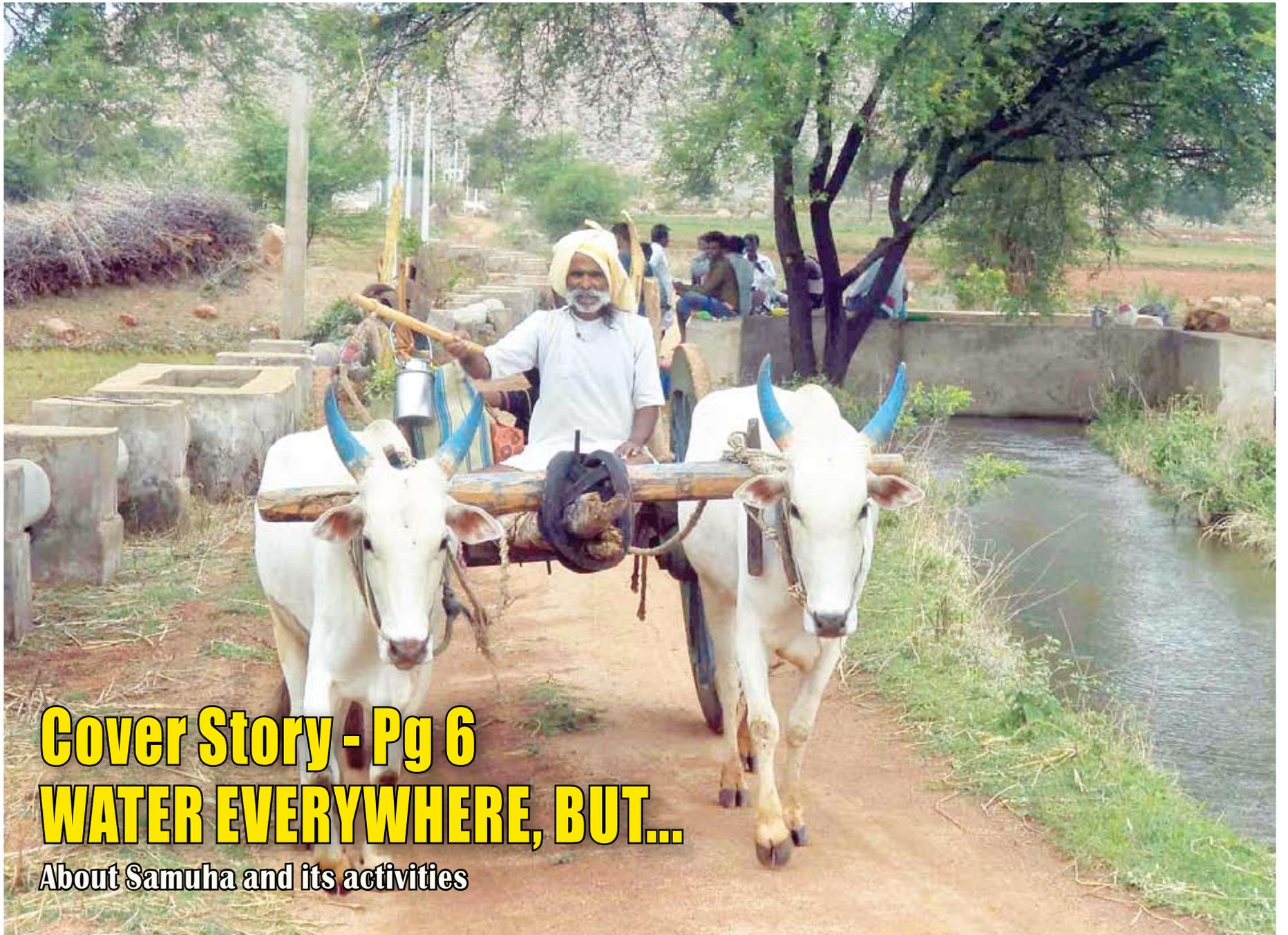


Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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Cover Story - Pg 6 WATER EVERYWHERE, BUT...

About Samuha and its activities



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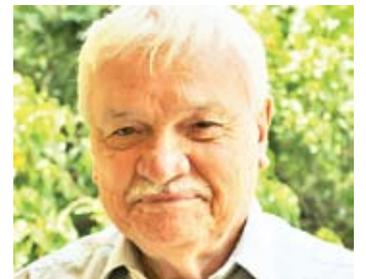
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Radha Madhav's efforts towards
sustainable agriculture



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About Gift Your Organ
Foundation in Bengaluru



Chit Chat Pg 12

**"Communicate or Die.
So be it!"**
An exclusive interview with
Murray Culshaw

From the Editor

Dear Friend,

Our ancient religious texts and epics give a good insight into the water storage and conservation systems that prevailed in those days.

Clean water scarcity has become a major issue in India as well as other countries affecting people's lives in several ways. The total quantity of water available on the globe is the same as it was 2000 years ago. It is important to appreciate the fact that only three per cent of the world's water is fresh and roughly one-third of it is inaccessible. The rest is very unevenly distributed and the available supplies are increasingly contaminated with wastes and pollution from industry, agriculture and households.

There are two extremes in India. The nation goes without water or there is heavy rain resulting in flood. In many regions of India, people have to travel long distances to get drinking and cooking water. On the other hand, people are wasting more water than their daily requirement. According to a survey conducted by UN, it has been found that girls in Rajasthan do not attend school as they have to go long distances to fetch water for their daily needs.

Over the years, increasing population, growing industrialisation, expanding agriculture and rising standards of living have pushed up the demand for water. Efforts have been made to collect water by building dams and reservoirs and digging wells; some countries have also tried to recycle and desalinate water.

Water conservation has become the need of the day. The idea of ground water recharging by harvesting rainwater is gaining importance in many cities. However, there is a growing realisation that there are limits to 'finding more water' and we need to know the amount of water we can reasonably expect to tap and also learn to use it more efficiently.

It is the human nature that we value things only when it is in short supply. As such we appreciate the value of water once the lakes, rivers, reservoirs, ponds, and wells run dry. Conversations Today lauds Samuha who works towards conservation and restoration of water bodies. We hope their story inspires many more organisations to join them in this endeavour.

