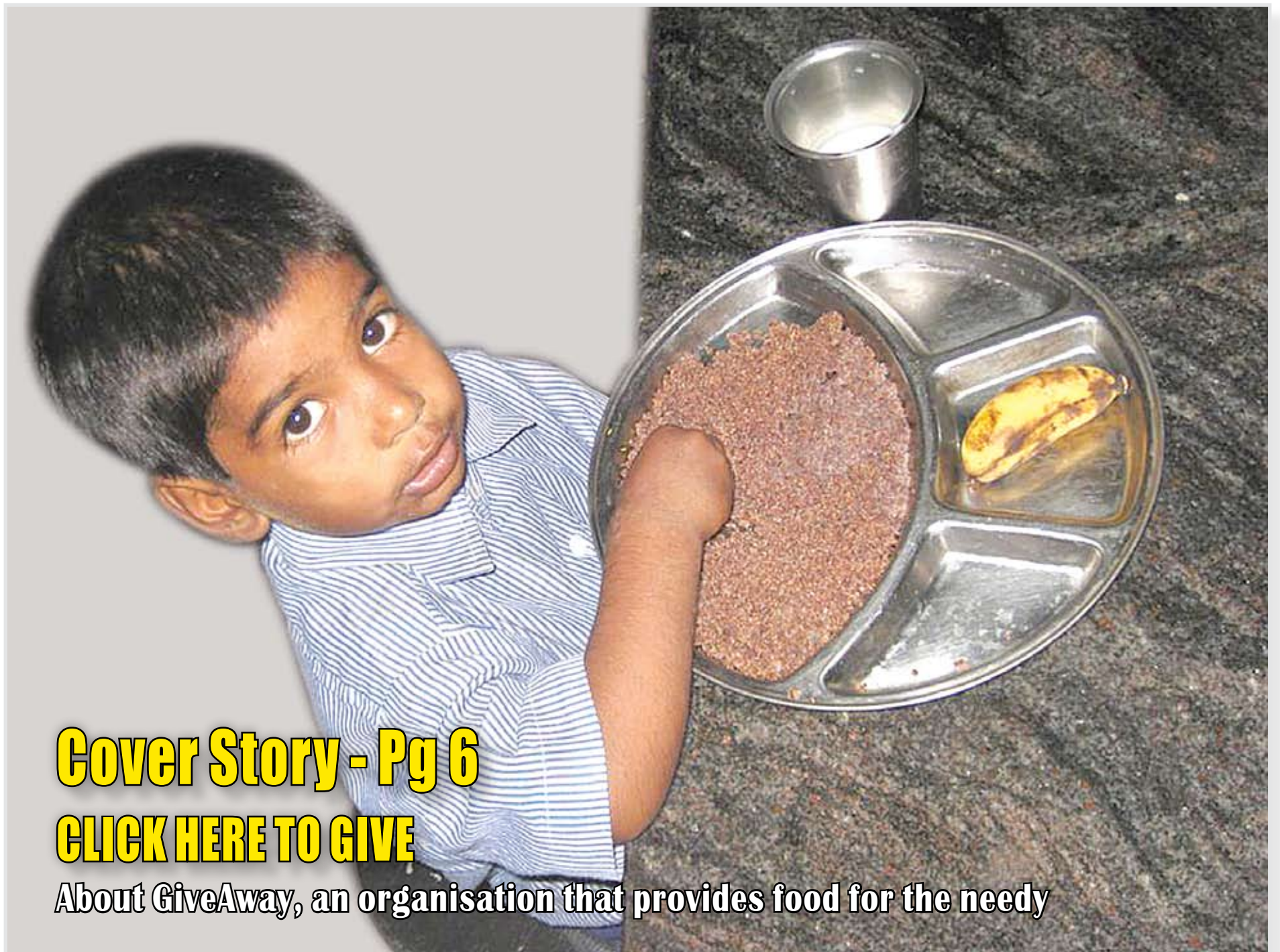


# Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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**Cover Story - Pg 6**

**CLICK HERE TO GIVE**

About GiveAway, an organisation that provides food for the needy



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**"Social change is a slow  
process and we are heading  
in the right direction."**  
An exclusive interview with  
Shri. Arun Roy IAS



# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

There have been various philosophical works done in the past that try to define 'respect' comprehensively. The most substantial work has been done by Immanuel Kant. He stated that every individual deserves respect because he is an end in himself.

Respect means a lot of different things for different people. Giving someone respect seems similar to valuing them, their thoughts and feelings, and acknowledging them, listening to them, being truthful with them, and accepting their individuality.

Courage, perseverance, cheerfulness are virtues found in a person who respects himself. Self-respect is extremely important for the dignity, confidence and personality of an individual. Your entire character and conduct depends on how your estimate of yourself. A self-reliant and carefree person succeeds in the battle of life.

Alfred Whitney Griswold has said: "Self-respect cannot be hunted. It cannot be purchased. It is never for sale. It cannot be fabricated out of public relations. It comes to us when we are alone, in quiet moments, in quiet places, when we suddenly realize that, knowing the good, we have done it; knowing the beautiful, we have served it; knowing the truth we have spoken it"

Respect is like a boomerang. In the sense, you must send it out before you wish to receive it. If you respect your elders today, your future generations will carry these values and will learn to respect you when you grow old. When people respect one another there are fewer conflicts.

Respect, be respected!

