

Conversations

A Chronicle of Social Currents

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From the Editor

Dear Friends,

It has been predicted that the world population will be 9 billion by 2050 with 2.5 billion people living in less developed nations, resulting in wide spread social problems and unmanageable governance structures. Therefore, we need a bottom of the

pyramid approach (mainly people to people, one to one) to bridge the social divide and disparity.

Individuals and Corporates involved in social transformation need to apply sustainable and innovative practices to address social issues. By converting each issue into an opportunity for

providing equitable solutions, Social Entrepreneurship will become the backbone of all such ventures.

This issue features Corporates involved in societal causes. Let us applaud them for their contribution to the welfare of the nation.

P. N. Devarajan



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Essentials in Corporate Social Responsibility

There is a need for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to become fully integrated with strategic management, corporate governance, and ethics in organizations. CSR is gaining grounds and is becoming essential for corporate sustainability.

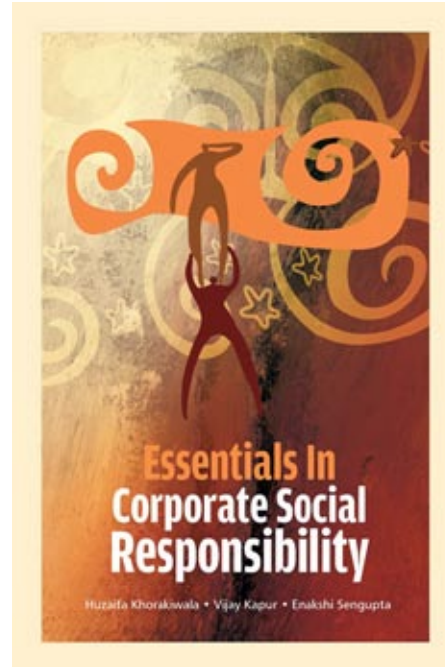
“Essentials in Corporate Social Responsibility” is the title of the book authored by Shri Huzaifa Khorakiwala, CEO, Wockhardt Foundation, Vijay Kapur, and Enakshi Sengupta, CSR Consultants and Researchers. The book was unveiled by Minister of Water Resources and Minority Affairs of India, Shri Salman Khurshid and Dr. Habil Khorakiwala, Chairman of Wockhardt Group in the august presence of Nobel Laureate Prof. Mohd. Yunus during the Wockhardt Foundation’s CSR Conclave in Mumbai.

‘Essentials in Corporate Social Responsibility’ has the following chapters:

- Evolution of CSR down the Ages

- CSR a contested Concept
- Theories in CSR
- Corporate Community involvement and CSR
- CSR and Employees
- CSR and Environment Responsibility
- CSR in the Market Place
- CSR and Reputation
- Bridging Trust with CSR
- Social Responsibility Investment and CSR
- Future of CSR

The book is set of 11 chapters that are very relevant in the modern context not only in the Indian scenario, but also the global. The book addresses the challenges faced by CSR managers and students in understanding and implementing CSR in today’s world. The book provides a comprehensive approach to the key concepts on Corporate Social Responsibility, and discusses



contemporary issues that are currently being faced by business and society across the globe.

The book presents an overview of how the concept and practice of Corporate Social Responsibility grew, manifested, and flourished in its modern context. The chapters highlight issues on the history of CSR, its development, and its challenges. The content is rich with matter bearing relevance to contemporary issues such as relationship of CSR to reputation, trust building, and socially responsible investment. The book is useful for CSR professionals, students, practitioners, CEOs, Government officials, policy makers, and researchers who can gain an insight into the framework of CSR dividing it into four silos of workplace, marketplace, community, and environment. Authors have used very simple language to express their thoughts and ideas and it is attractive in terms of design.

—Excerpted from /www.asiacsr.com

ADD SPARKLE TO THE SEASON WITH A
TOUCH OF THE ORIENT AT **China Town**
A SIP OF SCINTILLATING SPAIN AT **Zara**
A TINGE OF EXOTIC THAILAND AT **Benjarong**
A MESMERISING SENSE OF NORTH INDIA
AT **COPPER CHIMNEY** A SPLASH OF COASTAL FRESHNESS
AT **Kokum** A MÉLANGE OF SPICES AT **ENTÉ KERALAM**
AND VEGETARIAN GOODNESS AT **Cream Centre**

A Head For Business – A Heart For World



“Some people strengthen the society just by being the kind of people they are”, said John Gardener. And they surely know how to accommodate their interests within the opportunities they come across. So true! Not being able to pursue an M.A. Social Work did not stop Kaviya Suresh, Regional Coordinator, SIFE India, from engineering a process of social change. She enrolled herself with the Social Entrepreneurship Outlook program (SEOP) offered at CSIM. “The course gave me a comprehensive understanding of the various social issues and the need for an entrepreneurial approach to handle them”. On completion of M.A (HR), she joined Students in Free Enterprise* (SIFE), India as its Regional Coordinator in Chennai.

“I could incorporate my learnings from the course in my work. I could orient students from all that I had picked up during my visit to organisations and practical exercises that was part of CSIM’s curriculum.”

SIFE, operating in 39 countries, is a unique network of business heads and colleges that focuses on enhancing the leadership roles of college students. SIFE acts as an incubator by providing a platform, guiding and mentoring students to make an economically sustainable model that addresses a social cause. It in turn, provides an interface between the social issues that have long been affecting different communities and students with an inclination to make a difference.

SIFE, India started with eight colleges in 2003 and the number has grown to 65 across India, with 25 colleges in Tamil Nadu. Over the years, SIFE India has established itself as one of the premier student-based organizations in India supporting free enterprise and entrepreneurship.

The students of a college enrolled in SIFE, work as teams to address a particular community in need, and design and implement a sustainable business model that would empower them. And here, the word ‘community’ subsumes almost every kind of people. From *idli* vendors, mechanics, transgenders, commercial sex workers, self help groups, differently abled, beggars, to plantation workers. “We do not have set categories of communities as they tend to reduce the space for experiment and thereby reach. Students are free to work with anybody. The only criteria to be satisfied is that the community should be the one in need”, says Kaviya.

