

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

RNI No.TNENG/2013/52428 | Volume 4 | Issue 12 | December 2016 | 12 Pages | For Free Circulation Only| www.msdsrtrust.org



Cover Story - Pg 6
INFORM, EMPOWER, CHANGE
About DESH and its activities



Published by P.N.Subramanian on behalf of
Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani,
391/1, Venkatachalapathi Nagar, Alapakkam,
Chennai - 600 116 and printed by him at
Express Press, Express Gardens, No.29, Second
Main Road, Ambattur Industrial Estate,
Chennai - 600 058.
Editor : Marie Banu
Phone : 044-42805365



Alumni Talk Pg 3

Empowerment is Real
Dr Mohammed Rafiuddin's
efforts to empower
underprivileged children in
Hyderabad



Profile Pg 9

**Learning more at Holistic
Development Learning Centres**
About Makkala Jagriti's
programmes for street children
in Bengaluru



Chit Chat Pg 12

**"I realise today, that, I was the
change I was waiting for."**
An interview with
Dr. Saundarya Rajesh, Founder,
AVTAR Career Creators

From the Editor

Dear Friend,

Our country is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, especially earthquakes, floods, drought, cyclones and landslides. Studies indicate that losses arising out of such disasters equate up to 2% of India's GDP and up to 12% of Central government revenue. Although cyclones affect the entire coast of India the East Coast is more prone compared to the West Coast.

The recent cyclone Vardah has brought Chennai to a standstill. It has brought down over 3384 trees and disrupting electrical lines, mobile network, and internet services. Blocked roads are making it difficult for people to commute. Power continues to be down in a number of localities in Chennai as officials work to restore transformers and electric poles that suffered damage.

Having learnt from the December 2015 floods and informed through disaster warning messages, people living in the city and neighbouring districts emerged to be stronger than before and are quietly rebuilding their lives. Social media alerts made the community stay away from danger and reduced the number of casualties.

Although, Cyclone Vardah has departed Chennai, it has left behind a trail of destruction.

While the response from the State Government has been effective, it is time for us to ponder whether we are prepared to deal with such disasters year after year.

Marie Banu

Editorial

Latha Suresh

Marie Banu

Questions that matter

"Most misunderstandings in the world could be avoided if people would simply take the time to ask, 'What else could this mean?'" — Shannon L. Alder



A recollection of our past surely takes us back to the questions that we used to ask as a child. Of course, some questions were welcome and many not. Yet, questions were the way we discovered our life. Along the way, the questions reduced and judgments, advices & assumptions became more prominent. To the point that we rarely ask questions and whenever we do we are quite hesitant. My own coming back to questions happened when I enrolled into a course of coaching. I struggled to ask questions.every time my "coachee" would bring up something to discuss, it was 'natural' for me to give solutions. I had to really pause, listen and ask questions that gave the coachee insights about their own dilemmas. Asking a question that clarifies, that is generative leaves both the coach and the coachee empowered in their ways of engaging.

When one asks a question instead of making a conclusion from a fixed

point of view, belief, or decision about something, one would be co-creating the future with the universe as the question energetically opens up the space for something different to show up.

At this moment, ask these questions to yourself and listen to your thoughts and feelings:

- What do you want?
- What's holding you back?
- What is it costing you to continue holding back?
- What new habits will you put in place to fortify your new mindset?
- What is the most meaningful action you could take now?
- What new skills or support systems will ensure your success?
- How could you have this conversation so it empowers everyone concerned?
- How can you learn from this

problem so it never happens again?

- How can you create more value with less effort?

My practice of non-violent communication (NVC) again takes me to a place of observation instead of evaluations. Here again observations give me the foundation to ask questions, deepen my inquiry. A questions can be a request too. If you are engaging with your child, would it not be useful to ask a generative question than blame or judge?

I am really enjoying my journey back into the world of questions. By the way, it is useful to ask 'What and How questions' over 'Why' questions if you are reflecting about life, relationships. A wise friend once said, a why question is often compelling but the answer useless.

So what you touched you most in this article?

Yours Energetically

Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi is trainer, facilitator and coach of the Positive Energy (PE) program. She is a spiritual seeker with a vision of transforming her own energy state from surviving to being. In this journey she has gathered deep insights and is continuously working towards creating a pathway for more seekers. With years of exposure to spiritual practices like yoga, reiki, and personal development interventions like coaching, she is working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space. She can be contacted at bhuvaneshwari@teamthink.co.in for arranging Positive Energy training and Coaching sessions.

Empowerment is Real

Entrance examinations in our country dictate the career choice of most young minds. Almost every student prepares for these exams, but there are very few who actually prepare themselves for other options. Dr Mohammed Rafiuddin is one from this majority of people who sincerely prepared and appeared for the examination. However, he did not succeed in the first attempt. Aspiring to be a doctor, he decided to appear for the examination once again in the following year. “On my cousin’s insistence, I joined Bachelors in Social Work at Osmania University as I did not want to waste my time,” he says.

Mohammed intended to pursue the Social Work course only for a year as all his interest was in studying medicine. But, this course changed his perspective towards life and he began to visualise a better future for the underprivileged children. Realising that Social Work was a professional discipline that had the potential to rewrite development stories, he continued with the course, securing a University Gold Medal.

“As a doctor, I thought my ability to reach out could be restrained due to multiple reasons. Social Work helped me open up as a person and better comprehend the realities in which majority of our countrymen lived. Every challenge forced me to devise new strategies. My first encounter with street children moved me and since then I decided to focus my work towards improving their lives in some way or the other. I felt motivated and was on the right track,” he recalls.

Interacting with children on the streets during a project, Mohammed learnt that most of them were unhappy with their families. The circumstances in which they lived, the dynamics between the family members, the lack of importance given to their presence and aspirations impelled them to do something to improve the conditions. “They wanted to help their mothers by all means possible. The only way out, which they also happened to observe amongst their peers, is to engage in daily wage labour in local, small scale industries. And there they are, caught in the vicious cycle of street life!” he laments.

