

FORCENET

E-ZINE

Magazine for military veterans in the corporate
May 2024, Volume VI, Issue 5



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FORCENET

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

In every corner of our nation, unsung heroes walk among us, their bravery not only defined by battlefield valor but also by their unwavering commitment to service beyond the call of duty. Among these extraordinary individuals stand the Defence veterans, guardians of our freedom who continue to serve long after they've left the uniform behind. Their transition from the battleground to the community frontlines is a testament to their resilience, dedication, and undying spirit of selflessness.. Hence this month our theme is Veterans for Community **“Veterans for Community”**

One of the most remarkable traits of veterans is their innate sense of duty, a quality ingrained in them through years of military training and experience. This duty doesn't diminish upon retirement; rather, it evolves into a profound sense of responsibility towards their fellow citizens. They understand that true strength lies not in the might of arms alone, but in the willingness to serve others, to uplift the marginalized, and to build a brighter future for generations to come.

Moreover, veterans bring with them a wealth of skills and experiences forged in the crucible of adversity. Their ability to adapt, strategize, and lead in the face of challenges is unparalleled. These invaluable traits make them invaluable assets to any community endeavor, from disaster relief efforts to civic engagement initiatives. The ethos of camaraderie instilled in veterans fosters a sense of unity and cohesion within communities. They understand the power of teamwork, of standing shoulder to shoulder with their neighbors to overcome obstacles and achieve common goals. In a world often divided by differences, they serve as beacons of unity, reminding us that together, we are stronger.

The contributions of Defence veterans to community building are immeasurable and invaluable. Their unwavering dedication to service, their resilience in the face of adversity, and their commitment to making the world a better place serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration to us all. Let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting them in their continued mission of service to others. For in their selfless actions, we find the true essence of heroism and the promise of a brighter future for all.

Thank you to all our veterans for your service, both on the battlefield and in our communities.



Yours Vet 4 Comm

Capt Rajesh Nair
Editor, ForceNet E-Zine

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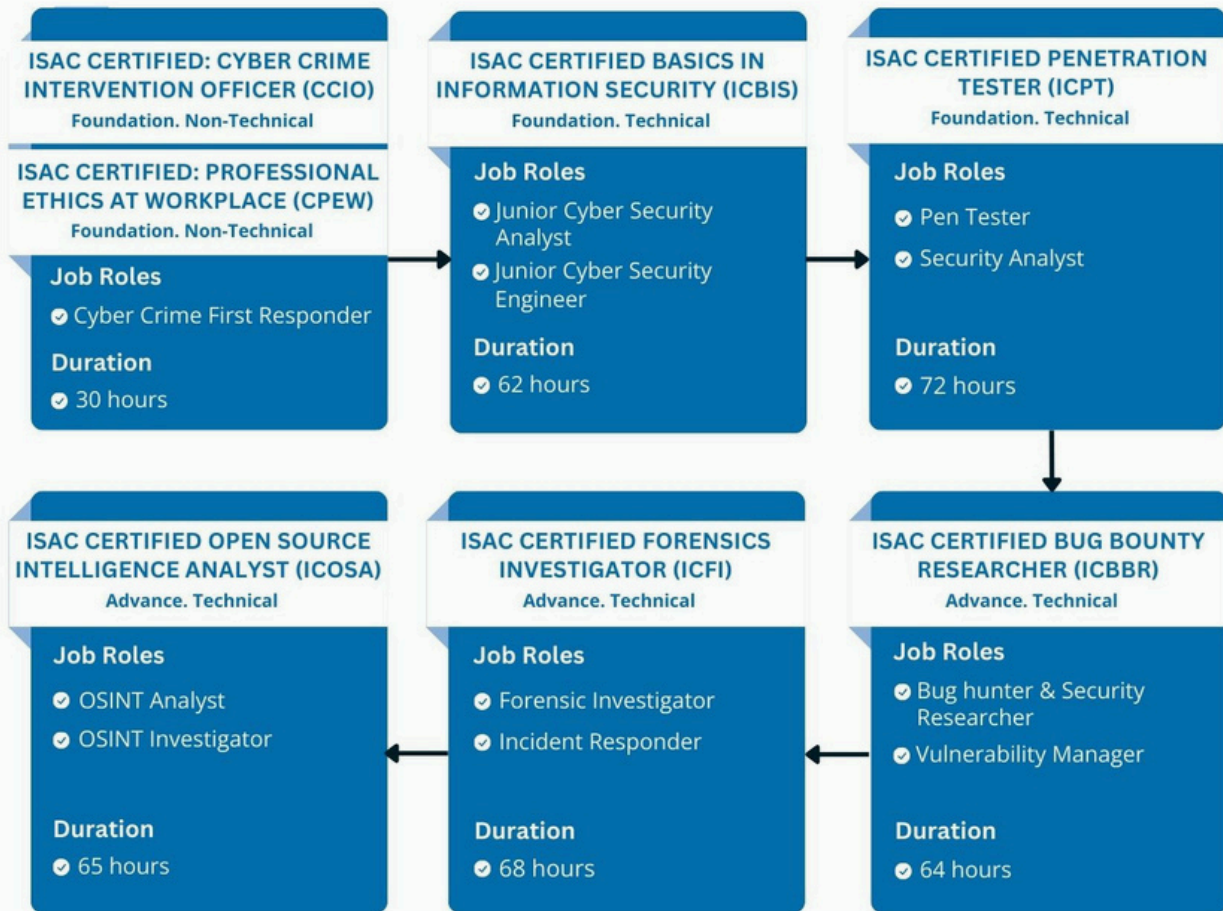
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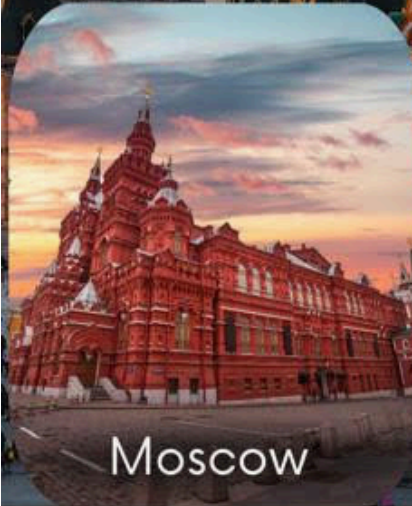


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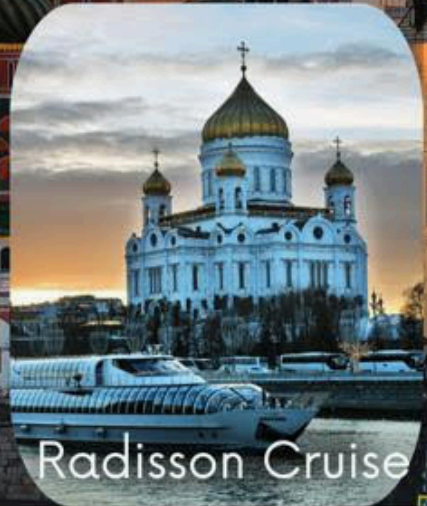
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[A NOTE FOR THE READERS](#)

This is an interactive e-magazine with active links on many pages, including the advertisements, which can be used by just tapping or clicking on them. For ease of providing feedback, such links have been provided at the end of the articles too.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this e-magazine are the personal opinions of the authors and interviewees. Thus, the information and viewpoints presented in the articles do not represent those of Forces Network, and neither does Forces Network accept any duty or responsibility for them.

Online Feedback / Review

We would be featuring Feedback received from users post clicking on the interactive active links of the e-magazine. These links can be used by just tapping or clicking on them. For ease of providing feedback, such links have been provided at the end of each articles.

Feedback on: Theme Answers

I had a word with two Veterans on their inspiring transitional journey Major Daksh Nakra's journey from Sales profile in banking to presently working in field of Cyber Security. He is alumnus of Iqbal Sir ABCT renowned program. Iqbal sir will be truly proud that veterans are transitioning into tech role. I have got some tips from Daksh sir for my own transition journey.

Lt Nishu Miglani journey from working professional to owning a startup is incredible. She offered me direct help to come up with ideas which would be helpful me in getting angel funding. So generous and showing lot of confidence in veterans community.

Additional Suggestions:

Forces network is organising webinar on Elder Care for a business opportunity. Thanx a lot IQ Sir for promoting entrepreneurial opportunities on Forces Network.

LT CDR VARUN DHAND





SOURCE: FOBRED INDIA

Veterans for Community - Vet4Com

Theme Articles

Theme Article

VETERANS4COMMUNITY: 24*7 SELFLESS COMMUNITY SERVICE

BY VARUN DHAND

Personnel in Uniform (Faujis) are acknowledged as Veterans after retiring from active military service. Despite being retired, Veterans still remains connected with armed forces ecosystem and take part in the armed forces and veterans' centric activities. Veterans step into the civil world to explore job opportunities in their 2nd innings, some start their own venture and others settle down to live calm retired life. Since veterans are part of camaraderie and welfare culture in armed forces, they know the importance of bond in the armed forces and in life. There are lots of Veterans who are excelling in their profession but few among them also provide active support to veteran's community.



Veterans help each other in many ways, from sharing their personal experience to helping people on ground. I also try to remain connected with the veterans and actively provide job referral opportunities and fortunately, many of them got successfully placed. It gives a great level of contentment by helping a veteran. It's a chain reaction, when one veteran helps another veteran, the act is carried forward, as they also got the desired help when it was needed. We should build up a strong community and we all must realize this power.

I also aspire to be self-employed in the near future and will not leave any stone unturned to help the armed forces and veteran's community. I know various veterans in the industry who had set up their own venture from agriculture to consultancy. They are really supportive and even ready to mentor me to start my own set up. Veterans join Civvy Street and establish themselves through good job profiles or have their own venture. It will be win-win situation for veterans and personnel in active service. Veterans who are already established outside would in a better position to advice the fellow veterans, officers coming out of service and their dependents as well. Veterans carry extra responsibility of being ex-armed forces personnel and they put extra effort to live up to their reputation.



I had done some research on how veteran's organisation works globally to help their veterans. They have similar organisation structure like DGR (Directorate General of Resettlement) in India. What I had observed these organisations does career profiling of their veterans as per corporate requirements. Veteran's skillset is highlighted equivalent to job requirements and experience required to work in corporate. They even send veterans to study in various universities to enhance their skillset in which they were groomed. This helps veterans to better marketize their profile and increase their chances of getting better job prospectus. I feel departments, manpower is allocated to serve veterans in India but fresh energy, ideas and its quick implementation is need of the hour. Public - Private Model can also be helpful in bringing radical reform in life of veterans.

One organization which is working for the cause of Veteran's Community is 'Forces Network'. 'Forces Network' is offering veterans community service and is presently at evolving stage where different initiatives are taken. Initiatives like Webinars are organised to support veterans for their smooth transition in their 2nd Innings, various employment opportunities are published in the group, group members discuss wide range of issues in community group and they get solutions to them.

In the recent times, 'Forces Network' have taken various initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship. I am also a firm believer and echo that we as veterans must be job-creators rather than job-seekers. We as veterans have various skillsets like strong conviction, ability to adapt in tough conditions, risk takers and problem solvers. The only thing missing is that we need to marketize ourselves better, and a little push of confidence that we can succeed as entrepreneurs in large numbers. We never had any need to market ourselves while in forces. But qualities like strong values, integrity, sense of ownership and welfare-oriented mindset, are perfect ingredients for starting a great business idea. These qualities will further become foundational stones in order to run successful business ventures. We as veterans carry a very bright future for our community, fellow citizens and country by contributing towards growth of the country.

I conclude with the following line:

'If we all are together, then we are something, otherwise nothing!'



