

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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Cover Story - Pg 6 A hand to hold

About Hand in Hand India and its activities



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Editor : Marie Banu
Phone : 044-42805365



Alumni Talk Pg 3

Learning to get into Schools

Bal Utsav, an NGO in
Bengaluru and its work in
introducing need based
interventions in schools



Profile Pg 9

Messages from Puppets

About Kalaivanan who uses puppetry
along with other art forms to educate
the public on several issues..



Chit Chat Pg 12

"CSR is the beginnings of ownership of the country."

An exclusive interview with
Shri Prahlad Kakkar
Leading Indian ad film director

From the Editor

Dear Friend,

Women's Rights, gender equality, equal pay. These concepts might be thought by many to be a reality. While great strides have been made over the decades, much remains to be done.

Women still need to advocate for their children, especially their daughters, to be educated. For many the struggle is harder than ever. Literacy is a global issue but it is women who hold the power to make change.

Real change will happen when norms and mores evolve. Most Indian families, like most Chinese or Vietnamese families, are still patriarchal and strongly prefer boys to girls, a preference they often exercise by aborting female fetuses.

Some years ago "women's issues" were at the political and social forefront, literacy was considered a global priority and a human right. After the first International Literacy Day in 1965, it has become clear that focus on literacy puts women squarely in view.

Evidence is irrefutable that literate women change and transform their families, their communities and the wider world. Literate women are more likely to send their children, especially their girls, to school. By acquiring literacy, women become more economically self-reliant and more actively engaged in their country's social, political and cultural life.

All evidence shows that investment in literacy for women yields high development dividends. Investment in women's literacy improves livelihoods, leads to better child and maternal health, and increases girls' access to education. In short, newly literate women have a positive ripple effect on all development indicators.

The changemakers featured in this issue are about social workers who focus their work in the area of women, education and health.

Hope you do get inspired, and inspire others.

—Marie Banu

The Energizing Pause

It's not only moving that creates new starting points. Sometimes all it takes is a subtle shift in perspective, an opening of the mind, an intentional pause and reset, or a new route to start to see new options and new possibilities.

—Kristin Armstrong

In life, a pause can make all the difference!

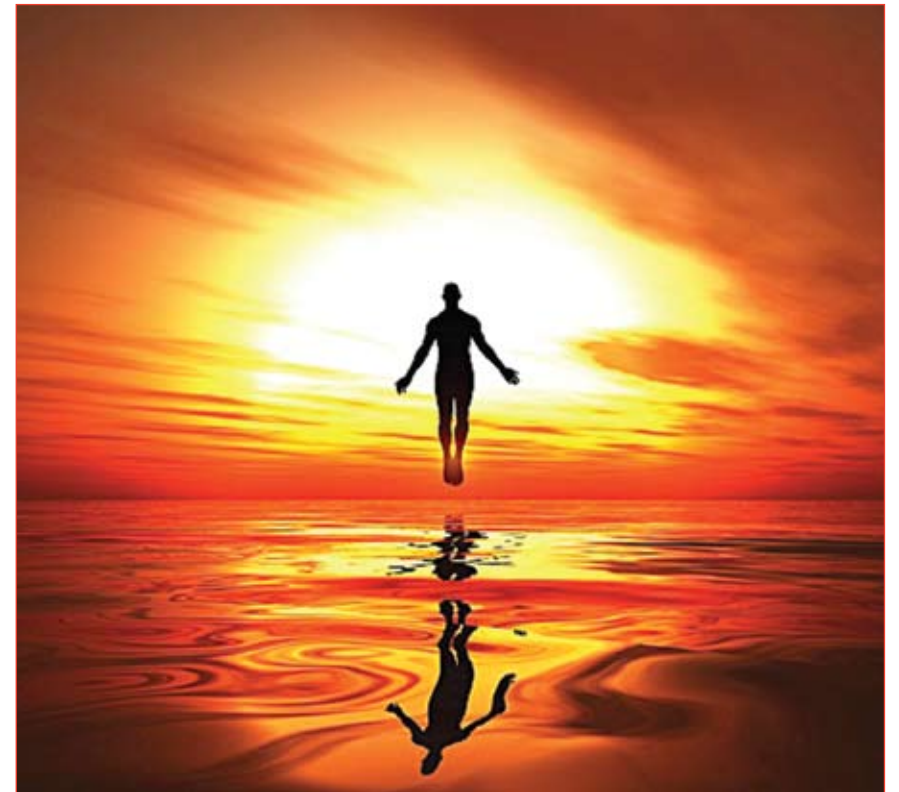
Today, the world around us demands that we constantly do, do, do, and then do some more. There is a fear built around a pause. Pause – a brief break from the work on hand, a pause in thinking about a new strategy, a week-long retreat, a break from work to pursue further education or take care of pressing family needs, or caring for one's child, etc. Pauses are associated with loss of time that could be used productively. The popular notion is that we think we are making progress when we are in motion – as in moving forward, towards our goal.

However, in reality, oftentimes, the most progress is made when we pause. History is proof enough of how many discoveries were made during a pause. The best insights come when we stop working on something and let it be. Inspiration and insights cannot be reached solely through continuous mental focus, thought, and reasoning. They are accessed when the mind is in a relaxed state. In such a state, creativity flows and newer vistas open up and come to our awareness.

Pauses refresh and renew us and actually enhance our productivity. More importantly, they bring balance and rhythm to our lives. Pauses are built into the way our body functions – be it the pause of sleep or the tiny pause between two breaths. And this tiny pause between breaths are the most relaxing, these pauses are when we experience the one-ness with the universal consciousness.

Pauses give us life. Then why don't we honor these pauses and allow ourselves to relaxing slip into them completely? After a pause, plunging back into work can be more fun and energizing.

We hear our life breath during the silent pauses. In music, pauses make the rhythms and allow the notes to settle in



and reverberate in our ears and hearts. While thinking, the pauses help assimilate, synthesize, and notice new connections and patterns. That is how innovations and discoveries happen. While engaged in physical work, the pauses help renew our energy for another round of work.

Pauses are energizing! Pauses create life, they provide continuity, they increase productivity, vigor, and focus. Pauses bring you in touch with your 'being' state – which is your true existence. So, welcome pauses in your life; do not wait for that one long holiday, or the end of the week, or for that special place to relax. Pauses have potential energy and can cause progress, even without movement. Invite, enjoy, and cherish the energizing pause!

