

# Scribbles

Bringing colour to your lives

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## From the Editor's desk...

Dear Colleagues,

Why a special issue on Change? Everybody talks about 'the only constant in life being Change'. Therefore do we have to speak about an oft spoken and 'dry' topic?

Over the years I have come to a conclusion that the term 'Change' is often misunderstood and many a time misused in a manner that managing Change is blown out of proportion.

Let us look at some examples:

I remember the days when Chemplast and SEC (now called SETL - Products) were working on moving into SAP. The consultants told us then that the Change had to be managed and even suggested that we do a roll out on this topic. We implemented SAP without any formal Change Management Session - Lo and Behold! With some hiccups, it started working.

When computers were first introduced and typewriters removed, what is the change management that organisations did?

When the advent of telecommunications overcame our lives in the last decade, what was consciously done on managing change?

What is the Change management that any individual does when their first born is delivered? Or what is the Change management adopted when the child starts going to school?

What is the Change a person needs to manage when he/she becomes a grandparent?

Ironically, there are so many Changes that happen in our lives without us 'managing change' (in the real sense of the term) and yet in an organisational context, Change is often hyped as a big time topic!

Hence, we decided to explore this topic from its different facets - professional and personal.

We are very proud and happy at the response that we received from those we got in touch with. The result is an issue filled with contributions on one topic - Change. From a philosophical perspective, to the economical, literary and social and personal..., people take you through their journey on Change that they have faced at some point of time in their lives. We also present to you some Sanmar locations - Then and Now.

Some of us go through events that are Life Changers - I had the opportunity (I do not want to use the word misfortune) to experience it. These are events, that all of us who have been through one will agree, which Change our outlook forever. Since this event, I have understood the importance of 'This Moment and the Now'. The importance of Being Happy Now... and Contributing to making others around you Happy.

We do hope that this issue is meaningful to you and shall make you and your families Happy in this New Year 2012.

We look forward to bringing more colour to your lives.

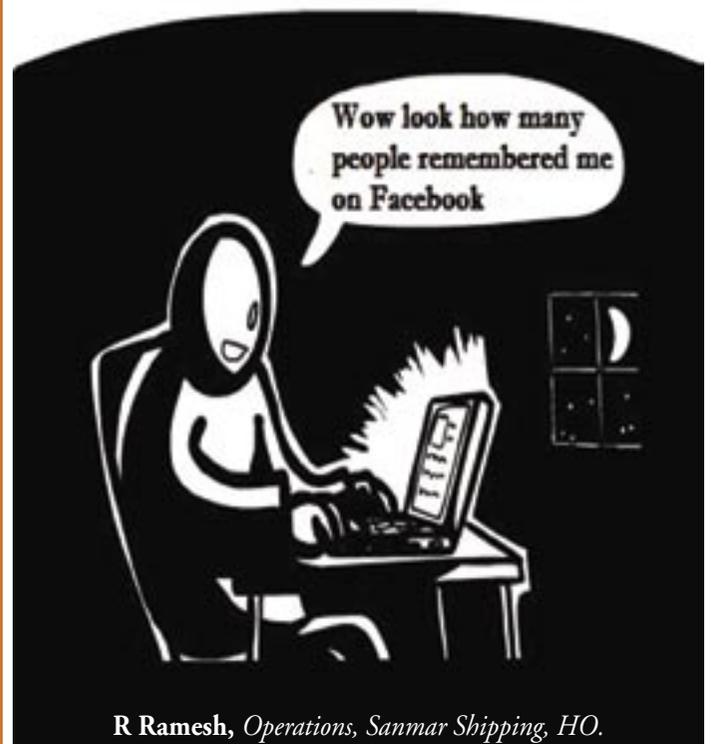
Ananda Jagan



### BIRTHDAYS IN THE OLD DAYS



### BIRTHDAYS NOWADAYS



R Ramesh, Operations, Sanmar Shipping, HO.

Given at the bottom of each page is a saying on 'Change', contributed by

V Subramanian, Central Accounts, Sanmar Corporate Division

S Manavalan, Production, Chemplast Sanmar Ltd., Karaikal



**'Building' change**

# Then &

A picture is worth more than a thousand words and memory is the diary we all carry with us.

In these pages we have presented some vintage Sanmar photographs contrasted with the recent ones.

While on the one hand these images stand testimony to the continuous growth witnessed by Sanmar over the last four decades, on the other hand, the constant factor of change that rings through all our lives is evident.



*Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur (1967)*



*Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur (2010)*



*9, Cathedral Road (1965)*



*The Sanmar Group, HO (1990)*



*The Sanmar Group, HO (2011)*

# & Now

‘Building’ change



*Duramettalic (India), Karapakkam (1977)*



*Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam (2010)*



*Sanmar Alloy Castings, Viralimalai (1998)*



*Sanmar Foundries, Viralimalai (2010)*



*Floorshop Duramettalic India, Karapakkam (1977)*



*Floorshop Flowserve Sanmar, Karapakkam (2010)*

By changing nothing, nothing changes.



# Gizmos, 3D flicks, Disposable Incomes... Cultural Metamorphosis!

The only constant in life is change. As clichéd as it may sound, it simply does not lend itself to debate. Cultural change, for that matter, is dynamic and constantly evolving.

Cultural can be all about people's beliefs, their values, attitudes, and all about other organisations and institutions. And believe me, anything to do with individuals can be termed most complex. If it sounds complex, penning it down, you would agree is 'Herculean'.

