a number of physically challenged students have become industry-ready thanks to the training imparted at these business units.

In its 25th year, Myke believes that Worth Trust has what it takes to push the boundaries of its work with physically challenged individuals. Along the way, equal weightage, he says must be given to both rehabilitation and business development so that the trust's self-sustenance model can be successfully sustained well into the future. September 5, 2014 will also mark the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the trust – an occasion that is truly special given the long way Worth Trust has come in the last two decades. Creating and impact that is truly becoming of an NGO dedicating itself to fighting for the inclusion of physically challenged people in day-to-day living, Worth Trust is certainly looking all set to achieve a whole lot more going ahead. In doing so, there's little doubt that a self-sustained NGO like this, is certainly the answer to encouraging inclusiveness, rehabilitation, employment and quite simply, a better world, for those with physical challenges.

# MISSION MEDICINES

*“Once I have grouped my medicines together, I begin identifying people who need these medicines and don’t have the financial wherewithal to afford them.”*

The fact that he’s 79 is no deterrent to M Ramani. The almost-octogenarian has his heart and mind firmly set on serving society. And that’s why no sooner than he retired back in 1994, he’s dedicated his life towards making society a better place to live. For 20 years now, Ramani has dedicated his life to distributing medicines to the needy. “I’m a follower of Sathya Sai Baba and I’ve always wanted to make the most of my retired life, instead of spending my silver years doing something that would mean little to the world around me,” he says. “When I got down to thinking about what I wanted to do, I realized that in several rural hamlets, a number of people don’t have access to medical care let alone proper supply of medicines.” That was when Ramani decided that distributing medicines to people who needed them, would be his life’s calling.

“I am inspired by two people: my father and a social worker by the name of R Sridhar. In fact, Mr Sridhar was polio-affected but still went about making society a better place, by way of his yeomen service to those around him, running a charitable trust that would impart financial service to deserving people, for their educational needs. I wanted to do something tiny, yet meaningful for those around me.” Encouraged by friends and the doctors he knew, Ramani then went about collecting medicines that doctors didn’t need, and shipping them to people who needed them the most. “So many doctors get samples of medicines nearly every day, which they hardly use. I collect these medicines and bring them back to my place.” A process of filtration begins. This includes checking for expiry dates and grouping relevant medicines. “Once I have grouped my medicines together, I begin identifying people who need these medicines and don’t have the financial wherewithal to afford them, and thus go about the distribution.” Ramani goes about distributing these medicines himself, or asks his beneficiaries to come by his place and have them collected.

Earnestness, dedication, sincerity and honesty have for long, been the four pillars over which Ramani has built his service. “I have gone about distributing these medicines without fear, favour or preference for a certain caste or creed,” he says. Not only has he networked with doctors to collect these medicines, but Ramani has also visited several medical camps with large stockpiles of medical supplies, in order to source medicines. The most important rule that he has, is never to derive personal benefit from his service to society. “That’s something I faithfully adhere to,” he says, “In fact, I had a skin



condition and a doctor had prescribed certain medication. These medicines weren’t available in the pharmacy. However, strangely enough, I found them in my box of medicines that was to go out to people who needed these medicines. But I told myself that I was not going to benefit from the service that I resolved to do for others.” Ramani chose to wait until he found the medicines that he needed.

Working as a volunteer, according to Ramani, requires two qualities: commitment and divine grace. “You cannot be successful even in social service without these two qualities. And thankfully, I have been blessed with both,” he says. In fact, his inspiration to engage in social service occurred to him much before retirement, when he worked as a senior audit officer. “When I would visit hospitals to do audits, I could see the number of people who were struggling with life-threatening conditions. On several occasions, we complain about pain in our legs. But only when we see people who

*On several occasions, we complain about pain in our legs. But only when we see people who don’t have limbs, do we realize the value of life and how much we are blessed*

don’t have limbs, do we realize the value of life and how much we are blessed,” he says.

