Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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important."**
An exclusive interview with
Mr Aroon Raman

From the Editor

Dear Friend,

Humanity can be defined as quality of being human; the unique nature of man, by which he is distinguished from other living beings. Being human does not infer that an individual is humane.

To understand the quality of humanity in an individual, one should take note of what he does for those who do not return his favour. One of the most exemplary examples of being humane is Mother Teresa.

Humanity means caring for and helping others whenever and wherever possible. It means helping others at times when they need it the most, forgetting your selfish interests at times when others need your assistance, and giving unconditional love to each and every living being on earth.

It is told that serving the poor and the disabled is one of the greatest humanitarian deed that an individual can offer in his lifetime. It is essential for us to understand the fact that we are lucky to have everything that we desire at any point of time we need. By serving the needy, it implies that you have more than enough resources at your disposal. To serve humanity is to serve God" and "Service before Self", bring out the importance of social service.

The changemakers featured in this issue are all selfless workers who have been instrumental in transforming societies. There is no greater happiness than the happiness that comes to us through the happiness of others.

Let us keep our humanity clock ticking!

Marie Banu

Working with the inner critic
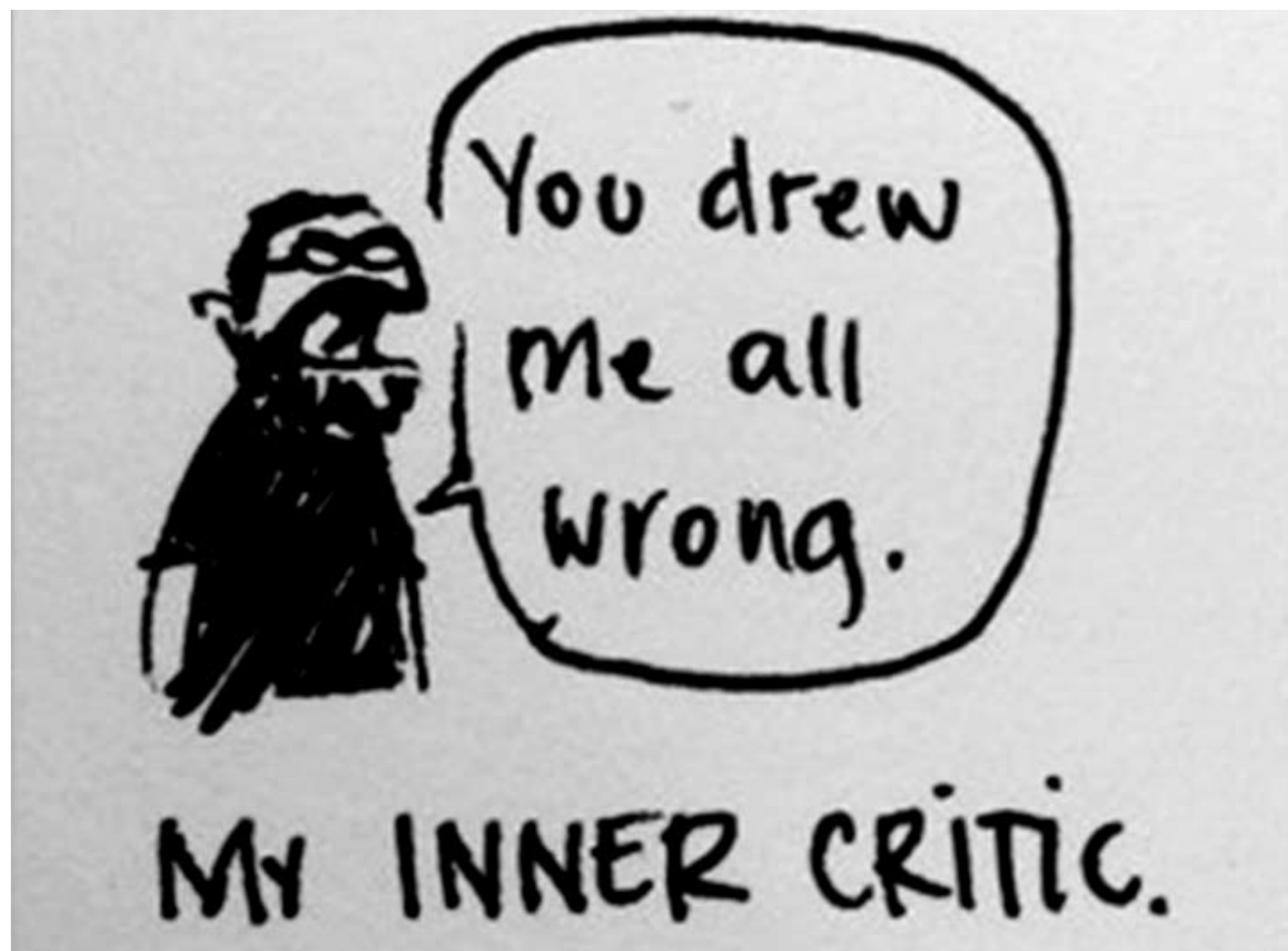
Most of us have an inner voice that is self-critical. Some of us have this inner voice so high that it can disrupt our life. Some event, conditioning that we received in our growing years—perhaps the voice of a parent, a teacher, a peer have strengthened the inner critic or the gremlin.

The inner critic maintains the status quo and does not allow one move forward confidently. The action happens largely at the mental level and is largely about looking at things as right or wrong. This inner critic comes from fear, from the need to control, leaving one with very little openness to natural unfolding. The inner critic masks one's presence as a human being. What is so central to being 'alive', the qualities of awareness, of appreciation are lost as the inner critic dulls down and contains it all. The inner critic injures the actual amazing delight in our heart.

Ajahn Sumedho, a Buddhist monk says, "I used to have what I call an 'inner tyrant', a bad habit that I picked up of always criticizing myself. It's a real tyrant — there is nobody in this world that has been more tyrannical, critical or nasty to me than I have. Even the most critical person, however much they have harmed and made me miserable, has never made me relentlessly miserable as much as I have myself, as a result of this inner tyrant. It's a real wet blanket of a tyrant, no matter what I do it's never good enough. Even if everybody says, "Ajahn Sumedho, you gave such a wonderful [inspiring talk]", the inner tyrant says "You shouldn't have said this, you didn't say that right."

Disengaging from the inner critic helps in being present to the experience in the moment. The method of disengagement needs to be conscious and intentional, in contrast to the habitual automatic ways.

In the Sufi tradition it is suggested that our thoughts should pass through three gates. At the first gate, we ask of our thought, "Is it true?" If so, we let the thought pass through to the second gate, where we ask, "Is it necessary or useful?" If this also is so, we let the thought continue on its way to the third gate, where we ask, "Is this thought rooted in love and kindness?" Judgmental thoughts, which are neither true, helpful, nor kind, falter at the gates.