As an alumna of CSIM, she explains,

me and my friends understand their needs and abilities. The success of the project was not just about the profits made, but the change the activity brought in the lives of the children as well as in us,” she says.

Every student involved in SIFE works around a shared cause. Apart from making a difference amongst the needy, these students also have an opportunity to mentor, get inspired, network, collaborate and learn, find great talent, start a career, and be recognized for support and achievement.

In one of the projects she explained about how students from an engineering college worked on providing skill addition and quality education to the automobile mechanics. 14 of them were

like gambling and alcohol. A group of biotechnology students came up with the idea of promoting seaweed cultivation in the shallow waters to extract a component that had multiple applications in pharmaceutical industry.

“Convincing the people was a big task in itself”, says Hagini, another alumna of SIFE. The students approached Mr. Sakthivel of Aquaculture Foundation of India. Besides providing the technical knowhow on the project, Mr. Sakthivel facilitated the communication between the students and the community members.

“Once the project took off, we wanted to make sure that the men did not waste the money that they earned out of this project. Hence, we organized workshops to help them understand the better side of life. Each of the community members started earning Rs. 9,000 a month, and soon they took complete control of the project”, says Hagini.

Every country that operates a SIFE programme organizes a national competition, from which one institution will be named National Champion and advance to compete at the SIFE World Cup. This process provides teams with the opportunity to present their outreach projects to a panel of judges who evaluate and determine which team’s project has had the most social impact.

Once a year, the National Champion SIFE teams from around the world meet at the SIFE World Cup where they present the results of their community outreach projects to a prestigious group of international business leaders. India has participated in the world cup over the last 7 years and has been a finalist for the last three consecutive years. (Alpha Arts & Science College & Loyola College from Chennai qualified as finalists.)

In effect, SIFE enables students to understand social responsibilities. Kaviya’s vision is to see SIFE in every college/university after ten years (like NCC and NSS). That’s certainly a head for business and a heart for world! This indeed is a novel CSR project that has honed both leadership skills and social responsibility amongst the student community!

* WNS Global Services and KPMG are the Platinum Sponsor of the SIFE India and Mr. Keshav R. Muruges, Group CEO, WNS Holdings is the Chairman of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), India.

—Shanmuga Priya R



“I could incorporate my learnings from the course in my work. I could orient students from all that I had picked up during my visit to organizations and practical exercises that was part of CSIM’s curriculum”. Her role now in SIFE is to facilitate students to take the lead in identifying the community, building rapport with the members, identifying the need, and bringing out an outcome based project. The concept of Social entrepreneurship is thus indirectly addressed to these students.

Kaviya was an active SIFE member during her college days. In one of the projects that she was part of, the team had worked on teaching mentally challenged children to make greeting cards. “This was an unforgettable experience. Teaching the challenged children helped

enrolled in Diploma in Mechanical Engineering and thereafter, all of them were employed by Hero Honda. In another instance, SHG members in a slum were assisted in buying a machine to make sanitary napkins. Today, the members of the SHG manage the entire cycle of production and marketing. “SIFE is a great platform to showcase your talents and your skills. I think nothing can be better than realizing your potential”, says Vishal Parmar, an alumnus of SIFE.

One of the most memorable projects was that of seaweed cultivation introduced in Akalmadam the village at Rameswaram. The aftermath of tsunami and the bilateral issues with Sri Lanka restrained the fishermen from fishing. There was no alternate source of livelihood and the men got into practices



Suresh Kamath with his staff at Lasersoft Infosystems Ltd.

Software Meets Care

“Persons with disability are among the most committed professionals that I have known. Not only are they very creative but they are also consistent in their performance.” —Suresh Kamath, CEO of Laser Soft Infosystems Ltd.

Especially for those in the software industry and also for those whose business it is to study business leadership, if the name Suresh Kamath does not strike a familiar chord in you, you might want to know him. CEO of Laser Soft Infosystems Ltd. (now a part of the Polaris group of companies), Mr. Kamath is an entrepreneur who has been making a difference in ways more than one. Looking up on him on the internet one can find that all the articles that have featured him at various points of time in his career so far have one common sketch of his personality—that of humaneness, humility, and of being unconventional. Upon speaking to him, one cannot help but feel a certain reverence for the way he exhibits these qualities.

Suresh Kamath is one grateful man. The company that he founded, Laser Soft Infosystems Ltd. a leader in creating software solutions in the banking and healthcare sectors has recently struck a much coveted deal with the Reserve Bank of India. With that, his team of over 550 software professionals is gaining in on realizing its collective dream of creating core banking solutions for all Central Banks.

What makes Suresh Kamath and his team different from any other company? “We have employees who are highly motivated and whose motivation inspires everybody else in the firm. The firm has benefitted richly because of having these people” he says.

Laser Soft Infosystems Ltd.’s employee base comprise of a large number of persons with disability who occupy positions at various levels in the corporate hierarchy. Presently, their numbers account for 15 per cent of the total employees of the company. Kamath’s dream is to create 10,000 jobs out

of which at least 40 per cent will be filled in by persons with disability. According to him, while the firm is open to employing people based solely on their skills, the search for these individuals is a difficult one. In colleges there are barely two or three students with disability. Though the population of persons with disability in our country is a large number, these people are usually shunned by their own families, largely kept indoors, and deprived of education and employment.

“Persons with disability are among the most committed professionals that I have known. Not only are they very creative but

member earned a salary of Rs. 1,000 initially, including Kamath himself.

Kamath and his team chose the Banking and Healthcare sectors as their target clientele as both had large bases and thus had great potential for improving their services through computerization. “I noticed that software companies focused on providing services rather than developing products. I saw that as an opportunity. That is exactly what our company does these days—developing products to enhance the efficiency of our client-organizations,” says Kamath. The software industry is exhaustive in the present times and the

with the ever-increasing government policies on reservations, it is difficult to maintain the ratio of persons with disability employed in his company. However he tries as best as possible to keep his company’s policies unperturbed. “I believe that each one of us has a responsibility towards the society. For all the privileges that I have had, I need to give back to the society. Starting this company and following the policy that we do is my way of repaying my social debt. Even today, anybody can approach us for employment and they will be valued solely based on their merit, and not on the basis of their appearance, health, or any other discriminatory factors,” Kamath adds.