—Marie Banu

## Editorial

**Latha Suresh**  
**Marie Banu**

# Trust: Open mind, Open heart, Completing Incompletions

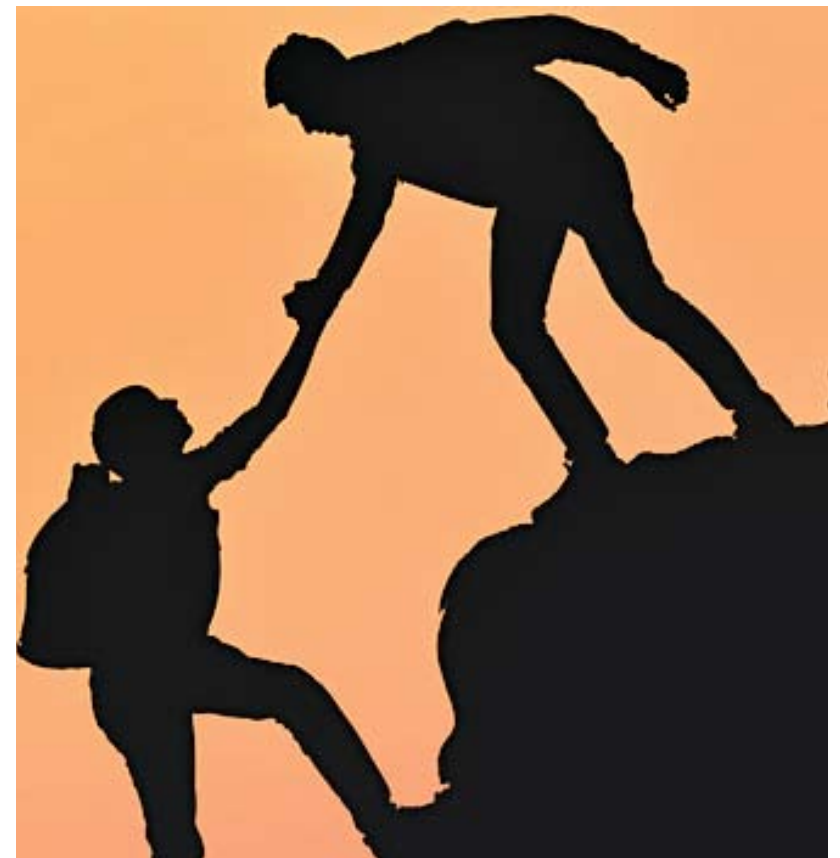
*"If you want to trust someone, look for the points of connection, not the points of divergence." -Lea Brovedani*

To be trusting is willingness to be vulnerable. In trusting someone, we can experience our mental and emotional limits—in other words, one can observe the experience of an open mind and open heart towards situations and people that one interacts with?

I am presenting here some thoughts and experiences with trust.

Trusting and being trustworthy is an ongoing pursuit. I am volunteering for a cause now. In this context, I am experiencing the dynamics around trust in every encounter. What would make the other person's heart open towards the cause? This is a moment of trust building. I experience that building trust requires me to be first open towards the other—even mental chatter in the head interferes with the trust that can be potentially built. Like an ECG—sensitive to heart's activity, trusting as a process is sensitive to our thoughts & emotions in the moment. Trust is both, rational and emotional and gets amplified based on the mindfulness one can bring to the situation or to someone.

Rebuilding broken trust, particularly with close family members is challenging. There would be life stories where family members do not speak to each other, or their relationship is strained because trust between them eroded. Here, trust is not as much rational. It's more emotional. One would need to complete those emotional in-completions to rebuild trust. Something that is incomplete, for e.g.: an apology, unhealed grief, takes away a lot of energy and in the process leaves very little space for trust to emerge. Completing in-completions is about letting go



past hurts, disappointments, un-met needs and expectations and lack of forgiveness towards others.

Here is a short story about trust.....

Little girl and her father were crossing a bridge. The father was kind of scared so he asked his little daughter, 'Sweetheart, please hold my hand so that you don't fall into the river.' The little girl said, 'No, Dad. You hold my hand.'

'What's the difference?' Asked the puzzled father. 'There's a big difference,' replied the little girl.

'If I hold your hand and something happens to me, chances are that I may

let your hand go. But if you hold my hand, I know for sure that no matter what happens, you will never let my hand go.'

In any relationship, the essence of trust is not in its bind, but in its bond.

Would you look at your life and see whom do you trust, like the little girl? What makes trust happen in that relationship- is it love, is it caring or commitment or something else? And would you like to express those elements in other relationships in which you want to build trust—can there be intentionality in your actions?

## 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](mailto:bhuvaneshwari@teamthink.co.in) for arranging Positive Energy training and Coaching sessions.



# Becoming an Insider

The influence of education and micro finance on the lives of rural poor, particularly the women has been demonstrated by many initiatives. Amudha Surabhi Sevai Maiyam, based in Kannayiram Taluk of Dharmapuri district also follows suit. What makes it unique is the transition in the Founder's vision. The journey from an outsider's perspective to that of an insider, has helped him recognise the values of self-employment and the principles of credit worthiness in a rural setting.

"I guess that's the difference in running your own NGO. Working in other organisations exposes you to different perspectives of the issue being focussed and does not give you the liberty to change the course of an action suiting to the interests of the target group. While it is all about decision making in the former, it is more procedural in the latter," explains Mr D Dharmalingam, Founder of Amudha Surabhi Sevai Maiyam.

Hailing from Dharmapuri, Dharmalingam was well aware of the development sector's contribution to the social progress in his district. Soon after graduation in Tamil literature, he joined the *Arivoli Iyakkam* as Assistant Project Coordinator. *Arivoli Iyakkam* is a movement aimed at eradicating illiteracy by developing a network of volunteers who went to villages to teach children. Teaching aids and study materials were also distributed. "The three years that I spent with *Arivoli Iyakkam* allowed me to interact with a wide range of people. Initially, I spoke only as a representative and kept reiterating the significance of education, like any other outsider would," he says.

Gradually, Dharmalingam began to see how people associated themselves with an educational initiative. As part of his work, he visited 33 Panchayats, and eventually realised how people perceived education. He also saw the critical influence of their lifestyle with regard to education. "It was this open observation that helped me build relationship at the grassroot and district levels. I saw my role as an interface and did my best to realise the outcomes," he says.

Dharmalingam also focussed on agriculture and in developing his land so as to ensure a steady flow of income for his family. "This was my responsibility and I had to take a sabbatical from development work," he adds.

After four years, Dharmalingam joined a NGO that focused on micro-finance. Hooked to the idea and the impact it had,



he formed 66 self-help groups (SHGs) within a month. With his extensive contacts and relationships that he had built earlier, he was recognised as the face for this NGO. This had a heavy bearing on him when the NGO decided to move out of the region.

"SHGs needed a nodal agency and the groups formed were too young to be left by themselves. I felt that I was accountable and had to take up the responsibility," he says, indicating the birth of Amudha Surabhi Sevai Maiyam in 2005. Working closely with the SHGs, Dharmalingam discovered how credit worthiness was understood in the villages—both by local leaders and external money lenders.

"Cash availability in these villages was a great issue once. Today, credit worthiness is no longer individual oriented and the open discussion of needs amongst the self-

group members is a milestone in itself. There is more accountability in the villages and the women are comfortable to borrow from the Panchayat now," he says.

Dharmalingam and his team have formed 272 SHGs and all activities are managed by a team of six staff members in his organisation. Visibly proud, he reiterates that there are no money lenders in his Taluk and that resources have been built through savings. "The groups have utilised more than 50 crores worth subsidy loans and continue to avail loans from different government schemes. Savings has become a habit now," he smiles.