Pema Chodron tells an old Native American story of a grandfather who has two wolves in his heart, one was vengeful and the other kind. One day his grandson came up to him and asked him which wolf wins in a fight, to which the elder replied, "Whichever one I feed."

Take a breath; it's time to get started on a new chapter…stop feeding the "inner critic wolf."

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.

In the journey to initiate

No one ideology or perspective can help analyse a situation in totality, nor can it absolve all social maladies. "Whether for-profit or not-for-profit, each approach has its own strength and best suit a set of development concerns," says Mr Shravan Kasam, Project Head for AP State operations of Vidya Helpline, Nirmaan Organization, Hyderabad.

Born in an upper middle class family, Kasam had always been passionate about social issues and approaches followed to address them at different levels. Along with a group of friends, he began to contribute and organise recreational programmes for orphanages and homes for aged, during his college days. "We all got hooked into this activity. We looked forward to planning new programmes and executing them," recalls Kasam. The friends together registered a society called Aikyata (serving souls) to continue such work regularly and in a more organised manner.

Eventually though, this did not last. He pursued his Masters in Pharmaceutical Analysis from the Kingston University, UK. After four years, he returned to India with the resolve to start a social enterprise. Kasam, as an individual, always disliked the idea of working for someone else. "Given my family background, I was clear about starting my own business. Not as a conventional enterprise, but as something that can influence the society in a positive way. I had no one to guide me through this path, hence explored on the internet and came across many inspiring case studies. I gained confidence and thus stepped into the social sector," he elaborates.

His initial plan was to start an agriculture information centre, but in the absence of his family's support, he established his own online shopping enterprise, hoping to convince his parents eventually. Along with business, he made time for volunteering with NGOs and associated himself with institutions/individuals who strived to make a difference in the lives of the underprivileged. He says, "It is during this phase that I got to know about CSIM from a friend. The course at CSIM was inspiration in itself. I met people in their 60s and 80s who were passionate about specific issues and pondered over their ideas to initiate change. They were all so confident and supported each other. I realised that I was not the only one who had to confront opposition from family to pursue career in the development sector. I was exposed to a kind of networking that was unseen in the corporate world - connected by purpose, resolve and mutual admiration. It all encouraged my interests and prepared me to leave my business."

Kasam left his business and joined Nirmaan as its Sustainability & Expansions Coordinator. Nirmaan, founded in 2005, is an example of what constructive discussions among students can lead to. A group of students from BITS Pilani, while deliberating on the idea of a developed India, decided to fulfill their responsibility towards the marginalised and under privileged. Intending to promote grassroot social innovations, volunteerism, active citizenship and social citizenship among the youth, Nirmaan introduced a number of initiatives like village level knowledge centres, rehabilitation (including livelihood opportunities) of flood victims in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, vocational training centres, entrepreneurship development centres and many other programmes focusing on education and livelihood, engaging community members as key stake holders. In a decade, Nirmaan has evolved into a citizem movement with six chapters spread across the country.

Nirmaan's initiated the Vidya Helpline in 2010 (1800 425 2 425/22/27/28) to offer free tele-counseling services for rural youth on academics and career-to help them decide on their career choices and the avenues available. Lack of 'relevant information on demand' and inadequate monetary support have limited career choices for rural youth. Without such information, they are unable to make critical decisions, and pursue a career that can improve their lives. Under this project, Nirmaan also conducts regular career counseling workshops in different schools and colleges in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Assam and Karnataka.

Its been about a year and a half for Kasam, who is now heading all operations of Vidya Helpline in Andhra Pradesh. "I am very happy now" says an elated Kasam, recalling his journey ever since he started his online shopping venture. "I used to follow inspiring stories on facebook. Stories on start ups did not excite me. Charity work made me feel jealous. So did volunteering. Later, the clarity and confidence I had acquired through acquaintances from CSIM, changed this perspective," he explains. He left his business to start a social enterprise, but lack of experience was a concern. He was very cautious not to enter the sector without knowing its innards and gaining some experience on managing such a model. "Nirmaan is doing just that for me. Surrounded by all young and passionate minds constantly looking out to initiate change in communities, I have been able to observe this sector very closely," remarks Kasam.

According to him, social entrepreneurship is the model to opt for when we focus on empowerment, rights based programmes and similar initiatives that have to be self sustainable. Inability to mobilise funds must not inhibit social, behavioural change which is essential for dynamic development. On the other hand, education for poor children, adoption services and similar services can follow the non-profit approach because such services continue to be unaffordable for a large section of the population. Backed by all this experience, perspective and resolve, Mr Shravan Kasam dreams of starting his own social enterprise in the near future.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

> *The course at CSIM was inspiration in itself. I met people in their 60s and 80s who were passionate about specific issues and pondered over their ideas to initiate change.*

Inspiring Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

D.: Sri Ramakrishna touched Vivekananda and the latter realised Bliss. Is it possible?

M.: Sri Ramakrishna did not touch all for that purpose. He did not create Atma. He did not create Realisation. Vivekananda was ripe. He was anxious to realise. He must have completed the preliminary course in his past births. Such is possible for ripe persons only.

D.: Can the same miracle be worked for all?

M.: If they are fit. Fitness is the point. A strong man controls the weaker man. A strong mind controls the weaker mind. That was what happened in the case cited. The effect was only temporary. Why did Vivekananda not sit quiet? Why did he wander about after such a miracle? Because the effect was only temporary.

D.: How is the mind to dive into the Heart?

M.: The mind now sees itself diversified as the universe. If the diversity is not manifest it remains in its own essence, that is the Heart. Entering the Heart means remaining without distractions.

The Heart is the only Reality. The mind is only a transient phase. To remain as one's Self is to enter the Heart.

Because a man identifies himself with the body he sees the world separate from him. This wrong identification arises because he has lost his moorings and has swerved from his original state. He is now advised to give up all these false ideas, to trace back his source and remain as the Self. In that state, there are no differences. No questions will arise.

