

Inspira



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FROM MY HEART

My Dear Young Enthusiastic
LILA FELLOWS,

This has been a very eventful quarter. I will start with this years **Award** function. We had past LF's and new LF's come up on the stage and speak of their experiences. Our Chief guest was Ms. Kiran Majumdar CMD of Biocon India. She shared some wonderful thoughts with all of us. She truly is a role model for all of you out there. To read more about what she said, log on to our website www.lilapoonawallaafoundation.com by clicking on 'Leading Ladies'. This year **Thirty-nine new Lila Fellows** joined the family. They are from various fields, ranging from MCS, Geography, Info systems Management, Pharmaceuticals, Chemical Research, Computational Biography, Food Science & Nutrition, Biology, and many more. Seven of them left for overseas, 5 for USA and 2 for UK.

Then came my birthday on 16th September. What a memorable evening it was! "Tum Jeeyo Hazaaron Saal, Saal Ke Din Ho Pachaas Hazaar....", sang the seemingly never-ending line of Lila Fellows - not 1, 2, 3, but a whole lot of 43, alongwith the orchestra. Struck by the birthday aura thus created, I walked down the **Corridor of Lila Fellows** right into the room where ribbons, balloons, live music, cake & 57 candles were all ready, as if to say 'Lila Ma'am, We Love You!'. Then what followed was a perfect birthday hosted by my friend Vasantha, but initiated and made vibrant by the selfless attitude of the Lila Fellows. I could not help but say, "I have had 56 birthdays but none as wonderful as this one, I could not have

asked for anything more!". It was a truly great surprise, beyond any expression or expectation and so it also brought tremendous joy and happiness and a feeling that all these six years of hard work in establishing LPF was at last worth it. The LF's took my breath away. The most important was that they have now come of age, they have understood that undoubtedly giving is many times happier than receiving. **They put in their might and donated a wonderful gift to the Foundation.**

Besides these two fantastic functions, we had the traditional **get-together** for the new Lila Fellows at Holiday Inn.

With the **objective of continuous learning and upgrading skills** we had **two training programs** for Lila Fellows conducted by well known women professionals; one by Mrs. Cora Menezes on 'T.A.' and the other by Mrs. Vimla Menon on Presentation skills. Both of them did these programs, with only one objective in mind, to build LF's into **young dynamic and confident young professionals**. The Foundation is indeed grateful to both of them.

On the **cultural front** we had three performances, a play **Fiddler on the roof**, an **Odyssey** performance by Yogini Gandhi and a **Sarod** performance by Ayaan and Amaan Ali Bangash.

All the Trustees with their spouses celebrated the successful completion of the 6th award function. We had a **get together at Golconda, ABC Farms**, where we enjoyed Hyderabad food. To get to know the **Inspira Editorial Board**, who call themselves **Crusaders**, we had a **PIZZA** evening at Pizza Hut. We had great fun.

Firoz's roses have really added warmth, fragrance and grace to many an occasion. We have used roses on all occasions for spreading **friendship and comradeship amongst our Parivar of LPF.**

The dark water-laden monsoon clouds i.e. the lifeline of India changed into these dark war clouds. What the future holds for us God alone knows, but **our oneness and the strong foundation of the LPF**, I am certain, shall strengthen with time no matter what difficulties we face. Let us hope and pray that this calamity soon becomes another 'to be forgotten' chapter of history.

On behalf of all the **Trustees of the Foundation** and on my own behalf I wish each one of you and all your loved ones, **A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS FESTIVAL SEASON**. May each one of you achieve your aspirations and have a healthy and a successful year, inspite of the problems.

With Loves

Lila



Words fail me, What can I say? When we are born we have to leave the world. All of us know this fundamental truth, but always we rejoice at birth and mourn death. We are nobody to question the Almighty's decision. But I will say that Mr. Indur Thadhani was more than a FRIEND. We loved HIM for his calm composed disposition. He has been a guiding force not only behind his beloved wife MAYA but to the whole Foundation. He took lot of interest in the working of the Foundation and on this day we Salute Him and bid a respectful farewell to our departed Friend. May God give strength and courage to Maya and their children. May God rest his SOUL in peace.



SHORT TAKES



Kavita Vasant and Sadhavi Salunke put forward an emotional but an enlightening success story that will definitely move every soul with its message of 'love and share'.

She grew up in a broad-minded yet conservative family, which believed in religion and values - Tamil values. She was sent to a Tamil medium school, which she discontinued after her 5th standard as she later joined the Dastur School for girls. Her school laid the foundation for learning values like humanity and secularism. She recalls many funny instances of her transition from Tamil to English medium where English seemed to be an alien script and writing it reverse also did not matter! Always a rapid learner, Vasantha gathered speed. She joined Fergusson College and took up science for two years. Here she went on to meet and make a group of friends who always wanted to do or be something different. Here is when she met our very own Lila Poonawalla who later on became a friend for life.

She recalls the days when orthodoxy and conservatives dominated the college scenario, when saris were casuals and fitting salwar-kameez was the fashion for a few. At this time the "to make a difference" desire always lingered among her groupmates and they went on to create history by wearing shorts at a PT display and transforming yards of crepe paper into skirts to perform their favorite Cha-Cha-Cha dance. The desire to do something different always led them to new challenges and it remained throughout their lives.

Engineering came her way because of the education system at that time when you could either become a doctor or an engineer. Becoming a doctor meant hard work for 10 years while engineering could be achieved just in three years. 10 years seemed a long time to become independent. So engineering it was. She was one of the first two women mechanical engineers of the University of Pune (the other being Lila Poonawalla.) Their friendship matured as they completed their degrees together.