In these many years of its successful running, Laser Soft Infosystems Ltd. has received several awards such as the National Award for Welfare of Persons with Disabilities in 2005, from the Union Ministry Of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Helen Keller Award from the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, and was also conferred the title of Best Private Employer by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 2005.

“Laser Soft has been acquired by Polaris Software Labs Limited in October 2009. However, they are also keen to take forward our initiative of providing jobs to physically challenged,” concludes Kamath.

Here is a company that has quite literally married the ideals of Corporate Social Responsibility with the rigours and ambition of business, thus creating a futuristic model of sustainable and progressive enterprise. For that, we take our hats off!

—Archanaa R.

“I believe that each one of us has a responsibility towards the society. For all the privileges that I have had, I need to give back to the society.”



Suresh Kamath

they are also consistent in their performance. Software development suits them as it does not necessitate hard physical labour and our employees are willing to learn” says Kamath.

Kamath started the company in 1986, when quite young and with a meager sum of Rs. 200 at hand. The 80’s as one can recollect was the period when the software industry was little known and the sector was just about emerging. The company started with five employees working out of a portion of a rented house, and every

competition is reaching impossible levels. How does one strategize one’s moves?

“When people buy software, it is usually priced several times higher than the cost price and often customers are left with few choices when it comes to the right mix of quality of product and its pricing. Keeping our quotes low without compromising on quality and running our business in a straightforward fashion has been a big part of our conviction to stick to business ethics,” says a triumphant Kamath.

Speaking of business ethics, he says that

The Four T's in Action

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” —Lao Tzu.

81-year-old C. Sarangapani believes in doing more than preaching. He combines humour with deep spirituality in his day-to-day interactions with young children as he helps them to take their first crucial step in life's journey.

Fondly known as Pani Uncle, his latest venture is teaching three slum children for two hours a day in his home. This former Executive Director of IDBI is an Electrical and Mechanical Engineer by training. He found his vocation in social action post-retirement—thanks to the inspiration of his close friend and mentor Sri P.N. Devarajan.

It was Sri Devarajan's example and words which impelled Pani Uncle to donate his large bungalow in Bangalore to Siva Sakthi Homes—an organization working for the mentally challenged. To this day, he collects more than Rs 25,000 a month (in cash and kind for the Home) by going around in his car picking up rice, dal and oil from the homes of donors. Siva Sakthi Homes dedicated in memory of his late spouse Smt. Jayamani Pani was launched in January 2001 and presently has over 28 children residing here.

Pani Uncle's support for CSIM, a management school for the social sector, is equally heartfelt and hands-on. He finds donors, attends classes, participates in events, and motivates the students and the faculty with timely, humorous narratives.

As for Pani Uncle's latest venture with the three children, he adopts a unique teaching methodology. Padma, Vijayalakshmi, and Anusha start their classes with a prayer for peace and oneness, followed by storytelling that is punctuated with jokes, and lessons on values. He allows the children to play with the educational software that is installed on his computer to help build their English vocabulary. He asks the children to describe simple action pictures in English, and make them work out mathematical problems and write stories. This unstructured meandering is deliberate as it enables him to earn their trust and affection.

Pani Uncle claims that he was inspired by Sri P.N. Devarajan's teaching of the '4 T's of social action'. He states: “One doesn't necessarily need a huge budget and a strategic plan to do good. All that one needs to do is to share a little—Time, Talent, Treasure (in this case, his computer, books, his house), impelled by the Touch of compassion for the have-nots.”

The reverberations of these simple actions are already being felt as the three girls are able to clearly articulate their ambitions. Padma wishes to become a



doctor and offer free treatment to patients, Vijayalakshmi aspires to become an engineer and build schools and hospitals, and Anusha too wants to become a doctor and treat senior people like Pani *Thatha* (meaning grandfather). The influence has spread to the parents of these children too. Now, with Pani Uncle's help these children wish to enroll themselves in the National Open School system to complete their long-discontinued education.

It only takes a little stretch of the imagination to envision the possibilities—inspired neighbours taking up the education of their house-maids' children or encouraging drivers to attend night schools. Pani Uncle's latest journey has the potential to touch a thousand years and a thousand generations.

In a chat with Aruna Subramaniam, Sarangapani shares his milestones in social service.

It has been said the Philanthropy is a state of doing where the giving is easy. You seem to be a perfect example. Your comments?

You get many more times than what you give. One's karmic balance in the bank of God gets credited and one derives the benefit of this credit either during one's own life time or in a subsequent birth, as for example, one takes birth in a good and prosperous family.

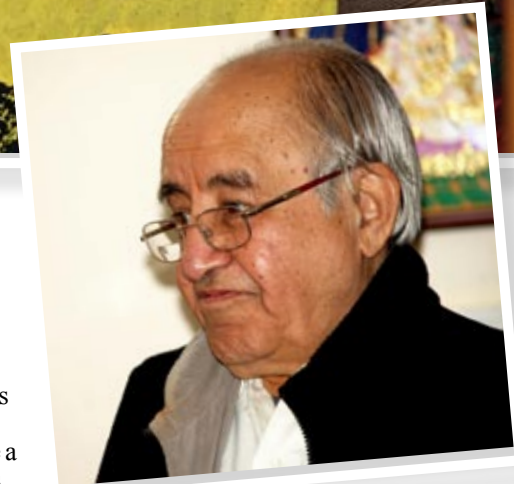
What motivates you to give selflessly?

Life is an endless journey; one is born, grows, dies, and is reborn again. This journey goes on and on till one finally gets liberation from rebirth. Bhagavan Baba in one of my visits to Puttaparthi in 1984 advised: 'If one has less luggage, there will be more comfort, and the journey of life will be a pleasure.' I realized the wisdom of this profound message after going through the traumatic experience of losing my life partner and mother, and when all my children settled in distant lands.