Lt Cdr Varun Kumar Dhand *retd from Indian Navy with 11 years of service in Executive cadre. He had left Indian Navy in 2018. Presently, he is working as Deputy Manager (Security) in State Bank of India, Mumbai. He is passionate of reading books, running marathons, writing book reviews, write and debate on different topics of national importance. Readers can share their feedback of book review at dhand1984@gmail.com*

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Theme Article

Veterans For Community

BY RAJESH NAIR

India's veterans, having served their nation with valour and dedication, often find new avenues to contribute to society post their military service. Many veterans, with their well-honed leadership skills and sense of duty, are at the forefront of community service initiatives across the country. From rural development to disaster relief, their commitment to serving the nation continues beyond the battlefield. In line with the theme Vet4Comm this article would be looking into various service endeavors that veterans who have transitioned from defending the nation to empowering their communities would take

- **Rural Development :** In rural India, where basic amenities and infrastructure are often lacking, veterans are leading efforts to bring about positive change. Retired military personnel, drawing upon their experience in organizational management and resource optimization, are instrumental in implementing development projects. From building roads and schools to providing healthcare services, these veterans are catalysts for transformation in remote villages. Their leadership ensures that development reaches the grassroots level, improving the lives of countless individuals.
- **Health Care Initiative:** In remote and underserved areas where access to healthcare is limited, Indian veterans are at the forefront of initiatives aimed at improving medical facilities. Veterans collaborate with healthcare providers, NGOs, and government agencies to establish medical camps, mobile clinics, and health awareness campaigns. Their efforts ensure that marginalized communities receive essential healthcare services, thereby alleviating suffering and promoting well-being.
- **Crisis Management:** During times of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or cyclones, veterans emerge as invaluable assets in relief operations. Their training in crisis management, quick decision-making, and logistical expertise are indispensable in coordinating rescue and relief efforts. Veterans often form volunteer groups or collaborate with NGOs to provide immediate assistance to affected communities. Their selfless service and unwavering resolve bring hope and relief to those grappling with adversity, showcasing the resilience of the human spirit. These have been seen time and again across the country during floods, earthquake, fire or sabotage.
- **Education and skill Development:** Recognizing the importance of education and skill development in empowering communities, veterans are actively involved in initiatives aimed at imparting knowledge and vocational training. Through mentoring programs, they share their insights and values with the younger generation, instilling a sense of discipline and patriotism. Moreover, veterans leverage their technical expertise to train individuals in various trades, equipping

them with the skills needed for sustainable livelihoods. By investing in education and skill enhancement, these veterans are Education: paving the way for a brighter future for generations to come.

- **Veterans for Veterans:** In addition to their contributions to the wider community, veterans also play a crucial role in supporting their fellow servicemen and women. **Forces Network** is the ideal example of same. Recognizing the challenges faced by those transitioning to civilian life, Forces Network provides a support network offering guidance, counseling, and employment assistance. Through camaraderie and shared experiences, it creates a sense of belonging and solidarity among veterans, fostering resilience and well-being.
- **Green Soldier:** Concerned about the environmental challenges facing the nation, Indian veterans are actively engaged in conservation efforts aimed at preserving natural resources and biodiversity. Drawing upon their discipline and sense of duty, veterans organize tree plantation drives, clean-up campaigns, and awareness programs to promote sustainable living practices. By championing environmental stewardship, veterans inspire communities to adopt eco-friendly lifestyles and contribute to a greener, healthier planet
- **Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment:** Recognizing the importance of economic empowerment in uplifting communities, Indian veterans are instrumental in fostering entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities. Through skill development programs, vocational training, and access to microfinance, veterans empower individuals to become self-reliant and financially independent. By nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation, veterans catalyze economic growth and create pathways out of poverty for marginalized sections of society.

The service of veterans extends far beyond the battlefield, as they continue to serve the nation through community empowerment initiatives. Whether it's spearheading rural development projects, responding to disasters, or nurturing future leaders, veterans exemplify the ethos of selfless service and commitment to the greater good. Their dedication and leadership inspire hope and transform lives, embodying the spirit of service that defines the true essence of being a hero. As we honor their sacrifice and valor, let us also celebrate their ongoing contributions to building a stronger, more inclusive society and nation for all.

Jai Hind!



Capt Rajesh Nair is from the 75th Course, OTA, and was commissioned into 14 Maratha Light Infantry. Post Army service, he has worked in the field of administration for more than a decade, having worked with companies in the IT, ITES, Manufacturing and Service Sectors. He is currently working with a global Oil and Gas company as India Lead for Administration and is based out of Pune.

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Article, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor

Star of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

IN INTERACTION WITH IQBAL SINGH

Commander Arun Kumar Mishra (Retd) is an accomplished leader with over two decades of distinguished service in Indian Navy, transitioning seamlessly from a Chief Engineer Officer in the Indian Navy to a transformative role as Chief Executive Officer at Dakshana Foundation. He is an alumnus of NDA and IIT Kharagpur. He has bootstrapped CS Joint Services Foundation and Joint Services Academy in Oct 2023. JSF is on a mission to inspire and train Indian youth to pursue career pathways in Armed Forces and has achieved a success rate of 30 percent in six months.



IQ: Please tell us something about your background prior to joining the Indian Navy, and your subsequent Naval career. Please share any significant achievements.

Arun: My father served Indian Army for 30 years in the rank of Havildar. I was selected for NDA in 1990 and joined Indian Navy in technical branch. During the service, I completed B.Tech (Mechanical) from Naval College of Engineering, M.Tech from IIT Kharagpur and Technical Manager Course from Naval College of Warfare. I was awarded with commendation by CNS and C-in-C. As training faculty at INS Shivaji, I pioneered the commissioning of Damage control simulator and trained more than 1000 sailors/officers. I was awarded with Best Instructor.



NDA Hunter Squadron

I served onboard INS Kulish, Guldar and Anjadeep as Engineer Officer. It was a privilege to serve as operations and production manager for five years at Naval Dockyard (Vizag). As Chief Engineer Officer onboard INS Aditya, ship was awarded with Best Fleet Tanker. I served Indian Navy for 23 years and took PMR in Mar 2016.

IQ: You were an employee at Dakshana Foundation before becoming a social entrepreneur. Give us an understanding about your roles and organizations in chronological order after you left the Navy?

Arun: I prepared and appeared for GMAT to pursue MBA program at ISB in 2016. However, I learnt about Dakshana Foundation. The foundation is an NGO, engaged in training underprivileged students for IIT and NEET. They had recently acquired a residential campus of 110 acres in a remote village which required capacity expansion, Govt partnerships and infrastructure upgrade. Considering my past qualification and experience in training, I was offered the role of Chief Administration Officer. Mission of the organisation and the nature of appointment appealed to my passion. As CAO for two years, we steered every vertical in a residential campus almost from ground zero. Being a remote location in a village, challenges were unique in dealing with human resource, water, communication, estate, security, kitchen, dining hall, purchase and inventory management. In two years, we expanded the program from 60 to 200 students.

Considering initiatives and interest in academics, I was appointed as Chief Academics in Oct 2017. Dakshana also has MoU with Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya school system through which 1000 students are trained at six centres of excellence in addition to the residential campus at Pune. We Initiated training of faculty from a pool of Dakshana alums, enabling cost efficiency and self-reliance. We developed online test platform, IT infrastructure for performance evaluation and counselling, in-house content creation and online modules for JEE and NEET during Covid which can be accessed by deserving students across India at zero cost. The capacity increased to 600 students. We achieved a consistent success rate of more than 70 percent for five years.

I was promoted in the role of CEO in Nov 2021. This role provided an opportunity to forge strategic partnerships and MoUs with government school systems, capital allocation, enabled creation of centre of excellence for 120 girl students at JNV Pune and 100 students at Bhopal in May 2023. Oversaw functions related to alumni support and engagement with more than 5000 alums and developed culture of sports and yoga. I completed certification program in Leadership and Change Management from IIM Lucknow in Jun 2023.

IQ: How did you prepare yourself for the Military to Corporate transition?

Arun: I believe that transition process should commence during last two years of service. One should be equipped with skill sets, certifications, connects and roadmap while in service. I dedicated last one year of service to prepare for GMAT and remained connected with best minds who have seen the transition journey. I was fortunate to get an offer on the day of retirement.

IQ: What were the challenges faced during your Transition? How did you overcome the challenges in your career as an employee at Dakshana?

Arun: Every transition is filled with challenges. However, every trouble is an opportunity in disguise. I had a long stint at Naval Dockyard (Vizag), which provided an opportunity to deal with civil workforce in varied situations. Human Engineering is vital when you step out in a new domain. Journey could be easier if you navigate with inner score card and integrity.



Engineer Officer INS Kulsih

IQ: If you were to Transition from the military to the corporate today with the benefit of all the insights and wisdom that you have gained today, what would you have done differently?

Arun: Leaders of today can't escape the technology revolution through AI, Big data and machine learning. I would have signed up for M. Tech (AI) in last two years of service. Many IITs, BITS and other universities have recently started the hybrid program.

IQ: From being an employee what prompted you to become a social entrepreneur?

Arun: At Dakshana, I could see the transformative journey of more than 4000 humble students. Dakshana alums were present in almost every IIT, NIT, AFMC, AIIMS and Govt Medical colleges. It was an extraordinary social return in a short period of time. Key to consistent high success rate was the process of selecting deserving and talent

students across India. I found that while there many such initiatives in STEM category, none existed for career pathways in Armed Forces. It is surprising to note that despite the youngest nation, there is a shortage of significant number of officers in Armed Forces.

Along with Lt Cdr Nikhil (ret'd), youngest GTO in India, we founded CS Joint Services Foundation and Joint Services Academy to inspire and train students to become officers in Armed Forces. We plan to create a dedicated platform for all types of entry to Armed Forces and Coast Guards which will provide preparation for written exams, Test Preps, Daily habit building exercises, counselling and inspirational content. Lt Cdr Nikhil has launched Podcasts with senior officers @rogerthatwithnkc. Olive Planet has been extremely kind to support our initiative to inspire youth through such podcasts. We are happy to share that 25 students have been recommended in last few months through online training. Most belong to humble background which provides immense joy in their journey from zero to hero. In future, we have a vision to make a residential campus to coach selected high potential and deserving students.



At Dakshana Foundation

IQ: What is your opinion is the fundamental difference in terms of the mindset from that of an employee to that of an entrepreneur? How did you make that shift?

Arun: I will be forever grateful to Col Ram Sharma (Former CEO at Dakshana) and Founder Mohnish Pabrai for grooming me to deal with unprecedented highs and unparalleled lows while navigating the professional and personal challenges. Entrepreneurship provides the laboratory to experiment your passion with freedom of mind and creativity. I believe that Veterans are at a sweet spot to take a plunge in present era of supportive policies and ecosystem.

IQ: Any important lessons you learnt while switching from a job to being a Founder?

Arun: The journey will be filled with roller coaster ride. "Trouble is an opportunity" should be the guiding principle. If you are a learning machine and have a mentor, the journey will be meaningful and fulfilling. Social impact will provide you both windfall gains and purpose in the long run.

IQ: How important is it to understand your own passion and expertise and then to work towards upskilling in that domain so as to have a better innings in the civilian world? How does one identify one's passion?

Arun: Each one has a Ikigai moment in their journey of experimentation. Experience which provides freedom to explore and touch lives will usually lead to passion. ISB has four flagship programs and offers 50 percent scholarships to veterans and serving officers. AMPPP (Advanced management program in public policy) is a cohort of best minds from IAS and leaders from corporates, NGOs and policy makers. I have signed up for AMPPP and Artificial Intelligence program by ISB which should help me in my next venture. One should endeavour to attend seminars, webinars, workshops and certification courses. Forces Network is on a yeoman mission to provide the relevant connect which works.



Engineer Officer INS Adity

IQ: You have had a long stint in the civilian workforce. To be successful what traits from the military must be give up and what must we imbibe?

Arun: Finding your place in the heart of team in the new arena will take time through patience and perseverance. Civil workforce has a natural respect to military personnel. Potent outcomes can happen without cacophony and noise. Strict regimental hierarchy should be replaced by collaboration and kinder approach. Long service writing notes will be replaced by short and specific style of communication. Self-discipline and an ability to deal with crisis are the natural strengths which will always be required in any organisation.

IQ: What message would you like to give to transitioning military officers who wish to make a career in social sector?