## Family structures and Marriages

As culture is defined by relatively strict social hierarchy, cultural change is also governed by the society at large and more closely by the immediate sphere of influence surrounding each individual. Numerous studies have tried to explain changes in family structures and marriage. Noted author, Raghuvir Sinha (*Dynamics of Change in the Modern Hindu Family*, 1993) summarises that over the last 60 years, the cultural trend in most parts of India has been an accelerated change from joint family to nuclear families, much like population trends in other parts of the world. The traditional large joint family in India, in the 1990s, accounted for a small percent of Indian households, and on average had lower per capita household income. He finds that joint family still persists in some areas and in certain conditions, in part due to cultural traditions and in part due to practical factors.

Recent studies suggest that Indian culture is trending away from traditional arranged marriages. A 2006 article (published in USA Today, February 13, 2006) reported that between 10 and 20 percent of marriages in urban India were self-arranged (called love marriages in India). Many educated 'MNCed' youth are looking at Live - in relationships as an alternative to marriage.

## Re-defining roles

Cultural change is responsible to a large extent in re-defining the role of man and woman in the society. With more and more women empowerment, men and women have been assigned jobs within the family and outside. Since both bring bread to the table, the responsibilities are shared. Men enter the kitchen more often, even baby-sit for hours when the women might be travelling on work. Such a welcomed cultural change sets the pattern for the next-gen as they see their parents at home and end up repeating this.

With this cultural change and re-definition, most households with younger kids also see the "latch key" syndrome. Most children become independent quite early and are initiated into the decision making process quicker than the previous generation.

## Globalisation and Socio-Economic Changes

Though many attribute cultural change to the phenomenon of globalisation, the individual's socio economic change has been noticeable.

- Disposable Incomes increasing, DINK (double income no kids) families being a fad, malls and

multiplexes cropping up in every suburb within the city, is an indication that people are taking efforts to shop for brands, spend quality time outside of their homes. ATMs have only helped this cause!

- Old restaurants are now replaced by international food chains. Fast food and Chinese dishes have replaced traditional eateries. Cooking at home is passé and eating-out the norm.
- Gizmos, gadgets, cars have fascinated individuals and are predominately used as style statements.
- Landlines have now become as antic as the postal system that has been replaced by the e-age.
- Pocket money has slowly replaced piggy banks. Monthly pocket money of 10-17 years old has risen by huge percentages.
- Staying in touch has been re-defined as social networking and BBMs, so much so that the concept of visiting has lost its charm.

- There are 42 million Internet users in India in the year 2008 compared to 1.4 m users in 1998.
- The number of mobile phone users has grown to 246 million in 2008 from 1.0 million users in 1998
- There has been a great increase in sales of passenger cars. The sale has increased by 96% in the last ten years

- People prefer watching 3D flicks than the traditional 2D cinema.

- Fashion has undergone a sea change. It is acceptable these days for both women and men to be dressed in what they deem comfortable rather than what the society used to think as

appropriate. Today, when people need to appear different, they prefer the traditional look, otherwise, the trendy chic look is in.

Global exposure, travel and to a large extent the media can be termed responsible for the change in fashion.

- Styles of greetings have undergone metamorphosis. Formal greetings have been replaced by slangs. 'Hey' and 'yo' have become acceptable forms of greetings and the SMS language has most certainly given the queen a run for her money. These changes have become an intrinsic part of our communication and our being as well. This also reflects the societal acceptance of these changes.

With so many variables surrounding an individual, he / she is but a victim to this change. Some welcome the change immediately, more take time to accept them and a select few try to fight the change. Though every individual has a view on these changes, these changes are evident and cannot be denied. There is no wrong or right in this and certainly not open to any judgement. These changes have indeed made individuals change their attitudes and to some extent, it could be said that value and beliefs are being questioned and newer responses being evolved.

We are but products of change and as professionals, the environment we live in and the decisions we make will be based on many internal and external influences. It is best to understand and comprehend these influences and cultural changes so that we can make informed decisions.

**Shilpa Senthilkumar**, HR, Corporate Division, HO.



## Global Top Ten ‘Change Makers’

*While hundreds and thousands of persons have contributed to bringing about significant changes in their respective spheres across the globe, we ‘spot light’ top ten people who are well known for their unparalleled contribution in changing the course of the world and the course of history.*

### **Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), Italian:**

Most famous of the explorers, Christopher Columbus believed he could reach Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. In the year 1492 he set sail in the Santa Maria to prove his theory. Instead, he landed on the islands now known as the West Indies. His discoveries led to the European explorations and settlement of the Americas.

### **William Shakespeare (1564–1616), English:**

The greatest play writer in the English language, William Shakespeare wrote atleast 154 love poems and 37 plays, including Hamlet, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. He introduced more than 1,700 new words to the English Language.

### **Charles Darwin (1809–1882), English:**

Naturalist Charles Darwin established the theory of evolution. When his famous book “The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selections”, was published in 1859 Darwin challenged the Bible’s account of creation and explained that humanbeings descended from an ape-like ancestor.

### **Karl Marx (1818–1883), German:**

Karl Marx’s ideas on economic history and sociology changed the world. Marx explained his theories in the Communist Manifesto (compiled with Friedrich Engels and published in 1848) and Das Kapital (1867–94). His ideas eventually led to the Russian Revolution and communism.

### **Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), Indian:**

Gandhi led the peaceful civil disobedience of Indians against British rule in India and negotiated with the British Government until 1947, when India was granted independence. He became the first icon of people’s struggle against oppression. His simple lifestyle and his belief in religious tolerance made him a symbol of peace ever since.

### **Albert Einstein (1879–1955), German / American:**

One of the greatest physicists of all times, Einstein has become a symbol of genius. When his most famous work, the General Theory of Relativity was proven in 1919, Einstein became the most celebrated scientist in the world and he won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Einstein was a firm believer in pacifism but his scientific theories helped his adopted country, the USA, to develop the atomic bomb.

