

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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6

COVER STORY

HEALTHY WOMAN, HEALTHY WORLD

About Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA) in Mumbai and its activities

Alumni Talk



3

Making a Dream Come True
Sabaresh's efforts in the area of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Profile



9

Teaching for the future
Educating the underprivileged through new-world low-cost techniques

Chit Chat



12

"I incorporated the concept of 'ISR', meaning 'I am Socially Responsible'."
An exclusive interview with Deenadayalan of CEO

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Throughout the world, especially in the developing countries, there is an increasing concern and interest in maternal and child health care. This commitment further strengthened after the World Summit for Children, 1991, which gave serious consideration and outlined major areas to be addressed in the provision of Maternal and Child Health Care services.

The high number of maternal deaths in some areas of the world reflects inequities in access to health services and highlights the gap between rich and poor. It is learnt that almost all maternal deaths (99%) occur in developing countries and one third of them occur in South Asia.

One target under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 is to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 births, with no country having a maternal mortality rate of more than twice the global average.

Improvements in maternal health will lead to reduction in maternal mortality rates and address concerns arising from unhealthy pregnancies and issues during childbirth.

Promotion of maternal and child health has been one of the most important thrusts of the Family Welfare Programme in India. The primary objective of this programme has been to provide public health services to pregnant women, identifying expecting mothers and infants, strengthening child survival and safe motherhood through specifically targeted programmes. The National Population Policy (2000) recommended a holistic strategy for bringing inter-sectoral co-ordination at the grass root level by involving NGOs, Civil Society, Panchayat Raj Institutions and Women Self Help Groups in reducing maternal mortality.

Maternal health is important to help the mother and her baby continue to have healthy lives. While there are several NGOs like SNEHA whom we have featured as cover story this month, addressing this need, it isn't adequate to meet the growing demands for maternal health care.

Women could be educated on the importance of maintaining good health care during pregnancy; organisations could provide high quality equipment to help treat women during their pregnancy and after childbirth.

—Marie Banu

EDITORIAL

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

Design: Blink Foundation

Start Living

It is time to wake up and start living! Do all that you have not done because you wanted to be safe, secure and certain. Stepping out of habits that I formed from what others told me is the biggest step I took to empower myself. I realised the word empower really means to turn on one's gifts without letting others define me. This is not rebellion. This is living with respect for oneself and others. Would you like to start living or start dying slowly.... This poem is a testimony of how most of us have begun to live life

You start dying slowly

If you become a slave of your habits,
Walking everyday on the same paths...
If you do not change your routine,
If you do not wear different colors
Or you do not speak to those you don't know.

You start dying slowly

If you avoid to feel passion, and their
turbulent emotions;
Those which make your eyes glisten, and your
heart beat fast.

You start dying slowly

If you do not change your life when you are
not satisfied with your job, or with your love,
If you do not risk what is safe for the uncertain,
If you do not go after a dream,
If you do not allow yourself, at least once in
your lifetime,
To run away from sensible advice.

TheMindsJournal.com

-Pablo Neruda

Habits, routine, certainty is relevant until you make it happen. No sooner habits, routine and certainty make you happen, you start dying slowly. Start embracing one new thing every day or every week. Feel the lightness of being yourself. Don't hold your success, your expertise, your job, your relationships so habitually that you start dying slowly.....

Start living, now!!!

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.

Making a Dream Come True

As a child, you had dreams. And as you are growing up to a young adult it's time to realize your dreams. Getting a plush job is very often your first priority. But, do you love what you are doing? Most people do. There are some who are restless and feel that they got into a wrong bus – living and fulfilling somebody else's dream.

Sabaresh DB is a qualified computer engineer who worked for a Silicon based Fortune 500 IT company, Hewlett Packard, for 15 years in Bengaluru. Somewhere along the line, he felt emptiness and that he was wasting his life. It was at this point in time when he was introduced to a voluntary organization that worked on child rights. Since photography was his hobby, he engaged in visual documentation of their activities. He then enrolled in a 15-day weekend program called 'Inspire' conducted by CSIM that was designed especially for social enterprise start-ups. "I truly got 'inspired' after this programme and decided to start my own social enterprise," he says.

Sabaresh gave up his job and was toying with a number of domain concepts for his. As he was more concerned on the health issue and the vulnerability of people, especially women and children, he chose to work on water management.

Lack of access to portable drinking water leads to illnesses and death, especially among children. Without adequate supply children cannot wash often enough thereby leading to contract infections and diseases.

Having done this background research, Sabaresh started Aaroghya Foundation with a mission to inspire and empower people in communities by bringing clean and safe drinking water to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

He opines, "It's hard not to think about water today. In our country, we face growing concerns about our stewardship of the world's most precious resource. There's talk of shortages, evidence of reservoirs and aquifers drying up, and how people who simply don't care."

Aaroghya engages in the areas with



the greatest concentration of excluded and marginalized communities and empower them to engage in decision making along with the local governance institutions and influence those responsible for delivering the basic 'WaSH' services.

"We demonstrate sustainable WaSH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - solutions to make an impact at the district state and national-levels," say the technocrat social entrepreneur. He further adds, "We work across the nation, acting as a bridge to the very best ideas, connections and opportunities. We fulfill our mission by developing new collaborations and partnerships."

To enable this Aaroghya Foundation has carried out the following projects: Aaroghya: Water;

Aaroghya: Sanitation and Hygiene

Aaroghya: Lakes.