Arun: Social sector can provide both profit and purpose in life. This landscape has not been explored much by veterans. National and International foundations, CSR Heads, and Trusts provide invaluable opportunities. They are good paymasters and provide the freedom to explore and impact millions of lives.

IQ: Tell us about your family. What role did your parents play in shaping your value system. Also share the role played by your family including spouse in your successful Transition?

Arun: I hail from an Army family. Parents and Army life laid the foundation for resilience and grit to overcome the odds and daily challenges. My wife, Meena Mishra, has always been a source of strength and support in turbulent times of transition and in Indian Navy.



Parents



Self and Spouse



Iqbal Singh is a former infantry officer who started his career with The Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He took premature retirement from the Indian Army in 2008 as a Lt Col to pursue a career in the corporate in the technology industry. He is currently working in a senior role with a Big Tech company based at Gurgaon. Iqbal is also the Founder of Forces Network – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate.

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ForceNetPreneur

In this series, we plan to showcase a few entrepreneurs who are members of the Forces Network and have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as well as learn from them with a view to motivating more members of our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full-time vocation. Finally, we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

IN INTERACTION WITH IQBAL SINGH

Major Krishnan is from the 72 course of NDA and has served in the Para signals regiment. After hanging his boots he has worked with companies like Ericsson, Airtel and Nokia in communication and network vertical, before starting his own venture where they offer compliance testing for telecom equipment. The company has been recently awarded certified TSTL, one of the few in the country, the other being larger MNC's.



IQ: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the NDA, and your subsequent Forces career. What are the Top 5 Learning from the armed forces career?

Krishnan: I was a regular south Indian kid but interested in the outdoors. Bruce Lee was my icon to follow ! My Learnings were::

1. Be flexible yet be persistent
2. Tough times is where you learn the most
3. Never repeat mistakes
4. Red ink entry chaps are gold to work with. Little did I know I was one too !
5. Calm mind is a super power.



Quiz winner along with Krishnan

IQ: You have service fairly early. What was the impetus for you to leave the uniformed service?

Krishnan: I found the service too rigid & slow for my mind set.

IQ: You worked in several corporates initially? Tell us about the companies, the roles and what you found exciting?

Krishnan: I was in Ericsson as a project manager. Rolled out the complete Airtel Kerala 1800 GSM network. Learnt everything about cellular there. Then in Nokia I was on the terminal side right from CDMA to 4G handling field testing on live networks across APAC & MEA.

IQ: If I have to ask you about that moment when your heart said that it is time and I want to start my own venture, Please give us details about it ?

Krishnan: Nokia got bought by Microsoft and I knew the merger wouldn't work because of very different mindsets of the two companies. I quit at that time and started on my own.



MEMORIES OF LIFE IN ARMY:

IQ: Please tell us about your entrepreneurial venture? What was the vision behind starting your venture, and thereafter expanding it?

Krishnan: I was always interested in telecom, IT & security. When I started in 2014, the telecom security part was non-existent so I started to do software and field testing thus keeping in the industry while watching it evolve. I picked up business skills and got familiar with the regulations and tax requirements. Huge learnings for me in every sphere. I built my network all these years. I kept my eye on the telecom security regulations. In 2022 the Government had come up with a clear telecom security framework and then I grabbed that opportunity for the security part.

IQ: What were the challenges faced in this entrepreneurial journey? And how did you overcome those challenges?

Krishnan: The services background is only a small add on. In itself it has minimal value unless we intelligently put to use what we have learned through our service. Keyword is intelligently. Play to win is easier said than done. Books can only help so much. Initially I was playing not to lose, bad idea. In business one needs to be all in or stick to a job. I made my first profit after 3 years then in a couple of years Covid hit. So one had to be resilient. Only the resilient get through. Resilient enough to keep learning and wait for your time. You need a 5-10 year outlook to pull things off.

I learnt to be strategic in my approach yet play tactically. There were many days where the only win was, me getting through my morning workout. I stayed in and learnt. It will seem slow, very slow at times and it is. So resilience is what pulls one through. I have varied interests in photography and I am into learning music. So that helped me navigate my days and celebrate small wins. I don't drink and have never felt the need or urge to. So keeping fit despite setbacks and slow movement itself is a huge morale booster.

IQ: Would you like to share the details of your venture, services offered and your strategy behind growing your company forward?

Krishnan: With India going big on digital, cybersecurity is a big growing opportunity. Out of this telecom security is a niche and a specialised field. This bridges IT and Telecom domains and with cloud in the mix it is kind of all encompassing. We are one of the few early movers in this domain. We offer compliance testing for telco equipment. We will focus first on India to establish a presence and then branch out globally in the next phase of growth.

IQ: Recently your company was awarded the certification of Designation from the Govt of India National Centre for Communication Security as the certified Telecom Security Testing Laboratory (TSTL) . Only 5 labs in India have this the other 4 are subsidiaries of MNC and the fifth one is yours? Tell us about this field? What made you venture into it? How difficult was to get this certification?

Krishnan: It's a difficult certification since the framework though decided is open on the points of how to achieve it. So a lot of R&D and study is required on each aspect. That took a lot of reading, exploration and creative approaches to various tests. That took time. It took us 1.5 years just on the technical test processes and to get it into some shape. Now couple this with constantly changing DoT understanding of the tests & requirements and personnel changes in DOT, you know how it gets ! They too were learning as we went along.



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CERTIFICATION OF DESIGNATION

This is to certify that

M/s Deltaphi Labs Pvt. Ltd.
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Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri East,
Mumbai - 400059

has been designated provisionally as Telecom Security Testing Laboratory (TSTL) in India for conducting the conformity assessment of security requirements for Telecom equipment as specified in Annexure-I subject to the Terms and Conditions specified in Annexure- II & Annexure -III.

TSTL Identification : DL0005
Certificate No. : NCCS/TSTL/05
Valid Till : 27/03/2027

Digitally signed by ANURODH KUMAR
Date: 2024.03.27 19:05:43 +05'30'

IQ: In your assessment how big is the opportunity in the TSTL space? Can veterans play in this space? What do they need to do to be significant players in this space?

Krishnan: The entire cybersecurity space is very much open not just India but for the entire world. If one is willing to relearn, upskill and start realistically, anything is possible. There is really no one to one co-relation with what one does in the services vs what is there in the private sector. One has to re-start realistically and without baggage.

IQ: How have you found your entrepreneurial journey so far? Could you please share the Moments of Happiness and those moments when it was really demanding and you dug deep and faced the situation?

Krishnan: Of the total time in such ventures, 90% time we learn from failures and are in a mindset, will it even work. Learning is a win. Setback is redirection to think in a different way. No salary for years, only expenses. But I have never missed an employee's salary or a payment ever. The trick is to have a strategy which is over 5-10 year period has more success probability than failure. There are no absolutes here. No funding is also good in a way. One learns to optimise and work within the constraints. Don't choose too many things, zero on one and stay with it. Resilience is what will finally work. It will force luck to favour you. The other thing is timing. I kept watching the Govt regulations and tried to get ready at the time it is enforced. That gives us some market advantage, being bit early & not very late.



Fun Time

IQ: What are your future plans going forward?

Krishnan: I plan to consolidate the current India requirements and in phase two we will look at overseas opportunities.

IQ: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up entrepreneurship?

Krishnan: Don't fall back to services way of life. Get 100% out of it till you assimilate the real world. Reskill, stay realistic, start lower, speak less listen more, stay resilient. Pick up a hobby and stay fit. Many days the only win will be doing your routine. Get comfortable with being permanently uncomfortable. Black shoes with White socks are ok, no one really cares.

IQ: Do you have any other hobbies or interests, which you pursue passionately?

Krishnan: I am a passionate wildlife photographer. My blog is <http://krishphoto.com> . I have been maintaining it since 2005. And now I am learning to play guitar. And I am game for anything outdoors, paragliding, scuba, sailing...you know it. Maybe I will buy a small sail yacht and ditch my house.



Corporate Avatar



Iqbal Singh is a former infantry officer who started his career with The Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He took premature retirement from the Indian Army in 2008 as a Lt Col to pursue a career in the corporate in the technology industry. He is currently working in a senior role with a Big Tech company based at Gurgaon. Iqbal is also the Founder of Forces Network – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate.

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor

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Women Power

Spouses/Daughters of Defence Officers as well as those who have donned the uniform, have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such women of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS

Ms. Ruchi Ahluwalia is from a fauji family and is currently heading the HR function as a group Chief People Officer Qness Corp Ltd. She has worked in diverse industries over 22 years with passion, positive outlook and purpose. A visionary HR leader, her focus is to enable direct growth to the business bottom line and steer overall organizational advancement through all aspects of the human capital function.



Uday: Please tell us about yourself and what you do?

Ruchi: I am an HR leader and strategist with an MBA in HR & Marketing certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and Brain based Certified Coach. I have over 22 years of diverse HR experience out of which over 15 years have been in leadership roles across various industries like Software, Pharma, Automobile, Financial Services, Health care, Engineering and Professional services.

I bring in the ability and organizational skill to make human resources a competitive advantage for the business. Popularly known to challenge the status quo and create a meaningful difference in people, teams, and organizations, she is referred to more as a Business Manager than an HR professional.

At heart I am a passionate person with a positive outlook and a big advocate of DEI & Digitalization agenda. Have been awarded the 101 Top HR Minds, the 50 MOST INFLUENTIAL HR, Top 10 Women Chief People Officer-2024 and "India's Greatest CHRO- 2024" Award

On the personal front I live in Bangalore with my husband Vivek who works for GE Healthcare as the Director for South Asia SCM and son Varun who is in his 2nd year of BBA LLB. Parents are settled in Indore because MHOW (Military HQ of war) is where my brother and me grew up. I enjoy being guest speaker and panelist on various professional and social forums. Other interests include Writing short articles, reading, running and taking a plunge in Spirituality.

Uday: Army life must have had influence in your choices as you travelled and grew in personal and professional life, could you please tell us more about the Fauji aspect of your life journey?

Ruchi: Being raised in an Army family exposed me to various cultures and affinity to diversity has been a constant in my life. It's the bedrock of my personal and professional life, guiding my leadership style toward empowerment and inclusivity. In addition to that, army life has also taught me resilience and self-reliance, a core value that has been instilled in me since childhood by my father and saw reinforcement with my husband. Adaptability and commitment is another great influence from the Army.

Uday: Would you like to share more details of the domain/industry you work in, your organisation and your profile in your organisation?

Ruchi: Currently heading the HR function as a group Chief People Officer Qness Corp Ltd. Qness is one of the biggest private employer of India with a workforce of close to 5.8 Lacs, spread across 9 countries. We provide a host of technology-enabled staffing and managed outsourcing services across processes such as sales & marketing, customer care, after-sales service, back office operations, telecom operations, manufacturing operations, facilities and security management, HR & F&A operations, IT & mobility services, etc.

In my role at Qness, I'm all about people and culture transformation. I'm driven by the idea of constant improvement, whether it's in individuals or the organization as a whole. My track record speaks to that - I've built, transformed, and scaled businesses, always striving for better. I'm a firm believer of Dave Ulrich's HR Value Pyramid. It's all about HR methods and models that boost company competitiveness and value creation. And measuring HR's impact on the bottom line? Absolutely crucial. That's why I'm all about using data and insights to track how our work shapes up.