Few ways to pause are:

- Meditation, a practice for a spiritual pause that brings peace
- Psychologist K. Anders Ericsson points out top performers tend to work in approximately 90-minute cycles and then take a break. We are designed to pulse and Pulsing is the simplest, easiest, most immediate way to build breaks into your day.

It's very important that we re-learn the art of resting and relaxing. Not only does it help prevent the onset of many illnesses that develop through chronic tension and worrying; it allows us to clear our minds, focus, and find creative solutions to problems.

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Yours Energetically

Dr. Bhulakshmi V and Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi are trainers and facilitators of the Positive Energy (PE) program. They are spiritual seekers with a vision of transforming their own energy state from surviving to being. In this journey they have gathered deep insights and are 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, the authors are working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space.

This intervention is being offered by GapSkills Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd to corporates and schools. You can contact them at info@gapskills.com to design a customized intervention for your organization or join the PE open program - www.gapskills.com.

Learning to get into Schools

Museum Schools, the first initiative for Out of School Children (OOSC) was introduced by Bal Utsav in 2012

The grades of inequity, in almost everything that pertains to education, is a challenge that India has been facing for decades together. In spite of numerous schemes, programmes, civil society initiatives, alternative forms of education, etc. there still remains a large number of children who either drop out before completing elementary education or have not stepped into school at all. Fortunately, all these problems are more apparent than before as the implications affect the populace in one way or the other. This scheme of affairs disturbed Mr Ramesh Balasundaram and his wife Binu, Founders of Bal Utsav, based in Bangalore.

Both of them gave up their corporate jobs in order to work for the above cause. Soon after marriage in early 2009, Ramesh and Binu started contemplating on what they wanted to do. They began to research on the education sector thoroughly. Coincidentally, during this time, the Union Planning Commission released its data revealing that there were 3.3 million NGOs in the country, i.e. one NGO for every 400 people in the country.

"While so much was being done through government schemes/programmes and NGO initiatives, problems persisted and in fact they penetrated deeper in the system. Every cause emerged as a work in progress," recalls Ramesh who is disappointed with the 'band aid' approach in the development sector which did not allow the analysis of a cause's ecosystem.

India having the highest number of children in the world, Ramesh and Binu believed that solutions for the predicaments in our country can only come from its own children. Bal Utsav was thus established and registered as a Trust in 2009 with the objective of introducing need based interventions in schools.

"Children are taught so many things, but health, especially sexual health, is not imparted as it has to be," he says. Bal Utsav developed modules to handle this subject in Government Schools and initial success encouraged them to spread across five cities in India. "We soon realised that we had not planned for such a quick expansion. Therefore, we had to relook at our work as the scheme of things progressed with no bandwidth constraints."

It was in 2010 that Ramesh and Binu enrolled at CSIM Bengaluru for the Social Entrepreneurship Outlook Programme (SEOP). "The course gave us a lot of inputs to restructure our existing work. In 2011, we registered the Trust as a Sec 25 Company. While Trust Laws varies from state to state, Company Laws are uniform across the country and this helps us in planning our expansion more strategically," says Ramesh.

As part of SEOP, Ramesh interned with the Karnataka State Commission for



Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) where he had access to information on government allocations for children across all departments. The findings were more than an eye opener as he learnt that the Government of Karnataka spent only 1.3 percent of its funds on children that constituted 30 percent of the total population. He presented this finding along with a small scale review of models from other countries to KSCPCR. Ramesh was also part of the group project at CSIM which also was on education, thereby giving him another opportunity to look at the Right to Education Act in detail.

"All the maids' children were in school. So what was the fuss about RTE, I fail to understand," he says adding that, "A large number of children dropped out of school. 64 percent of children who enrolled in school did not finish class 8. Children either dropped out due to several reasons or did not attend school at all."

A volley of questions had to be answered to put the puzzle together. Who were these children? Why aren't they in school? Ramesh and Binu found that a large number of out of school children were from urban slums who were caught in the vicious cycle of early marriage, ending up parenting a child by the time they reached 20 years of age. As their parents migrated in search of employment, children were left in community's custody. By the time the second child was born in the family, the first child gets on to the task of taking care

of his/her sibling. Averaging at 3 children per family in urban slums, the third child comes when the first and second have completed 12 and 8 years of age. "We found that the last child was sent to school in all probability, while the first child, if sent to school can reach only class 10 when he or she is 22 years old," says Ramesh adding, "for this education till class 10, the older child has to give up earning for his family, and despite all the struggle, the class 10 certificate would not suffice to obtain a job. This is a classic urban phenomenon."

The usual approach is to build more number of schools, but the problem here is not access—it is age appropriate entry into schools. Conscious about the fact that any solution has to be reproducible and scalable, the couple decided not to build any more schools. Instead, they chose to introduce a fast track mode of schooling, which would enable children complete schooling by the time they were 14 years of age.

Museum Schools, the first initiative for Out of School Children (OOSC) was introduced by Bal Utsav in 2012. It is a very unique concept that was able to thrive on government infrastructure which was hardly put to use. Bal Utsav built a curriculum based on the museum exhibits. Beginning with 150 children, the concept of museum schools prepared children to enter an age appropriate class within a period of two years. 47 children in the first year and 113 children in the second year were enrolled in age appropriate classes. "We were glad that they were not just enrolled, but remained and continued to study," says a contended Ramesh.

Bal Utsav's next focus was on children of migrant labourers, more specifically, the construction workers. Joining hands with another alumni of CSIM, Bal Utsav opened 'Tent Schools' at construction sites and

taught these children using Telugu, Oriya and Bengali as the medium of instruction. Soon, they were back to the question of OOSC, but looked at tribals exclusively. "With tribals, the problem was not age, but access to schools. So, we initiated four learning centres in Madikere district in 2014," says Ramesh.

Bal Utsav's efforts were soon recognised by the Government of Karnataka. They invited Bal Utsav to scale out their model using the unutilised class rooms in Government Schools and mitigate the issue of OOSC.

Ramesh and team developed a one year curriculum for this 'School in School' model. OOSC were brought to school through community mobilisation and the Government of Karnataka provided shelter and food through Akshaya Patra programme. Bal Utsav's role was to educate these OOSC with their own curriculum, learning aids and teachers so that these children can join age appropriate classes after one year. Being a one year programme, Bal Utsav also decided to organise after school classes to support the children in understanding their lessons better.

