

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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Bangalore's Garbage Army

About Hasiru Dala - the forefront of waste management in Bangalore



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Act has endeavored to bring
CSR from backroom to
boardroom."**
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From the Editor

Dear Friend,

"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom."

—George Washington

Education is an important medium of acquiring skills and knowledge. Our education begins at home. Thereafter, as we grow, we go to schools, colleges and other educational institutions. Education brings positive changes in our life. It enhances our knowledge, skills, and intelligence and enables us to lead a successful life.

Just as a face is the mirror to the heart of a person, the literacy level reflects the status of a nation. Education is considered to be one of the most significant aspects for the development of a nation as it helps in developing the country not only economically, but also socially.

An increase in education among people results in increase in economy for the nation. It also opens the horizons of our mind and condemns the social discrimination's like caste system, dowry system, child marriage, etc.

It is sad to note that about 25.6 percent of India's population is still illiterate. The major reason for this is 'poverty'. Though the government provides many facilities for disadvantaged children like free books, free uniform, and free mid-day meals, yet we are unable to achieve 100 percent literacy in our country. The other reason for this is 'backwardness'. In rural as well as urban India, there are still many people who do not realise the importance of education and therefore do not send their children, especially girl children, to school.

A child through education learns basic norms and values of the society. Nelson Mandela has said: *"Without education, your children can never really meet the challenges they will face. So it's very important to give children education and explain that they should play a role for their country."*

Let us participate in educating our nation!

—Marie Banu

The concept of "for-profit social work"

There should not be undue profit in an NGO or excessive profit. It should be limited and reasonable profit. We are looking at triple bottom line, but in the past we had no economic no ecology issues that we were looking at. We focused only on equity, meaning that the giver and taker were equal. There was no discrimination between the giver and taker and the community at large. Without discrimination, we help people to fill the gap between the haves and the have-not. This was the greatest focus and it was not looking at economy or ecology, but on belief alone and building stakeholders.

Slowly, we reached this belief amongst stakeholders and NGOs that we need to measure the impact of input – whether monetary or non-monetary, governance, etc. impact being quantitative or qualitative.

This helped NGOs to reach out to more people. Economy is a major component for equity and ecology with natural resources, in both urban as well as rural areas, and have an important role to play in lives of people who are living with nature.

So anything that is done by NGO for the beneficiaries, whether economical or ecological, affects the people. They are like the front and back stage of work.

NGOs do not work for profit, but economy is for profit. If you destroy or deteriorate ecology, you are indirectly destroying economy.

Now, we have Triple bottom lines, whether it is quantifiable or not. What is qualitative now, will be quantifiable later. You will find in time that there are various measures of output, hence will be able to measure it.

My feeling is that all NGOs have a triple bottom line approach. The for-profit element is also coming in. When you look at the term 'Profit', it may seem as if it is against the philosophy of social work, but it is not. You need to look at the dimensions in economy and connect the causes with economy. When a profit is made whether small or big, and this is monetised and gets into an account and disclosed to stakeholders, then the money is valued. This monetisation is used to measure the impact of the vision and mission of the organisation. It is not given away as a dividend to the shareholder. Therefore, the profit element is already there, and embedded in the NGOs, but not come to the forefront and recognised.

However, there are NGOs that are designed only for profit. They have all the three elements, but not at the central stage. By changing the attitude of



these NGOs and organising their vision they are now able to see economy with ecology and equity taking equal positions.

For every vision, there is no mission without money. We don't need excessive money, but money is required to create the necessary inputs, infrastructure, training and development of people and their needs. So, in order to raise the money we need a donor who will look at your cause and therefore offer to donate.

A donor or a grant making body are the forms of input. Funds could be from a Trust, whether one time or continuous to create a sustainable programme for a particular cause of the NGO. This is acceptable as it is given out of grace.

Another way of creating the funds, is through activities that generate income, preferably benefitting beneficiaries. NGOs can use their skills and bring out a surplus by involving communities that they are working with. This profit will not be divided amongst the beneficiaries, but will be used for the purpose that the NGO works.

NGO has a source in the form of verticals involving the same stakeholders in it. By nature of gap management, they are able to fruitfully engage the communities in marketing the products and generate funds for the

organisation. Direct surplus could be used to reach out to more beneficiaries. The focus should be in scaling out and reaching out to many leaders and geographies who will own that activity.

The ideology of for-profit and non-profit is the same, it is only the way of operation that varies. One example that I would like to give is Dr V (Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy) of Aravind Eye Hospital. He created the wealth necessary for the NGO and also framed the vision and mission. In order to finance the cost of free cataract operation, he found that he needed to buy intraocular lens. He therefore created a separate vertical within Aravind Eye Hospital that was managed independently by experts, to manufacture intraocular lens at a scale that was economic. He also used this to export to western countries as the quality was good and compliant. He diverted the profit made from sale of lens to provide subsidy for his patients. This process is called cross-subsidisation.

He utilised the latest technology and scale of operations to generate funds for patients who required free or subsidised eye care treatment. He used the model of large corporates like Walmart to market his services.

This is a rare model where Dr V did not have grants, or individual donors or support from government. He created economy within the NGO. Likewise, if NGOs can look out for such opportunities, they can create surplus by operating the economies and utilising it to cross-subsidise and benefit their cause.