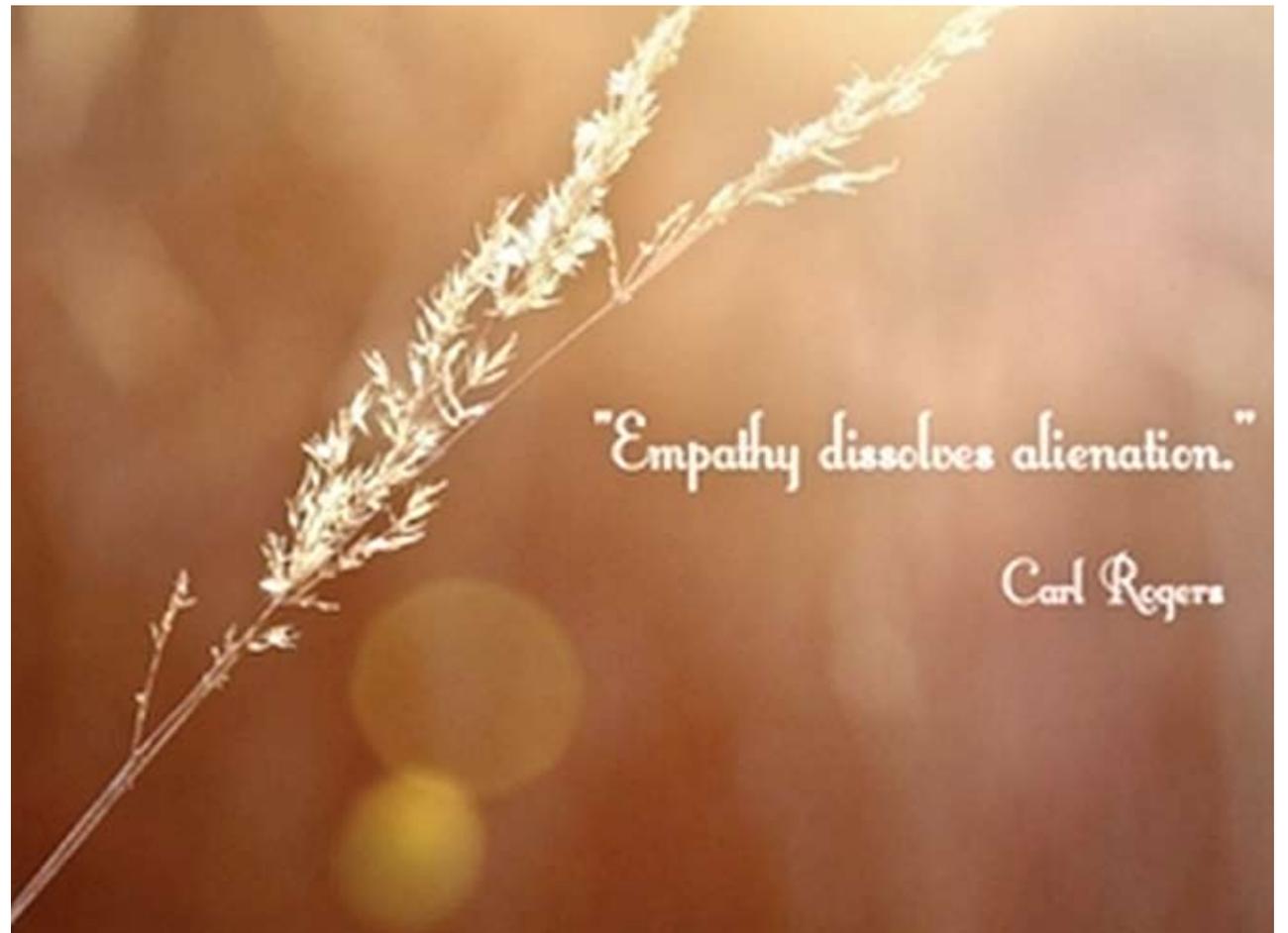
Let us join hands for water conservation!

—Marie Banu

Caution or Compassion

"Empathy, of course, is a special kind of understanding. It's not an understanding of the head where we just mentally understand what another person says. It's something far deeper and more precious than that. Empathic connection is an understanding of the heart in which we see the beauty in the other person, the divine energy in the other person, the life that's alive in them."

—Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*



In a recent discussion with a friend, I got to know that he had a 'rough' discussion with a women colleague who broke down in a meeting after he commented on her work. I heard my friend say, "After that, I became a bit cautious while talking to her." At that moment it struck me how our habit to become cautious blocks compassion, separating us from the other.

I consider Self Empathy as the first step to experience compassion. Lack of self-empathy makes us cautious about our own feelings, resulting in mental chatter. We then project it to the outside world in multiple ways.

Empathy is a respectful

understanding of what others are feeling. It is: "I feel your feelings." Normally, instead of empathy, we often have a strong urge to give advice. Empathy, however, calls upon us to empty our mind and listen to others with our whole being, being fully present to what is alive in the moment. It is a divine energy that connects us beyond thought-level connection that we regularly establish for ourselves with others. Self-empathy is the same process, now the "other" replaced with oneself.

Self-empathy results in an inner calmness and centeredness, allowing us to be present to the current moment.

The way to practice self-empathy is to connect to our feelings and unmet needs and imagine that our needs are met. On doing so our feelings shift, opening us to new possibilities that we were previously blocking with judgment and expectations. From this place, we can then be available to the world with the 'emptiness in our mind' and 'openness in our heart'.

Here is the start of compassion. When we are transformed within us, we can step out of the "enemy images" (described by Marshall Rosenberg) and perceive the moment, disregarding the past that continues to keep us away from life.

Yours Energetically

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

Sustaining Agriculture

Radha Madhav is very passionate about sustainable agriculture and wishes to integrate natural methods into the current system of farming



In spite of being the mainstay of Indian economy, agriculture has not received the attention it requires. It is no longer an attractive option for farmers themselves. The scale of footloose migrations and the unparalleled burden on the farmers time and again indicate the need for sustainable agriculture. Mr Radha Madhav is very passionate about sustainable agriculture and wishes to integrate natural methods into the current system of farming. Having worked in the corporate and government sector, he always favours strategies that emerge from experience and insights, backed by a detailed analysis than the conventional decision making that is being followed.

A post graduate in Agriculture and Social Work, he has always wanted to work for farmers and the development of rural population. "This is not just about agriculture, it covers a whole gamut of human rights issues like child labour, farm labour rights, farm safety, equity in distribution of farm income, promotion of technical aspects which the farmers must adopt only after studying the suitability in their farms and many others," he reminds us, adding that a major challenge faced in the knowledge economy of agriculture is the farmers' attitude of following what the neighbouring farmer does.

Soon after post-graduation, Madhav joined Dr Reddy's Lab, a pharmaceutical company. He was part of the team that researched about plants capable of treating water and the recycling of waste water. After about six years in research and as a trainer and auditor on safety, health and environment systems at a private company, he joined the Government of Andhra Pradesh as an Agriculture Officer. Driven by the desire to work with the farmers, he moved to rural locations while promoting agriculture extension activities that focused on farmers as 'Adarsh Farmers'. More than an experience, this

tenure turned out to be inspiring for Madhav. "Every day was a new learning experience with the farmers. Their enthusiasm to feed the nation has to be supported by other services. I saw the reality they faced," says Madhav who believes that his stint as an Agriculture Officer has improved his personal skills. "Following a constructive approach in dealing with issues is critical. You not only begin to negotiate your stand confidently, but also introspect decisions from all perspectives," he adds.

He dealt with farmers working on ten thousand acres in more than ten villages. Identifying progressive farmers was the initial step that allowed officials like him make an entry into the communities. Thereafter, the farmers were introduced to new technologies, trained on efficient farm practices, exposed to platforms where they could learn collectively, share best practices and leaders were identified to promote new programmes. His initiative on farmer clubs in a remote village is still consistent and empowering farmers to be self dependent from accessing knowledge to converting them to actions.

With experience, Madhav learned the difference between corporate and government sectors. While the former was equipped with resources, expertise that favoured the introduction and scaling of new initiatives, the latter lacked acknowledgement, resources and man power remained a big constraint. After about six years with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, it was time to move back to the corporate sector to explore what more could be done in agriculture. Madhav joined Monsanto as the Human Rights Lead and also took charge of the CSR & Sustainability initiatives of the company. Protecting farm labour rights was the major focus and he got to engage with more than thirty thousand farmers every year. He has worked across the country in

states like Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Rajasthan. "Our primary task was to ensure that there was no child labour on the farms, farm labour including women workers were given fair treatment i.e. ensuring fair compensation, preventing discrimination and harassment, and that all farmers received adequate compensation. Equally important was the responsibility of providing safe and conducive atmosphere in the farms, which called for the play of multiple factors," explains Madhav, lamenting the lack of importance given to farm safety in the country.

