

Kalyanmayee

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OPENING STROKES



ARCHNA AGRAWAL

There is a wonderful saying that to accomplish great things we must first dream, then visualize, then plan... believe...and act!

As I write these lines, my heart is filled with gratitude to those who trod this path before me, who dreamt of creating an institution, visualized what it would do over the years and then set about building it brick by brick. They built Kalyanmayee with a vision: it would be an instrument for social change, for togetherness and a platform for us to share and fulfill our dreams and aspirations.

As I now head this very unique institution, I

can imagine what it means to give birth and nurture it. My salutations to Ms Saroj Gupta (the founder President of the Airports Authority of India Women Welfare Association — AAIWWA — and wife of Mr D V Gupta, the second Chairman of AAI) to Ms Jija Madhavan Singh the then Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) and Secretary General, AAIWWA and Group Capt D C Mehta, the then Director (Personnel) & Coordinator, AAIWWA.

I got roped into the system, thanks to my abiding passion for art and culture. Subsequently, as my husband grew in his career, the responsibilities got bigger and

bigger. I was the Regional President in the North-East and Northern Regions and was Vice-President of the institution at the corporate level. The experience has been invaluable and has given me a perspective of what really needs to be done to enlarge our vision, improve our delivery systems and truly make Kalyanmayee a truly innovative and substantive institution that can contribute not only to AAI but to society around us.

In the few months I have been at the helm, we have made some fundamental changes to the way we run our institution. We reviewed the

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Walk down memory lane

I distinctly remember that day of October 1997, when I was called by Mr D V Gupta, the then Chairman, AAI, to his office. Not knowing the purpose of the summons, it was but natural for me to be perplexed.

On entering the office my anxiety increased manifold by the presence of Ms. Jija

Madhavan Singh, the then CVO there. Honestly speaking, nobody in their wildest of dreams could have thought at that point of time that we three were on the threshold of creating history in the annals of the AAI.



GP CAPT DC MEHTA

Mr Gupta opened the deliberations: he apprised me of what had transpired between the two of them prior to my being called in. He, in the most unambiguous terms, put across his thoughts on a scheme for the welfare and betterment of the fairer sex working at the AAI - and that included employees as well as the spouses of the male employees. The only plausible reason for inducting me in their scheme of things was two fold: First, I being the Director (Personnel), welfare was part of one of my responsibilities and, second, with my armed forces background, I fit their bill easily. When I confirmed that I foresaw no problems in evolving an appropriate scheme for AAI within

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Go Green!

THAT'S THE MESSAGE FROM AAI AND KALYANMAYEE IS PUSHING AHEAD TO ENSURE THAT THE AAI AIRPORTS BECOME LIVING EXAMPLES.

Trees exert a powerful emotional influence on mankind. They symbolise spiritual sustenance and renewal and are an embodiment of birth, life, death, regeneration and rebirth.

Trees have been an important factor in the evolution of ecology and life on earth. Forever giving - shade to a tired traveler; fruits to

all; beauty to our planet; oxygen to keep us alive; leaves and bark for medicines; removes carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, from the air — trees are essential and irreplaceable.

Notwithstanding the debt we owe to trees, their emotive power, and their importance to other forms of life, the forested area of the earth is steadily being depleted. This is where AAI and Kalyanmayee come in. "Giving back to the community where we live and work, a commitment towards sustainable growth of communities": that is the message and the major objective of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) of the AAI and Kalyanmayee is playing a pivotal role in helping AAI achieve this.

As a CSR Project, Chairman, Airports Authority of India, Mr V P Agrawal has given directions to all airports across the country for massive tree plantations to be carried out and tree plantations are going on at all airports.

Kalyanmayee is helping out by nurturing and caring for all these trees. All the trees planted are being accounted for. A monthly report of the progress of all the trees would be sent to the central unit of Kalyanmayee for it to monitor the progress. So, not only is AAI planting trees but also ensuring that the plants grow into full-grown trees and contribute their bit to save the environment and the ecology of the planet.

IT STARTED OFF AS AN IDEA TO STOP POLLUTION AND SAVE TREES. TODAY, KALYANMAYEE'S INITIATIVE TO MAKE PAPER FROM WASTED TRUCKLOADS OF PAPER LOADS HAS NOT ONLY BROUGHT HOPE AND SUSTENANCE TO A NUMBER OF WOMEN BUT HAS ALSO SAVED MONEY FOR THE AAI.