As if 20 years of service were not enough, Ramani feels that there is a long way to go. “I want to keep doing this until my last breath,” he says, his voice full of

commitment, dedication and enthusiasm. “I truly believe that this is my calling and that I can do a good job at making society a better place to live.” Along the way, he hopes that his efforts can reduce the gap between need and lack, especially when it comes to medical facilities. “A number of rural areas don’t have proper access to medical facilities or proper availability of some very important medical infrastructure,” he says, “If in a small way, my actions will help these people; that will give me immense happiness,” he says, “I bear all the expenses of my service, including transportation of these medicines. And I do it joyfully, because I know that there is no better feeling than to know that your actions have helped someone who is truly in need, and needs your help the most.” If there’s a lesson that can be learnt from Ramani’s service to society, it’s simply that age can be no barrier, in the effort to brighten the lives of those around us.

# Widening opportunities at Navjyoti Community College

**F**inancial obstacles cannot stop you from fulfilling your dreams, as Dilkhush Jha, son of a driver, proved when he secured 22nd rank in all India CS Foundation exam. I could not stop my emotions as he came, all dressed up in formals, to distribute sweets for his success. A student of Navjyoti Community College, Karala from Personality Development Course, was awarded 100% scholarship under Navjyoti-TKWs fellowship to pursue B.Com (Hons.) in Banking and Finance from TKWs Institute of Banking and Finance.

I requested him to share his experiences with the current batch students so that they are inspired and motivated. At Navjyoti, we all are truly proud the way he delivered the session which was, by the way, unplanned.

Here are the questions asked by students, who were elder to him, and he happily answered them all with confidence and a smiling face:

Tell us something about your achievements, asked a student.

"I secured 92.79% in class 12 without coaching. In fact, I used to give tuitions to students while I was studying. And then was awarded 100% scholarship in TKWs Institute of Banking and Finance through Navjyoti India Foundation. Recently, I have secured 22nd rank in All India CS Exam", replied a visibly proud Dilkhush and more proud indeed were the students who applauded for the boy who hails from their area.

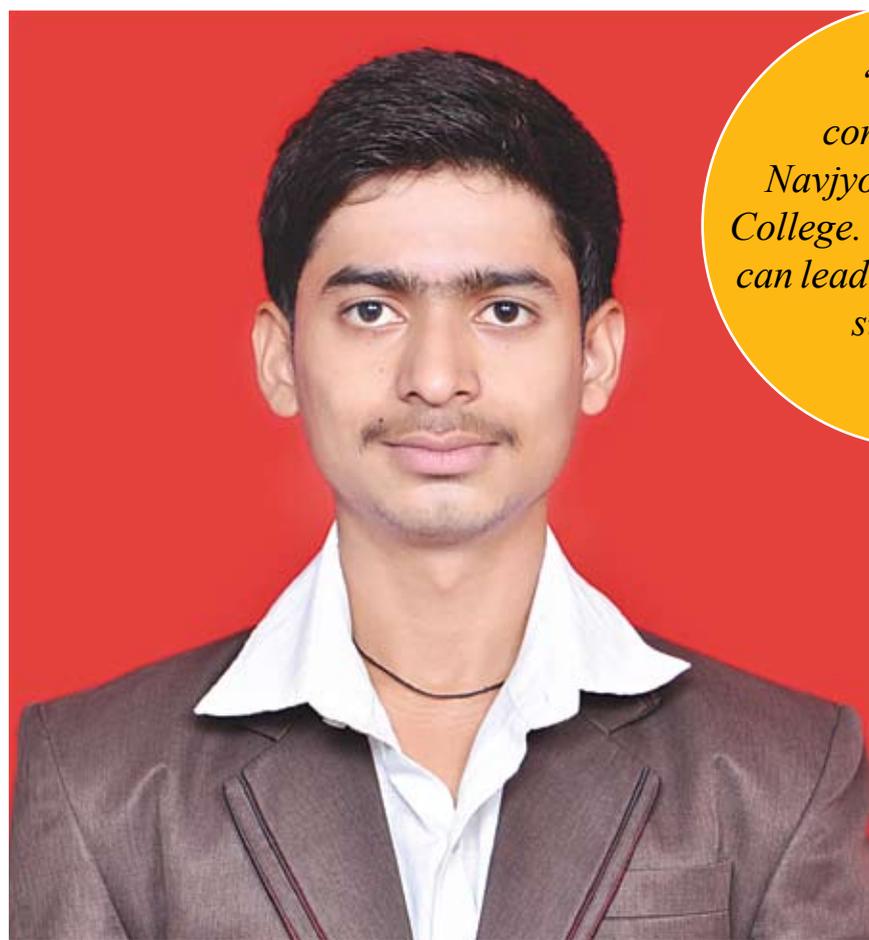
What did you learn in Navjyoti Community College (a project of Navjyoti India Foundation)? another question emerged.