Aaroghya Foundations approach to clean water solutions is simple. They find local partners who can identify the need for water filtration systems in communities that lack sufficient clean drinking water and train them on



installation of RO systems, logistics, maintenance & technical improvements.

Sanitation and hygiene is integrated into Aaroghya Foundation program and forms part of its 3-pronged approach —hand-washing; safe management & handling of drinking water; and hygienic use of toilets including menstrual hygiene.

Tanks and lakes play an important role in irrigation as well as recharging ground water in the surrounding areas. Lakes play an integral role in Indian culture and serve a variety of purposes. Unfortunately, today most of the lakes and water bodies are reduced to cesspools due to direct discharge of

industrial effluents and unregulated dumping of solid wastes.

Sabaresh facilitated fellowship in terms of knowledge sharing with like-minded partners and encouraged field visits to Aaroghya to rejuvenate lakes and understand the issues that are currently plaguing lakes and ponds of Karnataka. "The aim of the fellowship interaction is to facilitate the revival of 4 lakes in Bangalore in the next 12 months and 12 lakes in Rural Karnataka," he says.

"Water, sanitation and hygiene make a visible impact on the health and hygiene of children and those of their families and the communities. Based on lessons from our practical work and that of other local and international experiences, we work with the state government and encouraged the public to engage in promotion of clean water and hygiene," he says.

—Harry Jayanth



Leader & Leadership Matters...

7. Time Sense: within-time and on-time

“You gotta make it a priority to make your priorities a priority” – Richie Norton



Meaning of Time

Sense: The Leader does not miss getting things done at the right time when working on his/her goals (LOI, www.discoverself.com).

The dictionary meaning of Time sense is an ability to feel the lapse of time and to estimate and compare intervals especially of short duration; the sense or perception of time and time-relations.

The most underrated and taken for granted in Leadership actions are prioritization and time-sense. The leader may have a grand vision, willing to put efforts and work, have alternatives and options, go into minute details and plan all actions; but, if the Leader is not focused and does not prioritize all their actions in the right time, there is no way the goal/ vision is achieved. In reality it is the right timing that hits the jackpot along with all other things being equal and strong. Time sense includes context and place too. Excellent time sense implies that the Leader does not take anything for granted and is aware and connected to the context while deciding their actions to achieve the set goal.

“Timing has always been a key element in my life. I have been blessed to have been in the right place at the right time.” —Buzz Aldrin



This time, we have an interesting personality to meet. Shivam Agarwal, the Granite King! Hailing from North of India, Shivam is comfortably settled in Bangalore like ‘Nammuru Huduga’. When we talk to him, a 26 year old who seems to have entrepreneurship streak in his DNA, comes across with confidence and clarity in what he does through the day. He has multiple things going on in a day from restaurant business to granite factory beyond Hosur. Shivam started his ‘Szechuan Dragon’, a Chinese restaurant serving a classic menu of Indian Chinese classics while in college itself. Let us hear all about his entrepreneurial ventures and the way he managed and continues to manage time to achieve his expected targets.

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.” —Stephen Covey

I find it very interesting to see you become an entrepreneur at a very young age and managing many tasks in a day efficiently. So, what is your concept of time?

Shivam gives a broad smile and speaks as a matter of fact, “Time is precious. Everyone has the same amount of time. We must remember that Time is money. How we utilize and organize the available time is important. Time is not to be conceived as a linear phenomenon. It is actually multiple parallel activities that can go on at the same

time; which if clear on priorities, time can accommodate many things in one go. Time exists and it keeps moving. How much can we stretch it and manage it effectively is the concept of time.”

What all do you do in a typical day?

“I have my restaurant business, family business factory dealing with granite stone, my personal fitness, family and social life. I take care of purchase, sales, inventory, menu, finance management, employee engagement, and so on. When I first began my restaurant, I also pursued my engineering degree, living on my own and managing my life all by myself. The day typically begins at 6 in the morning and ends at 11 or sometimes past midnight. I have never neglected taking care of myself, eating on time, getting sufficient sleep and spending time with my parents and cousins. Of course, periodically, I do take a fun break and don’t miss birthday parties too!” he quips.

I came to know you began restaurant business while in your second year of college. What made you do this? How did you manage your priorities?

Shivam seems to go back to his college days and narrates, “When I joined BMS College, I did not find any good affordable restaurants in and around my area that students could go to and hang out. While I was walking around, I saw a building that was under construction. It was located at a corner and was perfect for a small restaurant. I decided to serve Chinese food and ensured that my restaurant served lunch from 12 noon to 4 pm and dinner from 7 pm to 11 pm. This timing was perfect for students to come after class or during late evenings after their assignments.” he adds saying, “I come from a family which is well-established in the granite industry and I knew that I may have to join them after I completed my studies. I didn’t want anyone in my family or my friends to think that life was going to be easy for me. I wanted to prove to myself that I can run a successful business of my own before I venture into my family business.”

I laugh and add a side remark of how it is genetic trait of the Marwari who doesn’t think twice to start up a business and Shivam smilingly nods in agreement.

What motivates you to run a full day with so much of enthusiasm and watch for the right time?

“I have seen my mother and others in my family never wasting a day in their life. It has been conditioned that ‘life is for a purpose’. My vision is to bring a change in the way people think and view life. I want to be one who will leave a message behind when I die; be an influencer for right things in this world. So, there is no right or wrong time but only appropriate time for everything. I am all the time thinking about ‘how two or three

mangoes can fall in one stone’ and so time is very critical in that decision. My mind keeps working through the day and so there is least wastage. Whenever I am waiting for someone I finish two other jobs using technology.”