While access to schools and OOSC are two significant challenges, one sided approach did not help address both issues simultaneously. Bal Utsav has been able to check both with their innovative models of Museum Schools, School in School programme, and Learning Centres for tribal children, demonstrating that a consistent focus on both these issues is critical in solving the inequities at the level entering schools.

Ramesh and Binu are now headed to rebuild three schools in Nepal. Let's wish them success!

—Shanmuga Priya.T

A journey in life with an experience of Love and oneness in abundance: Dr. Sailakshmi

Dr. Sailakshmi Balijepalli (Sai) who, moved by experiences with infants dying for want of medical care, decided to dedicate her life to eliminating this scourge

When someone is born to a family of doctors, we almost take it for granted that person will also become a doctor. More importantly, that person may either pursue a roaring practice or dedicate him or herself to working in a community or public health system to serve the poor. Rarely does one come across a highly qualified doctor giving up her medical practice to pursue her inner interest in setting up appropriate administrations and systems for providing healthcare to newborn children and babies whose parents cannot afford intensive care to save their children from threatening conditions. This is about Dr. Sailakshmi Balijepalli (Sai) who, moved by experiences with infants dying for want of medical care, decided to dedicate her life to eliminating this scourge.

Early days: Dr. Sai was born into a family of doctors. Both of her parents had excellent practices. Sai's sister also pursued medicine and became a cardiologist. In fact, this sister is Sai's motivator, friend and mentor in all her activities. Sai has not just adopted any religious tenet, but is creating a social movement, and derives a lot of motivation from her family.

When she was young, Sai also dreamed of becoming a doctor. She did her entire schooling at Keyes High School for Girls, Secunderabad, between 1977 and 1989. Between 1989 and 1991, she attended St. Francis College for Women, Secunderabad, for a two years' intermediate course in biology, physics and chemistry. In 1992, she joined the Gandhi Medical College, Hyderabad, and completed her Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery, Medicine courses in 1997. She did her internship in the period 1997–98. She did her postdoctoral Diploma in Child Health in the years 1999–2000 at a premier institute in Hyderabad. She further did her postdoctoral course for the Diploma of National Board in Pediatrics between 2001 and 2003. Her educational background reflects her scholastic brilliance all through her academic life and shows how keen she was on pediatrics. The obvious question that arises is: what has she been achieving with her academic excellence and her quest for impeccable knowledge on pediatric medical care?

Trigger and impacts: Sai's parents were highly spiritual even as they were busy with their profession. Listening to religious discourses, talks on moral lessons from epics, divine songs and prayers, and studying art were the norm of life. She grew up understanding the value of service and kept asking questions about the purpose of



the soul from childhood. She always felt that God has created every human with a purpose, and one's ultimate calling is to identify that purpose and work towards fulfilling it. As a kid, she loved philosophy and the question, "What am I?" jaunted her a lot.

Her sister constantly nudged her to pursue her education with excellence and made her dream of saving lives by becoming a doctor. She insisted that Sai should not work for money, but should put service ahead of money.

Sai says, "Maybe our vision of freedom of life to every child born is a very ambitious one". Further, she quotes an unknown author: "There are infinite imaginative possibilities when we allow freedom to go beyond our perceived limits. If we can dream it, we can build it. Life through unconditional love is a wondrous adventure that excites the very core of our being and lights our path with delight".

Her path was not as easy as one may think. Though there were quite a few transformations, she always had the liberty given by her parents to pursue whatever she wanted as long as she held on to her dignity

and truthfulness! Further, they preferred that she use her strengths, her knowledge of medicines, to serve her in succeeding in her chosen life path.

Sai was instinctive in her early stages. She was a person who felt the compulsion to serve the needy, however demanding that service was on her in terms of time and other resources! Two instances in her life vouch for her commitment.

The first instance came about when a major earthquake hit the state of Gujarat on January 26, 2001. It killed 20,000 people, injured another 167,000 and left about 400,000 homeless. Sai left for relief work, missing her post-graduate entrance examinations.

The second instance was when she was working in Chennai. On August 18, 2008, Bihar experienced one of the most disastrous floods in its history. A breach in the Kosi embankment near the Indo-Nepal border inundated large tracts of land and washed away many populous villages. The flood affected over 2.3 million people in the northern part of Bihar. Sai jumped at the opportunity to do relief work. Here, she met Ashoka Fellow Anshu Gupta, who

became her mentor and later, a board member of Ekam, the foundation she established.

The real trigger that propelled her into social service could have been her first patient when she was doing her internship in the government hospital. Kulsumbi, the patient, was in her mid-thirties. She was in a precarious condition and could not afford treatment at a private hospital. She required some surgical interventions. Just as a challenge, Sai's teacher encouraged her to take the case over and do whatever she could. Sai operated on the woman and resorted to "beg and borrow" medicines and surgical and clinical accessories to treat her. The patient responded, but Sai's term ended, and she was posted to a different assignment. Her mind lingered around the woman she had treated, and the question she kept asking herself was "Why does not God help such people?" It was a typical case of lack of money power making death laugh at a critical patient in a general hospital, where the support systems are inadequate or underprepared or both.

After a few weeks, she visited the ward and found that the patient got her discharge

and left. However, no address was available for her. Though Sai felt relieved that the woman was cured, she was uncomfortable because of her inability to understand patient recovery. In a twist of destiny, the woman reappeared after a couple of months. She mentioned to Sai that she had lost hopes of survival before Sai's intervention made it possible. It is impossible to believe that an intern can leave such an impact on a patient! However, Sai took the case seriously, and decided her future was in providing intensive care for those who could not afford it.

Opportunities and challenges: Sai was frustrated with the inadequacies of the healthcare available in India. She witnessed the number of children that were becoming victims of the inefficiencies of the system, and saw doctors increasingly accepting these deaths as a routine problem. Often, she observed that the intensive care unit had limitations. Children were often admitted to the ICU a little too late, and more important, many parents of the patients could not make firm decisions on whether and how much to spend on the afflicted child. They had other children, and they were severely limited by their inability to afford the ICU facility.

These observations and her internal reluctance to submit tamely to the existing situation pushed Dr. Sai to search for solutions. Initially, she assumed the role of a proactive doctor who visited orphanages around her hospital to identify, refer and treat sick children.

Later, to achieve large scale impact, she created a project that connected private doctors to orphanages around their hospitals. To quote her, "It started in 2006 as a community pediatric health project of Mehta children's Hospital, where I was working as a junior consultant in the neonatal intensive care unit. We initially tied up with 60 pediatricians who were friends, colleagues and teachers, and matched them to 60 orphanages based on their location. We asked them to take up ownership for health care of the children attached to their orphanage".