Mohammed and friends began to spend evenings with the street children and gradually learnt about their lives, routines and struggles. “It was interesting to know that some of them had very good grasping power, few were good in communication, and some were excellent in managing teams. It was also good to note that some read newspapers regularly. While these strengths mattered to us, children had forgotten their aspirations in the midst of their struggle to survive. We had to do something for them; that’s how Hyderabad Council of Human Welfare (HCHW) was conceived in 1990,” shares Mohammed.

During the communal riots in 1992, the



team lost contact with children for 15 days. In a meeting, post the riots, the children felt that a home for their own was a genuine need. With the help of local leaders, HCHW managed to establish its first residential centre in 1993. Mainstreaming the street children through school education and reuniting them with their families was a routine. Children independently managed all the work required at the centre and did not require any supervision. “Their sense of responsibility amused us. They accepted us easily. Professional backing from the Social Work course gave us the confidence to deal with one child at a time,” he recalls.

“Challenges soon emerged. Some children were not interested in education, and this disturbed the performance of other children. It was then HCHW decided to open its second residential centre that was responsive to the needs of children interested in education,” he adds.

Alongside these direct interventions, HCHW took upon the task of sensitising the public and police on street children who are vulnerable to exploitation. “If any incident happened in the community, our centres were targeted for investigation. This affected the children’s morale and we had to therefore intervene before the

children felt adversely affected. Finally, after three years of our campaign, one nodal officer was appointed to handle matters related to such children,” he says.

Mohammed saw the 1098 helpline as the best strategy available to assist vulnerable children on a 24x7 basis. He studied the model and introduced it in Hyderabad city in 1998 with the support of police and officials from other concerned departments. In 2001, this service was handed over to the State Government to integrate it with the national programme.

Mohammed felt the need to assess why children lived on the streets and a survey revealed that 60% came from rural villages while around 40% came from Hyderabad slums. The team then decided to build the capacities of rural NGOs to prevent migration of rural children and this effort proved successful. In the city’s slums, the pressure to earn money and to access credit never diminished. What could be addressed was the role of money lenders who kept this pressure high and compelling. “Women approached money lenders even for small sums like 200 rupees. HCHW used the strategy of self-help promotion to eliminate money lenders. After a decade, women are now able to access credit up to 20,000 rupees

and there are no money lenders in the communities,” he smiles. This economic empowerment of women led them to taking conscious choices on their children’s education and health. Their active participation in the local economy led to the reduction in child labour and child marriage. All activities are now completely managed by the women.

“You must see to believe empowerment is real,” says an elated Mohammed, under whom HCHW won the ‘Best NGO Performance Award in 2011’ from the State Government. HCHW’s interventions have made way for shelter homes in the Juvenile Justice Act Amendment, thereby allowing total rehabilitation and education for children living on the streets. This development led to HCHW consciously monitoring performance of street children in the schools.

“None of the schools were empathetic towards these children. They weren’t ready to share any information. We had to make it mandatory. Besides attendance and performance, we also advocated for the schools to alert us on children who were absent for more than three days in a row,” he quips. These evaluations led to HCHW opening its own day school to be able to reach out to more children.

HCHW’s school has now 250 children studying from kindergarten to class 5. Over-aged children are guided to complete two grades in one academic year. Bus services ensure that commutation and safety concerns do not stop the children from attending school. While the young studied, there were also older siblings who enrolled in skill training programmes and then placed in suitable jobs. 100 youth were trained every month and the placement record shows a success of 73% per batch.

More than two decades in the field, Mohammed felt the need for a refresher course to update his knowledge and revisit HCHW’s strategy for street children. “CSIM gave me the new energy. The SEOP programme enlightened me on how to manage human resources—whether children or adults from different backgrounds. I knew why it was critical to prioritise principles of management in a non-profit organisation,” shares Mohammed.

Now busy with the silver jubilee preparations of HCHW, Mohammed is all set to launch a mobile clinic that will make real time diagnosis and timely health care accessible to poor households in the city. “Families are pushed into poverty due to catastrophic health expenditures. Simple health issues are ignored due to lack of medical care and basic needs are all compromised. I wish to see the mobile clinic change people’s attitude towards health care. That is the first and significant step,” he asserts.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

The next phase of maturation

In conversation with Dr. B. S. Ajai Kumar, founder & Chairman, HealthCare Global (HCG) Enterprises, on his experience of spearheading the company's public listing.

“Planning for an IPO in India is a process that involves a lot hard work, commitment and team effort,” confesses Dr. B S. Ajai Kumar, founder, chairman and CEO, HealthCare Global Enterprises Ltd, a speciality healthcare provider, that came out with its public offer in March this year. When he kick-started the IPO process a year back, he didn't worry about the right timing for the IPO, as he believed there is no ideal time and an IPO's success depends on the ecosystem and the confidence the company has in its growth, and the support from the board of directors and investors. “One can always second guess the right time. My way of looking at it is, after evaluating everything, take a decision and stick to it and don't look back,” he says.

For the HCG chief, raising funds from the market was really not the issue but the IPO was more a sign that the organisation had become mature enough to enter the next phase. “It was time to move from being backed by PE player to become a public company,” he simply says.

This oncologist-cum-entrepreneur took the decision to set up his own hospital in India when he observed the poor state of cancer centres during his trip to India from Austin, Texas. At that time, he noticed that therapy which was phased out in the U.S, was still being used in India and hence, with an objective of

overcoming the hurdles to accessible, affordable and quality cancer treatment, he set up Healthcare Global Enterprises (HCG) in 2003 as a chain of hospitals providing complete care for cancer patients; from diagnostics to post treatment management of the disease.

He built the hospital with a focus on strong principles that include conducting the business with integrity and reinvesting profits to ensure growth. And this has translated into good growth in its top line from Rs. 26 crore in FY 2006 to Rs. 600 crore in FY 2016 with over 170 doctors and 20 hospitals across the country. It has chosen to partner with doctors or centres that have a strong local understanding of the region they operate in and are keen to share the HCG journey. This enables the company to combine their respective expertise and provide holistic treatment.

With an intention of creating a high quality outcome, the hospital is also heavily investing into R&D and technology. “Growing the hospital and ensuring that patients across the world have a good ecosystem and proper treatment has given us the dividend and that's the focus going forward,” states Ajai Kumar.