"I learnt confidence in Navjyoti Community College. Only confidence can lead us to the path of success. At TKWs Institute of Banking and Finance, I taught 2nd year student while I was in first year. It is the 'can do' attitude, that helps us to build the confidence within us".

What sets you unique amongst others? A curious boy, 2 years elder to him asked.

"There is nothing unique in me. I have two hands, two eyes, two legs- similar to what others have. But what stood out was the belief in me. I participated in all the activities that college offered as there were learning from simple activities such as conducting rallies, functions, organising celebrations. These events imbibed leadership qualities in me which I didn't realise at that time. Today, I understand that participation is more important than winning".

He further added, "The ability to convey ideas is another important aspect. We must ask ourselves if we are prepared for the corporate world. We must



*"I learnt confidence in Navjyoti Community College. Only confidence can lead us to the path of success."*

enhance our knowledge by observing things and what impact will it have on others."

Recalling the Ripple Effect that he learnt in life skill sessions, he urged students to develop the habit of enquiry, observation and analyse the impact it will have on others and society.

He further asked the students, "Has anyone thought about it, about the impact of our actions on others?" He continued, "Our thinking can change our world", giving examples of Newton and Edison. What has set them apart was their ability to think and ability to apply their knowledge.

What is your secret of success?

He requested for a whiteboard marker and shared his learning from TKWs Institute of Banking and Finance. He mentioned about ASK Principle and drew a triangle with A, S and K at three edges that stood for Attitude, Skills and Knowledge. And in between was the area of success. Dilkhush was seen as a trainer by now. He asked students if he expands A, will the area of success increase? "No", said everyone in unison. What if he expands S and then A? The students got the message by now. "Only if I join all three, Attitude, Skills and Knowledge, the area of success will increase". That's what he did, focussed on all three.

"The attitude of high thinking and bigger dreams to achieve what one aspires for needs to be inculcated", he explained quoting the example of Dirubhai Ambani, the same story which we narrate at the time of orientation session of students, never realising that some students would remember for their life time. "The skills to convince others i.e. how do we sell a whiteboard marker so that the client will be ready to buy your product". Not going far, he inspired students that convincing skills must start from home, "How many of you will be able to convince your fathers to allow you to work at a far off place, think about it?"

When it comes to knowledge, he explained that one needs to practice what one has learnt. And share with others, only then we will be in a position to give back to the society. "Simply reading books will not help. Appreciate W family: What, Why, When, Where. Apply mind as this is the only asset which appreciates and not depreciates. Simple activities like softboard updation based on theme in Navjyoti Community College enhanced our creativity and learning".

"Here in Navjyoti, we learnt to observe through feedback system and give our viewpoints. It was not just a piece of paper for us".

Any incidence that motivated him to

work towards the success he achieved?

Dilkhush shared his achievement of getting selected in Science All India Level Competition that motivated him. Trophies placed at his home motivate him. The ability to host the annual day for the first time in Navjyoti Community

College motivated him. And

most important, the smile on the face of his father motivates him that his life is on the right path. The message that he conveyed was that celebrating small achievements motivates him.

