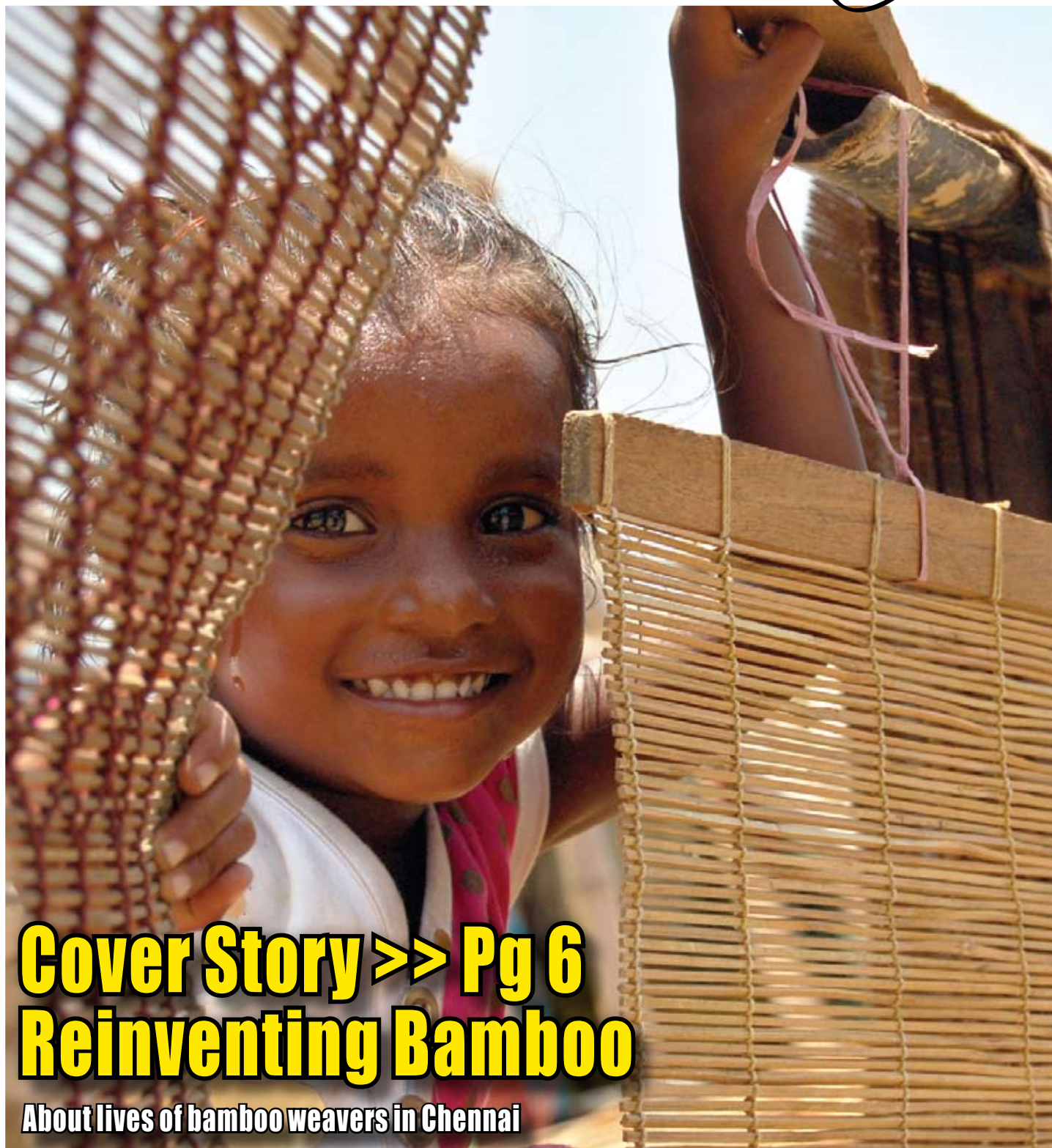


Conversations

A Chronicle of Social Currents

Volume 3 | Issue 9 | September 2012 | For Free Circulation Only | A CSIM Product



Cover Story >> Pg 6 Reinventing Bamboo

About lives of bamboo weavers in Chennai

Photo: Pradeep Kumar. D

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Suthan's effort in providing water and sanitation for rural villages



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"You can get whatever you have lost, but not your time."

An exclusive interview with
Shri. Tamilaruvi Manian

From the Editor

Dear Friend,

"You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want," says Zig Ziglar, a legend in the field of motivation and personal development. One of the ironies of leadership is that you become

a better leader by sharing whatever power you have, not by saving it all for yourself. If you use your power to empower others, your leadership will extend far beyond your grasp. This is very true of great leaders who are not in leadership for personal gain but they lead in order to serve other people.

Let us all learn to let go of our ego, give our powers away and also become a good follower. This is the common trait amongst all the leaders featured in this edition. Why not try to emulate them and lead by example?

Happy Reading!

P. N. Devarajan



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Traffic News



Photo: Lourdu Raj

INFORMATION PROVIDED
BY THE COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE, CHENNAI FOR
THE MONTH OF JULY 2012

Loss of lives due
to accidents

118

No. of accidents
reported

851

NUMBER OF CASES BOOKED FOR TRAFFIC VIOLATION

- Signal violation -25,628
- Wrong side driving - Nil
- Over speeding -8,271
- Violation of one way rule - 18,270

ADD SPARKLE TO THE SEASON WITH A
TOUCH OF THE ORIENT AT **China Town**
A SIP OF SCINTILLATING SPAIN AT **Zara**
A TINGE OF EXOTIC THAILAND AT **Benjarong**
A MESMERISING SENSE OF NORTH INDIA
AT **COPPER CHIMNEY** A SPLASH OF COASTAL FRESHNESS
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Bridging THE DIVIDE

“At CSIM, I learnt the technicalities of running an organization with business acumen. I understood that not the turnover of the organization, but the number of beneficiaries that matters.”