However, his journey of taking his company public was rich and filled with tremendous learnings that he agreed to share for this article.

The beginning of the IPO saga

Since 2006, the hospital received private equity funding to the tune of US \$10 million from IDFC Alternatives and India Life Sciences Fund (who have since exited), Premji Invest, India Build Out Fund (now under Quadria Capital) and Temasek. In March 2016, HCG raised Rs.650 crore by offering 29.8 million

shares to investors (when three more investors also partly exited the venture).

Once the board gave its approval to go public, the company worked on getting the investment bankers on board. “This was a great learning experience: how valuations are arrived at, what are pros and cons of going public,

obviously moving from private to public limelight and being responsible to common shareholders is a great responsibility and this takes you to another level and is part of the maturation process,” says he. The company identified its team of bankers – global and domestic – as well as lawyers and these groups were identified after a significant screening process.

The company then meticulously put together a checklist, with the help of lawyers, to see where it was with SEBI. “We had to meet with varied information on how was initial stock obtained, story behind the story, entire forensic of promoters and to some extent the board of directors,” says Dr. Ajai Kumar. And once all the factors got sorted out, the company was ready to go public by January or February this year.

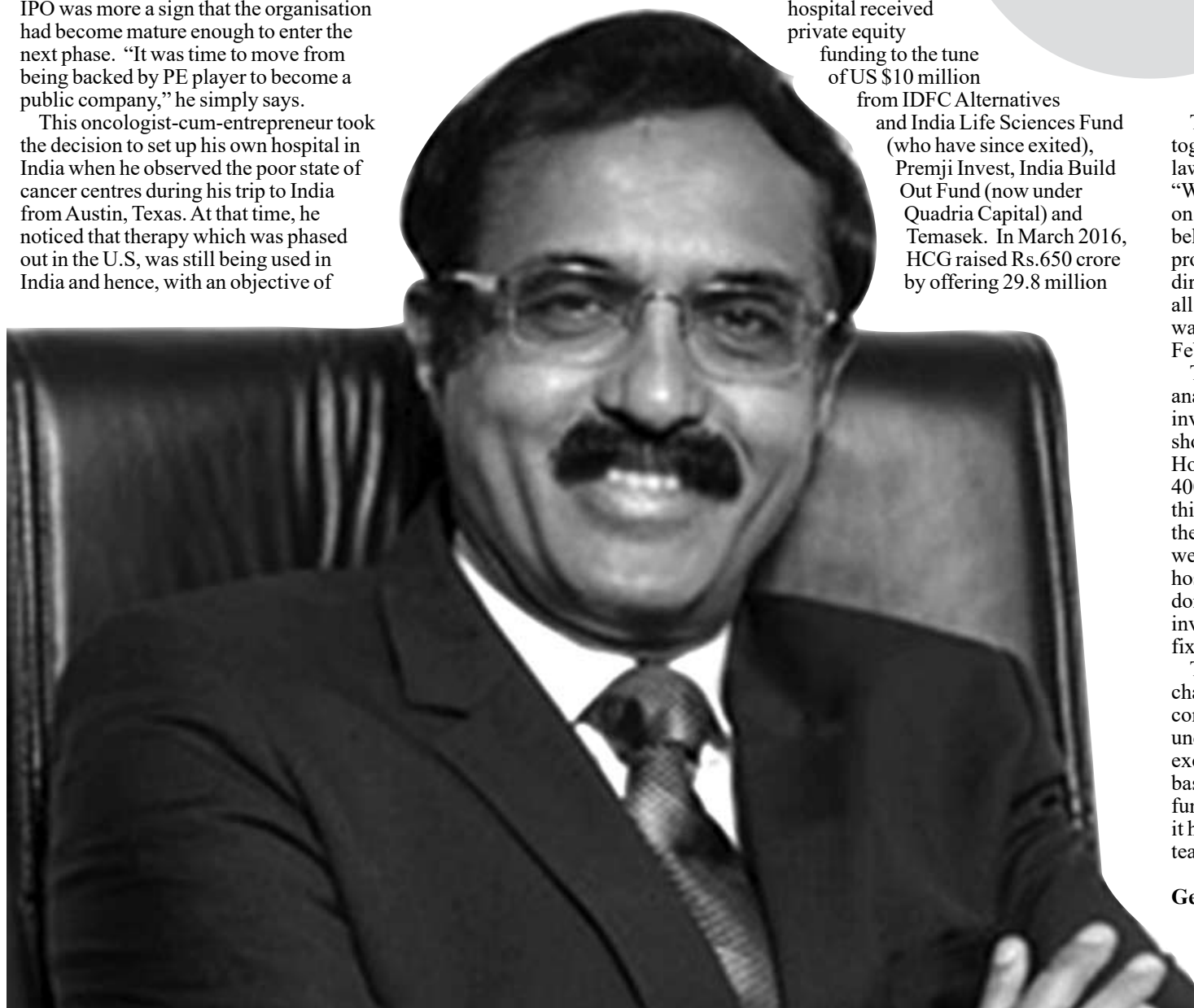
The next steps were to identify the time, analyse the ecosystem and interest by investor community for which it did road shows in India, U.S., U.K., Singapore and Hong Kong. The company met almost 400 investors and investor groups, and this was taken up by different bankers. In the second road show, potential investors were invited to visit its centre and see the hospital and several Q&A sessions were done and, eventually an anchor group of investors was created, the IPO date was fixed and we went public on March 30.

The company has made necessary changes to its processes and systems to comply with regulatory requirements under laws of SEBI as well as the stock exchanges. Also, given the wider investor base post IPO, which includes mutual funds, FIIs, and HNI and retail investors, it has established an investor relations team to interact and address these queries.

Getting over the hurdles

With private equity companies on the board, valuation was being

Growing the hospital and ensuring that patients across the world have a good ecosystem and proper treatment has given us the dividend and that's the focus going forward



scrutinised very closely apart from the acceptance of the IPO in the market and the profitability at the time of the issue. So the challenge was to get board consensus which we were able to do successfully.