Dharmalingam does not dismiss the idea of defaulters and appreciates how women have learnt to resolve this problem within their own groups. Accustomed to government schemes and loans, women also began to establish their self-employment ventures. Production of bricks, umbrellas and ropes, animal husbandry, small eateries, tiffin delivery services, flower shops, etc., are run by women. They also inspire young girls who are now aware about their right to education. Early marriages have drastically reduced in this region.

Dharmalingam is very content with the

impact his organisation has been able to create. However, he is in complete awe of the fact that SHGs have become a source of social strength for the women in these villages. "They have recognised the need to build an income base besides engaging in agricultural activities and no longer complain about low levels of income from agriculture. This is where I would like to appreciate the value of self-employment. These women have helped me un-learn the falsely perpetuated association between education and income. Whether educated or not, self-employment is an option that everyone must think of," he asserts.

Trying to cash in on this excitement in self-employment, he has also initiated talks with the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Training Centre to introduce a new range of vocational skills that women can take to. With classes scheduled to begin from September 2017, he is very positive of the impact this move would create.

"This is my valuable lesson from CSIM's Social Entrepreneurship Outlook Programme. Introduction of new strategies must be guided by the changes that evolve during the course of intervention. We waited out to see how our SHGs evolved. We know their strengths now and are confident of using the same to create a wider impact through new programmes," says Dharmalingam.

—Shanmuga Priya.T



# The KPO with a difference



**S**athya Kumar R, founder & CEO, Techindia Infoway, started his entrepreneurial journey in 2000 building custom ERP software applications for clients in manufacturing and healthcare. In early 2003, a serendipitous meeting with a client in the US, who was building a sleep lab, enabled him to transform Techindia into a healthcare management services firm. Today, the company employs over 600 people and serves clients in the U.S., Japan, Canada and Australia offering high-end, 'near real-time' cardiac monitoring, sleep disorder monitoring, EEG/EMG, clinical trials and highly specialized e-ICU and e-Nurse support.

Sathya, who is also an active angel investor, is media shy and spends most of his time in the world of healthcare and disruptive technology. We convinced him to share his journey for Smart CEO's Hidden Gem series, which tracks profitable, growth companies that are often away from the glare of mainstream media.

It was 6 AM on October 30th, 2016, a Sunday and more importantly the day of Diwali. The sound of 1000-walaha and display of rockets, took over the sky, almost all over Chennai. The scene was no different in the Ambatur Industrial Estate area. Though not a residential neighborhood, there were people out on the streets celebrating the festival of lights. Amidst the festivities, the scene inside the

office of Techindia, a non-descript building in Ambatur, is very different. Over 360 people walk into work, clad in new clothes, sweet boxes in hand, but gearing up for a full day at work. Mind you, this is over 60% of the overall staff strength at Techindia, which employs over 600 people.

At Techindia, people love their work. More importantly, they understand the supreme importance of the work they do; Techindia monitors, in near real time, vitals of patients in step-down ICUs and homes in countries like the U.S., Japan and Australia. In case a patient develops an emergency, Techindia's 'central command center', manned by highly skilled clinical techs, activate the emergency services protocol as per the SOP.

Techindia's clients – mostly Hospitals, GPs, IDTF's and Satellite clinics – have adopted the advanced healthcare monitoring technology. But, while the technology is at the cutting edge, real-time monitoring of healthcare data was a bottleneck for several of these clients from a cost and program efficacy perspective. And, that is the problem Techindia solves for them.

## The early days – a chance meeting with a 'sleep lab group' entrepreneur

The Smart CEO caught up with Sathya last month to get a first-hand account of his entrepreneurial journey. The biggest

question we had was how did he manage to convince a hospital in the West to outsource such a critical process. After all, there is a zero percent tolerance for error, and usually, healthcare processes that were outsourced were around workflow management, billing and insurance, but never real-time healthcare vital data processes. So how did Techindia bag its first client?

Sathya explains in detail, "I still remember the early days very clearly. It was around 2003 when a friend in the US was building a network of sleep labs – a facility that monitored and treated patients with sleep apnea and other sleep disorders. Techindia was actually roped in to build a workflow management ERP application for this client. We did this well. As the sleep lab scaled up, our client realized that real-time patient monitoring could not be done in a financially viable fashion, on-site besides shortage of skilled technicians in all care centers.

We said – let's take a shot at it. We'll hire a small team, primarily electroencephalography technicians and a neurologist – who'll then be trained by the client. We got started with this, delivered this well and fortunately for us the client then opened 12 more sleep labs in the US and we scaled up with them."

Over the last decade, Sathya has developed a deep passion for healthcare, personally picked up the technical knowhow and has setup a professional

training academy for all clinical technicians working at Techindia. The clinical team has to go through an international certification process, with all relevant regulatory approvals, continuing education and clinical compliance in the client's country.

The segment Techindia initially tackled was sleep disorder diagnostics. As this business grew, there was an opportunity to build multiple business verticals like real time patient heart monitoring, clinical trials, e-ICU/ step down ward monitoring and e-Nurse desk.

Sathya proudly says, "Today, through our clients, we monitor over 5000+ cardiac patients daily; Over 1.2 billion heart beats are monitored every single day here at Techindia."

The clinical data team is ably supported with a voice-support team that calls for an ambulance or an on-site physician support if needed, after the interpretation process is complete. There is a 3-minute window to take action, if an event is detected. Sathya says, "Our recruits are often critical care nurses. They understand the value of time, the value of care coordination and the value of a life. They are people who're 'ON' 100 percent of their time at work, focused on delivering hospital-grade oversight."

## High barriers to entry business

Sathya explains that the space he operates in has very few players. "It is not

an easy segment to break into. It took me two years to close my first cardiac services order," he says.

Once the business comes in, there are a few critical areas to take care of – high quality 'zero tolerance to error' operational process, robust sales process, compliance, certifications, training and continuing education.

At Techindia, Sathya leads the sales efforts personally. "I do have the support of our sales people in the US, but it requires the entrepreneur to be there. A prospective client has to see our facilities, our sincerity and our work process besides good referrals." In addition to sales, the entrepreneur is also focused on further building the core team. "The certifications and training are part and parcel of what we do," he says. These certifications are not only about compliance; there are impromptu workshops, online classes, concordance exams and special training programs specific to client process.