Maria Suthan Dallas, known as Suthan by his friends and colleagues hails from Nagercoil, a town in Tamil Nadu. His father being a Block Development Officer, he grew up in Pollachi and Udumalpet during his childhood. While studying at Presentation convent in Udumalpet, a village near Coimbatore, he got involved in social service activities. Getting into social work was not new for Suthan. Even as a child, he used to collect old clothes along with his friends and donate them to old age homes and orphanages. Keen to pursue social work even after school, Suthan enrolled for BA Sociology in Loyola College, Chennai. “I did not know that there was a bachelor’s degree in Social Work, hence took up sociology,” he says. While pursuing his graduation, he enrolled in the Outreach Programme at Loyola where he needs to spend 120 hours in social work every year. Although he was happy to do this, he felt this not satisfying as wanted to spend more time for social work.

Along with 12 of his friends, who also shared similar passion, Suthan formed an informal community and named it ‘Amity Ministry’.

“I named it ‘Amity Ministry’, which means ‘ministry of love’. We encouraged college students across the city to join us in volunteering at orphanages and old age homes during weekends. Initially, people thought we were a church based group. We therefore started projecting ourselves as ‘Amity’ as we wanted people to believe that we were secular in our thoughts and works,” he says.

Amity has now grown to 600 members. On an average, 80 to 90 members are active every month and the core committee members schedule their volunteering time. “We were finding it difficult to issue receipts to our donors and collect funds from abroad, hence wanted to formalize our work. In 2010, we registered Amity as a Trust,” he explains.

Amity’s campaign for volunteers was through social networking sites. “Although most of the students are from Loyola College, we also have students from Stella Maris, New College, Women’s Christian College, and RMK Engineering College. Every two months, I spend considerable time with the fresh set of volunteers to motivate them further,” says Suthan.

Speaking about Amity, Suthan nostalgically shares an incident which made his belief in



volunteering stronger. “I used to volunteer during weekends at an orphanage that provided care and shelter to children living with HIV/Aids. Senthil (name changed to protect identity) was a young boy who lived here. He was very friendly and I looked forward to spending time with him. One day, I did not find him in the home. When enquired, I learnt that he suffered from chicken pox and expired a few days ago. I was deeply shaken. It was then I decided to spend more time with children who were living with HIV/Aids.”



“Volunteering in orphanages does not necessarily involve only helping the inmates with their day-to-day chores.”

“Volunteering in orphanages does not necessarily involve only helping the inmates with their day-to-day chores. Our volunteers spend time with the children in orphanages and make them happy by playing games and telling stories. We want them to be happy as long as they live,” says Suthan wiping a tear.

In 2008, Suthan learnt that there was a drop in the number of children who were infected by HIV/Aids. It was then he decided to shift his focus on something more important.

Suthan says: “From 13 out of 1000 children, the number of HIV/Aids affected children had dropped to 3 out of 1000 in 2008. I read about Scott Harrison, the founder of ‘Charity: water’, a non-profit organization based in New York that works towards providing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations. I was inspired by Scott’s initiative and decided to move beyond volunteering.”

“58 percent of Indian people use open space for defecation, while it is only 4.8 percent in Indonesia. I launched a Trust ‘The Bridge’ to focus on providing clean water and sanitation for people living in rural areas.



There is a government scheme which provides a grant of Rs. 5000 to construct a toilet in a rural household, but not many are aware of it. We organised campaigns in rural villages and advocated with the government to extend this programme to all rural households. Now, the grant has been enhanced to Rs. 9000 per household,” he says with pride.

Water is essential to maintain these toilets. As the government provided financial support only for toilet construction, The Bridge mobilises local donations and provided tap connections to each of the toilets. Besides, the Trust also organises awareness campaigns on hygiene practices.

Suthan wanted to adapt a social entrepreneurship model in his social work like Scott Harrison did. It was then, he googled and located CSIM. He joined the one-year course Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Initiative and Management in Chennai. “At CSIM, I learnt the technicalities of running an organization with business acumen. I understood that not the turnover of the organization, but the number of beneficiaries that matters. The sessions of fundraising were also really helpful,” he says.

Suthan has now launched a for-profit enterprise named ‘Oinkk’, which provides NGOs technical support to launch websites at a nominal fee. “I wish to train students on web designing and sustain my initiative. The money I earn from this would be used for my charity,” he concludes.

Suthan’s ministry of love has bridged the gaps for many. Let us join him in his mission to reach out to more people who are in need.

—Marie Banu

“There is a significant difference between students in cities and those in smaller villages. One of the reasons for this difference is the fact that teachers in many rural schools are not qualified enough to pass on their knowledge to kids.”

It's just another day at one of the Government schools in Thiruvallur. A bunch of school kids walk past, their incessant chatter filling the air. They spot a van and run excitedly towards it. Once they step in, they are greeted by giant screens, test tubes, laptops, a range of colourful chemicals, lab instruments and friendly teachers. They get down to work as they mix chemicals and perform experiments of their choice. In the process they discover that science can be fun, and that practical hands-on training in labs is crucial to understanding the subject. That is pretty much the philosophy behind Vignan Rath—science labs on wheels, an initiative by V Pasupathy, a city-based scientist and food safety consultant with Parikshan Charitable Trust, an NGO that works towards empowering society through science.

Pasupathy believes that science is an art form, and like any other performing art can be perfected by practice. He says, “There is a significant difference between students in cities and those in smaller villages. One of the reasons for this difference is the fact that teachers in many rural schools are not qualified enough to pass on their knowledge to kids. Besides, most rural schools do not have the infrastructure to support practical training in the form of labs. Although the Government has introduced a variety of measures to support rural education, they may not be effective unless it involves active participation from the students themselves.”

It is with this backdrop that Pasupathy introduced Vignan Rath three years ago; he wanted to make science accessible to children in rural areas, and help them discover the joy of learning through experimentation. He adds, “Our initial plan was to station our van in Thiruvallur district for a period of six months and let children from government schools in the district use the facilities. But, the response has been so overwhelming that we haven't been able to move our van out from there for three years now!”

The Vignan Rath comes equipped with instruments and chemicals necessary to perform over 2,500 experiments. It has a projector, laptops, screen, and four friendly qualified science teachers. “We have at least 150 to 200 children each day at the van, and they do about two to three experiments each, per day. In a month, we reach to around 3,000 to 4,000 kids,” adds Pasupathy. It helps that the atmosphere in the van is informal, and that students can get their doubts cleared in the local language, making it easier for them to understand even complex scientific principles.

Apart from the Vignan Rath concept, the NGO also conducts some large-scale science camps and fairs. For instance, the

Igniting minds



Cognizant Foundation funded our second van for the Vignan Rath programme. They were convinced with the work that we have been doing and decided to donate a fully-equipped van, on their own accord



foundation's 15-day annual science camp in Chennai.