It is often said that one should forget bad experiences and move on in life, is it right?- the questions did not stop as students wanted to interact more and more with him.

"While it is important to move ahead in life, it is equally significant to learn from failures". He explained quoting example of UPA government who are analysing their reasons of failure.

What is the difference between confidence and overconfidence?

He shared, Confidence is when I say, "I can do it", when I say, "Only I can do it", it is arrogance and when I say, "I can always do it right, that is overconfidence."

How did Navjyoti India Foundation help you?

"Navjyoti is instrumental in mapping talent of youth and enhancing confidence by widening opportunities for us". He re-iterated the activities and sessions like life skills, shramdaan, competitions that help them identify their weak areas, improve on them to evolve and grow."

"Navjyoti has enabled me to reach a position where I can give back to my community", he focused.

What is the message for youth of your age?

"I would like to say that grab opportunities, enhance knowledge. There are good resources, faculty at Navjyoti. One must make optimal use of these resources and give back to our college. Returns, at time, may not be immediate, what is more important are the skills that we have learnt at that moment which may help us later on".

All we could hear after that was the huge round of applause which filled the room with hope, motivation, commitment and gratitude!!

—Chandni Taneja

# Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

Swami Yogananda with four others arrived at 8.45 a.m. He looks big, but gentle and well-groomed. He has dark flowing hair, hanging over his shoulders. The group had lunch in the Asramam.

Mr. C. R. Wright, his secretary, asked: How shall I realise God?

**M.:** God is an unknown entity. Moreover He is external. Whereas, the Self is always with you and it is you. Why do you leave out what is intimate and go in for what is external?

**D.:** What is this Self again?

**M.:** The Self is known to everyone but

not clearly. You always exist. The Being is the Self. 'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is indeed so well put as the Biblical statement "I AM THAT I AM" in EXODUS (Chap. 3). There are other statements, such as Brahmaivaham, Aham Brahmasmi and Soham. But none is so direct as the name JEHOVAH = I AM. The Absolute Being is what is - It is the Self. It is God. Knowing the Self, God is known. In fact God is none other than the Self.

**D.:** Why are there good and evil?

**M.:** They are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. Trace the

source of the ego. It ends in the Self. The source of the ego is God. This definition of God is probably more concrete and better understood by you.

**D.:** So it is. How to get Bliss?

**M.:** Bliss is not something to be got. On the other hand you are always Bliss. This desire is born of the sense of incompleteness. To whom is this sense of incompleteness? Enquire. In deep sleep you were blissful: Now you are not so. What has interposed between that Bliss and this non-bliss? It is the ego. Seek its source and find you are Bliss.

There is nothing new to get. You have, on the other hand, to get rid of your

ignorance which makes you think that you are other than Bliss. For whom is this ignorance? It is to the ego. Trace the source of the ego. Then the ego is lost and Bliss remains over. It is eternal. You are That, here and now... That is the master key for solving all doubts. The doubts arise in the mind. The mind is born of the ego. The ego rises from the Self. Search the source of the ego and the Self is revealed. That alone remains. The universe is only expanded Self. It is not different from the Self.

—Excerpted from talks with Shri Ramana Maharishi

## Belongingness Dimensions – Employee engagement

Employee engagement is the commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.

This commitment means engaged employees actually care about their work and their company. They don't work just for material considerations alone, but work for vision and evolution in life.