Another question was on the preparedness to go public, as it is a long drawn process. “We are a focussed cancer group and at that time not many healthcare companies were in the public market. It is not like we are going to be a big cap company. But, the questions that needed answers were –why IPO now? Why not make it a bigger company and then IPO,” recalls the leader. However, he says, “We have had PE investors for several years. We have a huge growth opportunity in the future and want the public to be our partner in this growth opportunity. The type of company that we have created: transparent, ethical with governance, should be appreciated and public should participate and reap the reward along with us.” Dr. Ajai Kumar also adds, “I started this hospital as an individual, created certain value and people invested because of our ethics, transparency and governance apart from the professional skills.”The hospital has also received good public recognition and is a part of a case study at Harvard Business School.

Life after the IPO

“Post IPO, things have not changed drastically except that we deal with more independent directors, there is a silent period where we do not take part in any stock transactions, etc.” states the

doctor. There are only compliance issues which gets handled the way it should. The company has made some changes to its team and has added a new CFO. It is also training people so that organic growth can happen internally and it can empower its people to grow within the organisation.

The organisation is anticipating good growth going forward and is working on several new projects. The challenge, the leader admits, is to convert them to reality and work with the partners to make it happen. In the next 3 to 5 years, the company wants to make treatment more widely accessible, maintaining the high quality. The company has completed almost 1000 cases in Molecular genomics (next generation sequencing) over the last year or so. It has also started performing liquid biopsy in the last three months. Its centres are doubling and by end of 2018, its current 14 centres will become 26. The centres see around 40,000 new patients which will increase with the doubling of the centres. “We want to make sure that proper execution is done; proper systems are put in place, with a clear focus on constantly improving and enhancing patient outcomes,” says Dr. Ajai Kumar, as the conversations comes to a halt.

To be continued...

—Poornima Kavlekar
This article was first published
in The Smart CEO Magazine
(www.thesmartceo.in)

The IPO is a sign of the organisation maturing and entering the next phase.

Financial Performance

(RS. IN CRORE)	Q1 2017	FY 2016	FY 2015
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	133.67	581.98	519.38
PROFIT AFTER TAX	5.69	5.43	4.70



CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INITIATIVE AND MANAGEMENT



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

CSIM offers training and consultancy to social enterprises – for-profits and non-profits – to facilitate them to apply successful business practices and yet retain their social mission.

It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives. CSIM operates in Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

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. Anand G Adsul,
Head – Devrukh,
@77580 28270

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 call: Ms.Latha Suresh, Director, SAN, India @ 92822 05123.
www.san-india.org

Inform, Empower, Change

The key to DESH's success since its inception is its reluctance to stop with mere information awareness, and pursuit of accountability.

The Deepam Educational Society for Health (abbreviated to read DESH), was founded in 1991 with the sole aim to bring about more awareness about HIV-AIDS. It managed to achieve this initially, through programmes in slums, industrial areas and educational institutions. "We began by establishing counseling centres at government hospitals in Chennai," says Dr. Saraswathi Sankaran, Founder and Chairperson of DESH. "While our aim was to initially begin with HIV-AIDS awareness, the cases we began witnessing at our counseling centres led us to extend our programme into the realm of reproductive and child health awareness too." This transition allowed DESH to serve several sub-sets of beneficiaries, with the sole aim of enabling a journey towards safer lifestyles. This, even the NGO focused on the task of empowering women in order to make them agents for social change.

One of the key approaches that DESH has adopted is SHE, which stands for Social Health Education. With the potential to touch the lives of youth in and out of school, Women and their families, and migrant workers to name a few, the programme has won appreciation from all quarters. This has also led to DESH developing a battery of equally appreciated communication materials. "Based on the needs that we observed, we started developing our own materials," explains Navin Kumar, Senior Manager, Operations & Development, DESH. "Over time, these have been tried and tested, and have been appreciated by our external evaluators like The Tata Institute of Social Science and the Madras School of Social Work."

The key to DESH's success since its inception is its reluctance to stop with mere information awareness, and pursuit of accountability. "Our aim is to empower those we come into contact with and make them accountable for what they are doing," Navin explains. "That way, we create a collective movement that helps to spread the message across. Our methodology is unique, and is being followed across our outreach programmes."

As part of this massive outreach drive, DESH has reached out to truck drivers across States like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, UP and Rajasthan. "We've taken up an entire block in Cuddalore," says Navin. "We've managed to work with more than 6,000 people in Chennai and Villipuram alone, as part of our projects in Tamil Nadu." DESH is also the training partner of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. As part of this tie-up, the NGO has also engaged in the training of primary health centre doctors in seven states. As part of its journey, the NGO has covered 2,500 schools using its novel methodology. "We begin by sensitizing heads of these institutions, develop specializations for a

few teachers, and then help take the message forward through peer educators," explains Navin. "Using this approach, we manage to sensitize all students in the school." As part of its journey, the NGO has worked with donors like UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

A large chunk of DESH's work in India is with government education departments. "We call ourselves trainers and have implemented programmes for them," says Navin. The most impressive feature of these programmes though, is that they are easily replicable and scalable. "The approach we follow is quite simple. Like I mentioned before, we begin by devising our methodology and material," he explains. "We then engage in capacity building at other NGOs. In doing that, we share that expertise and don't hold it to ourselves."

As part of its R&D programmes, handouts, flipcharts and reference manual and have been used to bring about awareness, empowerment and accountability. DESH has ensured that these materials are prepared and time-tested. Another approach that it takes is the use of folk art in the form of street plays, mime and dance drama as vehicles for mass communication of social messages, with each of these messages designed and conveyed to suit the taste of the local population. Since 1993, DESH has managed to pull off over 600 street plays which have garnered an audience of over 1.5 lakhs people.

Going forward, Navin says DESH is keen to extend its school programme (branded happy, abbreviated to read 'Health Action Programme for Progress of Youth'). "As part of this initiative, we plan to build capacities at NGOs across all States. Like all our previous programmes, this is also going to be scalable and replicable." Still in its infancy, HAPPY is being implemented in one district in Tamil Nadu, as of today. But even as DESH takes it forward, the programme's current avatar will turn into a model centre of sorts. The school programme will also serve as a comprehensive health programme, encompassing basic health and mental health. However, Navin says the focus is being centered around the much-discussed topic of substance abuse. "Many children today, are becoming increasingly vulnerable to smoking," he says. "So, while basic and mental health is a key ingredient of the programme, we would like to focus on the topic of substance abuse."