Similarly, Lijjat Papad serves poor women living in the slums of Mumbai by engaging them in making papad. They created a facility and distributed the raw material to women through paid volunteers. They made a huge societal impact by involving illiterate poor women who are sitting in their homes idle. Activity in itself created employment for volunteers, staff and created a market for papads. This is a good example for a mix of for profit and non-profit activity in an NGO.

Revenue that is required for an NGO, needs to be created within the organisation. We could register the NGO as a Section 25 company, where the entire profit is allocated for the stated purpose. The long term objective for the organisation is to utilise the skills of beneficiaries and participate in the income generating activity.

—P.N. Devarajan

Practicing Equality

“CSIM’s SEOP programme changed the way SHEEP organized its work. The fact that funds could be raised motivated me.”

Labour rights have to be taken with a pinch of salt. The generation of reforms, revolution and thence the evolution of labour rights can be witnessed in any city or town even today. The current generation is, no doubt, enjoying the most robust framework that has been in place for labour and human resources. However, one can’t deny that these are also the times when exploitation of manual labour has reached new levels, significantly impacting the cycle of inter-generational poverty.

“Equality remains elusive. It is very true! Daily wage is a convenient option in many sectors. But it is hardly a priority to check if all labourers received their wages on time, and much harder to see labourers coming forward to collectively voice against atrocities at work place. On the other hand, the idea of ‘union’ is still not completely accepted by both workers and companies. I have learnt my lessons,” says Mr Desingu, Founder SHEEP Trust in Madurandagam, Tamil Nadu.

Born in a simple family of farm labourers, Desingu struggled to complete his schooling. “Studying beyond tenth standard was not possible for me as I had no support and had to work to help my parents,” recalls Desingu who moved to Chennai in search of work opportunities.

Desingu started with a monthly earnings of 800 rupees. Being articulate about labour issues, he had to face suspension seven times in a period of 8 years. “I was with the plastic industry and according to rules we must be paid three times more than what we received. Companies extracted work but never respected their contract or commitment. Besides such low wages, we had to survive under poor conditions of work,” laments Desingu, who then initiated efforts to establish a union in the company to fight for labour rights.

The union won the case and many workers got their arrears. But, Desingu was terminated in 2004. He moved back to his home town and joined the Human Resource Development Foundation in Thirukazhukundram as a field staff. Despite liking the job and feeling content, he decided to leave.

SHEEP – Social Health Education Empowerment Programme Trust was established in 2011 in Gudappakkam Village. Desingu was the face of this trust and worked extensively with the communities. Now, he represents all the community issues on appropriate platforms with the concerned authorities. Re-admitting school dropouts through the un-filled reserved seats helped him



engage with the communities. He also established a cordial relationship with colleges to facilitate re-admission processes and be able to follow up on the progress of these children.

The next focus for SHEEP was women

livelihood and their access to welfare measures. Steeped in ignorance and lack of awareness, women did not know their entitlements. Through the Trust, Desingu helped women access all services that were due to them and also

cleared legal issues they faced regarding land ownership.

“There is no dearth of issues here. We only need an eye for detail to identify, prioritise and then act upon it,” he laughs. Issues concerning ration cards, land pattas, pension for the elderly interfered in the dynamics of a household’s livelihood. SHEEP trust, cognizant of all such implications, has represented these issues with the District Collector. Alongside, the Trust also organized social awareness programmes on nature, organic farming, pesticide in food, environmental sustainability, and also plantation drives periodically. Having known the importance of Gram Sabha meetings and the power of local governance, Desingu also worked strategically to spread awareness on Gram Sabhas, encouraging people to actively participate in these meetings.

Hooked into local governance structures and their potential to transform rural lives, Desingu participated in the ward member elections but lost by a margin of 11 votes. Undeterred, he continued to work with the communities with renewed rigour aspiring for something that no one ever did in the region.

“Gudappakkam is a village with 400 votes, but no basic amenities, services or welfare measures. The land documents narrate the story of domination and oppression between caste groups. Ever since the administrative division of Perumbakkam Panchayat, the two wards – Waypanai and Avarinodu surrounding the Gudappakkam village have been doing well. However, this village remains in between, at the behest of influential local leaders,” explains Desingu, concerned about representation of families living here. According to him, declaring it as a separate ward is the best way forward and this is what I want to fight for. Equal representation is what democracy is all about,” he asserts.

“The SEOP programme changed the way SHEEP organized its work. The fact that funds could be raised motivated me. I am now looking forward to initiate new programmes at SHEEP trust that catered to the needs of different sections of the people here,” says Desingu who completed the CSIM course in 2015 and intends to launch initiatives that focus on destitute women and property rights of women. Pursuing equality as a value all his life, he is hopeful to inculcate the same in the next line of leadership at SHEEP and in the communities.

—Shanmuga Priya. T

Keeping the dreams of students alive!

LIVE has been offering an education which is live, capturing the spirit of the name of the institution, with vocational education values and utility.

Twenty years, 10,000 certificates, 5,000 diplomas, 50 awards, 60 newspaper appreciations, 4,000 alumni speaking highly about the benefits. LIVE is still going steady and strong!

With promises to keep and several roads ahead to take, the Loyola Institute of Vocational Education (LIVE) is now celebrating its 20th anniversary, and bouquets from various quarters are pouring in.

