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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

When we say that nature is wise, one of the things that we refer to is the bond between a mother and her children.

The love of a mother knows no bounds and at times a woman, who is not biologically related to the children, but nevertheless cares for them, is also referred to as their mother.

Mythology and religion make multiple references to the unconditional love between a mother and her child, and the power of motherhood in general. While there are certain natural qualities which are imbibed by a woman on acquiring motherhood, there are also few qualities – responsibility, selfless love, patience, and empathy – which are required for becoming a good mother.

A mother is a child's first teacher, first guide and first friend. She is the epitome of love, affection, sacrifice and generosity. As much as our father is important, it's our mother who literally give us our lives and do most of the parenting during our early years.

It's not about whose role is bigger or better as both parents influence our lives and each one's influence is distinct from the other.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, let us honour the women who shaped us, nurtured us, taught us and showed us what life and love are about.

Marie Banu

Being Deliberately Developmental



This term is coined by Robert Kegan & Lisa Lahey, authors of the book "An Everyone Culture." The authors use the term Deliberately Developmental Organisations (DDO) to describe companies that invest in their people's personal growth alongside performance pursuits. In this article, the term is extended at an individual level.

An individual who is deliberately developmental, manages to hold achievement and personal development together by keeping an eye on the bigger picture and thinking about the values and unconscious needs underpinning what s/he is pursuing.

In day to day life, one can get immersed in "running the race". It is about moving from one milestone to another. It could be about acquiring,

of achieving and of being seen and heard.

No sooner we choose to be deliberately developmental, then we are running the race yet we can simultaneously "switch on" the awareness of why, what and how of our actions. This is a conscious process of going beneath habits and challenging oneself to accept one's shadow/limiting mindset and stop blaming others, and external factors.

Kegan and Lahey say, "PAIN + REFLECTION = PROGRESS. For development to occur, the individual should feel some pain – pain to question, examine, test, and consider their own limitations and the consequences of those limitations.

The book refers to "Working on your backhand" as a term to help individuals confront and conquer mindsets, that are holding them back

from greatness. Being deliberately developmental means, individuals challenge rather than avoid or hide their backhands and reflect when they miss these practice opportunities. A deliberately developmental individual opens up dialogue with others to seek feedback and creates stretch in what they regularly do.

The authors also refer to people typically performing two jobs: the one they are paid for and a hidden one of trying to look good by covering up mistakes, managing expectations, and pretending to have answers. Being deliberately developmental stops energy loss and the drain that happens because of the two jobs. Individuals can instead use their energies to see possibilities hidden in their limitations!

EDITORIAL

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

Yours Energetically

Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi is trainer, facilitator and coach of the Positive Energy (PE) program. She is a spiritual seeker with a vision of transforming her own energy state from surviving to being. In this journey she has gathered deep insights and is 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, she is working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space.

She can be contacted at bhuvaneshwari@teamthink.co.in for arranging Positive Energy training and Coaching sessions.

MIRROR OF HOPE

A third of India's enormous population comprises children. A study by a leading international children's charity found that around 20 million children in India are orphans. The disturbing fact is that out of these, the study finds that only about 0.3% of them actually have deceased parents. The rest are orphans by abandonment. Poverty is a major reason why so many parents are driven to make this decision. Children who are left with no protective systems caring for them, often end up victims of more poverty, child labour and trafficking.

As it happens, the most healing hands are the ones that know pain, all too well. For Jeevan, founder of Asha Kuteer Orphanage, his lonely and "unloving" home environment became his biggest motivation to bring children who are born under worse circumstances, into a loving, nurturing home. Born and raised in a small village in Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh, Jeevan, the eldest of three siblings, often felt his parents favored his other siblings over him. He completed a course on Computers at the local Polytechnic college, but for unavoidable reasons could not pursue a career in the same field. He worked as a medical transcriptionist for a few years. He battled with severe depression, his girlfriend at the time left him and the medications he was taking for his depression rendered him unable to take on a full-time job because he was sleeping till late into the day. His already strained relations with his parents worsened. It was when he hit rock bottom that he had an epiphany. "I thought, why should I run after people for love? I will instead give it to someone who needs it especially," says Jeevan. He decided he would provide a caring, empathetic home for children who knew neither.

"When I started Asha Kuteer, I didn't have any experience or training to build an organization," says Jeevan, "I learned through trial and error. Most of us think providing physical comforts is the bulk of parenting. We forget just how important emotional support is for a child." He provides an example, "We have a girl in our orphanage who witnessed the horrific burning of her mother by a neighbour. After receiving her into our care, we realized she had no control of her bowel movements. At least thrice a week we would receive complaints from her school for this. The trauma had affected her physical and mental wellbeing. We gave her as much love and support as we could and within six to eight months, the complaints drastically reduced." Started in January 2013, Asha Kuteer currently runs three homes in Hyderabad housing a total of 75 children. While basic supplies of food, clothing and school supplies are being donated by generous individuals, the organization constantly struggles to find regular funding.



"The CSIM course gave me great insights into what other NGOs around the country are doing. What stood out for me was 'harnessing the power of technology for social good.'"

In 2018, Jeevan joined the 16th batch of the Hyderabad chapter of CSIM's Certificate Programme in Social Entrepreneurship. He says, "The CSIM course gave me great insights into what other NGOs around the country are doing. What stood out for me was 'harnessing the power of technology for social good'."

While he has been continuously learning and streamlining the work of Asha Kuteer to make it sustainable, Jeevan still faces challenges every day. He highlights a few, saying "First, helping our children overcome a tragedy. We have children who have seen their mothers burnt alive, or forced into prostitution. Sometimes, I have no words to even console them. Secondly, finding funds. My wife and I have used up our life's savings on building these homes, and we work every day to bring in the required money. Thirdly, it's tough to find compassionate and capable staff. We previously had single mothers on our staff, but due to their bad experiences in life, they were spreading negativity

among our children as well."

As per government rules, orphanages like Asha Kuteer can only admit children between the ages 6-18 years in their care. While none of the 75 children under his care are old enough to leave the home anytime soon, Jeevan is hopeful about their future. Asha Kuteer also runs a home for the visually impaired college going boys.

When asked what his aspirations for them are, he emphatically states, "I have no aspirations for the children. They have big dreams of their own which I'll only be too happy to assist them with."

We do not insist on any one career path for them. Recently, one of our girls got selected to play for the Telengana Team at the National Roller Hockey games." Pride is evident when he shares this news.

