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# VOICE

of RID 3233



WOMEN VIBES  
Sumedha on  
Girl power

PARTNER'S PAGE  
Rohini on  
Rotary

FASHION TALK  
Radhika's  
Reflections

**PDG Nanda**  
The Surgical Leader

**Bothra Ji**  
Santa of RID 3233

LIT LOUNGE  
Morning  
Miracles  
by Ramesh

HEALTH CAPSULE  
Dr. Poorna  
on perfect  
smile

# VOICE of RID 3233

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ISSUE - 6

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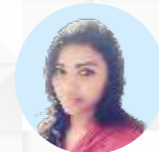
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# The birthday Santa

## Unwrapping Love,

### One Wish at a Time

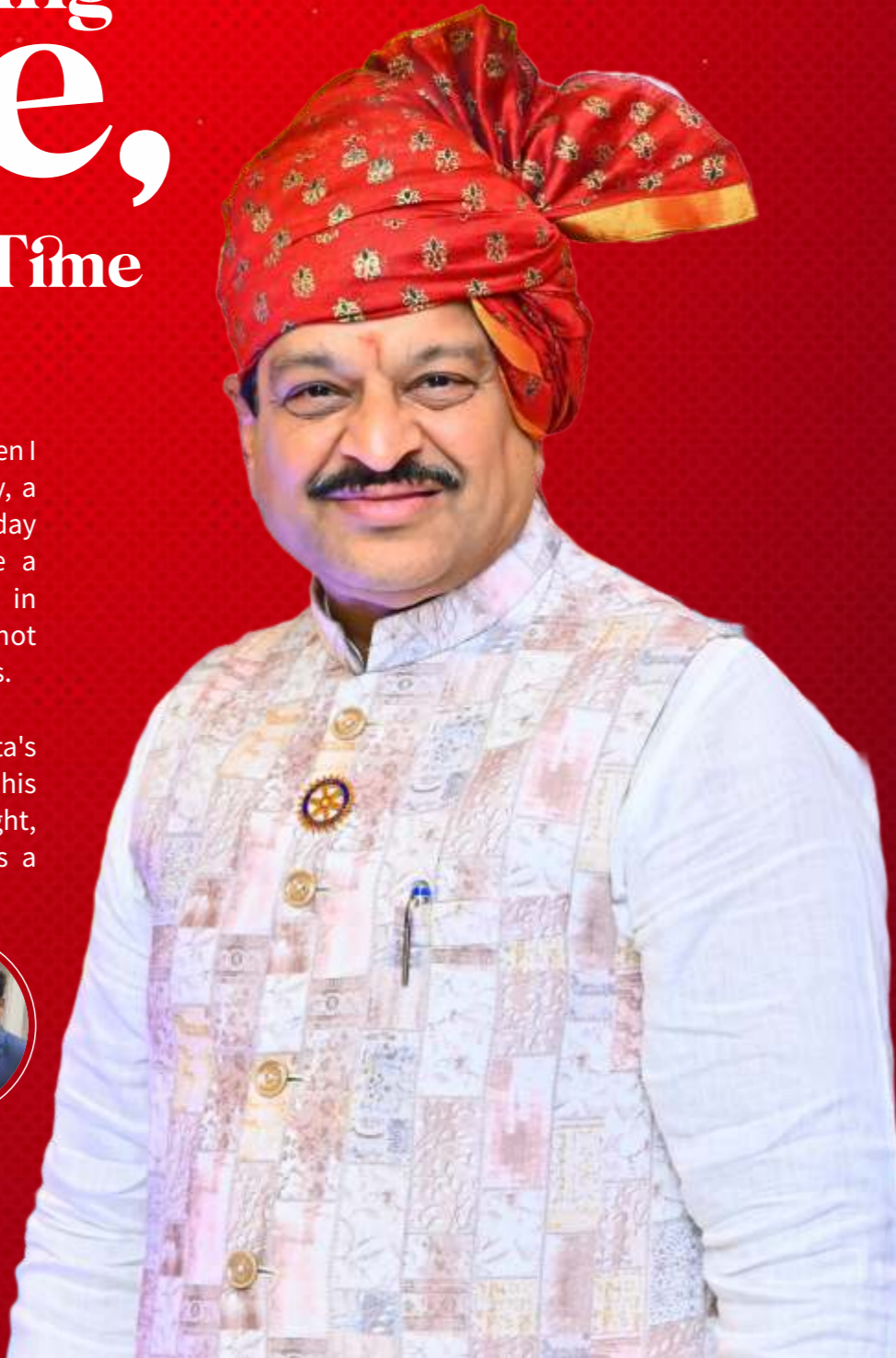
- DG Mahaveer Bothra

It was a chilly December morning when I met Mahaveer Bothra Ji - ironically, a man who didn't know his own birthday but knew everyone else's! Like a mischievous Christmas elf, he walked in with his trademark smile, carrying not wrapped gifts, but stories of connections.

The conference room felt more like Santa's workshop, filled with the warmth of his birthday wishes. "Ho Ho Ho," I thought, "This isn't just an interview. This is a masterclass in spreading love!"

Little did I know, I was about to meet the Santa Claus of relationships.

-Rtn. Sashi



### Santa Claus of RID 3233:

**How did a man without a known birthday become the ultimate birthday maestro?**

Growing up, I didn't even know my own birthday! During my marriage preparations, my wife's family was shocked. But that moment became my turning point. I realized birthdays aren't just dates - they're opportunities to make someone feel special. My daughter's first birthday sparked a mission: to celebrate others and spread happiness. Sometimes, our biggest limitations become our greatest strengths!