Looking back at the strolls and strides it has taken in the past, the institution now looks ahead, armed with more plans drawn up to meet the challenges of the future. Established in 1996 by Loyola College (Autonomous), a Jesuit institution owned by the Loyola College Society, functioning in the heart of Chennai and set back from the hustle and bustle of the main road in Nungambakkam, LIVE has been alive to the aspirations of youth and the academic needs of society.

That vocational education holds the magic key to the mission of solving the unemployment problem has been accepted all over the world by academicians and administrators. An article in The Guardian corroborates this theory: "Vocational education tends to result in a faster transition into the workplace, and countries—Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands—that have it at the core of the curriculum and have been successful in maintaining low youth unemployment rates." (The Guardian: Vocational Education: Why the Finns do it best: January 15, 2014.)

Out of Loyola College's outstanding concern for and commitment to the welfare of students was born LIVE, in keeping with the generally accepted notion and value of vocational education on which the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Government of Tamil Nadu had also laid thrust as a sine



qua non of higher education.

LIVE has been offering an education which is live, capturing the spirit of the name of the institution, with vocational education values and utility. The educational programmes are tailor-made to suit the tastes, temperaments and targets of diverse aspirants in the fields of media, travel & tourism, film-making, and medical laboratory technology for about two decades. Courses offered by this institute are widely recognized by the industry for their merit and quality and the students who have passed with flying colours have landed in plum posts at reputed organisations.

C. Kothandabani, who did the Travel and Tourism Management Course at LIVE between 2000 and 2002, gained quick experience moving up the ladder from Assistant Ticketing Officer to Tour Leader and ultimately setting up his own tour company in 2015 called 'Exploring India'. In September 2007, he was invited to travel to Netherlands to receive the prestigious Best Tour Guide Award. He says: "The Travel and Tourism Management Course at LIVE has enabled me travel to Europe (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France) which gave me a good understanding of the tourist industry and allowed me to behave

in a professional manner while dealing with tourists from other countries."

Sanju Vatsan, Senior Web Designer with COMODO, says: "I have always felt that I was so lucky to be a student at LIVE and I can positively say LIVE has made me a better person. It has helped me develop a positive attitude towards my studies and discover more about myself. Teachers are very caring and interested in students' well-being. They make sure every class is fun, educational and interactive."

Santosh Munish feels that LIVE was one of the best learning experiences he gained. He says: "The professors were so informative as well as friendly and made

C. Kothandabani



Sanju Vatsan



Santosh Munish





students so comfortable that we never had any hesitation to clarify our doubts related to the subjects. We were well trained in all the media subjects. I would take this opportunity to thank each and every professor for giving me confidence to survive in this competitive industry.”

LIVE has designed courses so as to develop knowledge, skills, attitude and sense of social responsibility of pre-college students and graduates. Socially relevant and employment-oriented, the courses meet the needs of the industry. The curriculum is regularly updated and validated by the industry in order to bridge the academics-industry divide. The faculty have rich industrial and academic experience which enable the students to gain an insight about how the industry really works.

For instance, students pursuing film-making course, cinematography and film editing gain exposure through personalities visiting and dwelling at length on their specializations. Film

workshops, festivals and galas are organized so that the students keep abreast of the developments.

Predominantly, students are trained through group discussions, seminars, business games, audio-visuals, case studies, research assignments, field visits, production-based practical's, industrial visits, educational trip and internship in their respective fields.

To bolster the students' career, many LIVE-industry agreements are in place which help students gain practical experience in the industry as a regular part of their classes. Besides, students do internships in industries of their choice. Even as the students pass out of the institution, LIVE also assists them in placements. Armed with PG diploma, diploma, certificates in languages and other relevant titles awarded by LIVE, the students leave the portals of the institution with skills to conquer the job market and with memories to cherish forever.

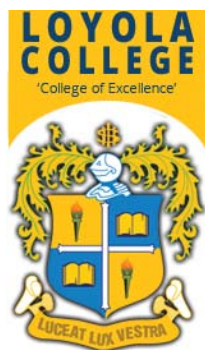
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FOR REGISTRATION AND ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT

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Bangalore's Garbage Army

In many ways, Hasirudala was historic in its inception. For only the first time, an urban municipal body began registering waste pickers in the country.

Garbage is a universal urban problem. The very existence of urban waste and the need to dispose the same has posed many a challenge in several cities. In Bangalore however, the situation has thrown up several additional challenges. But a sustained and combined effort to streamline this process has resulted in garbage-collection and waste disposal becoming solid processes through the efforts of the BBMP and the Hasiru Dala network. As researcher Chaya Chengappa writes, "The combined effort of a network of organizations working together proved instrumental in initiating the registration process and in forming a city-wide waste pickers' and waste itinerant buyers' membership-based organization called Hasiru Dala."

The objective was simple. Organize and streamline the garbage collection system in Bangalore. "The network is formed by many organizations working with waste pickers across the city. The alliance of Indian waste pickers is most broadly reaching these organizations as it supports the advocacy efforts and works with all the network partners that represent the city's waste pickers," Chaya writes. Having participated in active and influential activities promoting the concept of decentralizing waste management in the city, the gradual progression lay in integrating waste-pickers into a more organized system.