Jeevan credits his wife Mercy for making his dreams come true. "Without my wife, Asha Kuteer would merely be a hostel," he says. "She bore with me as I suffered my depression. She cared for and nurtured our kids when I had to run

administrative errands and fund raising work, away from home. The only other people who have extended their immense support are my board members," says Jeevan.

"Hope is VITAL for survival," says Jeevan. When he was going through some of his roughest times, he kept a small mirror under his pillow. Every morning before even opening his eyes, he would bring the mirror up to his face, open his eyes and say to himself: "I love you Jeevan". "It was hard because I didn't love myself, but it gave me my last string of hope," he says. Jeevan believes that in service of the children, he has found healing for himself. "When in depression, one tends to think only of one's own problems. However, as I started learning about each of the kids' tragedies, my own problems seemed to fade away. Thinking about the kids, their needs, their education and their problems has made me a less self-centered person on the whole."

Jeevan's vision for Asha Kuteer is, "To see desperate and disadvantaged children grow to be valued members of society with a promising future and a memorable past, empowering them to lead productive lives beyond the orphanage and to become contributing members of society and leaders of the next generation."

We wish him the very best.

—Archanaa Ramesh

Leader & Leadership Matters...

15. Task Involvement : passion unleashed in deep dive



Meaning of Task Involvement in Leadership:

The Leader goes into details of his/her job and has a clear understanding of all related aspects. (LOI, www.discoverself.com). Task Involvement is a state in which the individual's goal is to demonstrate mastery of a task or personal improvement relative to self-referenced criteria, such as improving on their previous personal best. The synonyms of involvement seem to be *captivation, immersion and so on*. The antonyms are *non-engagement, non-participation and so on...*

Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence – Vince Lombardi

Involvement in Task is considered a default factor while discussing Leadership. But this dimension needs to be understood and developed equally if a Leader has to sustain his/her leadership. When the Leader is high on task involvement:

- They push themselves and the team to produce quality
- They constantly strive to be better and therefore set or surpass standards
- They guide and nurture people, contributing to their career progression
- People who work with such leaders learn a lot
- They can drive their day-to-day operations with little or no dependency, as they can rely on their own job knowledge.
- They are in a position to troubleshoot operational issues, using their deep understanding of all aspects related to the task

Over last seven years, I have been associated with Prabhat Ramesh, the CEO of Nidharshana Technologies, a first-of-its-kind Behavioral Analytics platform (www.opptimise.in). He has been an example of what Task involvement truly means in all dimensions of work. An entrepreneur, advisor, writer, and user-experience professional with 2 decades of experience in designing and building world-class software platforms and rolling out end-to-end user-experience strategies, Prabhat has been involved in setting up and managing Offshore Development Centers (ODCs) and user-experience teams for US-based ISVs and Enterprises across diverse domains. He has been a recipient of many Honors and Awards, like Hall of Fame Award @ Symphony Services; Most Valuable Contributor Award and Outstanding Contributor Award @ Aztecsoft; Recognition Award @ Intel Corporation and Spontaneous Recognition Award @ Intel Corporation – 2001. He is an alumni of IIM Bangalore, Apex Institute, and Bangalore University.

Thank you Prabhat for giving me this time to share your thoughts. Let's start with what does Task Involvement mean to you?

Prabhat is quick to respond, "Task involvement to me is whatever that makes a project or product or service a deep success in terms of all stakeholders. For example, if I am building a software, the reseller, the channel partner, the vendor, the prospect, the user all have to say it is a good product; this is possible only when you have a good understanding of all stakeholder expectations. When I say good product, it

can be seen from 2 perspectives: Functional requirements and aesthetic requirements." According to him, functional requirements mean:

- If there is an immediate addressable need the product addresses? If there is no need, the value of the product is low, and nobody would call it a quality product.
- How easily can people use a product? It's ease-of-use.
- How is the user experience, in terms of its delivery and maintenance? For example, how quickly was an issue resolved, who resolved it, how courteous were they, and so on. For the user experience to be above par, some standards have to be maintained.

The aesthetic requirements refer to the kind of audience and cultures being addressed, and it could be something as simple as font or color choice. For both functional and aesthetic, deep dive is very crucial.

Prabhat, what do you mean by Deep dive? Can you give me an example?

"First, deep dive means dive into the depths. You do whatever it takes even if it is going to take longer. Just because you want the end product out, you cannot cut corners and hit a road block later. Quick fixes don't produce quality. In my life, for almost a decade I was into content writing and user experience. I thought I had hit the ceiling and switched into general management. Someone said they would give me a break if I took up business analysis. I then took up a program at IIMB which was very rigorous and had no short cuts. I spent almost one year. I used to work for 12 hours a day and study for 6 hours a day for one full year. I went and did a certification in business analysis. Only then I attended the interview. Again, this is not to convince the world. I myself would think I wouldn't have done justice to my job had I not deep dived.

The second facet of deep dive is Passion. If you are not passionate, you will not dive deep. Task involvement is all about how passionate you are to dive deep and explore the minute details, so that whatever you create will be of quality."

Prabhat, I have noticed both Passion and Deep dive in your response to most areas of work we have done together. Since which age did you pick up this attribute? And what helps it grow and sustain?

"I think for giving my 100% to everything I do, definitely my Dad has a role to play in it. He ingrained in me the attitude to do my best in whatever I take up. During college days, when I decided to join the army, in my NCC days in activities like attending camps, getting two certifications done, I gave my best. When I look back, there have been

certain patches in my life where I have been very passionate. For example, during my NCC days, my post-graduate program at IIM-B, and when I started my first company, my passion was overflowing."



To answer the question how to develop passion, Prabhat draws parallel to Maslow's hierarchy. He says, "Typically, people at the stage of self-actualization are deeply passionate. It becomes a part of their profession and they cannot distinguish between passion and profession. Secondly, people who live with conviction than comparison are those who tend to be passionate. When you live life on your terms, there is more room for passion. In a life out of compulsion, there is absolutely no scope for passion. When people take up a profession just because that is where the bells and whistles are, they have no immediate motive to demonstrate involvement and passion. Social pressure for designation and promotion eats away the passion. Even in government systems, it is a predictable growth. Until people don't take pride in what they are doing, task involvement will be limited. The focus should move to quality than mere quantity. I can either give my best or nothing. There is nothing I can do without passion. There is no life other way without passion for me."

Prabhat, what beliefs do you think will sustain passion leading to increase in Task involvement in a person?

More and more people look at work as a mechanical chore and are focused on getting things done than doing a good job. Quality is something that you do when nobody is watching. We need to ask ourselves, what efforts have I put into anything; or am I happy with my task outcome. Even if someone says it is good, I know if it could be better. People with passion will revisit their task and review. There is always a scope for improvement.