All the *sastras* are meant only to make the man retrace his steps to the original source. He need not gain anything new. He
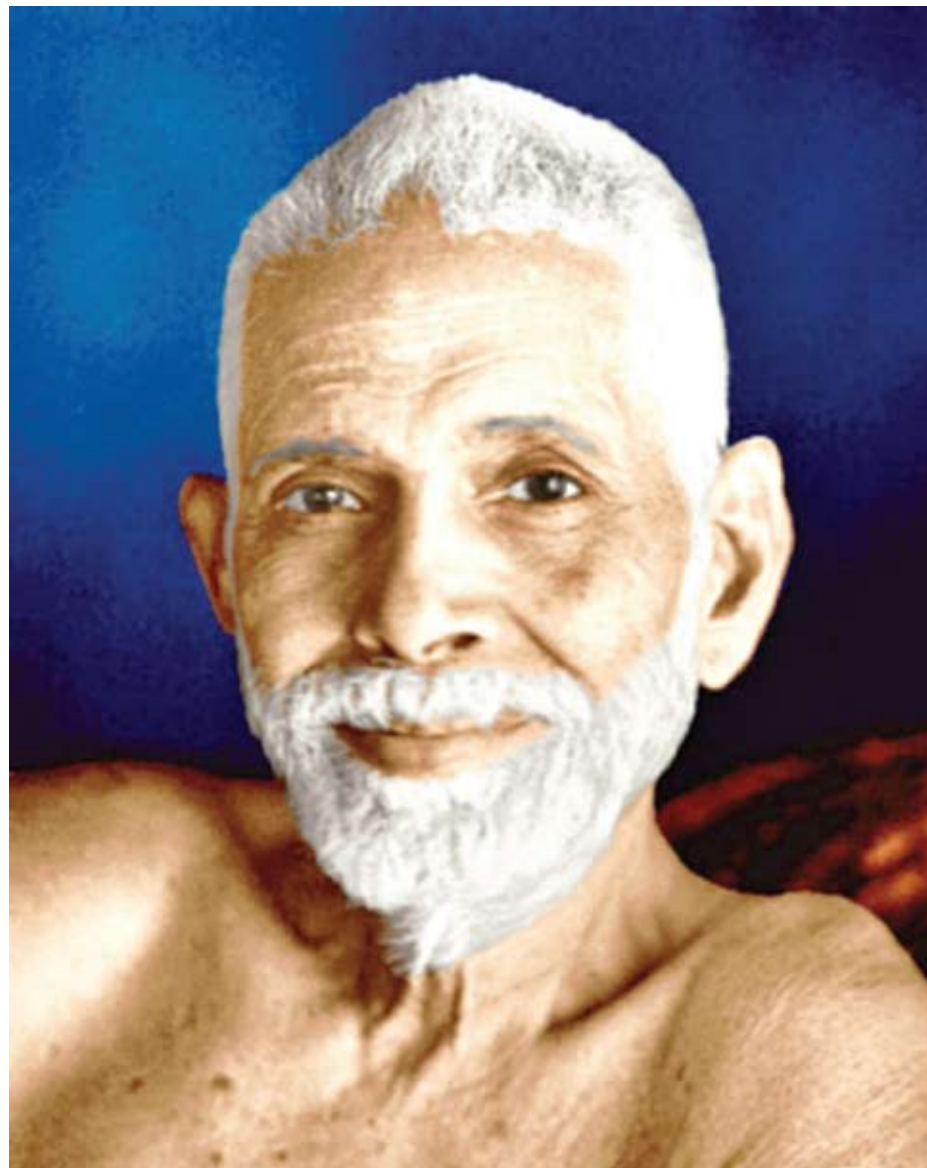
must only give up his false ideas and useless accretions. Instead of doing it he tries to catch hold of something strange and mysterious because he believes that his happiness lies elsewhere. That is the mistake.

If one remains as the Self there is bliss. Probably he thinks that being quiet does not bring about the state of bliss. That is due to his ignorance. The only practice is to find out "to whom these questions arise."

D.: How to control lust, anger, etc.?

M.: Whose are these passions? Find out. If you remain as the Self, there will be found to be nothing apart from the Self. Then there will be no need to control, etc.

D.: If a person whom we love dies, grief results. Shall we avoid such grief by either loving all alike or by not loving at all?

M.: If one dies, it results in grief for the other who lives. The way to get rid of grief is not to live. Kill the one who grieves. Who will

remain then to suffer? The ego must die. That is the only way.

The two alternatives amount to the same state. When all have become the one Self, who is there to be loved or hated?

D.: What is the Sun *marga*? What is the Moon *marga*? Which of them is easier?

M.: Ravi *marga* (Sun *marga*) is jnana. Moon marga is Yoga. They think that after purifying the 72,000 *nadis* in the body, *sushumna* is entered and the mind passes up to the *sahasrara* and there is

nectar trickling.

These are all mental concepts. The man is already overwhelmed by world concepts. Other concepts are now added in the shape of this Yoga. The object of all these is to rid the man of concepts and to make him inhere as the pure Self - i.e., absolute consciousness, bereft of thoughts! Why not go straight to it? Why add new encumbrances to the already existing ones?

Source: Talks with Sri Ramana Maharishi

About Giving

The top most development values is dignity in reaching out. Giving is not just giving, but becomes an attitude, character, and act of gratitude.

Giving is not only material or money. Giving is also your Time, Talent, Treasure, and Trust. These four 'T's are abundantly available with us any time. You should be willing to give your Time– which is in your control – systematically to a cause; whether for an individual, cause, community, or campaign. When you give Time, you will not be consuming the energy of others; you will be contributing energy.

When you give your Time with care and share, the value is more for the receiver. You will also see the results of the society awakening and will feel good to see the substantial gains to all the people around. So, there is no shortage for giving, or rather, no results are short for giving.

When I say, give 'little of your little', I essentially mean material and money. You need not have to be a rich man to give; instead you should have the mind and attitude to give. You have to give 1 out of the 10 rupees you have in your pocket. It might be small, but the power of giving makes it big. This is because people will like the concept and there will be a big bandwagon behind you.

Giving is an attitude and not a resource. So, I always found that it is always possible to give one thing at a time or certain things at a time, all the time.

Age is not an important factor for giving. The donor can also be a child. I would like to share a story with you. At Shiva Shakthi Kakkum Karangal, we had a couple who used to bring their daughter to play with the inmates here whenever they brought food. They did this repeatedly and this created an impact on the girl. The parents at one point in time found their daughter more interested in social work, and were worried that her studies may suffer. They therefore told their daughter that they will restrict the visits to the Home once in three months. This incident upset the girl. But, she did not deter. She saved her pocket money that her parents gave in a *hundial* and emptied it at the Home when she visited. By doing this, she exhibited what was possible within her limits and displayed her qualities of giving. This proves that when you inculcate giving as a habit in childhood, it remains. Nothing can be taught. It should come from within!

This is the philosophy of Dal, Oil, and Sugar (DOS) programme coordinated by Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani Trust that encourages voluntary giving of materials that are required by charitable institutions to keep the kitchen full of nutrients.

Although the contribution may be small, it is substantial. It is similar to the concept launched by Kanchi Paramacharya which is called Pidi Arisi Thittam, where housewives while cooking food for the family set aside a fistful of rice in another vessel. This rice is donated once in a month to a poor person. This act of charity becomes a repetitive behaviour and ingrains in the mind of the father, mother, children, relatives, and visitors.