### From Diaries to Digital:

**What magical transformation turned your birthday tracking from a hobby to a love revolution?**

In 1990, I bought a simple diary and started tracking birthdays. Back then, not everyone had phones, so I'd carefully note down dates. I began with greeting cards, then moved to telegrams, SMS, and now WhatsApp and Instagram. Technology changed, but my goal remained the same - connecting with people and making them feel valued. What started as a personal hobby became a daily mission of spreading joy.

### Gifting Guru:

**If birthdays were a language, what dialects of happiness have you mastered over 25 years?**

I learned that gifts aren't about money - they're about understanding people, remembering their preferences and deciding what will excite them. It's the way of showing you care. My team and I send 200 personalized messages daily. We've discovered that a thoughtful wish can bridge distances and create lasting friendships. The secret? Genuine love and attention to detail.



### Love in a Package:

*What's the most bizarre, heartwarming gift you've ever customized for someone?*

Customization is my superpower! Once, I discovered a friend loved panipuri. So, on his birthday, I arranged a special panipuri party. Another time, for an ice cream lover, I organized a surprise ice cream feast. It's not about the gift's price, but the thought behind it. The most bizarre gift? Love itself - packaged with genuine care and a big smile!



### Telegram to WhatsApp:

*How did your birthday wishes travel through the evolution of communication technology?*

I'm like a birthday wish time traveller! Started with greeting cards costing a small fortune, then moved to telegrams at Rs. 3.50 each. As technology evolved, so did my love messages. SMS, mobile recordings, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram - each platform became my happiness highway. Now, I create birthday videos that can make people smile from miles away. Technology changed, but the heart of my message remained the same: you are special!

### Relationship Alchemist:

*How do you transform a simple wish into a lifelong connection?*

Magic happens when you're sincere! I wake up at 4:30 AM, check my birthday calendar, and send personalized messages. It's not just a wish - it's a bridge of connection. I remember preferences, send thoughtful gifts, and always stay genuine. People don't just receive a message; they feel valued. My philosophy? Give without expecting anything in return.



### Critics' Corner:

*When people say you're networking for business, what's your witty comeback?*

I always say, "My business is happiness, and love is my currency!" Some think I'm just networking, but for me, it's about spreading joy. I've seen how a simple birthday wish can transform relationships. Businesses might use similar strategies, but my motivation is pure - to make people feel special and connected.

### Birthday Blueprint:

*Walk us through your 4:30 AM ritual of spreading joy - is this madness or magic?*

Call it madness, call it magic - I call it love! Every morning, I wake up early, check my birthday calendar, and start my mission. Personalized messages, video calls, tailored gifts - it's like being a happiness ninja. My team helps me reach 200 people daily. Some might think it's crazy, but I believe in the power of consistent kindness.

### Global Love Network:

*How many hearts have you touched with your 200 daily birthday wishes?*

Thousands! People now call me from around the world just to say thank you. My birthday wish network spans continents. It's not about the number, but the connections created. I've transformed strangers into friends, business contacts into family. Each wish is a small seed of love that grows into something beautiful.

### Emotional Investment:

*If happiness had a return policy, what would your dividend look like?*

My happiness dividend? Priceless connections, lifelong friendships, and countless smiles. When you give love without expecting returns, you receive something much more valuable than money - genuine human connections. My investment strategy is simple: spread joy, be consistent, and watch relationships bloom. The returns? Immeasurable happiness and a heart full of love!





## Share Your Flair, Show You Care!

Welcome to "Voice of RID 3233" - your platform to shine! We invite you to contribute your articles, photos, poems, drawings, or any creative work. Share your passion and expertise with fellow Rotarians. Please include your picture and contact details and send your contributions to [rid3233team@gmail.com](mailto:rid3233team@gmail.com)



**Help us grow our Rotary family  
by sharing this magazine with your non-Rotarian friends**

Let's inspire them to join us and make a difference together.

**Send your contributions today and be a part of our vibrant community**  
[rid3233team@gmail.com](mailto:rid3233team@gmail.com)



## From the Editor's Desk: Half-Yearly Special Issue

*Fellow partners in Service,*

Ho, ho, ho! Guess who's been Santa this year? Our very own DG Bothraji! In this special half-yearly edition of Voice of RID 3233, he shares why being Santa for his big Rotary and friends' family fills him with joy and reminds us all of the magic of giving. Trust me, his words will make you want to spread cheer far and wide!

And what's a special issue without some star features? This exclusive Imagine year edition shines a spotlight on PDG Dr. N Nandakumar and his Presidents (yours truly included!) and Anns. Adding more sparkle, the then District First Lady, Dr. Sumedha, pens an inspiring article on women in leadership, while my First Lady, Rohini, shares her take on life as an Ann in Rotary—honest, heartfelt, and relatable!

Of course, we've doubled up on everything this time! From Kovil Idly recipes to fashion tips, eye care hacks, and even an insightful article on Vastu to bring harmony into your home—the list goes on and on. Consider this edition your perfect companion for the holidays.

A big shoutout to Team Praanha for their dazzling designs that bring this magazine to life and to our wordsmith extraordinaire, Raji, whose sharp eye kept us error-free despite a mountain of articles. Your hard work makes this magazine shine brighter than Christmas lights!

To my team—thank you for crossing the halfway mark in style. We've done it with flair, and I know the rest of this journey will be just as extraordinary. Here's to making every issue better than the last!