Can you share with us a memorable incident while doing DOS collection for Siva Sakthi Homes?

Yes. Smt Radha and Sri. Ananth who live in L&T South City, a large complex with about 20 towers and may be around 6,000 residents take the trouble of organizing collection of old news papers, magazines, etc. every month. They collect an average amount of over Rs 50,000 through this programme and distribute the collection to several institutions. From this, Siva Shakti Homes received Rs.2500 every month.

This example has been replicated more recently in other smaller complexes. For Instance, at Gopalan Jewels Smt Maya Prabhakar collects old news papers and donates about Rs.2500 every month to Shiva Sakthi Homes. The potential of



replicating this effort in a large city like Bangalore is immense and one need not spend any money to buy Dal, Oil, or Sugar. It is a kind of recycling your waste to make an economic contribution to deserving NGOs.

Today's youth are busy with their work and find it cumbersome to engage in social work activities. What is your advice for them?

I do not agree. In my work with CSIM, Bangalore, I have found many young people quitting their high paying jobs due to burnout and have joined NGOs for a living wage or have started their own NGO. Ms. Ramalakshmi left Oracle to join us and help us with her professional skills and experience.

It is for us to lead by example. As Sri. P.N. Devarajan aptly puts it, “Be a Servant Leader and not a Power Leader!”

Ten-year-old Raji clutches Sheetal's hand and asks, "Will you stay longer?" "Yes, for some more time. You still remember me?" replies Sheetal.

"Yes, of course I remember you. You took me to watch the IPL match, and how can I ever forget my meeting with Sachin Tendulkar," says Raji with a twinkle in her eye.

Their conversation sought the attention of many children around, and each of them eagerly await for their turn to speak with Sheetal.

Sheetal is the Executive Director and Trustee of the K C Mahindra Education Trust which is based in Mumbai. She started her career at Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. as a Management Trainee in 1982. After a stint in marketing, she served as a Product Manager of flagship products such as the Armada and Bolero in the marketing department of the Auto Sector. She was also deputed to Mahindra Ford Ltd. and helped launch Ford Escort in India.

"With Sundays being my only free days I

didn't find time to volunteer and give back to the community. I always longed to work with children, and when I heard of an opening at the K C Mahindra Education Trust, I instantly applied for the position. It was a fantastic opportunity as I could continue to work for the Mahindra group, and at the same time help underprivileged girls and other undeserved communities!" she quips.

Nanhi Kali is a sponsorship program that supports the education of underprivileged girl children in India. Anand Mahindra, Vice Chairman & Managing Director of Mahindra & Mahindra, who is the Founder of Nanhi Kali, believed that educated women form the foundation of a modern secular society. He felt that there was a strong correlation between the existing societal ills in India—growing population, dowry deaths, caste system—and lack of education of the girl child. He believed that by empowering the girl child with education there would be huge benefits for the nation in the long term. Therefore, with

the dual objectives of impacting the nation's development by educating the girl child and encouraging Indians to contribute to the society in a focused manner, he launched Nanhi Kali in 1996. Currently, the Nanhi Kali project is jointly managed by K C Mahindra Education Trust and Naandi Foundation.

Nanhi Kali identifies girl children based on their enrollment in government schools, family income, parents' educational background, social background, and the child's aptitude. Sponsorships from individuals and corporate houses are sourced to take care of the educational requirements of these children.

Working together with Naandi Foundation, Sheetal managed to garner sufficient support to reach out to over 70,000 girls. These Nanhi Kalis live in urban, rural, tribal and conflict affected communities across nine states of the country.

The sponsorship cost of a Nanhi Kali is Rs. 2,400 a year (for a girl child studying in Std. 1 to 5) and Rs. 3,600 a year (for a girl child

studying in Std 6 to 10). Each donor receives a detailed profile of the girl they sponsor along with her photograph and two progress reports on how she is fairing both in academic as well as in extra-curricular activities. Apart from academic support, girls are provided with a material kit which consists of a school bag, uniforms, shoes, socks, stationery, notebooks and hygiene material for the older girls.

"Which child would not be happy to receive these items? Especially the girls who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who are from rural and tribal areas where parents find it difficult to provide their children with two square meals a day? The Nanhi Kali material support takes care of the incidental costs involved in sending girls to government schools and serves as an incentive for parents to support their girls education," states Sheetal.

Speaking about the method of teaching, she says: "Children receive academic support through the Academic Support Centre that functions 1 to 2 hours before or after school



Apart from academic support, girls are provided with a material kit which consists of a school bag, uniforms, shoes, socks, stationery, notebooks and hygiene material for the older girls

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hours. Concepts of Mathematics and Language are taught with an objective that the girls attain grade specific competency levels. We use innovative teaching tools and activities such as storytelling, group games, etc., which make learning not only meaningful but also fun. Our team also works with the parents and community to sensitize them on gender equity."

Sheetal took a break to speak with the children who were waiting for her. She asks Dharshinee if the Academic Support Classes were of help to her and she gets a spontaneously reply: "The classes at Nanhi Kali gives me time to do my homework and revise for my lessons which makes me understand better."

"Some of our students participated in the National Level Talent Search Competitions and won scholarships. Although the cash award is only Rs. 750, this motivation is tremendous," says Sheetal.

Sheetal is optimistic of supporting 500,000 girls over the next three years. Speaking of CSR projects in general, she says: "For the Mahindra group CSR is not just making cheque donations to NGOs. Need assessments are carried out and focus areas and goals are set. Projects are then selected keeping in mind where we can achieve maximum impact as well as where employees can participate. Partnerships with NGOs are entered into strategically keeping in mind the common values and goals."

Like Sheetal, there are many socially committed individuals in the corporate world who have dedicated their skills and time to serve the society. *Conversations* wishes each one of them success in their endeavors!

(Names of children have been changed to protect their identity.)

—Marie Banu





Rati Forbes with the SHG members

A Responsibility to Give

Forbes Marshall supports 'Gammatwadis' or fun preschools that introduce children to formal schooling

Companies should not only focus on business but also simultaneously work to give back to the society, believes the team at Forbes Marshall. Falling in line with this belief are the core values of their CSR policy—innovation, integrity, family spirit, and entrepreneurship. Rati Forbes, Director Forbes Marshall spearheads this initiative.