Some of the beliefs that I hold which helps me be involved in task are -

- I believe nothing is better than non-sense i.e., I would rather have nothing instead of non-sense
- I believe in Mercedes Benz tag line – Best or Nothing
- Leave everything a little better than you found it; add value to whatever has been given to you.

- Otherwise don't even take it up.
- If you just have to complete a task, anybody can do it
- Be passionate about whatever you do, there is no other way



I strongly believe that each one of us has immense potential to excel in whatever we do. If we are not going deeper we are only limiting our potential. We are not leveraging our ability to excel at things. People who are passionate are actually exploiting their potential. When the whole world is filled with passionate people, it will be a different planet altogether, for then you excellence all around you. It would be a fairyland. Passion can become infectious. When you see others passionate, it rubs off on you also."

As a Leader who notices perfection and imperfections easily, Prabhat can you tell us what are the flip sides to this attribute? How do you manage to work with people who may not be passionate in their tasks?

Prabhat lights up with a large knowing smile and shares, "When it comes to parenting, I get too passionate and become fussy too. Somewhere I have realized that in this need for deep dive, I am becoming detrimental and it is not helping my kids and others at home.

Too much of task involvement and focus can make you get caught up at the micro level and lose sight of the macro. In management, they say such person is too tactical and not strategic. They are called the sticklers. They can become blind to the big picture. They should be careful not to bury themselves in a hole. That can frustrate others too.

My own personal journey is to see how I can balance the macro and the micro. I am still learning to accept that there can be different standards and at the same



time, encouraging others to move up to a better level. I am thinking maybe they need some more time, guidance, or maybe this is not their priority; can I be a little more accommodative than just shooting them down? We are not showing them the spark the way they want to see it. Once they realize why we are doing what we are doing, the spark will be there in them as well and they will be passionate. Somewhere we kind of force them to be passionate, which will never work. It will again become mechanical. If we get angry or upset, they will start developing aversion towards that passion. They will only wait to hit back when we do not live up to what we speak."

Prabhat, from your experience as a leader, is task involvement possible to be developed in people? If so, how can we develop the attribute?

Prabhat connects to the EQUBE life education program for students that he has been part of and shares, "If there is purpose, there is passion. If you are strongly married to a purpose I don't see why you won't be passionate about it. When I take up a job just because I have to, where will passion come from? Can you go without sleep for three days to write an article? Can you go without eating or drinking one full day to finish writing a piece of code? That's passion. We can't teach people to be passionate. Instead, we can invoke the purpose within them. For example, if there is a person who comes for a writing job, first I will ask them the question are you happy being a writer? Do you really want to be one? Give me an honest answer. If they say no, then there is no point in dealing with them or finding a method to get the best from them. Someone may say yes, I am interested, but I don't know how to do or I am willing to learn. Passionate people are those who have no bounds."

Prabhat thinks willingness and openness to learn are important for task involvement. An 'I-know-it-all' attitude does not help to learn. Find out what they love doing and give them something that they enjoy doing. Lighting the fire of passion is the key. Sometimes they may come to you without a passion. But what you are doing may fill them with passion. Show them something that they are willing to sign up for. Once they are filled with passion, they will certainly dive deep. They will not cut corners."

Prabhat adds, "Interesting enough, we cannot go and ask someone to become little less passionate. I will never do that and would probably say I would rather die than be without passion."

Well said Prabhat, and thank you for your valuable insights. Can you leave some of your punchlines for our readers?

- Best or nothing!
- Try to leave things better than the way you found it.
- Try to raise the bar constantly in terms of your ability to excel
- Just focus on your bit.
- If all are mechanical we are living with robots. Passion is only for humans. Make use of this opportunity where you are born as a human being and be passionate.

Involvement for leadership has two dimensions, Task and People. This article dealt with task involvement and in the next one let us discuss People involvement.

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath



Centre for Social Initiative and Management

Centre 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.

For more information, please visit our website www.csim.in

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EDUCATION: THE ELIXIR OF LIFE



It's something most of us are acquainted with. We grew up learning about it in our schools, through social awareness programmes, and have read about, extensively — India has a literacy problem. While the country has had a disparity between the literate and the illiterate, several efforts have been taken to improve this ratio. For several years now, the Each One Educate One initiative has been working tirelessly at doing just this.

"One of the biggest challenges we see is the magnitude and scale of the problem. Even today, 70% of our nation's population lives in rural India and much of these parts have limited or no access to quality education," says Deepika Amirapu, Trustee, Each One Educate One. "This offers an opportunity to us to tap this large under-served population

by bringing quality education into these communities and making them part of the growth story and contributors to nation building."

While it's no doubt that the country's prolific growth has turned an entire generation into an aspiration-driven class, Deepika fears that the situation has also resulted in a growing divide — between those with and those without access to quality education. "This much touted growth also comes with the risk of a perception that the benefits of this growth is trickling down to the underprivileged. We find this perception as being the first roadblock in any conversation on this topic," says Deepika.

The commercialization and rapid scaling-up of institutions like health and education Deepika feels, is partly to blame as inhibitors to inclusivity. "A new

paradigm of viewing education as a service to society is one of the factors that can reduce the rampant commercialisation of education," she says. "This will go a long way in fulfilling our promise to the nation's children of their right to quality education." In a nutshell, that is exactly what Each One Educate One does — viewing education as a service and an obligation to society.

While Indian literacy rates have seen a steady climb from 61.5 percent to 70.5 percent between 2004 and 2014, the world literacy rate is a far superior 86.3 percent. "At Each One Educate One, we believe that good education, good health and good nutrition are the three parts of the new essential trinity that must become the basic right of every child," says Deepika. She adds: "Only when society is able to give children these three basic

rights, can it demand them of their responsibilities when they grow to become citizens of the country."

While India's growing literacy rate is a step in the right direction, the Each One Educate One initiative believes we can do better. "Our focus is on the quality of education that we are giving the children today, keeping in view the kind of citizens they will turn out to be tomorrow," says Deepika. "By this measure, we would look at students not being just able to read and write but being contributors to the society."

It's not just education that Each One Educate One focuses on, but value-based education as well — or as Deepika puts it: "holistic personality development". The schools it supports, for instance, focus on promoting human values early on in a child's growth and development. These



include values like truth, conduct, peace, love and non-violence. "The hope is that as the child grows, these values manifest into civic and constitutional values of a global citizen," says Deepika.