Dive into this treasure trove, enjoy the read, and don't forget to share it with your friends and family.

**Rtn. Sashikumar VS**  
*District Chairman - Communications*  
*Editor, Voice of RID 3233*

# The Rotary Surgeon

## Healing Communities, One Project at a Time

– PDG Dr. N. Nandakumar

**G**ear up, fellow Rotarians! What happens when a protégé meets his mentor over a cup of tea? Pure magic—and an interview that's about to become your ultimate leadership manifesto! Dr. N. Nandakumar isn't just another District Governor; he's the kind of Rotarian who could probably solve world hunger while performing surgery and planning a district project—all before his morning coffee.

As a club president during his gubernatorial year, I've witnessed first hand the magic of his leadership. Sitting with him and Dr. Sumedha, whose knowing smile speaks volumes about behind-the-scenes leadership, I knew this wasn't going to be your typical snooze-fest interview. This was going to be an interesting mix of service, inspiration, and enough leadership wisdom to make even the most seasoned Rotarian take notes.

Aspiring leaders, grab your chai, hold onto your classification pins, and get ready for a masterclass in Rotary that will make you laugh, engage, and want to change the world—all at the same time! ””  
– Rtn. Sashi



**Could you tell us about your journey into Rotary and what made you stay committed to the organization?**

I joined Rotary in 2000, thanks to my father and two close acquaintances who believed I'd thrive in the organization. My father, ever supportive, was intrigued by Rotary's values and the opportunities it provided for service. I remember him asking if the club culture was conducive, and the assurance that it was family-oriented and met on Sunday mornings made all the difference.

From the beginning, I found immense joy in the camaraderie, projects, and service opportunities. Even when I took a brief break for training abroad, I felt a pull back to Rotary. It's the fellowship, the values, and the impactful work that kept me committed. Over the years, I've participated in everything from polio campaigns to large-scale service projects.

For me, Rotary has always been about people – members who care deeply, support each other, and strive to make a difference. That sense of community, combined with the tangible impact we create, has been my anchor in this remarkable journey.

**As someone who has held various leadership positions in Rotary, which role or project has been the most memorable for you and why?**

Each leadership role I've held in Rotary has taught me something unique, but my tenure as District Governor stands out as the most memorable. It was a time when I could lead with a vision and mobilize an entire district to achieve extraordinary goals. One of the defining moments was spearheading the district bifurcation process. Rotary International had recommended it, and as challenging as it was, we worked together to create two strong and balanced districts instead of one unwieldy entity. It required collaboration, negotiation, and a focus on ensuring equitable opportunities for future leaders in both districts. Today, I look back on that achievement with pride, knowing it strengthened Rotary's presence in our region.

During my governorship, I also focused on sustainability through rainwater harvesting initiatives. These projects addressed critical environmental concerns and demonstrated how



Rotary can make a tangible difference at the grassroots level.

Another highlight was our Smile Chennai project that we did when I was a District Avenue Chair, which brought together 23,000 children in a health and hygiene campaign. Although heavy rains disrupted our attempt to break a Guinness World Record, the event's impact on the children and their communities was immeasurable. It was more than about numbers; it was about teaching life-changing habits to a generation.

What made these moments truly unforgettable was the camaraderie and teamwork I shared with my presidents, Rotarians, and my family. Leading the district wasn't just about managing projects; it was about building relationships, inspiring leaders, and creating a legacy of service. These experiences not only shaped my journey in Rotary but also reaffirmed my belief in the organization's transformative power to unite people and create lasting change.

**Project Dhanvantri in Sri Lanka seems to have been a significant initiative. Could you share more about this project and its impact?**

Project Dhanvantri was one of the most impactful initiatives I have been a part of, addressing a deep humanitarian need in northern Sri Lanka. This project was born in the aftermath of the civil war and genocide, which left countless people physically and emotionally scarred. Our team conducted medical camps in these war-affected areas, providing essential care to individuals who had little-to-no access to healthcare.

One of the most moving aspects was the prosthetics programme, where we provided artificial limbs to victims of the conflict. Witnessing their joy and hope as they regained mobility was unforgettable. These efforts weren't just about medical care – they were about restoring dignity and rebuilding lives.

The project's significance grew over time. What began as a Rotary district initiative expanded into a collaborative effort involving multiple districts. It became a cornerstone for ongoing rehabilitation and support programmes in the region, ensuring continuity and sustainability.

Personally, Project Dhanvantri taught me the value of service that transcends borders and circumstances. It demonstrated how Rotary's collective will can address profound challenges and create meaningful change. To this day, the project serves as a model for how we, as Rotarians, can rise to meet extraordinary humanitarian needs while embodying our core values of service above self.



“Leadership in Rotary is about guiding people with different perspectives towards a common vision”

**During your governorship, you managed to prevent internal conflicts from escalating to RI level. What's your philosophy on handling leadership challenges in Rotary?**

During my governorship, one of my priorities was fostering unity and resolving conflicts within the district. Leadership challenges are inevitable in an organization as diverse as Rotary, but I firmly believe they must be approached with a mindset of collaboration, empathy, and discretion.

My philosophy centres on open communication. When conflicts arise, I encourage leaders to bring their concerns directly to the table rather than letting them escalate. By creating an atmosphere where everyone feels heard and valued, we can address issues constructively. Rotary is not about individuals; it's about the collective mission of service, and this perspective helps shift the focus from personal differences to shared goals.

Transparency is equally important. During my year, I made it a point to address concerns promptly, avoiding the secrecy that often fuels misunderstandings. At the same time, I believed in resolving disputes internally, without unnecessary escalation to Rotary International. This approach not only protected the district's reputation but also strengthened our ability to handle future challenges independently.