### **Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), Austrian:**

Adolf Hitler was Germany’s leader from 1933–1945, during which time he led the world into the most devastating war in history. Hitler’s hatred of Jewish people and his desire for a blue-eyed, blond-haired master race led to the murder of six million people during World War II in the concentration camps.

### **Nelson Mandela (1918 -), South African:**

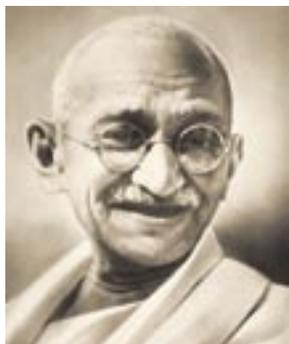
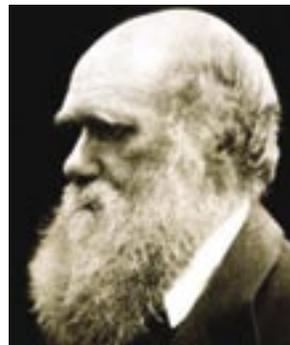
Nelson Mandela dedicated his life to the fight against apartheid – a policy which kept black and white South Africans apart and denied black citizens the vote. He was imprisoned in 1964 for his aggressive opposition to South Africa’s racist government and was held for 26 years. In 1990, after his release, Mandela was elected President of the African National Congress. In 1993 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end apartheid.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr (1929–1968), American:**

A Baptist minister who campaigned against the segregation of blacks in the Southern states of the United States, Martin Luther King was influenced by Gandhi and believed in peaceful protest. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was assassinated in 1968, but will always be remembered for his dignified, passive resistance to an unjust society.

### **Bill Gates (1955 -), American:**

Bill Gates created his first computer programme while still at high school, co-founded Microsoft in 1977, and by 1993 was the richest man on Earth. In 2000 Gates and his wife formed the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation for charity, which is the largest charity in the world.



(Sourced from Internet)

## Networked society

Yesterday, I received a phone call from Hyderabad on my mobile phone while having lunch at Maris, next to our office. Hari Mohan Paruvu, former Hyderabad medium pacer and author of a couple of bestsellers, wanted to know why I hadn’t replied to his email of a couple of weeks ago. Though I am rarely guilty of such bad manners, I had not even acknowledged receipt of his message. It was all the more unpardonable, as he had wanted some help from me.



This is what happened. I was travelling on vacation and had deliberately left my laptop behind. Though I did check my email on my phone, I forgot all about Hari’s missive at the end of the vacation. In the days before email, Hari’s handwritten letter would

have awaited my arrival back home and I would have probably replied to him at once.

When I was a college student, I tried to write letters full of descriptions and anecdotes, humour and human interest. This was a valuable legacy I inherited from a family whose elders prided themselves on writing regularly to their loved ones and investing their letters with warmth and love.



One of the nicest compliments I received came from a friend, then a student at JIPMER,

Pondicherry. He said that not only he, but also all his friends in the hostel eagerly awaited my weekly letter full of stories real and apocryphal. This good habit stayed with most of us before the communication revolution towards the end of the last millennium. I lived in Hyderabad and my brother in New Jersey, but my parents at Madras could count on both of us writing them every week.

9 December 1973. I was a 26-year-old bank officer, but still did not have a telephone at home. Suffering an acute toothache all night, I waited impatiently for dawn to break so that I could go



out and find a drugstore to buy a painkiller. As I tried to start my Rajdoot motorcycle, the machine decided to punish me for not looking after it well

and gave me a violent “kickback” - for want of a better word—opening up the back of my left foot.



Later in the morning, after a quick visit to the dentist, I rode to the Lal

Bahadur Stadium where my team, State Bank of India, was playing a match, to inform my captain (he too did not have a telephone connection) that, with my already swelling foot,



I could not play that day. Unfortunately, we had only eleven men at the ground, and I was forced to take part in the match. In excruciating pain all the while, I fielded near the boundary (you would

have gathered by now that I was not the captain’s pet) all day long.

When I returned to the dressing room, it took me a good half hour of effort to take off my left boot, because my foot had swollen so much. I somehow managed to ride my bike back home, with changing gears proving a most painful exercise. I was furious with the game of cricket, Rajdoot, traffic police, dentists—in fact all of humanity, as I dismounted my steed.

“Congratulations,” the voice of my 2nd floor flat’s neighbour boomed, much to my annoyance. Even as I was mulling a caustic retort like “Thank you for enjoying my misery,” came his next words: “You are the proud father of a little daughter. We opened a telegram meant for you.” I hobbled upstairs, unable to



contain my excitement, to a hero’s welcome at my neighbour’s, with his wife and kids greeting me with a delicious cup of payasam that Mami had made on receiving

the good news from my in-laws at Bombay, where my wife had gone to deliver our first child.

Sorry, I must leave this story here. I have an urgent message from my next-door neighbour—who lives alone and has a chronic medical condition—asking me if I can get her a hard-to-find drug ASAP. I messaged her back a promise to look for it immediately. At the pharmacy, I will be stumped when the druggist asks me for the patient’s name. I have to text a message asking for her name, because I have it saved on my phone as “Neighbour1.”

**V Ramnarayan**, *Advisor, Corporate Communications, Corporate Division, HO.*

## Rewind, pause and play

Music and dance have gradually moved from temples, royal courts and chambers, to open air venues, pandals, wedding halls and large auditoria. Men and women sat in separate enclosures demarcated by a rope! In 1910 you could listen to a *kutcheri* for a quarter anna. Carnatic concerts then were as long as four hours, now you can listen to even one-hour slots. The *kutcheri* menu then was not packed with so many songs as it is now. Many musical instruments have turned ‘electric’ and the natural sound is lost.