She joined D.R.D.O. in 1967 as a senior scientific assistant. She had a very steady career graph, as she got promoted every 5 years. It was easy for her to adjust with her assistants because she never developed the 'I am the boss' attitude in her team. But being dominated by her bosses was never the norm.

She went on to be a part of the successful development of Safety Arming Mechanisms & Fuses for Guided Missiles as well as aircraft bombs for the first time in India. She has also developed the indigenous technology for the design & manufacture of very large size Ball & Roller Bearings called 'Slewing Rings' & the design & reliability proving of certain mission critical system for Agni-II Guided Missile Launcher. She won the Agni Award for Excellence in Self-Reliance 1999, the D.R.D.O. Best Project Award -1985 & Cinni Best Woman Executive Award 1987.

Marriage happened after 2 years of her joining D.R.D.O.

She says she learned a lot from D.R.D.O. It had a bureaucratic system but at the same time there were many opportunities and they came along with a large amount of challenge with them. So every opportunity, every challenge gave Vasantha a purpose to move ahead and explore new horizons.

She went on to become the joint director of D.R.D.O. Her transfer to R & D engineering was a silver lining in the cloud where she got the opportunity to become a member of the C.I.I. The credit for all these mind-blowing achievements of her life goes to her 'must-do-something-different' attitude. She says the key to her success is accepting challenges and putting her heart and soul into the work she did. She quotes a line from the book 'One Minute Nonsense' that says, "wanting to find the truth you will always walk alone". Vasantha always wanted to find out what lies beyond the truth which made her accept challenges and stand strong against the winds of discouragement. It was just the right time when Lila Poonawalla called her up to be a part of the foundation.

She had just retired. There were two important influences on her to join-her reaffirmation of friendship with Mrs. Lila Poonawalla and the need to know each other as they are of today.

She also has a very strong instinct to help others. She enjoys the interview-sessions before selecting the new awardees for the year. She says that there exists democracy amongst the panel of trustees where each one can put forth their varying points of view. The best thing is everybody is ready to listen and consider the matter if it is

worth it. In all she enjoys being a part of the board of trustees.

She likes young people and enjoys their company. But one thing, which saddens her is that all the visionary lot of Indians have gone abroad and they have not felt the need to give back to their nation what they took along - its culture, values, etc. She strongly feels that the Indians should do whatever they can to add to the development of their nation.

She shares with us some statistics according to which if every Indian between the age group of 20 to 60 saves one rupee a day we will have two million rupees with us, which will help our nation in a major way! The moral of her story is 'we do not lose by giving even a little'.

Her advice to the Lila Fellows is "spare something for others whose dreams can be fulfilled with your little help. Remember that your aim should be to empower others as you have been empowered. The foundation has helped you fulfill your dreams so help others fulfill theirs. Life always has something to offer. Be open and generous. We lose nothing by giving to others".

In her own humble ways the powerful 'missile woman' strives to build up strong walls for a peaceful world.

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER ...

"I was not looking for my dreams to interpret my life, but rather for my life to interpret my dreams" opines Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, Chairperson Lila Poonawalla Foundation who five years ago had not dreamt that she would build such a great institution.

Welcome to the Lila Poonawalla Foundation.

In keeping with the glorious tradition of the Lila Poonawalla Foundation, the Sixth Year Scholarship Award Function was held at the Russet Hall of Hotel Taj Blue Diamond on the 2nd of August 2001. The atmosphere was filled with mixed feelings of anticipation, enthusiasm and pride. The hall was crowded with senior and new Lila Fellows with their beaming parents in tow. The trustees mingled with the Lila Fellows, breaking the ice instantly and adding warmth to the conversations.

Mr. Firoz Poonawalla, trustee on the board and 'the man behind the successful woman' lighted up the evening with his effervescent sense of humor that dotted his compering and his beautiful roses spread all over the place.



Mrs. Lila Poonawalla welcoming the Chief Guest Ms. Kiran Mujumdar Shaw at the Sixth Award Function.

Mrs. Lila Poonawalla, Chairperson of the Foundation gave the welcome address to the dignitaries, the Lila Fellows and their parents, the press etc. which was followed by lighting the lamp by the dignitaries on the dais. Her speech motivated the young and old alike with her stress on reaching out to those that are less fortunate than us.

Lila fellows, Suvarna Deshpande and Manjusha Gupte gave their viewpoint about the foundation. New awardees - Prachi Bora and Sarika Deore could not retain their excitement on getting the scholarship while Dr. Supriya Kulkarni and Samidha Ghatpande enlightened us on what Lila fellowship means to them.

Our new trustees on the board too made their mark. Mrs. Vasantha Ramaswamy spoke about the Lila Poonawalla Foundation. The Scholarships, we learn, are gifts to the girl-graduates who are needy academic scholars from any and every stratum of society. Though some of the overseas Lila Fellows were absent, Mrs. Surabhi Nag did not forget to

mention them and the ones present along with their outstanding achievements.

The trustees of the foundation are brilliant pioneers in their respective fields who made it to the top through all odds. Discovering this was a major inspiration in itself!

Uzma Kazi, editor of Lila Poonawalla Foundation Newsletter-'Inspira', spoke about the quarterly newsletter and thanked the trustees and her team members for their support, commitment and co-operation.

Senior trustee Mrs. Freny Tarapore introduced the chief-guest for the evening, Mrs. Kiran Majumdar Shaw (Chairperson and Managing Director - Biocon India), an awesome lady- a pioneer in the wine-brewing industry in India. "Listening to all the Lila Fellows and the great work the foundation is doing is indeed amazing and that too in an important area - Women's Education.