The reason for this of course, was to build a strong network of waste pickers to aid the system and tie up loose ends that had existed in the process of garbage collection. With Bangalore being an IT capital and industrial activity having hit a peak, there was of course a major challenge in implementing the idea on the field. However, the first step lay in integrating waste pickers, and getting them to work the basics. "This group called the solid waste management round table had proposed and promoted the integration of waste pickers and small scrap dealers running dry waste collection centres," writes Chaya. The strategy towards achieving this end lay in a studied "top-down" approach that Hasiru Dala was keen on implementing, which was in stark contrast to approaches in the past that took on the 'bottom-up model. "In contrast to

previous "bottom up" efforts, the network as a whole used a "top-down approach" as a key method of engaging the BBMP in enumerating and registering waste pickers," writes Chaya.

The reason for the reverse approach working in Bangalore lay in the advocacy of top leadership in the municipality. Given the general enthusiasm that the initiative received back in 2011, getting the idea across wasn't exactly the greatest challenge. The only ones that did exist were those challenges on the ground. But that also, Chaya writes, was quickly overcome.

Continuous dialogue with citizens and officials has resulted in the BBMP approving Hasirudala to operate three Dry Waste Collection Centres in the city.

"Challenges on the ground were successfully overcome because organisations mobilized and trained waste pickers intensively across the city," she writes, describing how Hasiru Dala came to be. However, while organizing a pool of waste-pickers was a task in itself, the greater challenge lay in applying the right kind of process to the plan. For that to happen, a well-thought-out methodology or strategy was required. The one that Hasiru Dala came up with was beneficial to both, the organisation itself and the BBMP. "The methodology enables the BBMP to register and issue authorized photo identity cards. It requires authentication of waste pickers through an introduction letter from residents, NGOs or scrap dealers," Chaya's report states.

Interestingly enough, the approach and strategy won praise from across the board and was well accepted by all zones in Bangalore's municipal layout. In due course, a pilot project was conceptualized and subsequently executed. "The pilot was tested in the city's west zone. The gaps identified in

the pilot helped improve the efficiency of the registration process." By 2011, nearly 3,000 waste pickers were registered, with a target to scale that number up to 5,000 by March 2012. The registration allows such waste pickers authorization to collect waste and therefore "protect themselves against harassment from the police, municipal authorities and the public," as Chaya's report states.

In many ways, Hasiru Dala was historic in its inception. For only the first time, an urban municipal body began registering waste pickers in the country. The network partners began by forming and training small and informal collectives of waste pickers to tackle several requests to provide waste management services the BBMP's Dry Waste Collection Centres and for bulk waste generators. "These services include composting organic waste and collecting and segregating recyclable waste. The collection centres and bulk generators are waste pickers' main sources of livelihoods as door to door waste collection is contracted out," the report states. But the work didn't end just there. "Continuous dialogue with citizens and officials has resulted in the BBMP approving Hasiru Dala to operate three Dry Waste Collection Centres in the city." In many ways, these baby steps helped the organization climb the ladder of success to achieve more out of what it set out to do. By this time however, a clear methodology, strategy and implementation procedure was well formed up, as part of the bigger picture.

There has also been a sustained effort towards developing training modules for waste pickers, which include the process of enabling such individuals to develop life and entrepreneurial skills of their own. In the aftermath, Hasiru Dala is today, at the forefront of waste management in Bangalore. The organization spear-heads source-segregation drives in close to 20,000 Bangalore households, in addition to also organizing green events, wherein waste is kept to a minimum. But some challenges continue to persist, like for example, how such workers can be sustained only by contributions from households, many of which are reluctant even today, to pay for their garbage to be cleared.



CII-CSIM Capacity Building Programme for NGOs



The CII-CSIM Capacity Building Programme for NGOs was successfully completed at Bengaluru on 7th May, 2016. Out of 30 NGO participants, three of their best proposals were awarded prizes of two lakh rupees, one lakh rupees, and fifty thousand rupees each. The winners were Hasiru Dala, Samuha, and R'eussir Trust.

The selection panel comprised of Mr. Murray Culshaw, Senior Development Consultant, Mr. Aroon Raman, Past Chairman – CII Karnataka State Council and Convener – CII CSR Panel, Mr. Srikanth Rao, Co-Convener CSR Panel, CII Karnataka, and Mr. Cherian Thomas, National Director, World Vision India.

Mr. Cherian Thomas addressed the participants and shared his experience in the corporate sector as well as about World Vision programmes.

All participant were awarded certificates by Mr Ravi Raghavan – Chairman, CII Karnataka and Managing Director, Bharat Fritz Werner Limited.



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.

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Please visit: www.csim.in.
CSIM also facilitates Social Audit for social enterprises through Social Audit Network, UK and SAN, India.
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Enabling Opportunities

Orione Seva is an NGO based in Bangalore, working for the poor communities in Chikka Byrathi.

A society's progress is driven by the desire to create opportunities that enable people to move up the social ladder. Inequity in access to these opportunities defines the trajectory of growth and therefore, needs to be addressed holistically with a long term vision. While social welfare programmes abet rehabilitation of vulnerable groups, there are also others that intend to build capacities so that even the most vulnerable will be able to realize economic independence. Thus, the emphasis on skill development and vocational training programmes focusing on specific sections of the society. And most certainly, the earlier we start the better.