For Shivam, life is a just a good workout run every day and he thrives on challenges. Challenges pushes him to have a sense of responsibility which ensures judicious use of time.

What are the supporting factors that enable you to manage time efficiently?

“I first ensured that I have picked up a business that does not interfere in my time and energy. I go to my restaurant early in the morning to plan for the entire day and ensure that all supplies and menu are in order. I also have a partner who helps me when I am not there. By mid-morning I go to factory and stay there for the entire day. In the evening, I come back to restaurant for dinner time. When my restaurant is open, factory is closed; when the factory is at its peak in running, the restaurant is getting ready for dinner time.



I use technology, cctv at restaurant and factory, record feedbacks and do regular documentation in order to ensure that I know what is happening all the time and that quality is maintained.”

Shivam says that the key for managing time and multi-tasking is to learn excellent delegation. One has to trust and keep people working happily so that they will become our own arms, legs and eyes. Shivam has truly learnt the art of being approachable, affable, and decisive with clarity and his employees trust him and own up their work.

A Leader also needs a good supportive team to ensure no opportunities are missed and actions happen in appropriate time. Training others to be on time is not an easy task but it is not impossible also. Shivam opines constant encouragement and positive strokes go a long way in making them realize the worth of right time.

What mindset aid to manage time effectively and efficiently?

- First, Learn to ‘No’ – most of us hesitate to say ‘no’ to self and others and therefore turn up as poor managers of time.

- Willingness to SACRIFICE – willing to give up things that one wants to do and move to things one needs to do.
- To do and learn everything from the scratch as much as possible – know both the pain and pleasure of doing a work.
- Have the knowledge of the context and get into actions without delay.
- To be practical in approach and have good knowledge on what needs to be done.
- To plan keeping both the holistic perspective as well as the contingency.
- To have no fear to err, say sorry, learn and improve – “My first delivery order took 2 hours and the customer was highly upset. From then, till today – we deliver our order in 8 to 15mins.”
- Ability to balance is important. Every action has to be appropriate to what is needed.
- Be focused and consistent to the maximum extent in here and now. While planning may happen in morning, being available to the present moment is most important.
- Wake up early! This is key to excellent time management. When mind is fresh, and with a healthy breakfast, a lot can be accomplished.
- Work with an idea of being indispensable. Everything should work perfect in my absence.
- Paying attention to small things that

- has to be settled goes a long way in making the bigger picture perfect.
- Keeping to do list of tasks, recording the actions, writing down reports truly helps in efficiency of managing time.
- Knowing that thinking process is continuous and can be done parallel opens up ample amount of time for ideas and improvements.
- Healthy, good relationship with people and employees is key aspect to getting things done.



Don't you get tired doing this routine every day? What are your efforts to stop burning out?

Shivam believes in a healthy balanced lifestyle. He says, “The key is never to overdo anything, including scheduling, planning... it's important to take periodical breaks and have sufficient family time. I go biking, spend time with nature and spend time with myself without feeling it as wasting time. All these get into my schedule of ‘to do’ in life. I also have a good routine of eating, exercising and sleep. I know that taking

care of myself is the key to doing all that I want to do in time.

Healthy body and healthy mind is integral to time sense.



Do you make time for social life?

“I do get some negative thoughts and boredom sets at times. But, I am very much aware of this and catch it early. I do things that I love and change my mood and thoughts from negative to positive. I never miss meeting my friends and spending time to have a healthy social life. I attend functions and also help people whenever needed.

Appropriateness of time comes in knowing you need everything in life. I cut many personal unwanted jobs and prioritize on a daily basis where my time goes.”

Your last punch line for our readers please?

“Prioritize, plan and stick to plan with consistency and sacrifice.

Writing down the schedule and tasks to be done. Not just typing on phone or

keeping in mind. When you write down you remember it better.

Follow through all tasks and stick to plan; if there is a block initiate action and keep it on priority till the block is removed.

Do it or have the knowledge to do it. Time sense can only be Lived and not Thought. So a Leader has to lead by example. Team members follow when they see their Leader managing tasks on time and in time.”



In the last six articles we have discussed the six attributes – Aspiration, Responsibility, Optimization, Detailing, Planning and Time Sense when balanced appropriately enable a Leader to be a True Achiever.

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath

Priority



A man was dying from a poisoned arrow. His relatives rushed a doctor to his side but he refused to have the arrow taken out unless he had the answers to three questions, very vital to him:

1. Was the man who shot him white or black?
2. Was he a native or a foreigner?
3. Was he tall or short?

He was so adamant about getting his answers that the arrow could not be removed on time and he died.

Explicit Learning

- A. Failing to see the vital issue may at times land us into serious problems.
- B. Get your priorities right.
- C. Let us not get entangled in a mesh of trivia, missing the vital issue.

Introspective Learning

- A. What is my priority – trivialities or vital issues?
- B. What forces me to be adamant on trivialities?
- C. Do I ever prioritise? If yes, how?

HEALTHY WOMAN, HEALTHY WORLD

Dr. Armida Fernandez, in her long years working as a neonatologist in Mumbai’s largest public hospital, Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital, identified the need for improving health seeking behaviour in low income communities

Today, we have the pleasure of exploring the work of an NGO, one of the Great Indian stories - one of resilience against injustice, one of purpose in the face of chaos, one of transformation within fortresses of superstition.

The Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA), Mumbai was formally founded in 1999, but the seeds for it were sown sometime during the 70’s. Founder, Dr. Armida Fernandez, in her long years of working as a neonatologist in Mumbai’s largest public hospital, Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital, identified the need for improving health seeking behaviour in low income communities, particularly of women and children. Says Hamsini Ravi of SNEHA, “The hospital is located close to Dharavi, Asia’s largest informal settlement (colloquially known as slum), a densely populated area. Seeing a large proportion of newborns succumb to various illnesses, Dr. Fernandez pioneered several low-cost innovations within the hospital to increase their chances of survival. However, she observed that many of the children died once they were outside the safety of the hospital, and many developed chronic cognitive and physical disabilities. It was at this point in time, she realized that in order to make a lasting impact in the health of children who hail from vulnerable communities, she should take her ideas outside the hospital, closer to people’s homes.

So, Dr. Fernandez and a few of her colleagues began to regularly visit the slums, educate women on: the benefits of breastfeeding; care during pregnancy; nutrition of infants and young children; besides other essential health messages that they hoped would help the women and children lead healthy lives.

“SNEHA follows a two-pronged approach,” explains Hamsini, “We work closely with public health systems (to build capacity among public health workers and enable the system to deliver high quality public health services), as well as with communities (to build health-seeking behaviour, thereby helping them demand high quality services from public systems). SNEHA is focused on building evidence-based models of health interventions for the health and nutrition of women and children living in vulnerable



areas, focusing on Maternal and Newborn Health; Child Health and Nutrition; Adolescent Health and Sexuality and Prevention of Violence against Women and Children.”

“In India, more than 289,000 women die from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications each year. Most of these deaths are preventable with adequate prenatal care and education,” says Hamsini. How does SNEHA tackle this problem?

By establishing a maternity referral network. SNEHA partners with local municipal corporations to strengthen maternal and newborn referral processes. The aim is to reduce the load on over-burdened health facilities and to ensure that high risk pregnancies receive timely critical care.

SNEHA works with the staff of Primary Health Care to develop effective processes, track efficiency, and to build awareness on the issue. They also facilitate the formation and skill-building of voluntary women’s groups that can address health needs and promote healthy practices, particularly for mothers and newborns. These groups come in particularly handy in the event of emergencies.

SNEHA’s flagship nutrition programme, “Aahar,” works to treat and prevent malnutrition in children under 3 years of age. They partner with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and their work covers 150 anganwadis (child care centres) across vulnerable settlements in Dharavi and Wadala.

Recognizing the need for discussing sexual behavior and sexual health during early years, SNEHA has developed programs for young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Their Resource Centres offer a non-judgemental and safe space for adolescents to come and share their questions and concerns. The centres house a multi-media library on Sexuality, Gender, Health and Human Rights. These centres engage with parents and Community Gate-Keepers as well.

Women are particularly at risk of encountering violence. Through their Crisis Centers, SNEHA provides counseling for survivors of violence and facilitates access to medical, legal and police services. Women volunteers monitor the safety of women and children in their area, providing emotional support, also connecting women to Crisis-Intervention services. SNEHA trains and sensitizes police, staff of municipal hospitals and legal aid lawyers to deal more effectively with cases of violence. They do advocacy work including but not limited to the effective implementation of the Protection for Women against Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Protection of Children against Sexual Offences, 2012.

“Our biggest challenge in working with urban slum communities is the constant geographic mobility and



migration,” says Hamsini, “Many of our beneficiaries tend to move halfway through our intervention, and that compromises the quality of care and level of intervention that we can offer them. The other challenge is the inherent heterogeneity in urban slum communities, that makes community mobilization a challenge. Varying cultural practices within communities’ present unique challenges with respect to standardizing our group education strategies and content. Doing home-visits to provide customized care helps us be mindful of cultural beliefs of each family and ensures continued cooperation from their end to our services. Also, making our data collection processes more robust and real time helps us keep track of our communities’ movement patterns.” A glance of the individual cases handled by SNEHA, available on their website, best illustrates these challenges.

SNEHA continues to look at newer areas of intervention with their other initiatives such as the Mahila Arogya Samiti, Sanjeevan Mobile Health Clinic, Romila Palliative Care and their Nurse Aid Programme. CEO of SNEHA, Vanessa D’ Souza is prominently quoted as saying that her vision for SNEHA is that she hopes that in the long term there is no need for SNEHA to exist. When asked what brings about such a counter-intuitive thought, we are told, “Rather than growing our programs exponentially, we are focused on creating and testing programmes that can be replicated by either other NGOs in different parts of the country and by the Government. If our programmes were to be replicated and institutionalized by the Government, and if such institutions catered to an informed community that is empowered enough to demand services from public systems, our field-level services would no longer be needed,” she signs off.

—Archanaa Ramesh



SOCIAL IMPACT AND GOING BEYOND THE POTHOLES OF 'DEMOCRACY'...

It has been said that *"Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."* —Winston Churchill

The quote above is often used by many who find the whole idea of democracy becoming more and more perplexing. What is it? Why is it a method of governance that we should follow? Are we aware of the dangers of swallowing it whole?

Was Churchill alluding to some of the contradictions inherent in the democratic process?