Initially everyone was enthusiastic, but because of busy schedules, they were not able to visit the orphanages regularly.

However, they were willing to see all the children referred to them free of cost. Accordingly, we started a nodal clinic model such that these children would be referred to the nearest pediatrician.

It was still a bit of a challenge to stay within a medical and hospital system and deliver effectively on this model. Sai decided to improve the model's efficiency. She quit her job and started Ekam Foundation.

In 2009, she registered Ekam Foundation as a not-for-profit organization. As the most vulnerable children came from adoption agencies, she started by training caretakers to identify sick children in time, provide emergency care and improves nutrition as needed. Later, she expanded her operations to government schools, where most orphaned children studied.

Eventually, this network covered 80,000 children in Chennai. After witnessing the need for effective follow-up on treatment, she also started school health clubs. The teachers found this important initiative to be rewarding because it brought about observably improved productivity in the children. Sai's idea of involving diverse stakeholders for health, like local political and social officials in district health committees, has emerged from the experience with school health clubs. Children were often transferred to government hospitals when their families had no resources to pay. Closing the loop, Dr. Sai realized she needed to go back to working within the government system as with smaller investments, one could achieve a greater impact.

Connecting with friends and well-wishers: She approached one of her friends namely Prasanna, who takes care of the Confederation of Indian Organisations for service and Advocacy (CIOA), an arm of MaFoi to support activities through Ekam Foundation. MaFoi promoters Mr. K. Pandia Rajan and Latha Rajan became trustees of Ekam Foundations. Other eminent professionals also help Sai in setting the right vision for Ekam Foundation. Sai is clear that one individual cannot do full justice to a good cause. She feels she needs to scale operations to reflect practical needs and establish a proper system.

Further, true to her instincts, she believes that a good medical professional may not be the best administrator most of the times, though there could be exceptions! She felt that there is a void when it comes to administration in public health systems. She thought she would focus more on filling in the void.

The following achievements highlight her daunting spirit and ambition to stretch her network as wide as possible for better reach:

- She networked with almost 51 hospitals and 150 pediatricians to take care of all referrals after screening the children. All these hospitals admit the children under subsidies and credit facilities given to Ekam Foundation.

- After she started working with ICH, Egmore, Chennai, Sai tied up with other government hospitals like those in Chengalpeta and Virudhunagar and Madurai's Rajajee hospital.

- In October 2010, Ekam received official permission from the NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) to appoint 234 Nurses in all 37 medical college hospitals and district headquarter hospitals in the state and monitor all 41 sick newborn care units (SNCUs) established in the state for reducing the neonatal mortality rate as part of a public-private partnership initiative.

She has constantly been working with this group on advocacy as well as on action in emergencies. She has now started working in Mumbai on a similar project. It is amazing to find her so involved in saving the lives of children. Sai says, "I think it is the collective responsibility of all of us to see that no child is denied access to the needs that help the child survive. This is freedom of life!" She also believes that she supports government hospitals and does not compete with them, as her target segment is poor children who cannot afford private care.

Visionary Thinking: Sai became cognizant of that the fact that mortality was highest among younger children and poor children who did not go to school. Seeking direct reach to migrant workers and communities in slums, she started community-based work on preventive neonatal and childcare. Ekam also created

a community children's insurance scheme. Though her heart beats for these schemes, her mind faces the challenges of maintaining the financial sustainability of these efforts.

She is trying to tie up funding arrangements with government schemes, international agencies and private partnerships. Sai happily mentions the number of individual donors who support her activity. Going forward, she wants to set up excellent operational standards for her project, with clear transparency and objectivity. The project trustees also share her ideas.

Conclusion: India is a country where it is common for professionals to groom their children to take up the same professions, join them in their practice and create family-run medical institutions. In the case of Sai, we find a scholastic doctor who quit her medical practice to establish an administrative set up for providing intensive care unit services to poor children and thus reduce infant mortality in the country. It is not that just a development indicator which hurts her! Her humanity makes her take it as a "call of the soul". Her reading of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's works were so intense and forceful that she decided to set an example of their preaching by her practice! It is not that who said what that matters, but who does what! It is the understanding of the meaning of kindness to society and especially to poor children. It is dedicating life to work based on that understanding that matters. One can shy away from normal life by moving to religious groups to serve as a dedicated member! One can also opt to serve in a limited capacity when one has large financial support! Sai chose to show courage by being different and accepting the challenges of administering and bringing energy to build an organization around a humane cause. So many more of the world's children would be enabled to lead a normal, healthy life even if we had just a few more Sais around us.

— This is part of the book "Incredible Champions" authored by N.Chandrasekaran and published by Partridge Publishers 2014.

Editorial

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

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.

Contact Persons:
Ms. **Marie Banu**, Director, Chennai @ 9884700029
Dr. **Madhuri. R.**, Head, Coimbatore @ 9840222559
Mr. **K L Srivastava**, Director, Hyderabad @ 9912656112
Ms **Aruna Subramaniam**, Director, Bangalore @ 9886833665.

Please visit: www.csim.in.
CSIM also facilitates Social Audit for social enterprises through Social Audit Network, UK and SAN, India.
For more information, please contact Ms. **Latha Suresh**, Director @ 92822 05123 or visit www.san-india.org.

A Hand To Hold

Since its inception, Hand in Hand has helped form over 77,000 self-help groups, over one lakh self-help members, 38,236 microenterprises and just over 82,000 micro-beneficiaries.

Hand in Hand India is an NGO that aims at creating entrepreneurship through empowerment in order to alleviate poverty in the integrated communities. When it began its mission back in 2002, Hand in Hand's singular focus was to eliminate child labour. It incidentally started work in Tamil Nadu's Kanchipuram district, helping the district's children rewrite their stories — change narratives from those of industrial experiences to ones that they could call their own. With this singular focus, the NGO has today, branched out into several different verticals.

"As we began our work, we also began to realize that poverty was the root cause of every problem we were contending with," says Dr Kalpana Sankar, Chairperson and Managing Trustee, Hand in Hand India. "Hence, the focus continues to lie in eliminating poverty. Poverty alleviation is quite simply at the core of our work." However, child labour continues to be part and parcel of Hand in Hand's list of "non-negotiables". Over a period of time, issues like self-help, microfinance, skill-development, health and environment have come to become an integral part of the work it does.

