

An Interview with Head - IR, SEG Automotive India Private Limited

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Interviewed by **Prakasha R.M.**,
Head-HR,
SOLIZE India Technologies Private Limited.,

“Life begins when you start something,
and blooms when you keep doing it”



Nagabhushana K, is a Senior HR/IR leader with about 26 years of experience in the field of HR, Legal and Industrial Relations. Presently he heads IR in SEG Automotive India Private Limited., (formerly known as BOSCH Limited) at Naganathapura, Bangalore. He led HR & IR in Wipro Infrastructure Engineering, ISKCON (Akshaya Patra Project), Fosroc India Chemicals and Kirloskar Batteries Limited.

Nagabhushana K, holds Masters in Social work from Bangalore University. He has contributed substantially in the areas of HR, IR, Social development, Art and Culture. He also directed four social impactful short movies namely – Bare Truth, Dhaana, Emergency Exit, Domestic Enquiry and he was recognized and awarded for the same.

He is also authored three books i.e., 'Janapada Sahityadalli Janapadiya Nambikegalu', 'Olavu' (Collection of Poems) and 'HR Guide'.

Besides his HR profession, he is passionate about Social development. He along with his family and his mother, formed a community development organization called 'Namanam' at Noorundumalai, a tribal village at Krishnagiri forests in Tamil Nadu and borders with Karnataka.

This village was declared alcohol and tobacco free in the year 2006 by District Administration headed by an IAS officer namely Dr. Santhosh Babu. In the last ten years, over 1,000 youngsters have found a new direction for their lives through Namanam.

From fighting alcoholism to employment to health to women empowerment, one by one, Nagabhushana K, is moving the mountains of Noorundumalai. Noorundumalai now has a respectable school, a changed face from its dilapidated condition. The girls of the village, who used to be married off at the age of 12, are now standing up for themselves and their education.

Nagabhushana K, has been working hard for a change in this scene. He has now set up a factory at Noorundumalai to produce sanitary napkins for the women of the village, who are the ones employed at the factory, making the 100% cotton napkins and leading a feminine hygiene revolutionary lives.

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You had very humble beginning. What made you to be grounded always?

“Life begins when you start something, and blooms when you keep doing it”. I believe that any journey starts with a single step which is universal truth, no exception even to mine. Fortunately, I am blessed to have been connected with best leaders all across. They encouraged me to identify my life 'Purpose' in my early career. The biggest lesson that I learnt from all these leaders especially from Dr. APJ Kalam was “Be like the bamboo, the higher you grow, the deeper you bow.” Practicing this principle always helped me connected with people across geography. The purpose keeps me always active. You be the change you wish to see in others as Mahatma Gandhi stated, I started reflecting myself and bring change within me rather changing others.

To conclude the answer, when we walk on the street, all man creations look to be bigger & brighter but when you fly in air all of them look to be very trivial in front of nature. As such we left with no alternative but to get grounded.

2

At the very early phase of your career in Kirloskar, you handled Trade Union independently and successfully settled many issues, brought industrial peace and harmony. Please share few insights.

It is always easy to deal with organized and unionized employees than unorganized.

It was an opportunity for me to start my career with value based organizations like Kirloskar and continued my career with Wipro Infrastructure, Akshaya Patra, Bosch wherein an excellent team and their sincere efforts because of which I was in limelight. Besides, competent leadership with a clear vision and support from time to time helped me achieving my milestones. I am lucky enough to have signed more than 15 settlements of all kinds both bipartite and tripartite. All these could have happened because of those organizations where I was associated with. The kind of experience & exposure I had, made me to be part of solutions with deep focus on the root cause of every individual problem.

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You worked with diversified companies like Oil and Gas, Engineering, Social Development and Electronics / Automobile. Which industry is close to your heart?

The work is close to my heart not the industry. I am happy that I could get experience working with all kinds of organizations. Since working with people is my passion, it drives more satisfaction by adding value to the quality of people lives which I have been doing regardless of nature of industries or organizations I have been associated so far.

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While you were working for one of the biggest Indian MNC, you joined ISKCON as Head HR. You would have joined another MNC with bigger responsibilities. What was the reason for joining ISKCON (Akshaya Patra) mid-day meal project?

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is my role model. It was he who inaugurated the Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Secondly, my entire student life was in an Ashram availing "DASOHA" or "PRASADA" (free meals) as such joining Akshaya Patra from Wipro, it was not just a job or career, it was duty & obligation on my part to serve needy, government school going children. Working with Akshaya Patra was altogether different experience in my career.

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You said that you are inspired by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. How did you come in contact with Dr. Kalam?

