

The Mahatma of Koramangala

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Gurudev Tagore named Gandhiji “Mahatma.” It was not a subjective or emotional outburst. When we do research on the mind of Mahatma Gandhi putting the question ‘what attributes in Gandhiji constituted the fiber of greatness?’ we get the answer “he was not merely a great man; rather he was both a great and a good man - a combination which is too rarely achieved and too little appreciated”.

When we apply this reasoning from the perception of a researcher on the mind of Mahatma Gandhi, to late Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy, we feel like rightly naming him the Mahatma of Koramangala. We are limiting the laurel to Koramangala because we have seen him and his “Mahatma” activities at close quarters from our vantage position in Koramangala.

At one place Gandhiji had said that he was a spiritual man in the garb of a politician. Prof. Ramaswamy too was an embodiment of spirituality and ethics in the garb of a Management Professor. Incidentally Prof. Ramaswamy was the first Professor of Management in the University system in India and taught in Bajaj Institute of Management of Bombay University. He brought new dimensions to management education by taking it into hitherto neglected sectors of the economy such as transport, power, education,

health, agriculture, rural development, public administration and the political system.

An Industrial Engineer, with a scientific mind fine tuned with the ageless wisdom reflected through the Vedic value systems of India, he was experimenting in scientific application of Ethics and Spirituality that can be copied and reproduced by anybody with passion and commitment, and tested in any lab of real life to transform human perception on Happy Living. His vision was embedded with the dictum of Bhagavad Gita “Yogakshemam vahamyaham.” He believed that a coherent existence of man, animal and nature is the right answer to achieve happy life. “Happy life automatically comes when our thoughts and deeds create positive vibrations,” he frequently used to comment. Many would remember his pet statement” if there is a Heaven, let that Heaven be here, now and around us.” He believed that every child is born divine and the shining quality of the rays of the divinity within, gets obscured and blacked out with the societal pollution cloud of mindsets.

As a true Guru to the society at large, he dedicated his post retirement life to eradicate that cloud or eclipse through two NGOs - the

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CARTMAN and the Indian Heritage Academy (IHA),

We will first talk about the IHA which he developed like a University. In a unique format of full freedom to the teachers, the IHA grew as a centre of excellence in bringing out the divine qualities of creative talents in children, and helping the grownups to visit their inner self through Yoga, Meditation and cultural programmes. The Mahatma in Prof. Ramaswamy comes to focus when we look at the way the Civic Amenity (CA) sites got from BDA(Bangalore Development Authority) on long lease are used by others to build Kalyana Mantaps, Convention Centres, Clubs, etc. that mint lakhs of Rupees per day now a days. Prof. Ramaswamy built small halls and rooms at IHA which enterprising art, dance, music, spiritual Gurus use as class rooms rather in an autonomous institutional format at very nominal overhead expenditure, and train children on various art forms and spirituality training like yoga, meditation, etc. The IHA also was a source of strength and empowerment for cultural institutions who could organise regular programmes at very nominal rent not available elsewhere in Koramangala. In fact today IHA is like a mini Viswabharathi of Gurudev Tagore, though unlike Santiniketan in Bholpur, IHA in Koramangala has a tiny small land of about half-an-acre. Nearly thousand children are fine tuning their creative talents and hundreds of adults get physical and mental empowerment training. What other attribute we can give to such a visionary who worked with missionary zeal to build the Indian Heritage Academy in Koramangala from plain earth to what it is today?

Coming to CARTMAN, in fact this was Prof. Ramaswamy's first project. His deep love for animal and nature and his perception of the gratitude that mankind owes to animals and nature for all the wealth and prosperity that man makes, is reflected in the projects and activities undertaken by this NGO. But for his vision, high level contacts and perseverance, this two acre CA site in a prime locality in Koramangala 6th Block of Bangalore, today known as BBMP-CARTMAN Eco Park, would have turned as a concrete jungle that would have benefited a handful exclusive elites of the society. Guarding it like a hen guards its chicks, Prof. Ramaswamy created a mini forest, bringing saplings from various parts of India where he visited during his Management lecture tours. We the Koramangalites owe it to Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy in preserving this land and the scenic beauty created there for the enjoyment of all citizens. True to his passion activities in the Eco park started with an animal welfare centre and an Anganwadi for construction workers' children. CARTMAN today organizes out of school/college campus educational programmes on environment awareness, love for animals and inspiring young Indians to undertake the Talisman Test of Gandhiji. Gandhiji's advice to young people who were seeking to join for any profession used to be like this "Whenever you join a profession and do anything, close your eyes first and think of the poorest of the poor person that you would have seen in your life. Now think in what way a smile will come on the face of that poorest of the poor you met. Work to get that smile. "The Anganwadi at the Eco park is a very ideal teaching aid on Talisman test and a place of empowerment for students and youth. _____●