Adopting activities in resonance with the needs of the community has been the key to their sustenance right from the beginning. In the early 70s, the thrust areas included housing, electricity and roads. With the local municipal corporation yet to be established, the nearest hospital was too far to be accessed by the community members. To address this issue, the team had set up, 'Shehernaz Medicare centre which transformed from being a dispensary to a fully equipped thirty bedded hospital. During the late 90s, a more focused approach was adopted to deal with needs pertaining to health and education. Soon, women empowerment as well garnered attention and became a priority.

"Working with women was initiated through vocational training programmes. Women felt comfortable and secure in being associated with us. Influenced by the wide range and scope of activities undertaken, the women had proposed to contribute their bit to the community. This led to the birth of pre-schools and self help groups", says Bina Joshi, Consultant, Department of Social Initiative.

Today, Forbes Marshall supports 'Gammatwadis' or fun preschools that introduce children to formal schooling and trains *balwadi* teachers in collaboration with the municipal corporation. When asked about the need to work with government bodies Bina Joshi says, "It is important to add value to what the government institutions are doing because it is they who cater to the poorest of the poor".

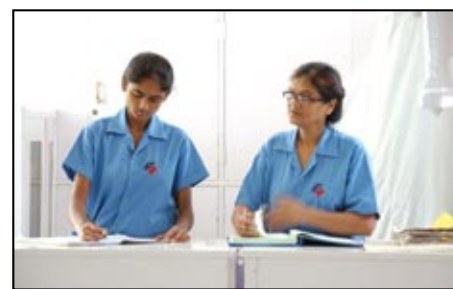
Micro credit was seen as an effective tool to women empowerment because the women in the community had no access to money, except that from private money lenders who claimed exorbitant interest rates, pushing them in to a debt trap. Forbes Marshall therefore focused on organizing 150 self help groups, 3 federations and 1 women credit cooperative society are being supported by the group in Kasarwadi, Bopkhel and Morwadi communities.

Enumerating on the multifaceted influences that 'access to credit' has created, Bina Joshi says "More girls get into higher education and the number of child marriages have plummeted so visibly". With increased awareness of health, hygiene and legal rights, these women are able to come together, approach the government structures and make sure that their civil rights are protected. Remarkably, they have grown to be potential sources of credit for the men in their families!

An inspiring narration is that of Swapnil Bagve who wanted to pursue engineering amidst financial difficulties. He says "Contribution from the Forbes Marshall team and loan from SHG, of which my mother is a member, enabled me to live my dream. Today, I am an engineer only because of my parent's support and Forbes Marshall's help. I am grateful to their support and I would like to help someone like me to study once I have income of my own."

Support classes and motivational centres for students from the municipal corporation schools have proved to be effective in their academic performances. Added to this is the access to a wide range of books through the School Library Project in the municipal schools and life skills training programmes.

A special project – TARANG (Training for Adolescents on Reproductive Health and Gender) provides training programmes on personality development,



With increased awareness of health, hygiene and legal rights, these women are able to come together, approach the government structures and make sure that their civil rights are protected

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communication skills and other related topics for adolescents. Education on gender issues, health and HIV/AIDS has been an integral part of this project. In effect, the rightly named 'Social Initiative Department' of Forbes Marshall has created avenues for the benefit of those who are yet to be born. All these programmes are done in consultation with the community during the planning, implementing, and monitoring stages.

"Interestingly, other corporates have approached the Social Initiative Department to emulate and replicate such initiatives with long lasting impact. As part of advisory committees in other corporates, members from the department train the staff on education, HIV/AIDS, communication skills, team building and personality

development", adds Bina Joshi.

Networking with different civil society organizations has also added value to the education of the local children. The introduction of Livelihood Advanced Business School (LABS) program of Dr. Reddy's Foundation in Pune has enabled a stable income for the youngsters in the hospitality and service sectors.

"It is not all awareness and skill development centric. Recreation has been crucial in building relationships with other organizations in the locality. One such occasion was the Children's Film Festival organized in November 2010, to commemorate with the National Children's Day. The response from the underprivileged children from the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation area, for whom it was organized, was overwhelming. It is now decided to make this an annual event", says Meghna, Consultant, Department of Social Initiative.

On measuring success, Bina and Meghna speak on one tone. They say, "The good rapport built with the local people, corporation board, and the school board explains our influence in the field. The real social change that we envisage will be seen in the next generation. Appreciably, the involvement of the staff has helped us sustain the efforts over the years."

This explains the ranking of Forbes Marshall as the second best company in employee participation in CSR activities. The company is also the recipient of BG Deshmukh Award instituted by former Union cabinet secretary BG Deshmukh for CSR.

With more than two decades of work with the communities, the team has inculcated 'the responsibility to give' in its staff, the local population and we - the readers!

—Shanmuga Priya R

The Community's Gardener

Orchid Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. is a name to reckon with, not just in the pharma sector, but as it happens, in the community welfare sector as well. The company tries to bring employee participation in its community development work as well. The fact that best illustrates this is that every new employee has to plant a sapling on their very first day at work. Mr. Deepan Bharathi, Senior Manager CSR, talks about the evolution of the Orchid Trust. He also introduces us to Mr. S. Mani who wears many hats in the organization, all in the upper echelons, but for whom the CSR initiative remains his first love.

The company set up its manufacturing unit in SIDCO Industrial Estate, Alathur, Tiruppur Block of Kancheepuram District in 1994. "In 1996, floods destroyed several households in the neighboring settlements and the company went about arranging relief in the form of food supply and temporary shelters. This spontaneous response to address the local needs led to the formation of Orchid Trust in 1998, a full-fledged CSR wing of the company that reaches out to 26 villages in the area surrounding their plant. The Trust was from the beginning equipped with experienced social workers who systematized its activities and spread its arms over five thrust areas: Health; Education; Women and Child Development; Youth; and Infrastructure Development. Since 2010, Tribal Development was added as a new focus area to this list," says Deepan.