Opportunities are God sent and are present everywhere. If one has determination and courage, nothing is impossible. Success does not come easily and it is a tough road to go through", she said. She also emphasized on our responsibility as awardees to return to society what it has given to us, through our skills and qualifications. She congratulated all the Lila fellows on being a part of the foundation and awarded the scholarships while another senior trustee Mrs. Maya Thadani called on the awardees.

Mr. Parshuram Date thanked the Chief Guest, all the trustees, the parents and the Lila Fellows.

Every moment of the ceremony had a personal touch to it - from the flowers given to the Lila Fellows to those adorning the whole place. Even the bouquets presented to the trustees were filled with their favorite colored roses!

The evening left us with beautiful memories and a great sense of societal responsibility as students and citizens of the world.

— LUBAINAH VAPRA AND MANASI KULKARNI.

BLACK TUESDAY

From: Neetu Bhatia

To: 'Poonawalla'

Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2001. 9:44 a.m.

Subject: RE: Hello, hope you are okay.

Dear Mrs. Poonawalla,

Thanks so much for asking. Sonya had called. The problem is I can't seem to make outgoing calls from my landline as well as my cell phone. I really appreciate everybody's asking. I am safe and well but the sight I saw was the most horrific thing I have witnessed in my life. I was at work early Tuesday morning around 7 a.m. and was already almost 2 hours into work when we heard a loud explosion. I work in 3 World Financial Center, which is right adjacent to the WTC buildings. We looked through the windows and figured something had hit the WTC; people started to evacuate the building. The evacuation was very orderly and there were no signs of chaos. Once down the street, we just stood there looking up not knowing really what had hit. Then came the second explosion within minutes. I didn't see the plane enter the two buildings as I was on the other side, but saw the fireball and debris come out on the other side. And that is when we realized there was something awfully wrong. We started to run away from there. Some yards away and we looked back up and I saw the most horrific sight of my life. I saw people, human beings jump off the 70th-80th floors of the WTC. At first I thought it was falling debris, then quickly realized it was human beings as their shadows were being reflected on the buildings as they fell. I waited there for sometime. People kept saying the towers were



Mrs. Lila Poonawalla atop WTC, USA

Who could speak better about the 11th September - "The Black Tuesday" than someone who had a close brush with death! The first thought that occurred to each member of the LPF was Neetu Bhatia, when the first news about the terrorist attacks came. Neetu, a dynamic young Lila Fellow working at the World Financial Center shares a horrendous experience.

strong enough to take the hits. Then I realized there wasn't really any point in standing around and that it would be prudent to get home. I live right across the river from the WTC and the WFC. I take the ferry to work and back. I decided to make my way to the ferry terminal, which is right behind 3 WFC. There were hundreds of people already there to get on the boats. I got on to the boat that was supposed to bring me back to the ferry stop close to my place. The ferry people said it would make one other stop before going to my stop. When we reached the other side of the river, I was still waiting inside the ferry for other people to get off. Then I heard the ferry guys yelling and screaming, "everybody off the boat". I thought there must be someone on the boat or the boat was going to blow up. I came out and asked a woman next to me what happened. She told me to turn around. I turn and see the first of the towers come crumbling down. It was unreal, as if in a movie. The whole area including where I was standing only a few minutes ago was engulfed in smoke, falling debris, etc. I couldn't believe how lucky I was to have gotten out in the nick of time. I have not been able to focus on anything since. The experience has shaken me up a little; there are so many things we do in the course of everyday life that seem so trivial on a day like this. But I want you to know that I really appreciate your concern and all the calls and e-mails I have received over the last couple of days. I feel lucky to be alive and appreciate life a lot more than I may have before.

Senior Lila Fellow Chandrika Srinivasan shares her experiences...



After I finished my post-graduate studies in Computer Science from the Nowrosjee Wadia College, I joined Persistent Systems Pvt. limited, where I worked for about two years. It was my dream company and I loved the work that I did there. It gave me a foundation for becoming good Software Engineer. I also learnt that knowledge of business ethics, documentation and sharpening "listening" abilities is of utmost importance. Last year I joined Tata Consultancy Services, and I was

posted here in Florida. Here I work with American Express Technologies.

Initially I was like a fish out of water. The culture was new, the people were new, and the surroundings were new. Soon I started blending in. Within two months of working here at AMEX, I received a lot appreciation from various people.

Here is an extract from an appreciation that I got from one of the Project Managers, Ms. Cynthia Fardella - "Ms. Srinivasan has proven to be a highly skilled technician who has been a valuable asset to the team. She works quickly and consistently and makes the extra effort to do her work with quality. She is proactive in coming up with solutions to technical issues. It has been a pleasure to work with a dedicated and talented professional such as Ms. Srinivasan."

Here's another by Martin J. Kraztmark 3- "Chandrika has done a great job leading small projects. She not only learns quickly but also helps her colleagues to learn quickly."

The experience working here has been an eye opener in many ways. It helped me widen my horizons. Working with people from varied backgrounds, working with professionalism, maintaining quality, better communication were some of the aspects. When I look back I realize that I am here today because of the scholarship I got for my post graduation

studies. I received an award of \$200 too as a token of appreciation! I became an important member in the project. My views held a lot of importance.

The project that I was working on has now been successfully deployed. For the past four months I have been studying for the Certified Software Quality Analyst certification and hope to clear the examination.

Being here in U.S., I have come to realize how much my country and my city means to me. I was reading Inspira on the net sometime back and I was totally in awe of how well Lila Fellows are doing.