The old masters needed no mikes, and sang by heart. The new crop with “mike-voices”, brings ipods and e-tamburas, and sings peering into sheets of paper or into their laptops. The practice of handing out goli-soda and crystal sugar candy before

The ‘get-up’ of artistes and audience has changed. Dancers then wore heavy dresses and chunky ornaments. Now, they wear sleek, stitched costumes and light jewellery. The *kudumi* or tuft has been resized to the crop among men.



White shirts or grand *angavastrams* on bare chests have given way to colour-coordinated designer kurtas.



*kutcheris* is no longer in vogue. Snuff has been sniffed out. Hot milk with saffron in silver vessels and tumblers have given way to coffee and energy drinks in steel flasks.

The December Season held in the Christmas-New Year week in Chennai, has now ballooned into a four-month long festival (Nov. to Feb.) of music and dance. You could then enjoy a Season for just five rupees. Now you dish out almost 12,000 rupees for a ground floor seat.

Years ago, the nattuvanar and the orchestra moved behind the dancer as she performed. Now their place is fixed near the side wings on the stage. Sadir was mostly performed by dancers of the devadasi community; but after it was rechristened as Bharatanatyam in the 1930s, it has attracted thousands of girls from different backgrounds. Boys too are taking to classical dance.

Decades ago artistes and rasikas traveled by tram, rickshaws, or walked and cycled to concert venues. Now they arrive in swank cars. Today’s audience comes armed with noisy cellphones and flashes messages while the *kutcheri* is on. Artistes were paid by the organisers then, but many artistes pay the organisers now! Tech savvy gurus spend more time teaching on Skype. Instant success is the buzz word.

Whatever the changes, the aroma of coffee (filter or instant) and tiffin from canteens, the strands of jasmine, silk sarees, and most of all, the sound of music and ankle bells continue to tug at your heart strings. Change is constant, yet some things never change!

**S Janaki**, Executive Editor, *Sruti*.





## Changes in work-life over a period of four decades in Sanmar

*N Sivakumar joined us in 1971 and has been associated with Chemplast over the last four decades. As a person who has had a successful career in a single Company all through, NSK speaks on the various changes that he has experienced both personally and within the Organisation.*

Change is inevitable. Change can be perceived obviously as Technology change every minute/ every day. In Sanmar, whenever there is change in technology, we have evaluated the appropriateness and implemented it to our overall corporate objective. There are several examples. Green technology is one such example that comes immediately to my mind.

We changed from mercury to membrane even in 1978, before the law required us to do it. We implemented the VCM containment package which cost us a lot of money but we chose to use it for the good of the company and society at large.

In Karaikal and Cuddalore, when opportunity came, we took a quantum leap and brought in a technological revolution. We implemented the closed reactor operations. We also implemented Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) across all plants.

The other kind of change is with respect to 'dependence' on external agencies.

When we started, the power situation was very scary inside the plant. Dependence on power was mitigated very early in 1975 when we installed our own generator. Successively we have moved on to gas turbines, coal and now we are looking at any other new technology.

When I started in 1971, the important thing was people's expectation and respect to social recognition was more. There



## Looking Forward

*Remember the days when food was made warm without a microwave, when black and white television sets were most sought after, when VCR was a rare commodity and air conditioning and bus travel were two different things altogether and computer and Internet and mobile phones were neither heard nor seen. Our lives and lifestyles have changed so drastically over the years that we cannot even remember our home numbers since we got a mobile last...*

were only fewer levels of people. Now we have the Asst Vice President, when already the Vice President is an assistant to the President. But these things are inevitable.

But the good thing is, when a person is given a promotion now, it is related to responsibility. Title changes are only cosmetic today. Even very junior people are not happy with fancy titles, and they are happy only with more responsibility – this is a welcome change.

There is also change in how people look at their relationship and how they are compensated and recognised.

As for changes in ethical policies over time, some years back, if somebody had a second mobile, he had to report to company. Now everyone will laugh – as your servant maid, milkman, and garbage cleaner – all have a mobile.

As for changes in education, when I studied, there were only 5 institutes offering engineering courses. Now, I understand that there are about 700 engineering colleges. I will not agree that quality has suffered because of the numbers. The difference is similar to that of a mami producing dosas in a small shop and dosa in Saravana Bhavan hotel. You don't get the special touch in Saravana Bhavan. With mami, it will be *gotsu, sambar* or *chutney*, each day it will be different, whereas with Saravana Bhavan it will be of the same taste, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Education today is more to do with marks; when I was a child, I scored good marks and still enjoyed going to the riverside or stealing mangoes in the groves. Whereas, today's children have no time for all this.

Family life has changed now. My wife is educated and comes from a good family, but she came with me wherever I went. Even with one of my colleague's case, his wife accompanied him to Bombay, Chennai, Thuthukudi and to Mettur, even if she was educated. Today's spouses are not willing to accompany their husbands wherever they go. These things are not possible in today's context.

# Looking Back

*It is in this context of ‘Change’ that we interviewed a cross section of Sanmarites to get their opinion on a variety of subjects - both professional and personal. We are pleased to share their perspectives and perceptions. While the willingness to change was acceptable in some cases, the transition was not very comfortable for some others...*

## Customer Management... Then & Now

**AH Kesari Prasad has been with SETL - Products Divn. for more than 24 years and is presently Business Manager, Xomox Sanmar. KP’s insight on Customer Management reflects his vast experience in the Sales and Marketing field.**

“Then”, for me, was post-1974... when I started my career as a raw Sales Engineer in Chennai.

I was selling Chemical Process Pumps and Valves... an Industrial Product.