Health

A mobile health clinic visits Pattipulam on every Monday and Alathur on every Wednesday for free general health checkup, and transportation is offered to those who are referred to bigger hospitals. An emergency vehicle has been kept at the ready right outside the factory which any local can gain access to in times of need. Awareness camps on gynecology, diabetes, dental, eye care, and HIV/AIDS are regularly conducted, and so are annual health checkups for school children. Financial aid up to Rs. 25,000 is also provided to those who need to undergo major operations.

Education

Tuition centres have been set up in six villages and sponsorships for higher education are also offered to deserving students. The Parent-Teacher Associations of each of the 18 schools are encouraged to identify the best teaching talent in their community to join as teachers in the schools whose salaries are borne by the trust. Personal counseling for adolescents, an exclusive English language trainer, special classes for girls, and overnight stay for boys in the school just before the Board Exams are added features of this program. "Our

schools have taken a tremendous leap in delivering results in the last few years. From a measly 40 per cent of students passing their board exams, today the pass percentage is between 87 to 98 per cent. Credit for this massive change goes to the teachers. Therefore, along with rewarding the highest scoring students every year we also recognize the best teacher and felicitate them in our 'Best Student-Teacher Award Ceremony'" says an enthusiastic Deepan.

Women and Child Welfare

"We needed to keep this as a composite group as the wellbeing of one is directly proportional to that of the other" says Mani. Aside of the medical facilities mentioned above, the trust encourages women to form self-help groups (SHG) and pursue income-generation activities. The trust provides them with training, assists them to identify the product line, and in some cases also helps them find a market. However, this is tedious work and there have been several ups and downs.

"Hand holding is very much necessary in the case of these ventures. One of our groups ran a mobile canteen in a popular tourist spot near Mahabalipuram successfully for about six months. However, after that the group developed a discord and subsequently dissolved. We once secured a deal with a famous hotel chain at whose nearby resort our SHGs would sell their vegetables for a whole year. However, the deal included a fixed price for the vegetables regardless of the subsequent changes in the market price. This led to the group suffering a huge loss at the end of the year. We learnt the lesson the hard way," says Deepan.

"However a tailoring unit has been installed and has been successfully running in the last few years now. Also a paper recycling unit for the community is there in the pipeline which will soon be producing enough for the company's gifting purposes," he adds.

Youth

Deepan recollects the time when a group of youngsters knocked at the gates of Orchid Pharma for work. He says, "They said that they wanted to be employed only by Orchid, but their collegiate degrees were from streams other than Chemistry and other physical sciences. We provided them with career counseling, worked on their profiles, and presented them to various organizations where their services could be utilized. We also trained them, administered mock tests and interviews to prepare them for the job competition outside. Our employability-enhancement initiatives still draw a major crowd".

"We are happy to be giving them the much needed exposure and the encouragement to explore," adds Mani.

"What we are doing is to merely convert the free cattle scheme into something that will be sustainable and also profitable for the villagers."

Tribal Development

There is a small and scattered tribal community called Iruilas in Thiruppur block in Tamil Nadu. The Trust presently extends its educational and health related services to the people of this community as well. The children are provided with free tuition, uniforms, books, and other paraphernalia to meet their scholastic needs.

Infrastructure

Orchid Trust works hand in hand with the government to bring water and electricity to their villages. Good relations with the community and the government are its biggest strengths. The Trust's current ongoing project is in bringing energy security to these villages. Of late, the trust has been lobbying with the newly elected government to collaborate with them and provide bio-gas plants along with the latter's promise of distributing free cattle.

"What we are doing is to merely convert the free cattle scheme into something that will be sustainable and also profitable for the villagers. Just watching people uncover their hidden capability to resolve their own problems is fascinating. We watched it first hand when an entire village came together to de-silt a canal. All they needed was a spark of curiosity," says a visibly excited Mani.

"We also pride in the fact that unlike in urban areas, rural folk have tremendous zeal for applauding the efforts of others. We see that in every child who claps louder and louder each year as they cheer their award-winning class mate. The general ethos is very healthy and innocent. We want to build on that," he adds.

The trust has thus been able to gain many inroads into the community by not being prescriptive but by merely following the needs of the community as expressed by them.

"As a pharmaceutical company, we strive to strengthen the health needs of the human mass and at the same time we envision the overall development of the community, which is the part and parcel of our growth. Germinating from the concept of corporate social responsibility, Orchid has adapted the concept of trans-personal expansion and growth of the community as a whole. The company therefore contributes its best to the community for its multi-dimensional development through Orchid Trust. We trust the potentials of our staff and strive to build the society as a whole."

"Take off your urban lenses periodically and explore rural India; there is limitless scope for exciting work!" concludes Mani.

—Archanaa R.



Bhagwan Shri Ramana Maharishi's conversation with his disciples on varied topics

An aristocratic and distinguished lady visitor from the North accompanied by her Private Secretary arrived at noon, waited a few minutes and asked Maharshi soon after he returned to the hall after lunch:

D.: Maharajji, can we see the dead?

M.: Yes.

D.: Can the yogis show them to us?

M.: Yes. They may. But do not ask me to show them to you. For I cannot.

D.: Do you see them?

M.: Yes, in dreams.

D.: Can we realise the goal through yoga?

M.: Yes.



D.: Have you written on yoga? Are there books on the subject by you?

M.: Yes.

After she left the Master observed: "Did we know our relatives before their birth that we should know them after their death?"

"What is Karma?" asked someone.

M.: That which has already begun to bear fruit is classified as *prarabdha Karma* (past action). That which is in store and will later bear fruit is classified as *sanchita Karma* (accumulated action). This is multifarious like the grain obtained by villagers as barter for cress (greens). Such bartered grain

consists of rice, ragi, barley, etc., some floating on, others sinking in water. Some of it may be good, bad, or indifferent. When the most potent of the multifarious accumulated *karma* begins to bear fruit in the next birth it is called the *prarabdha* of that birth.

When one of the present attendants came the first time to *Bhagavan*, he asked: "What is the way for liberation?" Maharshi replied: "The way already taken leads to liberation."