Orione Seva (the operational name of Kripa Trust) is an NGO based in Bangalore, working for the poor communities in Chikka Byrathi. Drawing inspiration from a 20th century Priest, Don Orione, the NGO has worked extensively to build opportunities here, to impact lives of the needy. Cognizant of the discrimination women and children had to face, their presence in the community also helped to build trust thereby enabling a conducive atmosphere for learning and development. "We found that women and children were the most disadvantaged. Further, children with learning difficulties also became our concern as there were no other programmes or services that reached them here. They were just left to deal with themselves at the family level," says Fr Mariano, Director of Orione Seva.

The socio-economic dimensions of poverty compelled them to find out ways to ensure women, children and especially those with learning difficulties had their own space to acquire basic skills. A decade ago, manufacturing illicit liquor was the main livelihood here. With development around the city pushing migrants to this village, parents had no means to support educational and nutrition needs of their children. Since most of them worked for daily wages and often reached very late, they were not even able to spend quality time with their children. As a result, there was no motivation for children to study and they invariably dropped out. To address this issue, Orione Seva decided to run a tuition centre in its premises where children will not only be able to study in the evenings, but will also be provided food to meet their nutrition needs. "The programme has been operational since ten years and the rapid urbanization has made this intervention more necessary and relevant," he says.



During the course of work with the tuition centre, Orione Seva also came across children with learning difficulties who had no means for constructive engagement and learning. Parents felt helpless and did not even know how to interact with their own children. Unaware of the role they could play, Orione Seva's intervention only raised their expectations. Dayaniketan is a day care centre for children with learning difficulties that was established three years ago. It presently serves 34 children from the community and new admissions are taken in as and when need arises. Children from the slums of DJ Halli were enrolled in the centre which provided pre-vocational and vocational training programmes for children belonging to the age groups 5 to 15 years and above 15 years.

"Fortunately, mobilization was not an operational challenge for us. Families had no issues sending their children to Dayaniketan. In fact, they encourage us to expand the operation of this centre," he says adding that "the only challenge Orione Seva had to confront was the high expectations from parents and community." They took really long to comprehend and accept the limitations of their children. Parents must know that they are equally responsible for the progress in their children. So, we decided to take them along in the journey. Thus, the decision against making this a residential centre."

Having recognized this, Orione Seva consciously engaged parents through monthly meetings to help them learn

how to handle their children and encourage their learning, development at the household level.

Orione Seva recently began its work at Chandanaduru village in Chikkaballapur district, Karnataka. Very much similar to the pattern of operation in Bangalore, it all began with a tuition centre that allowed the organization to comprehend needs of children in the community. "But, here it is a weekend tuition programme as lack of public transport makes the commute difficult and expensive," he informs.

Soon, Orione Seva recognized that Chandanaduru and the five villages around it in Gauribidanur Taluk had no programmes or services reaching out to the children with learning difficulties. There were no special schools in this region. A day care centre similar to Dayaniketan was introduced and it was received well by the community. Having been operational since two years, the centre now trains 16 children.

Working with women was an unexplored option and Orione Seva has started from the scratch. Initially, the women were brought together to spend some time together. Women had no place for socializing, nor was there any means of recreation. Orione Seva decided to bring them all together and engage them in constructive activities. Learning their interest in stitching & embroidery, Orione Seva provided them with all raw materials to produce pieces of art using the anchor stitch that they were good at. "We explored avenues to sell their products in the market, and



thanks to the quality of work of these women, we found takers. We started getting orders from Mother Earth and other enterprises," says Fr Mariano on how this initiative evolved into a livelihood project called Thayi. Thayi now boasts of a wide range of products – wall hangings, clay products like bells & diyas, multi-purpose pouch, cushion covers, bags, wallets, etc.

With these initiatives, along with school sponsorship programmes and medical camps going on steadily, Orione Seva now wants to find out ways and build its own capacity to reach out to children with severe learning difficulty.

—ShanmugaPriya.T

Diversity Management in Social Organization

One of the greatest opportunity for a Social Organization is to spread far and wide and make the most impact in the area that is addressed. This expansion comes with a unique pain if not understood and focused and that is the issue of 'Diversity'. Diversity is both an excitement, possibility of newness as well as sapping and energy drawing. Which means, by itself it just is – the mindset with which it is approached as well as the extent to which it is ignored causes the pain. No One size fits all. Similarly no one way will work with all. Social organizations being largely people dependent, the issue of diversity in any project management cannot be ignored or taken for granted.

Diversity, by definition refers to variety or range of different demographics connected to people, gender, age, geography, culture, political, social orientations and perspectives or even different mental and physical states of human being. When organization grows and expands diversity may come internally due to the number of people from different backgrounds joining the organizations or/ as well as diversity due to the organization being located in different geographical locations bringing in different social, political, cultural dimensions. Normally, diversity is seen as a HR responsibility. In fortune 500 companies, diversity department is established to ensure it maintains and educates management about the diversity that exists in every team. Unfortunately, even in corporate it has remained largely in statistics and data analysis and not percolated deep into psyche and treatment spaces. This makes the subject a more quick fix rather than foundational.