“This camp,” says Pasupathy, “is aimed at mobilising funds for our various programmes, besides sharpening our science skills. That's why it is a paid programme. Participants have to pay 1,500 rupees per head and they can do about 45 experiments each.”

Pasupathy, by his own admission, is not a fan of fundraising, but believes that it is sometimes essential to meet the growing expenses of the NGO. The operation

costs for the van alone is about Rs 48,000 per month, on an average. He is not one to brag about his work either; he believes in letting his work speak for itself. “Cognizant Foundation funded our second van for the Vignan Rath programme. They were convinced with the work that we have been doing and decided to donate a fully-equipped van, on their own accord,” he adds.

Recognition for their work has come

from all quarters. For instance, whenever there is a science exhibition anywhere in Thiruvallur, the district authorities invite Parikshan to participate. Besides, the NGO also participated in Anna University's science fair. The National Innovation Foundation, a national science and technology body that supports grassroots innovations, has approached the NGO to invite scientific ideas and suggestions from school children. Recently, the NGO joined hands with Agastya Foundation, an education trust, to host a three-day mega science fair in which thousands of school children participated.

The NGO is also part of Give India, a network of Indian NGOs that helps route donations, and that has helped it gain more visibility and work with other such organisations that follow a similar approach.

Parikshan has managed to re-define students' approach to science, in its own small way. While, earlier, at science exhibitions in Thiruvallur, students would merely put up charts, now they exhibit live experiments. Pasupathy, however, does not want to take credit for this change. “I'd like to thank our dedicated staff, our

teachers, and head of the teaching programme, Arivaran. All of them are accomplished science graduates in their own right, and they have played a key role in inspiring these children, and being so patient. Most of them work on a voluntary basis and are paid a very small token amount. Yet, they work from their hearts," says Pasupathy.

As of now, the trust has two vans, one in Thiruvallur and one in Kanchipuram district. "The country needs 800 such vans to cover its entire geographic extent, but we only have two," says Pasupathy with a smile, "We have been invited by other states, but taking the programme far and wide is a logistical nightmare. Right now, though, we plan to take the van to Vaniyambadi. It has a sizable population of Muslims, and some of the girls in the community have no exposure to the benefits of education. We are keen to expose them to the magic of science." The NGO also has long-term plans of setting up district education/science centres.

One of the biggest challenges to the NGO's functioning, apart from logistics management, is funds. Pasupathy believes that this has something to do with the mindsets of people. "I am part of various NGOs," he says, "I have noticed that if I'm involved with providing food or housing for the needy, funds pour in. But the same people raise questions when it comes to funding a science programme for rural children. One reason is that, it's not a tangible thing, unlike food or a



house, where there are concrete results to be seen."

He feels that the native intelligence of the country has not yet played a big role in national development – it seems to be reserved for a bunch of English-speaking people from the IITs or IIMs. "This is where the Government needs to pitch in. I believe that the Government is the biggest social worker—we are merely enablers or tools, if you like. So, if they create the necessary infrastructure, we are more than willing to be knowledge partners, with no strings attached." He adds that exposing rural children to science and its benefits is crucial for the country's progress in a number of fields, mainly agriculture. Rural empowerment, he adds, will make Government programmes more meaningful.

At this stage, though, Pasupathy is happy to ignite just a spark of inspiration to rural children. But he feels that for this to have a lasting impact, society needs to change, and understand that investing in education is essential for the nation's progress. "It is a long process though, and we have to wait. I hope Parikshan lasts long enough to see it happen," he sums up. We hope so too.

—Harini Sriram

For more information about Parikshan Trust, visit parikshancharitabletrust.org

Development Directory on Education

Department of Sociology, MOP Vaishnav College for Women launched Development Resource Directory on Education at the time of the inauguration of the People's Club for the year 2012-2013 on 3rd September.

This directory has been prepared by the BA Sociology students with the support of CSIM, and has information for 269 NGOs

and CSR programmes who work in the field of education in Chennai, Cuddalore, Coimbatore, Vellore, and Thiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu.

Shri. Tamilaruvi Manian was the Chief Guest for the event and Shri. A. Sarvesan, General Manager, Human Resources, Orchid Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals received the first copy.

Dr. C. V. Geetha, Vice-Principal, Shri. S. Parthasarathy, Secretary, MOP Vaishnav College for Women; Smt. Uma Maheswari, Head of the Department of Sociology, Smt. Marie Banu, Head - Communications & Networking, CSIM, were part of the event.

If you wish to obtain a copy of this publication, please write to chennai@csim.in.



“In summer business is slightly better because the blinds offer protection against the heat and help to ward off dust. Our clients are anyone who needs blinds, not just this or that person.”

Reinventing BAMBOO



You can call it blind love Or the sheer love of bamboo. I am talking about the passion that consumes those men and women whose deft hands fashion bamboo baskets and window blinds day in and day out on the sidewalks of Chennai which double as their work spaces. Working on their frames with a stone to which a thread is attached, their hands go back and forth, weaving the bamboo strips in quick succession, to create a blind. Finishing touches are added as they dress up the borders and add a touch of paint to some of the pieces. Finally, pulleys and strings are fixed so that the blinds can be rolled up or down and they are ready to be despatched to the customer. All in a matter of days.

In a world where plastic and synthetics rule, it is wonderful to reconnect to our roots with these lovely blinds, baskets (bouquet holders, laundry baskets and *pooja* baskets), and chair swings born out of the creativity of these skilled crafts persons. What is life like for them?

Says Lakshmi who operates out of Chetput: “The blinds are customised, made strictly on order, and are charged for at square feet rates. The prices may vary depending on the intricacies of the design. The smaller baskets are bought for bouquets and have a fairly stable market; but with the chairs, swings, and laundry baskets—there is no telling. There are good days and bad days. The bamboo for the chairs is from Assam (available in Chennai) whereas the bamboo for the baskets is from forests in Pulicat, which we sometimes collect ourselves”.

She and her husband hire other workers to

complete orders, and if volumes are good make what is a reasonable sum. But, given today’s inflation and soaring prices doesn’t add up to much. Hailing from Andhra, Lakshmi and her family originally used to live in Mandaveli near Mylapore in Chennai. The house was broken down and they soon found themselves by the banks of the Cooum.