From humble beginnings in just one district back till 2004, the NGO today has a presence in seven States and six countries outside India. "But there's work to be done," Dr Kalpana admits, "The fact still remains that 65% of women are anaemic and 55% of children in India are malnourished. That needs to change."

The management of Hand in Hand is divided into three verticals: Key Executives, Project Management and Trustees. Dr N Jayaseelan, Group CEO, heads the organization, with Dr Kalpana Sankar and Dr. Percy Barnevik who are Chairperson and Advisor, respectively. The NGO's Project Management team is responsible for initiatives like solid waste management, village improvement and natural resource management. By her own admission, HHH India's solid waste management programme is close to Dr Kalpana's heart. "Sensitizing those we teach about the environment is also a priority," she says, elaborating on the NGO's five-pillar approach to poverty alleviation. "Education and Child Labour



Elimination, Health, Self-help Groups and Microfinance, Skill-training and Tech Centres, and Environment are these five pillars," Dr Kalpana continues, "Under the pillar of Environment, society at large needs to learn a fair bit about solid waste management. We help achieve that."

Since its inception, Hand in Hand has helped form over 77,000 self-help groups, over one lakh self-help members, 38,236 microenterprises and just over 82,000 micro-beneficiaries. A chunk of this success owes its existence to the NGO's unique Credit Plus programme. Utilizing social capital of self-help groups as collateral, the NGO has raised microfinance. Over the course of its work in these areas, the NGO has also scripted many a success story.

At the core of HHH India's existence, is a commitment to sensitizing people through IT. "We manage to achieve that through our team of 3000," says Dr Kalpana. Finding the right people for the job, though, continues to remain the challenge. Taking that challenge head-on is something HHH India actively engages in while training social

entrepreneurs. "Here again, we look for passionate people and help them get their business models in place."

Integrating some of its key work areas like skill-development, health, natural resources, solid-waste management and village improvement, Hand in Hand has been recognised for its contribution to

society. The NGO won the Best NGO Award just last year for its contribution to promoting self-help, at the Inclusive Finance Summit. But its achievements don't end just there. Hand in Hand has also helped construct over 10,000 toilets, has helped over 489,000 patients through health camps, and fed over 7,000



children, nurturing them towards better health from malnutrition. Part of this process involved renovating Anganwadis at an average cost of Rs 25,000 per centre. "We aimed to make these centres more child-friendly and thereby create a perfect environment for mother and child," says Dr Kalpana.

Perhaps one of the ways in which Hand in Hand stays a cut above other NGOs in the same space, is its contribution to preservation of natural resources. Adopting a conserve-develop-create model, the NGO has successfully managed to create jobs and encourage livelihood through conserving the environment. In doing this, Hand in Hand has planted over 538,000 trees, and generated close to 85,000 man days. The future looks set for the NGO, which now plans on a two-pronged approach encompassing job-creation and fighting poverty. As part of this mission, Hand in Hand hopes to create five million jobs by 2020. Another key programme that the NGO is currently engaged with is the process of training students at the university level.



Students of science, finance, development studies, business, arts and medicine have applied for internships at Hand in Hand, even as the NGO

continues to impart training to applicants. Volunteerism is also something the NGO is quite keen on encouraging at the basic level.

Donations, however, play a crucial role in the functioning of such organizations, Hand in Hand included. Donations are accepted in the denominations of Rs 1,000 upto Rs 10,000.

With what it calls a "devoted" team of over 3000, Hand in Hand will now focus on the future, it seems, lies in employment and the NGO's two-pronged approach to empowerment (through job-creation and poverty eradication). Even as it goes ahead with this plan, child labour and women's empowerment remain key focus areas of the NGO. This, alongside other focus areas such as skill-development, natural resource management and solid-waste management, look all set to take Hand in Hand to the next level, even as the NGO looks forward to continuing its success story. "The aim is to create five million jobs by 2020," says Dr Kalpana as she signs off, "While this is a collective goal that we plan on achieving with our partners, we feel we can directly create over 3.5 million jobs in the same period."

Inspiring Conversations

Some Congressmen handed over the following questions to Maharshi:

1. How long is India destined to suffer bondage?

2. Have not the sons of India made enough sacrifice for her liberation?

3. Will India get freedom during Mahatma Gandhi's lifetime?

The above questions were not answered categorically. Sri Bhagavan simply remarked:

Gandhiji has surrendered himself to the Divine and works accordingly with no self-interest. He does not concern himself with the results but accepts them as they turn up. That must be the attitude of national workers.

Q.: Will the work be crowned with success?

M.: This question arises because the questioner has not surrendered himself.

Q.: Should we not then think of and work for the welfare of the country?

M.: First take care of yourself and the rest will naturally follow.

Q.: I am not speaking individually but for the country.

M.: First surrender and see. The doubts arise because of the absence of surrender. Acquire strength by surrender and then your surroundings will be found to have improved to the degree of strength acquired by you.

Q.: Should we not know if our actions will be worthwhile?

M.: Follow the example of Gandhiji in the work for the national cause.

'Surrender' is the word.

The following slip was also handed over to Sri Bhagavan:

"Four of us have come from Coorg and we had gone to Delhi to wait as a deputation on the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and we are now going back. We are sent from the Coorg Congress Committee and so kindly give us some message to the Coorg District Congress Committee and the people of Coorg in general."

When this slip was handed over, Sri Bhagavan said that the same answer holds good here too. The message is contained in the word 'Surrender'.

—Excerpted from talks with
Shri Ramana Maharish



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Messages from Puppets

Kalaivanan has completed 40 years in spreading the utility of folk art forms, more specifically, glove puppetry

We are a generation where folk media does not seem relevant in our day-to-day lives. Yet, we would not mind sitting for a show if it talks about something relevant. Activists and other patrons who work to preserve these old art forms often mention that folk media can communicate with a crowd much better than the modern forms of entertainment. This is what Mr Kalaivanan, Founder of Kalai Trust in Chennai believes in.

Born to a lyricist, Muthukoothan, Kalaivanan has always had more exposure to arts than his counterparts. While other kids used to play during holidays, Kalaivanan got hooked into puppetry and wrote his own plays. "In fact summer holidays was my favourite time of the year. I used to invite kids from neighbourhood and stage shows at my home, charging 10 paise per ticket. It was all for sheer fun," recalls Kalaivanan who has now completed 40 years in spreading the utility of folk art forms, more specifically, glove puppetry.