This means that they are willing to stretch and go beyond their work expectations. They will own up the organization and their work. "This is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential." —David Macleod

When employee engagement is high, they put forth a lot more effort to own up their tasks, achieve quality, and deliver results. The popular belief, so far, has been that putting appropriate systems in place can enhance workforce efficiency. While systems and processes do enhance efficiency, focusing on the people factor and their level of engagement with the organization can bring in workforce effectiveness, which is beyond efficiency. This engagement connects to the extent of -

- employees feeling mentally stimulated
- high trust and communication amongst the employees including management
- employees being able to be child-like and open minded in work and people connect
- employees feel high energy to complete the deliverables and contribute further
- level of pride an employee experiences being associated with the organization
- extent of connect and passion that the employees show in their work
- willing to stretch and pull others with them in the journey to reach organizational vision
- extent to which employees generate love and affection in their working teams
- willingness to stretch, support,

stand by each other in crisis, new ideas, tragedy and happy events within the organization

- Rejoice, encourage and stimulate each other to give their best to work and vision
- Decisions reflecting vision beyond self in work teams

Usually in a social organization where the engagement with the outside society is very high, the people within the organization are taken for granted. Tried and tested ways of yester years become the organizational culture without a serious thought to the present realities and what the employees truly need. The Generation Y and Z who are the current set of employees seek different levels of engagement. The Gen Y and Z are those people who seek choice and meaningful life. Therefore their decision to work in development sector is more a matter of choice and not out of desperation for livelihood. So they will stay only as long as they see active and meaningful engagement. They are also the people who try out innovative processes and are willing to move into varied areas. They are ready to explore and experiment. They are not caught in the need to settle down for routine life and steady income. Money has a transient value and therefore no longer money and incentives are prime motivators or decision factors connected to job and profession.

In the light of this, employee engagement cannot be seen as a set of motivational activities that needs to be done periodically. Instead, it has to be seen how much dialogue, active involvement, feedback and follow through are present within the organization at Intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual level. The people managers have to elevate to the position of conscious keepers and monitor these areas of the organizational culture constantly. Motivation as a focus has no value. Instead stimulating various actions in each of these areas and formulating activities that will naturally

draw the employee into the organizational processes are of more value.

- In Intellectual sphere the extent to which knowledge and insights are discussed, articulated, shared, new knowledge development, activities that develop innovation and creativity, pet projects and so on.
- In the physical sphere the extent to which employees meet, interact and work together at physical level are included - activities like sports, games and fitness, events that involve physical presence and working together.
- In social sphere the extent to which the employees are connected to the society and others in making a difference - common functions, events, campaigns, governance meetings and CSR activities.
- In emotional sphere the space that employees have to personally share, relate to each other like canteen, coffee breaks, family events, space for expressing emotions, get together, annual events to bring out talents, connect with music and arts and so on
- Spiritual sphere is often confused with religion. In the name of developing secular work spaces we have largely forgotten the self and consciousness connect. Gen Y and Z to a large extent seek this connect. Spaces which allow self development, meditation, group healing spaces, fulfilling life dreams, and ability to stretch and reach out to others through energy and so on.

In a social organization many of these may be a part of work process but they should be carefully built into the organization as internal processes too.

Gen Y and Z are also people who seek a fair balance of three things - head and heart; self and group work; outcome and

process. So the activities should have a blend of all these three. Most of the times the engagement activities relate to annual meet, employee benefits, training programs and reward schemes. The significant value adding effort would be to see to what extent are the employees engaged in self and group processes through the day in delivering their work outputs. The possible areas of effort would be -

- The people managers have to first formulate and map various individual and group activities in the organization to different spheres - intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual
- A clear mapping has to be done of the work, position, role and engagement levels in various spheres
- Employees have to be fitted into this mapping and the space where it is low has to be tapped. Efforts at engaging the employees in those spheres have to be planned.
- This has to be aligned to talent management, team work and learning and development processes.

With every team, context and work composition, the spheres of engagement may vary and it has to be perceived with the fluidity it provides. The essence of each activity is more important than the form in which it is presented. Engaged employees become the partners in building organizational excellence.

### Reflections:

1. What are the activities that stimulate engagement in my organization?
2. To what extent am I willing to stretch and reach out to people within the organization?
3. What factors stimulate my engagement and what factors block my engagement with the organization?

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath, PhD.