“We now have a ration card and the government has promised us a dwelling. Let’s see,” she says full of hope and optimism. As she speaks, her little daughter Swathi runs out tucking into a banana and grasping her mother’s shoulder for support. Lakshmi’s other children are at school.

Quiz her on the customer profile and she says: “Our customers are a motley crowd. They come in cars and two wheelers.” But, beyond that she does not know much about the demographics.

This skill that they possess is all that they know having learnt the ropes at the hands of family members. So, a life minus this vocation is probably difficult to imagine!

Her counterpart who sells her wares from another part of the city is very guarded in her responses.

“Give me a fictitious name,” she says “Any name. I don’t want any trouble from the undue attention.”

So I decided to call her Parvathi.

For Parvathi too weaving runs in the family and it was natural that she took to it. “Twenty or thirty years ago there were more of us almost one family on every other street of the city. But, things have changed. Right now, if customers come we are happy; otherwise we just take it in our stride. If there is work there is work, else no,” states Parvathi in an attitude of resignation.

But the sensible strategy that they have all adopted is to work only on order basis as far as the blinds go. She and her husband head operations at this site, but as one person cannot do all the work a team is put together when orders are good.

“In summer business is slightly better because the blinds offer protection against the heat and help to ward off dust. Our clients are anyone who needs blinds, not just this or that person,” she points out in typical business speak.

In what is one of the greatest ironies of life, the take home pay is nothing to write home about for all that labour.

“The profit is not great after making payouts to the coolies and deducting costs of materials, etc. It is barely enough for paying house rent, meeting the cost of school education for the children, and our food bills,” observes Parvathi.

A mild drizzle begins. This is something they dread, because the bamboo can’t be bundled and taken home quickly nor can it be left exposed to the elements.

Clear about one thing and what signals the death knell of crafts such as these she says that she doesn’t want her children to take to this line of work. Mechanisation of course has taken a toll, but customers are also fewer these days.

“Sometimes people think we are a hindrance or an inconvenience since we work out of the platform,” she confides giving voice to her deepest fears.

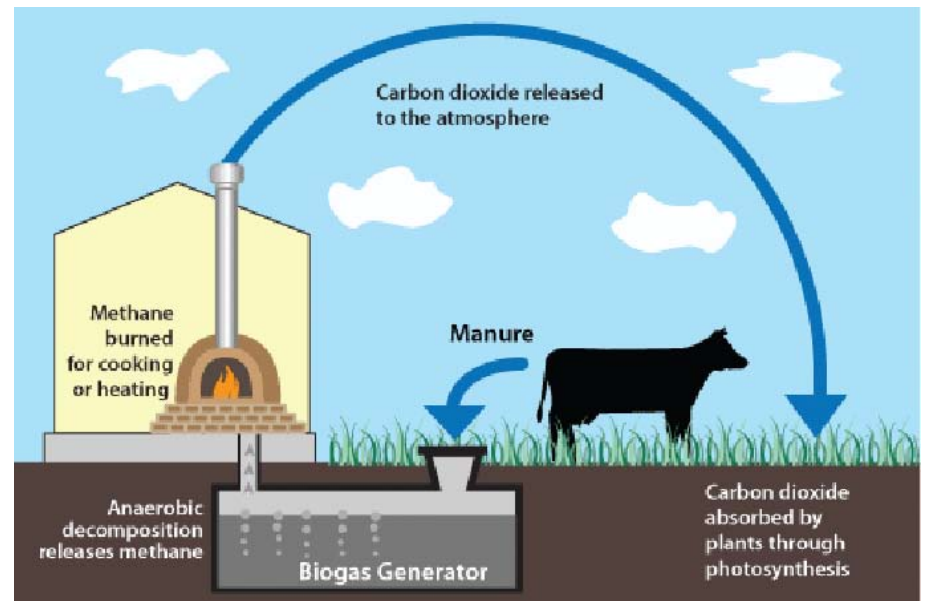
In sum, a little patronage, some marketing and design support, a permanent work space are few of the things that will go a long way in keeping this craft alive and help to provide a livelihood for families and women engaged in this occupation. Perhaps it will also impart a sense of security and safety and remind people that there is such a concept as dignity of labour even in the twenty first century.

—Sudha Umashanker



Photos: PradeepKumar. D

Towards a sustained future



“The indigenous method of producing a source of energy has its share of benefits—both in terms of its positive association with the environment and financial benefits for the involved businesses.”

Mahatma Gandhi’s vision for a self-sufficient India is being taken forward in a co-ordinated effort by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) across the villages of our country. With diminishing natural resources and growing need for substitutes to meet energy requirements, biogas is being seen as an imminent alternative and is being promoted in farms to give rural India its own dependable and sustained energy source.

Maharani Milk Products Company uses bio-gas to boil milk for making ice cream, milk-shake, and other dairy products. The company was established in 2007 with an investment of 10 lakh rupees.

One such enterprise is Maharani Milk Products Company located in Nelvoy, a small striking village 10 km away from Vellore district. Maharani Milk Products company uses bio-gas to boil milk for making ice cream, milk-shake, and other dairy products. The company was established in 2007 with an investment of 10 lakh rupees. It was financed by Union Bank of India in Vellore under Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which seeks to plan, promote, facilitate, organize and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas.

The company’s semi-production unit

is built on two acres of land which contains of a farm with 25 cattle, including 20 cows. It also encompasses a plot of forage to feed the livestock and six people have been employed for maintaining this section. One man and a woman are responsible for farming while four other women work in the semi-production section.

These cows give 10 litres of milk in the morning and six litres in the evening, which is not enough to meet the company’s milk requirement of 1000 litres of milk every day. In order to make up for this shortage they have to procure milk from elsewhere. They depend on villagers who sell milk and governmental milk companies like Aavin to buy surplus milk from.

A family has been employed to live inside the company’s compound to look after the animals. These people are responsible for feeding, washing and milking the cows. They also collect the cow dung and use it to generate biogas.

Manjuna (30) and her husband Kumar have been presently employed by the dairy farm. They have been living and working here since four years now and each of them earn 3000 rupees a month. Manjuna starts her day at 5 AM. She collects the cow dung amassed overnight, washes the cattle, and feeds them. Around 7 AM, she milks

them using a milking machine.