Yearning for a change in the sector and backed by experience with the government and corporate companies, he dreamt of being more professional in dealing with NGOs in Human Rights role and also initiate an informal network of farmer caring champions by starting his own organisation to work further for the farmers. Suggested by a colleague, he joined the SEOP programme at CSIM Hyderabad. Adhering to a professional approach in development interventions is a challenge in itself and the course had helped him understand the layers of systemic interactions with farmers. The learnings on developing programme implementation frameworks, art of hand holding communities and the art of researching communities, he says, made it easier for him to play a key role in managing the Human Rights and CSR programmes at Monsanto and a champion of the Monsanto Global Sustainability Network. "I was able to look at the implementation of CSR programmes on water harvesting, sanitation, sustainable agriculture, farm management and women empowerment from the beneficiaries' side. With this holistic understanding, I could play an efficient role in hand holding the farmers and communities," says Madhav who also mentors similar programmes

across Asia and Africa.

Madhav's responsibilities were not just restricted towards the farms and farmers. He and his team with NGO partners also visited farmers' families and counselled them on farm safety, implications of child labour and their importance in maintaining the country's food security by sustaining natural resources. Fully conscious of the benefits sustainable agriculture can bring in, he recently undertook visits to model villages like Ralegaon Siddhi and disseminated best practices among the farmer communities, also creating platforms where farmers from different regions/communities came together to share and learn from each other. Aware of the larger picture, he recommends that all knowledge and expertise is documented in simple language and published, so that it can be availed by everyone. "A great share of knowledge in agriculture is not reaching farmers. They have immense local knowledge, but are carried away by the information that reaches them from other external sources. They are still not aware of best practices and market opportunities. They are helpless," he explains.

Reiterating that farmers and agriculture are his areas of interest, he also acknowledges the potential of knowledge transfer in agriculture. "Our farmers were into subsistence farming, but were forced to take on an entrepreneurial role with increasing population. However, they were not equipped with the requisite support services. Intervention at this level can be instrumental in moving towards sustainable agriculture," he signs off.

Visibly excited about the scope of working with the farmers, Madhav continues to prepare himself for this role in his dream of building an informal network of farmer caring champions to further spread best practices for sustaining agriculture.

—Shanmuga Priya.T

Inspiring Conversations with Shri Ramana Maharishi

D.: Is not what Gandhiji describes, the state in which thoughts themselves become foreign?

M.: Yes, It is only after the rise of the 'I' thought that all other thoughts arise. The world is seen after you have felt "I am". The 'I-thought' and all other thoughts had vanished for him.

D.: Then the body-sense must be absent in that state.

M.: The body-sense also is a thought whereas he describes the state in which "thoughts do not come".

D.: He also says, "It takes no effort to stop thinking".

M.: Of course no effort is necessary to stop thoughts whereas one is necessary for bringing about thoughts.

D.: We are trying to stop thoughts. Gandhiji also says that thought is an obstacle to God's guidance. So it is the natural state. Though natural, yet how difficult to realise. They say that *sadhanas* are necessary and also that they are obstacles. We get confused.

M.: *Sadhanas* are needed so long as one has not realised it. They are for putting an end to obstacles. Finally there comes a stage when a person feels helpless notwithstanding the *sadhanas*. He is unable to pursue the much-cherished *sadhana* also. It is then that God's Power is realised. The Self reveals itself.

D.: If the state is natural, why does it not overcome the unnatural phases and assert itself over the rest?

M.: Is there anything besides that? Does anyone see anything besides the Self? One is always aware of the Self. So It is always Itself.

D.: It is said, because It shines forth, It is directly perceived. I understand from it that It becomes *pratyaksha* (directly perceived), because It is *pradeepta* (shining). Since it is not realised by us, I take it to be not shining. It is only

pradeepta (shining), and hence admits of obstacles and goes under them. If the *atma* becomes *prakarshena deepta*, (very shining) it will shine over the rest. So it seems to be necessary to make it shine more.

M.: How can it be so? The *Atma* cannot be dull at one moment and blazing at another. It is unchanging and uniform.

D.: But *Chudala* says to *Sikhidhvaja* that she simply helped to trim the wick.

M.: That refers to *nididhyasana*. By *sravana*, Knowledge dawns. That is the flame. By *manana*, the Knowledge is not allowed to vanish. Just as the flame is protected by a wind-screen, so the other thoughts are not allowed to overwhelm the right knowledge. By *nididhyasana*, the flame is kept up to burn bright by trimming the wick. Whenever other thoughts arise, the mind is turned inward to the light of true knowledge.

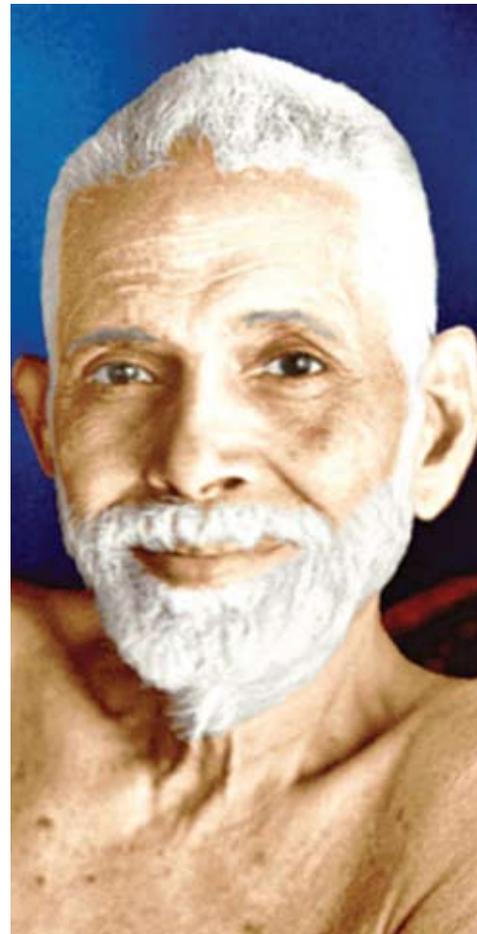
When this becomes natural, it is *samadhi*. The enquiry "Who am I?" is the *sravana*. The ascertainment of the true import of 'I' is the *manana*. The practical application on each occasion is *nididhyasana*. Being as 'I' is *samadhi*.

D.: Although we have heard it so often and so constantly yet we are unable to put the teaching into practise successfully. It must be due to weakness of mind. Is it possible that one's age is a bar?

M.: The mind is commonly said to be strong if it can think furiously. But here the mind is strong if it is free from thoughts. The yogis say that realisation can be had only before the age of thirty, but not the *jnanis*. For *jnana* does not cease to exist with age.

It is true that in the *Yoga Vasishta*, *Vasishta* says to Rama in the *Vairagya Prakarana* "You have this dispassion in your youth. It is admirable." But he did not say that *jnana* cannot be had in old age. There is nothing to prevent it in old age.

The *sadhak* must remain as the Self. If he cannot do so, he must ascertain the true meaning of the 'I' and constantly revert to



it whenever other thoughts arise. That is the practice.

Some say that one must know the 'tat' because the idea of the world constantly arises to deflect the mind. If the Reality behind it is first ascertained it will be found to be Brahman. The '*tvam*' is understood later. It is the *jiva*. Finally there will be *jivabrahmaikya* (union of the two).

But why all this? Can the world exist apart from the Self? The 'I' is always Brahman. Its identity need not be established by logic and practice. It is enough that one realises the Self. It is always the Brahman.

According to the other school, *nididhyasana* will be the thought *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). That is diversion of thought to Brahman. No diversion should be allowed. Know the Self and there is an end of it.

No long process is necessary to know the Self. Is it to be pointed out by another? Does not everyone know that he exists? Even in utter darkness when he cannot see his hand, he answers a call and says "I am here".

D.: But that 'I' is the ego or the 'I-thought' and it is not the Absolute Self that answers the call or is otherwise aware of oneself.

M.: Even the ego can become aware of itself in the absence of light, sight, etc. Much more so should be the Pure Light of the Self.