During one of those days, Kalaivanan's father chanced upon his play and informed him that there was no voice modulation for different characters. This is when he started experimenting on mimicking the voices of legendary actors like P.S. Balaiya and Suruli Rajan. He soon fell in love with this art form as it allowed him to grow as an all rounder.

The multi tasking that was required and the kind of coordination he had to keep with his team members engaged him completely. With this excitement, he also experimented different story lines with the help of his father, who always assisted him with the scripts and dialogues. This fun-filled activity soon became an identity for Kalaivanan.

"The person who used to sell snacks near my house came across an advertisement by CARE India in the paper which he used to wrap snacks. He shared this paper with me which informed about CARE India's work to promote awareness on health and nutrition in slums. The advertisement had invited applicants who can do puppetry shows in slums on this theme. I immediately applied for the programme," says Kalaivanan.

Even before he could realise the gravity of this task, representatives from CARE India came over to his place to discuss the details. "They were amused to see that I was only 14 years old then. The lady who came from CARE was actually searching for Kalaivanan Sir," he smiles.

Kalaivanan visited CARE India's office along with his father, where he was briefed about the project and what was expected of them through puppetry shows. This led to the father-son duo



preparing scripts, puppets, and other aids to stage shows on health awareness in urban slums of Chennai. So far, Kalaivanan has staged 108 programmes for CARE India, and over 6000 shows across India.

Name a theme or topic and he has done a show on it! Whether it is women's rights, child labour, child rights, disaster management, environment, AIDS, health, organic farming, human rights, life skills education or any other.

The Government of Tamil Nadu nominated Kalaivanan to Bihar on a cultural exchange programme where he performed shows on health awareness. Doordarshan Television telecasted 205 shows until 2005 and he recently completed 40 episodes on moral values for children on Vasanth Television.

Completely involved in glove puppetry, Kalaivanan established Kalai Trust in 1992 to use glove puppetry along with other art forms like the villupattu to educate the public on several issues concerning their day to day lives. This journey, he believes, educated him as a member of a community.

"I have completed only class 12. Studies never interested me. But, puppetry educated me. When someone approaches my Trust to organise a show, they just tell the theme which is no more than a phrase. The amount of reading about the theme and the information that we collect about our audience gives much more knowledge and exposure than what a school curriculum could do. This is the reason why I am determined to spread the use of folk media," asserts Kalaivanan.

After his father's demise in 2005, Kalaivanan forayed into script and dialogue writing. Today, he is the only

using glove puppetry to develop learning aids and conduct classes.

"Use of such media keeps children attentive and makes them think on how all this is done. Provoking curiosity and being able to express oneself is the first step to successful education. No matter how much technology grows, kids will continue to like folk media. In my experience, I have seen children easily open up to puppets than teachers," says Kalaivanan who does not feel threatened by modern means of communication and entertainment.

Along with his father, Kalai Trust organised only three training programmes for school teachers. The focus then was on conducting shows.

Now, the Trust intends to spend more time in organising such training programmes. Recently, the Childline (1098) officials approached the Trust to train their staff in glove puppetry. Trainees can either use it to conduct a puppet show or just use the aids to teach children. Over the years, NGOs working with children, and those running education centres find this method very useful.

Impact, according to Kalaivanan, is a very subjective term. "I have seen the impact even before I would leave the venues. Once, we organised a show for Hand in Hand NGO in Kancheepuram. The show tried to educate the government school girls on the importance of using toilets. That very evening, one of the girls went home and locked herself in her room, forcing her father to construct a toilet in her home. The father

had to finally heed to his daughter.

The next day, he went to school and enquired the reason behind his daughter's behaviour. The school Head Master shared this incident with me. This is what an artist dies to see," says Kalaivanan.

Having been in this field for over 40 years, the only challenge according to Kalaivanan is collecting updated, relevant, authentic information on themes that are given. "This is the challenge and this is what excites us," he smiles.

With every show being an improvisation over the previous one in terms of context, dialogues, screenplay, lighting, stage usage, etc., Kalaivanan and team believes that they still have a long way to go in learning the nuances of this art and promoting its utility to the younger generation.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

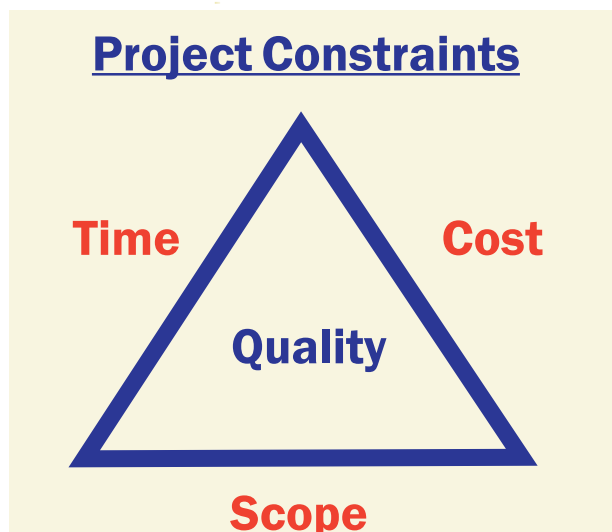


person in Tamil Nadu who can organise glove puppetry shows with a complete team of 7 members. But, this does not make him proud or happy. He is anxious and apprehensive, for there is much more to be done to spread the knowledge of these art forms to the next generation.

"Our kids must be taught to express collective consciousness, and folk media is the best way to do it as it reaches audience easily. Glove puppetry is the easiest of all and will be more fun for children," he says. Through Kalai Trust, Kalaivanan has offered training programmes to four colleges, 100 NGOs and also school teachers. More than 150 school teachers have been trained in

Time Management – a deciding factor

One of the biggest asset and constraint that we all have on hand is TIME. The project timeline is a critical factor with large implications on the decisions made. The managing time is a key focus point in Project management. Time management or mismanagement is one of the biggest contributor for cost overrun, time lapse, credibility-loss and ultimately a stress creator. In a social organization where the project timelines are highly dependent on a lot of internal and external factors right from political, social, economic, to team spirit, passion and sustenance, the time management assumes high priority.



The earlier articles on Project Charter & Scope Management, which are the guiding and foundational elements for any project. According to the Triple Constraints theory of projects, one of the constraints that any project would have is TIME along with Scope and Cost for delivering Quality outputs. The Cost and Time are the factors to be balanced all the time to ensure best results.

