

Scribbles

Volume No. 3

October 2012 - Special Issue

Issue No. 7

From the Editor's desk...

Dear colleagues,

My recollections with Sri KS Narayanan goes back in time, several decades, when as a young girl I would accompany my father at 4.45 – 5 am in the morning for a walk at the Madras Cricket Club.

Next to the car park was a tennis court, exclusively reserved for a group of people, old but young at heart. The place used to reverberate with laughter. Were they playing tennis or was it a laughter club!

The head of the group was Sri KSN.

Much later in life I realised what a gift it is to be able to smile and laugh, first thing in the morning.

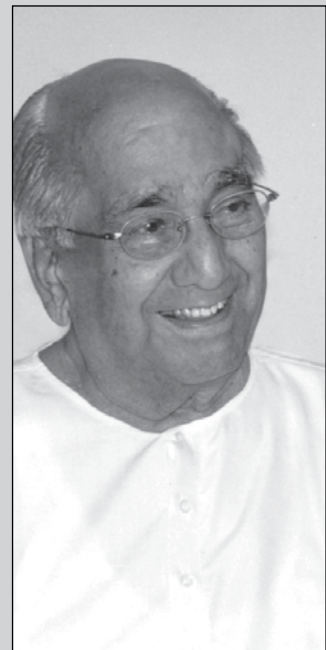
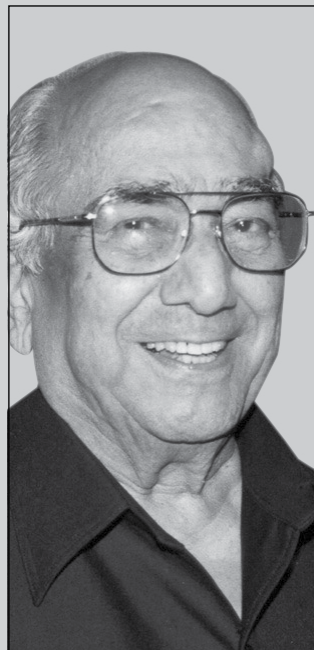
Nana (Nana Mama to me), as he was called by all who knew him, was full of life, a gentle human being and a loveable person.

The foundation of Sanmar was laid by him and the Group owes its values and philosophies to the seeds that were sown by him.

This issue is dedicated to this great soul.

Sarada Jagan

KS Narayanan (30 January 1919 - 28 September 2012)



KS Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group

A Memoir by SB Prabhakar Rao

It is with a deep sense of sorrow that we record the demise of Sri KS Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group, on Friday, 28th September 2012, after a brief illness. He was a doyen among a pioneering generation of industrialists.

A brief report on his life and mission –

“Constantly perform your obligatory duty without attachment; for by doing duty without attachment, man verily attains the Supreme”.

This essence of *Bhagavad Gita* sums up the life and mission of the late Sri KS Narayanan (KSN).

It was in the year 1919, when the guns of the Great War of Nations were silenced and peace returned, that KSN was born in Kallidaikurichi, Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Born in a family of bankers, KSN had the native talent to manage money most prudently. KSN's early stint as a financier exposed him to the real and highly competitive world of business.

KSN's entrepreneurial talent and expertise in the manufacturing sector came from hands on experience he gleaned from a wide spectrum of industry segments ranging from printing ink to PVC resins. His very first enterprise was the takeover of a printing ink factory, Nanco. Later on, he acquired the South India Rubber Factory in Coimbatore. From rubber, KSN graduated to the manufacture of calcium carbide, and then on to cement, an industry where his experience and in-depth expertise were matched by few other entrepreneurs.

An important milestone in KSN's life was when he spent more than a year in Denmark in 1946-47 and acquired considerable technical knowledge in the cement manufacturing process. He was the Managing Director of The India Cements Limited for over 35 years, during which period, the company witnessed diversification and expansion of production capacity in its cement units.