In social organizations, there are several stories of organizational and project failures because sufficient understanding and customization had not taken place to accommodate diversity. For example the health care programs were received differently in different districts of Karnataka and the NRHM fund utilization had issues to be sorted out based on regional, political, social and cultural issues. The north Karnataka was way different from the Mangalore/Udupi region to different in the south Bangalore urban region. The school development and management drive in Karnataka had to have a differential approach and process in south and north Karnataka. Having a diverse background of people and multi locations when mixed appropriately can bring better ways of handling tasks and deliverables. They will bring their own unique inputs and perspectives to look at the social issue that is addressed in multiple ways. When understood and tapped, it can be used for achieving higher standards and thereby excellence.

Diversity becomes an issue within the organization when –

- At the time of team formation: There has to be appropriateness to the task, customer requirements as well as match of the competence/ capability to deliverables. For example the gender, age, experience, knowledge, field expectations, all have to be taken into consideration.
- At the time of forming policies for organizational functioning: Different geographical locations have their own social and cultural milieu. The essence of the policies have to be understood and execution has to be built taking diversity into consideration. In some service organizations, there were policies on encouraging people getting their family on a weekend and work, have their spouses to have an opportunity to join the company, have work from home options or even take their personal time to do any community



- service depending on the importance given to work life balance in that region.
- The compensation and reward mechanisms: Most of the times these are built as standardized processes rather than taking the age, place, gender, social and cultural components of the people. This would enable all the varieties of people to stay engaged and contribute. E.g. in an services company, where the majority of staff were young, just out of college and enthusiastic, they had an allowance called "Dating Allowance" which meant they can take others on a date and get reimbursed for that as a part of compensation. This was seen to increase the employee engagement.
- In R and D spaces where new dimensions of product or service are explored, bringing in diverse people can add to innovation and creativity. It can break deep seated mindsets and enhance the common sense application in development.
- In connecting and delivering to the field/ customer: The appropriate mix of region, age and gender has to be taken into consideration. Localities may be accepted in some projects better by the customer or that itself could become a limitation.
- In team Leadership: A leader needs domain and operational knowledge and also the capacity to develop, encourage and build a team to move towards excellence. Someone coming with different background may be able to interact and experience the team afresh without bias and prejudices.
- As a process of change management: To customize and make intervention processes relevant to the times, revamp and bring in fresh thoughts, an appropriate age mix may contribute.
- To bring in holistic perspective to the solutions provided: An appropriate knowledge and experience mix from varied fields may help the team.
- In decision making: There are varieties of decisions that are taken in any project and diversity can be an enabler to get multiple perspectives and inputs. For example, the way a woman may take decisions vs. a man; the experienced and elderly vs the young with fresh and updated knowledge; diversity can enable holistic decision making within the team. If the leaders are aware and mindful of the diversity factors, the decisions would be lot more enriching and significant in impact.

When diversity is created, however, in most organizations we do not see them in appropriate configurations. There is no one right way of having this

diversity mix, however, one needs to have an appropriate mix and match of all the different factors of diversity to get the best out of the project team members. A number of analytical tools and interpretive data may be used to determine the mix. But it is not a one time job and needs to be revisited based on the results. Diversity is not for its own sake but for better outcome and to get the best out of people in any project and organization. The higher the engagement of people, higher is the belongingness which results in commendable outputs. Understanding the implicit beliefs and intents of all people with their own diverse backgrounds, would definitely benefit the projects and get higher outcomes.

While there are bright propositions from diversity, there are certain shadows too when it is ignored or taken for granted.

- Judgements and bias: Especially in rural and urban mix of people; regional and language bias, gender bias and judgements about knowledge, experience, expertise. These can create difficult blocks in learning and assimilation of thoughts, perspectives and ideas. These biases may have aroused out of their own, experiences and understanding from self and observing others. These views may be limiting and may impact the performance of projects.
- Peer pressure and deep set identification, living in comfort zone that makes people form cliques and groups with people from similar backgrounds, locations, education, gender and which intern can limit team work and excellence. The beliefs in the minds of the people have to be addressed to remove these blocks.
- Diversity if not utilized properly can add to time and energy consumption. It can delay consensus, agreements in decisions. Standardized processes may even back fire and to arrive at appropriate solutions may take time. Human issues may loom larger than technical issues.
- The power blocks of working in corporate office and field branches creates a different diversity issue due to regional and localize bias.

For organizations where this has not been a focused area, some action plans could be –

1. To tap and understand what kind of diversity is prevalent already within the organization
2. Determine the appropriate mix to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Re-organize the teams so that the diversity mix is appropriate and value adding
4. Evaluate some of the best practices in a similar industry / context / project – how they have configured their diversity factors.
5. This is a constant review process, one time setup may or may not be significant for long time. Regular check on what is working and what is not working should be evaluated and appropriate changes should be considered.
6. Careful calculation of cost benefit and business impact needs to be connected to diversity components.
7. Some kind of focused activities in knowing, understanding the social and cultural dimensions of the people and region has to be formulated as a part of the education process.
8. An appreciative enquiry process to accept diversity and learn from each other to be instituted as a part of organization culture

Unity in diversity is the Indian mantra and that needs to be integrated into every social organization.

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath and Prathaap B



1 Learning



Some disciples once complained to their *guru*, “You tell us stories, but you never reveal their meaning to us.” The *guru*, replied: “How would you like it if someone offered you a fruit and chewed it before giving it to you?”