The Project that my family members have been working in their individual capacities is the project of Dr. A.P.J. Kalam, namely PURA (Providing Urban Facilities to the Rural People). The project is located in border areas between Karnataka and Tamilnadu, Village called Urigam belongs to Krishnagiri District, the birth place of my mother and it is she who heads the Project. District Commissioner Dr. Santhosh Babu was instrumental in getting me connected with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for the first time in July 2007. It's a great thing happened in my life. I am proud to place on record that we are successful in sustaining the project and its growth for 18 years by following an advice by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam that **"One step forward with no step backward."** I take this opportunity to thank the District Commissioner Dr. Santhosh Babu for having connected with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

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You have transformed your village Alcohol and Tobacco free. What is this social action?

Transformation is a big word yet happy that my village now has got connected with main stream of the society – socially, economically and provided with basic amenities. Thanks to people all across and the Govt. of Tamilnadu for the timely supports and approvals. People in the villages are more innocent building trust matters a lot with them. Getting them engaged socially, economically, spiritually will be a best beginning for their holistic transformation.



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You have been always encouraging young professionals to go back to their villages and create social impact. How HR professionals can make difference and add value to their community in their villages?

Each one of us have duties and obligations to give back to our society and community with whatever possible. At the same time, we need to have a fair balance with all other responsibilities. We should be grateful to our profession as it deals with people. Further, it is to be noted that working with people is a joyful opportunity and life game changer.

Dr. APJ's forethought was that it will be Women India & Rural India drive terms globally. Urbanization in rural area should be our focus to have big social impact which indeed starts from within. Therefore, HR Professionals are more competent as compared with other professionals in bringing social changes in their community and society. Clear mindset and commitment towards fulfilling individual obligations will go a long way in this respect.

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You also have directed short movies those are social impactful? Would you please share more details about those short movies?

It was an inspiration from Akshaya Patra. When I was serving Akshaya Patra as an Head HR, I used to observe food wastage though it was very negligible. In our culture food is considered as “Prasadam”. Lot of food wastage happens in Hotels and personal events like marriages, celebrations etc. On contrary in tribal even today, some people make their food out of animals' dung. I wanted to create an awareness on food wastage to children and people around us. Hence, I directed a short movie called “**Bare Truth**”. Respecting food means respecting nature and mother earth. This movie was played in all schools where mid-day meal was served.

Another movie I directed was '**Domestic enquiry**'. As you know, not much literature is available on domestic enquiry, even if you read some literature unless one is experience and exposed to, it is hard to learn the skill. This movie helps HR and IR professionals to learn different aspects of Domestic Enquiry including application of principles of natural justices, role of an enquiry officer, role of management representatives, union leaders and emotional part of their families. Many practitioners refer this movie and connect with me to discuss about Domestic enquiry.

'**Emergency Exit**' movie was produced to bring awareness about safety beyond working locations. Safety is not only limited in industries as we can see unsafe acts and their impact everywhere including our homes. Creating awareness on road safety was one of the reasons to direct this movie. Safety should be looked holistically. As such, one needs to be more responsible for self and others safety.

Last one is '**DHANA**'. It is about organ donation. People have wrong belief that donating organs is a curse. Donation of organs are there in our culture from ancient time. Unfortunately, it is misinterpreted because of various reasons. After watching this movie, many donors voluntarily came forward to donate their organs. As a result, more than 1000 people registered to donate their organs. People have come forward even to donate dead bodies to Sri Sri Sri Ravishankar Gururji's Ayurvedic Medical College, Kanakapura Road, Bangalore for academic purpose.

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Would you share some of the key achievements of Namanam?

There are my achievements, I would like to mention few of them.

- Implementation of PURA project conceptualized by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.
- Transformed more than 1000 Rural & Tribal youth so far who were in the habit of consumption of Tobacco and Alcohol.
- Set up a Campus Tobacco and Alcohol free.
- Established Rural Employment Learning Centre.
- Established manufacturing facilities intended to add value to the farmers' products.
- About 15 rural based products are produced and marketed by Tobacco and Alcohol free Youth for their economic fulfilment.
- Getting urban people migrated to village and supporting them to be part of rural transformation.

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Would you share some of recognitions received for your outstanding contribution?

I am blessed with series of awards and recognitions. Few of them are:

- Tamilnadu State Award 2009.
- NHRD Game Changer National Award – Mumbai.
- International Rotary Award – Bangalore.
- Hosurian Leadership Award – Hosur, Tamilnadu etc.

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What are your future plan?

Continue to stay grounded, focused on what we have been already doing. Establish Rural based Skill Development Centre. Establish Support Center for natural farming.



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