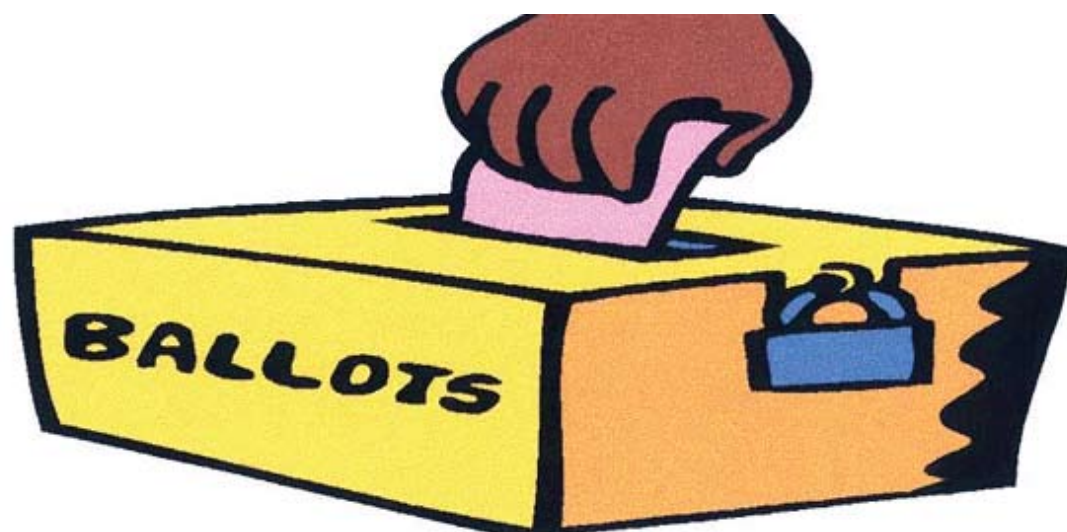
In 2014, we allowed the democratic will of the people in Scotland to decide on whether or not to become independent from the rest of the UK. Despite a negative vote – 55% to 45% – the result fuelled a nationalist drive which, even now, seems to be constantly simmering just below the political consciousness. It was followed by a general election in 2015 where the electoral seats won by the Scottish National Party (SNP) was 56. This was against only 3 seats won by all the other parties put together, although the SNP polled under half of those that voted. Funny thing, this democracy...

Then, in 2016, we had a UK referendum on staying or leaving the European Union. To most people's surprise the Brexiteers won forcing a new government to lead a messy withdrawal from Europe. This was based on only 52% wanting out of the EU and 48% wanting to stay in. A small margin, but the majority of voters wins for absolute change and a change that will affect generations to come.

In the USA Donald Trump's election was even more bizarre as he managed to become president with only 46% of the popular vote when his rival, Hillary Clinton had 48%.

So what is going on? I am going to argue that we should not idealise 'democracy' as it possesses a number of faults or contradictions. So here goes with nine contradictions or potholes to consider.

1. Democracy is often dependent on a geographical area where the inhabitants have the right to vote. A person who is chosen to represent that area is elected by a majority of the people living within specified boundaries. However, it depends on the definition of that area and where the borders have been drawn.
2. There is often the problem of access to a vote amongst the electorate. Many people are excluded from the electoral roll, some choose to be. The roll may be out of date or there may be a transient population. The electorate is not always a true representation of the people who live in the area.
3. There are lots of people who appear on the electoral register who do not vote. Some countries make it compulsory to vote but most do not. So we follow the will of only those that actually vote.
4. There is a belief that voters elect someone to represent their wishes and desires at a higher level of government. In most democratic countries, this does not happen as prospective candidates usually align themselves with a particular party or grouping. Political parties have policies which reflect the party's values. This is all very well but local issues tend to get lost in the expedience of party interests.
5. There are differing democratic systems to consider. In the UK general elections, we have a first-past-the-post system which has the advantage of giving a clear result where only slight swings in opinion from one political party to another can result in clear parliamentary majorities. It has the disadvantage of not being a true reflection of the feelings of the whole of the electorate. An alternative is proportional representation where seats in government, generally speaking, are divided according to the numbers of people who



have voted for particular parties. On the surface this appears to be fairer but in countries where this system is in place it usually results in an overabundance of parties and the minor parties tend to have a disproportionate amount of influence in government as they hold sway on tricky or closely divided issues.

6. There is a belief that those politicians that have been democratically elected, actually govern. In established democracies, there are often other governing bodies. In the UK, the civil service, with its hierarchy and powerful mandarins, unelected persons can influence the decisions that emerge from the well-trodden corridors of power. Similarly, people are often appointed by those who possess power into positions of authority that can dictate their decisions to the mass of the population.
7. There is a danger of forming a dictatorship of the majority where the minority's wishes are overridden by politicians elected by slim margins. They then push for major societal changes that do not take account of the wishes of all the people.
8. Democracy is not inherently fair or inclusive. Within a democracy single-minded people can form pressure groups to lobby government and political parties trying to influence the debate if not the outcome on particular issues. Resources can be used to by private companies and others to disproportionately influence policy. Money talks and those that have it recognise this completely and use their money to influence decisions or policies.
9. Under multi-party democracy there is always a fight for the middle-ground. The battle over the centre of the political landscape in the UK is all very well – but is there any real choice left with previously principled parties sacrificing their values to gain power by attracting the middle ground?

This brings us to the question of relevancy. Is parliamentary politics relevant to the average person whether "in the street" or aboard the No 29 bus to Auchtermuchty?