Mutual respect and the Rotary ethos of fellowship played a critical role. By emphasizing that we're all working towards the same purpose, we were able to transform potential conflicts into opportunities for deeper collaboration.

Ultimately, leadership in Rotary is about guiding people with different perspectives towards a common vision. It's not about avoiding challenges but navigating them with integrity, patience, and a commitment to strengthening the organization. This philosophy has been my compass throughout my Rotary journey.





“  
Whether in the operating room  
or a Rotary training session,  
my goal is to equip people  
”



**You've been passionate about training in both your professional and Rotary life. How has this dual experience shaped your approach to leadership development?**

Training has been a cornerstone of both my professional career as a maxillofacial surgeon and my Rotary journey. In my profession, I've been involved in training young surgeons through programmes like the AOCMF, where we emphasize skill development, precision, and the importance of continuous learning. This has given me a deep appreciation for structured, hands-on approaches to leadership development – something I've carried into Rotary.

In Rotary, training isn't just about imparting knowledge; it's about inspiring confidence and fostering collaboration. Drawing from my professional experience, I focus on interactive and practical learning. Leadership isn't theoretical – it requires real-world application, empathy, and adaptability. I ensure that training sessions in Rotary are engaging and tailored to individual needs, moving away from lecture-based formats towards more participatory and discussion-driven methods.

My father, a corporate leader, also influenced my approach to training. Watching him rise through the ranks and lead with discipline and inclusivity shaped my understanding of leadership as a service to others. His emphasis on preparation and clarity of thought taught me the importance of mentoring and empowering others, which I practice in both Rotary and my profession.

The dual experience has made me recognize that great leaders aren't born – they're developed through consistent effort and the willingness to learn. Whether in the operating room or a Rotary training session, my goal is to equip people not only with the skills they need but also with the confidence and vision to lead with purpose.



**Project Shakti and women's health initiatives were significant during your year. What inspired this focus, and what impact did it create?**

Project Shakti was deeply personal and purpose-driven. During my year as District Governor, I wanted to address a pressing health issue that had widespread implications but often remained unspoken – women's health, particularly breast cancer. The inspiration came from a mix of personal encounters and Rotary's commitment to creating impactful change in communities. Seeing the increasing prevalence of breast cancer and the barriers women face in accessing early detection inspired me to take action.

Through Project Shakti, we introduced mammography machines in hospitals and two mobile units to ensure even remote areas had access to screening. By the end of the year, we had reached over 25 lakh women across Chennai and surrounding areas. This initiative wasn't just about equipment; it was about education and empowerment. We worked to raise awareness about the importance of regular screenings and early diagnosis, which can save countless lives.

The impact was transformative. Women who previously had no access to screening could now undergo mammography in their neighbourhoods. Beyond detection, the initiative sparked conversations about women's health and encouraged families to prioritize it – a shift that will have long-term benefits.

Rotary's strength lies in addressing unmet needs, and Project Shakti epitomized this ethos. It reinforced the belief that when we focus on targeted, sustainable solutions, we can transform lives. To me, this project exemplified Rotary's power to blend compassion with action, leaving a legacy of hope and health.



**You've emphasized the importance of club-level engagement over district-level activities. What's your vision for balanced growth in Rotary?**

For Rotary to thrive, we must strike a balance between strong club-level engagement and impactful district-level initiatives. Clubs are the foundation of Rotary – they're where members connect, serve, and grow. My vision for balanced growth emphasizes empowering clubs to take ownership of their activities while aligning with district goals for broader impact.

At the club level, I believe in fostering a sense of community and relevance. Clubs must focus on initiatives that resonate with their members and local communities. Smaller clubs, especially, need support to sustain their operations without being overshadowed by district activities. This involves providing them with tools, training, and mentorship to build leadership capacity and execute meaningful projects.

Districts, on the other hand, play a vital role in offering resources, networking opportunities, and a platform for large-scale initiatives. However, district activities should complement club efforts, not compete with them. I advocate for district leaders to spend more time engaging directly with clubs, understanding their unique challenges, and tailoring support accordingly.

Ultimately, balanced growth means enabling clubs to operate independently and innovatively while connecting them to the larger Rotary ecosystem. This dual approach strengthens Rotary at every level, ensuring that both grassroots service and strategic initiatives thrive. A Rotary where clubs and districts work in harmony is one that can adapt to changing times, attract diverse members, and continue to make a profound impact on communities worldwide.

**How do you see technology and changing times affecting Rotary's future, and what adaptations do you suggest?**

Technology is reshaping every aspect of our lives, and Rotary is no exception. To stay relevant in changing times, Rotary must embrace innovation while staying true to its core values. Technology not only offers immense opportunities for Rotary to grow, engage

members, and amplify its impact, but also requires us to adapt quickly to new expectations.

Rotary International's online presence also requires enhancement. A more intuitive and personalized experience on platforms like rotary.org can make Rotary accessible to younger members and tech-savvy professionals. A structured, interactive digital orientation for new members would ensure they feel welcomed and informed from day one.

Lastly, as attention spans shrink, Rotary must rethink its events and communication strategies. Interactive formats, concise presentations, and engaging social media campaigns are critical to keeping current members involved and attracting younger generations.

Technology is not a challenge but a tool to elevate Rotary's mission. By embracing it thoughtfully, we can ensure Rotary remains dynamic, inclusive, and impactful in the years to come.