I am saying that the Self is self-evident. One need not discuss the *tattvas* to find the Self. Some say there are twenty-four *tattvas*, others more and so on. Should we know the *tattvas*, before we admit the existence of the Self? The *sastras* dilate upon them in order to point out that the Self is untouched by them. But for the seeker he can straightaway admit the Self and try to be That, without having recourse to the study of the *tattvas*.

D.: Gandhiji adhered to *satya* (Truth) so long and won realisation of the Self.

M.: What is *satya* except the Self? *Satya* is that which is made up of *sat*. Again *sat* is nothing but the Self. So Gandhiji's *satya* is only the Self.

Each one knows the Self but is yet ignorant. The person is enabled to realise only after hearing the *mahavakya*. Hence the Upanishadic text is the eternal Truth to which everyone who has realised owes his experience. After hearing the Self to be the Brahman the person finds the true import of the Self and reverts to it whenever he is diverted from it. Here is the whole process of Realisation.

—Source: Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

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.

For more information, please contact Ms. Latha Suresh, Director @ 92822 05123 or visit www.san-india.org.

Philanthropy

Philanthropy is generally bequeathing or giving away one's wealth in part or whole towards the causes for which the Philanthropist has inclination, emotional attachment or a flair to do. Philanthropy in terms of funds will sustain activities liked by the Philanthropist or that is already being done by organisations.

The fund will be one which is sustained either directly or indirectly through the interest earned by the fund for the purpose of disbursement.

Social Philanthropy, according to me, is one which is directly attached towards Social Entrepreneurship and social needs. By Social needs, I mean the needs of the society, particularly for the downtrodden or unfortunate sections of society who are not able to help themselves or not being helped by others, but need help at all stages of livelihood in order to be capable of living with honour, earn a living, pursue their work in society with equal status, and live happily. This is the definition of social philanthropy.

Philanthropy is generally considered in terms of money or bequeathing, however it can also be in kind. It can be participation—emotional and material by the philanthropist; he can devote his time, energy, and presence in these activities as it adds flavour and strengths to these activities. Such a philanthropist will be actually able to experience what is happening and therefore be satisfied in terms of outreach and whether what is happening is according to his inclination, desires and expectations.

Participation will also give him opportunities to course correct his ideas on what is social change and how it is to be effectuated with least employment and resources. Therefore, he will be able to share his experiences either through print media or lecture series with other budding social entrepreneurs and other social philanthropists. Therefore, it will have a spread effect.

Philanthropists should become a breed which come together. I have a dream that they will become bequeathers and they will allow well before their life time, even during their youth, certain part of their earnings be dedicated to social philanthropy and also certain percentage of their earnings at the time of their demise will be allocated and given to social causes. He or she will also indicate the causes that are closer to his heart so that the Bequeather's Trust will be able to direct these funds to such activities so that his soul will really rest in peace.

For this, he has to convince his family during his lifetime about how social bequeathing or bequeathing of the wealth for social causes is a part of the obligation of the family to the society. It is not only him alone, but the other family members who should also agree totally - mentally as well as emotionally - that this cause should be served in a sustainable manner.

That is the sense of bequeathing itself. It is a legal application that our funds should go outside the family entitlements and towards the societal entitlements. It will slowly become an acceptable pattern in the family that the earning member in the

“There are three arms for social philanthropy—the philanthropists; the government which enables, but does not have a mission to implement; and the NGOs who have a dedicated source to implement, but do not have the wealth.”

family has a right to bequeath and they will honour it. When honouring is done, their respect in the society automatically goes up. Therefore, they will more and more seek to do this than abhor it.

I would say that in the sense of bequeathing and philanthropy, the two outstanding people who have spent a great portion of their wealth while they are active and involved are: Premji of Wipro and Shiv Nadar of Datamatics who is running SSN college of Engineering. SSN College is a very good institution and has arisen out of his desire to give away his wealth for sustainable education.

Similarly, Azim Premji of Wipro has concentrated on that part of the society which needs the most, the rural children and their education. These are the areas which are unseen, or where anybody has judged the enormity of the issue. He has done enormous work in Orissa and Karnataka and is now slowly spreading his intervention in other states. I adore him for his courage, his dedication and his actual doing in all grounds. Finally, he is very active and not at the end of his journey leaving this task for someone else to handle.

Social Philanthropy should be taught as a social science in schools and colleges. Eminent personalities who are practitioners should be invited to talk to these students so that it makes an effective impression in their mind at a time when they are planning their career.

Philanthropy should be encouraged by appealing to people who are in a position to part with their wealth for the social philanthropical cause. For them to do it willingly, they should understand why they are doing it, what is the significance, how many are helped, what is the quantum of help,

what is the impact on social philanthropy, how they can ensure that it will be spent for the right cause and not wasted away on administration expenses.

Tax benefits offered by the government is only to encourage the philanthropists in an indirect manner, and benefit NGOs. There are three arms for social philanthropy—the philanthropists; the government which enables, but does not have a mission to implement; and the NGOs who have a dedicated source to implement, but do not have the wealth. The NGOs should invite the philanthropists to see the work they are doing so that they are happy to see the way in which their money is spent.

My vision for future India in terms of philanthropy being taken by every household and by every economically well doing person is to bequeath for a Trust. There should be several Bequeather Trusts with a wide variety of approaches on where to invest money for promoting social causes, particularly reducing social inequality. It can be

either focus upon poverty or education, or disability, or any other form of inequality.

In order to bring in equality into the society, they should ensure that the person receiving the help does not feel that he has been offered charity, but instead he deserved the help. The form of bequeather trust thereby becomes impersonal.

To manage the funds received by philanthropists, we need Social Entrepreneurs heading and running the NGOs who will be able to receive the Bequeather's Trust money and apply it to such causes where they have the inclination to do, thereby satisfying the giver and the taker.

There is a saying: A man's desire is to get and get; get and give; give and get; and give and give. The last stage he reaches would be sooner the better, because when you give and give more will flow in. Give and give is a state of mind which will support all these things.

Giving is a philosophy strengthened by philanthropy. It could be one rupee or a million rupees, but strengthens the giver.

Giving through an NGO gives a belief that the social entrepreneur will equitably distribute, conserve, and create an impact of what is expected of it. The taker will also feel that he is getting help from a social entrepreneur and not from the money giver directly.