The family is a place where character is built, because the child see their parents practicing giving.

There is no age for giving. Even at a time when you are close to one foot in the grave, you can write off all your wealth for a cause. The children, otherwise fear of losing their share of the property, should be trained in a family where giving is practiced so that they will never object to bequeaths or legacies. Such children will encourage their parents to give. Thus, the seed for giving while young should come from the family.

If one does not have money, he can give his Time and Talent. For example, in DOS programme, we give material and volunteers contribute their time to collect these materials and distribute them to charitable institutions.

Charitable organisations should involve their neighbourhood first. But, in reality, most of them shy away from their neighbours and go to distant pastures to contribute. This takes a long time, because 'seeing is believing'. For example, Shiva Shakti Kaakum Karangal, a home for the mentally challenged children in Chennai, has the neighbourhood support. They involve them in the day to day activities and the children create a bondage with them.

Charities think that the neighbourhood would be critical and therefore avoid interacting with them. It might be so in the initial stages, but over time they realize the important role you play in the community and would want to partake in your activities.

Most of the philanthropists have the money, but do not have the time to listen, feel, and experience. Such philanthropists do not sustain. Time is essential for all philanthropists; else it would be one-off and impulsive.

There should be a healthy mix of philanthropists–both young and old. I plan to launch a Bequeather's Club, where members would leave behind part of their wealth for community causes. The club would be managed entirely by bequeathers' themselves. People who are mentally inclined and also have the support of their family will give 5 to 10 percent of their wealth for a good cause. This initiative would be easy to translate charity into action plans.

Attitude of giving

There is a constant struggle between the heart and mind. This starts when the life is created and ends when life is ended. That is the journey! The heart says: "give unconditional love and compassion" while the mind says: "what is in it for me?"This is the constant struggle and where does it belong on a zero to hundred scale? It depends on what influences the mind, either internal or external.

If parents encourage giving, then their children will give. Thus, the environment which you create in the society will encourage giving. Heart more than mind is a primary social work factor. How many people will be able to generate this attitude? It can be vaguely compared as you are the society's face in the mirror.

First experience of Giving

At IIT Kharagpur in 1958, there were 8 students pursuing their Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering Plant Design, and 4 students (which includes me) were offered a scholarship of 150 rupees a month to cover the expenses. At that time, I felt that regardless of status, the other 4 students also deserved the scholarship. So, I talked to the other three students who received the scholarship and convinced them to share the funds equally among those who did not receive this benefit. This was enough to meet their expenses. This was a live experience of giving and receiving with love and dignity.

I am happy when I see someone achieve his objective of training and empowering others, and I get angry when I see anybody working with me and not achieving their target. If I get an opportunity to meet both—the one who made me happy and the one who made me angry—I would like to speak to the one who made me angry first, as I want to help him. I feel very good when I learn that I have been instrumental in transforming the attitude as a person. I like to be around people who are humble. I don't exhibit my anger in public.

A transition occurred in me when I was 40 years old. I read a book titled 'Power of Positive Thinking' by Norman Vincent Peale, a Pastor. A lot of people appreciated me for my changed behaviour and this refined me to be a better person. This book changed my life.

Being a student of Ramakrishna Mission, I am inspired by Swami Vivekananda's teachings. My father was spiritual as well as rational. Most of the time you find spiritual people to be charitable, because it disciplines the mind to be content and make surplus available to giving.

Spirituality and religion are separate. Religious practices are more scripture and ritual oriented, but spirituality is an attitude. Religion can be involved in charity, but it is not a must. Spirituality is discovering yourself—God within you!

Dignity in giving and receiving

The top most development values is dignity in reaching out. Giving is not just giving, but becomes an attitude, character, and act of gratitude.

I am giving because God has given me this facility to reach out to more recipients thereby spreading the give effect. When you give, somebody sees you giving and it is contagious. People will like to copy this and come to you and ask how you are doing it. Giving is an economic activity and not charity, because you are giving to only those who are skilled and knowledgeable.

When you give to somebody, you are increasing his potential and leads to growth. More people should give little of their little. There should be no dearth for giving, there are no boundaries, have no limitations and feeds on itself.

The giver is also a receiver. You may be also lacking in something, which you may receive from another giver.