**You've been instrumental in creating endowments and promoting The Rotary Foundation. What motivates your passion for giving?**

My passion for giving stems from a deep belief in the transformative power of structured philanthropy. The Rotary Foundation exemplifies this by channelling resources into impactful, transparent, and sustainable initiatives. Knowing that my contributions directly support causes like health, education, and peace – reaching people I may never meet – gives me immense fulfilment.

One of the unique strengths of The Rotary Foundation is its efficiency. It ensures that resources are utilized effectively, with minimal wastage, to create meaningful change. For example, the success of PolioPlus demonstrates how targeted giving can achieve global milestones. Being part of such efforts inspires me to do more.

Personally, I see giving as a way to leave a legacy. Creating endowments in my name and my wife Dr. Sumedha's name was a conscious decision to ensure that our commitment to service continues beyond our lifetimes. Whether it's funding mammography

machines, smart classrooms, or dialysis units, these endowments represent an enduring connection to Rotary's mission.

The structured approach of the Foundation also appeals to me as a professional. Much like in my field, where precision and planning matter, the Foundation's accountability and focus make giving impactful. It's not just about financial contributions; it's about creating opportunities for service and inspiring others to contribute.

Ultimately, giving to the Foundation is my way of living Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self." It's about extending gratitude for what I have received in life and ensuring that others benefit in meaningful and lasting ways.

**How did your professional background as a maxillofacial surgeon and your father's influence shape your leadership style in Rotary?**

My professional background as a maxillofacial surgeon has had a profound impact on my leadership style in Rotary. In my field, precision, patience, and decision-making are critical, and these traits naturally translated into my Rotary journey. Surgery taught me to analyse situations carefully, act decisively, and adapt to challenges – all essential skills for leading in Rotary. Moreover, my dedication to improving lives through my profession aligns seamlessly with Rotary's ethos of service, reinforcing my commitment to making a difference.

Equally influential was my father, who was not only a corporate leader but also a mentor. Watching him rise through the ranks of a large organization instilled in me a deep respect for discipline, hard work, and humility. His emphasis on the Japanese approach to leadership – focusing on

meticulous planning, teamwork, and continuous improvement – shaped how I approach my roles in Rotary. He believed in leading by example and empowering others, lessons I carry with me in every project and leadership position.

The blend of these influences has made me a leader who values structure, empathy, and collaboration. Whether it's spearheading initiatives like Project Shakti or working through complex district-level challenges, I strive to lead with clarity, purpose, and an unwavering commitment to service. Both my profession and my father's example have taught me that leadership is not about authority but about inspiring others to reach their fullest potential. This philosophy has guided me throughout my Rotary journey.





**How did Dr. Sumedha's leadership in the Partners Committee and her work with Purple Reign influence the success of initiatives like Metro Hunt, Project Shakti and Sheroes, particularly in promoting DEI and raising awareness for causes like breast cancer?**

My year as Governor was made even more impactful thanks to the unwavering support and leadership of my beloved wife, Dr. Sumedha, who went above and beyond to ensure that we gave Rotary all our time and effort. Through her involvement in the Partners Committee, we were able to bring many new programmes to life, especially focusing on DEI, where I felt India still had some cultural gaps. By including diverse voices and giving partners a shared sense of responsibility, we were able to bring them closer to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion that are so essential to Rotary's growth.

The Metro Hunt programme, for instance, was a collaborative effort with the Chennai Metro Rail to promote public transport, and it would not have been possible without Dr. Sumedha's leadership and the dedication of Chairman Anand. The event, with over 900 attendees, continues to be talked about and

stands as a testament to what we can achieve when we work together with partners in leadership.

The Sheroes event, aligned with the RI President's visit, was particularly close to our hearts. Project Shakti focused on breast cancer awareness, self-examination, and the importance of early screening, inspired by RI President Jennifer Jones' own breast cancer journey. Dr. Sumedha, through her leadership and the Purple Reign magazine, played a key role in amplifying women's voices, raising awareness, and driving initiatives like Project Shakti, which continues to focus on providing mammograms to women in need.

It is through these initiatives that I believe we were able to make a lasting impact, bringing DEI to the forefront, empowering women, and breaking down barriers, while also honouring the resilience of individuals like President Jennifer Jones. Dr. Sumedha's contributions were not just influential during my tenure, but they laid the groundwork for a future where every woman in Rotary is given the opportunity and platform to lead.

**What's your perspective on making Rotary more attractive to younger members while maintaining its core values?**

Attracting younger members to Rotary while preserving its core values requires a thoughtful balance of tradition and innovation. Younger generations are driven by purpose, flexibility, and the opportunity to create tangible impact. Rotary must adapt to these expectations while showcasing its legacy of service, integrity, and fellowship.

One key approach is to leverage technology and digital platforms to engage younger members effectively. Short, interactive meetings, dynamic social media campaigns, and hybrid events can appeal to their fast-paced lifestyles. Additionally, emphasizing causes that resonate with them – such as environmental sustainability and social justice – can draw their interest.

I also believe that family involvement is vital to retaining younger members. Dr. Sumedha, my wife, has always been a pillar of support in my Rotary journey. Her involvement not only enriched our projects but also showcased Rotary as an inclusive and family-friendly organization. Younger professionals value such inclusivity, and Rotary must highlight how it fosters connections beyond professional networks, creating a space for families to engage together.

Mentorship is another important factor. Senior Rotarians have a wealth of experience to share, while younger members bring fresh perspectives. Encouraging cross-generational learning within clubs can create a dynamic and mutually beneficial environment.

