

NEWS & VIEWS

Stalwarts launch Ethics Journal

A former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India; a Management Guru and National Professor of India – Management; a retired Chief Secretary of the State; a retired Chairman of one of the leading Public Sector Undertakings of India and still an active board member, advisor and mentor of many public and private corporations; a working CEO and MD of one of the globally acclaimed Indian corporations; a renowned educationist who has to his credit building of innumerable institutions including two deemed Universities with over 30,000 students on rolls; a scientist and retired Professor from the prestigious Indian Institute of Science and a successful entrepreneur – it was a ‘Saptharishi sangha’ of dignitaries on the dais.

The occasion was the launch of the *Asian Journal of Professional Ethics & Management*, an initiative by the Bangalore based Society for Professional Ethics & Management, founded by Dr. C. G. Krishnadas Nair. The function was held at the auditorium of Bhagavan Sri Mahavir Jain College, Bangalore, on 28th March 2009.



The dignitaries were M.N.Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India, Prof. N. S. Ramaswamy, Founder Director, IIM-B and National Professor of India, Dr. A. Ravindra, former Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Dr. C. G. Krishnadas Nair, former Chairman of HAL, S. Gopalakrishnan, CEO and MD of Infosys Technologies Ltd., R. Chenraj Jain, Chairman of the Jain Group of Institutions and Prof. E. S. Dwarakadasa.



Each explained the need for giving importance to ethics in professions and business in the present high-tech and information technology driven world. Knowledge, capital and manpower alone cannot drive individuals, institutions and industry. They need to act ethically. Only then will their efforts yield positive results, benefiting everyone. Politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen, would, as a group become givers rather than takers. Ethics is a magic wand that ushers in growth and prosperity and ensures tranquil relationship between all concerned. The speakers exhorted the young professionals who formed a sizable part of the audience to study ethics and to practise it. It would empower them in their professional lines that lay ahead of them.

Highlight of individual speeches:

Dr. C. G. Krishnadas Nair, Chairman, Board of Editorial Advisors of the Journal explained what prompted him to establish the Society for Professional Ethics & Management and start this quarterly journal. "Growing unrest in the world stems from greed and associated corruption. Though the perpetrators of such negative practices form a small percentage, the venom of their destructive behaviour spreads like wildfire, suffocating the entire society and world community. The Asian countries in general and India in particular, have spiritual treatment systems that can not only heal the visible and invisible wounds, but also build immune systems to protect professionals, managers and public administrators from the onslaught of such viruses. The objective of the Society is to promote activities that will spread awareness of the fundamentals of ethics and how the values of ethics can bring in excellence in management, which in turn will benefit the whole mankind. Media has great power and role in guiding and molding the citizens, particularly the young and growing ones."

Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India and Patron Advisor of the Journal, said that "human was never better." He then explained how the self-preservation tendency attached with animal passion drove the early settlers of the globe towards destruction of large community for the benefit of a few. As civilization began to roll forward, spirituality sprouted, balancing the opposites inevitable within human perception and thinking, like good and bad, right and wrong, greed and generosity, night and day, etc. Ethics is the practicing arm of spirituality that on the one hand prevents man from becoming a victim of his own greed and destroying himself and the society, and on the other hand transforms him with a healthy sense of 'fear of breaking the law' and thinking in positive terms before every action. This fear of law and positive actions prevent chaos in words and deeds. Actions followed with such thinking bring in results beneficial for both the individual and the society at large.

Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy said India's concept of 'dwanthwathwa', which means one should be a giver as one takes, is forgotten by the civilized world. In his urge to be the winner all the way, man crushes his own cradle. All other pre-historic civilizations that gave importance to this winning theory got destroyed, while the Indian civilization which has a history of over 10,000 years of accountable cultural activities, is alive and vibrant even today. The 'sage and self' concept that is in the gene of Indians, has helped to preserve the spiritual qualities needed for healthy social life and prosperity. Practicing of ethics, an offshoot of spirituality, has been driven away from academic life in India. Modern curriculum of Indian educational institutions has taken away the teaching of ethics. Awareness and practice of ethics enables one to blossom in any activity, job, occupation, career or profession, and spread the fragrance of growth to fellow human beings and to the society at large. 'Public gain should be more than private gain,' is the fundamental principle of ethics. Practicing such principles enables one to bring heaven here and now. For this to happen a reversal of the present educational policy has to be brought about. Indian education should have more of 'Indian thoughts' that will kindle liking and love for ethics and take the growing generation to new heights of glory.

Dr. Ravindra – Ethics in governance is vital for peaceful public life and prosperity of the society and the state. But it is the most difficult to manage. We cannot wash away our hands by criticizing bureaucrats and politicians who are mainly responsible for public administration. Concerted efforts must be brought in, to make the officialdom and political players feel the urge to be ethical in their thoughts and deeds. Concern for fellow citizens, respect and fear for law, motivation to improve the lot of the general public and build a strong nation, are the guiding factors of good governance. A clear understanding of ethics in public life will benefit not only those involved in the field of governance but the entire society and the nation.

R. Chenraj Jain - Civilizations and culture are preserved by the unconsciously competent stalwarts. They have worked hard and served in their professions with utmost concern for fellow citizens, nature, animal and environment. This is what has made them the stalwarts they are. This concern can be defined as "ethics of life." And such stalwarts are adorning the stage of launching the *Asian Journal of Professional Ethics & Management* here today.

S. Gopalakrishnan - World is going through economic and political turmoil. Nevertheless modern technology has changed life of millions for the better. With the advent and adaptation of modern technologies, the middle class has grown in India from 100 million to 300 million. Technology helps us to connect the world together. Perception of technology with ethical values, helps us to bring a balance between exploitation and development. What is the right way to do this? How to fix the system with increased leverage, that will benefit all stakeholders? To get the right vision and answer we fall back to ethics. The *Asian Journal of Professional Ethics & Management*, is a giant step in creating and spreading awareness of ethics.

Prof. E.S. Dwarakadasa - Man developed his sense of ethics through observations and experiences. Initially anything done for his gain or survival was correct for him. Slowly with the evolution of social life and imbibing values of community living, some kind of scientific thought began to enlighten him. This enlightenment influenced and guided him in his relationship with other members of the family and the society. This can be said as the beginning of Ethical thoughts which not only gave a new perception to his words and deeds, but also helped man to scientifically progress and create many achievements for the benefit of humanity.

Letters to Editor:

Some thoughts to share

Let me, at the outset, salute and applaud the greats, who thought of an Asian Journal – on Ethics – with the first copy already in our hands; particularly Dr. C.G. Krishnadas Nair, the visionary thinker, whose brain-child it is. The concept of Ethics is becoming endangered and heading to possible extinction and oblivion, in this age of ours, with the rat race and pursuit of material gains and wealth, which takes precedence over all else. So, this publication is not a day too late and is most appropriate for our troubled times.

Ethical behaviour to be cultivated over the years and practiced, life long, whether at home, school, work place or business – big & small. That is, abjuring greed and being sensitive to the needs of others. Examples from real life, around us, amply show that Ethical practices need not impoverish any one of us. On the other hand there is a glow of rare achievements.

On a purely personal level, ethical behaviour results in a rare fearlessness, courage and peace of mind. Ethics, therefore, should be the guiding force, at all levels and at all times. The essence of true happiness is after all peace of mind – i.e. *shanthi*.

- **R. Sriram***
Bangalore.

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