—Excerpted from Sri Ramana Maharshi teachings

Synergizing social entrepreneurship efforts

A Series on Growing
-Reflections for Deep Change

As the institutionalization processes has begun to speed up and there are myriad amount of small scale social entrepreneurs trying to do their best, collaboration seems to be the one mantra that needs to be chanted if we want to see large scale revolutions. It is a paradox that one of the challenges that social entrepreneurs face is to be able to collaborate. Each of them is busy journeying in their own path that they have no time or energy to join hands. Inability to collaborate and see the bigger picture is one of the reasons, especially in India, why in spite of the large number of institutions working towards bettering this society and empowering individuals, the efforts are not producing the desired outcomes.

The inability to collaborate leaves behind several implications. Do we create heaven or hell for ourselves? The funds are plenty but the sources are limited. With each person looking at what share can be taken from that for furthering one's own vision, the funders also get very cautious and skeptical. It reminds me of this parable.

A group of representatives were sent from earth to see what made hell and heaven. The group first went to hell, where it found everybody suffering, though hell looked a rich place. This surprised the group. It was lunch time in hell and they were puzzled to see that the hell dwellers were looking famished and angry in spite of rich food being served in abundance. On closer observation they realized the hell dwellers had no elbow joints because of which they were unable to bend their arms and eat, though food was available in plenty. So all of them starved



and kept quarrelling with each other.

Then, the representatives went to heaven and found the conditions similar to those in hell. It was dinner time and they rushed to the dining hall. The heaven dwellers looked happy, well-fed and contented. The representatives observed that their arms too were the same as those of the hell dwellers, yet they were not unhappy. The representatives found the dwellers were happy as they realized that the delicious food kept on the table was meant for serving others and not themselves. So they collected enough food from the table and fed each other. All of them got plenty to eat and nobody went hungry. (Sampath, J.M. story 63 Discovery—3rd edition, Insight Publishers, Bangalore, India, 1998)

When the mutual help has to become functional, the vision has to be shared and owned by all. There has to be love and care amongst the people willing to work on realizing and furthering the vision. Each one has their own niche and capabilities. No big work can be achieved by one institution or one group. It requires

several hands. When the people get caught in their own identities, collaboration becomes a tough journey. The melting of the forms can happen with inclusiveness, and when hardening happens the essence of the process is lost.

The focus points for value adding collaboration emerges from:

- the inner trust in oneself and the grounding of the principles within self
- an ability to continuously learn and obtain clarity on values
- focus on principles than forms of expression of the principles
- need for introspection and reflection with a need to grow and evolve
- focus on understanding and responding to context from what is needed by the context than what one needs from the context
- strong conviction and clarity on one's being and way of functioning based on the principles that one stands by
- deep awareness of one's ego and being humble to include than defend
- willing to be non judgmental and be in the flow to make things happen
- deep awareness of one's own purpose in life and its connection to the institutional vision
- deep anchorage in a sense of gratitude and giving leading to paying forward what one receives

The challenges to collaboration comes from selfishness; focus on short sighted gains; essence differences; gap in intention and action; judgmental attitude;

disrespect and low conviction in the path chosen. The nature of collaboration is experienced when learning is easy and allows dissemination of best ways of doing things from one group to another. Every member coming into the group will feel trust, giving, acceptance, respect and regard for who they are irrespective of the inner package they are made of. There is a need that is created to support each other and make each person contributive to the vision. They experience the openness to explore, learn from each other and grow to realize the larger vision.

"The giver and the taker are equally important, for neither can exist without the other. One needs the other for one's own fulfillment" (pg 119, Inner Realities by J.M.Sampath, Insight publishers, 2003)

Points for Reflection:

- How aware of the larger vision that I am a part of and how much is it the focus in my decisions?
- What are my inner challenges in collaboration and how do I deal with each of them?
- What is extent of time and methodology I use in aligning myself and my team with the larger vision?
- How do I catch myself becoming judgmental and form centered in my collaborative spaces?
- What evaluation do I use to continue to assess myself and my ability to collaborate to achieve the larger vision?

—J.M.Sampath & Kalpana Sampath

The Rainbow Effect



In a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in our businesses, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence.”
—Jamsetji N Tata, Founder, TATA Group

The time was the early 1990s and the occasion was gathering of industrialists called by India’s Prime Minister, Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Representing the Tata group were Chairman Ratan Tata and Dr. J.J Irani, Managing director of Tata Steel. “The Prime Minister proposed that we business people set aside one per cent of our net profit for community development projects, totally unconnected to the workers and industry that any of us was involved with,” recalls Dr. Irani. “Mr Tata and I looked at each other; we didn’t make any comment. Later, we drew up a chart that quantified Tata Steel’s contribution on Sri Rao’s scale. We discovered that, over a ten year period, the company had been dedicating between 3 and 20 per cent of its profits to social development causes. In the years since, depending on profit margins, the figure has continued to vacillate within this band.”

The Tata Steel example is not an anomaly for a Tata company. If there is one attribute common to every Tata enterprise, it has to be the time, effort, and resources each of them devotes to the wide spectrum of initiatives that come under the canopy of community development. The money numbers are staggering: by a rough estimate the Tata group as a whole, through its trusts and its companies spends about 30 per cent of its profits after tax (PAT) on social-upliftment programmes.



The Tata culture in this critical segment of the overall corporate sustainability matrix—inclusive of working for the benefit of the communities in which they operate, building India’s

capabilities in science and technology, supporting art and sport—springs from an ingrained sense of giving back to society. “This is a matter of principle for us, it is in our bloodstream,” says Dr. Irani “and it isn’t something we like to shout about. Some people consider social responsibility as an additional cost; we don’t. We see it as part of an essential cost of business,

as much as land, power, raw materials, and employees.” The Tata tradition in community development has since the earliest days of the group’s history, been defined by its core values. It never was charity for its own sake, or as the group founder Jamsetji Tata puts it, “patchwork philanthropy”.