The dynamic lady behind Kalyanmayee's latest initiative, Ms Archana Agrawal (who became the Chairperson in January, 2009) explains: "My grandfather, mother -- they were all social workers. Even my father-in-law believed that one must practice before preaching and married a widow in those conservative times. So, I guess I saw and learnt from them all. Those values were passed on to me."

"People full of angst, who are not content within cannot contribute to society. There comes a time when one must give back to society - only then can your life be fulfilled," feels Ms. Aggarwal. "I learnt that to protect sensitive documents, about three truckloads of paper rolls from the ATC were burnt daily at the Airports Authority of India office: it was their policy. I was horrified - imagine the pollution!"

Ms Agarwal pursued the idea relentlessly. "I fought with the officers and even my husband and insisted that they plough the funds that they set aside towards their CSR (corporate social responsibility) into

a paper recycling project under Kalyanmayee. Instead of burning paper, if they gave it to us, we would shred and recycle the paper and return it to them. In this win-win situation, pollution would be zero, thousands of trees would be saved, women would get employment and AAI's stationary bills would be drastically reduced."

AAI loved the idea, gave Kalyanmayee the seed money and "we started operations in May. Now, we are constructing a new building for the initiative. As AAI wives and/or employees, it is in our own interest to enhance the image of the institution." It was a project that simply had to be done: "We said we can, we will and we did. As part of its own CSR initiatives, Ambuja Cement visited our workshop and wanted us to do the same for them. It is the only handmade paper that is up to the mark," they said.

"We hope to replicate such initiatives in all the five sectors where Kalyanmayee currently operates. Each region has its own set of requirements, for example in South India, sanitation is a big problem and

in the North-East it is drugs. I have visited each region and invited people from the other airports to come over and discuss with us which issues they would like us to tackle. They live there, they know best. We do not want to foist our ideas, but listen, learn and work collectively as a team," hoped Ms. Agrawal.

paper - photocopies, message sheets, notes, documents, magazines, etc. are dumped. These are collected and delivered to Kalyanmayee on a monthly basis. "We also purchase hosiery and denim rags from exporters to add fibre and make the paper stronger," said Ms Seenghal.

Once these rags and papers are

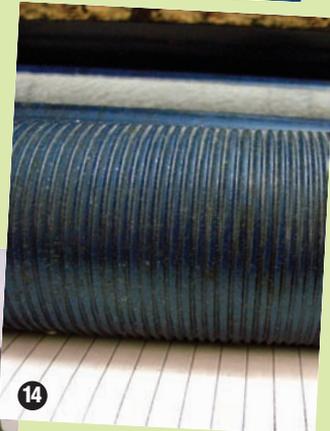
Paper-making, the Kalyanmayee way

Back to the paper-making initiative, it was Ms Anita Seenghal, the confident, capable in-charge who runs the day-to-day operations at the paper recycling plant, who explained the whole process. Offering us fresh lemon-grass tea with a smile, she told us: "Ours is a chemical-free, eco-friendly initiative. It works like this: first an empty box is placed in every section of the Airport Authority of India's offices, into which all waste

sorted and freed of staples, pins, dirt and/or plastic etc, the paper is shredded, soaked in water for thirty minutes before being pulped for twenty minutes. The rags are chopped and go into a winnowing machine that turns it into cottonwool. It is soaked for 8-12 hours (depending on the kind and thickness of cloth) before being pulped.

The final 'load' for paper-making





IT IS MORE THAN JUST PAPERWORK: The complex process of making paper begins with: 1) The sorting of paper; 2 & 3) which then goes into the shredding machine; 4) Rags are fed into the winnowing machine; 5) While the Pulping machine receives paper strips; 6) Once the pulp is made, it is set in the Univat machine; 7) The Screw Press squeezes out excess water; 8) The paper is left to dry; 9) When dry, the muslin backing the paper is peeled off; 10) The paper is flattened in the calendaring machine; 11) The paper cutting machine at work; 12) The creasing machine in action; 13) Envelopes being made; 14) The lining machine; 15) Ms Seenghal at the Silkscreen section; 16) Bougainvillea stationary; 17) Flowered paper; and, 18) Stationary items produced at Kalyanmayee.

depends on the thickness, texture and quality of paper to be made on that day. The rag pulp is then added to the paper pulp as and if required. Flowers, leaves, grass, bran and fibres are also added when making speciality wrapping papers and envelopes.