Through its near-three-decade-long journey, DESH has interacted with both, government and partner organizations too, with direct interventions also remaining a key part of its activities. In Navin's words, "our specialization is the human touch. That's what sets us apart from the rest."



Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

Maharshi explained in the course of conversation:

Whoever desires liberation? Everyone wants only happiness - happiness too as found in the enjoyment of the senses.

This question was asked of a Guru, and the latter answered: "Quite so. That happiness which is the result of enjoyment by the senses is the same as that of liberation. That desire of such liberation is one of the four qualifications for attainment.

This is common to all. So all are eligible for this knowledge - Self-knowledge."

In fact there may not be found any individual in the world who possesses all the qualities in perfection necessary for an aspirant as mentioned in Yoga Sutras, etc. Still pursuit of Self-knowledge should not be abandoned.

Everyone is the Self by his own experience. Still he is not aware, he identifies the Self with the body and feels miserable. This is the greatest of all mysteries. One is the Self. Why not abide as the Self and be done with miseries?

In the beginning one has to be told that he is not the body, because he thinks that he is the body only. Whereas he is the body and all else. The body is only a part. Let him know it finally. He must first discern consciousness from insentience and be the consciousness only. Later let him realise that insentience is not apart from consciousness.

This is discrimination (viveka). The initial discrimination must persist to the end. Its fruit is liberation.

—Source: *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*



Seeing



There was an old blind woman who lived with her daughter in a little fishing village on the sea shore. The daughter dived for pearls, which she sold to the local agent and from the proceeds, they lived their lives. Before selling each day's collection however, the daughter kept aside in a little bag some of the choicest pearls as a hedge against difficult times.

One day, during a dive, the daughter was attacked by a shark and killed. The mother was desolate as not only had she lost her only child and companion but also her only means of support. In the midst of her grieving and loss she remembered the little bag of pearls that her daughter had kept aside and decided to see the agent and sell them for her own livelihood.

The agent examined the pearls and paid her the exact market value for them and advised her about investing the money so that she would have a regular income for the rest of her life.

When the old woman had gone, the agent's assistant who had observed the whole deal asked, "Those were black pearls and you paid their full value! Why did you do that? After all, the woman was blind and could not see the colour of the pearls?"

The agent replied, "But I am not blind and I can see."

Explicit Learning

- A. Many of us look at life; very few of us see life.
- B. It calls for personal conviction to look beyond what we see.
- C. We need to look beyond what is visible to the eye.

Introspective Learning

- A. What prevents me from seeing everything?
- B. What is the nature of 'Seeing'?
- C. How do I learn to see beyond what is visible?

Learning more at Holistic Development Learning Centres

According to the latest report on Children in Difficult Circumstances by Plan India, 80% states reported street children and child labour as key concerns in the context of child rights. While trafficking and child marriage also emerged as major concerns, it must be noted that all these issues feed into each other. Biases in the planning and intervention of one issue against another led to complication. The resulting chain of processes and the dependence on point interventions have not mitigated the issue, yet have been able to mainstream as many children as possible.

“Over the years Makkala Jagriti understood this dynamics. When Ms Joy Srinivasan began in 2003, there were many children on the streets of Bangalore, but lesser number of schools. Education is the way to build a society. We wanted to help children get back to schools. Our focus was to enrol them in public schools that can ensure holistic development of children in the formative years itself,” narrates Mr M Murali, Chief Functionary of Makkala Jagriti in Bangalore.

By 2009, the reality of drop outs from schools and the general preference for private schools by parents from all classes forced Makkala Jagriti to recalibrate its strategy. By empowering the marginalised people, one cannot ignore their aspirations and increasing consciousness about ‘good quality education’. While these parents saw private schools as a solution, Makkala Jagriti invested in building the capacities of government schools in order to improve their quality of education.

“Quality education is a fundamental right. Even the poor must be able to access this wherever they go. Therefore, government schools, which functioned as a centre for education with benefits like midday meals, had to transform into learning institutions that focussed on the holistic development of children. Thus, Makkala Jagriti rebuilt government schools to make the most of both features – quality education and benefits to promote equity,” says Murali.

Makkala Jagriti introduced learning centres within government schools, that operated according to the school timings. With all requisite permissions in place, schools gave them one class room and ensured one period per day for each class for children to undergo supplementary learning. Language development, Creative development, Life Skills and Physical development were the areas of focus for the organisation. “Listening and Speaking is the most important part of communication, but only reading and



writing are being focused in school. Our Language development classes aim to bridge this gap through reading programmes with grade specific texts, developed in line with the syllabus followed by the school,” explains Murali.

Activities like arts and craft, dance, and debates are also organised to foster creativity amongst the children. These activities not only encourage creativity and lateral thinking, but also reinforce the concepts that the children have learnt during regular classes. Makkala Jagriti has been very categorical about the space that needs to be provided for life skills. “These underprivileged children come from a background of ‘no’ or ‘less care’ at home. Their social skills are poor, they have low confidence levels and are also weak in decision making. Life skills was the way to redefine their personalities within the school environment, so that they could experience the change in themselves,” Murali adds.

In Karnataka, schools with less than 175 children do not have a physical education teacher. Therefore, there are no physical activities in such Government Schools. Recognising the importance of play in healthy child development, the learning centres organise outdoor sports and karate classes. Aply, these centres are called the Holistic Development Learning Centres (HDLC).

Presently, there are 12 such centres – 7

“Quality education is a fundamental right. Even the poor must be able to access this wherever they go. Therefore, government schools, which functioned as a centre for education with benefits like midday meals, had to transform into learning institutions that focussed on the holistic development of children.”

centres in schools across Bangalore, 3 centres in Koppal district and 2 in Bangalore’s urban slums. With the experience gained at two delivery points—schools and slums—Makkala Jagriti is all geared to focus on its third delivery point—the Juvenile Homes. Vocational Training (life skills and counselling services) will be focussed in these Homes. “Otherwise, they too may land on the streets,” warns Murali.

Learning centres in the slums teach English and Computers during the day for the youth. In the evenings, these centres encourage children, whose parents are still out at work, to study.