Even during those days, the fact that I was a front-line man for my company wasn’t lost on me. My customers knew my company only through me. If I was technically proficient, honest and credible, that was how my company was perceived by my customers.

I remember an instance when I had quoted my products to a company called KCP Ltd for a Project in Sri Lanka. They got the project after 18 months. Their Project Manager Dr KR Das knew that I was aware that they had quoted with my company’s product specifications and this couldn’t be changed. Yet, when he asked whether my prices were still valid, I said yes because that was the fact — the prices hadn’t changed. This created a tremendous impression on Dr Das because many other suppliers had increased their prices. Later on,

Dr Das and I became very good friends and he used to ask for my advice on selection of products even though many of them were not in my company’s manufacturing range.



It is this credibility that, in my opinion, every professional should work to achieve.

As in other aspects of life, it is during moments of adversity that the most enduring friendships are forged. Staying with a customer overnight while a product is being repaired, going out of the way to hand deliver something urgent — such events are not easily forgotten and help better bonding with customers.

When I was doing my Management course, I was taught one more important lesson which has stayed with me since. Every contact or communication with a customer is a “stroke”, and the more strokes you make, the better will be the customer relationship. As a young Engineer, I was bidding for a high value job. I made it a point to hand deliver every quotation, letter, drawing etc., to the concerned persons in the customer organisation. By the time we were called for negotiations, there was no doubt in the customer’s mind on whom the order would be placed.

“Then” was the period of Trunk Calls (Ordinary, Urgent, Lightning), Typewriters, Telegrams, Telexes, Stenographers, Dictation, letters, etc.

“Now” is the present. The Internet mails, mobiles, laptops, ERP etc., have changed the way communication is done and information is retrieved. However, the customer’s expectations have moved up accordingly so things haven’t really changed.

We can have any number of video conferences and WebEx calls, teleconference calls but nothing really takes the place of a face to face meeting. After all, you can’t share a jug of coffee over the phone!!!!

Alphonse Karr, the French novelist said “The more things change, the more they stay the same”. How true!! There is no then and now for values like truth, honesty, good manners, punctuality etc. Customer management falls into this category.

## The changing phase of Safety Management

**P Manoharan, with his 38 years of experience in the management of Safety shares his views on the changing safety scenario in the country. He is responsible for Safety function of the Group.**

Safety Management is nothing but Risk Management. Risk Management is based on two core aspects. One is what you consider as risk and the other aspect is what the acceptable risk is? The safety management & safety performance depends on the answer for these two core aspects of risk management.

The definition of risk and the acceptable level of risk are continuously changing and have become more and more stringent and broader. Accordingly, the lookout for safety is also continuously changing.

In India, at the time of independence, scope of safety was limited

to machinery break down and production downtime due to fire etc. Immediately after independence, the application of safety management changed to include prevention of personal injury and property loss. After the Bhopal accident in 1984, the scope of safety got changed to include environmental and off site safety too.

With the globalisation and entry of international safety culture, the scope of safety had changed at the beginning of this millennium to have consideration for occupational health, industrial hygiene and concerns of the community as well.

Industries and employees are also tuned to the changes in the scope of safety management and have since changed their approach to industrial safety.

The number of serious industrial accidents is coming down steadily, though the number of industries and the number of employees are steadily on the increase.



### Youngsters then & now

*P Natarajan, Managing Director, SFL, speaks on the work culture of the youth today in contrast with yesteryear. We thought it best to get PN's views on this as he brings with him more than 3 decades of corporate experience.*

The approach towards hierarchy and seniority has changed a lot. When I joined Sanmar 8 years back, I struggled a lot to overcome calling my seniors ‘Sir’. Today the younger generation does not call anybody as ‘Sir’ and it does not really matter, as this is not the only way to show your respect towards somebody.

The attitude of younger generation is more on to ‘we can do’ and the organisation today is becoming very flat. Moreover they are ready to take up more responsibilities and are confident in achieving their goals.



I feel that today the security need is lesser and the youngsters are very confident. The generation today wants more job satisfaction. They rather want more balance in life than what we have perceived

in our times. Money is not the only factor that they look for, as they are confident that they can earn it any time. Youngsters today are more upfront and truthful in sharing the views and opinions.

This is completely different to those days when we were viewing our career choices. We wanted to be very secure and feared what would happen the next day. We wanted to save some money and buy a house and so on...

### From ITES to Sanmar

*We spoke to S Sundar Raman, Head of Corporate Services, and a relatively new entrant to the Group on changes he experienced when he shifted after more than 2 decades from ITES industry to a manufacturing industry.*



*This shift warranted a change both in his work life and personal life, which he has spoken about.*

To start with I would say it is a welcome change. For the past 26 years, I was in emerging industries where we were talking about technology, had new ideas for bringing in new markets. Though people were committed and ambitious towards their goals, discipline in terms of work culture was given a go by.

Initially when I came into Sanmar it was a shock to me that everything was so disciplined and the work culture was totally different. Today I count minutes and seconds in terms of timeliness to work though we do not actually work on calendars. We have focus to deliver the best on time. I think this is a phenomenal change I have experienced in Sanmar.

In terms of personal life as well I could see a great difference. In fact I feel that there was no personal time at all working 24/7. Today I am able to have good homemade food on time, though it was a change / pressure that my wife had to take in terms of her day to day schedules at home. On the whole we are happy with change for a better quality life that we are leading....and it is really a welcome change...

### Shift from army to corporate

*Major SK Nair, Head of Security and Administration at Mettur, joined industry after more than 20 years in the army. We asked him to air his views on the changes between life in the army and life as a civilian. Reading his views would make you realize, that ‘you can take a man out of the army but you cannot take the army out of a man’.*

Army has got a doctrine ready for any sphere of work. In corporate everyday is a ‘new page’.