Explicit Learning

- A. Learn to see the world from your own point of view.
- B. You can't see the world through others' eyes.
- C. We always want someone to think for us.



Introspective Learning

- A. How do I learn?
- B. What motivates me to learn?
- C. What is the process of learning?

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Inspiring Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

Mr. Kishorilal, an officer of the Railway Board, Government of India, hails from Delhi. He looks simple, gentle and dignified in behaviour. He has gastric ulcer and has arranged for his board and lodging in the town.

Five years ago he took up the study of devotional literature. He is a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna. He could feel Krishna in all that he saw. Krishna often appeared to him and made him happy. His work was going on without any effort on his part. Everything seemed to be done for him by Krishna himself.

Later he came in contact with a Mahatma who advised him to study Vedanta and take to *nirakara upasana*, i.e., devotion to formless Being. He has since read about seven hundred books of philosophy and Vedanta, including the Upanishads, Ashtavakra, Avadhuta and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He has also studied Sri Bhagavan's works in English and is much impressed by them.

Once when he was in the jaws of death, no other thought haunted him but that he had not yet visited Sri Bhagavan in his life. So he has come here on a short visit. He prays only for Sri Bhagavan's touch and His Grace.

The Master said to him: *atmaivaham gudakesa*, i.e., I am *Atman*; *Atman* is the Guru; and *Atman* is Grace also. No one remains without the *Atman*. He is always in contact. No external touch is necessary.

D.: I understand. I do not mean external touch.

M.: Nothing is more intimate than the *Atman*.

D.: Again Sri Krishna appeared to me three months back and said, “Why do you ask me for *nirakara upasana*? It is only *sarva bhutesu cha atmanam sarva bhutani cha atmani*. (The Self in all and all in the Self.)

M.: That contains the whole truth. Even this is *oupacharika* (indirect). There is in fact nothing but the *Atman*. The world is only a projection of the mind. The mind originates from the

Atman. So *Atman* alone is the One Being.

D.: Yet it is difficult to realise.

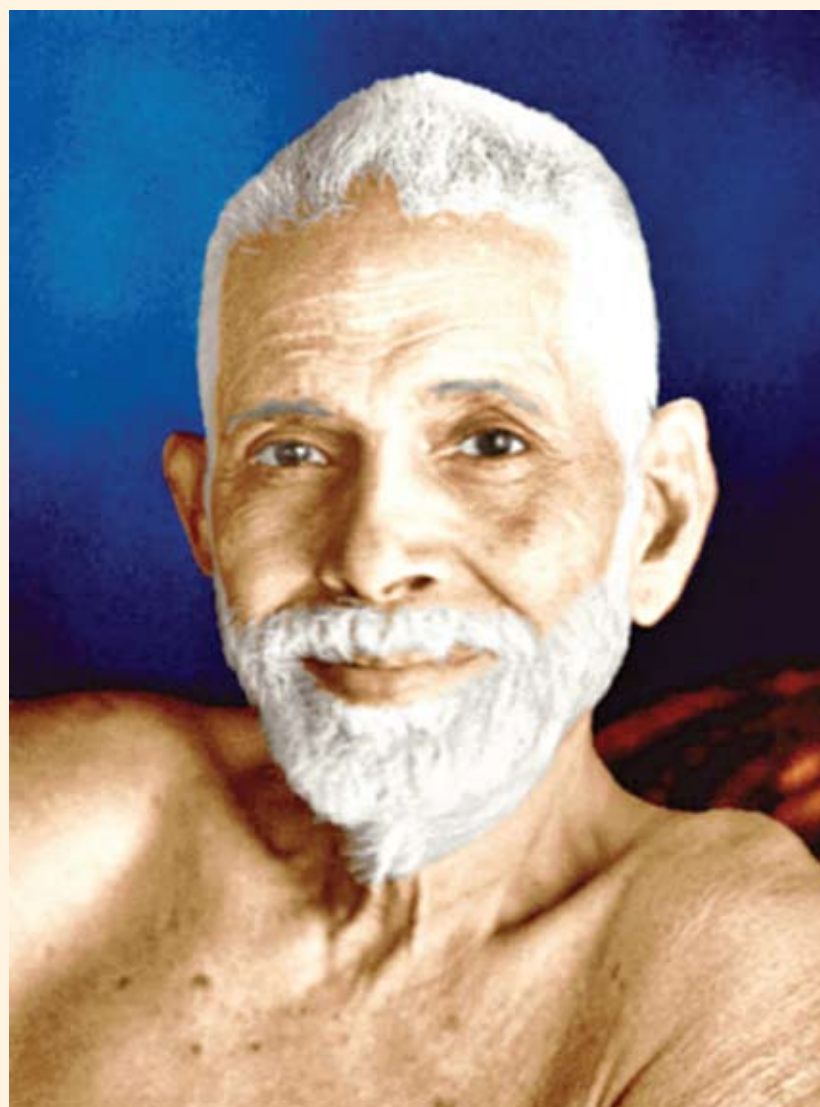
M.: There is nothing to realise. It is *nitya suddha buddha mukta* (the Eternal, pure, aware and liberated) state. It is natural and eternal. There is nothing new to gain. On the other hand a man must loose his ignorance. That is all.

This ignorance must be traced to its origin. To whom is this ignorance? Of what is one ignorant? There are the subject and the object. Such duality is characteristic of the mind. The mind is from the *Atman*.