For all these lofty plans, there are a set of medium-term targets that the organization has set for itself. The first of these targets deals with the parameter of Scale. "We want to scale up the number of beneficiaries who the program has been able to bring into the ambit of education," says Deepika. "From supporting 5,000 children in partner-institutions, we want to sponsor 15,000 students across existing and new schools by 2022." The second is Expansion: "Each One Educate One will, by 2020, have its overseas chapters to support the cause of education in countries where it is still not a basic human right or entitlement for children," she says. "Presently, members of the Foundation from UK, USA and Australia support students studying in the existing partner institutions."

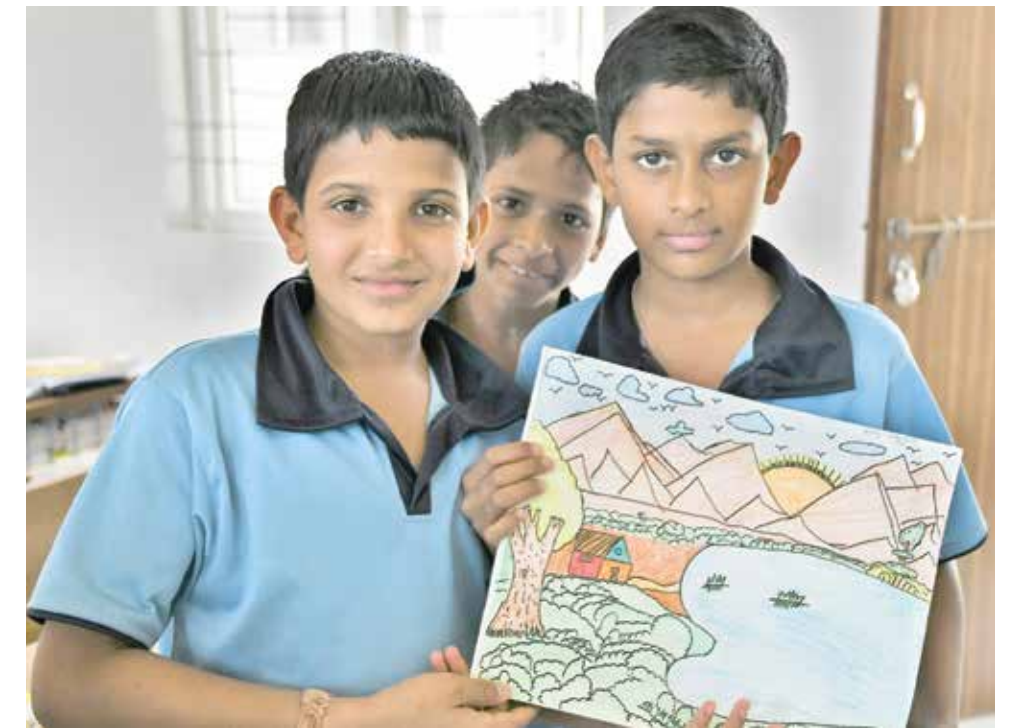
The third goal is that of Awareness: "We want to emphasize on the importance of rural education and the need for a serious intervention by society to bridge the increasing urban-rural divide as far as access to quality education is concerned," says Deepika. Another approach being adopted by the organization is that of championing values based education and its adoption as whole-school approach. "We try doing this by creating awareness among the key stakeholder groups like parents, teachers and the government," says Deepika.

Perhaps the most important step to achieving all this lies in advocacy:

"Each One Educate One, through its partner schools, has been involved in influencing government legislation to introduce values based education in the government schooling system," says Deepika.

The organization draws inspiration from the works of Sri Sathya Sai Baba especially in free healthcare and free education. "His work is a testimony to how these models can work in the present day," says Deepika. And in keeping with the approach of value-driven education, the fundamental value at the core of Each One Educate One is that of "community involvement". Deepika says, "It draws its inspiration from the timeless idea of 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam' (the entire world is one family). Hence, in every activity or program by the foundation, societal involvement is paramount."

Another aspect of Each One Education One that has stood out as a beacon of success is the foundation's sustainability story. "It's a reality in many of our schools today where those who work for us from local areas are already stakeholders," says Deepika. "They help in running of the school and sponsoring children's education. These individuals have realized the value that these schools are adding to the community, and come forward to contribute towards purchase land, construction of buildings and other infrastructure." As India continues its march towards 100 percent literacy, there's no doubt that initiatives like this one will play a key role in that journey. "We should be able to get there (100 percent literacy) in the next two decades," says Deepika, signing off.



As India continues its march towards 100 percent literacy, there's no doubt that initiatives like this one will play a key role in that journey.

Have dementia? Don't forget to dance

Her mother may forget, but at Memories Cafe, she makes new memories for the both of them.



First, you might hear snatches of music. Followed by bursts of laughter. Some days, you might hear singing, usually to oldies from the 1960s.

If you walk towards these sounds, you might be greeted by the sight of a large group of older men and women, accompanied by younger faces — perhaps their children, siblings, or helpers.

They sing, they dance, they move with uninhibited joy, or they sit contentedly and watch the action, chatting with others. It's a session of Memories Cafe in action, and the mood is festive.

Yet celebration was probably the last thing on the minds of these attendees, when they, or their loved ones, first received the diagnosis — dementia.

Just ask Belinda Seet, whose mother, Katherine, was diagnosed in 2011, with Alzheimer's Disease, a type of dementia.

"In the beginning, I cried a lot because you know on TV and everywhere, you always see it's like this person losing themselves, this person not remembering," says Belinda.

But she rallied herself, aware that she had managed to care for her late father, when he had cancer. "Once I calmed down, I decided there and then that I want to make my life with my mom as happy as possible. I want to make as many memories as possible."

"When she goes, the memories are for me."

Dementia is an illness that causes brain cells to die at a faster rate, leading to a failing memory, impaired intellectual functions, and personality changes. According to Alzheimer's

Disease International, every three seconds, someone in the world develops dementia.

In Singapore, it is estimated that over 45,000 people are affected by one form or other of dementia, or 6.2 percent of the elderly population. By 2050, this is expected to grow to 187,000.

There is currently no cure for dementia, but there is medication for Alzheimer's that can temporarily ease symptoms and for some, slow down the disease's progress.

Advised by the doctor to keep her mother's brain engaged, Belinda devised activities to hold her mother's interest:

"I know that my mum loves knitting, so I come up with little plans, and then when I feel that she's already sort of used to a certain pattern, I change the pattern. And that helps her."

She also continues to holiday with Katherine, and makes a point of bringing her along when she meets friends.

And then, there's Memories Cafe.