There is an incident that I want to share. End of last year my brother had an accident in which he lost an eye, and lost a finger and grafting was required for his right hand. He was in ICU for about 15 days and the medical expenses ran in to a couple of lakh of rupees. Because of the job I am holding today I was able to financially support the expenses. Fortunately, My brother is back to work now. I owe it to the Lila Poonawalla Foundation.

In the journey when I retrace my steps, I come to a point, which made all the difference in life-the scholarship, which I received, for my post-graduate studies for helping me get I where I am. I will be forever grateful to Madam Lila Poonawalla and the trustees for the trust they had in me and for helping me lead a better life.

I remember my school anthem (St. Ursula High School, Chinchwad)....

Young in age full of vigor and zest,
We are eager to do our duty,
Full of spirit we shall give our very best,
To make life a thing of beauty
Lighted to light
Lighted to light

My regards and wishes to Lila Ma'am & Mr. Poonawalla and all the trustees. And best wishes to my fellow Lila Fellows

Driven by her dreams

Lila Poonawalla sure has given the girl child a gift none could ever repay. She has through her famous education-oriented fund provided many girls the opportunity to be able to excel at their education without the burden of monetary stress to bear truly a prospect for success.

That's exactly the way Samidha Ghatpande viewed the generous amount of money that was entrusted to her when she was short listed, interviewed and chosen as one of the benefactors of the LPF last year.

Samidha is a young bubbly Pune girl, with an immense sense of direction and focus in her work. Her life long ambition has been to set up her own business back home. For this purpose she chose to do a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at the Government Polytechnic in the city after her primary education in St Anne's School.

She then completed her Bachelors in COEP and aspired to go abroad and earn her masters degree. Throughout all this Samidha was nothing short of a topper. She stood 6th in Maharashtra and 1st in Pune at her diploma level and has always been proud of her above average marks.

Samidha was linked with Mrs. Thadani, who is one of the trustees of the LPF. Things got rolling for her. On the day of the interview, she muses, she was extremely apprehensive. Things however were destined to go well, for Samidha found herself paying off her student's loan and applying to study abroad.

It's been a year since the scholar shifted base to The University of Toledo, USA to obtain her master's degree. She is down to meet family and friends who she says she missed immensely there. For the next month there is nothing on the agenda but relaxation and outings, all of which are well deserved and warranted to this girl who has dedicated the past year to a dream of excellence without straying in any way.

Life in the USA, alone for a young Indian girl is an eye opener. Samidha shared accommodation off campus with another 3 Indian girl students. Amidst the hectic study schedules and jobs, the girls bonded over the kitchen cooking sprees, homesick evenings and partying nights. As most foreign students do, Samidha immediately joined up with the International Hospitality Programme, some thing on the lines of our very own internationally acclaimed Symbiosis Society.

Here she adopted an American host family who made her feel right at home with the culture and ways of the star spangled land. She melted into the atmosphere of continental food, Thanksgiving night, Christmas with all the ease as she did into her rigorous study and work timetable.

One's idea of American college life tends to get disillusioned by the images of scantily dressed students spending their time at sorority houses and football games, as depicted in popular TV shows. However it definitely isn't all parties and proms for Samidha, who has gone there with an ultimate goal of excellence

and not diverged from her initial plans.

Her 8 am to 12 am job coupled with her lectures through the afternoon keep this perky Puneite busy as a bee.

Her first job was at a cafeteria on campus, which she adds was not that exiting. It lasted out 2 months till she found herself a nice position at the Dean's office as the student secretary. Incidentally the Dean is an Indian too. Samidha tells us that of all the people in her class Chinese and Indians make up for the majority with only two actual Americans to grace the benches.

Samidha is highly praiseworthy of the education system there. She says it gives a student a chance to be able to analyze and understand his or her subject, which is far better than the system of byhearting which is part and parcel of the education here.

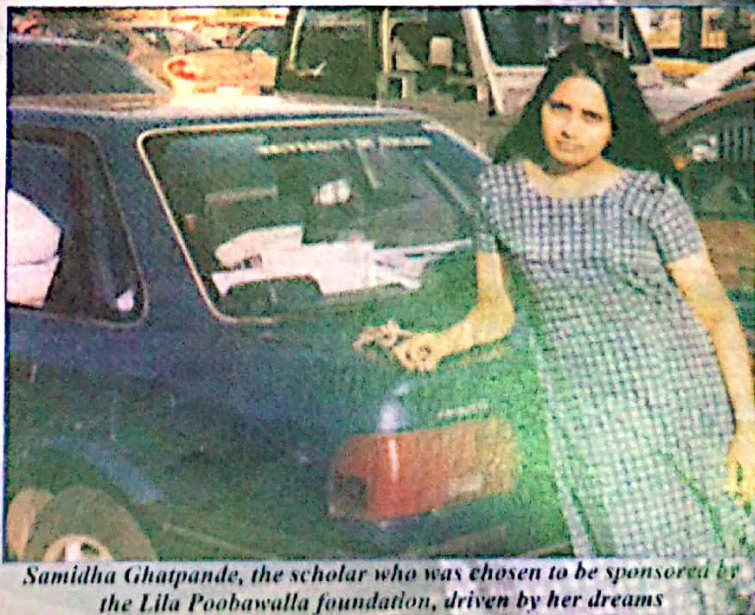
The fact that the ration of computers to students is a fantastic three computers to every one student is another advantage and proclamation of sorts the superiority of the educational system in the West. The absence of bureaucracy and the efficiency of college staff and faculty only push the quality and hassle free system there higher into the limelight.