# Sadguru Gnanananda Fellowship Awards 2014



**M**anava Seva Dharma Samvardhani (MSDS) launched the Sadguru Gnanananda Fellowship Program in 2010. Each year, 3 fellows are identified from rural India and are offered a monthly fellowship of Rs. 10,000 for a period of 3 years. Further, these fellows also get mentoring support from the CSIM team to enable them scale up their organisation.

This year, the nominated fellows are Akshai Abraham, Dilip Patro, and Shoba Gosa. All these 3 change leaders have very high potential for creating a humane and just

society through their field-based organizations.

We believe that MSDS Fellowship at an early stage will reinforce their self-belief and accelerate social change and development.

We invite you to be part of the celebration and join us in wishing these changemakers the best in their endeavours.

*If you wish to nominate budding rural social entrepreneurs whom you think would qualify for this prestigious fellowship program, please write to [chennai@csim.in](mailto:chennai@csim.in).*

**D**ilip Patro, MCA & M. Com, is a software specialist by profession. He met with a road accident in 1997 which resulted in being a quadriplegic. Although physically challenged with less mobility, he uses an active wheel chair and drives a four wheeler to move around.

Dilip is passionate about providing other spinal cord injured persons (SCIP) with training and resources and hence launched 'The Ability People' in 2007.

The Ability People (TAP) is a nonprofit organization registered under the National Trust (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India) and works among the disabled people in and around Visakhapatnam city. It is appointed as a representative for statutory member of Local Level Committee in the District of Visakhapatnam under the National trust.

With active support from PSU's and district administration, and in collaboration and technical support from national & international NGO's, TAP provides mobility aids & appliances; organizes awareness campaign for Spinal Cord Injury Persons, Loco-motor disabilities, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Mental Retardation & Multiple Disabilities in and around Visakhapatnam.



**S**hoba Gosa has an MA in Youth & Community work from Oxford Brooks University. She is one of India's first training professionals to be a certified Business Coach and her workshops are interactive, participatory and creative. She is an experienced trainer with a rich training experience in youth leadership, talent management, communication skills and behavioral management, as well as gender and peace building.

Shoba carries more than a decade of experience in cross-cultural youth engagement work. She has written articles and attended conferences focusing youth work in SAARC and Europe. Since 2003, she has been involved in refugees and asylum seekers projects in England and in SAARC countries.

She is a founder and CEO of Young People for Life India, a non-profit organization, which is committed to the empowerment of young people in our community, especially teenage girls and younger women in disadvantaged rural and suburban communities of India.

She is the recipient of young women achiever of international women's day centenary celebrations award from Government of Andhra Pradesh and SIRD, India.



**A**kshai Abraham is an MBA from Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal. He has over seven years of experience - six years in the social sector in areas of research, program development, project management and organization building and one year of international experience as a cultural exchange intern in Austria.

Akshai founded ProjectKHEL in 2012 merging his interest in social work and sports in order to positively impact the lives of underprivileged children. The organization now uses sports as a platform to impart Life Skills Education (LSE) to almost 1000 children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Prior to founding ProjectKHEL, Akshai was the Program Head of the Development Metrics Group at the Center for Development Finance (CDF) - IFMR, Chennai where he spearheaded a team of researchers and programmers and managed a million dollar grant project funded by Google.org.

Akshai has also worked as a Consultant with AMS, where he was primarily involved with social sector studies commissioned by international agencies such as the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, etc. and also with Aide-et-Action, an international NGO where he worked in fund-raising and education development programmes.



## “We do not prepare our students for CSR. We prepare them for working with the government and continue working with NGOs.”

**Dr. Parasuraman shares with Marie Banu the programmes coordinated at Tata Institute of Social Sciences**

**D**r. S. Parasuraman has over 25 years of experience as a teacher, trainer, activist, administrator and development worker. He holds a Master's Degree in Anthropology from the University of Poona, Pune and a Ph.D. in Demography from the University of Mumbai, Mumbai. He has also been conferred Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) by the Assam University.