#### Betting on healthcare startups

As Sathya built Techindia, he also made a few investments – ranging from angel to Series-B – in several disruptive medtech companies. He's been tracking the sector for a while. On one end, there are consumer companies like Apple and Samsung building apps for tracking health data. On the other, there are healthcare companies collaborating with these consumer companies to launch IoT devices that supplies the data needed by these apps.

However, Sathya believes that it is still early days. "My biggest grouse against the consumer health app segment is that – how reliable is this data? Is it medical grade data that can be used to make serious actionable healthcare decisions?" These are very valid questions and Sathya says, he's betting on healthcare technology startups that are working at the cutting edge of real time, highly available, multiple vitals monitoring using scalable cloud architecture. "The crucial aspect here is to ensure various medical sensors work cohesively with secure data, analytics funneled with

business intelligence to take meaningful and actionable decisions, customized for every patient."

In India, he's part of few start-up forums that offer funding and active mentoring. Globally, he's invested in a few ventures that are working on next generation healthcare IoT, medical robotics, real time patient monitoring and assisted living.

#### The next three years at Techindia

For the global markets, the next frontier for the company seems to be in the e-ICU, medical robots & Healthcare IoT area. The company has made early inroads in this segment and Sathya is convinced of the potential here.

Over 4 years back, Sathya wanted to launch the sleep and cardiac monitoring business for the Indian market. However, when he studied the market with a consulting firm, he felt it may be too early. The insurance industry was still in its nascent stages and there was no access to high quality patient monitoring device. But, he believes, now the time is ripe.

Sathya is working on a confidential project, in sync with a European partner, to launch an affordable care continuum & management program that is medical grade and remotely manageable for urban & rural India. "The key is to get the logistics and pricing strategy right. At this point of time, the thinking is we won't charge for the device itself. The idea is to charge only for the care management service time line," explains Sathya.

Techindia plans to roll out its India strategy and product within the next financial year.

"Of course, the opportunity in e-ICU, medical robots, healthcare IoT and cardiac monitoring for patients abroad continues to be tremendous and we'll continue to build our capabilities there," says Sathya, as he wraps up.

—This article was first published in  
TheSmart CEO Magazine  
(www.thesmartceo.in)



**His area of focus:** Divides his time between sales, strategy and growth

**Key Mantra:** Every team member at Techindia must understand the value of time, the value of care coordination and the value of a life

**Professional passions:** Healthcare and Disruptive Technology; Angel Investments and mentoring

**What next for Techindia?** Expand capabilities around e-ICU, Healthcare IoT, medical robotics, real time patient monitoring and assisted living

#### Techindia, in numbers

<b>600</b>	No. of employees at the firm
<b>3-minutes</b>	Time available for a Techindia technician to activate the emergency services protocol as per the SOP
<b>4</b>	Serves clients in 4 global markets – U.S., Canada, Japan and Australia.
<b>5000+</b>	No. of patients monitored everyday at Techindia
<b>1.2 billion</b>	No. of heartbeats monitored every single day



## CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INITIATIVE AND MANAGEMENT

**C**entre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani. It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship.

CSIM offers **training and consultancy to social enterprises** – for-profits and non-profits – to facilitate them to apply

successful business practices and yet retain their social mission. It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives.

For more information, please visit our website [www.csim.in](http://www.csim.in)

#### Contact Persons:

**Ms. Marie Banu,**  
Director, Chennai  
@ 9884700029

**Mr. Ramesh Balasundaram**  
Director, Bangalore  
@ 9845211311

**Mr. K L Srivastava,**  
Director, Hyderabad  
@ 9912656112

**Dr. Madhuri. R,**  
Head, Coimbatore,  
@ 9840222559

**Mr. Sandeep Mehto,**  
Head – Hosangabad,  
@ 96696 77054

CSIM also facilitates **Social Accounting and Audit** for social enterprises, CSR projects, and NGOs through Social Audit Network, India (SAN India).

For further information, please contact:  
**Ms. Latha Suresh,**  
Director, SAN, India  
@ 92822 05123.  
[www.san-india.org](http://www.san-india.org)



# CLICK HERE TO GIVE

*In just five months since its inception, GiveAway began catering to 500,000 people in Chennai alone. This included at least 1,000 homeless people who were fed every day.*



A couple of years ago, three friends who went by the names of Mohamed Asif MH, Nareshwar Sivanesan and Fahd Khaleel Wallajah were spending a day at Chennai's Marina beach when they chanced upon an elderly person rummaging through a pile of garbage, in search of food. Not far away, a middle-class family was tossing leftovers from their meal. "This was a full-plate meal that could have easily fed at least two hungry people," says Fahd, recollecting the incident, which paved the way for the trio to start GiveAway. Two years since its inception, the organization has been one of the most successful crowd-sourcing platforms around, focused on social causes. In a nutshell, GiveAway's mission is simple: provide for the needy by sourcing from excess. "We started by collecting leftover food from households, wedding receptions, restaurants and parties in Chennai," says Fahd. "We personally went to these places, collected food and ensured that it was packed in a safe and hygienic manner before being delivered to the beneficiaries."

In just five months since its inception, GiveAway began catering to 500,000 people in Chennai alone. This included at least 1,000 homeless people who were fed every day. And this, even the company began growing with zero marketing costs. "Individual contributors helped the startup stay afloat," says Fahd. He continues, "Our real breakthrough came with the devastating floods that washed out Chennai in December 2015, which saw us brainstorm and chance upon the idea of crowd-sourcing, which took form and shape next year." The company began operations with its share of challenges, though. "Convincing different corporate enterprises, negotiating and bringing them onboard, was our greatest one yet," says Fahd.

When the floods left thousands of families homeless and hungry, GiveAway began realizing that it had bigger tasks ahead. "We contacted nearly 10 corporate enterprises who could come to the rescue of the hundreds of people affected by the floods," says Fahd. From names like McDonald's (donation: Rs 10 lakh worth of coupons) and e-grocer BigBasket

(crowd-funding campaign on the GiveAway platform, raising essential groceries worth Rs 22 lakh), there was some semblance of a response. Soon enough, Foodpanda chipped in with a crowdfunding campaign to source Biryani for 20,000 people from various restaurants in Hyderabad, with local travel company, Parveen Travels helping transport the food through six Volvo buses, even as others sent essentials for 5,000 families who lost their livelihood. "In total, GiveAway sourced around 200 tons of food and essentials, valued at nearly Rs 5 crore," says Fahd.