The social projects undertaken by the social entrepreneurs are usually on very stringent cost and time lines. Striking at the right time or missing the right time have serious implications on the sustainability of the project. Further the interdependencies on the government sanctions, funding, recipients makes adhering to timelines a highly challenging task. Hence discussions on every aspect of Time becomes important.

TIME has two dimensions – Planning & Organized; Timing. Both are critical and impact the time management directly. For excellent planning and being organized and connect it with appropriate timelines we need to understand some of the critical aspects listed below.

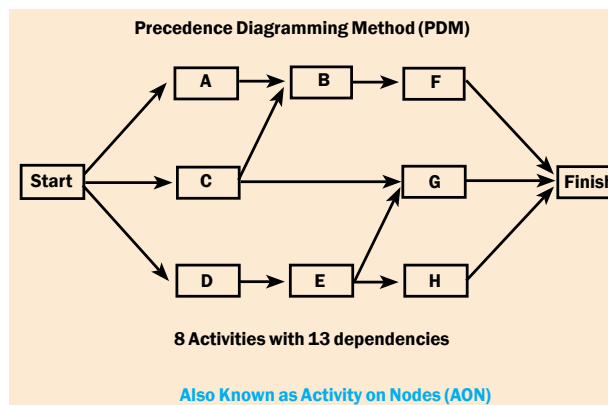
- **Plan Schedule Management:** Provides guidance and direction on how the project schedule will be managed throughout the project.
- **Define Activities:** Provides guidance and direction on how the project schedule will be managed throughout the project.
- **Sequence Activities:** Identifying and documenting relationships among the project activities.
- **Estimate Activity Resources:** Estimating the type and quantities of material, people, equipment or supplies required to perform each activity.
- **Estimate Activity Durations:** Approximating the number of work periods needed to complete individual activities with estimated resources
- **Develop Schedule:** Analyzing activity sequences, durations, resource requirements and schedule constraints to create the project schedule.
- **Control Schedule:** Monitoring the status of the project to update project progress and manage changes to the schedule baseline

The first step is to get develop a schedule and



management plan based on timelines using the inputs obtained from the objectives of the project. These can be ascertained from the project charter, management plan, environmental factors & the learning obtained from organizational process. Using expert judgments, meetings, discussion and analytical techniques a schedule management plan is prepared.

Using this schedule, there needs to be a decomposition of all the related activities that are involved or required for



the project. Using the Scope baseline, we need to define all the activities break down – WBS and get the activity list, attributes and milestone list. Once we have the list of all the activities, these need to be sequenced for either parallel or sequential plan or execution. This can be understood when we know the relationship and dependency between each activity. This relationship can be represented in different formats, some of the commonly used are PDM-Precedence Diagramming Method/ AON (Activity on Nodes).

For example if the project is to work on establishing excellent school leadership process amongst government school across states, it is important to understand the context in each state, district, the curriculum calendar of events along with the objectives to be achieved. The work is broken down into smaller elements and meaningful connections are drawn amongst each element.

When we have the clarity on how the activities are sequenced and connected, estimation of resources for each activity becomes easier especially for materials, people, equipment, etc.

Estimation of resources can be done using analytics (simple calculations of all the numbers involved), expert judgment (using people with domain knowledge), published estimation data and also using some of the software applications to help do analytics better. The typical output of the estimation should give the resources for each activity, resource breakdown structure, and this should get updated in the overall project management plan.

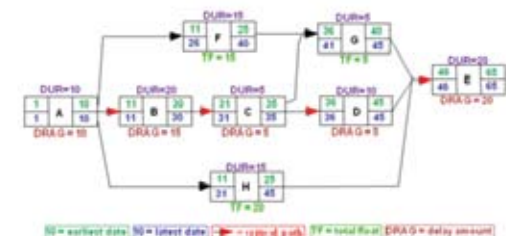
Basis the estimation of resources, there is also a need to estimate the duration between each activity with the



estimated resources. There are many tools and techniques used to estimate the duration like Analogous estimation, parametric, three-point estimate, group decision making & reserve analysis. The output from these would give the activity duration estimates. These are different methodologies that can be easily learnt through basic research about them.

One of the estimations method is using PERT - Program Evaluation and Review Technique: $\text{PERT Estimate} = (\text{Optimistic} + 4 \text{ Most Likely} + \text{Pessimistic}) / 6$. There are many reference materials available online to know more about the formula and its derivation.

Using these estimates, the project schedule is developed. All the inputs taken to build the schedule management plan and learning from organizational processes are used in this



stage. The analysis of risks is also included. Using many analytical methods like CPM (critical path method), CCM (critical chain method), modeling, Lead and Lags, compression and software applications, developing schedule becomes more quantifiable and measurable. The typical output that can be developed from all these inputs are the schedule baseline, project schedule, and project calendars and other relevant plans to execute the project.

Based these schedules, we need to now monitor how the project is progressing as against the planned schedules and baseline. Using review mechanisms, optimization techniques, modeling the schedules, controlling the schedule and monitoring becomes relatively easy. Each of these can help in understanding the work performance, schedule forecast, changes required, and updates to management plans and learning from organizational processes.

Many of the above listed methods and techniques are well tested and used across different industries, domains over 4 decades. If there is a strong intention to learn, understand and apply each of these methods appropriately the possibility of executing an excellent project within timelines will not be a dream. When time management is discussed in a project, it is usually directed towards time and schedule. But actually if all related aspects of planning and scheduling is taken care the time management automatically happens too.

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath and Prathaap B



Global Summit on Corporate Social Responsibility

As the world struggles to seek answers to the issues around achieving sustainability through collective action, India has already taken a leap of faith in that direction with the government taking a giant step forward. In 2011, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs released a comprehensive and a firm statement of intent and defined the role of corporate sector in linking corporate growth to the sustainability of the process of overall development of society. This was done in the form of the National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs) on Social, Economic and Environmental Responsibilities of Business, which provide an overarching concept of business responsibility and linking it to sustainability. The NVGs, as these guidelines have come to be known as, are voluntary in their ethos but suggest disclosure as the means of increasing their uptake. Subsequent to this, two critical interventions by government further strengthened the resolve to carry this agenda forward. One was to mandate disclosure by top 100 listed companies and other was to bring a part of the NVGs itself from the voluntary to mandatory space by introducing Section 135 in the Companies Act, which was finally enacted in September, 2013.

Just as the creation of shareholder value requires a company to perform on multiple aspects, in a similar way, CSR and stakeholder value creation also requires a multi-faceted approach, spread across intersecting economic, social, as well as environmental dimensions. The challenges posed in this pursuit will have its implications on virtually every aspect of a firm's strategy and its business model.