By demonstrating that Rotary is both forward-thinking and deeply rooted in meaningful values, we can inspire younger generations to see it as a platform where they can lead, serve, and grow. This vision will ensure Rotary's legacy thrives in the years to come.

**Based on your rich experience in Rotary, what advice would you give to new Rotarians and emerging leaders in the organization?**

My advice to new Rotarians and emerging leaders is simple: embrace Rotary with an open heart and a willingness to learn. Rotary offers a platform like no other – an opportunity to serve, connect, and grow both personally and professionally. To make the most of it, focus on building relationships and contributing meaningfully to your club's projects and initiatives.

Leadership in Rotary is not about titles; it's about the impact you create. Start small, get involved in service activities, and always strive to inspire others by your actions. Remember, leadership is not a sprint; it's a marathon that requires consistency, humility, and a commitment to teamwork.

One of my greatest strengths throughout my Rotary journey has been the unwavering support of my wife, Dr. Sumedha. She has been an integral part of every milestone, from local projects to district-level initiatives. Her contributions and encouragement remind me that Rotary is not just an individual journey – it's a family and community endeavour. Surround yourself with people who share your vision and values; their support will propel you forward.

Finally, never lose sight of Rotary's core values – fellowship, integrity, diversity, and service above self. These are the guiding principles that will help you navigate challenges and achieve meaningful impact. By staying true to these values and remaining open to new opportunities, you can leave a lasting legacy and inspire others to follow in your footsteps.



# Women in Leadership:

## Breaking Barriers & Shaping the Future

**Rtn. Dr. Sumedha Nandakumar**

*Imagine Year First Lady, RID 3232  
Past Secretary, President Nominee  
Rotary Club of Chennai Towers*



In a world often considered to be male-dominated, I've observed that leadership positions across politics, society, and personal spaces have traditionally been occupied by men. However, as a woman leader myself, I'm heartened to see the gradual yet steady increase in women's representation globally. Through my journey as a dentist, Rotarian, and First Lady of our Rotary District, I've witnessed firsthand how women in leadership positions not only work towards creating an equitable world but also bring unique perspectives that enrich our systems and organizations.

My leadership journey has been profoundly shaped by remarkable women who have inspired me throughout different phases of my life. At home, my grandmother and mother were my first leadership role models, demonstrating the power of resilience and compassion in managing family affairs. Their unwavering strength laid the foundation for my understanding of effective leadership.



During my school years, Marie Curie's dedication to scientific discovery despite numerous obstacles showed me the importance of perseverance and intellectual curiosity. As I grew older, India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi exemplified how women could lead nations with strength and determination. In the corporate world, Indira Nooyi's remarkable tenure as PepsiCo's chairman proved that women could excel in global business leadership. Michelle Obama's memoir "Becoming" further reinforced the significance of authenticity and using one's platform to create meaningful change.

Through my role as First Lady of our Rotary District, supporting my husband Dr. Nandakumar, I've had the privilege of implementing various initiatives that reflect the leadership traits I learned from these inspiring women. I've discovered that successful women leaders consistently embody certain fundamental qualities: self-awareness, respect, compassion, vision, effective communication, learning agility, integrity, courage, gratitude, and resilience.

As a practising dentist and active Rotarian, I've strived to incorporate these traits into my professional and service life. Studies consistently show that women leaders help increase productivity, enhance collaboration, inspire others, and improve fairness in organizations. Our natural inclination toward empathy and emotional intelligence proves invaluable in leadership roles.

I firmly believe that good leaders are made, not born. Through my various roles – as a healthcare professional, Rotarian, and First Lady – I've seen how leadership skills can be developed and refined through experience, mentorship, and determination. I continue to advocate for increased participation of women in positions of power and decision-making, knowing that this diversity strengthens our society and paves the way for future generations of women leaders.

My journey has taught me that when women lead, they don't just break barriers – they create new possibilities for everyone. As we continue to shape the future, I remain committed to supporting and inspiring more women to step into leadership roles, knowing that their unique perspectives and abilities are essential for building a better world.

To my fellow women Rotarians: The time is now to step forward, embrace your leadership potential, and be the catalysts of change. Together, let us transform our clubs, inspire our communities, and create a future where service above self knows no gender. The world is ready for your leadership – are you ready to answer the call?