He has held key positions in international organisations: as Asia Regional Policy Coordinator, ActionAid Asia; Senior Advisor to the Commission, and Team Leader of the Secretariat; World Commission on Dams; and as Programme Director, Oxfam GB, India Programme. Currently, he is Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India.

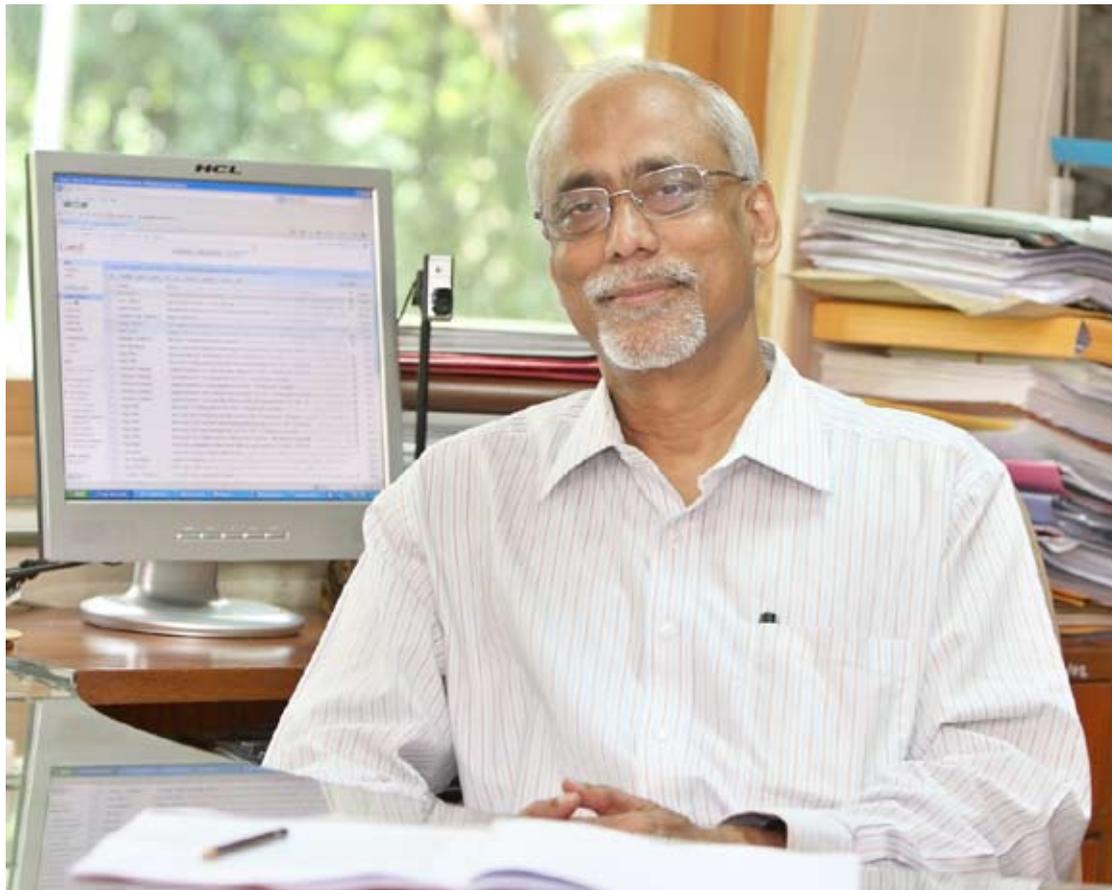
Dr. Parasuraman has been associated with the Narmada Movement from 1987 and was a member of the Indian Prime Minister's Committee to review the Tehri Hydroelectric Project.

He was awarded the Bharat Shreshtha Acharya Award 2012 by MIT, Pune and has over 50 publications in the form of articles in international and national journals, books and research reports.