In order to provide counselling services and vocational training to the youth, Yuva Jagriti was established in 2006. Youth from the slums, largely



school drop outs, are sent on camps, guided to develop their competency map and are then enrolled in vocational training centres within the network. Thereafter, they are also placed in jobs across Bangalore. “Mobilising youth is a huge challenge. With no guidance, they are left astray, to deal with their issues of adolescence, peer pressure and also pressure from families to earn money. They are disconnected from all forms of education or growth,” says Murali, adding that Yuva Jagriti takes them through multiple stages of screening so that the decision to undergo training in a particular field is a fully informed decision of the individual. This process ensured that the youth did not drop out from the training centres.

Having reached out to over 20,000 children so far, Makkala Jagriti continues to refine the contours of holistic development by addressing core issues at the micro level. “Dropout rates in schools have decreased. Student strength in government schools has increased. 80% of the children in schools have achieved the desired learning outcomes for every focus area. While moving to a new school, children looked forward to a HDLC there. Makkala Jagriti is contended with the impact it has been able to create in a decade,” smiles Murali, dreaming to see the organisation’s work further addressing the issue of street children.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Corporates and the Social Work Sector



The difference in a corporate engaging in social work and an NGO doing social work is in the scale of operations. In corporate, there are more human resources available as their employees have assured jobs and are interested in doing social work by investing their time and talent. That kind of human resources is available at call. But, in the case of NGOs, human resources are not at par. They have to ferry from the social milieu which is always afraid of security.

NGOs should therefore synergise with the neighbourhood companies and encourage their employees to participate in the NGO activities. For instance, General Electric (GE) encourages its employees to involve in NGO work of their choice. They also offer a matching grant of 1000 rupees when an employee contributes 100 rupees to an NGO that works in the vertical prescribed by the company – for instance education, health, etc.

Corporates and NGOs can work together. It is only identification of resources and role play. What is essential is mutual trust. Both of them have to come together and resolve the mutual trust problem and develop strength. In order to do that NGO leaders should have training in Social Entrepreneurship at CSIM. Like a business

entrepreneur, there should be a social entrepreneur. The common factor is entrepreneurship – willing to dream, work together and be accountable.

NGOs are aware of the ground work reality as they are working with the grassroots and know better. CSR programs can save time in conducting an impact assessment and should take the knowledge from the NGO. They should enable others to participate in their work. Enabling is also recognized as CSR activity.

Opportunities are aplenty. You have to get a linkage between NGO and a Corporation and should together build a Trust. Business houses always think that they have more responsibility than NGOs. NGOs should therefore prove that they are equally responsible. For this, they should talk the same language as the corporate. This requires training for NGOs as although they might have the passion, most of them do not have a system.

If the NGO has a vision and mission document, and are clear on their focus area, then they should convince the corporate that has a CSR programme that they are in congruence.

Once the vision and mission statements are approved, there should be constant reviews in the course of delivery of mission.

These reviews will give a feedback and also suggest corrections. If they agree for periodicity of review and course correction and if they systematize it, then the faith between the two will increase.

The more number of activities the NGO can shoulder, it can intensify the work that they are doing for improving the quality and the spread of it.

NGOs who are requested by corporates to collaborate in areas where they do not have prior experience, should first do a pilot. The learning derived from the pilot project will make the NGO possible to build growth – quality growth or spread out to more beneficiaries – thereby providing higher value to existing beneficiaries. Depending upon manpower and their bandwidth they can decide either on spreading or work by emphasising on quality.

It essentially boils down to both public as well as private sector that people training in people and getting the people to develop as professionals in whatever they are doing has to be achieved.

In the social sector, the problems are varied. It has to be recognized and attended either by the social sector or only the corporate sector or by co-operation between the two.

—P.N. Devarajan

THE FOUR Ts : TIME, TALENT, TREASURE & TOUCH

Social Entrepreneur or volunteer or any other stakeholder in social work terrain need to manifest the four Ts into action in varying degrees depending on context or need or occasion. Let us look at them for better understanding and the roles. Time is the most precious input. Time lost is lost forever. Time spent should be quality time. Investment of time is one key requirement for successful social impact achievement. Time investment brings about qualitative change in the social impact. Time can be invested by a volunteer; not necessarily full time. It is well known that volunteer time if translated to money by using man-hour US \$, will run into several tens of Billions of US \$ per year. That is the power of time.

When time invested is managed and led well, it can leverage several fold advantage to social impact. Investment of time, albeit small to start with but in predictable frequencies and into committed ventures, will be the entry

strategies for several who wish to take professional career opportunities in social sector and serve joyously.

The second input is Talent. Talent is skill, knowledge, competence, experience, etc. Talent is an important component of social impact. Talent adds value to time. Thus time and talent positively reinforce each other to give an efficient and effective impact of the service. If one does not bring Talent to Time invested, she brings very little but routine. The Talent can be behavioural, besides technical or professional. Behavioural Talent is showing empathy, love and compassion, give and take and share, leadership, teaching by example and so on.

In the Talent sphere the most significant elements are continuous improvement, out of box thinking, innovation, creativity, simplicity, smartness. Thus talent will give the social entrepreneur, a definite differentiator from other organizations.

The third and equally important

contribution is in giving Treasure.

Instead of just saying finances, money or donations, the word Treasure is used to emphasize giving your treasure, which you like to keep even to yourself like a Treasure. Hence investment of Time, Talent along with Treasure makes it complete. The 'Treasure' can be just a rupee or millions of rupees, it is just what you can spare and share from your earnings and or wealth. There is no mission without money but it is not the only factor for mission achievement. The Treasure can also be generated from friends, community, comrades, society or venture philanthropy and the like. Time, Talent and Treasure – What a triumvirate it is! It is an amazing spirit – God's gift to the cause you serve.

Time, Talent, Treasure as golden triumvirate bring so much opportunity to learn, open one's own self consciousness, there is a great triumph to bring 'the Heart' into action by involving 'touch', the last but not the least, the crowning glory.