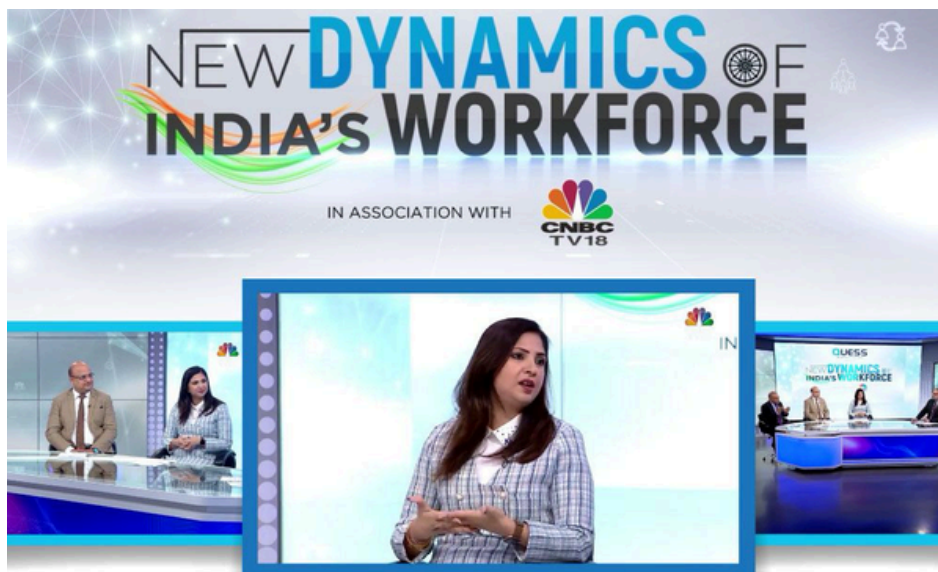
At Ques, we're big on human experience. We believe in making experiences personal and employee-led. That means tailoring practices and benefits to suit each person and giving them the reins. We're also serious about holistic well-being. We understand that people want workplaces that support their overall wellness, from financial to social aspects. That's why we've been recognized as one of the Top 40 Best Workplaces for Health and Wellness by Great Place To Work, year after year.

Uday: How has been the journey in the corporate so far and any stories of great remembrance and significance you wish to share with us?

Ruchi: Looking back, it's funny how I ended up in HR almost by accident. I had my heart set on being a doctor, but that plan didn't pan out after my 12th grade. So, I switched gears and pursued an MBA in marketing instead. Started off in product and brand management at Nicholas Piramal, but then stumbled into a significant Organization Design and development project that led me into HR. It wasn't part of the plan, but for the past 22 years, HR has been my world – a place where I've learned, grown, and found my path.

Uday: We all have mentors and guides in our professional world and they are a great influence, could you please tell us about them from your life?

Ruchi: Women CEOs like Indra Nooyi and Leena Nair are my SHeroes and truly inspiring. I have been lucky to have great CEOs as managers who have helped me learn the dynamics of business and honed my strategic and financial acumen. My executive coach since 2014 has been a great advisor and coach who has helped me take key career decisions and shaped my thinking. Last but not the least, current chairman of Ques have been a driving force for me to become the best version of myself. BTW it's still work in progress in his words "your best is yet to come"



Ruchi Ahluwalia
Group Chief People Officer (CPO)

Uday: What's your biggest source(s) of inspiration?

Ruchi: My outlook on life is all about gratitude and joy, inspired by Rhonda Byrne's books like "The Secret" and "The Magic." They've really shaped my beliefs, reinforcing the power of positivity and manifesting dreams. Whether it's career goals or personal aspirations, these books have shown me how a positive mindset can make all the difference in bringing our deepest desires to life.

Uday: The theme of this edition of our Magazine is Veteran for Community. Your thoughts on this please?

Ruchi: Our veterans are crucial to our country not only while they serve actively but even post their service in many ways - Economic, Technical, Political, Social to name a few. For instance, Veterans can contribute their technical and entrepreneurial skills to their communities. Politically active veterans can sign petitions, write to the political parties and Govt. representatives, and campaign for pro-veteran candidates. They can also serve as community representatives for enhancing safety and security in the community. Besides veterans bring plethora of skills and exposures to the table which makes them worthy of leading social and political agendas thereby contributing to the betterment of the society as a whole. They can also share their experiences and connect with community members at community events, which can also raise awareness about the challenges veterans face. Last but not the least, they can volunteer their time at veteran's homes or hospitals or at nonprofit organizations.



Uday: Challenges you faced so far, on the way to establishing yourself and how you challenged those challenges? Was there any Turnaround event or moment in your life?

Ruchi: Since I was mid school, I wanted to become a doctor and serve people. Life threw me a curveball and even after 1 year of drop year and intense hard work for pre medical exams, I ended up doing graduation in science. This was shattering of the dream and was tough at first, but I didn't let that stop me. I set my sight on getting an MBA, and put in the focus to make it happen. Funny thing is, now I hire doctors as one of our business is into Hospital management. I am still doing what I always wanted – helping people. I also feel HR profession is the best thing that has happened to me and I enjoy my work to the T.

Uday: Live in the present moment and/or Plan for the future? What's your mantra?

Ruchi: Life is like driving a vehicle. You have the rear mirror to reflect on the journey crossed and that anything from the past should not worry you in your present enjoy the scenic beauty while you pass by and look forward to your future destination.

So I believe in leaning on my past to drive strength from your successes learn resilience and preventive corrective action from the setbacks, live in the current moment and enjoy it to the fullest with gratitude everyday and look forward to a brighter future which keeps me rising up everyday to a new life.



Uday: Lessons learnt as the world transitions through one of the most challenging times?

Ruchi: Quite a few which I remind myself everyday. What got you here will not get you there. Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest still holds apt. Are you adaptable to the changing times. Are you the fittest? Don't count on your old laurels and it's a disruptive world where you need to learn unlearn relearn every day and become a better version of yourself. Similar to the smart phones and apps, every 3 - 6 months there's a better version available and the older ones are rendered useless. Our body is like the phone and mind is the playstore/app store. One needs to uninstall /reinstall and new install different apps constantly.

Uday: What advice do you have, especially for family members (women)from Fauj?

Ruchi: I have a huge admiration for the Fauji's and the Fauji families. A fauji cannot fulfil his/her national duty without the unflinching support of their families. If a Fauji sacrifices comfort in keeping the Nation on the topmost priority. The Fauji family also has sleepless nights and are ready for change. My brother Col. Rachit Ahluwalia and I once in a while debate about the corporate life V/s Army life and the challenges in both, however there is no profession in the world that can compare to someone who is on National duty so that others can be at peace and flourish. I can only say that Fauji rocks and Fauji family members are the epitome of adaptability and patience.



Uday: As an aspiring, experienced and confident woman in the Corporate World, what makes you enthusiastic about the future of women from the Armed Forces families in the corporate world?

Ruchi: I have hired and worked with many women leaders who are ex army officers themselves. What comes along with them is commitment, hardwork and a can do attitude. A bonus on top is collaborative skills and resilience. All of these are competencies to becoming a great leader. Personally I work towards creating diversity equity and inclusion in the organization with 50% women participation in the workforce. Hence women with diverse background and on career breaks due to any reason are always welcome in our organization.

Uday: What is the best thing you love about Fauj?

Ruchi: That in one life you can experience many lives, life skills get embedded in your DNA through the Army training and real life situations and the fact that your efforts are meaningfully contributed towards nation building.

Uday: What keeps you going other than the work, what are your likes and hobbies? And how do you make time for your hobbies from your busy schedule?

Ruchi: Variety and balance is my attitude. Hence I naturally get drawn towards new experiences and learnings. Tall goals excite me and I put myself towards achieving them. Since I am a workaholic and want everything in life, a lot of efforts goes towards balancing all elements of life family, friends, team, personal self. Diving into the spiritual self, travelling, reading binge watching organizing social events make a basic cut to my hobbies.



Uday: Last but not the least, rather most important, FAMILY and its role in your life as you excelled in your corporate career?

Ruchi: In one sentence - Parents & my Fauji brother together form my foundation, my in laws supported me like pillars, my husband comforts me like a roof (without a glass ceiling ;-)) and my son is the wind beneath my wings.



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

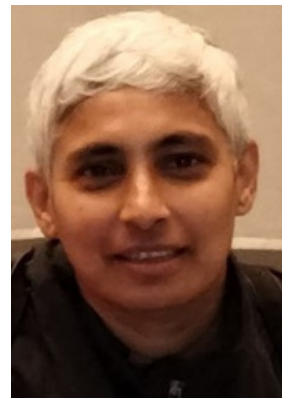
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Women Power

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IN INTERACTION WITH AFZAL AMDANI

Major Bhavana Chiranjay, Retd, an Officer from WS -16 Course, from the Corps of Engineers (Madras Sappers), transitioned into the Civil after 9 years of service in the Indian Army, which included instructional tenures in Training Academies for Officer Cadets and Other Ranks. After Army, her second stint of nearly 7 years, was with Wipro Ltd in service delivery and project management. Post which she has co-founded Swakshatra Trust, a child Rights Organization with 5 other Veteran Officers and other professionals from the Civil, and has deep dived into the child protection, anti human-trafficking and anti sex-crimes space.



Afzal: Please tell us something about your background before you became an Army Officer?

Bhavana: I am from the State of Karnataka, born in Bangalore. My Father Late Sri Chiranjaya Kumar, was a Banker and hence we grew up in a lot of different stations due to my Father's postings once every three years (Bangalore, KGF, Karwar, Ahmedabad, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Hubli). My Mother Ms Saroja Kumar is an Educator, Musician and a Home Maker. I have two sisters, I am the second one amongst us three siblings. We are a family of animal lovers. Have always grown up around dogs. Before joining the Army, we were based out of Hyderabad, where my Father was last posted prior to his retirement. I had done my BSc from St Anns College Mehdipatnam Hyderabad, before joining OTA for training in Apr 2000. I have been a National level player in martial arts like Tae Kwon Do, Budokan Karate. Coming from a family of musicians (Mother is a Sangeet Visharad), I learnt Tabla as a kid.





Afzal: Please tell us about the purpose and the work done by your NGO? What are your future plans?

Bhavana: My Organization **Swakshatra Trust** was founded in 2016. Our Mission is Anti Human Trafficking and Anti Sex Crimes, within the larger canvas of Child Rights. Our 13 member Leadership Team consists of 5 Veteran Officers of the Indian Army. With effect from 2016, we have worked in the area of rehabilitation of child survivors of sex-crimes and trafficking through the following three Programmes:

- Swakshatra Home for Children housing child survivors (girls in the age group 12 to 23 years), providing counselling and psychotherapy support, support with the criminal justice process, education, vocational training and other healing enablers. These are Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) placed with us for institutional care and support through a quasi judicial entity called the Child Welfare Committee.
- Setu Bridge Learning and Vocational Training Centre, providing Bridge Education to Children from our Home that are not ready for mainstream education in terms of age appropriate educational levels, and for Out of School (OOS) children from migrant labour populations.
- Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Awareness and Prevention Training for children, educators and parents in schools and slum clusters.

As the next phase of our Operations, we will be commencing targeted Rescues of sex-trafficked children/ individuals, by mid of 2025. Towards the preparedness for this phase of rescues, we are in the process of constructing a secure Safe-Home Complex in the suburbs of Bangalore on a piece of land that has been gifted to our Trust by a kind Philanthropist. Such a Safe-Home Complex will become essential during this second phase of operations and onwards, considering an increase in demand for housing capacity given the rescues, and further considering that the risk perception for our Organization as an Organization involved in Rescues, will increase from the present perception of our Organization as one involved in rehabilitation.

We will be calling this place Swakshatra Gaurav Niwas. This Safe-Home Complex, as a one-stop support for child survivors of the profiles mentioned earlier, will contain a Children's Home of capacity 75, a Learning Centre for Bridge Education and Vocational Training, Life-skills Training, Employability Training and various extra curricular activities, and an admin complex containing the kitchen and dining areas and staff quarters. This space will contain other healing enablers like some minimal infrastructure for games and sports, and a medical inspection and care facility for animal assisted interventions. With this next phase of rescues, we hope to make a significant impact in terms of numbers, in the rescue and rehabilitation of children from sex-trafficking.

Afzal: When and how did the spark of this passion ignite?

Bhavana: The first time that I considered Child Protection as something that I certainly wanted to involve myself with in this lifetime, was after an incident that happened when I was around 21 years. This one night, those days my Father was posted in Hyderabad, and I was studying late into the night, and noticed through the window a figure curled on a heap of sand as part of construction material that was in front of my Home (some construction happening in my neighborhood). After a while the curled figure on that heap of sand did not feel like a street dog, so when I went out and checked, it was a child, a boy around 8 years of age perhaps. It was a cold November night, so my sister and I, took an old blanket and tried to cover the child, at which instance, he woke up with a start... that was the moment, that I experienced a feeling of distress perhaps which culminated in a strong thought in me, that no child should be that scared and out in the open....I was giving him a blanket the best that I could have done that day?