In a corporate world situations change, people change, attitudes change and mindset change – everyday the problem is different. A number of sacrosanct rules and regulations are uniformly



applicable in army, to 100%. In a corporate world rules, regulations and directions are there. But the manager has to accept the change and it is up to his/ her wisdom to dovetail it.



The challenge is more in the corporate world.

In the army, the whole organisation is mentally tuned to one system. Here, in corporate, everybody is a free bird and they think differently. Everybody wears a different hat...

I have been in the army for 25 years and have been a high stickler for rules and job quality. Getting work done out of a soldier is easier but here, we have to be slightly more diplomatic...

## Cadets then and now

*CV Subba Rao joined Sanmar Shipping 17 years ago and presently heads the Shipping business. He came aboard Sanmar Shipping with close to 15 years of experience at sea. He spoke to us on the changes he felt that cadets had undergone through the three decades of his experience in Shipping both on and off shore.*

A career at sea is beginning to lose its charm. Until the late 90s, a career in the merchant navy, symbolised adventure, glamour and high levels of income. It brought forth young people into strategic leadership levels, riding on knowledge, fearlessness and risk to personal safety in a hostile environment. The advent of the lucrative careers in information technology and finance has drawn intelligent and well schooled young people from affluent backgrounds away from the sea into the land. This has now brought more students from rural backgrounds over the last decade into a sea career.

Change is inevitable, and the process breeds a bit of pain. In 1995, there were 10000 ships, today there are 40000 ships. It would take time to find and train officers for a sea career for such a volume overnight. India, however, has managed to set up institutions to meet the growing demand, largely on account of private enterprise. Therefore this phase of uncertainty will pass over the following decade, and India is well geared to provide skilled and competent sea faring officers and ratings to the world’s merchant fleet.

While the demographic profile has changed over the last decade, the basic tenets of maritime training has remained sound. Technological changes have brought in equal changes in the classroom, without diluting the emphasis on physical training meant for the rigours of the sea.

If I may cite myself as an example, I was selected for entry in Marine Engineering College, Kolkata [otherwise known as DMET (Directorate of Marine Engineering Training), today known as MERI (Marine Engineering and Research Institute)]. From a small town boy and raised in a close knit family, I could see myself change over a four year stint ending in 1981, before I embarked on a ten year sea career. The course is completely residential. A typical day would comprise wake up calls at 5.15 am (chilly winters not withstanding), assembling for physical training (PT), followed by breakfast, classroom lectures and games in the evening. Dinner is followed by study time, with the assembly of the cadets thereafter before lights off at 10 PM. In tune with the training, uniforms are compulsory for all activities, including peak caps, berets, smart tunics, blazers and double breasted coats for winter and other ceremonial occasions. Flouting of rules brings forth punishments. Equally, an aggrieved cadet could appeal, which would bring a Court of Honour committee (comprising the cadets and Hostel Warden) to review the case, and adjudged accordingly. Such a training brings forth issues of leadership, understanding power & authority, besides strengthening the individual for his future good.

In my view, apart from accountancy and medicine, a trained marine professional is the closest one could get as “employable” soon after graduation.



## From typewriters to ipads

*T Muralidharan works at the Corporate Office and is responsible for the telecommunications network. We asked him to share the changes that he has witnessed over 25 years in this field and how it has impacted his work.*

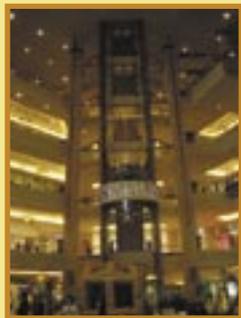
Technology is changing very fast. I am in the telecommunications field in Sanmar for a long time. In those days, we used manual boards for connecting the calls and we had many operators doing the job. In 1988 the EPABX, an electronic board line that made it simple in connecting multiple calls. All of us were hesitant and afraid of the new system. But soon with little training everybody got acquainted with it.

Similarly till 1994 we were using only manual/electronic typewriters. I remember initially for printing our financial reports, one of our employees had to take the data to “Shaw Wallace” where they would code & write the necessary programmes so that it could be later taken on print using a ‘matrix’ printer. When moved to computers, people were hesitant, at first, as they did not know that they could open files and save in various folders to preserve the data. And now everybody is using computers and are ready even to shift to ipads and want to stay connected, be it work or personal life. My observation is that people change with time and technology, though there would be some initial resistance.



## From the US to India

*Dr Krishna Kumar Rangachari heads the Speciality Chemicals business of the Group. He had shifted from the United States to India to join the Group. We asked him to pen his experiences on shifting base to India and describe lifestyle changes that he had to 'adjust' with due to this 'home-coming'.*



It is 3 ½ years now since I shifted to India after 18 years in the US.

Culture shift was not really the issue. Even when we were in the US, we used to come to India every year and we were probably more comfortable and normal than Indians here...

The biggest change in getting back here is that things are very unpredictable in day to day life. We are getting used to this unpredictability in every aspect. They say 'management by chaos' and it is like managing to the chaos here. This change at a personal and not professional level was the hardest to adjust.



The other biggest thing is that in the US you pay for a service and you get it and here even if you are willing to pay the money, you will not find anyone and that too on time. We have to get used to this.

Otherwise, there is no issue with my children and my wife is happier here especially with the support systems and things...