—PN Devarajan
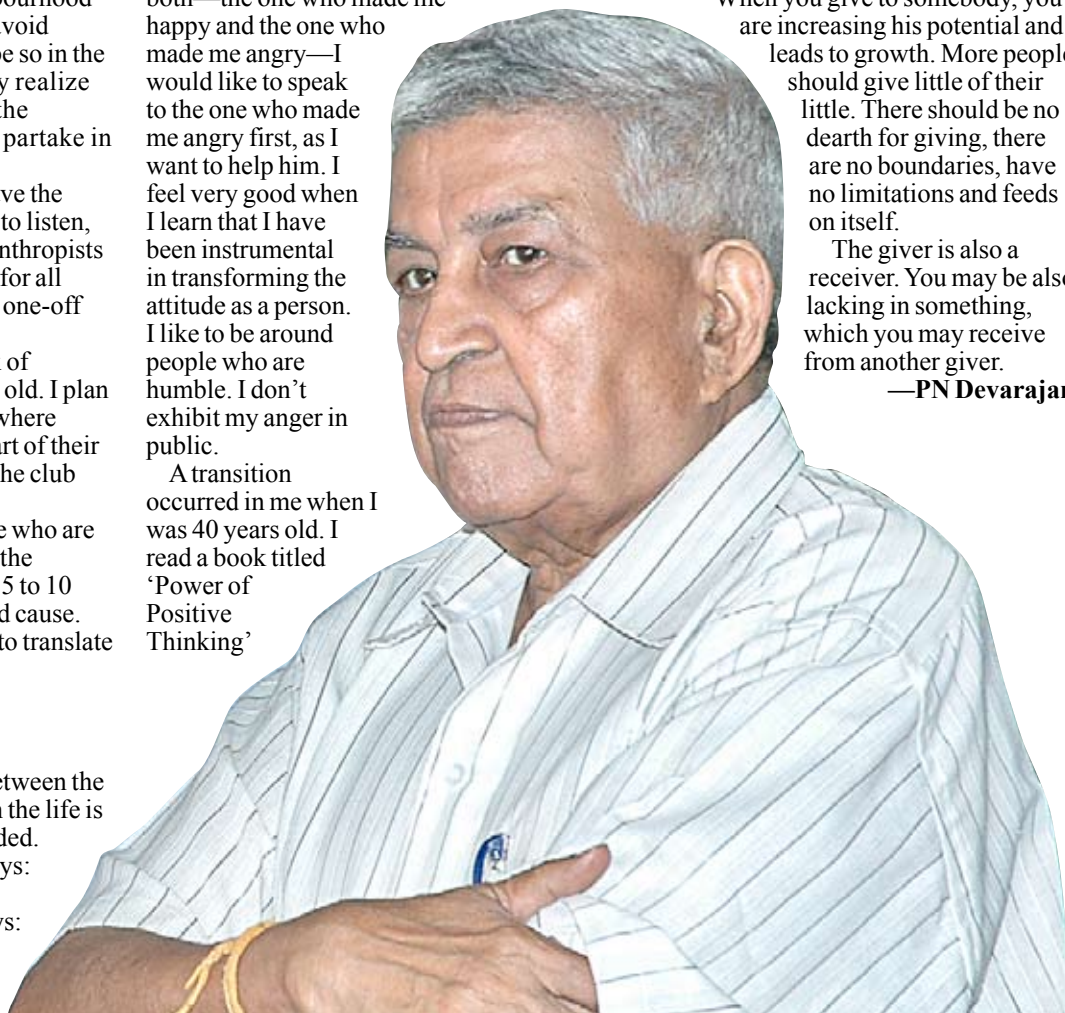
Back To School

Bal Utsav's Museum School model was a basic everyday school for children from urban slums. The school itself would function from museums in the city, and the curriculum was built around exhibits as the museum.

In 2011, one of the major landmarks in Indian policy was notched up, when the Right to Education Act was introduced. Almost immediately, a beacon of hope arose for the millions of Indian children who were out of school. A number of these children were the focus of Bal Utsav's education drive on the back of the Right to Education Act in 2011. The NGO had its priorities in place. "We began our first intervention on the back of the RTE," explains Ramesh Balasundaram, one of the co-founders of Bal Utsav, "But our priority was to bring about education through multiple parameters. And that's how it has been for the last seven years."

The problem with education often lies in the simple fact that children don't quite receive the education they need. Given the situation, it's easy to deduce that this automatically means missing out on India's growth story. Bal Utsav's aim in correcting this, is to ensure that at least every child knows to read and write. To achieve that, the mission is to understand the problem and devise a strategy. But by Ramesh's own admission, another one of Bal Utsav's missions has been to avoid what he calls "the band-aid approach" to poverty eradication. "The problem is instant gratification," he explains, "When we see someone hungry, we feed them. We don't try to understand why they are hungry or ensure they don't stay hungry." The solution, then, Ramesh feels, lies in education, which continues to remain an unfulfilled area in social work despite the presence of nearly 3.3 million NGOs in India (according to Planning Commission data). "When we started out, we didn't think the problem was too big that it couldn't be solved," he insists, "All we did was to ensure that we start working with the future, and that's the children of today." In a nutshell, Bal Utsav focuses on the following approach to education: innovative learning opportunities for out-of-school children, sustained initiatives for all-round development of scholastic children, education and counselling of parents, and upgrading global teaching skills and thereby make teachers active learners for life. A large part of this has been achieved through the multi-grade, multi-level pedagogy that Bal Utsav has, by now, made its own.

But the problem was more than mere optics and PR. The first step that Bal Utsav took, was to consciously avoid stereotypical representations of poverty. "Nearly 400 million children require help," says Ramesh, "Strangely though, in India, these children are portrayed by the media as kids with torn clothes who look right into the camera." He continues: "These children not the only kind of children in the country who need help. Poverty isn't only about image." A large part of that effort has been evident in the last four years of Bal Utsav's operations, where the NGO has been putting together a major intervention for out-of-school children. In 2011, Bal Utsav introduced what Ramesh refers to as the 'Museum School

Model'. "The aim was to use a channel to touch upon multiple aspects of education," he explains, "Our Museum School model was a basic everyday school for children from urban slums. The school itself would function from museums in the city, and the curriculum was built around exhibits as the museum." But that was only the start.

In 2013, Bal Utsav quickly re-focussed its target, and came to realize that children from construction sites were a major part of the young populace that needed help. "In due course, these children became our second-largest contributors to our out-of-school children," says Ramesh. Only the next year, the third big contributor to Bal Utsav's out-of-School children, were children from tribal pockets. The NGO set up four centres in the Nilgiris district: two centres for workers at the region's tea estates, and two for tribal children. The same year, Bal Utsav teamed up with the Karnataka Government to rehabilitate out-of-school children in the State. The aim was to supplement existing efforts made to educate children. "We worked with the government to utilise unused classrooms in government schools to educate most of the kids," says Ramesh, "The most heart-warming aspect of the work we did, is the fact that it is today, a scalable model that can be implemented in virtually every Indian State."

Another encouraging result from teaming up with the government was the natural expansion in available infrastructure for Bal Utsav's work. "We moved children from nearby slums and construction sites to these schools," Ramesh explains. In undertaking this mini-exodus of sorts, Bal Utsav went all the way in overseeing the formalities that accompany such enrolments. The NGO began taking care of the paperwork for these students, including arranging for caste certificates in some cases. In fact, it was this landmark that allowed the NGO to begin 2015 by approaching education with renewed focus. "Since last year, we have been focusing on strengthening existing government schools," says Ramesh, "We have begun to understand that our system needs the maturity to absorb the children we educate. So, we are now picking up existing government schools and re-vitalizing them." This facelift on many levels has caused multifarious interventions in areas like infrastructure, teacher development, scholarships and water sanitation. "We hope to touch over a hundred schools this year, and in doing that touch the lives of almost 100,000 children."

The Rubber Growing Garos of Meghalaya

Rubber was first introduced to the Garos by a Medical Mission Sister, Sr. Rose Kayathinkara in the late 80s

Garos are the second largest tribal group inhabiting the Karo Hills and Khasi Hills in Meghalaya. The Garos are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. The individuals take their clan titles from their mothers. Traditionally, the youngest daughter inherits the property from her mother. Sons' leave the parents' house at puberty, and are trained in the village bachelor dormitory. After getting married, the man lives in his wife's house. Garos are only a matrilinear society, but not matriarchal. While property of Garo's is owned by the women, the men folk govern the society and domestic affairs and manage the property.

Rubber was first introduced to the Garos by a Medical Mission Sister, Sr. Rose Kayathinkara in the late 80s. Sister Rose was appalled at the poverty and the wretched conditions in which the Garo tribes were living when she landed in Rajabala in Garo Hills in late 70s. She would visit each and every house in the neighborhood and suggest various ways for people to break free of poverty. She introduced poultry and dairy farming and a few of the Garos started rearing pigs and cattle. It was then the idea of rubber cultivation stuck the nun, daughter of a rubber plantation owner in Kerala state's Kottayam district.