'Touch' concerns the 'heart' and not the intellect, mind or rationale. In true social transformation, 'the Heart' has a very important role, as balance opposed to 'the mind'. 'The Heart' is 'the mother' in the whole play. When one gets an opportunity, grabs it and blends investment of time, talent and treasure in the pursuit of service, the best of best will happen to all concerned as 'the touch' becomes the overarching goal of service. 'The Touch' brings the emotional integration and 'oneness' of approach to the 'common good' for all. 'The Touch' is like a thread that holds all flowers intact in a garland. The thread that 'connects' is the 'touch; and the flowers are Time, Talent and Treasure.

The completeness of service occurs extremely well when Time, Talent, Treasure and Touch are balanced and managed with due consideration for sensitivity, self esteem and self respect.

—P.N. Devarajan

Nruthya Bodhini – Musings of an Artiste

04 – Learning-doing-integrating-teaching

What is life when things just move on in a monotonous manner? Living the life of a social entrepreneur too is not about doing a volunteer service or carrying forth what is already set. It is all about continually finding creative solutions to existing problems at a cause level and eradicating them. In the process, no patch work will suffice, it may sometimes call for moving the location and understanding the problem. The solution that emerges too will therefore be totally different.

Six years had passed and Sadhana had become a fairly regular student in the dance class climbing the senior levels steadily. Three times a week two hours each class with one hour dancing and one hour discussion on life learning had gone by. She had passed the junior grade dance exams in flying colours with over 80%. She was now in 12th grade studying psychology. The teenager with bright shining eyes, long hair, though short and looked well-fed, she had the beauty of life that shown forth in her face when she came jumping enthusiastically into the class. Her four best friends in class were Bindya, Radhu, Mala and the regularly irregular Seeta. They formed a formidable team sharing great friendship with their Teacher who was more of a mentor to all of them.

It was month of June and a Friday evening. The teacher said: “Girls, I suppose you remember you all qualify to take the Senior Dance Exam this year and how many of you are willing to work for it? Senior exam will call for writing exam on theory as well as practical performance. Each is for full 100 marks and we have to do extensive reading in the next ten months. Your practical portions are almost taught, so no problem. Only practice now on. The exams will be in May next year.” Grumbling was widely heard from students as to a ‘no’ for the theory papers and studying books for next ten months – clear disgruntled sounds! The teacher continued, “Since theory is written in Kannada here, I can only help you by giving your theory explanations, and notes you make in Kannada.”

“What?” Coughed Sadhana in shock! “I can’t write an entire paper in Kannada! Can’t we write in English?” Teacher said, “English? No way, most text books and notes are all available only in Kannada and you hardly have one or two in English.” Radhu interjected, “Oh, then Sadhana can’t apply for this exam. We

also have board exams this year.”

Crestfallen for few seconds, quickly Sadhana rose and jumped up in enthusiasm “Aunty, I know to read Kannada and I understand the language.



But I can’t write fast and without errors. So, I will read all the books and notes compiling them and making notes in English. It will not only help me but also others who will want to write in English in future from our class. I shall make a copy of the notes and leave them with you.”



“What shall I do, I hate big books and studying,” wailed the lazy Seeta. “Don’t worry, I shall make notes and on Sunday teach you completely. We will learn together.” Thus began Sadhana’s story of learning how to do things that leaves behind something more than normal in every work; that leaves behind a documentation for future; and the most useful ability of note-taking! She also learnt to articulate all her deepest notes from heart onto paper. She entered the amazing world of reading and writing.

Similarly in every social entrepreneurship journey, there is always n+1 options for every problem. The ability to look for solutions that



will eradicate the problem is more valuable than solving the problem temporarily or quitting. Every problem has a solution hidden. One has to discover that.

The next ten months saw Sadhana spending every valuable hour she could get over the weekends in City central library, reading historical books on art and culture, Natyasastra, Abinayadarpana, many more and making notes. She poured over old question papers to list the topics



that needs to be covered. Interesting, it was also the board exam time with extra tuitions at college. When asked why she attempts two exams together, she replied, “I need a tempo, a speed and I build one when I am pushed to the corner and therefore the best come through more easily for me”. Those days had no computer and only paper and pen which made the job tougher and longer. Friends found her crazy, but Amma stood by her, willing be her best confidante for all cribs and gently pressing her aching fingers at night, knowing she has to be the spinal

cord of strength when her little one is trying out something beyond her. She patiently sat for hours without complaint, in libraries, reading story books till Sadhana finished her studying and writing. They packed their favourite bisibelebath and ate sitting in the steps of the library on weekend afternoons. Their bonding was unique.

“How did you do?” asked Amma as soon as Sadhana emerged from the exam hall. Amma had sat outside with prayers for all three hours. “Oh, I don’t want to think about marks, but I enjoyed writing this paper the most, Amma, I had timed myself 11 minutes per answer precisely; so I was perfect on timing. I do hope I won’t fail your hopes on me. You know something, I actually want to continue this studying theory further,” giggled Sadhana. This is when the true journey through Natyasastra had begun for her.

In a social work journey where every day would call for embarking on an unknown journey, the role of a confidante is immeasurable. Someone who believes in you, just stands by and is willing to invest their time and energy without a complaint accompanying to places unknown gives immense strength to the mind. They may think they do nothing, but they are the fulcrum which holds all the pieces of the entrepreneur together. Valuing and respecting such soul-friends is the highest honour one can give to them.

“Sadhana, there’s a post fixed to your gate,” pointed Seeta, as they came back home in the afternoon. Sadhana, surprised at the cover from government of Karnataka posting, opened it and Lo! She had bagged the State Rank. Sadhana felt dizzy. She had never expected this. A 92% in theory paper! Amma had gone out and so she ran to the dance class holding the letter. She had to see her teacher who was like her second mom! The true reward for her efforts had to be shared first with a big hug!

Going into depth and teaching are two awesome processes that integrates the learning in the most effective way. Social entrepreneurship journey is actually a learning- doing- integrating – teaching journey. It is a fulfilling process that emerges out of helping oneself and helping others to help themselves.

To be continued....stay connected....

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath

“I realise today, that, I was the change I was waiting for.”

Dr. Saundarya Rajesh shares with Marie Banu the role of women in Indian Economy.