## Down the memory lane

Imagine the Impossible,

# Achieve the Extraordinary!

**Rtn. Krishnachander**

*District Secretary – Imagine Year – 2022-23*

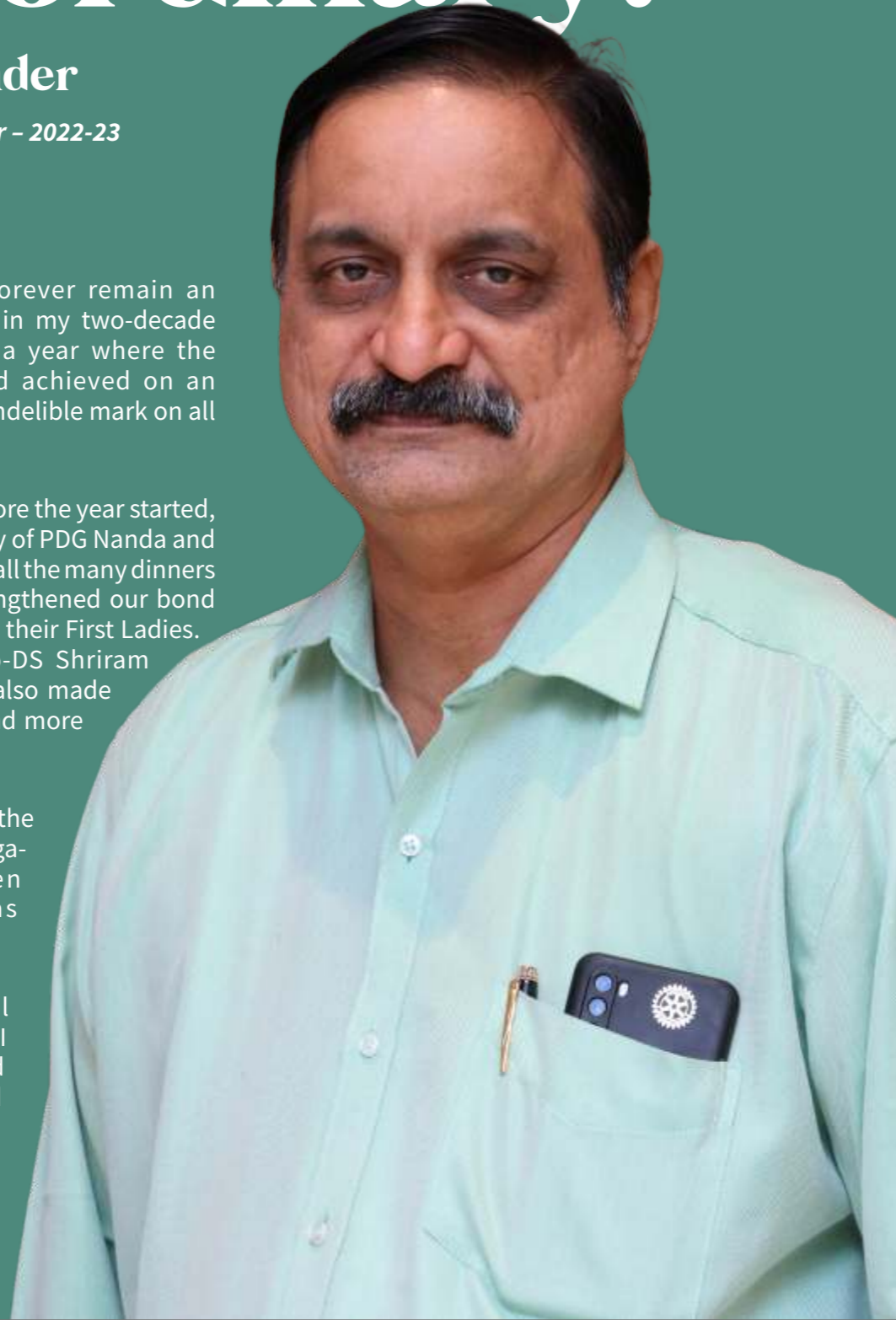
*Rotary Club of Chennai Towers*

The Imagine year will forever remain an unforgettable milestone in my two-decade Rotary journey. It was a year where the impossible was imagined and achieved on an unimaginable scale, leaving an indelible mark on all of us.

The camaraderie began long before the year started, thanks to the gracious hospitality of PDG Nanda and Sumedha. Deepa and I fondly recall the many dinners at the DG residence, which strengthened our bond with the Imagine Presidents and their First Ladies. My close relationship with Co-DS Shriram Duvvuri, nurtured a year prior, also made our shared journey smoother and more enjoyable.

Every event and project during the year was nothing short of mega-scale. With no rest between milestones, the energy was electrifying.

The visits of international dignitaries, particularly RI President Jennifer Jones, added immense colour and significance. Goa PETS, Mysore SETS, and the grand Sarvam conference stood out as monumental events.



Serving as a District Secretary was both a privilege and a deeply gratifying experience. Building relationships with the Presidents and Secretaries of 175 clubs in District 3232 was truly special. Memorable moments like club installations and GOVs made the journey even more fulfilling.

Though the massive administrative workload encroached on personal and business time, it was a small price to pay for the joy and learning it brought. I'm grateful to DG Nanda for giving me a free hand, enabling swift decision-making and communication without compromising protocols. The Imagine year will forever remain an unforgettable milestone in my two-decade Rotary journey. It was a year where the impossible was imagined and achieved on an unimaginable scale, leaving an indelible mark on all of us.

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This year has been a rich, educational, and transformative experience – one that has taught me invaluable lessons both personally and professionally. My heartfelt thanks go out to DG Nanda and all my Rotary colleagues for their extraordinary support and encouragement.

Here's to imagining and achieving even greater heights!



# Behind Every Rotarian is an Ann

**Holding It All Together**  
**Ann Rohini Sashikumar**  
*Imagine Year First Lady*  
*Rotary Club of Chennai Crown*

**W**hen I married Sashi, he wasn't a Rotarian. Back then, I thought life would be all about movies, dinners, and occasional Sunday brunches. Little did I know that a few years later he'd join Rotary and I'd be on a nonstop adventure as an Ann to a Past President of the Rotary Club of Chennai Crown and now a District Officer in Rotary International District 3233.

Being an Ann in Chennai Rotary with Sashi is like riding a rollercoaster on a theme park – unexpected, exhilarating, and full of surprises. One day we're at a colourful Dandiya night, and the next, we're at a Pongal Vizha where I'm trying to balance plates of sakkarai pongal and sugarcane while still looking graceful. Let me tell you, salwar kameez or jeans are much better for these events than sarees – I'll leave that art form to the other Anns!