Started by Singapore's Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) in 2014, it is a weekly affair that sees persons with dementia and their caregivers take part in activities to engage them cognitively, such as, singing, drumming, as well as dance and movement. This is followed by an hour for lunch and socialising.

Activities are held in dining spots accessible to the general public — to heighten the visibility of those with dementia, and chip away at some of the stigma surrounding the disease. Staunch supporters of the programme include Over The Counter at the National Library, the Soup restaurant chain, and Food for Thought at the National Museum of Singapore.

"Many caregivers, when they take care of a person with dementia, the focus at home is on basic needs — have they taken their medicine, did they take a shower, do they have enough food to eat?" says Ruth Wong, programme executive at ADA.

"The physical needs, most of the time, are being taken care of. But not the social, emotional needs."

"So I'm hoping that Memories Cafe will bridge that gap and help persons with dementia and caregivers have a good time together. And through that, it may renew their relationship," says Ruth, an energetic presence at virtually every session.

Belinda and Katherine have been attending Memories Cafe sessions for about two years. "It's actually a wonderful event for Alzheimer's patients, as well as caregivers. Because caregivers need a break, as well," says Belinda, who also volunteers at the sessions.

"There are so many other caregivers around, we all sort of know each other, we talk to each other, we ask each other for information, help each other. It's like a family."

At the same time those with dementia, when "they see other people like [them], they don't lose hope".

Lee Yeong Wei, who has been facilitating Memories Cafe sessions for two years, puts it this way: "It's mainly to have an hour of activity, to spend time together, to share laughter, to play, sometimes, just to have a moment to be silly."

Society tends to treat people with dementia and the elderly with kid gloves, fearful that they may hurt

themselves, but sometimes "niceness is very limiting", says Yeong Wei, a dance professional by training.

"When you say, 'Don't do this', 'Don't do that', you create a lot of fear, and there is already a lot of fear in them. But what about working with the fear, what about facing the fear?"

"My approach in Memories Cafe is that whatever trouble it is, we will try, we will do. That is why we are here. It's not to make things easy, it's to face the difficulty."

His biggest takeaway after working with people with dementia for two years: "The word 'dementia' becomes less and less important for me... I get to see past dementia and see who they are."

Points out Belinda: "When people hear 'dementia', 'Alzheimer's', everyone freaks out, and they always feel, 'ah oh no, oh no'."

But when they chance upon Memories Cafe in action, their perspectives change. "You know, it is not so bad after all, there are things to look forward to. Even if you have dementia, it's all right," says Belinda.

Sometimes, Katherine objects to going out with Belinda. "She always tells me, 'But I'll forget again tomorrow. I won't remember. I go back, I won't remember.'"

"I say, 'It's ok, because tomorrow is a new day.'"

—A story by Our Better World
(the digital storytelling initiative of
the Singapore International
Foundation
(www.ourbetterworld.org)

Aspirations from Slums

Life in Indian slums always reminds us of the consequences of planning rural and urban development separately, unmindful of the forward and backward linkages that influence lives of the underprivileged families. Right from the sense of belonging, people from slums have dual roles and responsibilities that keep them from pursuing a better, happier future. “Children are the most affected in such areas. Adults know priorities and adapt accordingly but children always look for fun, play, learning and a meaningful bond with family, community. The very way of life in the slums is antagonistic to this aspiration,” says Ms Sona Kumar, Managing Trustee of Sona Sarovar Trust in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

A retired Assistant Manager from the Reserve Bank of India’s Central Office in Mumbai, Sona believed that educated and privileged individuals must understand the other half and help alleviate their conditions of life. “The intention is to help. All other variables fall into place when you look for an opportunity to help someone in need. For me, it started with a physically handicapped girl who was crippled due to polio and felt miserable about not being able to move around independently. When I saw her walk with callipers and handle business through the sewing machine we had provided, I felt a strong resolve to touch many such lives. Thus was born the Sona Sarovar Trust in 2007”.

A decade long volunteering experience with an NGO introduced Sona to the challenges of rural life. The journey continued with many projects on rural rehabilitation, sanitation, solar energy and income generation. Sona and team soon recognised the critical link between poverty and illiteracy so decided to focus on child education in the neighbouring slums. Slums are a breeding ground for all anti-social activities and children in slums were exposed to all such dangers on a daily basis, affecting their lives and aspirations. Now that the Trust wanted to improve their lives, entering these communities and building a strong bond with adults and children alike, was inevitably the first significant step.

Play was the best possible way and establishment of tuition centres let the team further interact with the community. “When you work in slums you begin to realise that life in the slums is not just about insufficient infrastructure. Rather, it is about neglect at the individual, family and community level that discourages aspirations outside these slums. We had to annihilate this neglect to create a long term impact in the children’s lives,” says Sona, whose team designed moral education classes for the children. “It is important for these children to grow up to be good human beings and responsible citizens, in order to create room for change,” she adds.

According to Sona, one of the biggest challenges in working with these



Sona Sarovar Trust has touched the lives of more than thousand children over the years and looks forward to building a model in the Anand Nagar slum in Jogeshwari, Mumbai

children has been the movement of their parents between native villages and the city. The situation forces children to discontinue education and engage in labour occasionally, which in the long term becomes their vocation. “They are not bothered about missing their final exams. Parents are not interested in attending parent teacher meetings in the schools,” laments Sona. The Trust enables such children to complete their classes through supplementary examinations. With illiterate parents finding it hard to allocate earnings for education, children dropping out of schools is a usual phenomenon, further increasing the risk of exposure of anti-social activities like drug peddling, liquor supply and gambling. In a quest for engaging them meaningfully, the Trust began to celebrate children’s birthdays and festivals regularly.

Simple excursions and occasional visits to restaurants and movie theatres keep the excitement intact, ensuring



good attendance in the tuition centres. “When we ensure that children attend regularly, it becomes easier to take care of all their needs in a holistic way,” she says. In an effort to improve their health, the Trust began to distribute calcium and vitamin supplements. “A child developed lump in his throat due to some reason and the momentary apprehension about the medicines we distributed scared us. We soon switched over to distribution of fruits and other healthy foods,” Sona recalls. Regular medical camps guide the distribution of health foods and other follow up initiatives like treatment of cavities, distribution of power glasses, etc. With camps becoming a regular feature, the Trust learnt that children were unaware of basic hygiene. Workshops followed to educate children about hygiene, menstrual and reproductive health. The awareness created, along with scholarships ensured that girls attended schools regularly without dropping out.