The success of its Chennai Flood Relief distribution got the trio to realize that they were addressing crises on a global level. "Our team decided to work on a platform that would connect donors to the beneficiaries, and allow them to donate the bare necessities," says Fahd. Today, GiveAway has joined hands with e-commerce platforms like



BigBasket and Snapdeal. "These companies can list their products at a discounted rate on the GiveAway platform, and donors can then make purchases of products they'd like to donate." The products are then sent to verified beneficiaries. By registering on the platform, donors can track the quantum of their contribution, and the subsequent impact they have made on the beneficiaries. "Corporate partners cover shipping and handling costs, and deliver the products pledged by the donors to the beneficiaries," says Fahd.

How does GiveAway's business model work? "We generate revenues by being a facilitator between the donors and the beneficiaries," explains Fahd. "Neither the donors nor the beneficiaries are charged. Our commission model ensures that our

corporate partners get extra sales, because of which their business is oriented towards social causes, which in turn creates value for them." But challenges are still, aplenty. "They lie in facilitating demands of each orphanage, especially since most beneficiaries do not have supporters, which calls for effort on our part towards creating awareness and bringing supporters on-board," Fahd adds.

Bootstrapped thus far, GiveAway now says it's looking for funding from venture capitalists and impact investors. The money, it says, will be invested in talent, digital facilities for homes and orphanages, infrastructure, and logistics. "We want to get all orphanages, old-age homes, children's centres and the like, under one roof," says Fahd, adding: "In the next three quarters, we want to get every home and orphanage

in South India on our platform and then focus on strengthening our pan-India presence. We also plan to introduce geo-tagging to let you find an NGO or cause that is in your locality."

With a team strength of 12, GiveAway says it has impacted the lives of over 700,000 people thus far, across the country. The start-up was also associated with other major causes, including the Maharashtra drought in 2016 (in association with Snapdeal) and Cyclone Vardah in Chennai and the Gujarat Floods earlier this year. "We are also launching a feature for special events," says Fahd. "For instance, a person can donate food during special occasions to various homes and orphanages. GiveAway has a consolidated database of 2,000 such homes, with an average size of 50 members per home. Most of these homes are spread across major metropolitan cities in India."

While most of GiveAway's major campaigns run successfully on corporate platforms, with enough social media presence, the start-up has also evolved as an independent platform over time. As on date, the platform is hosting over 12 campaigns. "The main goal is to bring every home or orphanage in this country into one fold and give them a digital voice," says Fahd. "Our vision is to create a global platform, which connects every person in need to a person who can address it, through technological and disruptive innovations."

With civil wars and global terror dominating the ongoing narrative, GiveAway says that millions of dollars spent on rehabilitation programmes do not reach the actual beneficiaries. "This is where GiveAway, a startup which does not accept cash donations, could play a pivotal role," Fahd says. "We look forward to undertake major sustainable developmental projects, such as solar-powered water pumps, rural electrification, and medical assistance through our hospital partners." The start-up is planning to expand in East Asia, the Middle East and Africa. "At the end of the day, all we hope is our our startup gets the backing of renowned impact ventures, as we strive towards change," Fahd signs off.

**For more information, please visit [www.giveawayindia.org](http://www.giveawayindia.org)**





# Understanding the principles and history of social accounting and audit

I increasingly believe that to understand why things are the way they are and why they are not something else we have to know about the past and try to understand it.

I am currently helping to advise on a research programme called CommonHealth which is co-ordinated by the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University. One of the really interesting elements of the research is a look back at what happened with the community business movement mainly in Scotland in the 1980s and 90s. It is extraordinary how we interpret the past in different ways adding and detracting bits and pieces to fit our view of the present. The past is definitely open to interpretation but, if we manage to be as objective as possible, it can help us see the present and the immediate future with more clarity.

One interesting aside, and an issue that has arisen within the research project, is that the years ‘post-internet’ are much more widely accessible than the time before the internet which is sometimes overlooked as it involves reports and archives on dusty shelves...

Involvement in this research has recently led me to think about the historical roots of social impact assessment – where it has come from. In this blog I want to consider the reporting on impact and in particular the historical development of the principles around social accounting and audit.

Long before the establishment of the Social Audit Network and back in 1993, Community Enterprise Lothian (who I worked for at that time) worked jointly with others to hold a conference in Edinburgh called ‘Counting Community Profit!: Defining and Measuring Community Benefits of Local Development and Business Enterprises’. The conference attracted a number of important speakers – George McRobie (new economics foundation and Founder of the Intermediate Technology Development Group), James Robertson (author of ‘Future Wealth’ and ‘Future Work’), Rob Gray (then Professor at University of Dundee and author of ‘The Greening of Accountancy’) – to name just a few.

The conference was over-subscribed and pivotal in many ways as the Institute for Social and Ethical Accountability (ISEA) – now called Accountability – was formed shortly after and the new economics foundation went on to explore ‘social audit’ more and subsequently wrote the ‘Social Audit Workbook’ with John Pearce. Those working in ‘social audit’ as it was known then, used much of what had been discussed in the conference to devise principles for ‘social audit’.

After further consideration following the conference ‘social audit’ adopted the



following principles:

**Multi-perspective:** reflect the views of (all) those involved with or affected by the organisation.

**Comprehensive:** (ultimately) embrace all aspects of an organisation’s social etc. performance.

**Regular:** take place regularly (annually) and not on a one-off, occasional basis, and become embedded in the culture and operation of the organisation.

**Comparative:** offer a means whereby an organisation can compare its own performance over time; relate performance to appropriate external norms; and make comparisons with other organisations doing similar work.

**Verification:** audited by one or more persons with no vested interest in the organisation.

**Disclosure:** findings made available to all stake-holders and published for the wider community.

The over-arching principle of continuously improving social performance.

It is interesting that the principles do not include measurability as it was recognised at the time that many social aims are not measurable in the sense that you use a standard yardstick and give it a numerical or standardised value. Those pioneers in social accounting accepted that it would be a nonsense to try and measure everything – but where you can, do; and where you cannot, still try to assess the change in qualitative terms.

The above principles were espoused for quite a number of years. In the mid-2000s connections were made with those keen on advocating Social Return on Investment and following a joint meeting in 2008 the fledgling SROI Network and the more established Social Audit Network (SAN) agreed to share a number of the same principles. There was not complete agreement as SAN felt it was not possible

to financialise all outcomes. However, in the interests of collaboration a joint document (updated in 2010) was written and made publicly available.

Shortly after this meeting both organisations changed them slightly and adopted slightly differing principles to satisfy their differing audiences – the current Principles of Social Value have been published by Social Value UK (previously the SROI Network and the Social Impact Analysis Association). And for reference check out the eight SAN principles.

So what does mean for us now?