The Rubber Board of Kerala backed her idea and she took up cultivation seriously from 1987. She organized a meeting of the villagers to explain about rubber. "Nobody had heard about rubber trees at that time. Some asked me what they would get to eat from the rubber," she recalled. The nun said it took her time and patience to convince the people. She provided them free rubber saplings and funds to start cultivation. People's attitude changed after a few villagers began to tap the rubber and improved their economic status.

One such village which took to rubber farming was the Chirimdare tribal village on the East Garo Hills with a population of around 180 people. The Maraks have been living there for over four generations. They were practicing jhum cultivation growing paddy and vegetables and were living in extreme poor conditions till the late 80s. Sister Rose's visit to their house changed their lives forever. On her request they started rubber cultivation in 1987 and today they have over 2000 rubber trees. "I knew Sister's suggestion to grow rubber would not be a futile one. We believed in her and her intentions of uplifting us. She wanted us to prosper and that is why she painstakingly climbed the hills and reached out to us in our homes. We agreed to her idea of setting up a rubber farm and a few of us in this village planted the saplings provided by

I was living in a kacha house before and in 2003, I built a concrete house. I sent my children to school and college and today my family's future is secure because of rubber.

Sister from the Rubber Board," says Jengsen Marak.

"Once we started tapping the rubber, we used to go to Tura, about 90 kms away from here by cycle or bus to sell the rubber. A kilo rubber used to sell at Rs.35 – 40 those days but the middlemen would give us only between Rs.12-18. We did not get much returns from rubber initially as the middlemen were fleecing us. When we told Sister about this, she came to our rescue and started the Mendipathar Multipurpose Cooperative Society in 1998. Now, we are very blessed. We have to go just a few kms away and sell the rubber to the cooperative. We get good prices at the Cooperative and our earnings have increased. I was living in a *kachcha* house before and in 2003, I built a concrete house. I sent my children to school and college and today my family's future is secure because of rubber. My whole family is involved in rubber cultivation. We men are involved in tapping and the women help us in processing the latex. Sister helps us in getting our subsidy from The Rubber Board also." says Marak.

"The improvement in human living condition is possible through a proper marketing system and empowerment of people at the grassroots level," asserts Sister Rose. The Rubber initiative has completely changed people's lives. Every household narrates the same story of prosperity. It has ushered a silent economic revolution in the Garo Hills.

—Latha Suresh

Better Sanitation

Samagra is a social enterprise that was established to provide sanitation services in the urban slums of Pune

Urban planning and development in India makes for an interesting story. Every city has its own characteristics and challenges. And, slums have become an integral part of our cities. Provision of basic amenities to slums remains a challenging task to civic authorities. More glaringly, the question of sanitation has been daunting for multiple reasons. There are still people who defecate in the open and the establishment of public toilets, instead of solving this concern has only created a bigger menace. "Lack of user engagement is the lacuna here," begins Mr Swapnil Chaturvedi, Founder Director of Samagra.

Samagra is a social enterprise that was established to provide sanitation services in the urban slums of Pune. It was registered as a For-profit private company in 2012. Eventually, the Non-profit unit – Samagra Empowerment Foundation was founded in the year 2014, in Pune. Samagra's work revolves around three inter related aspects – redesigning community sanitation facilities, introducing user engagement to sustain these facilities and operationalise this model on a large scale to bring about an enduring behavioral change in the urban slum communities.

Samagra's long term vision is to see open defecation free slums. The widening socio economic divide due to lack of basic amenities is an impediment to the idea of resilient cities. Chaturvedi points out that sanitation plays a critical role in this context, along with water and hygiene. Their extensive research across few slums in India attempted to learn why sanitation services in slums were not successful and the potential impact of such facilities on life in the slums. Unexpectedly, design has never been prioritised. Women, children and also elderly found the generic models uncomfortable. As mentioned earlier, there has been no user engagement in the process which can create a sense of ownership and thus sustain the behavioral change. Third and most of all, absence of sustainable operational assistance has left these facilities in a deplorable state, when people get back to conventional behaviour, reconciled to open defecation. "There is no money allocated for operational assistance in the budgets of city corporations. Building the toilets cannot bring the change we seek," remarks Chaturvedi.

Samagra began by taking over the community sanitation facilities from the municipal corporation and then worked

> *Communities have to be an inherent part of this exercise because without their engagement, the facilities cannot be maintained properly and this flaw will impede the behavioral change we intend to see in the community's sanitation behaviour*

on redesigning these facilities for better usage, suiting the needs of different sections of the population. Alongside, a management platform was created to make these user friendly facilities self-sustainable. "Communities have to be an inherent part of this exercise because without their engagement, the facilities cannot be maintained properly and this flaw will impede the behavioral change we intend to see in the community's sanitation behaviour," Chaturvedi explains. Reiterating on user engagement, he insists that a nominal charge levied helps generate revenue to maintain these facilities, without depending on external funds. Building this sense of ownership is the key. However, it is more easily said than done.

"Urban slums are characterised by low levels of literacy and heterogeneous population where every group of people stick to their own set of habits.
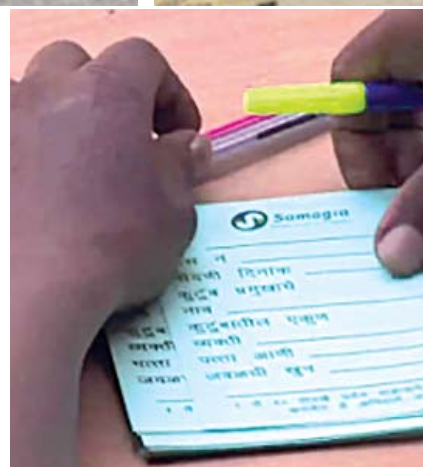
Everybody looks forward to a clean city, but do not come forward to clean it. Given these characteristics, ownership is the biggest challenge, more apparent in urban slums due to lack of basic infrastructure. We ask people to pay for usage so that they can eventually own and operate these facilities," he elaborates.

Samagra's provision of ventilation, lighting, sanitary dustbins, kids' accessories in the toilets and other features have made the toilets welcoming. New toilets have been established in areas closer to homes so that they are easily accessible. Regular community workshops are organised to engage the community members rationally and emotionally, so that a collective and long term impact can be made. Monthly family passes are issued to encourage the entire family to form a behaviour. Brand ambassadors from the communities continuously influence people from their radius of influence.