## From Delhi to Chennai

*Himanshu Rastogi, Head of IT has been with the Group for over 12 years. He shifted his family and home from Delhi to Chennai when he joined the Group. We asked him to talk about changes he experienced after the shift and also about how life changes when people move out of joint families to nuclear ones. Though he misses life in a joint family, to our surprise he is now truly a 'Madrasi'.*

I shifted to Chennai from Delhi in 1999 when I joined Sanmar. The primary reason for shifting to Chennai was for my children's education. Then, Chennai was a more conservative small town not cosmopolitan as now. The value system was very good and not hurry-burry like Delhi. I lived in Kotturpuram then and travelled just 4-5 km to office.



Now, I am commuting 30-40 km every day as I live in Kovalam. But I have no regrets. At the end of the day when I reach home, it is 'really home'.



A decade back, Madras was far more peaceful... no shops would be open after 7.30 pm whereas today there is more traffic, more people, more pollution and shops are open till late night. Traffic has developed tremendously and people have changed totally. For instance, Hindi was not spoken much earlier and now half the time they start the conversation in Hindi when they talk to me...

## Changes – the Egyptian Experience

*N Gnanasekar is part of the HR team at Egypt. He has been in Sanmar for more than 12 years. He moved to Egypt four and a half years ago. In this issue on change we thought it apt to record his experiences moving from ‘Cauverypattinam’ (Trichy) to ‘The Land of the Nile’.*

*Asalam alekkum!*

From Trichy, I landed in the land of Pharaoh one midnight a few years ago without knowing a single word in Arabic. My family joined me shortly. To me, Egypt meant the Nile, Great Pyramids and adventurous life portrayed in ‘the Mummy’ sequels; thinking of a country with industries was beyond the stretch of my imagination. So, I was prepared for surprises; anticipated only surprises. I went with clear mind and was ready to absorb and change myself whatever way life existed there!

The task was clearly cut out - understand the culture, adapt and integrate practices with that of the Group.

At first, I tried the easiest method of coping - try to change others. Disastrous. Then, came the realisation that ‘Nothing changes until **WE** change’. I had to remember the basic rule of interpersonal relations - ‘accept people as they are’. The change had to begin from **me**.

Adapting our lives to Egypt was not only challenging but also interesting as the changes gave new perspective to their lives and beliefs. It required a lot of will, respect, patience and sincerity to change to the culture and get accepted by the local people.

The heat and humidity in the desert make Egyptians prefer nights which are more pleasant than days. On a typical day, people get up around noon and open their shops. Life extends up to 2.00 am and most of the people, especially women, start their shopping past 8.00 pm. Traffic peaks from 10.00 pm to 1.00 am. We are now used to getting telephone calls, mostly wrong numbers, at 12.30 am, amenity bill collectors knocking doors at midnight, doctor’s appointment at 11.00 pm, etc.

The dress code is formal suit for any business meeting and functions in Egypt. As a person who wore a formal suit only for my wedding reception, this was a very difficult thing to do.

Since Arabic is written right to left, the documents are filed totally opposite from what we are used to. Records, Documents, Dossiers, etc., are stapled at the right top corner and the first page is the back cover. Most of the Egyptians normally shy away from writing lengthy reports. English makes it worse. Understanding their difficulties, I have to change my communication style to being simple, shorter sentences and to-the-point.



When changes are inevitable, accept them and start enjoying them. That is the way, I started seeing the better side of a life here.

*Kullu sena wintho thaibeen* (Wish you a good year).



**Change:  
Day  
into  
Night**

*Clicked by  
M Vidhyadharan  
Central Accounts,  
Corporate Division, HO.*

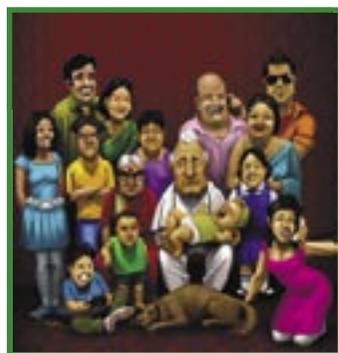
## Families - Joint & Nuclear

A joint family has its positives and negatives. While in a joint family, kids are very well taken care of by their grandparents. On the flip side there is a lot of back biting by relatives. It calls for a lot of maturity to build relationships and be among relatives.

In my family, sharing and bonding still remains between my children and my relatives in Delhi. My son is now in Delhi in his uncle's house and is absolutely comfortable with my brother and his family.

Change is a constant factor... may be I will make up for the time lost away from my children, by taking care of my grandchildren.

**Himanshu Rastogi**, IT, Corporate Division, HO.



*G Rengarajan, has been a part of the HR team for over 16 years. He moved to Cuddalore 2 years ago. He has been living in a joint family all through his life. Speaking to him we realise that joint family can include extended family as well. He speaks on the pros and cons of living in a joint family and how life is indeed a delicate balance to maintain.*

I live in a joint family, not only with my parents but also with my wife's parents. Both of our parents jointly manage the home front.

Handling parents and children has changed over the years. There is a lot of generation gap now. I obeyed my grandfather whereas my children say it is not possible. Handling relationships in a joint family is different, I will not say difficult. My 12 year old daughter wants to go out alone. Whereas my parents insist that she cannot go out on her own.

On the positive side, there is always somebody to take care of the family so that we can work comfortably. Quarrels are not much between a husband and a wife in a joint family and I feel that the situation might be tougher in a nuclear family which calls for better understanding...

### The changing scenario of socialising in industrial colony set ups in Mettur

Good rapport built and developed in Karaikal is helping a lot to the organisation in operating the plant in a cordial and peaceful manner. The goodwill still continues to give good results.

Taking cue from Karaikal, I started building a good rapport at Mettur with the people living in surrounding plants. The near good rapport developed with them has started yielding good results, in operating the plant peacefully and in a conducive manner.

Coming to our own employees, organising get-togethers of all employees working in various plants at Mettur on the eve of New Year and other occasions has given a feeling of oneness among employees.