The next step for KSN was into PVC resins, an emerging versatile raw material. This was also the

time he realised the importance of acquiring the latest technologies in manufacturing. In this respect, 1963 was a landmark year for KSN when his quest for a joint venture partner resulted in finalising a collaboration with BF Goodrich of the USA, and Chemplast was born.

KSN sowed the seeds for the success of The Sanmar Group, which has blossomed into a large and diversified industrial conglomerate. KSN travelled extensively, identifying appropriate joint venture partners for The Sanmar Group, embarking on a new era in its growth path. The Group successfully diversified from Plastics and Chlorochemicals to span Engineering, Speciality Chemicals and Shipping, thus keeping Sanmar in the forefront of Indian industry.

Even in his fifties, KSN was associated with several leading Indian companies as Chairman and as Director, providing his mature advice and guidance. He was the promoter Director of Chemplast, Sanmar Shipping, WS Industries, Tamil Nadu Dadha and Director of HMT, Kothari Madras and MRF Ltd., among many such positions he held.

To KSN, charity was second nature and he considered it his bounden duty to help his fellow citizens. He actively worked for several social causes and projects and in 1974, the Government of Tamil Nadu appointed him as the Sheriff of Madras.

KSN never claimed credit for his acts of generosity, nor sought any publicity for deeds that came straight from his heart. True to KSN's core belief in giving back to society several fold from the fruits of one's labours, he and The Sanmar Group have over the years contributed wholesomely to the growth of several institutions playing vital role in education, health, medicine and rehabilitation of the dispossessed. Some of the beneficiaries of his largesse are Sankara Schools, Sankara Netralaya, Cancer Institute, Adyar, Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, Vaishnav College for Women, Stella

Maris College, Children's Garden School, Polygon Creche, Bala Mandir and many more. He was actively involved in the management of several educational and philanthropic organisations including the Indian Education Trust, Mrs Madhuran Narayanan Charitable Foundation, Sanmar Welfare Trust, Uttara Swamimalai Trust and several others. Apart from his philanthropic involvements, he had also supported the fine arts, sports and people development. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Music Academy, Madras, and was a life member of India Society for Technical Education.

A keen tennis player himself and an avid cricket enthusiast, KSN was a true patron of sports. He was the driving force behind KSN Sports Foundation, promoting cricket, tennis and other sports activities, even before corporate sponsorship became a fashionable word. He was a life member of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association and a patron of the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association.

KSN never went to a business school, nor did he ever read an HR or PR manual in his life. He was a management guru with dozens of management textbooks rolled into one. He made the best use of people's strengths and talents.

Ethics and transparency, rare qualities in business today, have always played a very important part in anything KSN chose to undertake. The Sanmar Group is known for its ethical values, fair play and

transparency – the very qualities that reflected KSN's character. Yet, the man of whom so much has been said was known to speak of his own achievements as providential contributions to his success.

KSN touched the zenith in anything he was associated with. His close and long association with Denmark resulted in his appointment as the Honorary Consul for Denmark in South India, a position he held from 1975 to 1989. He was also knighted by Her Majesty, the Queen of Denmark, in 1983.

The Founder President of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Southern Region in 1969-70, and the President of the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce and Industry during 1975-76, KSN was honoured as a distinguished citizen by several organisations.

“Considerate to everyone without a trace of condescension and generous without a trace of ostentation” – surely these words constitute a tribute worth attributing to KSN. It is qualities such as these that the present generation can do well to emulate and cherish a legacy as wonderful as the one which KSN had given, for there can be no strength half as great as strength of character.

The only way to cherish his memory is to imbibe his qualities of head and heart and emulate his spirit of life and mission.



(From l to r): Vijay Sankar, Hony Consul for Spain, N Kumar, Hony Consul for Greece, Lars Christiansen, Commercial Counsellor, Danish Embassy, HE Freddy Svane, Danish Ambassador in India, KS Narayanan, Chairman Emeritus of The Sanmar Group, N Sankar, Hony Consul General of Denmark for South India and SB Prabhakar Rao, Vice Consul, Danish Consulate for South India (2011).

Friendships and Flashbacks