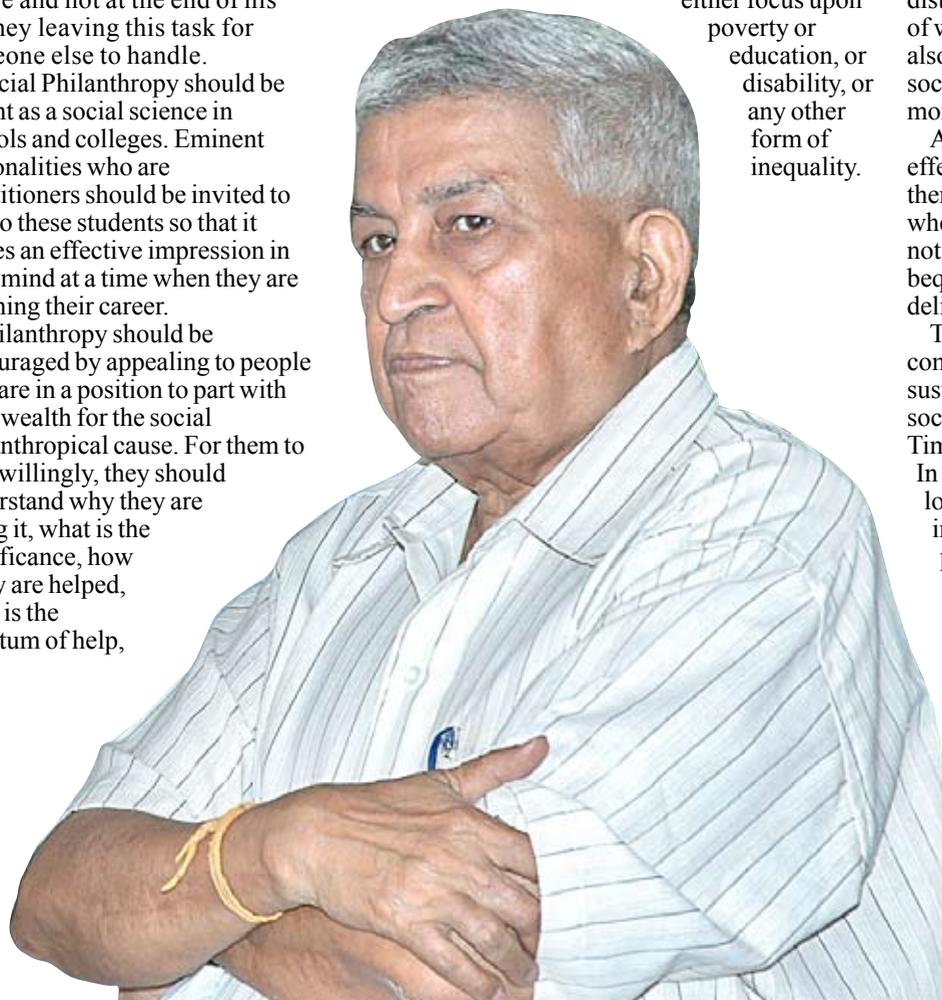
As a Philanthropist, and watching the effect of philanthropy on social causes, there are three main elements—cause, wherewithal to support the cause (I will not call this money as it is with the bequeathers), and the people who will deliver it, i.e. the social entrepreneur.

The lesson that I learnt is that when it comes to doing a good cause, make it sustainable. There is an inadequacy of social entrepreneurs who devote their Time, Talent, and Touch to use Treasure. In the four Ts—Treasure can be built or located, but we need a person with an inclination to be able to deliver it to right people at the right time and for the right cause. There is a need to follow it up, nurse it, and grow it. That is the essence of social entrepreneurship.

CSIM is one organisation that promotes social entrepreneurship, but there is a need for replication. We need one social entrepreneurship creation in every place with people who are willing to give the 3 Ts.

We need more number of social entrepreneurs than engineers or doctors, this gap is my concern.

—P.N. Devarajan



Water everywhere, but...

Samuha has been working in North Karnataka's Raichur district since 1987. Its guiding philosophy has been to "Improve the Quality of Life of Vulnerable People"

Water shortage, drought, long dry spells. With climate change rearing its ugly head in the last decade, there has been much spoken about and debated on what kind of impact Climate Change can have on a city's water supply. Take Chennai, for instance. It saw historic rainfall and flooding in late 2015, to the point of turning into a serious disaster. Yet today, it is a city that could well be bracing for an acute water shortage in the summer. Bangalore for that matter is expected to encounter a near-apocalyptic water shortage in the next decade — one that could render the city near unliveable. In times like these, serious introspection into water conservation and management is the need of the hour. Karnataka-based NGO, Samuha has its sights set on just that.

Samuha has been working in North Karnataka's Raichur district since 1987. Ever since the organisation began at Raichur's Deodurg Taluk, its guiding philosophy has been to "Improve the Quality of Life of Vulnerable People". Over time, however, the group has realized that one of the key areas of focus to achieve this mission, is through water conservation and management. That is precisely why the last few years have seen Samuha focus on water conservation in specific areas like irrigation, lake conservation and the enhancement of overall water quality.

"We received a grant from Hindustan Unilever Limited to look at water conservation and management in flood irrigated and canal irrigated paddy cultivation," explains T Pradeep, Secretary, Samuha, retracing how the organisation took on the mission of water conservation and its research, on a war-footing. Pradeep goes on to explain how the organisation's long-term goal is saving a whopping 179 billion litres of water in five years. "In the first year alone, we were able to save nearly 3.1 billion litres." Not happy to rest on these laurels just yet, Pradeep is more than willing to push the envelope of water

conservation and research. "The real question is: why can't we save 10 trillion litres of water?" he adds. To help find answers for questions like these, Samuha has set up Water Pressure, as a centre for water enquiries.

"A key area that we are currently studying is to do with the use of excess water in irrigation," explains Pradeep, "Farmers often believe that since water is good for the plants, excess can only be better. Of course it isn't, since excess water makes plants more vulnerable to pest infestation."

As part of the centre's work with water conservation, Climate Change is also an issue that Water Pressure is exploring,

especially in areas of climate adaptation.

"Our partnership with the Hindustan Unilever Foundation has allowed us to understand the criticality of water to adaptation. Their support is allowing us to focus on field innovations: Water-centric Sustainable Development Goals, water monitoring technology, WaterSmart Rice, Community Water Credits, amongst others," says Pradeep.

Water Pressure is also trying to understand waste water as a resource. Bengaluru receives around 1000 MLD (million litres/day) as Cauvery water. 80% of this flows back into the Dakshina Pinakini as sewage. The Dakshina Pinakini then flows into Tamil Nadu as the Ponnaiyar river before draining into the Bay of Bengal near Cuddalore. If all this water could undergo secondary and tertiary treatments, that 800 MLD would be a critical resource for communities and farmers in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. For people squeamish about the thought of treated sewage water as potable water, Pradeep reminds them: "the cool, clean water that flows of London's kitchen taps is treated water from the Thames."

Says Pradeep, "It is important to understand that sewage water is not bad; untreated sewage water is bad." It's ideas like this that Samuha will look to bank on, in its effort and mission to achieving optimum water conservation and improvement of water quality.

Most of the work that Samuha does with water is born out of a singular acknowledgement: that water is central to growth. It is with this understanding that Friends of Lakes, Pradeep says, could also consider taking its programme to Chennai — another city that has long-suffered the scourge of water shortage.

Samuha's twin targets of saving 179-billion litres in paddy cultivation, and influencing 10 trillion litres of water savings and quality will see SAMUHA focus more and more on Water for Life and Water for Livelihoods in its near future. It will be exciting to observe how achievements under these twin tracks are notched up at a time when urban and rural water shortages have become an issue hotly debated across the country.



6 *It is important to understand that sewage water is not bad; untreated sewage water is bad.*



Who will question the relentless pursuit of growth?

At a recent conference on sustainable development, the Group Head of Sustainability at IKEA, Steve Howard, said the consumer in the West had reached ‘peak stuff’ including ‘peak furnishings and peak curtains’. A controversial statement for someone who works for one of the world’s largest furniture retailers. Mr. Howard was quick to add that this new reality did not stand in the way of IKEA’s target of doubling sales by 2020. The solution – IKEA would churn out more environment friendly products that helped consumers make better choices, or what Mr. Howard, referred to as the ‘circular IKEA’, where repair and recycling are served up as part of one big happy buying cycle. In other words, Western consumers who had hit peak stuff could be nudged to buy more so long as it came with a ‘green’ Kool-Aid to wash down the guilt!

Maybe Mr. Howard was being politically correct or maybe he truly believes that these two seemingly conflicting realities can and should co-exist, but a question worth investigating is whether sustainability within companies will always have to bow at the altar of growth? Can sustainability chiefs steer their bosses away from chasing higher growth targets without risking their jobs or being cast aside as dreamers? Because at some point, no matter how green your stuff is, it’s still ‘stuff’, and more stuff, necessarily means more drain on finite resources, more energy consumption, more waste and more of the same unsustainable behaviour loops.