D.: Yes. Ignorance itself cannot exist. (He finally surrendered saying, “Just as a doctor learns what is wrong with the patient and treats him accordingly, so may Sri Bhagavan do with me.”)

He also said that he had lost all inclination to study books and learn from them.)

—Source: Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi



“Section 135 of the Companies Act has endeavored to bring CSR from backroom to boardroom.”

Gayatri Subramaniam shares with **Marie Banu** how corporates can identify implementing agencies to network with

Gayatri Subramaniam is the Convener and Chief Programme Executive of National Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility (NFCSR), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA). She has an academic and industrial experience of over 30 years and has been associated with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs since its inception.

Gayatri's main area of work is to contribute towards policy advisory service and undertake capacity building and knowledge dissemination initiatives in Corporate Social Responsibility. She has been a part of the evolution of the new legislation on CSR in India representing IICA at various national stakeholders' consultations and has also represented IICA at various international forums.

She is the Convener for NFCSR - a unique platform created for Government, Corporates and NGOs for taking up development and sustainable initiatives at a national level. At present, she is heading the Implementation Agencies Hub of IICA and, in her personal capacity, she is on various advisory committees of leading Corporates and NGOs.

In an exclusive interview, Gayatri Subramaniam shares with Marie Banu how corporates can identify implementing agencies to network with.

Do you perceive that CSR projects would contribute better to the socio-economic development of India than the 3.1 million NGOs working in India?

Yes of course, I definitely perceive that CSR projects would contribute better to the socio-economic development of India than the 3.1 million NGOs working in India. The reason being what most of the NGOs are doing at present are not projects, but sporadic and one off activities. There are of course very good NGOs who are doing projects but the numbers are really few.

What Section 135 of the Companies Act is looking forward is a combination of Corporates and NGOs working towards development initiatives. The combination of the project management skills, professional attitude and funds from corporates amalgamated with the passion, connection and communication of NGOs with the community will certainly be beneficial. Believe me, this combination is really going to do wonders and will hopefully change the scenario of social economic development of India for the better.



Corporates are not expected to do CSR by themselves. How can corporates identify NGO, Trust or Section 8 Company to network with?

True! Corporates are not expected to do CSR by themselves. They can either have their own foundation established as a Trust, Society or Section 8 Company or can use any such independent entity as their implementation partners, provided it has an established track record of 3 years.

The fact is that there is a huge trust deficit between the corporate and the NGOs. Therefore, corporates would definitely like to conduct a due diligence on the NGO partners before they engage them.

Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) established by Ministry of Corporate Affairs has an Implementation Agency Hub that provides this service. IICA is creating a database of efficient and effective Implementing Agencies. To enroll in this database, NGOs would have to go through a thorough due diligence process. We get them verified through a statutory auditor and once their papers are found in order, they are sent to seven Ministries and four departments for clearance.

This entire process establishes the fact

that these NGOs have a valid legal live status and are not blacklisted by any major body.

Do you think CSR will enable corporate employees to be sensitive to social needs and respond to it?

That is a very good question! Although the concept of CSR has been advocated for decades and is generally propagated by companies globally, argument on how CSR should be defined and implemented remains a contentious debate. This gap is problematic because corporates are generally being required to align with societal norms while generating financial returns and maintaining balance between the two becomes difficult at times.

Therefore Section 135 of the Companies Act has endeavored to bring CSR from backroom to boardroom. By doing so, many of the corporates have started thinking about CSR and also on how to implement it. Once they get involved in the process, the comfort level between corporate employees and community will increase, thereby resulting in the sensitivity to social needs and forcing them to respond to it.

What are the major social issues that

you think that the CSR projects should focus upon?

In India, the gap between “have” and “have-not” is tremendous. The need is huge! Schedule VII of the Companies Act (which the companies have to follow) has taken care of almost all the major social issues on which the CSR projects could be focused upon. Other than this, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs through a clarification (issued on 18th June, 2015) has allowed “liberal interpretation” of Schedule VII.

However, any CSR project should be need based and should focus on all the stakeholders. A good CSR project should have a baseline survey, in consonance with the need of the beneficiaries; a specific timeline; defined objectives; clear milestones; and specific output and outcomes to have a greater impact.

With making CSR mandatory, will India be able to achieve our Vision 2020 targets on social development? The journey has started on a very positive note. We, at IICA, see a great potential in this endeavor. The companies and implementing agencies are going full steam ahead and we definitely see a bright future.

Will Social Audit of CSR programmes make reporting more effective?

CSR activities has become a critical part of the business strategy today and this is particularly important in India, since we are the first country to have legislated the need to undertake CSR spending and make CSR reporting mandatory under the Companies Act 2013.

As of now, the companies are required to constitute a CSR committee of the Board, make a CSR policy and undertake to spend two percent of their profits in pursuance of their policy. The companies are mandated to report in the prescribed manner on how they have spent and disclose reasons for not spending.

The Social Audit of CSR programmes would definitely make reporting more effective as social auditing would help to narrow down the gaps between vision/goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness. Social auditing would also be able to provide information for effective response to external claimants that make demands on the organization. The social audit would be able to bring out all the weaknesses and strengths of the organization's endeavors to social initiatives, thus bringing in more transparency and give room for further improvement if required.