She says that she is very attached to her cows and has even given them names. The names an interesting mix of local and foreign names like Diana, Kiran, Julie, Linda, Shakthi, Shiva, Jay, Helen, amongst others.

“Naming the cows also makes it easy for the veterinarian doctor to find the ill one and treat it,” she says. When asked if anyone is her particular favourite, she says, “I don’t distinguish between them, I love them all”.

Manjuna’s husband Kumar has definite chores in the farm. He carries the collected dung in a barrow and puts it into the bio-gas plant where it is mixed with water to produce gas. There are three pits that are linked by a channel which allows the dung and gas to move from one to another.

Kumar has to also look after the forage plot. He maintains the forage and cuts it for consumption. To fertilize this land, he uses the wasted cow dung. Once the milk has been collected from different sources, biogas is fed into the

plant to start production, and from now, the semi-production group takes over.

This group boils an estimate of 1000 litres of milk altogether.

The indigenous method of producing a

source of energy has its share of benefits—

both in terms of its positive association with the

environment and financial benefits for the involved businesses.

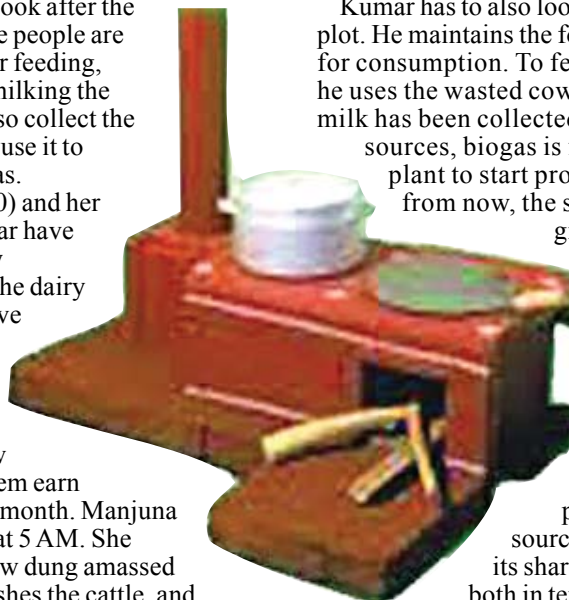
“The returns are favouring the decision of the company to produce and use biogas to run their business. The company makes around 40 percent profit and this business has proved to be beneficial for them. Taking good advantage of cow dung makes them save more money,” says Vel Murugan, coordinator of Aid Chennai, an NGO that focuses on development in areas of Education, Health, Livelihood, Relief and Rehabilitation.

The inhabitants of this village mostly belong to backward castes and most of them are close to nature. Some people are familiar with biogas and use it for cooking and other purposes. However, good luck has not favoured some of them.

About five years ago, along with Maharani Milk products, 10 households had started using biogas. They had availed a loan of 10,000 rupees at an interest rate of 2.5 percent from the bank two years ago, but could not repay it. They also did not possess enough cows to produce sufficient dung for biogas generation. After suffering losses, most of the families were forced to quit. Today, only two of the ten households and Maharani Company are using the system successfully.

The technology is promising for farmers and cattle owners if tapped effectively. It can greatly contribute in meeting our energy requirements and will also realise the great Gandhian dream of making the Indian farmer self-sustained.

— Masseh Abdullah
Asian College of Journalism



Connecting the DOTS

“A cough of two weeks or more needs to be investigated and the Sputum microscopy examination, is the best method of diagnosis.”

It might surprise many that India with its huge population of about 1.2 billion, bears the largest TB burden in the world—in terms of absolute numbers of incident cases that emerge each year. It contributes almost one-fourth of the estimated global TB cases and what is really surprising is that this is a disease that is fully curable.

Facts and figures continue to be alarming as tuberculosis stalks this country when it absolutely need not do so. In this context the work done by REACH, a non-profit organization is very relevant when it comes to creating TB free societies. In fact, that is their motivating goal.

Established in 1998, the primary focus of REACH is on support, care, and treatment of TB. It does not stop here as it covers other areas of work that include advocacy, public education, communication, and research. REACH works with a network of stake holders and is also a member of the WHO Stop TB Partnership, and a member of the Partnership for TB Care and Control, India.

REACH works with technical support and funding through specific project grants as well as programs and interventions designed, set up, and managed by REACH directly. It worked and continues to work with grants and technical support from The Global Fund to fight AIDS TB and Malaria, USAID. The Lilly MDR-TB Partnership and The International Union against TB and Lung disease (the Union) South East Asia Office.

REACH is led by an Executive Committee of distinguished members from different walks of life which is chaired by Dr. M.S.Swaminathan, Member Rajya Sabha and an eminent agricultural scientist, and works as an interface between the RNTCP, India's Revised National TB Control Program, private doctors, and hospitals to ensure that TB patients get high quality treatment they need and deserve. This initiative is known as the Private Public Mix (PPM), which has been the core of our work since inception. REACH works through a team of dedicated doctors, social workers and health workers.

Over the years REACH has built strong networks with private doctors and hospitals, which get in touch once a patient is diagnosed with tuberculosis. A drug box is then acquired from the government Tuberculosis Unit and begins on DOTS treatment for the patient. This is one of the unique aspects

of the organization where the care giver is also the dots provider. Dots is the directly observed treatment rendered by anyone who can access the patient and many are the inspiring stories of village postman, shop keeper tailors, and watchmen who have taken on the responsibility to do this as part of a community ethos.

REACH health workers educate and counsel patients about the disease and the importance of regular treatment. The patient's treatment is monitored till completion, and whenever required, patients are also supported with travel expenses, investigation costs, second opinions, and nutritional aid.

Some of the other activities include patient support—case referrals, treatment

initiation through DOTS; counseling; creating awareness—through different mediums to reach out to different sections in society; resource mobilization—to serve the cause of TB eradication and provide training to private providers; sharing new research on TB; as well as updates in TB diagnosis and treatment.

TB is an infectious disease caused by bacteria and spreads through the air when an infected patient coughs or sneezes. Most people in India are infected with TB bacteria, but only a few get the disease.

A cough of two weeks or more needs to be investigated and the sputum microscopy examination is the best method of diagnosis.