Reinforcing the implicit beliefs the group brings to its mission of sustainable development is an explicit set of structures, embodied most notably by the Tata Council for Community Initiatives (TCCI). The TCCI lends structure to the Tata group’s approach of sustainable development while driving its community engagement and improvement programmes.

“Sustainability is of fundamental importance”, says Kishor Chaukar, the Chairman of the TCCI. “I don’t believe charity makes a substantial impact on society. All that you are doing is satisfying the mendicant mentality. The real

contribution comes when communities are enabled in a manner that has a sustained developmental impact. That way you empower people, educate them, give them instruments of income, a feeling of self-respect and dignity, a reason to live,” he explains.

Established in 1994, the TCCI brings together good practices within the Tata group in the sphere of corporate sustainability. Its charter is extensive, embracing a wide spectrum ranging from building communities and promoting inclusive growth, creating a sustainable environment, promoting human development to co-creating sustainable value. The TCCI is a nodal agency of the group and operates through a participatory network which includes chief executive officers of all Tata companies.

The TCCI agenda is largely driven by employees. Tata executives, facilitators and volunteers provide impetus to the TCCI network through their conviction, dedication and involvement in the work that is undertaken. “The TCCI encourages a bottom-up form of engagement and assists companies to help evolve their own direction and opportunities to foster this work more systematically. There is no formal mandate of any kind hoping it would also largely be driven by the employees who think responsibly, initiate, and do this work,” says Anant G Nadkarni,

Vice President, Group Corporate Sustainability.

The TCCI has, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (India), crafted the Tata Index for Sustainable Human Development - a pioneering effort aimed at directing, measuring and enhancing the community work that Tata enterprises undertake. The Index provides guidelines for Tata companies looking to fulfill their social responsibilities.

“Commitment to the welfare of the communities our companies serve has been a key tenet of the Tata Group. It was recognition of the need to optimise the combined power of Tata companies to serve the communities in which they operate, that led to the creation of the TCCI over a decade ago. The intention was that TCCI would institutionalise the community development work of Tata companies and catalyse the development of thrust areas to give a greater focus to the social work of the companies, so that the impact of their community work is larger than what individual companies could accomplish.”, says Ratan. N. Tata, Chairman, Tata Sons.

The panoply of community development endeavours undertaken by Tata companies has touched, and changed, many lives. May the rainbow effect spread to many more companies across the globe!

—Sourced by Marie Banu from TCCI and other Tata Publications



Anant G Nadkarni

Daringly DIFFERENT

J K Tripathy, I.P.S shares with **Marie Banu** his views on how NGOs and Police could work together to bring about change in the society

J.K. Tripathy, IPS took proactive policing to a new level by listening to peoples' needs and expectations. An IPS officer from the 1985 batch, he received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in 2008. He is also the recipient of the International Community Policing Award conferred by the International Association of Chiefs of Police at Toronto, Canada in 2001, and also a Gold Medal for 'Innovations in Governance' at Glasgow, U.K. by the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management in 2002.

He received this award for introducing an innovative 'Community Policing Module' in Trichy where he served as the Police Commissioner. He had also launched a 'Slum Adoption Programme' in which orphans, drop-outs, children mostly from broken families, ex-convicts, etc., were provided an opportunity to go to school or take up vocational courses in order to improve their employability, and deter them from being driven to delinquency.

J.K. Tripathy, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Chennai, shares with Marie Banu his views on how Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Police could work together to bring about change in the society.

You have received an International award for introducing community policing at Trichy. How can this model be replicated in Chennai?

I did not win this award. It was our team! This system gave good results in terms of controlling crimes and enhancing police performance in all

parameters by empowering the citizens and constabulary, and to fight crimes of all types thus improving police image. Definitely, this has to be scaled up.

Your first case as Chennai Police Commissioner was solving the case of kidnap of a three-year-old girl from the Marina. How can parents and the community be precautionous of such instances in future?

Parents are cautious. What we need to do is to educate the child—both in school and at home. They should be told what to do and what they should not do. It is not only about their safety, but also against any abuse.

Parents play a very important role. When they go out or when they keep the child in somebody else's care, they should be doubly sure about it. We offer to conduct antecedent verification of the domestic helps they employ, but they should be absolutely careful while giving custody of their child to somebody or while taking them out.

On our part, we are taking strong action against those who indulge in kidnapping children for the purpose of illegal adoption or subject them to any kind of abuse.

There are many crimes happening in the city. Which of them do you think is the most challenging to curb?

First of all, I do not know how to qualify

'many', while comparing the present crime rate with the previous and the corresponding period, as well as with the crime scenario in other metros.

I meet around 100 people every day. I very rarely come across someone who say, "I am a victim of an offence, and the police did not register my case". This implies that police are registering complaints and statistics can be trusted. Chennai is the safest amongst all metros, and we are striving to make it 'still safer' by effectively handling snatchings.

I see crimes as a socio-psychic problem. As long as poverty, unemployment, greed, and other diversions exist, the society will be burdened with this menace. However, we are equal to the task with the active cooperation of the NGOs and the community.

Which are the areas you think NGOs and police could work together to bring about change in our society?

For us, in every scheme of things, we can enlist NGO participation. NGOs can play a vital role in empowerment of the community and in our fight against crimes. They can support our slum adoption programmes, Boys Clubs, rehabilitation of criminals, etc. We have a women help line through which we try and rehabilitate the women victims through NGOs. Overall, they can create awareness on various issues concerning the people while acting as a bridge between us and the

community. Depending on their level of commitment and capabilities, it is for the police to network with NGOs and enlist their support.

As a police officer, one is expected to be available 24x7. How do you overcome stress?

I do not get stressed at all. I just keep working through.

I am missing my games, but this is an initial job demand. There might be some element of de-stressing while playing, but it is not a soul war. I have held several positions and I have enjoyed each of them thoroughly.

Your advice for youth, who aspire to join the police?

I really have a dream for the youth to grow up as good and responsible citizens, upholding ethical and democratic values. If some of them wish to join the Police, they are welcome. Whichever field they are, let them not be self centric. They should always be asking themselves—"What are we giving back to the society?"

Editorial
Latha Suresh
Marie Banu



Photo: Marie Banu