

PANEL DISCUSSION ON DRIVING EDUCATION THROUGH THE DIGITAL PLATFORM

PROFILE OF SPEAKERS

R Chandrasekaran



R Chandrasekaran, the Secretary of FORTESS has had an exemplary career spanning over 34 years, in the field of Information Technology. Chandra, as he is popularly known, just retired as Executive Vice Chairman of Cognizant, India. He serves as an Independent Director on the Board of PNBHF and is also part of Chairman's council NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies).

He is very passionate about Education and is on the Advisory Board of Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai and on Post Graduate Program committee of NIT Trichy. He is an active supporter of social causes, directly supporting education of underprivileged school children, Offering Merit Scholarship in NIT Trichy and supporting Research Fellowship at in IIM Bangalore.

Chandra leads the Education pillar of FORTESS activities. He has been working with a Govt School in a small town in Tamil Nadu, which was his alma mater and has established a Computer Centre, equipped with Desktops, Laptops, all of them networked, along with Printers and hired teachers to train the students. The goal is to ensure that by the time the students complete 8th standard, they should be proficient in using computers. The idea is to leverage the learnings from this pilot to scale it up. There are a number of FORTESS members who have come through the Government Schools system in remote areas of India, who would like to give back. If we can standardize the process of data centre creation and bring cost efficiencies, develop an acceptable course curriculum along with teaching aids, it will enhance the learning outcomes of the economically disadvantaged sections. Through FORTESS, we intend to take this as a special program. Sevalaya has joined hands in contributing to the cause and earlier this month a Smart Class room was inaugurated by it's founder V Muralidharan.



Hema Gopal



Hema is a FORTESS member with more than 35 years of experience in IT and has a strong focus with ACADEMIA to enhance skill upgrade to suit Industry needs. Below are some of her key contributions in the field of Education

- Mentored 100,000 aspiring engineering students across seven cities of Tamil Nadu in the last six years on opportunities in challenges in IT & ITES
- Conducted programs for 5000+ students as part of SV150, HSSF & IMCT initiatives
- Visited close to 195 engineering colleges for various events like FDP, Student Workshops, Technology Appreciation Programs & Graduation Day
- Governing Council, Academic Council & Board of Studies of 27 engineering colleges
- Advisor to Kalvi40, an initiative by BumbleB Trust to impart academic syllabus from 3rd to 8th grade across government schools in Tamil Nadu, including all-round development skills for the students - Completed implementation for 200 schools



V Muralidharan



V. Muralidharan, an alumnus of Indian Institute of Science and TCS, is the Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya. Muralidharan had a long stint with TCS from 1987 till 2009. His rich experience in Project management and Quality management gained from his TCS days, coupled with his passion for serving the underprivileged, translated into his secret of success in nurturing Sevalaya as a leading NGO. Murali joined FORTESS in December 2020.

Sevalaya is a charitable organization head quartered in Chennai and doing charitable activities in Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Chengelpet, Tenkasi, Trichy, Thanjavur, Tirunellveli districts in Tamilnadu and in Thirubuvanai at Puducherry. Sevalaya runs free school, medical centres, mobile medical services, community colleges for skill development of rural youth, organic farming, gaushala sheltering dry cows and homes for the orphan and destitute children and senior citizens.

Sevalaya took shape when Muralidharan finished his Engineering degree from Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and joined Tata Consultancy Services in 1988. TCS as a corporate as well as its employees and partners have played a key role in the growth of Sevalaya. TCS has donated several computers to Sevalaya which has contributed towards the IT literacy of its inmates. Employees and partners of TCS have contributed towards purchase of land, construction of various classrooms, sponsorship for the livelihood of various inmates as well as volunteering in teaching and various other social activities. Several leaders from TCS including Mr. Ramadorai, Mr. Mahalingam and others have visited Sevalaya and shared their support for its cause. Currently, the Sevalaya Board comprises of some of the leaders who have had distinguished career with TCS and are proud members of FORTESS too.



Anita Rajan



Anita Rajan has been a FORTESS member since its early stages and is a Trustee and a Governing Council member of FORTESS. Anita is the Chief Executive Officer of Tata STRIVE and Vice President, Tata Community Initiatives Trust since 2015. Tata STRIVE is a Skills Building initiative of the Tata Trusts and has established itself as a leader in the Skill Development sector in India. Over 4 lakh people have been impacted through the skilling development work of the Tata Trusts.

Anita was deeply involved with the Indian National Skilling Ecosystem during its formative years having worked with the Advisor to Prime Minister on Skill Development as his Chief of Staff and later with the Chairman, National Skill Development Corporation.

Anita has over thirty years of diverse experience in the education and management sectors. She has been with the Tata Group for 17 years. Anita is an active member of Industry bodies, she is the Co-chair of CII CSR committee (Western Region) and an active representative of Industry as a speaker at seminars in India and overseas.

Prior to Tata STRIVE, Anita was with Tata Consultancy Services for 13 years, where she worked closely with the CEO on numerous initiatives of the company; including supporting the publication of a bestselling book on the company. Prior to TCS she was head of Research and Training at Schoolnet India, an e-education company that aimed to leverage technology in education. Earlier she worked with the advertising firm Lintas in advertising research. Her corporate career was preceded by a decade of teaching in High Schools across India.



Guest speaker

Mr. Prem Kumar Gokuladasan - Founder and Managing Trustee, BumbleB Trust (NGO). www.kalvi40.com



Mr Prem Kumar is an alumnus of PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore and Bharathidasan Institute of Management, Trichy. He is a seasoned professional with significant experience in the challenging IT landscape and had worked in various client engagements across different geographies for about two decades.

On his return to India from his six years of overseas assignments in UK and Germany, he took up the full-time social work project in Rural Education. After spending few years on studying the problem and exploring various solutions, Prem Kumar founded BumbleB Trust, a Non-Profit Organization by March 2019 in which he is currently the Managing Trustee.

BumbleB Trust engages in social activities to provide upliftment to the needy citizens. Unique differentiator being, the focus on building efficient solutions and frameworks by using technology as a medium to speed up the reach and delivery of these services. The trust's first project is kalvi40, a free educational mobile application for Tamilnadu and Puducherry government school students. More info at www.kalvi40.com.

As on date, Kalvi40 project empowers 20k students across 13 districts in Tamilnadu to get access to digital content of Kalvi40 at their rural Government school. 4500+ lightweight Tamil medium based learning can be accessed by any student and teacher across Tamilnadu and Puducherry for free. 50k+ users have installed Kalvi40 through play store as on date.