Whatever said and done the only thing that can make anyone stand out is their determination and lust for success, which are present in Samidha in high quantities. She puts herself completely into the pursuit to be able to succeed.

In the future, she says, she wants to be able to pay for the education of her younger sister too. Samidha plans to finish off her masters and work for two years in the States before she sets off to do her MBA. This plan was formulated by her years ago and she has already set herself the goal of doing her MBA in Michigan Ann Arbor College - A goal easy enough to accomplish for a youngster oozing with determination.

Nothing brings as much affection and fondness into the conversation as the part where Samidha spoke about Mrs Poonawalla who was the founder member of the LPF. Samidha says Mrs Poonawalla treats all her "Lilafellows" as the girls are called as daughters with love and affection. In fact she is thrilled and touched that within hours of her returning to Pune, Samidha was invited for a lunch with the board of trustees.

While in the USA Samidha kept in close touch with the foundation, just part of her gratitude she thinks she owed to them. She also says that when she grows up she would love to be able to do her little bit to aid the organization in the welfare of the girl child.



Samidha Ghatpande, the scholar who was chosen to be sponsored by the Lila Poonawalla foundation, driven by her dreams

PUNE Newsline

PUNE ■ WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 3, 2001

VIVACITY



Her place in the sun

- Our first period is...
- Tea time

Ambition and determination has taken Jyoti Dalvi, a rickshaw driver's daughter from a Laxminagar chawl to the University campus in the United States.

When one door closes, another opens. That's the philosophy that Jyoti Dalvi has followed to script her own story of grit and determination. After all, this determination and the will to succeed is what has taken this 25-year-old from a pokey two-room tenement in a Laxminagar chawl, home to her father, a rickshaw driver, mother and brother to the campus of the University of Missouri, Rolla.

Her place in the SUN

"After I passed the CSIR scholarship examination, I knew I would get teaching offers, but I knew I wanted to pursue further studies abroad." This was beyond her family's means, admits her father.

"I was willing to work extra hours, sometimes 12 hours at a stretch, driving the rickshaw and running the garage, to ensure that my children were well educated. Jyoti was insistent about pursuing further studies abroad."

This she pursued through hours spent at the British library pouring over application forms to send to Universities in Britain and at a English fluency class that she attended. It was here that at a teacher's suggestion she applied for the Lila Poonawala Foundations's scholarship for women.

"My determination to succeed in my goal helped me at the interview. I was also able to get a fully sponsored admission into a British University. I owe it all to the scholarship, because

my bank statement at the time was nil," she says.

The two years at the University of Hull in the UK for her doctoral research were a learning experience. A tour of Europe and her father's month-long stay at Hull which she squeezed into her English sojourn are evidently memorable.

Suitcases stand ready waiting for the shift to a new home. "When you become financially more comfortable, you want to give it to your parents who helped to make it happen," says Jyoti.

On a research-cum-teaching assistantship at the University of Missouri, Rolla, Jyoti also wants to take her parents on a visit to the USA someday. "I never give up hope," she says. And it shows.

AISHWARYA MAVINKURVE



"I always knew I would do it. I'm not afraid of any thing," says the plucky girl, now a graduate student pursuing her doctoral research in organic chemistry in the USA.

In the midst of negotiating the nitty gritty of a loan to buy a house, a spacious mini-bungalow in Pashan fronted with a garden, specially for her parents, Maruti and Shashikala, Jyoti who is home on a two-week visit seems determined to ensure that they live the cherished middle-class dream.

"When I look at her now I feel that all the hard work was worth it after all. She has realised the wishes that I could not fulfill myself," says mother Shashikala fighting hard to keep back the tears.

A mention of her Laxminagar home evokes reluctant memories of times spent studying for her examinations in a small backroom. Press her for details and she says, "You need concentration to study, not a room. I owe it all to my teachers who encouraged me a lot."

A bright academic record ensured that she bagged scholarships throughout her school days in Renuka Swaroop High school, followed by SP College and an MSc on a National Chemical Laboratory scholarship - when she stood second in Chemistry in the University of Pune.

EVE'S VOICE

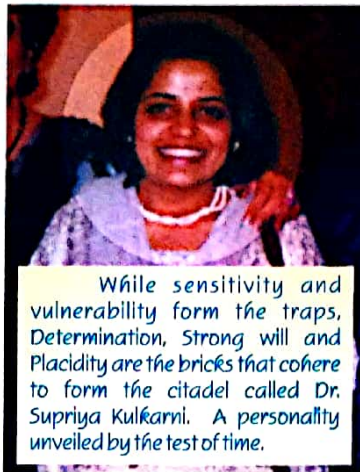
RAJANI PANCHANG catches up with two older awardees holidaying back home in Pune who were with the Lila family for this year's Award Function. The two ladies have made their country proud in a country that was alien to them, when they landed there.

This is a story that will amaze...

(Supriya is a M.D. in Pediatric Radiology from B.J. Medical College and a practicing Radiologist at K.E.M. Hospital. She has been offered a fellowship in Women's Imaging in Melbourne, but has no funding. She applies for the LPF Scholarship. Though deserving she is refused the award! She is still determined to go, but how doesn't know. Surprisingly she is called for a second interview by the foundation. Supriya is adamant to go at least abroad for 2-3 months as long her personal resources can last, if not for the whole year. Her persistence wins her an outright grant of Rs. 25, 000/- as her scholarship!)

Supriya went on to acquire training in a specialized field of pediatric radiology to evaluate children's diseases. She was lucky enough to be offered funds to last her for a year in Melbourne and she completed her fellowship. Later she was offered a fellowship at Toronto where she specialized in women's imaging and is doing wonders at her job as a consultant she was to do for six months.