Samagra has successfully mapped the urban slum communities in Pune at the household level on google, enabling the specific analysis of families who go out for defecation, those who have toilets in their houses, families that do not have a toilet at home, but have the space for constructing one and also the public sanitation facilities available for the communities. Such a detailed mapping is first of its kind and had come to be a very valuable input to evolve a comprehensive, targeted intervention in the field of sanitation. Around 20-30 percent of the families in every slum can have toilets, but data is needed to help identify these families. Subsidies can make a significant difference only when they reach these families within the communities. This data has been made available to agencies who oversee the construction of toilets in urban slums according to government schemes.

The reach of all these efforts definitely need a mention. Toilet usage among women has increased remarkably. Presently, there are about 4500 women users in a day. Paid usage of toilets has increased by a whopping 600% and customer satisfaction stands at an appreciable 92%. Samagra's idea of using 'technology and psychology' to bring about a desired change in sanitation behaviour of urban slum communities has worked. The model provides scope for replication, promising the kind of change yearned by many development thinkers. And the vision, seems achievable!

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Procurement – distinguish wants, needs and requirements

Dr. Kalpana Sampath and Prathaap B One of the key testing points for Project Managers come at the procurement stage of the project. The ability to distinguish clearly between the wants of the customers; needs of the project team and true requirements of the project; use the skill of 5W 1H of buying or procuring things that are required for executing the project show cases the maturity and capacity of the manager to manage the project efficiently. The procuring or purchasing the goods, materials and resources all need to be very contextual and appropriate to the activity and specific flow in the execution process. This understanding, called the procurement management, is vital to be operationally efficient and effective.

Procurement management would entail the project manager to –

- Identify project procurement needs
- Determine contract types and potential providers
- Identify/select procurement source
- Assessing quality and completeness of contract
- Verify product/service acceptance
- Structured review of the procurement process

In order to perform these roles effectively, the manager needs to employ four processes. Planning, Conducting, Controlling/ monitoring and Closing the transaction. In a social organization where funding is forever hand to mouth existence and every decision that has a direct connect to finance has to be thought out, these four processes become very critical.

1. **Planning** involves deciding how much, when, from where and who will acquire / procure. It also includes documenting project purchasing decisions, specifying the approach and identifying potential sellers. This is where the manager should clearly distinguish the requirements of the project from many needs and wants that may be put forth by the project team members. When there is limited funding the hierarchy of what are most essentials that would directly impact the project and those that are feel good items have to be distinguished. Procurement cycle needs to be well connected and aligned to project cycle. Every dimension of planning has to be a decision well thought through and scientific rather than purchase on gut feeling and unorganized. Many techniques like Make-or-Buy analysis, Expert Judgements, Market Research, Meetings and Historical references may be used while planning. This can be done well with the inputs of project plan, requirements documentation, work breakdown structure, risk register, activity resource sheet, schedule, cost estimates, environmental factors and overall understanding of the project activities and its goals.

2. **Conducting or Executing the procurement i**nvolves obtaining seller responses, selecting a seller and awarding a contract. Mindlessly sometimes social organizations become rule bound for getting three quotations and selecting the most competitive in terms of price. But that rule cannot be employed in every purchase decision. A number of factors connected to the project requirements have to be considered before decision is made. There are different types of contracts & are more or less appropriate for different types of purchases. Each of these have to be examined carefully and whatever suits the purchase has to be adopted. Given in the chart below explains the key elements, disadvantages and suitability of the method for awarding the contract.

- Fixed Price or lump sum contracts where a fixed price for an agreed upon unit of supply is paid to the seller (Unit price -fixed price).
- Lump sum / firm Fixed Price where Seller at most risk (FFP – Firm Fixed Price). This can be used for Commercial products and commercial services for which reasonable prices can be established.
- Incentive included fixed price which is most difficult to administer. It contains a number of cost/profit schemes like, cost, target profit, target price, ceiling price and share ratio. If seller maximizes profits, an incentive is offered to reduce costs and improve efficiency but no profit (FPIF – Fixed Price Incentive Fee). This is suitable in projects that are development and production of high-volume, multi-year contracts.
- The seller is paid a fixed price, but the contract is reviewed at pre-defined intervals in the project for adjustments to the contract price based on certain parameters (FP-EPA – Fixed Price with Economic Price Adjustment). This can be used with negotiated procurements and, in limited applications, with formal advertising when determined to be feasible.
- Another method which is not desirable from buyer's point of view, where the contractor is reimbursed its cost + a fixed fee. (CPFF – Cost Plus Fixed Fee). This is suitable in research and development where the costs are dependent on volume. Example in completion form: Advanced development or technical services contracts. In Term form: Research and exploratory development projects. This is used when the level of effort required is known and there is an inability to measure risk.
- Seller is reimbursed for an agreed upon performance cost along with a pre-established fee plus an incentive bonus. The buyer and seller share the uncertainty to a certain degree (CPIF– Cost plus Incentive Fee). This is suitable where both the buyer and seller would benefit like major systems development and other development programs in which it is determined that CPIF is desirable and administratively practical.
- Another method is where the contractor is influenced to increase costs. (CPAF– Cost plus Award Fee). But this is not advisable from buyer's point of view. This is suitable in projects where Level-of-effort services can only be subjectively measured, and contract for which work would have been accomplished under another contract type if performance objectives could have been expressed as definite milestones, targets, and goals that could have been measured.
- Time and Materials only contract: This is suitable in Engineering and design services in conjunction with the production of suppliers, engineering design and manufacture, repair, maintenance, and overhaul work to be performed on an as-needed basis. This method calls for provision of direct labor hours at specified hourly rate and materials at cost (or some other basis specified in contract). The fixed hourly rates include wages, overhead, general and administrative expenses, and profit. Material cost can include, if appropriate, material handling costs.

3. **Controlling and monitoring** the procurement process involves managing procurement relationships, monitoring contract performance and making changes and corrections as needed. These may be undertaken using Contract Change Control System, Procurement Performance Reviews, Inspections and Audits, Performance Reporting, Payment Systems, Claims Administration Records Management System. The right approval levels, tracking and evaluation mechanisms should be used

4. **Closing the transaction** of purchase and acquiring the requirements for the project is the fourth process. At the stage of closing, a clear document on all details of purchasing with a signed off closure and an update to the entire project team and management plan has to be executed.

In order to ensure efficient procurement all legal compliances, contracts have to be executed with genuine assent by both the parties. Both on the seller and the buyer the accountability and responsibility with commitment timelines have to be clearly spelt out. It is not about just following the rules of three quotations, it is much more intense and rigorous control and monitoring process to be followed in the procurement. Be it a simple purchase of stationary or heavy manufacturing equipment or transport vehicle, the underlying principles of procurement management has to be adhered to for efficient project management.