In theory it certainly is relevant and can affect the lives of all the citizens but in practice people only want to get on with their lot and barely see the importance of party politics. On the other hand, organisations want to know that they are operating 'democratically' and in a way that reflects some form of social equity or social justice.

And what about social impact? Community-based enterprises and local organisations serving the communities they are located in have tried to demonstrate



their democratic credentials by counting how many people came to their AGM; how many members they have – regardless of how active they were; and the level of engagement by local people. This all adds up to something that goes beyond casting votes and looking at majority margins.

Organisations who apply social accounting and audit as a process to monitor and evaluate an organisation's effectiveness and 'social impact', have used all the above factors in describing their links to their constituents. They go beyond counting votes and look at local involvement, opportunities where local people can engage with others and develop connections.

It can be argued that democracy works best at a local level where there are much clearer channels of accountability between an organisation and the community residents. Perhaps organisations have to get closer to communities and people, allowing them the chance to take more control over their own destiny. This might be through more active community politics with more decisions devolved to local people.

So Churchill is right, I think, in recognising democracy is 'the worst form of government'. What we need to try is more local involvement and community development, not focussed on 'democracy' as an ideal, but rather on social and economic justice.

—Alan Kay
Co-Founder,
Social Audit Network, UK
www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk

Teaching for the future



Making lives better through education, in a nutshell, is what CLT India does. After all, the organization points out that UNESCO estimates teacher shortage in India to be about 3 million, with a requirement of 1.5 million teachers in the years to come. By ensuring that the least served gets access to teaching, CLT India helps bridge that gap.

Registered as the Children's LoveCastle Trust in 1997, CLT India has spent the last two decades implementing several projects and reaping the rewards. "Our first program was a mid-day meal scheme for children in government schools," says Bhagya Rangachar, Founder and CEO, CLT India, "We were the first in Karnataka to officially launch a school mid-day meal programme." Back then, CLT India had launched the scheme in just one school. It impacted nearly 300 children. Today, Bhagya says CLT India's reach spans 9,000 rural classrooms, impacting one million children in three States. "We achieve this by providing digital STEM resources with low-cost technology delivery models," she adds.

The STEM content that Bhagya refers to, is academic material that is aligned to the syllabus and lets teachers use tools that inspire students to learn through visual means, which in turn leads to better engagement. Armed with a low-cost delivery model engineered by CLT India, the e-Patshale (as the module is christened) lets the solution have a built-in ecosystem without the need for high-profile infrastructure, electricity, internet or even unnecessary IT interface. As Bhagya says, "Developing curricula-aligned STEM content in



regional languages and building a large repository of teaching and learning resources with 15,000 rich-media videos and e-Books, not forgetting robust, low-cost technology delivery models in offline environments, has helped us scale our program." But there are other benefits too. She continues: "The data analytics gives us real-time data on usage, thus bringing better insights about the intervention."

The "devotion", as Bhagya terms it, to contribute towards better educational opportunities had far-reaching benefits. Before long, CLT India had a number of teachers and subject experts signing up to work for the cause. Today, e-Patshale content is transforming several rural classrooms, with a noticeable shift in the manner in which teachers and students have access to resources at their fingertips. In fact, improving on this reach is one of the goals that the organization has set for itself. "We want to reach 20 million children to access CLT e-Patashale resources to learn better in the next three to five years," says Bhagya.



Learning aside, the bigger picture for CLT India, undoubtedly, lies in ensuring the world that children inherit, is an inherently better one — especially for those in underprivileged sections of society. "Children miss out on life's opportunities when they do not have learning opportunities in under-served communities," says Bhagya, "Most parents of government school children do not have basic education; and the schools have severe shortage of schools. Our goal is to make sure that every child has a right to education and is connected to an 'informed' world, regardless of geographical challenges, gender and economics."

Challenges, however, continue to exist and these largely centre on funding for quality education, especially when it comes to research and development. "We find that the research and development aspect of our work needs funding at a strategic and organizational level, rather than at the programmatic level," says Bhagya. Despite the great work that organizations much like CLT

India do, there is also much left to be desired from the outside world when it comes to children's education. "It's the collected efforts of many interest groups, including the government, to ensure that every child has rights to education, healthcare and social welfare," she adds.

For its unrelenting work in the field of education, CLT India has clocked some mind-boggling stats. So far, the organization has claimed to clock 64 million hours of teaching, and has reached out to a million students while doing so. In achieving all this, CLT India has also covered 9,000 grades. Through these success stories, the organization's flagship e-Patshale programme continues to be its mainstay, especially for schools that lack basic infrastructure for teaching.

Today, a diverse, international team heads CLT India and by its own admission it isn't just all work and no play. After all, there's a child in each of us and that's no different for CLT India too. Even as it continues its mission of education for all, especially the underprivileged, the priority is crystal clear. Bhagya herself couldn't put it better. "Children are the backbones our society," she says, "They are the future. Our aspirations for a better world can happen only when our children are nurtured in a safe world, with education, health and family welfare."

Education is indeed a noble profession. But in educating the underprivileged through new-world low-cost techniques, CLT India has successfully carved a niche for itself as an educator par excellence, and an institution with a difference.

How can a mother behind bars bond with her child?

New Life Stories is giving imprisoned mothers a chance to connect with their children — through storytelling.



When does a story become more than a fairytale?

For Salimah Sukar, reading a story to her daughters was a step forward in her quest for a real-life, happy ending.