However, TB is completely curable and high quality diagnosis and drugs are available through the RNTCP which is being implemented throughout the country. Regular treatment involving the TB patient taking the medicines under

direct observation of a health worker or community volunteer ensures complete cure. This strategy known as DOTS recommended by the WHO, saves countless lives and dramatically improves the cure rate. Improper or discontinued treatment can lead to a drug-resistant form of TB – MDR-TB. Therefore, untreated TB is dangerous both to the patient and the community. Of course it goes without saying that TB is an economic burden to the country, affecting those in their most productive ages.

Though TB is curable and treatment is available free of cost at all Government health centers across the country under the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP), lack of awareness among the general public and the private health care providers prevents them from accessing the system and utilizing it effectively. Social stigma associated with the disease causes people to often refuse to accept the diagnosis due to fear of rejection by their families, loss of job, and social ostracism.

TB impacts women more severely, with many sent away from their homes; young women are especially vulnerable to this stigma and are often not considered eligible for marriage, even if they are fully cured. All these and other factors prevent people from seeking accurate and timely diagnosis or treatment. REACH has and continues to be a bridge between the patient, the private health care sector, and the government.

How can REACH be helped by society at large?

Volunteer

REACH needs support from volunteers in certain specific areas or at certain times of the year. If you are interested in volunteering with REACH you can contact them.

Become a DOTS provider:

DOTS providers and community volunteers are the foundation stones of the TB program in India. A DOTS provider is a person who overlooks the treatment of a patient by directly observing the patient swallow tablets.

Speak up to stop TB:

Very simply, anyone can read about TB and Speak up to Stop TB. Anyone can help reduce the stigma that forces those with TB to remain silent. Anyone can help those with TB to receive the quality of diagnosis, treatment and care that they deserve.

—Anne Suresh Kumar

REACH can be reached at: www.reachtbnetwork.org



Though TB is curable and treatment is available free of cost at all Government health centers across the country under the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP), lack of awareness among the general public and the private health care providers prevents them from accessing the system and utilizing it effectively



The Loss of Shraddha in India and Need of Its Revival—Men We Want—Real Social Reform

Early in the morning I came to Swamiji who was then staying in the house of Balaram Babu at 57 Ramkanta Bose Street, Calcutta. The room was packed full with listeners. Swamiji was saying, “We want Shraddhā, we want faith in our own selves. Strength is life, weakness is death. ‘We are the Ātman, deathless and free; pure, pure by nature. Can we ever commit any sin? Impossible!’—such a faith is needed. Such a faith makes men of us, makes gods of us. It is by losing this idea of *Shraddha* that the country has gone to ruin.”



Q: How did we come to lose this *Shraddha*?

Swamiji: We have had a negative education all along from our boyhood. We have only learnt that we are nobodies. Seldom are we given to understand that great men were ever born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet! We master all the facts and figures concerning the ancestors of the English, but we are sadly unmindful about our own. We have learnt

only weakness. Being a conquered race, we have brought ourselves to believe that we are weak and have no independence in anything. So, how can it be but that the *Shraddha* is lost? The idea of true *Shraddha* must be brought back once more to us, the faith in our own selves must be reawakened, and, then only, all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.

Q: How can that ever be? How will *Shraddha* alone remedy the innumerable evils with which our society is beset? Besides, there are so many crying evils in

the country, to remove which the Indian National Congress and other patriotic associations are carrying on a strenuous agitation and petitioning the British government. How better can their wants be made known? What has *Shraddha* to do with the matter?

Swamiji: Tell me, whose wants are those—yours or the ruler’s? If yours, will the ruler supply them for you, or will you have to do that for yourselves?

Q: But it is the ruler’s duty to see to the wants of the subject people. Whom should we look up to for everything, if not to the king?

Swamiji: Never are the wants of a beggar fulfilled. Suppose the government give you all you need, where are the men who are able to keep up the things demanded? So make men first. Men we want, and how can men be made unless *Shraddha* is there?

Q: But, such is not the view Of the majority, sir.

Swamiji: What you call majority is mainly composed of fools and men of common intellect. Men who have brains to think for themselves are few, everywhere. These few men with brains are the real leaders in everything and in every department of work; the majority are guided by them as with a string, and that is good, for everything goes all right when they follow in the footsteps of these leaders.

Those are only fools who think themselves too high to bend their heads to anyone, and they bring on their own ruin by acting on their own judgment. You talk of

social reform? But what do you do? All that you mean by your social reform is either widow remarriage, or female emancipation, or something of that sort. Do you not? And these again are directed within the confines of a few of the castes only. Such a scheme of reform may do good to a few no doubt, but of what avail is that to the whole nation? Is that reform or only a form of selfishness—somehow to cleanse your own room and keep it tidy and let others go from bad to worse!

Q: Then, you mean to say that there is no need of social reform at all?

Swamiji: Who says so? Of course there is need of it. Most of what you talk of as social reform does not touch the poor masses; they have already those things which you cry for. For this reason they will not think of those things as reforms at all. What I mean to say is that want of *Shraddha* has brought in all the evils among us, and is bringing in more and more. My method of treatment is to take out by the roots the very causes of the disease and not to keep them merely suppressed.

—Source: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*

Rewards and recognition - the vitamin M (motivator)

It’s amazing how the industrial revolution had brought the concept of dangling carrots to get the work done and it has remained for so long. The world has expanded; moved; perspectives have shifted but the rewards still form an important point of discussion whenever employee motivation is addressed. In belongingness also, rewards and recognition feature as a dimension that affects feeling of belongingness. It is my thinking that the issue of rewards and recognition is more of a socialization process. From young age, we grow people by dangling carrots material or kind; tangible or intangible for every work well done in school and therefore when they grow up the same becomes an expectation. The issue of rewards has been existing as long as humans have existed perhaps.

The word ‘reward’ from a dictionary meaning implies that—which is given in return for something done. In an organization context, reward is associated with appreciation, growth, promotion, and recognition of the employee’s efforts. Though compensation is assumed to be the payment for the service rendered, reward is for the extra input the employees put into their work. The rewards could be in financial terms or growth in management cadre, extra responsibilities, awards, verbal appreciation, etc. There are many things attached to reward like status, power in the group, self-esteem, social standing, growth in the organizational position, etc.