Sona and team now accompany their children to inter-school cultural competitions, sports tournaments and marathons. “We identify their interests and provide the right kind of preparation throughout. One of our girls has won more than fifteen races. Looking at children’s interest in marathon, we also help in registration and provide professional shoes,” says Sona, adding that catering to children’s small needs has now given them the position to shape children’s future aspirations. Sona Sarovar Trust has touched the lives of more than thousand children over the years and looks forward to building a model in the Anand Nagar slum in Jogeshwari, Mumbai. “Children must grow up to be happy, rational individuals. Our trust dreams of a day when slums do not characterise children’s identity and aspirations. It sure is a long road ahead, but worth all the efforts today,” she says.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

A Cochin Brahmin, Professor in the Ernakulam College, had an interesting conversation with Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan advised surrender to God. The visitor gave a glimpse of an ICS Officer. The gentleman while a student was an atheist or an agnostic. He is very pious now and the change has surprised everyone who had known him before.

In further conversation, the following points were noteworthy -

The visitor said: "One must become satiate with the fulfilment of desires before they are renounced."

Sri Bhagavan smiled and cut in: "Fire might as well be put out by pouring spirit over the flames.

(All laugh). The more the desires are fulfilled, the deeper grows the *samskara*. They must become weaker before they cease to assert themselves. That weakness is brought about by restraining oneself and not by losing oneself in desires.

D.: How can they be rendered weaker?

M.: By knowledge. You know that you are not the mind. The desires are in the mind. Such knowledge helps one to control them.



D.: But they are not controlled in our practical lives.

M.: Every time you attempt satisfaction of a desire the knowledge comes that it is better to desist. Repeated reminders of this kind will in due course weaken the desires. What is your true nature? How can you ever forget it? Waking, dream and sleep are mere phases of the mind. They are not of the Self. You are the witness of these states. Your true nature is found in sleep.

D.: But we are advised not to fall into sleep during meditation.

M.: That is stupor you must guard against. That sleep which alternates with waking is not true sleep. That waking which alternates with sleep is not true waking. Are you now awake? You are not. You are required to wake up to your real state. You should not fall into false sleep nor keep falsely awake. Hence:

Laye sambodhayeccittam vikshiptam samayet punah.

What does it mean? It means that you should not fall into any one of these states but remain amidst them in your true unsullied nature.

D.: The states are of our mind only.

M.: Whose mind? Hold it and see.

D.: The mind cannot be held. It is that which creates all these. It is known only by its effects and not in its true nature.

M.: Quite so. You see the colours of the spectrum. Together they form the white light. But seven colours are seen through the prism. Similarly, the one Self resolves itself into so many phases, mind, world, body, etc. The Self is seen

as the mind, the body or the world. That is to say, it becomes whatever you perceive it to be.

D.: These are difficult to follow in practice. I will hold on to God and surrender.

M.: That is the best.

D.: How can I do my duties without attachment? There is my wife, there are my children. I must do my duty towards them. Affection is necessary. Am I right?

M.: How do you do your work in the College?

D.: (laughing) For wages.

M.: Not because you are attached, simply as doing your duty.

D.: But my pupils expect me to love them.

M.: "Detachment in the interior and attachment in appearance," says Yoga Vasishtha.

—Source: Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Ignorance



Nasruddin earned his living selling eggs. Someone came to his shop one day and said, "Guess what I have in my hand?"

"Give me a clue," said Nasruddin.

"I shall give you several: it has the shape of an egg, the size of an egg. It looks like an egg and smells like an egg. Inside it is yellow and white. It is liquid before it is cooked and becomes thick when heated. Moreover, it was laid by a hen."

"Aha! I know!" said Nasruddin. "It is some kind of cake!"



- A. Simple things are easily overlooked.
- B. We fail to guess the most obvious things correctly.
- C. Abundance leads to blindness.



- A. Why do I miss the obvious?
- B. Does abundance breed ignorance?
- C. How do I respond to abundance?

The importance of ownership in understanding social enterprise

“I want to destroy ownership in order that possession and enjoyment may be raised to the highest point in every section of the community.” George Bernard Shaw

Over the years there has been a considerable amount of time and energy spent on discussing social enterprise – what it is, what it could be, what impact it has. At times this has been quite a creative and stimulating experience, while at other times it has been negative and tiresome.

In all these discussions, I believe, not enough emphasis has been laid on ownership. Who owns these social enterprises and are they accountable not only to themselves but also to the wider public? Accountability is going to become more and more important for social enterprises as they take on public and community sector contracts and have to account for their actions to a variety of different stakeholders.

With private corporations, ownership is often a slippery beast. The ownership of the ‘means of production’ can be difficult to determine as it is, at times, not fully declared – but is often the key to understanding why an organisation acts in the way it does.

Andy Wightman in his recent research and writings illustrates this in the following paragraph which refers to land specifically, but also can be extended to property and the ‘means of production’:

Guy Shrubsole in his recent book, *Who Owns England*, writes that less than one percent of the population owns about half of England and Wales. This cannot be right if we are trying to create a fairer more equal society.

Faced with these glaring inequalities, perhaps the only way to fully understand them is to go back into history and trace the threads that lead us to where we are now. Thus, indulgery historical and simplistic foraging...

Before capitalism there was a feudal system in the UK where a reigning monarch could grant whole tracts of land along with a title as a reward to the aristocracy for some form of favour. This ownership of land meant money could be made and inequality could persist – land being the primary source of wealth.

Land is about power. It is about how power is derived, defined, distributed and exercised. It always has been and it still is thanks to a legal system that has historically been constructed and adapted to protect the interests of private property. (‘The Poor had No Lawyers’ by Andy Wightman.)

At the time of the British Empire, European imperialists conquered foreign lands and introduced a form of ownership applying European laws - in effect taking control of whole areas through the ownership of land. As an aside, many tribes in Africa could not get their heads



around the ownership of land as it was a concept that challenged their existing value system – land to grow crops, air to breathe, panoramic beauty where all things that existed for all the people and, prior to colonisation, could not be owned in our sense of the word.

In Victorian times ownership and property became all important causing increased social and economic inequality as ownership of property would be passed on within families. In fact, those not owning property were excluded from voting, which reinforces Wightman’s comments cited above.

In the mid-19th century the co-operative movement emerged as a way that goods and services could be produced for the benefit of the workers and the wider community, not just the factory owners. Workers co-operatives were created so that they themselves owned the means of production.

In the last two centuries, many voluntary organisations and charities adopted a form of ‘trust’ where ownership was not held by an individual or indeed a group of people. Rather, those organisations were run and managed by ‘stewards’ operating in the best interests of the organisation to provide maximum benefit to beneficiaries. A similar structure was adopted by many housing associations.