This thought stayed with me all along and once I moved out of the Services, I knew I had to come into Child Protection. But the form and shape that the Swakshatra Child Protection has taken today, is thanks to my exposure to rescue of sex-trafficked populations, as a volunteer with our Mentor Organization Prajwala, based out of Hyderabad. Dr Sunitha Krishnan one of the co-founders of Prajwala, has been a mentor to our Organization ever since, and the Swakshatra Mission in the anti human trafficking and anti sex-crimes space, has been largely inspired by the work of Prajwala and Sunitha Ma'am.



Afzal: What were the challenges you encountered, and how were you able to overcome them?

Bhavana: Some top challenges we faced as an Organization:

Mitigation Strategy: We fought these corrupt entities in the courts of law. We further took representations to the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR), which also greatly helped our case.

- Self Harm and flight risks with children.

Mitigation strategy: Strong hazard maintenance and shelter management protocols.

- Witness protection needs of our children

Mitigation Strategy: Strong Security, Emergency Management, and Criminal Justice Support Protocols

- Fund availability for sustenance of operations

Mitigation Strategy: Diversified fund raising strategies

Afzal: What is your team like, and how did you build it?

Bhavana: Our 13 Member Leadership Team is as below:-

Executive Board/ Trustees

- Maj Bhavana Chiranjay, Retd - Executive Secretary
- Capt Smitha Naidu, Retd - Managing Trustee
- Dr Sridevi Vadakoot - Treasurer
- Ms Komal Mohan - Director Health and Education

Governing Body

- Capt Sarath Chander, Retd
- Capt Ritu Dubey, Retd
- Mr Bharat Chander
- Ms Kaveri Chengappa
- Dr Pooja Padki
- Dr Madhukar HS
- Advisory Board
- Ms Usha Jagirdar
- Maj Prashant Rai, Retd
- Ms Anupama Shenoy

Other than the Leadership who are all volunteers with the Organization, on our payroll are 16 professionals on various engagement modes ranging from Residential Fulltime, to Day time, to Part time, to Professional Services models. Amongst these are professionals with Social Work, Psychology and other degrees.

Afzal: Where do you operate from, what is your NGO's footprint currently?

Bhavana: Present Operations limited to Bangalore Geography. Our upcoming safe-home complex will be coming up in a suburb of Bangalore, 40 kms from the International Airport.

Afzal: What support and contribution you received from your family while pursuing this cause?

Bhavana: My Parents and that of the other leaders also, have been most supportive. The first two donations that Swakshatra Trust received, were from my Mother (10k) and Father (5k). My Father, till his passing due to covid in 2020, completely managed our accounts meticulously. He was a Banker. My Mother takes tuitions at our Children's Home, and conducts some select classes at our Bridge Learning Centre, this at 82 years of age. Not once have either of them ever complained about the long hours, or erratic timings involved during emergencies, or even about the potential risks to all of us in this journey.

When I gave up my employment with an IT Major and moved fulltime into Swakshatra, with no source of income, and home loan EMIS, my parents did not utter one sentence of discouragement...infact when I had no source of income at all due to this move (now with a training consultancy that I run with a friend of mine, I now have some sporadic income), it was my parents who kept me lovingly fed and housed. I can safely say that I have the luxury and privilege of being able to do this kind of work, because of my family and friends. Even my siblings and their children are very encouraging.

While my Family has played a pivotal role, my friends have played no less of a role in Mission Swakshatra. Swakshatra became possible due to 9 of us Friends joining hands and founding this Organization. We have been together through some of the most trying times in this journey. Other than the Leadership of Swakshatra, many many friends remain strongly connected with the cause, in the form of donors, individuals providing professional services, mentors for our children, resource persons, guides, trouble-shooters etc etc...ever grateful.



Afzal: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous journey. Can you share a few from your experience?

Bhavana: Top few lessons:

- What has worked fantastically for us, is that we do not have any political and religious affiliations. The learning in this regard has come more from witnessing the journey of Organizations with such alignment, and pitfalls therein.
- It is possible to survive in this country without bribing. You just need to stick to your guns.
- Just empathy, courage and compassion wont suffice in this complex space that we operate. Other aspects like knowledge, systems/ processes, discipline, connects with the right individuals and organizations, etc matter a lot.
- With the right Intent and efforts ... even though the journey may be difficult and progress agonizingly slow... you will eventually evolve a model that works
- Life with animals, will be the next level intervention in post-trauma care for children with adverse childhood experiences.

Afzal: Your efforts must have been appreciated and recognised by government and other non-government organisations. Would you like to share the details?

Bhavana:

- Swakshatra has been awarded the first position in the gold category, in a cohort conducted by PACT India in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child, for best practices in inclusivity.
- Swakshatra was represented during two consecutive years at the Vijay Diwas celebrations at the Army House in New Delhi, and our work was introduced to the PM, Raksha Mantri and Rashtrapati



Afzal: Would you like to share a memorable and gratifying moment during your journey?

Bhavana: There have been many many supremely satisfying moments in our journey with our survivors. Sharing a few:

- This one time, when I was speaking to a child who had some behavioral manifestations of her trauma, and I was chastising her for her poor behaviour, and in frustration I asked her, these many years with Swakshatra and you are still doing these things... please tell me what have you achieved over all these years? To this, this little one, in her limitations with communications tole me... I have taken out whatever i had bottle up inside.... this as a validation of our work, has stayed with me ever since.
- When one of our kids who came to us at 11.5 years of age, as a survivor of child labour and sexual abuse, and started her journey with us in healing... she was an illiterate, and had to be put through a remedial literacy program with us inhouse, she mentioned during one instance when a school bus passed by our children's home, that one day she would want to board such a bus and go to school...and take in her tiffin box, chapatis rolled with jam inside. One of my most fulfilling milestones in this journey, came when this child actually boarded a school bus, and we packed for her a lunch of chapatis rolled with jam inside!!

Afzal: What advice do you have for veterans who desire or aspire to dedicate their lives for the community service?

Bhavana: Us veterans are a rare breed, who in their early twenties, have a sense of responsibility towards something that is larger than us... when we joined service, for us that was our Country.... and we had it in ourselves to pledge our lives for the cause...this ability to align with a Cause larger than us, and go to any lengths to deliver, is something that can make us the next level activists and leaders in the development sector. Needless to say, there is a discipline and method to how we operate, and this can again be cutting edge in the development sector.



**Afzal: If one wants to contribute to the noble cause, what are the ways to do so?
How can they reach you and your team?**

Bhavana: Volunteer with us in both core and non-core engagements depending on availability of time

- Donate as retail donors
- Connect us to institutional donors in your respective networks
- Take up preventive strategy activities within your own communities and networks
- If life situations permit, join the cause in full-time engagements
- Start similar Organizations with this Cause wherever you are domiciled „we can be your knowledge partners till you understand the ropes

Afzal: What help do you expect from Fauji Veterans?

Bhavana: For swakshatra as the next step in our range of interventions to combat human trafficking and sex-crimes, we seek to build and commission a Safe-Home Complex called Gaurav Niwas, gifted to our Trust, by a philanthropist. Gaurav Niwas will be a one-stop secure space to house child survivors.

Gaurav Niwas seeks to provide as many healing enablers to child survivors, to include access to games and sports, animal assisted interventions and extra-curricular activities designed to enable healing and confidence building. Gaurav Niwas will have a learning centre to provide Bridge Education to survivors who may not be mainstream education ready. The learning Centre Setu (as in the Bridge), will also provide vocational training, employability training, lifeskills training etc. We seek to get into rescues, as the next logical course of interventions in the anti human-trafficking space.

Our construction activities are commencing in Sep 24 and we are in the process of gathering funds to make this space happen... we seek the support of Veterans and Civilian Leaders, to support us themselves as retail donors, and also as professionals now well-placed in the civil, to bring in institutional contributions from CSRs of Companies and Grants from Foundations... the kitty required is huge, and our best bet is to lean on Brother and Sister Officers and Veterans, to make this next step in our Mission against sex-crimes and trafficking... the Swakshatra Gaurav Niwas, a reality. Contact info: 9686661097, response@swakshatra.in, bhavanachiranjay@gmail.com



Captain Afzal Habib Amdani, commissioned from the Officers Training academy and a Madras Sapper Officer, leads a delivery center for an Indian tech giant in the Philippines. He sees his professional and personal convergence as a means to create a positive impact, leveraging digital technology to fulfill this purpose. A marathoner and paragliding enthusiast, he is fascinated by agility, speed, and scale.

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor

Knowledge Bytes

FORGED IN FIRE:

BY DHIRAJ BHIMWAL

(This is going to be a Four article series, starting Feb 2024.

This is the final part of the Article in the series by the Author)

"THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF INDIAN ARMED FORCES TRAINING ACADEMIES ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE"

"Coursemate": A word that reverberates through the ranks, igniting camaraderie and fortitude among those in uniform. Like a beacon in the night, it brings a sense of unity and purpose to everything, reminding us that we are not alone in our journey. With a nod, a smile, or a shared joke, it creates a bond that transcends the rigors of training or duty, infusing each task with determination and resilience. In the face of challenges, it serves as a rallying cry, propelling us forward as a cohesive force, ready to conquer whatever obstacles lie ahead. This single word is enough to raise spirit for any person in uniform.

The bond between coursemates, forged in the crucible of a defence academy, defies definition. It transcends time and weather, rooted in shared hardship and adversity. These comrades, often nicknamed during training (Nick names coined and bestowed upon during training



in academies get stuck for life, in most cases there is no logic or explanation behind these nick names but they are unique and have a distinctive connection with personality traits of that individual) become lifelong brothers, their connection enduring despite decades apart (some of them may not meet each other physically for years but once they meet it seems like yesterday. They share a unique bond, capable of both mischief and unwavering support, sometime stepping in domain of being unauthorised or even unlawful. This camaraderie extends beyond mere friendship, offering tangible benefits like career advancement (What money cannot buy, a coursemate placed in the right spot can do, both during service or in corporate or in day-to-day life), assistance in times of trouble (Coursemates are generally first respondents, spread across the world, and not to forget seamless holiday planning (just info the coursemate at a particular station about your tentative holiday idea, rest is

his/her problem, how he/she makes you comfortable and produces a best itinerary). Regardless of current rank or wealth, status coursemates remain steadfast allies, their loyalty evident in both joyful celebrations and sombre moments of need. The depth of this bond varies, with closer ties among those from the same regiment or training courses. Yet, the strongest adhesive lies in the shared experiences of academy life, where friendships are cemented amidst the rigors of training. To put it simply, coursemates are your siblings from different mothers. These days a few of daredevils (Pun intended) are taking this spirit to a new level by entering in to nuptial domain, following motto of Coursemate bhi, Soulmate bhi. Those who have gone pass that stage found solace in defence matrimony or within course for their wards. But of late, practice of marrying children from the same course has begun to decline, this shift is mainly attributed to families recognizing that in such marriages, the two coursemates tend to prioritize socializing and having fun together more than focusing on their new marital bond.

Crafted from shared trials and tribulations, this enduring bond between coursemates is akin to an unbreakable bond, forged through rigorous physical training and overcoming challenges. The passage of years since last meeting holds no significance; upon reunion, one can expect a warm welcome, characterized by joviality, and embraces that leave one breathless. In a matter of moments, reminiscences of academy days, complete with humorous anecdotes and shared secrets, are divulged to spouses. This phenomenon was vividly observed firsthand recently by me during attendance of Silver Jubilee Celebration of my course.