Certainly principles around social impact are important especially with the expanding interest in enterprises with a central community or social benefit. Both approaches – Social Accounting and Audit; and Social Return on Investment – use their respective set of principles to assess the veracity of social reports using one or other of the approaches. My problem with both sets is that ‘process’ has got in the way of ‘principles’. That is some of the ‘principles’ are really about the process itself.

I would like to suggest that with the benefit of hindsight – which is where this blog started – we should have a rethink about the principles of social impact. Concurrent with the evolution of these principles we should also look at the key aspects of all organisations to see if they are socially responsible. Those key aspects being how an organisation treats its staff and volunteers; how it is governed; how it uses surplus; its financial sustainability; its impact on the environment; and how it affects the local economy.

By building on what has happened in this field of social impact in the past, we should be able to develop tools, approaches and key principles for the future.



The ‘stories about the past’ provide the bedrock for understanding the present, and the development of the future. Is this what progress is?

Finally – and I hesitate – I would like to suggest a tweaked set of principles for social value...

Clarifying the true change and purpose that an organisation is working towards	<b>Focus</b>
Tracking changes so that comparisons can be made over time and between organisations	<b>Improvement</b>
Embedding the social impact process and making it central to what the organisation does	<b>Regular</b>
Considering more than one view in assessing social value created by an organisation	<b>Multi-perspective</b>
Demonstrating that data and information used is important and significant	<b>Materiality</b>
Checking that the interpretation of the change that happens is as true as possible	<b>Verification</b>
Involving stakeholders in assessing change that happens	<b>Engagement</b>
Being open and disclosing what an organisation has achieved or not	<b>Transparent</b>

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



# Awareness spreads by Giving

**M**enstrual hygiene is a concern not adequately addressed in the developing countries. As an issue, this too is multi-faceted. However, only the health dimension is focussed while the social and human rights perspective is often unacknowledged. “The fact that vast majority in the urban and rural areas cannot afford menstrual hygiene and that it is only looked at superficially is very disturbing,” says Ms Meena Mehta, Co-founder of Manuni Foundation Trust, based in Surat, Gujarat.

Inspired by Ms Sudha Murthy’s (philanthropist and eminent writer) efforts to deliver four trucks of sanitary napkins to girls and women affected by Tsunami in Chennai (2004), Meena began to observe women’s health issues in the poor sections of our society. She came to realise the nightmarish experience poor girls and women go through during their monthly cycles. Driven by the desire to give back to the society, her observations led her to identify ways of addressing women’s health and hygiene during menstruation.

“Awareness is a heavy term. As an outsider, when I tried to educate girls and women on the use of sanitary napkins, safe means of disposal, and other information related to menstrual hygiene – I could not see the connect at all. It is not that they weren’t aware. Yet, they succumb to ways that jeopardise their health.

Affordability is the issue, not just for sanitary napkins, but also for underwears. A 12-year old girl studying in a government school once told me that she had no underwears to use napkins,” says Meena, clearing the air on the commonly held perception about lack of awareness on menstrual hygiene. Her chance observation of an adolescent girl who tried to pick up a used napkin from garbage to wash and reuse, moved her. “I wouldn’t recite about poverty here. Rather, I keep asking myself, why things essential for women’s health and hygiene are not allowed to penetrate to all sections of the society. Is it not unfair to burden them with awareness, when they could do the least about benefiting from it?” she laments.

With the support of her family, Meena decided to reach out to needy girls and provide them with sanitary napkins. While her family supported her, there was criticism and discouragement from all corners. “I had to face trivial questions like: Why don’t you distribute



umbrellas, rain coats for children? Why not simply food or money for the poor? Why sanitary napkins? They called this ‘dirty work’. They did not understand that ‘giving’ was intended to change the situation of women’s health and hygiene and not meant to satisfy the ‘giver’ in me. Change cannot happen without awareness and awareness does not spread without giving,” asserts Meena.

Meena’s visits to schools and slums gave her a deeper insight into the issue. From a humble beginning in 2012, Meena now has more than 4000 girls who look forward to her visit every month. Very soon, her experience and interaction with the girls gave her the idea of distributing a kit, which consisted of napkins and underwears.

“My husband is my pillar of support. Watching my work closely, he suggested that I also include soap and shampoo in this kit to make it a complete hygiene kit that girls and women could use during their menstruation,” she says. Thus, the ‘magical kit’ was introduced comprising of eight sanitary napkins, two underwears, one bar of soap, and four shampoo sachets.

Manuni has established distribution drives in 35 municipal schools and 30 slums around Surat. Every distribution drive was accompanied by a casual conversation with the girls, educating them about the use and safe disposal of napkins. The organisation’s activities gradually impacted the attendance and performance of girls in the municipal schools.

“Accustomed to using any piece cloth taken from mothers’ old sarees or collected from garbage, rashes/ infection was a common scene. They would simply buy Betnovate or Sophramycin ointment from the local chemist and this was the routine they followed every month. This has been drastically reduced now,” says Meena.

Meena’s interactions with girls and women revealed their sense of safety that they began to feel after using Manuni’s kits. “For us, it was a revelation. Underwears are the most needed but least donated garments. The girls shared that they felt exposed every day without under clothes and more vulnerable during periods. That is when I realised that it was not just about hygiene, but self-esteem,” she elaborates.

Adolescent girls hardly participated in sports activities and were often found sitting with hands under their breasts. Women strongly felt that it also contributed to child sexual abuse. Manuni therefore introduced another kit, the ‘Tini-mini Kit’ for 4 – 11 year old girls, comprising of two slips and two under wears. Brassieres were also distributed to adolescent girls. Over time, incidences of child sexual abuse

have plummeted significantly.

Manuni consistently worked with women in the communities as well. Besides the magical kits distributed for menstrual hygiene, a ‘happy mother’s kit’ was also provided for new mothers. This was recently introduced and the community readily accepted this gesture from Manuni. The kit consisted of ghee, jaggery, two sets of nighties, two sets of under garments, sanitary napkins, four baby wraps, diapers and clothes for the infant. Meena insists that the idea of kits was the most comfortable way to organise the products and distribution. “It is also easy for donors. They can simply donate for a certain number of kits,” she says.

For a young organisation like Manuni, the impact it has made is huge and very promising. Meena’s thoughts have inspired many others to contribute to this mission. She has received sanitary napkins worth one lakh rupees as a birthday gift from Ms Sudha Murthy who has been her source of inspiration.