But is there really a world outside growth for modern day organisations, beholden as they are to shareholder and investor interests? Enter Benefit Corporations – legal corporate entities in the US, whose stated mission, purpose and obligations extends beyond generating value for their shareholders, to include consideration for environmental and social impacts. This legislation opens a space for companies that are not driven by the single point agenda of higher shareholder returns.

Often mistaken for Benefit Corporations, another breed of companies called B-Corps are slowly making their way into the world of business. They aspire to the highest standards of environmental and social performance, transparency and accountability and place people and planet ahead of profits. The list of B-Corp certified companies is growing each year, but most of them are sole proprietors or small and mid-sized businesses. In 2014, Natura, a Brazilian beauty brand, became the world’s largest public B – Corp and in late 2015, multinational giants like Unilever and Danone have begun to engage with the B – Corp movement. These developments point to a different way of imagining growth and is definitely a positive trend.

An interesting example of an outlier brand is Patagonia, a US-based, popular outdoor clothing and gear designer and manufacturer, who has actively pursued an anti-growth strategy, asking consumers to buy less of their products. In 2011, the B – Corp certified company published a New York Times ad, with a photo of their jacket

and the caption, ‘Don’t buy this jacket’ – advising consumers to consume less (and subtly hinting at the long life of Patagonia jackets). Ironically, the tag ‘Don’t buy this jacket’ showed up on the Black Friday winter clothing line the same year, and consumers flocked to buy the jacket, handing the company a 30% sales increase! A Bloomberg article reported that the ‘buy less’ marketing mantra has resulted in a surge in Patagonia sales, with new stores mushrooming across the US. Maybe the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Notwithstanding how the story unfolded, it was certainly a worthy attempt to question the premise of endless consumerism and growth.

In India too, conscious corporate behaviour is seeing the dawn of light with young start-ups taking the lead. Delhi-based Korra Jeans makes organic denims, with locally sourced materials, tailored from start to finish by a single tailor, thus departing from the ‘mass manufacturing’ model of fast fashion and embracing a model where work, craftsmanship, environment and social sustainability are all rolled into a pair of jeans!

But Patagonia and its ilk are still a blip on the radar. And while movements that give corporates a conscience are welcome, they remain Band-Aid solutions, in so far as they operate on the fringes. For most companies growth and profits are still the umbilical cord they cannot sever. And this makes things difficult for those sustainability professionals who are interested in crafting an alternative narrative that is not fixated on chasing ever

higher growth targets.

One thing is clear - given the looming environmental and social crisis, there is no shying away from unpopular conversations, including those questioning unrestrained growth; and for better or worse, CSR and sustainability teams need to lead these discussions and forge collaborative partnerships to arrive at solutions. Acceptance and solutions will not come overnight, assuming they come at all, but the stakes are so high that we have to give it our best shot!

The fact that ‘anti-growth’, however limited its scope and effect, has seeped into the business lexicon, is in itself a progressive step. Besides, no matter how you view the solution Mr. Howard proposes to the problem of ‘peak stuff’, he did point out to a very important shift in consumer behaviour, and gave a warning of sorts. Perhaps for now the consumer will be satiated with green products, and IKEA and others can continue on their growth path unhindered, albeit in a greener avatar; but soon, that won’t be the case.

Whether or not consumers come to question consumerism in all its colours, the Earth definitely is reaching ‘peak stuff’ and when that happens, the growth option will be off the table. The question is whether we act now and participate in shaping our future and collective destiny or we simply react to what destiny sends our way.

—Antaash Sheikh

Antaash Sheikh is a communications and CSR professional, based out of Bangalore. The views expressed here are her own.

The gift of second life

Organ transplantation has a long history. The advances in Medical Science have revolutionized the idea of treating different diseases, promising a second lease of life to many. With the advent of immuno suppressant drugs and other breakthroughs, organ transplants became efficient, also promising a longer survival for the recipients. While science could successfully carry out organ transplants saving many lives, societies could not take to this easily. Misconceptions around organ donation, which are reinforced by lack of awareness hinder voluntary donation of organs. And thus, demand and supply are never in balance.

Vital Organs like heart, liver, kidneys, intestines, lungs, and pancreas can be donated only in case of 'brain death'. Other tissues like corneas, heart valves, skin, bones etc can be donated only in case of natural death. All that is required is a registry that allows the doctors and donors to communicate easily during times of need. India does not have a registry. Unfortunately, The Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 also does not mandate the maintenance of a registry. The green corridors in the north and south are an achievement in every sense, yet we have only 0.08 organ donors per million population.

Given this scene, the awareness drives and the registration for organ donations promoted by civil society have had a significant impact. Several Foundations, with the support of the government have come together to build the case for a registry and promote pledging for organ donation through different means.

Gift Your Organ Foundation is a registered Charitable Trust based in Bangalore, founded in 2011 by a group of likeminded individuals who wanted to transform the scene of organ donation in the country, that was beset by deficiency and lack of awareness. "Many people think that eyes and kidneys are the only organs that can be donated. Deceased organ donation is much wider in scope and execution. Communities have to be educated about this," says Ms Priyanka Shylendra, Director for Operations at the Foundation. Alongside building awareness on deceased organ donations, the foundation aims to bridge the gap in the functioning between the government, the hospitals and the organ donors. It also serves as a national registry for those interested in pledging their organs in the possible event of brain death, which is linked to, and has the support of The Zonal Co-ordination Committee for Transplantation in Karnataka (ZCCK) – a



Deceased organ donation is much wider in scope and execution. Communities have to be educated about this.

Government of Karnataka body.

One of most successful projects of the foundation is the community project of introducing the option of organ donor on drivers' license cards. Priyanka graduated in Forensics from the UK and worked for a private lab in India. Driven by the desire to do something for the community, she developed this project while pursuing the Self Expression and Leadership Programme at Landmark. "In countries like the US, one can pledge organs while taking license. This way they got to pool in a large number of donors. It is believed that one organ donor can save up to 8 lives. So, wanted to try this in India but was not aware of others in the field who could help me take this forward. That's when I got to know about the foundation and my vision aligned with theirs," recalls Priyanka.

Beginning with the departments of Health and Transport, she contacted all the key stake holders and managed to get all the paper work done in the next six months. Funded by the state government, the driving license project took off

successfully and the second grant has also been used to initiate a similar drive in Udupi district of Karnataka and Mumbai. Udupi district saw the first organ donation happen in March 2016. As she later admits, the government support to work from the RTO office was the key as it allowed the foundation to meet and follow up license seekers easily. The foundation employs full time staffs who work at the RTOs to interact with the license seekers. The interaction is mediated in such a way to sensitise them on the need for organ donations and unravel the myths surrounding this concern.

Having completed two and a half years, the DL project is now active in seven RTOs in the city of Bangalore. 1,35,000 DL applicants were approached at the RTOs, out of which 45,000 had pledged to donate their organs in the event of brain death. Efforts not only educated the DL applicants, the regular follow up created a chain of interactions with friends and family members, educating families and communities in the process. Remarkably, the project was able to reach out to people

from different walks of life. The rich, poor, educated, illiterate, auto/truck drivers, women, differently abled – all of them could see the difference organ donations promised.

The only challenge faced was the fear in their minds. Some people thought that they might succumb to illegal organ trade and some others also misunderstood that their religion was against donation of organs post death. All such misconceptions were cleared and some procedural ethics were also explained. "We had to explain and assure that bodies of the deceased would be returned for final rights after the harvest of organs. This experience also helped us see the need to build support systems, especially for paper work, so that the process can flow smoothly," shares Priyanka, who is happy to see a steady rise in the number of organ donors in the last three years. The team is content with the progress and is more excited about the fact that they are building a person independent system that will continue to benefit lives even after they leave.

