

NEWS & VIEWS

We reproduce an excerpt of our Patron and Management Guru Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy's profile, recently covered by one of the leading national dailies of India, for the benefit and inspiration of our readers particularly the young professionals and professional students. The uniqueness of Prof. Ramaswamy's service to the society is that while innumerable saintly personalities of our country preach, our Patron puts his efforts to practice his vision and mission in real life terms. Starting from bullock carts, environment protection and civic management, his vision and mission cross the crescendo of life at application of ethics and spirituality in management. There are over twenty specific areas that have caught Prof. Ramaswamy's attention and zeal.

Editor

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The grand old man of IIM-B - An Institution Builder, he s lent the same zeal to improving the performance of the Millennia-Old Bullock Cart as he did to building IIM-Bangalore - Aarthi R | TNN

Meet Prof. N. S. Ramaswamy. For many, he's an 'ayya' in kurta-pyjama, sporting a flowing white beard and holding a strong walking stick in hand. A multi-dimensional personality, he's long been engaged in at least 20 missions across as many sectors: Indian heritage and management to bullock carts and donkey welfare.

Well known, well travelled, he's been a consultant to the UN, FAO, World Bank and many global organizations. Presently, he knows 11 cabinet ministers. The prime minister is a good friend. Yet, not many of his ideas have been implemented, nor missions completed till date.

That doesn't deter the grand old man's faith. At 84, he can still laugh saying: "It's destiny. Everything is ulta here. That's why I sport a long beard to show everything grows well in the wrong place!" affectionately patting his shining bald head.

In 1962, he was the first and youngest professor of management in Mumbai (then Bombay) University. "Not because I was handsome but because nobody was willing to take up a job that paid Rs 1,100." Today, probably, he's the oldest professor alive, and even today, he earns top bucks for a lecture. He first came to Bangalore in 1973 as founder-director of IIM-B. He took Management Science to sectors other than business and industry, showing its relevance to

agriculture, rural development, transport, health, education, power, communication, urban development, public administration and even the political system.

He retired in 1986 but is still socially active, implementing his various visions and missions through his two NGOs — Indian Heritage Academy (IHA) and CARTMAN (Centre for Action, Research and Technology for Man, Animal and Nature). He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2006 for social service. Incidentally, the proposal was sent in 1973. He was also appointed national research professor in management, the only one for management and among 12 in all fields put together.

He once participated in the Indian freedom fight as a student volunteer but strongly feels that India is more divided today than at the time of Independence.

ONE MAN, MANY MISSIONS

Prof. Ramaswamy was the first to improve the bullock cart, resulting in productivity trebling and reducing animal suffering, for which he became world famous as 'Cartman'. His work on use of donkeys and buffaloes earned him worldwide acclaim as a 'pioneer in buffalo and donkey welfare'.

An electrical engineering graduate, Prof. Ramaswamy has done significant research on

NEWS & VIEWS

livestock and its role in development, how livestock contributes to 7% of GNP but receives less than 1% of Plan allocation. With his elaborate research, he also proved that by modernization of the livestock system, rural India can be transformed.

A hard-core vegetarian, but he's also served as chairman of Animal Welfare Board of India and Meat Committee, and fought for modernisation of slaughter houses. He suggested a simple method of slaughtering animals in rural areas, of taking only the carcass to urban areas for consumption, thus eliminating all the ill-effects of the present system of transporting livestock by vehicles and trekking to distant consuming centres.

Born on March 2, 1926, he hails from a typical Brahmin family but has been a rebel of sorts. At 12, he rebelled against his grandmother's rule of sweepers not being allowed into the house, promising his maid Valli — "You will not sweep when I grow up."

Grown up, he also brought in a revolution in thought, organizing a 'Padavandana' function at IHA, where he and his wife traditionally honoured 100 dalit couples. Even in the management institutes he headed, he introduced better programmes to upgrade dalits so they felt confident about sitting alongside upper class students in the classroom.

"It's all about uniting Hindus by the heart and bringing dalits into the mainstream of Indian culture," as he says. He strongly believes in privatisation of the education sector. "You cannot improve the depressed class without increasing capacity with Public Private Partnership (PPP). I have the right to education but as an average poor student, where do I go?" he asks.

HIS BETTER HALF

They've been married for the past 60 years. Rajam Parvati came into his life in May 1949 as a lass who was 7th standard pass. She was "from an obscure village, far away from city life, so unused to people smoking that on our very first day

together, she thought I was burning when I was just casually smoking," he says, laughing. Today, "She's made me a proud husband, pursuing her studies sincerely even after marriage, not stopping until she got her MA." Just as they pose together for a pictureperfect moment, 10-year old mischief, their cute 'NRI dog' from the US, jumps in to join them in the frame.

THE FAMILY PIC

His son, Rajan Srinivasan, is back in India after 20 years in the US. His daughter, Rajani, still lives there, with her tech CEO husband. His two grand daughters work in New York; and a third is studying medicine in US. The IT engineer grandson works in Europe.

TYPICAL DAY IN HIS LIFE

He's up at 5 am and starts the day with Shubashitam, Bhagavatham, Upanishad & Indian heritage. After 7.30 am, he's walking through his special abode, the 2-acre mini forest that he has created as part of a project on the civic amenity (CA) site given to him by the state government. Back home before 9 am, he rushes to office after a quick 10 minutes expended on the city's nine newspapers. He's a great admirer of Indian newspapers. "If born again, I want to be an Indian journalist," says the writer of three journals. A spell at Indian Heritage Academy after work, before he heads back home.



AWESOME THREESOME: Prof. Ramaswamy with wife Parvati and pet Mischief