*In an exclusive interview Dr. Parasuraman shares with Marie Banu the programmes coordinated at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).*

**During your Directorship at TISS you have introduced a number of courses. Can you tell us more about this?**

TISS Mumbai is a great opportunity. It is a great place which is autonomous, government funded, and is not subjected to control by neither the government nor any Trust. So, it is up to one's imagination and ability to see how best you can up position TISS.



It is in that context that I came in as a Director where I was asked to clean up the place. With the participation of the faculty, we started looking at how best we can improve our academic programmes and that is how we got into fundamentally re-structuring the teaching programmes.

We positioned ourselves in terms of schools and centres, with schools having its own disciplinary orientation. We started some inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary programmes and admit around 1000 students for the Masters Programme every year.

With the society favouring medicine, engineering and management, there is a decline in the number of students choosing social sciences. We wanted to make social sciences interesting for children and hence developed a five-year integrated programme whereby children would learn all social sciences in the first year and eventually can get enough credits for two social science disciplines. They also study: mathematics (in the first and second year); how theory developed in biological, chemical, and physical sciences; research methodology; and logic philosophy.

At TISS, we wanted to create young scholars who are very strong theoretically and also analytically—which is what our social science disciplines lack. So, through our integrated programme, children will be good in the subject as well as be good analysts. They will have greater options to move on where they want to go.

We have been offering this course from our three campuses and are also encouraging others to take this curriculum and implement it. The idea is to promote social sciences in a big way.

**With the recent amendment to the Companies Act, do you think there would be more career prospects for Social Science professionals in the CSR programmes?**

CSR itself is not a big deal actually. There is so much that one can do with the government. When you compare with the amount of money which the Rural Development Ministry spends, CSR is only a small percentage of it. The Government of India spends some 300,000 crores of rupees and the State Government spends almost equally. The social sector is very big and what the corporates have been asked to

spend is a very small amount—both public and private sector put together may arrive at some 10,000 crores.

We do not prepare our students for CSR. We prepare them for working with the government and continue working with NGOs. Of course, working with industries, is another option.

**One of CSIM Alumnus was the first transgender to complete her Doctorate at TISS. What were the efforts taken to mainstream the third gender?**

In 2006 we came out with a new vision document where we said that any form of discrimination in the basis of caste, religion, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation would not be tolerated. Once we took that position, then the community used it in the Supreme Court. They asked: ‘when there are mainstream university users, how can you discriminate?’

**Can you tell us about the rural fellowship programme offered by TISS?**

We wanted to somehow motivate our graduates to go to rural areas and work in difficult situations. We started with a fellowship from Tata Trust and found funds from various

sources. Every year, we offer fellowships to around 30 TISS graduates who work in Kashmir, North East, and even in some Maoists affected areas.

We started a fellowship programme along with UNICEF called ‘Development Facilitators’ where 120 facilitators were created. We were also asked to train Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows, and have trained about 300 young people working in conflict areas.

**Can you tell us about any interesting projects that your Social Entrepreneurship students have launched? What is your advice for social entrepreneurs?**

There is an enormous opportunity for social entrepreneurs. Poor people are not without resources. The entire sector of micro credit revolves around them. It is not the issue of whether they have access to resources, but how you can make these resources create wealth for the poor people themselves.

This is the reason why we started the Masters Programme in Social Entrepreneurship. We even have a specialization in the Masters Programme in Social Work which is ‘Innovations in Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods’.

Social Entrepreneurship is the only programme where we do not offer campus placement. The students are supposed to develop a social venture proposal which is evaluated. Eventually, they get a seed capital to start their enterprise.

Some of our students have launched innovative ventures—like reaching dental care to rural people, and creating bio gas out of waste. We have an agreement with DBS bank wherein they fund innovative projects.

**Being part of several disaster management committees and researches, do you think that India competent to handle future disasters?**

India is competent to handle anything and have enormous capacity. But, whether we are willing to be competitive and are wanting to manage is a big issue. We had handled Cyclone Thane very well. It all depends on what we want to do with ourselves. Wherever we have the political and administrative willingness, we do it well.