**S Venkatesan**, Operations, Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur.

Till around the year 2000, annual tours to various industries across the country were organised through Society of Technologies (SOT) for which every employee contributed Rs 5 per month. Annual State level TSN Memorial Bridge and Tennis Tournaments were continued till very recently. In the Chemplast Recreation Club Mettur, films were screened regularly. Kutcheri and Patti Mandrams and dramas by renowned artistes were conducted. Annual family get-togethers were held in a grand manner, an occasion to showcase the talent of employees' children and spouses. During the month of Margazhi, bhajans were sung. Every year inter district shuttle tournaments were organised by a team of employees.

Presently the ladies club actively conducts annual one day picnic. Spouses and children participate. Children's day is celebrated in all the clubs in a grand manner and regular events in the ladies club include the Rangoli competition and cookery competition.

**R Shreeram & E Arunkumar**, HR,  
**VS Ramachandran**, Personnel,  
Chemplast Sanmar, Mettur.

## On becoming a grandfather

‘Relationships’ change

*S Venkatesan heads the Mettur Operations, Chemplast Sanmar. He has been with the Group for more than 23 years and has worked in various locations across the Group in India and overseas. He opines about socialising in Mettur. We also get a peek into his role as a grandfather.*

Becoming a grandfather is indeed a very joyous occasion in one's life. One can feel such happiness and joy when actually it happens. Such happiness makes me go home early in the evenings (of course by 6-7 pm !) so that I can spend time with my grandchild. I am not tired even when I am awake for a long time in the night taking care of the child. We ourselves become children when we involve ourselves with them; that too I can feel the change in me when I mingle with the child as a grandfather than that of the feeling as a father earlier. The psychological boost with this experience is making me understand life better.

Today children are very independent and both spouses are choosing to be in career. The challenge lies in the upbringing of their children and in this instance our role as grandparents is very important. In our case, my daughter stays very close to my home and our grandson is 10 years old. He goes to school in the morning and in the afternoon attends veena class and then maths class so on. There should be somebody to take the child to these places. That is when I decided to be on a part-time employment. Every day we have something or the other for my grandson and we both (me & my wife) will be taking him around. On the whole we are very happy taking care of our grandchildren and some small changes that we make in our own lives for them gives a lot of satisfaction.

**N Sivakumar**, *Projects, Chemplast Sanmar, HO.*



- C** – Curiosity in learning new things / technological advancements
- H** – Honesty in official dealings with business contacts
- A** – Accepting new ideas from whatever sources they may come from
- N** – Nice in communicating the ideas to give effect to the same
- G** – Good in presentation skills for giving a finality to take a call
- E** – Excellent in implementing “Change”

**K Srinivasan**, *Support Services, Sanmar Speciality Chemicals, HO.*



**How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?**

- 1) “I want a detailed memo about this issue.”
- 2) “You were supposed to have changed that light bulb last week!”
- 3) “We haven't got a policy on that.”
- 4) “I am on my way to a very important meeting, so we'll discuss it some other time.”
- 5) Three. Two to find out if it needs changing, and one to tell an employee to change it.

## Sudoku

	VI	V			IX			
II			VI			IV	VIII	
I						V		IX
VIII		VI		IX				
	III				VII		IV	
				VIII		IX		III
III		II						V
	VII	I			II			IV
			IV			VII	II	

## Quiz

1. What is the name with which “Times of India”, one of India’s largest circulated newspapers was called before 1861?
2. What are the present names of the ancient nations of Mesopotamia and Persia?
3. Which part of the human body does not change in size and shape throughout the lifespan?
4. URL created by Tim Berners – Lees has brought a revolution in the computing world. What is the full form of URL?
5. ‘Radio’ that works with the transmission of electromagnetic waves, was called as what in 19th century?
6. Name the person who has introduced the practice of sterilisation of surgical instruments that has brought a revolution in the medical services.
7. In ancient Olympics, two sports Boxing and Wrestling were played as one. Name the sport?
8. Which Asian nation was once known as the People’s Republic of Kampuchea?
9. What was the US Presidential retreat Camp David originally known as?
10. What is the colour that is derived by mixing red & yellow?
11. Name the father of ‘Genetics’ whose work became the foundation for the modern science of genetics.
12. The cholas called the ‘Nicobar’ island with what name, as found in the Tanjore inscriptions of 1050 CE (Current Era).

## Answers to the Sudoku & Quiz

IA	II	IIA	I	III	AI	IIIA	A	XI
AI	III	IIIA	II	A	XI	I	IIA	IA
A	XI	I	IIIA	IA	IIA	II	AI	III
III	I	XI	IA	IIIA	A	AI	II	IIA
IIIA	AI	IA	IIA	II	I	XI	III	A
IIA	A	II	AI	XI	III	IA	I	IIIA
XI	IA	A	III	AI	II	IIA	IIIA	I
I	IIIA	AI	A	IIA	IA	III	XI	II
II	IIA	III	XI	I	IIIA	A	IA	AI

1. Bombay Times 2. Iraq and Iran 3. Eye 4. Uniform Resource Locator
5. Wireless telegraph
6. Joseph Lister
7. Pankration 8. Cambodia
9. Shangri-La 10. Orange
11. Gregor Mendel
12. Nakkavaram

## Changing Connexions

From Gutenberg’s printing press, Graham Bell’s telephone, Marconi’s radio, Baird’s television to Steve Jobs’ tablet PC, all these inventors and their inventions, have made the process of communication simpler and easily accessible to every person.



1926



Telephone - Mobile

2011



1926

Typewriter - Laptop

2011



1946

Computer - I pad

2011



1925

Television - LED

2011



1912

Newspaper - E paper

2011



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