Equally significant is the fact that CSR today is no longer a peripheral activity, has



included into mainstream operation as an integral part of the paradigm of corporate management. In fact it has shifted its focus from back room to board room. It is also about refurbish existing practices, maximizing impact, and creating a link between social responsibilities and best business practices. It involves the conscious inclusion of public or community interest into corporate decision making, and adherence to the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit.

The importance of a strengthened platform for CSR which responds coherently and effectively to current and future challenges and efficiently bridges gaps in the implementation of the CSR agenda cannot be ruled out. Therefore the institutional framework for CSR should integrate the three dimensions of CSR in balanced manner and enhance implementation by, inter-alia, strengthening coherence, coordination, avoiding duplication of efforts and reviewing progress in implementing CSR. The framework should be inclusive, transparent and effective and that it should find common solutions related to global

challenges to CSR. With this backdrop, the Global Summit on CSR was organized jointly by Indian Institute of Management, Raipur, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Delhi and National Law School of India University, Bangalore. on 15th and 16th of May, 2015 at India International Centre, New Delhi. The Summit aimed to:

- Promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions (people, planet and profit) of CSR, promote the policy interface through inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments,
- Engage high-level leaders to provide policy guidance and identify specific actions to promote effective implementation of CSR, and
- Strengthen participation of all countries in international CSR processes and capacity building especially for developing countries to enable transparent public participation and partnerships to implement CSR.

The Chief Guest for the Conference was Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Honourable Union Cabinet Minister for Women and Child

Development, Govt. of India. Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, DG & CEO, IICA delivered the welcome address, and Mr. Louis Georges Arsenault, Country Representative, UNICEF India and Mr. Ashish Kumar Chauhan, Managing Director & CEO, BSE Ltd. addressed the audience.

The conference covered areas like Promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions (people, planet and profit) of CSR; Give an action- and result-oriented approach paying due regard to all relevant cross-cutting issues with the aim of contributing to the implementation of CSR.

Plenary sessions on New Paradigms of CSR; The role of CSR in "Make In India"; Stakeholder Engagement - Key to Success; and Return on Social Investment were held.

Ms. Latha Suresh, Director, SAN India participated in the plenary session on Return on Social Investment and shared her thoughts on Social Accounting and Audit.

Over 300 participants attended the programme and research papers on CSR were submitted during technical sessions by participants, which was part of the event.



“CSR is the beginnings of ownership of the country.”

Prahlad Kakkar shares with **Marie Banu** his thoughts on how CSR can lead to social change

Prahlad Kakkar is a leading Indian ad film director. He is the founder and main director for Genesis Film Productions, one of India's leading production houses, established in 1977. He did his initial schooling from St. Joseph's Academy, Dehradun. In 1966, he passed out from Sainik School, Kunjpura, Karnal, and in 1970, he graduated with Economics (Honors) from Fergusson College, Pune.

Prahlad Kakkar joined advertising in 1971, as an Accounts Executive at ASP (Delhi) and after a year, he was transferred to the company's Bombay office. In 1972, he joined the renowned feature director, Shyam Benegal, as an Asst. Director for films such as Ankur, Manthan, and Bhumika.

He is renowned for his candid and outspoken nature. An avid scuba diver, in 1995 he set up 'Lacadives', a scuba-diving school, along with his wife Mitali Kakkar at Kadmat Island, in collaboration with the Govt. of Lakshadweep.

Prahlad Kakkar is the co-founder of ReefWatch Marine Conservation,[9] set up in 1994, which aims at creating marine-life awareness. Prahlad Kakkar supports and plays an important role as the Chief Advisor & Trustee of Natura Outdoor Education Trust.

In an exclusive interview, Prahlad Kakkar shares with Marie Banu his thoughts on CSR and how it will lead to social change.

How CSR can lead to social change?

CSR is to awaken within you; your conscience of belonging to not just your state, caste, or family, but to your country as a whole. Because of the vast country, there are many issues and problems. You need to take a certain degree of responsibility.

I realised this when Jack Daniels decided to make me their ambassador. Within a month, they sent me a certificate of ownership for one square meter plot of land in their distillery. They took a photograph of it, put my name on it, and sent it to me. I thought that they were crazy as one cannot even build a toilet in that space. But, to keep that ownership alive, and the association with Jack Daniels continuing, I used to get a letter every month either from a neighbor or someone else stating: "Our cattle are crossing your plot. Hope you don't mind." You start taking the ownership seriously as you wonder whether you should put a fence on that piece of land, else a gate. No one is going to claim that piece of land though, but this kind of approach gives a

person something to own the brand. You have been included in their family!

CSR is the beginnings of ownership of the country. So, be part of a movement of a future, of the people, and take that responsibility, however small it might be. Don't give that money with resentment and take it out of your mantle. Be proud that you have been given an opportunity not to send that money to Switzerland, but instead put it back into your country and belong to it. It is a conscience. You are allowed to be part of a larger conscience. It is a privilege!

About CSR been made mandatory. Your thoughts?

Two percent is only a beginning and will make some kind of difference. When you start giving, you realise that there is more pleasure in giving rather than taking. If you take a project, for instance you decide to adopting a village, it is an

ongoing process. You will start to realize that two percent will not suffice, but still you will not stop supporting that project.

Use CSR as an opportunity to redeem yourself. To belong, and to have a stake.

Which of the social issues are most demanding?

Don't take the whole responsibility of the country. The Prime Minister is trying to do that badly. You just take one thing at a time and do it well.

Poverty, water, recycling, rainwater harvesting, environment, heritage, women empowerment, etc.—all are equally important. See which of these issues grabs you with passion, realize what you feel strongly about, and go for it.

Will CSR add more value to employer-employee relationship?

Prior to CSR being made mandatory,

many corporates were contributing to society at their own will. A lot of them were doing because people started questioning. For instance, Pepsi decided to recycle water as they were using 30,000 litres of ground water in India and so ensured to put back 100,000 litres. That became their CSR.

The spirit of the giving is to the implementation as well. Let's see how many corporates step up to the block and say: "Here is the money!"

What most corporates don't realize is that when employees are given the first right of refusal, to work on a project of their choice, and in fact CSR, you will be giving an opportunity in making the organization into a family. Employee-employer relationship becomes stronger as all are involved in the implementation of a social project. If it works, everyone takes credit.



Photo: Marie Banu