The relevance of this for a social entrepreneur would be very different making it a challenge factor for the social organization which houses both social entrepreneurs as well as the employees who look at their work as an employment. For the social entrepreneur, the realization of the vision and every progress in that direction

is a reward or recognition by itself. Most social entrepreneurs are inside out working with a passion that comes from within. But, for the people who work with the entrepreneur, every extra input may become eligible for consideration for a reward, more so a materialistic tangible reward.

It is a common dialogue: “What do you actually get or have got from all the hard work you put into that community?” “What recognition have you got after all these years?” The response from a social entrepreneur could be: “How can you say that! Isn’t it itself a reward that the community has allowed me to work with them? Look at their smiles!! This is my life calling and not a job to be done. I don’t work for rewards and recognition; I work for self-satisfaction.”

The issue is not about the importance of reward but it is about what reward is and whether it is extrinsic or intrinsic. The social entrepreneurs work with a missionary zeal and strong commitment towards vision that the rewards are usually intrinsic. In Jim Collins ‘Good to Great’ book he mentions that great leaders were usually shy and would not want anything spoken or written about them. But, they knew their direction and pursued their vision relentlessly. The vision in such cases is larger than self. But, for organizational members, reward and recognition play a significant role.

While formulating a performance appraisal system is easy, the toughest part is the selection for reward and recognition. In a product based organization it is easier to determine the extra efforts. In a social

organization for a goal to be reached, team work and collaboration plays a significant role. The outcomes and results may also not be seen immediately and the timelines for results may vary.

The other variable is the scale of efforts and thought processes which will decide the eligibility for a reward. The most difficult thing would be to recognize the differential scale that members of the organization may display. There would be people who identify themselves with the vision and therefore go the extra mile and some for whom it would be just a job. Before instituting a set of rewards and recognition, the social entrepreneur needs to ask what work has been done to enable clarity on organizational vision and identification with it.

The scale has to be built taking into cognizance the bandwidth existing within the organization.

The system should also be developmental, enabling members to grow and carve out a path for growth. The way growth is seen in corporate cannot be applied in social organization. Recognition of deepening of maturity with decision making and accountability needs higher impetus. Ability for people and task management requires equal weightage. In these circumstances, the appraisal system has to be customized, objective and comprehensive, and detailed taking the nature of the organization into consideration. It has to be a process that will motivate the members to deepen their passion, involvement and dedication to the vision, than get limited to getting certain hike in compensation or position.



A Series on ‘Belongingness...nurturing people connect.’

The key actions:

- To formulate certain educational and learning processes to identify with organizational vision and values
- To develop clarity around objectives and outcomes of the projects and processes that will help them reach the same
- To develop certain measurement around these processes taking the bandwidth of the members into consideration
- Have a dialogue based, self and peer evaluation instituting the same in steps building it year after year as a maturity process
- Create enabling environment for the members to work on their development plans and get periodical feedback on their progress

Reflections:

1. What kind of evaluation system do I have for my organization now?
2. What is the current level of clarity or extent of integration of vision and values in the members of my organization?
3. Which are the measurable processes in the project? How can they be measured at self and team level?
4. To what extent have I taken the values of objectivity, equality, justice and sustainability into account while appraising the members?
5. Is the process I have developed developmental and enabling in nature?

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath, PhD

A Welcome Relief

“We cannot be everywhere, but this way, we will be able to create opportunities for local people as well as ensure a certain level of sanitation in slums, places of pilgrimage and locations where large events are held.”

For most developing countries, the need to evolve a system for the hygienic disposal of human waste is paramount. And for us Indians, the problem is all too familiar as even in cities, several pockets suffer from the lack of proper sanitation facilities.

Post his MBA, Rajeev Kher was on an internship in North America in 1999, when he struck upon the idea to start a venture of his own that would generate employment and simultaneously serve a social need. He realised that providing sanitation solutions in India fit the bill, is non-seasonal and at the same time, would generate some revenues.

“Even today, it is a small business. He narrates how 3S Shramik (the service brand under Saraplast Pvt. Ltd.) came into being in Pune. Both his parents were supportive of his aspirations.

On the first job he undertook, Kher was the only employee and personally took responsibility for the cleaning of the toilet at the wedding site he installed the toilets in. And even today, it is the cleaning and maintenance services of the portable toilets that 3S Shramik generates its revenues from. It serves a variety of areas—right from event locations and construction sites to slums and rural areas.

How it works

Typically, the company charges for maintenance, cleaning and repair of the toilets at the site. It operates a cleaning truck with a service technician to visit the sites. “The truck has suction equipment to evacuate the waste, since the toilets are drain free, and cleans the toilet for further use,” explains Kher. It could be daily or on alternate days, depending on the usage of the toilets and customer requirements.

In the west, the market is mature and

estimated to be a US \$7 billion business. In India, it is yet to be recognised as an industry. But most importantly, there is tremendous need for education and training, and that is also one of the focus areas of the company.

3S Shramik has offices across seven cities—including Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai, Puducherry, and Goa—and is planning to enter cities such as Hyderabad, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Nasik, Nagpur, Kolhapur, and Aurangabad. It also services refineries and has a few thousand toilets in Paradeep and Puducherry among others.

Bringing in the units

The company started by importing its units from Germany and the U.S. Kher states that these toilets are of very high quality and comparable to the best in the world. His thinking was, the better the toilet, the more people will be willing to use it. Having started with only Rs. 5,000, he had no bank loans or anyone to back him up as his idea did not seem profitable. Yet, one German company trusted him enough to lend him the unit and take the payment when he was able to make it.

The growth was slow till 2006-2007 when Kher along with his brother Ranjeet and friend Ulka Sagalkar started manufacturing the toilet units in India and formed the company Saraplast. “We continue to source the raw material from our original supplier, which has now been taken over by an American company,” says Kher. Today, it is a small workshop that manufactures 10,000 parts per unit.

Witnessing the boom

In 2009, Shramik was funded by

Aavishkaar, a social venture fund, to the tune of US \$500,000 and since then, its story has changed dramatically.

Currently, the company’s growth is pegged at 30 per cent, growing from revenues of Rs. 2 to 3 crore in 2009 to a projected Rs. 12 to 15 crore this fiscal.

3S Shramik now employs 200 people and has three levels of workforce—top management, the supervisors, and the workers. The supervisory line has been trained to take independent decisions on daily operations to allow the top management to focus on strategic

wherein local people are given these portable units, provided training and cleaning support on a revenue-sharing basis. “We cannot be everywhere, but this way, we will be able to create opportunities for local people as well as ensure a certain level of sanitation in slums, places of pilgrimage and locations where large events are held,” he points out.