Dear readers, in our journey together , this article is the **fourth in the series** of articles, (In the first article **“Pehla Hamesha Pehla”**, published in Feb 2024 issue we spoke about the unique place the first of each life experience holds for us and in the second article **"Hometown Is Where the Heart Is"** featured in Mar 2024 issue we delved into the reasons behind the universal sentiment of love and nostalgia for one's hometown, examining the emotional ties that bind individuals to the landscapes of their formative years. The third article published in April 24 issue, titled **“Beyond the Classroom: “The Enduring Influence of Our Childhood School on Personal and Professional Odyssey”** we explored about Childhood schooling, how its influence extends far beyond the academic realm, shaping our character, influencing our choices, and defining our professional paths. Here in this article, we will talk about impact of training academies of Indian defence forces on individuals.

In the grand tapestry of India's military legacy, the training academies stand as hallowed grounds where the future guardians of the nation are forged in discipline, camaraderie, and an unwavering commitment to duty. The memories forged within the rigorous routines and challenging terrains of these academies become indelible imprints, shaping not just the trajectory of military careers but profoundly influencing the personal and professional lives of those who pass through their gates.

Fundamentally, the recollections stemming from military training academies transcend mere nostalgia; they represent the very essence of a transformative journey that shapes individual destinies and national trajectories. The impact of these institutions stretches far beyond their physical boundaries, resonating in the personal and professional decisions of officers who carry forth the resilient ethos cultivated during their foundational years.

As we reflect in succeeding paragraphs, on the importance of military training academies, it is essential to recognize the profound appreciation we owe to these institutions. They not only shape exceptional military leaders but also nurture exemplary individuals whose impact extends across society. Therefore, let us cherish and honor the experiences linked with these academies, acknowledging the lasting impact they leave on the dedicated individuals who walk through their revered doors. These academies have an enduring impact on our lives, illuminating the multifaceted roles it plays in shaping the individuals we become, the same can be as under: -

A Sacred Rite of Passage: Becoming an officer in the Indian Armed Forces is not merely a career choice; it is a sacred rite of passage that begins within the precincts of elite training academies. The experience transcends mere education; it is an immersion into a way of life characterized by discipline,



honour, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. The memories of early morning drills, gruelling physical exercises, and the camaraderie forged in adversity become the crucible in which officers are shaped.

Leadership Forged in Challenges: The training academies are crucibles of leadership where individuals are tested, refined, and moulded into leaders capable of guiding their troops through the most challenging terrains, both metaphorical and physical. The crucible of adversity, whether in the form of

demanding physical exercises, tactical training, or leadership simulations, instils resilience, adaptability, and the ability to make split-second decisions – qualities that define effective leaders both on and off the battlefield.

Discipline as a Way of Life: Discipline is the bedrock of uniformed life, and the training academies instill this ethos with unparalleled rigor. The daily routines, the attention to detail, and the adherence to protocols become second nature to those passing through these academies. This discipline extends far beyond the parade grounds; it permeates every aspect of life, shaping officers who are not only capable in their professional roles but who approach all aspects of life with a meticulous and disciplined mindset.

Camaraderie Forged in Adversity: The bonds formed within the walls of the training academies are forged in the crucible of shared challenges and aspirations. From the gruelling physical training to the late-night ragda sessions, the camaraderie established during these formative years creates a bond that transcends rank and hierarchy. This sense of unity becomes a pillar of support in times of professional challenges and a source of enduring friendships that last a lifetime. Their collective acts of adventures / misadventures are kind of national secrets, for a particular course they are classified as - if I have to tell you, I will have to kill you. Some incidents and characters involved stay a mystery even at Golden Jubilee reunions with multiple claimants of being central character in an event remembered fondly by a specific platoon, coy or whole academy.

The Art of Decision-Making: In the volatile and uncertain environments where armed forces operate, the ability to make swift and effective decisions is paramount. The training academies immerse officers in scenarios that demand split-second decision-making under pressure. Whether it is a tactical exercise or a simulated crisis, the training ingrains the art of decision-making, fostering officers who can navigate complex situations with poise and clarity.

Physical and Mental Resilience:

The training regimen in armed forces academies is designed not only to hone physical prowess but also to fortify mental resilience. The endurance required to withstand arduous physical exercises, coupled with the mental acuity demanded in strategic planning and execution, prepares officers for the rigors



of defence service. This resilience becomes a cornerstone of personal strength, enabling officers to confront challenges in their personal and professional lives with fortitude.

Professional Excellence: The pursuit of excellence is a hallmark of the armed forces, and it begins in the training academies. The rigorous curriculum, hands-on training, and exposure to real-world scenarios create officers who are not only proficient in their specialized fields but who embody a commitment to excellence in all endeavours. This pursuit of perfection becomes a guiding principle in officers' professional lives, driving them to excel in their assigned roles and to continuously seek improvement.

Ethical Framework and Values: The armed forces are not just institutions of defence; they are repositories of values and ethics. The training academies instil a sense of duty, integrity, and service to the nation. The honour code becomes more than a set of rules; it is a guiding principle that influences officers in their personal and professional conduct. This ethical framework serves as a compass, shaping officers who are not only skilled professionals but who also embody the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour.

Diversity and Inclusivity: In the melting pot of India's diversity, armed forces training academies stand as shining examples of unity in diversity. Officers from various regions, linguistic backgrounds, and cultural traditions come together to form a cohesive and diverse force. This exposure to diversity becomes a cornerstone of officers' ability to navigate complex, multicultural environments, fostering an inclusive mindset that is invaluable in both personal and professional spheres.

Legacy and Tradition: The training academies are not just institutions; they are repositories of tradition and legacy. The passing down of customs, ceremonies, and the rich history of military service creates a sense of continuity that transcends individual careers. The sense of being part of something greater than oneself instils officers with a profound sense of purpose, shaping their actions and decisions in a manner that upholds the legacy of those who came before them.



Family Spirit and Support: The bonds formed within the armed forces extend beyond the individual officer to embrace a larger family – the armed forces community. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose creates a support system that becomes a pillar of strength in personal and professional challenges. The understanding and support from fellow officers and their families form a network that provides solace and encouragement, contributing to the overall well-being of officers and their families.

The Everlasting Impact: In essence, the memories of armed forces training academies are not just nostalgic recollections; they are the very fabric of a transformative experience that shapes the course of individual lives and the destiny of a nation. The influence of these academies extends far beyond the



parade grounds and training fields, echoing in the personal and professional choices of officers who carry with them the indomitable spirit forged in the crucible of their formative years. As we reflect on the impact of armed forces training academies, let us recognize the profound debt of gratitude owed to these institutions that sculpt not only exceptional military leaders but exemplary individuals whose influence is felt in every facet of our society. So, let us cherish and celebrate the memories of these academies, for in doing so, we honour the enduring legacy they bestow upon the stalwart men and women who pass through their gates.



LT COL DHIRAJ BHIMWAL is a serving Army officer, commissioned from Officers Training Academy Chennai in Regt of Artillery in Mar 1999. Having served the nation in various sectors and roles the officer is presently on study leave pursuing a Master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Pune University.

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Author of the Month

Capt Nitin Joshi

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY SHRIWAS

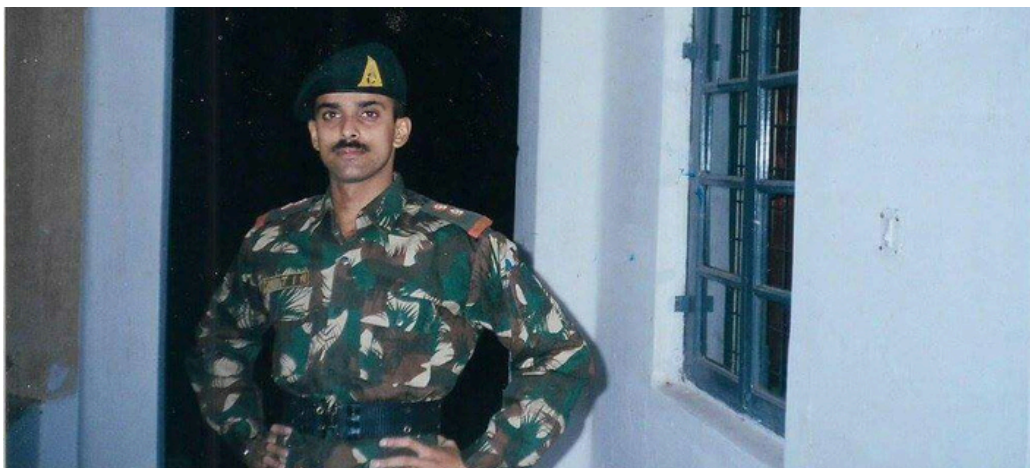
Capt Nitin Joshi is a second generation Officer who got commissioned to 10 Sikh Light Infantry in Mar 2000. Post his army tenure he has worked as the chief admin and training officer at Bhonsala Military School, Nashik. He has also worked with Club Mahindra, Hilton Hotels and Resorts before shifting to Pune in 2015. After working briefly with Indus International School as the director of admin, he followed his passion of training and development. He freelanced as a soft skill trainer for almost 6 years. Currently he works as a professor for soft skills and business communication in ICFAI Business School.



Uday: Please tell me a little bit about yourself, your background, your education?

Nitin: I served in the army from March 2000 to March 2005, in 10 Sikh Light Infantry. My father, Lt Col D B Joshi (Retd) is a veteran from the Corps of Signals. My mother, Mrs Lata Joshi is a homemaker. My wife, Mrs Sonal Joshi is a teacher in Vision English Medium School, Pune. I have two daughters, elder one, Ms Urvi Joshi is pursuing B.Sc. in Biotechnology while the younger one, Ms Avani Joshi is into class 9th.

After leaving the army in March 2005, I was working as the chief admin and training officer at Bhonsala Military School, Nashik. Thereafter, I worked with Club Mahindra at Panchgani and Hilton Hotels and Resorts at Lonavla. I shifted to Pune in 2015. After working briefly with Indus International School as the director of admin, I decided to change my line of work and follow my passion i.e. training and development. I freelanced as a soft skill trainer for almost 6 years. Then I got a break in ICFAI Business School as a professor for soft skills and business communication where I am currently working. I have completed my post-graduation in defence and strategic studies from Pune University and diploma in hotel management from Rizvi College, Mumbai.



January 2001, Infantry School Mhow

Uday: What inspired you to start writing?

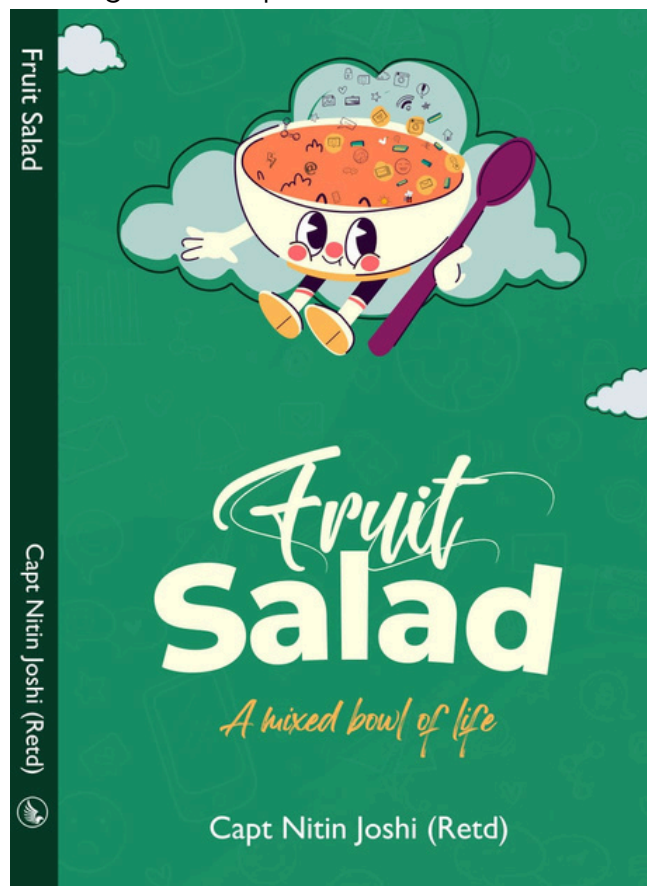
Nitin: Reading and writing have been my hobbies since childhood. Even in my school days, I used to write down my thoughts and experiences mixed with imagination. That time, I never thought of getting anything published. It was just something that I did for fun. Around the year 2013 - 14, thoughts of writing a book started coming to me. I used to think that I will write a book 'one day'. Then one day, I realized that that day was also one day. I opened the laptop and started typing; and now, I am close to the release of my fourth book with two more in the pipeline!!