Salimah is no stranger to life behind bars. In 2010, she landed in jail for the third time for trafficking drugs, this time to serve a seven-year sentence.

Arrested before her children's eyes, she would not see her youngest daughter, only 14 months old then, for about four years.

"She did not know who I was," recalls Salimah, who was released conditionally in 2015. "She asked, 'Where is mother? How does she look like?'"

"My older daughter (Ghaaziyah) showed her my photograph, but that doesn't mean much, you see. It was very painful."

In prison, she watched her fellow inmates become despondent from being cut off from loved ones, losing the will to turn their lives around. "People were released, and then they came back. They

couldn't cope," recalls Salimah.

She feared she would become one of them — after all, she had failed to stay out of prison twice before.

But six months before her release, Salimah's story took a turn: she was selected for a programme by non-profit New Life Stories, aimed at helping incarcerated mothers break the cycle of crime. Set up in 2014 in Singapore, New Life's efforts are two-fold.

Mothers due for release are selected for a programme that prepares them for re-entering society, through befriending and counselling.

Outside of prison, volunteers visit the women's children once a week to read to them, improving the children's language and social skills.

The volunteers also bring their mothers' presence into their lives once more, by creating voice recordings of their mothers reading a story to them.

These recordings are then played to their children, and their responses are captured on video and shown to the

mothers. In this manner, storytelling becomes "an expression of the mother's love", says New Life Stories co-founder Saleemah Ismail. "To break down the prison wall. To make the wall invisible. So that mother and child can connect."

New Life began with 15 mothers in the first cohort; the third intake began in January 2018 with 30 mothers.

Watching her children's progress over videos, Salimah felt something she hadn't experienced in a long time; a sense of connection to her daughters.

With help from volunteers, she put her thoughts to paper, creating a story starring three of her four children, complete with illustrations. New Life published the storybook, and gave it to her children.

"This is where my pain slowly healed. Even though there isn't any physical contact, at least I know what is going on," she says. "From there, my strength grew."

For Ghaaziyah, who was living in a relative's home, while Salimah and her husband served their respective sentences, her mother's written words

took her to a different place. "It reminded me of my mother, and that she was happy, as she got to write a book and send it to us."

Staying clear of crime after her release has been a struggle for Salimah, as she remains haunted by her past. But having her children as her focus has helped her stay on the path.

"If your children can accept you for who you were before, I can tell you that is already good. Not all children can accept," says Salimah. "My shield is always my children...my children are important, my life is important, the future is important."

Says Ghaaziyah: "I'm still so proud of her, because she faced her consequences, and she's such a great mother."

"I think mothers and fathers can stop going back to prison if they are happy."

—A story by Our Better World — the digital storytelling initiative of the Singapore International Foundation (www.ourbetterworld.org).

Launch of PGDSIM at CSIM Chennai

The 18th batch of the one-year PGDSIM - Post Graduate Diploma in Social Initiative & Management - was launched on 23rd June, 2018. 15 Prospective Social Entrepreneurs enrolled for the course. The Chief Guest for the inaugural event was Mr. Hemanth Kumar, CSR Consultant.

PGDSIM is a good combination of rigorous theory with fieldwork practice. It includes dynamic workshops and skill development programmes on issues related to the development sector. Prospective Social Entrepreneurs (PSE) present their project proposal to a panel of experts who critically assesses and guide the implementation process. As part of the orientation programme, PSE's are oriented on the course content, taken on field visits to various social enterprises and NGOs, and attend guest lectures delivered by practitioners. They also attend workshops on Group Dynamics and Street Theatre which enables them to function as an effective group during the course period.

Six core subjects and two optional subjects are handled during each semester. Both theoretical inputs and practical insights to all these subjects are provided by well-trained faculty who are academicians, social entrepreneurs, and subject experts. The classes for these optional subjects are held on Tuesdays for five weeks, while the rest of the days are dedicated for the core subjects.

Contact classes are conducted on two days a week and concurrent field work is assigned on other days. At the end of the course, each student is assigned to an NGO for one-month to serve as an intern and understand its day-to-day functioning.

Until now, 17 batches have been completed and in total 330 PSEs have received their diplomas. 71 of them have launched NGOs and 40 NGO heads and 66 NGO staff have been oriented on social entrepreneurship.

If you wish to know more about this programme, please visit www.csim.in or call 044-42805365.



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.

For more information, please visit our website www.csim.in

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CSIM also facilitates **Social Accounting and Audit** for social enterprises, CSR projects, and NGOs through Social Audit Network, India (SAN India).

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“I incorporated the concept of ‘ISR’, meaning I am Socially Responsible.”

Deenadayalan shares with Marie Banu his journey as a HR professional.



S. Deenadayalan, popularly known as Deen, is a HR professional who has been doing pioneering work in the field of High Performance Work Systems. By establishing CEO, an organization of his dream, he offers guidance in the areas of strategic and management development to various corporate houses in India and Multinational conglomerates.

Deen is a sociology graduate, with degrees in Law, Journalism and Post-graduation in Social Work. He has over three decades of experience in the field of strategic business processes and HR and has been trained in US and Canada on High Performance Work Systems.

He was formerly the Director (Business Services & HR), Dupont and has held positions like Vice President (HR) - ITC, General Manager (HR) - Titan, to name a few.