Dr. Saundarya Rajesh is an entrepreneur from Pondicherry. She is the founder-president of AVTAR Career Creators, FLEXI Careers India, and is the managing-trustee of AVTAR Human Capital Trust. She is best known for her work in the area of flexible working, second careers for women, and increasing women's workforce participation in India. She has a PhD in human resources and is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

In an interview, Dr. Saundarya Rajesh shares with Marie Banu the role of women in Indian Economy

What motivated you to launch AVTAR?

About 25 years ago with a new-born, an increasingly demanding job at a leading multi-national bank and a husband with his own fast-paced work schedule, I realised I was burning both ends against the middle. With a lot of hesitation, I went to my manager and proposed a flexible working arrangement that would ensure I finished my job while also managing my home-care and child-care duties. My manager's reaction made me realise that it was a long way before a woman can aspire for both a career and personal life. Soon after, I took the decision of quitting my job.

Within just a few weeks, I realised I wanted my career back. Not that same job in that same bank, but my career. And that's code for, I wanted my economic freedom, time with people other than my kids or mother-in-law, the adrenalin surge that came with completing a project, the acclaim and appreciation from peers – the whole package. I wanted my identity back. I wondered if it was a fundamental human right to desire to be intellectually and economically liberated and if so, was there some organization, some impassioned evangelist who would fight for that right for me.

No company and I repeat, no company was ready to employ a woman with my credentials on a flexi-time basis. It was either full-time or bugger-off! And on full-time, it was equal opportunity, the way the fox offered the crane equal opportunity to drink soup in a bowl. I decided to take the more scenic route and embarked upon a circuitous journey into HR consulting, Teaching, Radio production, Face-painting (yes I did that!) that finally led to my own entrepreneurial adventure - AVTAR. I realise today, that, I was the change I was waiting for. Today, AVTAR is India's Number One evangelist for Working Women – on the areas of Flexible Working, Career Enablers, Specific Career Opportunities for Returning Women et al!

What do you think is the role of women in Indian economy?

In my opinion, Women Power is the answer and solution to India's metamorphosis into a developed nation. In the years 2007-10, when the rest of the world was reeling under the impact of recession, India was able to hold its head high, due to the large amount of savings that Indian banks held. These were household savings accounts – held to the maximum extent by women! Thus, Indian women were an important reason for India to maintain its balance during the recession. Women impact in a very strong way since she spends more for the family. Women who not only save, but also earn translates to the following:

1. Doubling in household incomes – The Income level of urban Indian women has doubled in the decade 2001-2010. This has led to the average urban household income doubling – from up from Rs 8,242 to Rs 16,509
2. Even greater increase in savings - The Urban Indian woman who earned Rs 4,492 per month in 2001 was taking home as much as Rs 9,457 as of 2010.

This in turn led to a huge increase in savings.

3. Increased participation in buying process - While 34% of women participated in the actual buying process in 2003, by 2010 that number had gone up to 43%.
4. Increased financial independence - There has been a 33% jump in the number of women who have a savings bank account in the last decade.
5. According to the 2015 McKinsey Report, India could add \$700 billion of additional GDP in 2025, upping the country's annual GDP growth by 1.4 percentage points, by advancing women's workforce participation.

Just imagine women being able to work to the same extent and numbers as men! All the statistics mentioned above will be doubled and trebled. This means that within a short span of time, India will be a FULLY DEVELOPED nation, with a GDP that will be the highest in the world.

Please tell us about AVTAR I-WIN which provides flexi-careers for women.

AVTAR I-WIN expands to read AVTAR Indian Women professionals Interface Network. It was conceptualized and launched in December 2005. When it was launched, AVTAR I-WIN was India's very first career service for women. We specialize in creating and providing opportunities for women who have taken a break in their careers and are now intent on getting back to the mainstream. This is for the woman who has her career aspirations as high as her family priorities and is now ready to balance both. We are probably India's largest creator of career re-entries for women.

AVTAR I-WIN was a path breaking initiative which revolutionized how the industry worked – a true blue-ocean idea. After creating thousands of careers and improving thousands of lives in the process, we have evolved AVTAR I-WIN into more than just a recruitment service. Today, we are India's best when it comes to women's careers and a 40,000-strong network of women professionals across India. Our recruitment service is still as strong as ever (over 8000 placements and counting) but we now cater to every aspect of a woman's career.

What are the present activities of The AVTAR Human Capital Trust?

At AVTAR Human Capital Trust, we have been working in the space of economically empowering women for the past 8 years. Our work has been in the areas of Girl children life skills enhancement programs, employability workshops for women in various colleges in Tamil Nadu, Prevention of Sexual Harassment training and education support. As of now our work has primarily been in the states of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, we are hoping to spread our impact to other parts of the Indian geography too.

Did you know? Almost one in two women across India cannot read or write - this means 165 million females in India are illiterate. The returns on investment in girls' education are higher than for boys; educated women can increase earning potential and eventually economic growth rates. The national average female illiteracy rates (age 15 and older) to men is 45.5%: 23.1% (UNFPC, 2009). The health of future generations is directly linked to the physical condition of females. Only one in 100 girls reach the final standard of school. Women with higher levels of schooling have a lower risk of physical or sexual violence with their partner. An extra year of education boosts their eventual wages by 10–20%; for boys, the returns are 5–15%. Infant mortality decreases by 8%, for each year a girl stays in school. Schooling and social inclusion empowers young women to actively participate in civic life, take informed decisions, exercise their rights, and advocate for community improvements.



Thus, our new initiative – Project PUTHRI! Our new project 'PUTHRI' is

aimed at skill-building of girl students from Government run corporation schools to prevent drop-outs and to ensure economic empowerment by way of sustainable careers. The end-goal of this project is to make 10,000 corporation school girls career intentional EACH YEAR and ensure that they pursue white-collar jobs upon graduation. As such this is a longitudinal project and one that requires investment of time, volunteers, efforts and cost. For Project PUTHRI, we seek volunteers, mentors, corporate sponsors and training spaces. Organization and individuals who are keen and passionate about building a future India that is built on a strong foundation of empowered and intentional girls. We would like to reach out and request discerning organizations to partner with AVTAR Human Capital Trust on Project PUTHRI.