Within the 'factory', youngsters were busy laying unbleached muslin on the Univat machine before adding the load and pressing out the water with the felt press. The muslin-backed pulp sheets are then transferred to a screw press where further water is squeezed out. The sheets are left in the hot sun till bone dry and the muslin backing is peeled off. Then, the sheets are transferred to a Calendaring Machine which roller presses them smooth inlaid between sheets of steel. The sheets are stored and cut as and when required.

In these four short very busy months, Kalyanmayee has taken quantum leaps: from making writing paper, tissue paper and notepads to file covers and envelopes to screen printing visiting and greeting cards. It is already producing 350 sheets per day and hope to cross 500 very soon. "Ms. Agrawal is very innovative herself and gets back interesting paper ideas wherever she finds them. She gives everyone a free hand and this has led to great teamwork," added Charu Shukla who looks after the Kalyanmayee website. The pale mauve designer wrapping sheets scattered with windblown magenta bougainvillea spoke of beauty, social will and, of course, the urge to excel.

Ms Meera Mishra believed that whenever they decide to go in for

CSR initiatives, business houses and public sector NGOs begin with a decided advantage because "whenever you marry philanthropic motives with sound business strategies and planned implementation, the impact is far greater".

Kalyanmayee has now emerged as an extended arm of the AAI to take forward a whole range of developmental activities, which are at various stages of planning and implementation. The spectrum includes, on the one hand, value-added services and community development and on the other workers' welfare. Whenever an airport is built, compensation for land is given, but our focus is to help minimise the negative impacts by providing additional community services based on local needs -- like integrated community health, rainwater harvesting, vocational training and providing crèches for contractual labour at our sites. "We try to address the direct and indirect impact on the environment as well, with our new thrust - monitored reforestation drives which ensure that saplings survive -- to compensate for trees felled. We prefer not to perform random philanthropy like distributing food or blankets, etc. It is only when philanthropy is strategically planned that it remains sustainable," said Ms Mishra.

Is there any doubt that the dreams of Kalyanmayee's taskforce do not end here? Let's await the future which looks decidedly full of promise.

— Text and Photos by **Rachana Rana Bhattacharya**

Walk down memory lane

the next fortnight, I could see the sigh of relief on their faces.

I got down to the task and

“ Basically we revived Kalyanmayee, which was almost dead as an organisation. Ms. Jija Singh who was the Secretary General at that time, took a lot of interest; so did the others like Ms. Goswami and Ms Archana Agarwal. To increase social interaction we started life memberships and initiated social work by adopting villages and conducting de-addiction and adult literacy programmes.”

— Ms Saroj Gupta

carried out an in-depth study of similar schemes in the army and air force where they had the AWWA (Army Wives Welfare Association) and the AFWWA (Air Force Wives Welfare Association), respectively. I evolved a scheme for the AAI and, accordingly, a Constitution was drafted and put in place. Being fair to the then management it would indeed be apt if I were to acknowledge and place on record my gratitude and indebtedness for granting me all the freedom to work out the scheme. While the scheme was being evolved, it was learnt that

“ I joined Kalyanmayee in December 1997. In those days, though we had both national and international flights, there was no amalgamation. People did not know each other, had not met - even at the Executive Director level. There was this hierarchical divide in their minds. Once I met a senior officer in Udaipur who had worked in Aerodrome Control for 35 years. He had never ever seen the DGM, their wives had never met. He had not even seen a photograph of his boss, can you imagine?!”

— Ms Jija Madhvan Hari Singh

in the mid-80s Mr N K Singh, the then Chairman, IAAI (now part of AAI) had introduced a welfare scheme christened ‘Kalyanmayee’.

With great difficulty, we retrieved the file which revealed nothing more than the fact that the association had been registered in Delhi.

Right from the word go, I knew that if the scheme had to take off, it needed the active involvement of Mrs Jija. She was given a position: Secretary General. It was a post that would be filled by the seniormost serving Lady Executive at the Corporate Office. I have no hesitation in confessing that she did play a pivotal role with her foresight in creation of AAIWWA, garnering membership from all stations across the length and breadth of the country by propagating the

“ When you move from place to place, very often there is a sense of alienation among the families. In our times, Kalyanmayee provided a great platform for social interaction by conducting coaching, stitching, singing and hobby classes and hosting cultural programmes. I felt very enriched by the experience - we all did.”