—Shanmuga Priya. T

Use of Technology – Enabler for Social Organizations

Amazing how each of us have got addicted and attached to mobile phones and its apps. Though it has added many isolations and disconnects to people and relations, yet, it has surely become an enabler and made our working more productive, fun and well connected. The amount of time we spend looking at messages and email or even posts on social media or messaging apps are 8 to 10 times more than what it used be 5 to 10 years back. Has this movement made a better impact in the way we communicate, work, interact and do business? Has it increased our reach especially in social causes and issues to be addressed?

Technology when used efficiently and judiciously is a boon to optimize and reduce cost of transaction. This new age ways of dealing and relating with people using technology is surely the way forward to running large scale or small scale business transactions. As one can be easily connected and updated what needs to be done / asked, this has surely eased doing business or work with real time update. One cannot fool around or misrepresent their status, location, issues and challenges reducing conflicts. With so many advantages of using technology and easy to use apps, as an entrepreneur, we need to leverage and capitalize this opportunity to its full extent and capacity. There are so many small, free, easy to use business and productivity applications, apps, portals that can simplify many of the complex and manually managed processes and methods.

Social organizations for a long time have been vary of using technology. There are several restrictive beliefs that have been blocks to keep pace with the changes technology is bringing into organizations.

- Technology is costly and funding organizations cannot afford this
- Technology is mostly high end, expensive and time consuming
- Social organizations cannot afford maintenance costs or person to handle technology
- Technology use requires higher education which many field workers may not possess
- Technology and training takes time and will reduce the field work time for the employees
- The hardware is not affordable and justifiable for the donors
- Social organization requires to be in the field for productivity and not in front of gadgets
- Reaching to the under privileged and remote areas where efforts are needed does not require technology
- Anyway we have successfully run organizations without technology so far and the same can be continued

Optimization is the key in this dynamic, changing, complex world. Being agile is no longer the prerogative of the privileged or corporate. If social organizations do not change and catch up being the fore runners



This new age ways of dealing and relating with people using technology is surely the way forward to running large scale or small scale business transactions.

of change, they will lose out on the optimization. In the last two decades several large not for profit and NGOs have utilized technology effectively. Azim Premji foundation, Enable India, Infosys Foundation, Akshara, are some examples.

Some of the most commonly seen usage is the use of social media platforms for communication, updates, fund raising, cost optimization, sourcing the people, vendors or even promoting what one is doing / wants to do. For running the business/ project on a daily basis, there are so many variety of free applications that can be used:

- Manage all your contacts / network – Database and connect to social media
- Manage customers / donors/ investors database & transaction
- Manage vendors / suppliers/ contractors
- Invoicing, financial management, both inflow and outflow.
- Supply chain management
- Quality and risk management
- Product and inventory management
- Complaints and case management
- Knowledge management
- Chats and bulk SMS communications
- Human resource management

- And many other business process management tools.

We can explore many applications which are on SAAS (Software as a service) model which normally gives license for per user/ per month /per year basis. And most of these applications offer free for first few users to get the initial understanding of it with few limitations. These features would suffice for initial application and usage. There are many Indian and internally offered apps which are billed in US Dollars. The range of apps per user per month could start as low as \$3 to \$150. Average is about \$15 to \$20 for a paid user. Any addition of people or user will be at a cost.

Applications like Google Apps, ZOHO, Basecamp, Bitrix24, Evernote, MailJet / Mailchimp, Skype, Paypal and many others which are easy to download both as app on your phone and also use on systems covers most of the functional needs. Using most of them does not need any technical understanding and education. They are mostly self-learning, easy to configure app. Many of the out of box features can be as-is used. These apps are safe and secured with no infrastructural investments as they are cloud based applications.

Many manually done operations can be easily automated and nearly reduce over

50% of manual / people dependent processes. This will allow key employees to focus and spend effective time on the core issues of the project. This enables increased bandwidth where scalability and reliability of the entire system becomes lot more evident to expand and build higher level of trust.

Even for updating the donors, investors and stakeholders, these apps are very relevant and useful. Simple dashboards can be created that gets updated real-time and the required information is shown both quantitatively and qualitatively. There is limited need for follow-up or questioning from either side. When there is true cost and energy saving the investment is also justified to the donor. Since technology explosion is rampant, there is always a lurking fear of landing with wrong software vendors. Using out of the box apps dispels the fear of wrong vendors.

Usage of technology calls for a sure mind-set change and a paradigm shift w.r.t technology and its usage. Once the orientation is to optimize and get the best of people and efforts, technology can surely be an enabler and facilitate achievement of vision a lot faster and seamlessly.

— Dr. Kalpana Sampath and Prathaap B



Dr. Shanmuga Velayutham

CSIM Seminar - Status of Children in India

CSIM Chennai organized a seminar on 'Status of children in India' on 19th March, 2016 at its Alapakkam centre. The intent of this seminar was to understand the current status of children, discuss the challenges they face, and the government policies that are available for their welfare, safety and holistic development.

Eleven eminent speakers, all being expert in their respective fields spoke in various topics related to children—from health, education, juvenile laws, environment, to child abuse, special children's care, and child labor.

Around 120 participants - social workers, NGO representatives, students, social entrepreneurs, government officials, and professors attended the programme.

Mr. Narasimhan, Director of Protech Consultants inaugurated the event and welcomed the speakers and the audience.

An overview of children's status in India was shared by Mr. Vidhyasagar, Former Child Specialist of UNICEF. Mr. Ameer Khan, Coordinator, SOCHARA-CEU and Member-National coordination committee- Peoples health movement dwelled upon various aspects of children's health within cities and rural areas.

Mr. Prince Ganjendrababu, Secretary, State education Forum highlighted the evolution of children's educational aspects from pre-independence period to the current Samacheer system. He highlighted the pros and cons of the current education system and various solutions proposed by the government.

Dr. Shanmuga Velayutham, Convener, TN-FORCES, spoke about the importance of environment in a child's holistic development process. Mr. Iyappan, CSIM Alumnus and Founder of Sri Arunodayam, shared the need for special children care. He spoke about his work and the impact

he has created within the community as well as government.

The post lunch session was initiated by Ms. Stegana Jency, Deputy Director, CCRD, who spoke on various dimensions of child abuse. Mr. Devaneyan spoke on Juvenile Justice Act for care and protection of children. Mrs. Girija Kumarbabu, Secretary, ICCW, spoke on various cases, with subtle humour, highlighting scenarios where children were in conflict with law.

All the sessions were knowledgeable. The seminar was moderated by Mr. Then Pandian, Founder, PFHR, and the day's proceedings were summarized by Mr. Thomas Jeyaraj, Convener, Child Rights Forum.

Mr. Chella Selva Kumar, Member-Tamil Nadu Commission for Protection of Child Rights(TNCPCR) delivered the vote of thanks.

—Sudha Yegnanarayanan



Narasimhan



Ameer Khan



Then Pandian



Vidhyasagar



“Communicate or Die. So be it!”

Murray Culshaw shares with **Marie Banu** the need for communication amongst Civil Society Organisations

Murray Culshaw is a senior Development Consultant who has mostly worked with the voluntary sector in India. Murray has worked with civil society organisations—from local to international levels—advising on management, communications and fundraising.

His passion for many years has been to encourage voluntary/ civil society organisations to communicate with and raise resources from the public and become more accountable. He has spearheaded several initiatives to support the voluntary sector including India Cares and Credibility Alliance as part of the founding core group.

In an exclusive interview, Murray Culshaw shares with Marie Banu the need for communication amongst Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Can you tell us about your first experience in the development sector in India?