You can say that the stories just refused to stay inside me anymore. They were ready and wanted to be read.

Uday: What inspired you to write on this unique theme- “Fruit Salad - A Mixed Bowl of Life”

Nitin: The title of this book might lead someone to think that it is about culinary arts. It is not. It can be seen as a book on philosophy, poetry, quotes and writeups. Basically, it is about my perspective and thoughts on life. The content is mostly spontaneous; although a bit of afterthought has been given at places.

The inspiration for this book came during a casual conversation with a friend who is philosophically inclined. She asked me, “Nitin, why don’t you compile your thoughts on life into a book?” “Why not?” I thought. I was anyways planning the next book. And I started recording these thoughts and quotes. I think it was the universe talking to me.



Fruit Salad

Uday: You have already written few books more. What inspired you to write those books?

Nitin: Yes, I have published three more books before Fruit Salad. The inspiration for writing as mentioned earlier comes from my passion to write (and read). I love telling stories and I have been blessed with an active imagination and a sense of humour. I found so many stories around me and just had to tell them to people. And so, the books.

My first book 'Once a Soldier' is something like a spy thriller, inspired partly from my days in the army and partly from the ongoings around us. The second book 'An Affair of a Lifetime' is where I flex my funny muscles. It is a romantic comedy about a married man trying to have an affair. (Let me make it clear that it is NOT autobiographical!!!) My third book 'Communication Skills Simplified Through Stories' is related to the subject I teach. It brings out the importance of communication through stories, both real and imagined.

Uday: How do you gather ideas for writing a book on such a different topic?

Nitin: The ideas, the inspiration, the stories and the characters are all around us. You just need to see from a writer's perspective. I try to make the characters and incidents as relatable as possible for the readers. Whenever, I want an idea to write, I just recall incidents and people from my life. Likewise, as in my latest book 'Fruit Salad' incidents and people trigger ideas for writing.



Republic day in the college

Uday: What is your process for creative writing? How do you go about writing a book? Tell us about how you went about writing your latest book?

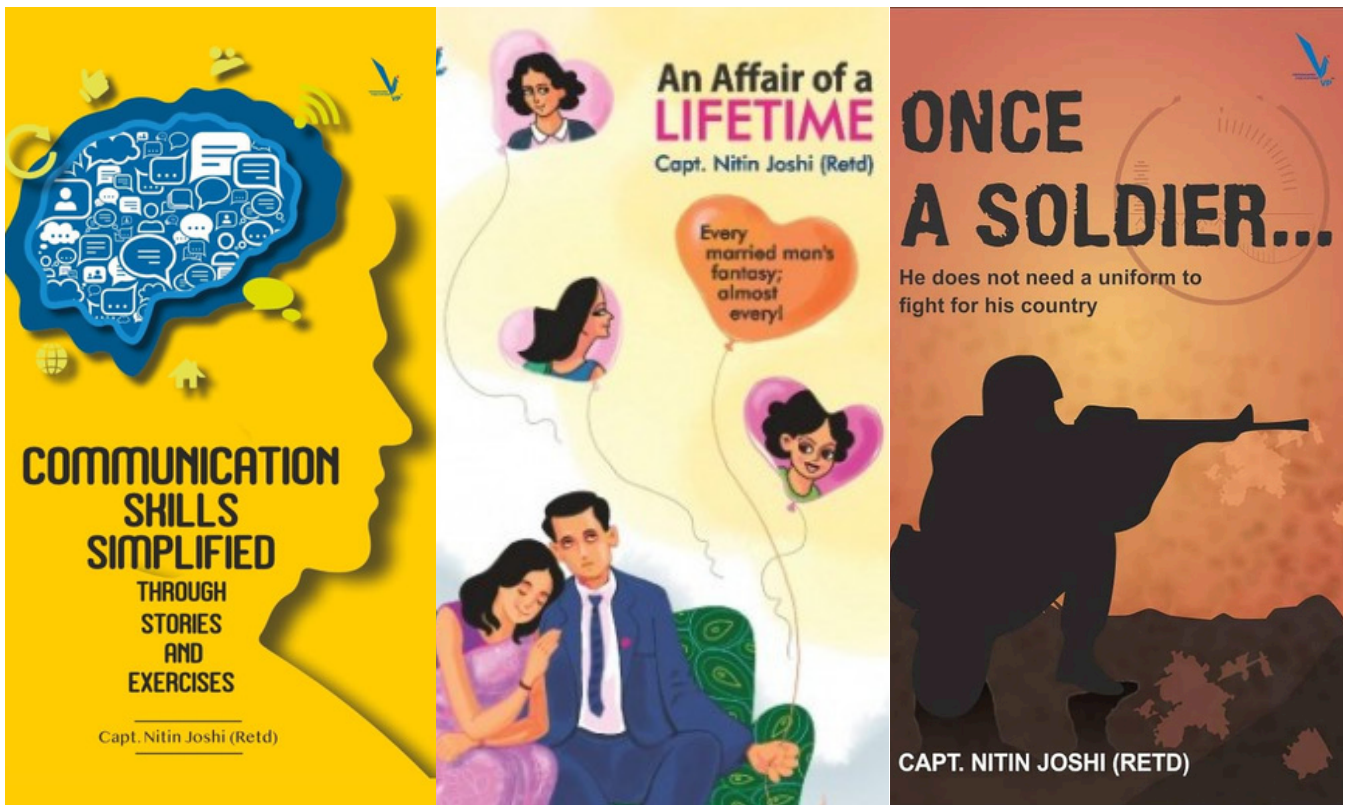
Nitin: My book on communication skills is meant to be a teaching book. For that book, I first made an outline structure of the book and then I went around creating the content and finding relevant stories to deliver the lessons.

For my first two books, which are fiction, I had no story line in mind when I started. Even the characters were not clearly defined. I just allowed the story to flow and the characters took shape as I went along. Every time, I sat down to write (type), I had almost no idea which direction the story would go in. But after typing a few lines, the story would develop and the ideas flowed. Even I used to be amazed at the result.

Uday: How did being in the forces helped you to write?

Nitin: I am a second generation fauji. Till the age of 30, I stayed in a fauji environment, first as a fauji brat and then as a fauji myself. (According to my wife, now I am just a brat.) This means that I have had a chance to see the country and meet people from every corner of the country. It exposed me to different perspectives and places. In writing, this helps in developing characters and setting my stories in different backgrounds.

Also, all cantonments have well equipped libraries. I always had access to the best reading material. This too helped in shaping the writer in me.



The Other Editions

Uday: What are your future plans for taking forward your writing ambitions? Please tell us about that?

Nitin: The plan is very simple – keep writing. I have many book ideas and I am going to see them all in print. Ideas also keep popping up all the time.

Uday: What is your message to all those people who plan to write a book but never really take up the effort to do so?

Nitin: The message is simple, just start writing (or typing) and then do some more of it. Follow this with some more of the same thing (writing / typing) and some more. Keep doing this. The result will amaze you. Remember what I said earlier about one day. Any day is the one day on which you plan to become a writer. It is up to you to decide. There is no magic trick (or app) for this. You just have to motivate and push yourself.



With My Better Half



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals. Thereafter he has worked with Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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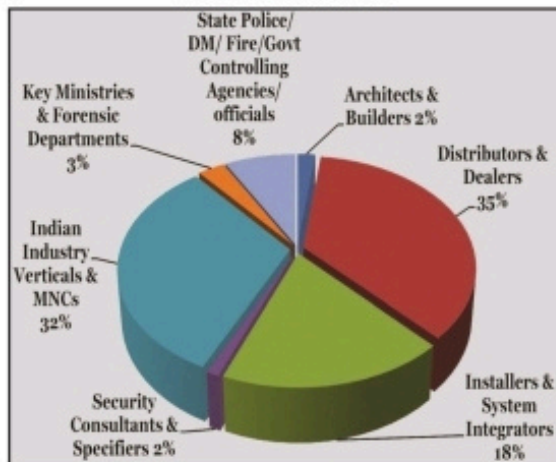
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Leisure

THE QUESTION WHICH IS SELDOM ANSWERED!

For an ex-NDA, the period during the term break after passing out from NDA is the most difficult to introduce himself to civilians. Since at this time the pride of successfully completing 3 years of rigorous training & the fact that he will be a commissioned officer within 11 months restricts him calling himself as an under trainee. Also lack of knowledge of NDA in the environment adds on to it, wherein half of the time is wasted to clarify that NDA is also an academy other than IMA, where cadets are trained. Nevertheless, this is a phase which every ex-NDA has to go through. During this phase I had an experience which left its effect lifelong. I will be sharing the same experience with you hereafter.

During the summers of 2012 (just after my passing out parade of NDA), I was travelling from Lucknow to Moradabad in a 2nd AC Seater Chair Class bogie. As a Hopeful True Bachelor, I checked in the chart list for a female companion around my seat. Even though I have always been unlucky in this, but this time fortune favoured me and a 20 year female companion was listed next to me. Butterflies already started flying inside my stomach. I even planned the way I will be introducing myself to her & thereafter how will I continue the conversation. I thanked God for this favour, & enthusiastically sat on my seat and desperately looked at the entrance door. After 5 minutes the time came wherein, I saw a beautiful girl entering through the door & coming near my seat. I prayed to God, please she should be the one! Seriously God was listening to me that day, she was the one. She kept her luggage on the racks above & purse on the seat next to me. I could smell her fruity perfume. What a choice! I appreciated her in my mind. I was already blushing & thanking God, that for the first time he has listened me. To my surprise she extended her hand to me for a shake hand. Oh God! this all was happening too fast; I wasn't prepared for it. I hesitantly shook hand & we shared our names. Immediately she said, "Excuse me Tarun". Oh God! my name from her mouth was like a beautiful song, I replied, "Yes pls!" she continued "Actually if you don't mind, can you exchange your seat with my boyfriend?" with this question I heard shattering noise within & reminded of the story of Hiranakashyap, wherein Hiranakashyap very intelligently asked God for boon with so many conditions, but God finds loopholes in it somehow to counter the boon. I felt the same, God listened to my wishes but with his twist involved. So as a pure gentleman, good citizen & a True Soldier I sacrificed my own comfort. She pointed the seat somewhere in the rear. Within a glance I again thought let it be any seat but not the last one, where I could see a big, dark & gloomy middle-aged man. But the "Law of Attraction" doesn't work on the negative inputs, if you focus on what you don't want the law will invariably give you what you don't want (for more details on "Law of Attraction" read book "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne).She continued "Tarun the last seat, where uncle is sitting."

With heavy legs & broken heart I went to the seat. Uncle was thrice of my size & was sitting on the aisle seat so invariably he got up to give me the way. I sat down & took out my tablet in order to kill 5 hours of journey. I started watching movies back-to-back. What else do you expect from a fresh lovelorn!

However, during this time uncle's peculiar behaviour took my attention. He was reading 3 books of different genres simultaneously, one was on management (theoretical book), second was of Khalil Gibran (philosophy) & 3rd was the God of small things (fiction). He was also jotting down notes in a small diary side by side. Whenever he was feeling sleepy, he would go and wash his face thereafter drink a cup of coffee. He would read some pages of one book then look outside through the window, give a thoughtful glance & thereafter write something in his diary & change the book. He was constantly repeating these actions. To be true intelligence can be sensed & I was able to do it within his aura. But this weird pattern was raising several questions in my inquisitive mind. But I was not able to talk to him due to his serious outlook. But I decided I will clear my doubts before I leave this train, but will engage in conversation when only half an hour is left for my station, so that if I offend him somehow, we will not be together for more time.