She has worked in three different countries and having asked her how the three varied, she comments, "India is not deficient, but it surely could be more facilitated. In Melbourne the work environment was very relaxing and friendly. It was a kid's hospital and every member of the staff really behaved young at heart. One could see clowns walking around the place and cartoons and fun-things hanging around... Just everything nice for the children to feel better! In North America, life is too fast and tends to



While sensitivity and vulnerability form the traps, Determination, Strong will and Placidity are the bricks that cohere to form the citadel called Dr. Supriya Kulkarni. A personality unveiled by the test of time.

make you feel lonely. Learning is absolutely focussed, requires you to present and publish papers, and face a lot of competition." Extremely assertive and result oriented, her future plans include coming back to India to create public awareness about self-breast-investigation.

She has always loved to travel. Though she has not got many opportunities to travel in India, she has traveled much abroad and made many friends. She feels her career has made her more tolerant and a better person. She acknowledges the contribution of her parents and a couple of teachers at her PG departments in her life, but the LPF has been a positive influence. She says, "No one has ever clicked so many photographs of mine as the Foundation did. They make me feel so special! Professional life has been so hectic, and as a doctor I spend the day caring for my patients. There are times when I crave to be cared for. When I return to India all friends and relatives look at me as a doctor

and list out their ailments hoping to find help. But no one asks 'what kind of a life do you lead there?' 'Who does your cooking?' But when I come to the Foundation the first thing that Maya Auntie or Lila Ma'am ask me is "Supriya, how are you dear?" That is what makes me feel warm about the Foundation and makes me keep coming back."

By now she is so overwhelmed that her eyes are brimming with tears and it is best to deviate the conversation... a quiet conversation but resonating so much!

A doctoral candidate at the Purdue University in the U.S.A., Manjusha has chosen a study area back here in India. "Degree amreeki... phir bhi dil hai Hindustani!"

Manjusha Gupte completed her M.A. from JNU, the University of Liberal Arts in India. Further she went on to choose 'Environmental Policy' as the subject of her Ph.D. For her it was always interdisciplinary subject-combining Public Policies and their impact on the Environment. Her prime interest lies in participating in the drafting of new policies and thereby being pivotal in resource management.

She had chosen the right program at Purdue University, Indiana and it was out of her own choice and conviction despite not being assured of an aid there. It was then that she learned about the LPF. She says, "In India we still do have a lot of sex-discrimination. What impressed me was that this was a trust offering scholarships only to women! And in addition, the foundation was not inclined towards any one prominent field; but recognized all fields equally. I remember one girl in my batch of awardees was granted an aid for pursuing classical dancing!"

Manjusha, since 1997 has progressed towards her goal. She chose a research project that requires her to be back here in India for her fieldwork for five months in a year and in the US for 5 months to compose and formulate her research. She has identified four tribal communities - Mendha in Gadchiroli, Saigatha in Chandrapur, Bada Bhilwara and Salukheda in Udaipur and they remain her subjects of research. She is studying how rich a forest resource these tribes mean, not only to our culture and heritage, but also our economy. She says there are tribes that are unaware of civilization and the environmental policies of the nation can prove to be fatalistic to their mere existence. She observes, "There are officially very strong laws and good potential exists in India; but their implementation has taken a back seat." She has also recently presented a paper in the American Political Science Conference and won accolades for the same.

About the difference in the education here and the U.S. she says, "The education system in India is not very inviting, and one has a complete



choice of subjects. There, studies spell hard work. Each one is encouraged and compelled to write, present and publish research papers. This helps one to become profound in one's subject. Learning there professionally trains you. This is not the case here in India. It is also very interesting to meet people from different nationalities."

How attractive or difficult was America when she landed there? "Indiana is a small conservative place in America. The Mid-west that it is, is mostly bleached white and some people do try to place you... by your color, your accent etc. Indians to many are Red

Indians and are poor and starved! It could be traumatic to beginners to adjust there but for me it was 'no hassles' as I had relatives close by and I spent most of my out-of-campus time with them."

Hailing from a family of nature lovers, she enjoys trekking and bird watching. But recently she has indulged in jogging and visiting national parks. She spends useful time in the public library reading about the minorities in America. The biographies of Black Women and their identity crisis have captured Manjusha's interests in understanding a double discrimination they have had to face - one of being Black and secondly of being Women.

She has spent productive time in being more creative and discovering more about herself. But of course the work culture there has made her add a few etiquette to her lifestyle - 'formalities' and 'aggressiveness' she has changed so as to be heard and to convey herself right. Her periodic mails to Lila Ma'am have encouraged her and made her want to live up to the faith the Foundation put in her.

Her family has been ever supportive and an integrated part of her life throughout. Luckily, she is also married to a supportive spouse, Anirudh Chaoji who is back here in India, and meets her only during that part of the year when she is here for her fieldwork.

Hats off to our young anthropologist! Here's wishing her all the best...!

LEADING LADY

'A red mail van parked in the porch, several open windows serving different purposes with long human lines in front of each, men in khaki idling away or creating chaos by calling out across the room, stacks of letters and the continuous stamping of never-ending letters... And housed somewhere here would be our 'Leading Lady' thought RAJANI PANCHANG.

But a well landscaped, silent campus with an arch over the entrance reading 'Post Master General, Pune Region' welcomed her. The office reception spelled discipline and class with the Secretary directing the way. An executive's table was well organized with documents and files complete with a PC. Across the table was seated the Post Master General herself, MS. HUMERA AHMED. Her personality, style, position, speech and action all just defined officer-like qualities. Breaking all the myths about the postmaster as portrayed by Bollywood, the facts visible and evident just left our Rajani awestruck..