For the company, construction sites will continue to be the main revenue generators. Working with non-governmental organisations for pay-and-use toilets will be another area of focus. Thirdly, like the kirana store, Shramik will create toilets that come with a range of associated products like soaps, condoms, and sanitary napkins.

The company has created 15 to 20 micro-entrepreneurs and services about one lakh people everyday. By June 2012, many more are expected to become a part of the network.

Kher is a director and the only representative from a developing country of Portable Sanitation Association in the U.S. He calls it a great learning experience that enables him to design solutions for Indian needs. He is also working with the municipalities in Maharashtra to redefine the concept of a clean toilet to bring it to more acceptable levels and hopes to expand his reach.

“Revenues will eventually flow but we are keener on seeing a transformation in the hygiene levels across the country,” says Kher. And all his energies are focused on just that.

—S. Meera

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Rajeev Kher



decisions. The profile of people includes ex-defence personnel, ACOs (authorised contracting officers) and officer cadres, young MBAs and graduates from smaller cities. “There is no glamour in our job and we find people from smaller towns are more open to join us. They think they can go back and do something for their regions too,” points out Kher.

Going forward

With 3S Shramik seeing fast-paced growth, Kher is more confident of achieving his vision of partnering with the government in raising the bar for sanitation in the country. He has been focusing on creating microenterprises,



“You can get whatever you have lost, but not your time.”

Tamilaruvi Manian shares with Marie Banu about his youth movement that works on Gandhian principles

Shri. Tamilaruvi Manian began his political career as a congressman in 1966. After the split happened in the Indian National Congress party, he joined the Indian National Congress. For some years, he served in political parties like Janata Party, Janata Dal, and Lok Shakti. He then joined the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC). After the merger of TMC with Congress, he continued his career in Congress and served in politics for over 40 years. He resigned from the post of General Secretary of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) on 23rd February 2009 because of the party's position on the Eelam Tamil issue. He has founded the Gandhiya Makal Iyakkam on 2nd October 2009.

In an exclusive interview, Shri. Tamilaruvi Manian shares with Marie Banu about his youth movement that works on Gandhian principles.

What motivated you to launch the Gandhiya Arasiyal Iyakkam in 2009?

When I started Gandhian People Movement, most of my friends advised me not to indulge in this. They said that no one would join my movement and therefore not to unnecessarily waste my time on this. But, I had firm belief that my movement would be a success as today's youngsters lack proper guidance and proper leadership.

My intention was to uphold probity in public life. I tell the youth who want to join my movement that they must be, first of all, very clear in three things. They should not crave after money; power; or name and fame. Whatever they have within themselves, they should contribute it for the welfare of the society. They should not expect even a pie from the society for their own benefit. So, this is the first prime aim of my youth movement.

We have enrolled more than 48,000 youth for the movement so far. They are doing a wonderful job and are now pre-occupied with a signature campaign

against Tasmac. We aim to collect one crore signatures and submit it to our Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 2nd October, 2012.

Your speeches have been inspiring and informative. What are the books that you read most?

My interest lies in four areas. My prime interest is literature and I have read both English and Tamil literature. Particularly, in Tamil literature, I have a strongest fascination towards *Sangam* (ancient) literature—*Ettu Thogai*, *Padhitru-pathu*, *Silappatikaram*, and *Kamba Ramayanam*. I get values and ethics only from those books. I also read English literature. I have read Shelley, Milton, and in fact all literary work of Shakespeare.

I am also interested in philosophy. From Plato to J. Krishnamurthy, I have widely read philosophy. My next area of interest is religion. I read Bhagavad Gita, Quran, and the Bible, and don't discriminate one from the other. Every religion teaches only one thing: Love your neighbor as yourself.

My area of interest is history. I read more than 12 hours in a day and don't waste even a minute. I read even while I journey, be it by train or plane or any mode of transport. You can get whatever you have lost, but not your time.

You have been stressing education through mother tongue. In a competitive society, how do you think that this would help our youngsters to seek

employment in India as well as abroad?

I don't advise the youth to confine with learning only their mother tongue. They have to know their mother tongue in order to learn values. But, to eke out his life, it is necessary for him to know English.

I used to say that English is the language of humanity. It is a universal language. One may not be able to read Spanish, Latin, Greek, or any other foreign language; but their works are definitely translated into English. So, if you know English, you can accumulate knowledge and be familiar with all sorts of literature, science, and philosophy.

English is a medium that would enrich your knowledge. It is therefore essential to know to read and write English. But, at the same time, if you are a Tamilian, you should know your mother tongue—Tamil.

I used to say: you honor other languages, but worship your mother tongue.

There is an instance from Bharathiyar's life that has been shared by Va Ra (V.Ramaswamy) in Bharathiyar's biography. It states that when Bharathiyar was in Pondicherry, Va Ra went from Mayavaram to meet him.

When Va Ra spoke in English, Bharathiyar called his wife Chellammal and said:

“Some foreigner has come here and I don't know what he is trying to say. Ask and let me know what he says.” Va Ra realized his fault and started speaking to him in Tamil.

Bharathiyar's intention was that, when one Tamilian meets another Tamilian, they have to convey their feelings and ideas only through their mother tongue.

Today's youth are turning violent; impulsively reacting; and at times even causing damage to public and private property. Given this scenario, how have youth responded to your movement which preaches Gandhian principles?

We cannot blame the youngsters alone for this. The parents should be teachers and the teachers should be the second parents for the children. The parents pour their love on their children, but at the same time do not know how to groom them. They thrust their impulsions, opinions, and ideas on them. Kahlil Gibran has said that children come through you and not from you. You pour love on them, but don't thrust your passion, impression, or ideas on them.

But, it is contrary now. The quality of education is deteriorating. Earlier, people were seeking education to augment their knowledge and the sole aim was not to earn money. But now, everything revolves around money.

Your advice for social workers?

If you want to be a social worker, first you need to do selfless service. In *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo says: Life is to give, not to take. So, whatever you have, give it to others. Without expecting anything from the society, you have to sacrifice whatever you have. This is the prime quality which a social worker has to inculcate within himself.



Photo: Marie Banu

Editorial

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