I was born in Kolkata and went back to England for schooling. I returned in 1964 to work in a Church run technical school. Gradually, that developed into interest in skills training and rural development which eventually ended up as a being responsible for Oxfam in India.

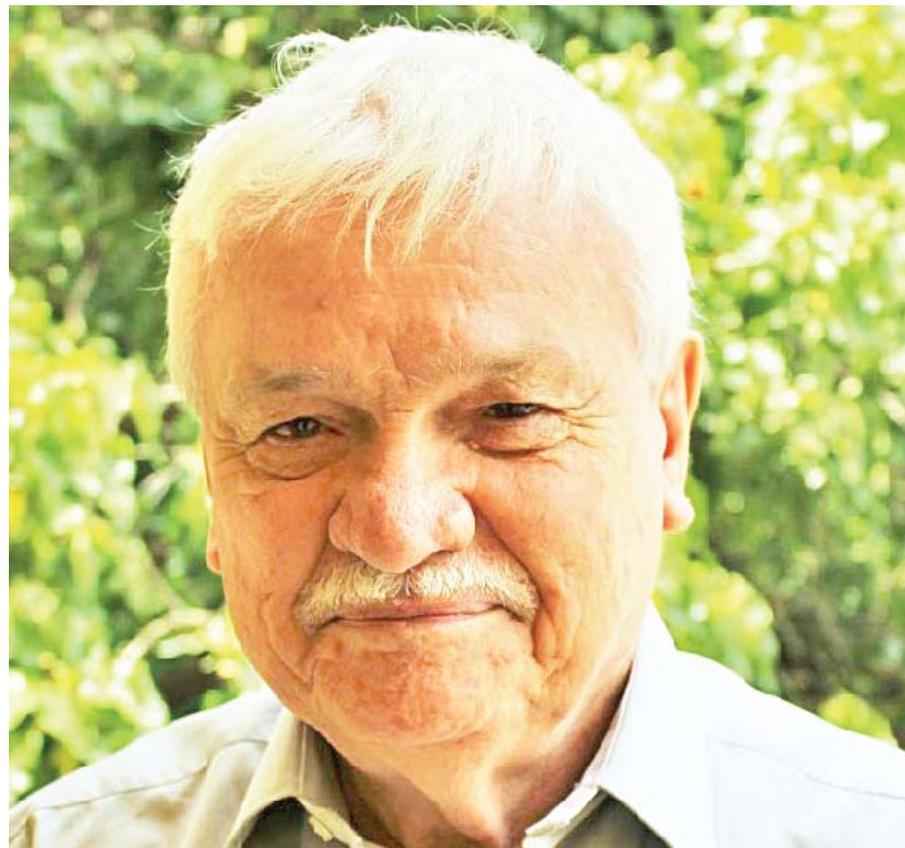
While with Oxfam in India from 1989 to 1994, I became very conscious of the importance of communicating social causes to the Indian public. I worked hard to encourage Oxfam to do it, but didn't succeed although we did small experiments. I left Oxfam when I realized I was not able to help to convert Oxfam into an Indian agency.

In that process, I developed the idea that social organisations should communicate to the public so that the public gets to know about social needs and in return support people and organisations working on such needs. Another idea I had was that the international aid-agency system was bypassing the Indian public. I felt this was wrong because the agencies giving grants were not accountable to the Indian public and the organisations receiving grants were also largely not accountable to the Indian public because they were accountable to the international agencies.

The only way for CSOs (we don't call them NGOs anymore) to become accountable to Indian society is to communicate and raise support from society. Furthermore if this happens, organisations will be much stronger because they would have national support, and the public would be much more aware of the society needs.

About Murray Culshaw Consulting?

When I left Oxfam, I said to myself that I would spend the rest of my time helping organisations communicate their work, engage Indian society, raise resources and



become accountable to society. From 1995, this is what I have been doing!

The first step was to do consultancy work. I was fortunate to have a home in Bangalore as my wife is from here. I had various contracts which kept me going. Gradually I built the consulting work into quite an extensive service. At one point we had about 15 people conducting communications and fundraising training workshops for CSOs in different parts of India; and provided consultancy.

In about 2000, I began to realise that we were not 'viable'. We did not focus on working with the bigger agencies, but focused on smaller and medium agencies who could not afford to pay the fees for the quality of staff required. So, this came to an end.

What was the reason to launch India Cares?

My next step was to help start 'Bangalore Cares' along with three others in Bangalore who as volunteers wanted to 'help the social sector', particularly in Karnataka. We organised conferences, released publications—it was ad-hoc as we did not have any staff.

In 2008, we were invited by the organisers of the 'World 10 kilometer race' in Bangalore to be their charity partner. That led us to employ two full-time staff and since then we have been the philanthropy partner for this big international 10 kilometer race which is held annually in May. The title sponsor for this event is now Tata Consultancy Services.

Through the World 10k race we have now helped CSOs raise 20+ crore rupees from participation, and since 2014 by serving as 'Philanthropy Partner' for Airtel Delhi Half-Marathon we have enabled organisations to raise a further 11 crore rupees. There are many great aspects about participation in these international quality events; one is that organisations learn to communicate their work to the public and raise vital funds.

When we moved to Delhi we changed our name from Bangalore Cares to India Cares. We are registered as a Trust. I am Chairperson of India Cares and help guide the philosophy. We have an active Board which helps with new initiatives and implementation. We receive income for our services which really turns us to be what is now called a 'Social Enterprise'. We have grown without a grant or investment which makes us quite pleased with ourselves!

There are several distinct ideas within India Cares. Donations do not pass through us; they go directly to the organisations that are registered with us. We are cause neutral, and do not raise funds from the public and distribute funds in the form of grants. We want donors to make donations to the causes they believe in, and we want CSOs to learn to relate directly to donors and they can only do this when they get directly involved.

We are now diversifying our activities into a number of other services, for instance, a 'CEO Forum' has been established to encourage Chief Executives

of CSOs to meet around specific subjects. The idea being that Chief Executives rarely meet each other unlike in the corporate sector where they frequently meet through Clubs or industry associations - and in meeting have an opportunity for peer learning. We now have had the CEO Forum running in Bangalore for the last eight months and have started in Delhi and Hyderabad.

What are the other services offered by India Cares?

We are developing Donor Services, for organisations who do not have staff to work on public communication. Many organisations do not have the funds to invest in communications staff. Our service will help organisations develop communication skills by having our staff work with them for a period of six months to one year. Hopefully in that time, the organization will build its own skills. This service will also include database management, developing proposals, individual donor relations, corporate relations and so on.

What else do you work on?

I am also Chairperson of Sense India, a national level organization serving the cause of people who are deaf and blind. This is a unique, niche disability. Five years ago, the organization was 90% dependent on international income. During the year that has just passed (2015-2016), it ran on money raised by its team in India. It is no longer dependent on international income and this year is looking at expanding its services. It has a very interesting national structure working through other organisations in different parts of India.

It is estimated that 500,000 people have this disability in India. Sense India's services are from baby screening to enabling adults engage in economic activities. I concentrate on strategic thinking, strengthening governance, and resource mobilization.

I am grandly called 'Senior Advisor' for Mahiti – a technology company with a mission to enhance the impact of social initiatives. I help with strategic thinking and management issues. I see Mahiti as very complimentary to some of the other work I do. There are also important links between Mahiti and Sense India; Mahiti and India Cares. Mahiti has exciting potential for growth because of increasing awareness that technology must be a part of enhancing the impact of social programmes.

Known as a Father ('now almost a dinosaur') of Fundraising, what is your closing remark for CSOs?

CSOs must communicate their work to the Indian public; spread an understanding of the work they are doing, and generate support – both financial and in kind. In other words, communicate or die! So be it!