Query : 'Post Master General, Pune Region', how did it happen for you and why the Postal services?

Response: I acquired my MA in English Literature from Hyderabad in 1978. I was teaching at a college at Mumbai when came the next stage- marriage. Those days a good match was someone who was settled abroad and that meant I would have to leave India. I got engaged and then had to face some common social pressures. My ethics would not allow me to succumb to them. My family supported my decision of not getting married then. But gradually I realized marriage would again come up as the only choice I had. I did not at that point of time want to leave India. The best way to defend my individuality was to gain social security, which I thought Indian Administrative Services (IAS), reputed and respected, could best give me. As a child the post office had been very visible to me. All those stamps and the stamping had fancied me. And so the seeds were sown...

Query : Postal Services in India are not very famous. They are visualized as any other inefficient public service. Not many women opt for this. Your view?

Response: No, not at all! Now the Post is quite a pro-women department. It is a well known fact that to get into this stream one needs to clear the UPSC Examinations and is a coveted cadre soon following the Administrative Services down the merit list. For women, the Postal Service is a very convenient place to be in, with lots of facilities, residential places being close by, and security assurance that comes with the job. Family life is easier for the women in this job than those in others.

Postal Services are labor intensive and involve synchronization of an immense work force. In the Government, man-management is very difficult. The job influences common people the most because the public inter-phase is high. This is not visible to the general public and thus maybe in India this field has not attained much importance. It was this challenge that I took up and I set out to create my own niche.

Query : What are the powers of a Post-master General and how does he/she operate?

Response: I am not in direct contact with the public. I as a Post Master General have about 200 post offices spread over 10 divisions like Solapur, Satara etc. under my jurisdiction. About 5 Senior Superintendents of Post Office (SSPO) and 3 Superintendents, 1 Railway Mail Service Officer and Manager Mail Motor Service all have to report to me and I supervise the expedition of jobs. Conventionally, transmission and sorting of mail, appointments, transfers, building establishment, training and technology are some of the portfolios a Post Master General holds. More important portfolios include purchases and transactions, i.e. the financial powers. Financial and Administration relaxation are at my disposal. Up to a certain

budgetary limit I am authorized to take independent decisions regarding sanctions. Beyond that limit my cardinal authority, the Chief Post Master General at Mumbai is the decisive head.

Query : You recently have been transferred to Pune. What has your experience been like in Pune?

Response: I arrived in Pune, precisely on 28th March 2001. We have about 15,000 staff catering to public services like banking, bonds, mails, etc. apart from the normal post. I introduced customer care classes so as to train & motivate the staff to influence the people in contact. We have started a 'green drive' to utilize human resource wherein each employee is presented a plant to be planted on a patch of land in the GPO campus, which he or she is responsible of. We conduct customer care classes for management students in Symbiosis & the response has been wonderful.

I have always been sensitive to nuances and open to public to have opened a public grievance too. I am more easily accessible to the public, I believe. I've been in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, where life is too fast and professionalism runs deep. Here in Pune it is different and the staff did take time to adapt and accept my ways, with which I am very stringent.

Query : How did your subordinate staff react to a woman boss?

Response: Earlier, the staff tried to take me for a ride, by expecting me to believe all that they reported. But assertive & stern that I am, sometimes in the middle of the night, I've caught them napping, off guard. Then they knew this lady means business.

When on deputation to different departments, I've felt the pressures building in. Being a woman & moreover single were the weak planes along which many a times I would find myself cleaving apart.

But with experience, by keeping myself aware, being pliant and sheer hard work has given me more endurance. I am from a liberal background & believe in a relaxed way of functioning. By and large the postal service is a very clean industry with very little or negligible scope for corruption and if present, exists only at the lower level.

Query : Has the Internet affected the postal service?

Response: No, not the Internet or the e-mails. In '97-'98 Reliance had truckloads of project reports to be delivered and the post office floor was crammed with them, which took lots of time to be cleared. Rather, in cases like these the computers have come handy. Now project reports can be as small as floppies, reducing the labor.

Yes, but the cut down in telephone rates has surely affected the trade. The local range of telephone services has increased. People prefer to pick up the phone and strike a two-way conversation, rather than write a letter and wait for the reply.

People may find the e-mail cheaper and quicker but then, when it comes to sending documents, where record of the communication is important, people prefer the Government postal service as the only reliable media. We have also now introduced a concept of 'e-post'. If one has to send a mail to an office in a distant place with no e-mail connection, the mail is sent as e-mail to the post office closest to the recipient. Then a printed paper copy of the mail is delivered to the recipient. Its advantage is this that it is a fast service and resourceful in underdeveloped areas.

Query : Anthrax scare?

Response: There are no reported postal cases of Anthrax in India as till date Courier delivered even the letter that Mr. Bhujbal received and was tested positive for anthrax.