**—Dr Kalpana Sampath
& Prathaap B**

CSIM Training at Coimbatore

A 5-day Social Entrepreneurship Outlook Program was organised by CSIM Coimbatore, commencing from 20th January 2016 onwards. 16 participants including NMCT coordinators and MSW students from various colleges of Coimbatore, currently undergoing a three month internship with NMCT enrolled for the programme.

The programme covered modules on Social issues, concepts and issues related to Social Entrepreneurship,and case studies of Social entrepreneurs. Besides, sessions on Management, Financial management, CSR, Project Monitoring and evaluation , Strategic planning of NPOs, Social Accounting and Audit and Proposal writing were also covered.

Latha Suresh, Honorary Director of CSIM handled sessions on Social issues and concept of Social Enterprises. Dr. Madhuri Ravindra Kumar, Head of CSIM Coimbatore, conducted interactive sessions with the participants on various types of Social entrepreneurs, using audio visual presentations. She also handled the session on CSR , its development and Section 135 of the Companies Act of 2013; Impact Assessment, Social Accounting and Audit framework; and basic concepts engaged in charting out a NPO strategy.

The module on Financial Management was conducted by NMCT - the Project Coordinator of HOPE project and the Finance manager of NMCT.

This course laid a foundation for the students to venture into Social Entrepreneurship.

CII and CSIM
launches
a 10-day Capacity Building Programme for Non-Governmental Organisations at Bengaluru

CII
Confederation of Indian Industry

CSIM
to learn • to heal • to raise

Venue:
- Enable India (Day 1&2)
- Toyota (Day 3)
- CII Bengaluru (Day 4,5,6, 10)
- Welingkar Management
- Institute (Day 7, 9)
- Agastya Foundation (Day 8)

Duration:
Two months
Starting from 11th March 2016.
Classes are held from 10am to 4pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

Medium: English *(Faculty can handle bilingual sessions, if required)*

Registration Charges:

Rs. 15,000 per participant.

Corporates can fully or partly sponsor the registration charges for the NGO they wish to support.

Who can enroll?

Founder members or Senior Managers of NGOs working in the state of Karnataka.

CSR professionals from Companies

Module:

1. Inauguration; Panel DiscussionStrategic Management ToolsPlanning (Vision, Mission, Objectives)
2. Strategic Management Tools (Contd.)
3. Factory Visit to Toyota; Toyota's approach to Operational Excellance
4. Operational Excellence Leadership, Group Dynamics
5. Resource Mobilization Strategies
6. Sustainable Strategies for Fund Raising
7. Effective Communication Documentation Tools
8. Field Visit to Agastya Foundation, Kuppam Campus;   Financial Management; Legal Compliances; CSR Act
9. Proposal Writing; Budgeting; Social Impact Measurement CSR reporting
10. Presentation of Projects

To register, please contact Ms. Priya at 080-42889595 write to shaw.priya@cii.in

"Corporate building for NGOs is important; capacity building for corporates is important."

Aroon Raman shares with Marie Banu the need for synergy between corporates and NGOs.

Aroon Raman is an Indian entrepreneur and author. Raman did his Masters in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and then pursued his MBA from Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He is married with two children.

Raman currently owns a Research and Development company and till date, he has written two two thrillers – The Shadow Throne and a Mughal period adventure called The Treasure of Kafur. Both books were published by Pan Macmillan and have become the national bestsellers.

In 1991, he set up "Raman Boards", a company involved in electrical materials, which was later bought by the ABB Group in 2007. He then started his Research and Development Company named "Raman FibreScience" in 2008 which has been acquired by a U.S.company in November 2014. The company specialises in wet-laid composites and offers end-to-end solutions to research and innovation problems. His company is also well known for developing talent at the grassroots level.

In 2010, he was elected Chairman of the CII Karnataka State Council for a period of one year. He is the Convener-CII CSR Panel.

In an exclusive interview, he shares with Marie Banu the need for synergy between corporates and NGOs.

What inspires you to write books?

I was a reader since very young age and enjoyed reading Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard, thrillers and boys adventure stories. I grew up on that diet of fiction and then got into non-fiction. I always had been good in English at school, but went on to study Social Sciences, business, and so on. But, I kept up with my reading habits. When I decided to sell my first company, writing just came back in full force.

I sat down and wrote my first book 'The Shadow Throne' which was published by Pan Macmillan. That did well and I launched into my second book 'The Treasure of Kafur' which is on a Mughal adventure. Now, am writing my third book called 'Skyfire'. The first book that I wrote was on a nuclear kind of Armageddon scenario. The third book is a sequel to the first with the same characters, but here the plot revolves around artificial weather manipulation. It is an interesting theme and not many people might be aware that there was a UN Environment Modification Convention (ENMOD) 20 years ago where various countries got together and said that we will not manipulate the weather or environment for military purposes. So, the militarisation of weather has been a kind of a hidden agenda in various military technologies for some time. So, this book is a take on that and has some basis in scientific effect

Your interest in the social sector?

I sold my first company in 2007; started another R&D company which I sold in end 2014. Ever since then, it has been my intent to engage in the social sector more strongly. I had also been part of CII for a long time in various capacities and thought I would take up the convenorship of CII-CSR panel which comes focused specifically on disability.

I must say that disability has been a challenge. Corporates do engage to some extent; of course, some are much more engaged than others mainly in the area of inclusion at workplace. Among the manufacturing companies, I find this to be still nascent.

In CII, while we did the conference titled 'Engage Ability', I have since found it to be uphill going. There is a lot more that needs to be done to energise the corporate world and particularly after our tie up with Disability NGO Alliance (DNA), I must say that I have not been able to do a lot. I have certainly not given up, but it is clear that we need to achieve a lot more on the ground before we can say that we can make some progress.

How can we sensitise corporates on inclusion?

This is vital. One of the things I am hoping that we will take up to in future is—better understanding of corporate CSR and what needs to be done and how to make CII more relevant. For example, DNA has a couple of good programmers which they would like to take up. Eight out of ten corporates would have chosen schools as their CSR agenda which are aimed at mainstreamed children. The moment we start looking at disabled children in every school, the intervention becomes complex. It has been more of a struggle to get the corporates involved in disability programmes because the investment per child seems to be much higher. It could be due to that or other reasons. One of our tasks to look into the corporate views in such matters. There is a huge amount of learning to be done!

How to enable synergy between the CSR and NGO programmes?

NGO capacity building is crucial and well understood. Apart from us, NGOs themselves are aware and are trying to expose themselves as much as they can. But, corporates also need as much inputs, particularly the mid-sized ones and others. Corporate building for NGOs is important; capacity building for corporates is important. Each side has to understand the other better. They have their own strength and weaknesses, and deeper involvement is probably required to bridge this gap better. Otherwise, right now there is a lot of cheque book related involvement which may not be the best way forward. That is one of the challenges going forward which we need to try to pitch.