Being defensive by using time & space as a tool is the first lesson you get as an under trainee in academies. So just half an hour before the journey was about to finish, I asked him, "Sir, if you don't mind can I ask you a question?" he replied instantly, "Oh yes please". I asked, "Are you a writer?" he giggled and said, "Oh no. Probably you saw me reading & writing that's why you are thinking this. But I am a scientist. Actually, I have been called to deliver a talk in Pant Nagar University on a topic related to my research." I sighed "Ok, so you must be framing the talk." He replied, "yes son definitely, what's your name by the way?" I told my name & he questioned immediately, "what do you do?" again the same question of dilemma. What should I tell him, ex-NDA, under trainee, joining IMA or becoming an officer? Confusingly I answered, "Actually sir I am under trainee, will be getting commissioned soon." He instantly questioned back, "Are you an ex- NDA?" this question took me by surprise because it generally comes from a fauji only. I told him "Yes, I am an ex-NDA." Thereafter he bombarded me with the extraordinary knowledge he had about NDA. It wasn't the age-old NDA GK, it was the knowledge which is seldom known to even ex-NDAs. When, where & how NDA was established, the initially invested money for NDA's infrastructure, the reasons to change the loc of NDA from Dehradun to Khadakwasla, requirement of NDA in India etc. with this eye-opening session he asked the number of weapons fired during training. Well to be true as an under trainee we only count the days left to go home and nothing else, but with this question I realised that I fired a lot many weapons without even realising it. The words of academy's adjutant flashed in my mind, "Once you leave the academy, then you will realise the value of this valuable training." Then he gave me a typical scientist like briefing on INSAS & its metallurgy. His in-depth knowledge of the subject out of his field & retention of the precise data about the weapons was mind boggling. After this mind-boggling monologue, he asked me the

question which is seldom answered, **“What is your talent?”** I started talking to myself, “What’s my talent? Nobody ever asked me this question, not even in SSB. What could be the answer to it?” I replied hesitantly, “I can speak well.” He replied, “Tarun that is your ability & not your talent.” He added, “This is a question which many of us never answer, even most of us don’t come to know about it. Till date even I am not able to find its answer. **Let me amplify talent, it’s something which has been gifted to you by God. That one special gift which makes you different from everybody else. By practicing your talent, you feel on 7th heaven. You will always find time to practice it, no matter how busy you would be.** Is there something which fulfils these conditions?” I was dumbstruck & replied, “I am sorry sir, nothing fulfils it.” He added, “Not to worry Tarun, people are as unaware of their talents as you are. Sometimes it takes lifetime to find your talent.

I am still finding mine. But let me assure you everybody has a talent, it’s not the ability or capability, but it’s just talent. It is the most creative part of you. Whenever you practice your talent it’s like you are meditating, it’s just you and your talent.” With this we heard the whistle of train, as it was approaching its final destination, so he ended swiftly, “All the best Tarun. May God bless you with success, health & happiness & I just hope that you find your talent soon.” With these words we shook hands & departed but the question he asked, turmoiled my tranquillity. Is there anything which gives me divine pleasure & relief? What is that one thing which has been gifted to me by God?
WHATS MY TALENT?

After this incident I was constantly asking this question to me but did not get an answer to it. In fact, many times my mind played games with me and fooled me with egoistic answers which were only holding space like a balloon. When I deliberated on this particular topic one thing got clear to me that talent has to be attached with purpose then only it makes some sense. In 2019 after undergoing series of miraculous events I entered into spirituality (which is definitely an interesting story in itself, can be shared later) and I found the purpose of my life after practicing deep meditations.

My purpose which was just a hazy image at beginning turned into my life’s mission. In last 5 years I have been constantly studying, learning, experimenting, getting certified and helping others with the knowledge of energy healings, spirituality, Astrology, Numerology, Card Readings and Vaastu. With this small experience I can tell with confirmation that finding purpose of one’s life is difficult but not impossible. It definitely takes willful actions on personal level but with correct guidance we all can find it. It’s a journey within of Self Exploration.

It’s never too late guys. For me it started in 2012 but I completely found the answer to that question in 2020 but I completely accepted it last year. But for many of us it could be today. Its always the choice of the seeker to find the correct answer. Let me tell you if you are reading it and it resonates with you - it’s not a coincidence. Everything in our lives has a purpose under the grace of Divine Plan but as humans

we all have the power of Karma which helps us to shape our lives. This is the reason that in many spiritual texts humans are called as the 'Makers of Their Own Destiny'. If you get on this path let me also guide you that multiple times you will feel delusional, shattered, depressed and alone on this journey of Self Exploration but I guarantee you if you are consistent on this journey, you will find the way. Correctly said by Rumi, a 13th century philosopher "As you start to walk on the way, the way appears". With this I just hope & pray from God/Almighty/Universe (or whatever you believe in because for me these all are expressions of the same divine energy which guides all of us consciously as well as unconsciously) that you should also find your talent soon and you would be able to answer the question which is seldom answered!

'WHAT'S YOUR TALENT'



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The **vel*** of progress inks on patently
But here a faux-naivete never displeases
Cricket's leather sphere unifies passion's
panorama
While the nation's permanent pantomime plays
A revolving galaxy of princes & pariah
Of disgraces, denials & disarrays
Some courtiers cool their heels in judicial
custody
Others prance free as demagogues often dance
Justice's arc bends long & with more probity
Than democracy's grand burlesque may
entrance
So, our nation's theatre plays on, an erudite
masque
Of pomp & pathos, piety & buffoonery
To vote or not to vote, the people's sole task



This greatest festival of elective **tlachcamone-ry**!!!**

~ **Commander V Srivatsan**

cdr.srivatsan@gmail.com

*Portmanteau words:

EditExit = Editors who face threats/exit due to reporting

Vel = Veshti (Dhoti) + Vellai (White) = Symbol of progress

**Tlachcamone-ry = Tlachcamone was the Native American trickster God, so this refers to India's own trickster political theater/ performance.`

Knowledge Bytes

METAPHOR : WARKARI AND MANAGEMENT LESSONS

BY ANAND BHARGAVE

Hectic week after week concise and heavy learnings from Albus Dumbledore (of course I am fan of Harry Potter) of IIM Ahmedabad, we the Bravehearts (of course, Mel Gibson fan also) were rolling in Human Resource capsule with Professor Biju Varkey and Warkari word hymned in the class. As usual, over a cup, my mind raced to think “Why should the ‘Prof’ mention them in the Human Resource Management class. Talking with my fellow “Tants”, it did open a Pandora box of lessons. Let me share it without an iota of other political colours.

Question arises **‘Who are Warkaris’** India is known for its vibrant rich traditions. Amongst the religious ones, undertaking ‘Yatra’ assumes prime importance in many sects/states. Yatra involves undertaking religious vows, travelling on foot and many other voluntary self-disciplinary



practices as part of the conduct. Narmada Parikrama (MP & Maharashtra), Sabrimala (Kerala), Lord Jagannath(Orissa), Shri Vaishno Devi and Pandarpur wari are some of its examples. **War is an abbreviation of wari, which means pilgrimage, and kari is the one who performs the pilgrimage.** The Warkari Sampradaya stands out as a vibrant tradition that blends spirituality with social engagement. Originating in Maharashtra, this devotional movement started 800 - 900 years ago, centering around the worship of Lord Vithal/Vithoba, a form of Lord Vishnu. Beginning in Hindu month of ‘Ashadha’(June-July), people from various walks of life, castes, and socio-economic backgrounds in Maharashtra, participate in the Wari, walking 250 plus kilometers on foot in 11 odd days with the common goal to reach Pandharpur on a day before Shayani Ekadashi, the eleventh lunar day (Ekadashi) of the bright fortnight Shukla Paksha. This article explores the parallels between Warkari Sampradaya and modern management principles.

Oldest Yatra: The Warkari tradition is renowned for its annual pilgrimage, the 'Wari'. Wari an age-old tradition has continued inspite of many changes in societal norms. What kept it going can be attributed only to a single point of devotion. In the corporate world, Toyota, TATA's, and many other corporate firms have ensured upholding the name and trust and forged generational bonds with society. Honoring organizational traditions and values, corporate can cultivate a cohesive culture and establish a 'Brand Name'. By respecting the wisdom of the past while embracing innovation, corporate can strike a balance between stability and progress. Organizations that withstand the test of time often exhibit resilience, adaptability, and a strong sense of purpose, mirroring the enduring spirit of the Warkari pilgrimage.



Shared Vision: At the heart of the Warkari tradition is the concept of 'Dnyaneshwari' that unites pilgrims in their devotion to Lord. Similarly, in his book, Satya Nadella writes that when he became Microsoft's CEO in 2014, he realized that employees needed "a clear, tangible and inspiring vision." Isn't it Shared Vision? but why? Cause this vision then compels and inspires teams to work harmoniously towards its realization. With strong belief in shared vision, roles suddenly become a practical arrangement rather than a race to be the "one".

No Hierarchy: Warkari's must lose their individual identities, egos, their positions in society and just experience the positivity energy generated by this unbiased 'unity'. Walking in Kirloskar Cummins or Toyota, you may be surprised to find an entire hierarchy in one uniform. With many pro/cons, uniforms strike equality for all rejecting discrimination, strengthens personality and again spearheads towards singular aim.

Chanting “Vithal” Continuously: One of the distinctive features of the Warkari tradition is the continuous chanting of the Lord's name, particularly the chant "Vithal Vithal" while walking for 250 Kms. This practice instills a sense of devotion and mindfulness among devotees, fostering bonding, singular focus & spiritual growth. In the corporate context, chanting a name can be metaphorically represented by the consistent repetition of a company's mission statement, core values, or brand mantra. Just as chanting a sacred name reinforces devotion, repeating these corporate messages helps the employees, management imbibe them deeply into the organizational culture. For example, a company might regularly emphasize its commitment to customer satisfaction, innovation, or sustainability through slogans like "Customer First," "Innovate Always," or "Sustainability Matters."

Ownership, also referred as Indirect Leadership: Warkari bonded by the aim, everyone takes on individual tasks / responsibilities to progress towards their destination, without relying solely on their leader to delegate tasks. When a work team shares a common vision, each member naturally feels a sense of ownership, irrespective of their specific role within the organization. Roles transform from mere assignments into practical arrangements, fostering collaboration rather than competition to stand out as the sole contributor. Increasing ownership quotient will indirectly relate to less time being spent on group\team management.

Inclusivity and Diversity: Warkari tradition transcends barriers of caste, creed, and socioeconomic status, welcoming all devotees into its fold. Similarly, hiring managers under the guidance of management embraces diversity in terms of Veteran hiring Program, Gender diversity and many others from the society fostering an inclusive environment where all individual's contributions are valued. My observation is that when you have people from different fields it is a great catalyst to drive creativity, build team spirit, fill gaps in collective intelligence, and build diverse valuable products.

Specific Date of Reaching Pandarpur: The Wari culminates on the auspicious day of Ashadi Ekadashi when devotees gather at Pandharpur to celebrate the meeting of saints Padukas with Lord Vithal. This adherence to a specific date symbolizes discipline and coordination among pilgrims. Likewise, in management, setting clear deadlines and milestones is crucial for goal achievement. However, adherence to target date requires efforts of the entire team. At this juncture, the leadership follows the principles of servant

leadership and empowers the team to meet the deadline. Thus, this initiative drives innovation, fosters employee satisfaction, and enhances organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

The Warkari Sampradaya offers valuable insights into effective management practices through its rich traditions and devotion. Surprising similarities between the Warkari pilgrimage/ similar traditions and management principles highlight fundamental truths in guiding human endeavors. Whether pursuing spiritual enlightenment or guiding a team towards corporate objectives, essential values such as vision, leadership, commitment, inclusivity, and continuous improvement form the fulcrum in its progress. As we confront the intricacies of contemporary challenges, let us acknowledge the enduring wisdom inherent in ancient traditions and embrace the pursuit of excellence, whether in spiritual or professional realms.



Colonel Anand Bhargave commissioned in regiment of Artillery has completed 23 years of service. The officer is undergoing DGR course at prestigious IIM Ahmedabad as part of the transition to corporate world as second innings.

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