Ms. Cora Menezes Workshop on 'Transactional Analysis'

Down Memory Lane... SNIPPETS



"Thank you for sending me Inspira. You all are doing a good job." - Allison Coolbrith, Leading Lady of Inspira Vol. 2 and member of the SEP 2000



Tea party at 'Holiday Inn' for New Batch of Lila Fellows



Play - Fidler on the roof



Ms. V. Menon's Workshop on 'Presentation Skills'



Trustees with spouses at celebration dinner after the 6th Award Function



Odissi performance by Ms. Yogini Gandhi



Musical Performance by Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash seen here with Ms. Lila Poonawalla, Mr. S. Basu, CMD, Bank of Maharashtra releasing the 1st cassette of the brothers, titled 'Swarsangam'

BOOK REVIEW

Dr. A.V. Srinivasan is a professor of Management and is in the public enterprise area at the Administrative Staff College of India, is a member of 'The Academy of Management of USA', & a member of the Quality Circle Forum of India. He was a senior Executive in Mahindra Owen in Pune and has served on the Board of Studies of Bharatidasan Institute of Management, Tiruchi. Dr. Srinivasan earned his MBA & Ph.D. degrees in Operations Research from University of Chicago & his MA degree in Statistics from Madras University. He has also specialized in Computer Management, Information Systems, Project Management, Corporate Planning and Futurology.

Dr. Srinivasan has presented and published several papers, in Indian and international professional meetings and has penned a book - "Critical Path Analysis- A Systems Approach". Dr. Srinivasan saw many parallels as also polarization between India & Japan in many attributes & became interested in studying the Japanese management Practices. It was then that he realized that a straight comparison could be drawn between the achievements of the two countries and that the functions of the industrial personnel in Japan can be applied to the Indian context. The book represents the factors responsible for reconstructing the Japanese industry from the ravages of World War II & putting it on the industrial map of the world. A result of the detailed exposition of the Japanese organization was this book. A close look would help us learn some useful lessons.

The American test for the atom bomb in 1945 was a success when the two major cities of Japan crumbled to the ground but what the Americans did not count on destroying was the Japanese stoicism, zeal and intense drive to perfection.

The book starts with a basic comparison of India and Japan in history, economic performance and social achievement. This is followed by a discussion on the cultural traits and the industrial structure. Next are the human resource development and various functions of management as practiced by the Japanese. The book is concluded by making a compare and contrast study between the practices in the two countries and a look into the future to help us identify the



TITLE : Japanese Management
AUTHOR : Dr.A.V. Srinivasan
EDITION : First (1990)
PUBLISHER : Tata McGraw Hill

signals of opportunity. The important elements of Japanese managerial system explained in this book are - lifetime employment, employee training and development, consensual management, labor management, RINGI system of decision making, their Just-in-time system & their concept & practice of Quality Circles alongwith their marketing, production & finance function in management. It provides an overview of Japanese industrial development, alongwith their marketing, production and finance functions in management, and compares Indian management practices and points to the weakness of Indian system of management providing guidance for its betterment.

The book emphasizes the esprit de corps, the consciously cultivated and planned system of making employees work as a corporate body, in contrast to the workers freedom to accomplish his aspirations in his individual way. The explanations for the success of Japanese corporations are - a strong group feeling self sacrifice for the interest of the group, willingness to overwork to achieve long term goals, respect for elders, a non confrontational mode of discussion and decision making, homogeneity of the society under national sense of purpose.

Does this not therefore amply tell how Japan could accomplish the miraculous resuk? By their deeds Japanese themselves have revealed the secrets. Japanese do not blow their own trumpets, nor talk much about their achievements - how they do it or how they did it, because to the Japanese result is more important then the reason.

- Sunetra Chaphalkar

YOUR'S TRULY

The sixth award function seems like yesterday and we are now at the end of the year. We welcome all the newly added scholars to the Lila Family. We are happy to gather the vibrant and enthusiastic lot in our fold. Some were eager to join the editorial team and we hope they will constructively participate in bringing to life new volumes of Inspira because Inspira has now reached a standard well accepted or shall I say very widely read and our endeavors very much appreciated. At this point, I would especially like to thank Rajani for her very valuable help.

Being a scholar alone is not the mark of a Lila Fellow, good grooming also is. Therefore over the months the foundation has arranged for Lila Fellows to participate in programs dealing with their all round development. Ms. Cora Menezes a multifaceted trainer conducted a workshop on 'Transactional Analysis' for the Lila Fellows. Dr. K.V. Menon too conducted a day's workshop on 'Communication Skills'. The programs were a great success with the Lila Fellows gushing with joy and pride on having acquired so much. Lila Fellows also had the privilege of attending cultural programs where they got opportunities to meet new people and great personalities and learn a lot about the myriad cultures of the big world we live in.

We are truly swelling with pride with the media catching up with our Lila Fellows. Local newspapers interviewed Samidha Ghatpande, Jyoti Dalvi and Preeti Tamaang. Along with several other women our dear Mrs. Lila Poonawalla and Mrs. Vasantha Ramamswamy were felicitated for their outstanding contributions by the National Council for Women in India at the International Women's Conference held at Pune.

Kudos to our women!!

We need to revise our lessons in peace, harmony and integrity if we are to see a better tomorrow. Fortunately, our foundation being cosmopolitan instills these values in us. We were relieved to know that our Lila Fellows overseas were safe even after 'Black Tuesday' left many marred for life. Senior Lila Fellow Neetu Bhatia shares her experience in this issue of Inspira.

Great people notice how they live; the greater live to be noticed. Mr. Indur Thadhani or Indur Uncle as most of us know him has left an indelible mark on us. Both he and Mrs. Maya Thadhani have been like foster parents engulfing us in their warmth, concern and hospitality. We all are with Maya Auntie in her moment of grief. We share her loss. It is ours too.

Hoping the New Year brings Peace and Newer Joys in our lives than ever before.

Editor : Uzma Kazi

"Ring out wild bells, to the wild sky...

Ring out false pride in place and blood,

The civic slander and the spite;

Ring in the love of truth and right,

Ring in the common love of good...

The year is dying in the night:

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die."



The editorial team at Pizza Hut.

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