When asked what keeps her going, she smiles. “My girls inspire me. The change I see in them when they are aware and confident, gives me the strength to continue. Once I met a girl who got her first period during the distribution day and panicked thinking it was cancer. I took her to the washroom, helped her change, explained what was happening and taught her to use the sanitary napkins. When I gave her two kits, she simply returned one and asked me to give it to another girl who may need it. Change is essential and possible. It must be also made affordable,” she signs off.

—Shanmuga Priya.T



# Nruthya Bodhini – Musings of an Artiste

## 12 – Reality - Power of choices

“Sadhana, sadhanaaa!! Why are you late for practice today? I was anxious you may not come. You know who has come? Come in soon”, Neetu pulled Sadhana’s bag as Sadhana entered the rehearsal room. “Who has come?” curiosity pushed Sadhana to walk fast. Sat there in the middle part of the row the new most popular hero of the Kananda films along with Manager Nagaraj and all girls surrounding him giggling and smiling ear to ear trying to grab his attention.

Sadhana’s heart raced just looking at him, “Why is he here? What is happening?”. “Oh! There is a new film they are planning and Shruti, that girl from north zone class is the heroine. They needed some dance partners for a classical dance show in the movie and so Nagaraju called him here. Sruthi’s gang is not allowing anyone to even go near. You know, Sadhana, he was a student here 5 years back and he is a very good dancer”, Neetu rattled all information in one breathe like a bullet train. When Sadhana looked on, it felt a bit overwhelming with the way the girls pushed their books for autograph, vied with each other to grab his attention; Nagaraju’s leering remarks and jokes taking advantage of the situation was somehow suddenly nauseating for her. The hero was gloating in the attention he received. Sadhana felt her irritation and anger rise at the condescending attitude that was being displayed and the girls being oblivious to it, forgetting they were artists too. Sadhana with her ego and high self-esteem was a person who would not follow the crowd but would assess the situation.

“So, is there no practice class today?” Sadhana asked Neetu. “Who wants to practice now”, giggled Neetu, adding “I don’t think so. They will now have only the selected girls perform a few numbers so that the hero and his director who is sitting behind him will get an idea”. “Selected girls? What do you mean? How can these people select without the right knowledge of the art?” there was a tiny irritation in Sadhana’s voice. “Oh, Nagaraju has already done it all and none of us are in the league too”, answered Gayathri who had joined in



the conversation. Apparently, it was all a game of who is who and what network one brings to the table and beyond that came a chance to showcase the talent and competence. Once a Hero then everything dances to his fancy and not merit. Many factors that Sadhana knew existed revealed itself, shocking her and giving her a jolt! The bubbly and positive Neetu had a classic statement, “Aiyoo, leave it my dear. Not worth keeping these things in mind”. Interestingly the most network savvy in the group was Suju who was fiercely focussed on getting to the top somehow. She was least worried about her talent or competence. She believed other things mattered more and had learnt to be savvy!! The question that loomed large in Sadhana’s mind that night was – ‘Is the result important or is the means to get there important while working on vision’.

*In the journey of social entrepreneurship, the question ‘Will end justify means’ is very important. In*

*most spaces the true merit of the issue will not stand ground at all. Vision is driven through many shortcut routes and unethical propositions that cuts the merit away. A huge part of the time is spent in managing the influential people and reaching the right ears that the rest who are not able to reach protest and they are termed as activists. The original vision changes to that of*

*struggling to get the issue to be heard. This can be very frustrating for the social entrepreneur. They may question their own purpose and even a dip in the self-esteem is possible. The struggle in the journey of the social entrepreneur may not be the resources on the path but to hold on to the path itself.*

“Sadhana, your friend Neetu had called. She wanted you to immediately go to rehearsal hall” said Amma waiting anxiously at the door for Sadhana to return from college. “Oh! But why? We don’t have any rehearsal planned today. Is she already there?”

Sadhana caught the feeling of anxiety and rushed to get ready. Little did she know that arriving at the rehearsal hall, would spell the beginning of a truly different life for her. The sound of all dancing and familiar music greeted her as she stepped into building. “Sir, I didn’t know there was rehearsal today and no one informed me either. I am sorry I wasn’t here earlier,” Sadhana spoke apologetically to Nagaraj as soon as she entered the hall. Nagaraj just nodded his head and dismissed it with a quick nod. Sadhana immediately noticed only four from the regular group were there and others were replaced by others who were not the regulars. Nagaraj in a tone of matter of fact said, “Sadhana, this is the group officially selected for the International Europe tour. So I did not inform you”. Taken aback, Sadhana struggled to find her voice to ask “But when was the selections held and why only four from our group are there”? In an irritated tone Nagaraj closed the discussion with “You don’t understand these things. All selections were done last Sunday and all are very useful, networked and influential. Europe tour is not easy and a lot of money is needed





for selection and they all can afford it.” “But, Sir I have been in your group for so long and it’s a government sponsored program. We have been working on this last six months. Prove to me how I am not as good a dancer to be on board than many of them?”

Sadhana’s activist role had got awakened and her tone showed displeasure. “You are better off focussing on our local tours for now and this is not your debate forum to hold red flags and question things. Intellectual girls like you are always a nuisance and you don’t get that straight means do not work everywhere. You have to have money or beauty or people or muscle power and you don’t have any of these except for righteousness lecture and straightforwardness. The government officer’s selection is final and don’t make a fuss here. It is better you have realistic goals and know yourself better. We will not have our regular programs till next month the girls are back from the tour.”

Humiliation, shock and feeling of being let-down descended heavily on Sadhana. She didn’t wait to search for

Neetu or talk to anyone. She felt her legs had a mind of its own and they just moved her from the hall down the staircase to the main road. She just walked not knowing where she was going. Her eyes had tears filled to the brim threatening to come streaming down and she didn’t care if she was on the road and if people were watching her. She walked to the little park by the side of the rehearsal hall and sat on one of those hard stone benches silent, for god knows how long. There was a shocked blank feeling that was making her feel totally helpless. Must have been over 30 minutes when she picked her heavy heart and walked to the parking lot, finding her two wheeler and didn’t know how she reached home.

Amma was watching TV and peeling peas. Sadhana stormed into the house and Amma knew by the way she walked in that something was wrong and Sadhana needed her attention. The tears that were held so far poured like two waterfalls. Amma, being who she was only hugged her and allowed her to complete before she asked what had happened. Sadhana who loved her



mom suddenly filtered the information of not being selected but never revealed the conversation Nagaraj had about their social status or intellectualism. Amma’s pride of her contribution to Sadhana could not be broken by the insensitive, corrupt Manager and it was for Sadhana to face her battle. But Sadhana’s self-

esteem and confidence had touched the lowest ebb resting in self-doubt and vacuum.