In the 1970s, Community Co-operatives were established in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland responding to negative economic factors - such as depopulation, dwindling services and a lack of employment opportunities. This model was largely copied by Community Businesses – functioning business enterprises that were owned and controlled by local people for the benefit of those living in local communities. In these cases, ownership of the business was held by the ‘community’ and not by individuals.

This now brings us to the current

situation with social enterprises. They are not public sector, nor are they part of the private sector where individuals own organisations and companies. Social enterprises sit somewhere between these two much larger sectors – and this, I would argue, is why ownership of a social enterprise is key to our overall understanding of what is and what is not a social enterprise.

Yvon Poirier, a French Canadian pioneer within the social economy, explains the origins of the term ‘social enterprise’ stating that its meaning originally...

...relates exclusively to the type of ownership. By ‘social’, one means that the ownership is by humans (persons) and not by shareholders (Social Economy and Related Concepts Paper, 2012)

He then goes on to explain that in the 1990s the term ‘social enterprise’ – particularly in the English-speaking world, took on a totally different meaning. The term ‘social’ in recent times has come to mean the purpose or sector of activity and not the ownership of the enterprise.

This shift in meaning is significant as the end result of social enterprise activity has become more important than the type of organisation. This has led to current thinking which stresses the dominance of social impact over how that impact is delivered and crucially linked to this, the ownership of the organisation.

In trying to understand the creation and evolution of social enterprise, we have become too bogged down in what a social enterprise does and what impact it claims. We are guilty of overlooking the issue of ownership and this is a situation I feel needs addressed.

In order to address this issue of ownership of a social enterprise, some activists have stressed the need for an ‘asset lock’. This ensures that individuals do not, and will not, benefit directly from their involvement in a social enterprise. In a way, this skirts around the central issue which is about who owns the enterprise – indeed, who owns and thus controls, the means of production. Ownership, in my view, should be more central to our understanding.

Many organisations that claim to be social enterprises are up-front about their social impact credentials, hoping that no-one will look too closely at the ownership of their enterprise. Of course, those private sector businesses with strong Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should be applauded – particularly if they genuinely report on what social benefits they provide and do not only use it as a marketing tool.

However, praising these private businesses for their CSR reporting does

not qualify them as a ‘social enterprise’. In my view a social or community enterprise is about collective ownership maximising benefit to a wider society.

When thinking about social enterprises, the first questions to ask are, who owns it and what is the ownership structure. This will help in understanding where that organisation is coming from and why it is acting in that particular way.

The key issue around ownership is whether or not the social enterprise is acting in a way that maximises social or community benefit, or is acting solely in the interest of the owners.

Collective ownership operating on behalf of a wider community ensuring future sustainability to benefit society has to be preferred to privately owned business masquerading as social enterprises.

In fact, I would go further. I believe that all organisations that have a central social or community purpose should keep regular and transparent social accounts. These ‘accounts’ should affirm the key things about the organisation, including ownership, and at the same time provide an indication of the social and community impact backed up by evidence.

And going even further, I believe that in order to give social reports integrity, they should be subject to an independent audit. For information on a practical way forward, see www.socialauditnetwork.org.

—Alan Kay
Co-Founder,
Social Audit Network, UK

Alan Kay was one of the original founders of the Social Audit Network (SAN) which encourages social and community organisations to keep regular social accounts and have them independently audited –

www.socialauditnetwork.org. Alan is retired but during his working life he had more than 35 years of experience in community development and social enterprise sector in the UK and overseas.

Alan’s background was in overseas development. Since returning to Scotland in 1988 he mainly worked with community-owned enterprises and social enterprises. He remains loosely attached to Glasgow Caledonian University as a Senior Visiting Fellow of the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health.

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“It is a proven fact that Chennai is a safe place for women and children.”

Arun IPS shares with Marie Banu the traffic regulations and systems he initiated in Chennai.

Shri. A. Arun IPS, Inspector General of Police, is the Additional Commissioner of Chennai Traffic Police. He had served as Commissioner of police, Trichy before moving to Chennai in November 2017. His earlier stints include Joint Commissioner, Traffic (North), Greater Chennai Police, and Joint Commissioner, Law & Order (South), Greater Chennai Police.

In an exclusive interview, Shri A. Arun IPS shares with Marie Banu the traffic regulations and systems he initiated in Chennai.

What inspired you to become a police officer?

I had a thought of joining either the Indian Defence Service or Indian Police Service since the time I joined College. I studied Mechanical Engineering and was a class topper. I was also active in extra curricular activities, especially Karate and Martial arts.

I realised that one gets to be isolated while in Defence service, whereas you become part of the society in Police service. Thus, I decided to become a police officer. After completing Engineering, I appeared for the Civil Service Examination. Generally, people choose Indian Administrative Service as their first option, but I chose Indian Police Service.

Can you tell us about the traffic regulations and systems you initiated in Chennai?

Earlier, the Traffic Police officers used to stop the violators, issue a challan, and collect the fine by way of cash. This was called ‘spot fine system’. Many thought that it was a bribe amount. There has been few cases where extra money was collected or receipt not issued by the traffic police officers. This gave room for a lot of allegations.

To do away with this, we introduced the ‘cashless e-challan system’ in May 2018. This system allows people to swipe their cards at Point of Sale machines already available with the traffic police. Those served with e-challans can make payments online through the web portal of State Bank of India, as well as that of Paytm. Fine can also be paid through the Paytm mobile app using a relevant QR code, or by way of cash at post offices, relevant courts and state-run e-sewa centres.

This system was introduced in Hyderabad much earlier, and only 40 to 50 percent of cashless payment has been

reported. But, in Chennai, we have a record of over 97 percent of cashless payment being made. The public has welcomed our initiative, hence this success.

Where do you derive your inspiration for such initiatives? Do you plan to introduce road safety in the school curriculum?

Inspiration for such initiatives come from the public. We read a lot; travel to other countries, and get an idea of how traffic systems can be improvised.

While I was traveling in Australia, I did not find any traffic violators. I would like to narrate one incident when I was on a 300 kilometer road trip along with three other Police officers and an Australian driver.

One of my friends was trying to throw away an empty coke bottle on the sidewalk when the driver told him not to do so. He argued, “There is no one around in the entire stretch of the road, hence it isn’t wrong.” The driver said: “That is the same reason why I am telling you not to throw it as there is no one to collect it and put it in the garbage bin.” I was pleasantly surprised and asked the driver what made him think in this way. He said: “I learnt these values while at school and it was an important part of my curriculum.”