— Ms Rita Mathur

need/advantages of an institution like this one. With the objective of rekindling the IAAI association, the AAIWWA was rechristened as “Kalyanmayee”. The logo was the brainchild of Jija the painter, the green theme providing a soothing effect to the eyes and the ‘tree’ giving shelter, shade and comfort to living beings.

Kalyanmayee was ‘re-born’ and started its work to achieve the objectives laid down. We can say that even in its infancy, AAIWWA rose to the national cause and ventured beyond the boundaries of our family/call of duty by donating handsomely - in cash and kind -- towards the PM’s relief fund to mitigate the aftermath of natural calamities: be it Orissa floods or tsunamis. AAIWWA also stood beside our army brothers after the Kargil operations.

AAIWWA by its very name denotes “Kalyanmayee is for the AAI People and by the AAI People”. Now that I am back with AAI in the capacity of an Advisor in Chairman’s

“ I remember how we used to distribute clothes and food to old age homes. Our donations did not stop there. The ladies became the driving force and encourage everyone to donate during natural disasters and during wars. They also took the lead to educate the less fortunate by giving tuitions at home.”

— Ms Usha Nirula

Secretariat, I consider myself fortunate to have got another opportunity to associate myself with Kalyanmayee. From the few interactions that I have had with Mrs Archana Agrawal and Mrs Deepa Vijay, Secretary, AAIWWA, it appears that they have a vision and have also, charted out the path to follow.

It would but be prudent for me to set the records straight by stating that in AAIWWA’s formative / gestation period, we solicited the services Charuvi (daughter of Mr V P and Mrs Archana Agarwal) who is an artist par excellence, acclaimed internationally and with a website of her own.

I have not an iota of doubt that the expertise that Mrs Agarwal possess would not only stand her in good stead in

“ Kalyanmayee was a platform to try and do our bit for society. It was also a great forum to interact with other AAI wives and share our experience on a variety of issues.”

— Ms Uma Ramalingam

managing the affairs of AAIWWA but also, under her able and dynamic stewardship AAIWWA is bound to be the beneficiary in the long run and achieve prosperity/attain newer heights in times to come.

(Group Capt Mehta was former EDP&A and Founder-Coordinator, AAIWWA)

OPENING STROKES

existing Memorandum of Association and have incorporated the following amendments:

- To help AAI achieve its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by undertaking community development activities for the local population and society at large.
- Introduce the concept of a Central Working Committee (CWC).
- Abolition of Membership Fees for AAI lady employees and spouses of male employees.

We also realised that the Kalyanmayee family needs to communicate better. I am delighted to inform you that Kalyanmayee now has its own dedicated website: www.kalyanmayee.org.

In keeping with our commitment for CSR, we have deliberated in detail on the sort of community development activities that we shall undertake and prioritise region-wise tasks. As for the regional meetings for follow-up action, I am delighted at the level of enthusiasm and excitement the concept has generated.

I am committed to utilizing every paisa that comes into Kalyanmayee “only” for CSR projects. Every other programme — social activities, functions and get-togethers — will be organized on a self-sustaining basis based on member participation. To make sure that those in office follow the dictum, we shall stay in local guest houses and travel by LCCs.

May I also take this opportunity to inform you that the long outstanding issue of the association not being registered has since been undertaken successfully by my team.

I am also most delighted that with the assistance of the Horticulture Department, we have been able to develop a fully-equipped nursery at Safdarjung Airport. We are in a position to supply, free of charge, saplings to AAI officials, especially residents of INA Colony. This, you would appreciate, would go a long way in adding to the fauna and flora of our colony.

Finally, a word in commitment. I wish to assure AAI, our parent organization, that as one of the many shoots they nurture, Kalyanmayee is fully aware of the tough times they are going through, largely due to the global economic situation. We have taken due note of the views expressed by the Chairman in his message to the employees. At Kalyanmayee, we are committed to practicing frugality and set an example for others.

As a first step, for this year’s anniversary, all out-station participants are being accommodated in-house (NIAMAR, FTS, Transit Accommodation, Club, etc.) and all travel is being undertaken by AC III-Tier. This is just a humble beginning and we hope we can set more benchmarks than others, we hope, will emulate.

The festive season is just around the corner. May I take this opportunity to wish each one of you much happiness and prosperity in the coming months!

ARCHNA AGRAWAL