*For the number of people who are willing to stand up the social cause how many are truly able to do good work? How many social organizations get the true support and visibility? Many of them rise to recognition and power through means that are not truly ethical. The straightforward and streaks of activism are shunned as the intellectuals and trouble makers. Many lose their self-confidence and motivation fighting for their rights to exist. The connections, network and kickbacks become more significant than the work that is undertaken to transform the society. The true good work hardly gets noticed and they exist in small pockets with unsung heroes and heroines unknown to the world. It’s not surprising our country has thousands of social organizations reinventing wheels and unable to collaborative and make mass impact.*

*To be continued.....stay connected ...*  
—Dr. Kalpana Sampath

## Perseverance



One day two frogs fell into a pot of milk. They swam around and tried to hop out. As there was no solid support under their feet, it was not possible for the frogs to hop out and escape.

After some time one of the frogs said, “I am completely tired. I can’t swim any longer. I am giving up.” He gave up and sank to the bottom.

The other frog said, “I will go on swimming. I hope something will happen.”

So he went on swimming. His movements churned the milk and turned it into butter. After sometime, the frog climbed up on the butter and hopped out of the pot.



### Explicit Learning

- Perseverance pays.
- It is easy to give up in between but difficult to see through to a meaningful end.
- Nothing is impossible as long as you don’t give up.



### Introspective Learning

- What is the nature of ‘Perseverance’?
- What makes me give up at times?
- How do I build my perseverance?



# “Social change is a slow process and we are heading in the right direction.”

**Arun Roy IAS**  
shares with **Marie Banu** his experience  
working for disasters  
and about the water  
crisis situation in  
Tamil Nadu.

**A**run Roy is a 2003 batch IAS officer. A law graduate from National Law School of India University Bangalore, he hails from Tiruvalla in Kerala. His parents are Prof. K. Vijayakrishnan and Prof. Vasantha Kumari and his wife Mrs. G. Laxmi Priya IAS officer is currently posted as the District Collector of Ariyalur.

Mr. Arun Roy has served as District Collector for Ramanathapuram and Krishnagiri; Joint Secretary, Department of Finance, Tamil Nadu Government; and Acting Vice Chancellor and Registrar of the National Law School in Tiruchirapalli. He also held the position of Deputy Secretary of Budget, and as Managing Director of Poompuhar Shipping Corporation. He is presently the Managing Director of the Chennai Metro Water & Sewerage Board.

*In an exclusive interview, Arun Roy IAS shares with Marie Banu his experience working for disasters and about the water crisis situation in the state of Tamil Nadu.*

## About your family and education?

I grew up in Kerala and did my schooling here. Basically, I am a lawyer by training. I joined the 5-year B.A.LL.B Honors course at National Law School of India University at Bengaluru and during this period prepared for the Civil Service Examination. My parents are both retired professors, and my wife is also an IAS officer and is serving as District Collector of Ariyalur.

## What inspired you to become an IAS officer?

I am a first generation Civil Servant as none of my family members held positions in the higher civil service positions. Of course, many of my relatives held positions in the Kerala Government Service, including my parents.

## Can you share your experience as



## Collector in Krishnagiri?

Krishnagiri is a district of contradictions. On one side, particularly Hosur, we can find development on par with a modern city. But there are also very backward regions including tribal villages having poor development indicators. Child marriage was another rampant social issue. My maid, who was of the same age as me, was already a grandmother.

We were able to run a massive awareness campaign against child marriage. Enforcement was also strengthened. Another satisfying memory was our attempt to reach out to tribal areas through special camps, thus increasing the number of tribals availing social security and food security related schemes.

**While there is a law to protect Senior Citizens under Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, 2007, our society is still facing issues related to abuse of Senior Citizens. Your thoughts?**

That is true! The reach of law in family

issues is very limited. This is even in the case of Dowry Prohibition Act. A fine balance needs to be maintained.

Many senior citizens feel guilty after filing a complaint under Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, 2007. They face community pressure as well as group pressure. There are instances where the senior citizens face more harassment after the complaint has been filed or revoked. In such cases, they do have an option of filing a complaint yet again and going through the entire process.

In my opinion, the law in itself is one of the well drafted laws of our country and has been implemented in many districts of Tamil Nadu. It gives a mechanism outside the police stations and courts. The Revenue Division officer or the Sub Collector has been given the authority and so there are plenty of scope for reconciliation. In many developed countries, it is taken for granted that one cannot abuse a senior citizen. This awareness is not there in our country. By taking actions on such complaints, we are

creating awareness on this issue.

**Your experience working for tsunami relief and the floods in 2005. Do you think we have learnt enough lessons to deal with such disasters (God-forbid) in future?**

I began my career as Assistant Collector (Trainee) and was originally posted in Tuticorin. After the tsunami, I was sent on Special Duty to Cuddalore. Fortunately, my job was to coordinate with NGOs. For this, all that was required was common sense and logistics management. It was a good experience to see the affected places and witness people react to the disaster. I was amazed to see the resilience of the affected people.

Though government systems are criticized for being slow in their response, I am personally impressed to see their strength in Disaster Management; not only in the case of tsunami, but also floods. They gear up much better than the private sector. For instance, when mobile towers go down, BSNL is the first to restore its services.

**With Chennai facing the worst drought in the last fourteen years, what strategies have you planned to overcome this situation?**

Things will only improve with the North-East Monsoon. Historically, the South-West monsoon only recharges ground water and never fills reservoirs. That is the pattern.

In the month of May, we had a situation where many bore wells went dry in well off areas like Annanagar and Adyar where the water consumption is high. For piped water improvement, we have to wait for the North East monsoon, unless we get Krishna water. But, the reservoirs in Andhra are also in a pathetic state. The areas surrounding our state – North Kerala, South Karnataka, and North Karnataka are also not doing well. Our reservoir from where we draw our water from are at the lower end of Krishna. So, if there is a flood situation in Krishna, then our situation might improve.

**What more steps can be taken to sensitise people on water conservation?**

People are aware about water conservation and that is why they have taken rain water harvesting in a big way, especially in Chennai. Recently, CMDA conducted a study along with Mr. Sekar Raghavan of Rain Centre on the rain water harvesting structures. It was found that 60% of the rain water has been harvested effectively, which is really impressive!

Awareness should be more focussed on upper middle class groups who consume a lot of water for gardening, etc.