This made me realise that we have a responsibility to teach our children such values while they are at a tender age. We are now working on a school curriculum for road safety and are planning to make it mandatory.

About the Traffic Exhibition hall in Commissioner’s Office?

We have created a Traffic Exhibition hall in the seventh floor of The Commissioner’s Office in Chennai. My idea is to bring school children here and make them get familiarised with the Police Department. They should feel comfortable and develop an interest in our work.

The Traffic Exhibition hall exhibits boards with messages explaining the traffic signals, sign boards, road safety traffic equipment and their use. While the children will go through the exhibits, the robot called ‘Rodeo’ will speak to them explaining the necessity of road safety.

Is our entire city brought under 24x7 surveillance with the Third Eye campaign?

The Third Eye Campaign is the

brainchild of Dr. A. K. Viswanathan IPS, Commissioner of Police, Chennai. We have taken a lot of initiatives from the Traffic department which has been appreciated. Our target is to bring all the Chennai roads (332 small and big roads) under CCTV surveillance and have at least one CCTV for every 50 meters distance. We have achieved 80 percent of our plan and hope to complete this task in a month or two.

We have a monitoring system wherein every 50 cameras are brought under one unit. We have a list of people who have set up the CCTVs area wise and our team goes periodically to review the functioning of the cameras.

In case of sponsors supporting a stretch of 50 cameras, we set up a booth and monitor it.

Live monitoring of all the CCTVs is not required and with over 2 lakh CCTVs in the city, this is not possible too. Whenever there is a problem, we go to that particular area and retrieve the CCTV footage for review.

The entire campaign is supported by the public and private sponsors. Now, we are also getting funds from Corporation, TASMACH, MP Fund, and MLA fund.

People still fear to rescue an accident victim for the legal processes involved for the witness. Your advice on this?

There is a “Good Samaritan Law” that offers legal protection to people who provide first-aid to accidental victims. The law aims to encourage people to assist the

accidental victims without fear of harassment by police. It also protects the “Good Samaritan” from liability, if unintended consequences result from their assistance.

Our traffic police personnel are well informed about this Law and they do not insist on witness for accident cases anymore.

Our city is facing a lot of crimes against children and women. What are your thoughts?

It is a proven fact that Chennai is a safe place for women and children.

Unlike other cities, our city is a much safer place. Domestic violence is present, but the overall crimes have reduced considerably in our city.

Any interesting case in your career which you would like to share?

There has been many interesting cases that I have dealt in my career so far.

During 2004, there was a gang of criminal tribes from Stuartpuram, a hamlet in Nellore district, that used to break into several homes in Chennai while the inmates were present.

Then, I was the Deputy Commissioner of Police at Annanagar and handled this case. I visited Stuartpuram along with my team and camped for over a week. This led to capturing seven of the eight dacoits. Very interestingly, that was the last of the dacoity incident that happened in our State as there has been no such cases reported for the last 15 years.

When I was Deputy Commissioner of Police at St Thomas Mount, my team detected the criminals who were involved in the bureau pulling offences for over a decade. We were able to recover more than 500 sovereigns of gold and hand it over to the victims.

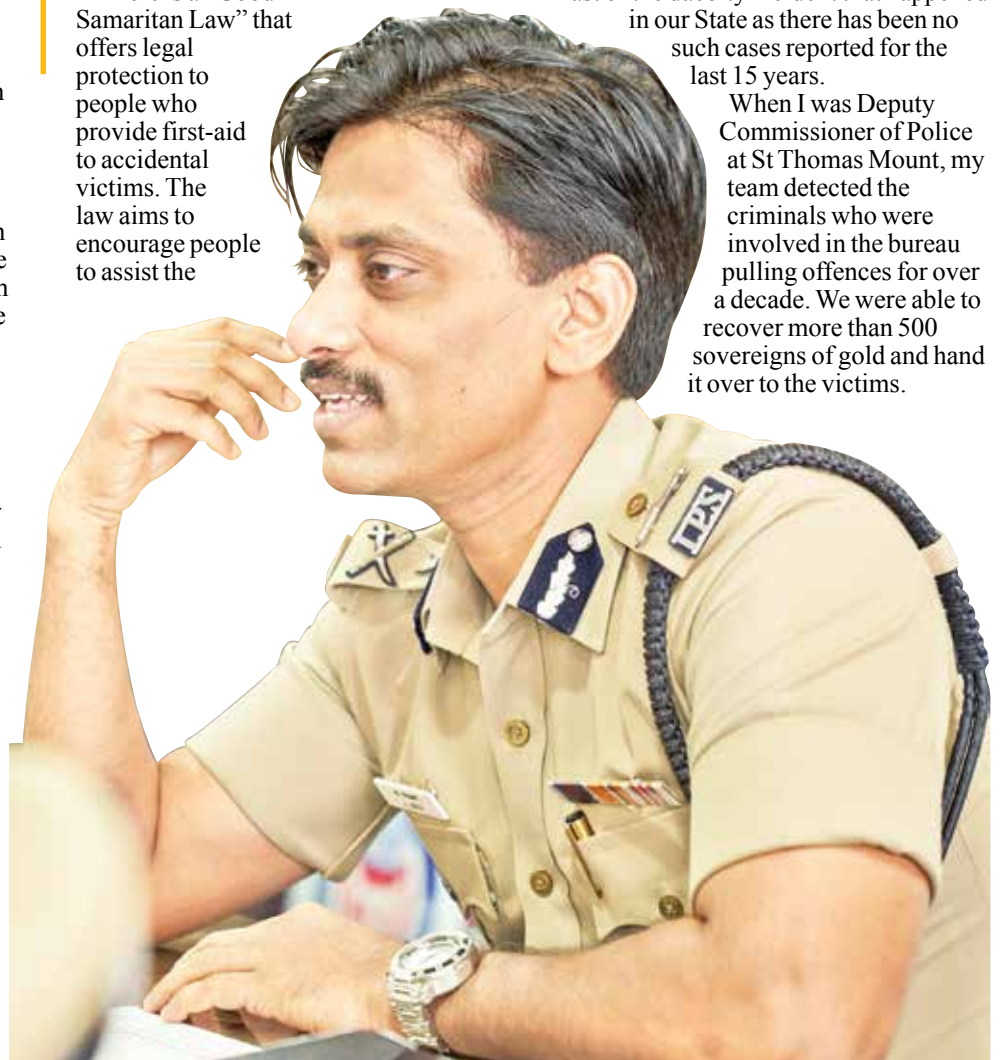


Photo: Srivenkat