Deen has been consulting various organizations across the globe, including Fortune 500 companies. Through his innovative empowerment model, he brings in a change of mind set for delivering business value. Apart from business consultancy, he contributes his time and effort to develop and sustain community development initiatives in Social Service Organizations. His passion lies in Organization Visioning, Leadership Mentoring and Coaching, Developing Organizational Capability, HR Strategies & Systems Development

besides Inspiring Young Entrepreneurs.

In an exclusive interview, Deenadayalan shares his journey as a HR professional.

About your education and early career?

I studied Sociology in Annamalai University, which was more by default than design. I then pursued PG in Personnel Management at MSSW from 1972-1974. Those days, this course was called ‘Post Graduate Diploma in Social Service Administration’.

Mrs. Mary Club Wala Jadhav offered me a scholarship and was a great source of inspiration. Before my results, I was offered a job at Enfield in 1974. But, I did not accept it as the canteen coupon was offered only to me and not to my other two classmates, who had also appeared for Interview along with me.

I joined Prof. TK Nair for a project on Food and Agriculture Organization in Karaikal and did my internship on ‘Agrarian relationship in Pondicherry’. Here, I learnt the meaning of ‘social divide’. I went to meet the local land lord in Nedungadu. He did not allow me inside his home, because I had interviewed an agricultural worker before.

Later, Mr. P.M Mathew, a Director in Mettur Beardsell and part of my VIVA panel, remembered how I did my

presentation and offered me a position at Mettur Beardsell. Ms. Indira Nooyi (that time Indira Krishnamurthy) along with the best of all Management Trainees from Business Schools were working here and I was the only one from Madras School of Social Work.

Can you share your stint at NTTF?

Mr. T.S Gopalan, a leading advocate, advised me to pursue my career in Skill Building. It was another 7 years of outstanding learning at NTTF where I had the opportunity to conduct several social experiments. From offering 50% of seats to Municipal School Students to up-skilling the blue-collar employees to become entrepreneurs; from capacitating union leaders to become entrepreneurs to managing labor relations —each of them was a new experiment and a successful experience. The much talked about ‘Learn, Earn and Grow model’ was seeded here in 1985.

NTTF is a role model in skill building for our country and Mr. Regruraj, the present Managing Director, continues to be my guru. I am happy to say that I am the uninvited ambassador of NTTF.

Your efforts to bring True value of asset building into practice?

I worked for Fenner in Madurai for a short period of ten months. The management used to offer 500 rupees as Long Service Award to workers instead of one sovereign of gold (that costed 400 rupees and was awarded earlier). The Union Leader Mr. Kondal refused the cash award and insisted only on the gold sovereign.

We all thought that he was a fool to demand an award of a lesser value. But, he told us that the gold will reach the family and will have more value in the coming years, while the cash given to the workers will be spent within the next day. He taught me the concept of ‘True Value of asset building’.

When I joined ITC at Mantralayam, we used to negotiate with employees and village leaders. Two village leaders, from opposing groups, would bring 100 of their men with guns and demand employment. Feudalism was high and we needed a lot of money to get things done.

The equity shares that ITC offered to its employees were taken away by Mr. Reddy, one of the village leaders.

After I learnt about this issue, I told the employees to pledge their share with the bank and purchase a home. This idea came from the learning I gained from Mr. Kondal—finding ways of enhancing employee assets.

What were the innovative programmes that you launched at Titan?

At Titan, I had immense opportunities to conduct various social experiments. We visited villages and recruited

students from rural areas, especially girls. We set up transit houses wherein each house had a Foster Parent. All the theory that I learnt in Social Work, I could put into practice—like social care, peer counseling, group work, etc. While some succeeded, few failed.

Mr. Kondal’s thought of people having assets and not money had a huge impact on me. As Titan did not advocate for higher remuneration for team members, I suggested to the management “Own you own House” scheme which they accepted in 1988. The company purchased 100 acres of land at 1 lakh rupees per acre. 400 employees opted to purchase the land in instalments of 100 rupees a month. Today, it is the state of the art colony in Hosur designed by Mr. Charles Correa.

Titan also did a hobby inventory and had 10 cluster club activities like folk songs, debate, wall graffiti, etc. On the third year of my joining, I took all the employees on a picnic and started building fellowship. We mainstreamed nearly 250 differently-abled which no company has attempted till date. Today, the Dehradun Factory has 80% of hearing impaired employees.

Titan Assembly workers wear white uniforms while other manufacturing center workers wear Green color uniforms. We formed a Rural Women Society so that they could be engaged to wash the uniforms every week. Titan paid the society for their services and this helped the rural women.

We also partnered with Myrada, ActionAid, and several other organizations for ancillary activities. Before the word CSR was born, Titan was into it. I incorporated the concept of ‘ISR’ meaning ‘I am Socially Responsible’ by having my team members participate in NGO activities.

Please tell us about CEO?

CEO has been registered as Centre for Excellence in organization. CEO was started in 1999 to pursue my passion as Socio-business entrepreneur, and till date we have made a significant impact at bottom of the pyramid. Very less attention is given to people working in this segment and I am proud that my team under Mr. Mahendran’s leadership has 140 members and have impacted people at all levels. We have created careers for several thousands of Municipal school students living in rural areas and organizations like GE, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Dr Reddys Lab, Strides, Granules, Corning, TAFE, Ashok Leyland, Titan, NTTF, CEAT, Ray Chem, KEC Electric, Indofil have facilitated people at bottom of the pyramid grow.

We have also supported NGO’s like M.S. Swaminathan Foundation, CBN, Youth for Jobs, Enable India, CSIM and many NGOs.