Through it all, Sashi's passion for Rotary is something I admire. Whether it's hosting events or editing a district magazine, he's always on the move. And where there's Sashi, there's me in the background, cheering him on, making sure he doesn't leave the house with mismatched socks, and occasionally helping him remember to wear Rotary pins to the meeting.



“Behind every great Rotarian is an Ann who deserves a Service above Self award for patience!”



His favourite line to say at club meetings is, “I couldn't do this without my wife, Rohini.” (Though I wonder if he remembers it's my turn to cook after all these events!)

The best part of being an Ann? My squad: First ladies from Imagine year. These first ladies are my partners in crime at Rotary gatherings. While Sashi and his friends discuss several things about the fellowship(!), we're busy cracking jokes, taking selfies, and sneaking seconds of dessert from the buffet.

Rotary life has been a wild ride, but watching Sashi's dedication and the impact it creates makes every late night, every rally, and every dandiya step worth it. As I often tell my friends, “Behind every great Rotarian is an Ann who deserves a Service above Self award for patience!” To all the Anns out there, hang in there! This rollercoaster may have its ups and downs, but the view from the top is always worth it.

“As I wrap up this article, I can't help but wonder if Sashi's unusually sweet behaviour all week was entirely selfless or just his way of getting me to write this for Voice of RID 3233. If push comes to shove, and he has to choose between the District's Voice or my Voice, I'm curious which one will win. Oh well, I'm sure he'll sweet-talk his way out of it, citing Service Above Self – because in Rotary, that conveniently covers everything!”

# Seeing Clearly: Your Eyes, Your Future

**Rtn. Dr. C. Senthil Nathan**

*Imagine Year President  
Rotary Club of Chennai IT City*

**R**otary friends, imagine losing the ability to see the smiling faces of children we serve, or missing the intricate details of a project that could change lives.

As an eye care specialist dedicated to preserving vision, I'm here to be your eye health champion.

**Your Vision: More Than Meets the Eye**  
Let's talk about the four horsemen of eye health that can sneak up on you faster than you can introduce yourself in a Rotary meeting.



### 1. Cataract: The Inevitable Age Companion

Think of cataracts as your lens getting a natural "fog filter" as you age. If you're over 50 and notice:

- Blurry vision
- Faded colours
- Reduced contrast

*Don't panic! This isn't a life sentence. Modern surgery is a game-changer:*

- Procedure time: Under 20 minutes
- Technique: Swap cloudy lens for a crystal-clear artificial one
- Success rate: Practically guaranteed

### 2. Glaucoma: The Pressure Cooker

Your eyes have their own internal pressure system. When it goes haywire, we call it glaucoma. Warning signs:

- Over 40? Get yearly checks
- Family history of glaucoma
- Diabetes or high blood pressure
- Steroid medication users

Early detection is your superhero move. A simple test can prevent potential blindness.

### 3. Diabetic Retinopathy: Sugar's Dark Secret

Diabetes doesn't just mess with your sugar levels – it can wage war on your eyes. High sugar can cause internal eye bleeding. Your defence?

- Annual eye exams
- Laser treatments for early stages
- Strict sugar control
- Proactive medical management

### 4. The Tear Duct Dilemma

Watery eyes aren't just an inconvenience. Blocked tear ducts or age-related tissue changes can be more than a minor nuisance. Modern surgical techniques offer permanent solutions.

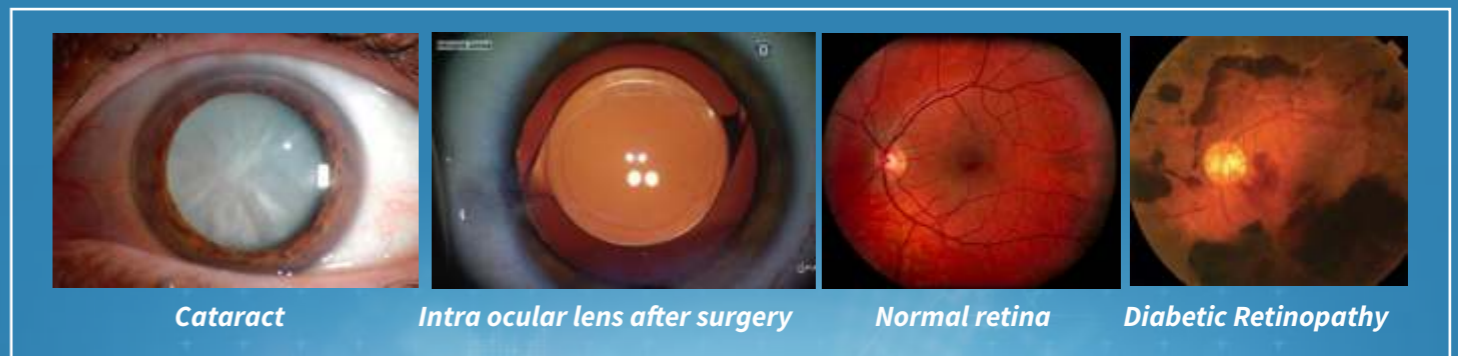
### Rotarian's Eye Health Pledge

We're problem solvers. We build communities. We change lives. But first, we must protect our most crucial tool – our vision.

Proactive steps:

- Regular eye check-ups
- Understand your personal risk factors
- Maintain overall health
- Spread awareness

Your eyes are not just windows to the world – they're your gateway to continued service.



“ *Dr. C. Senthil Nathan, Chairman of Ramana Eye and ENT Centre in Chennai.  
A globally recognized eye care expert committed to community health.  
Contact him at 9381026953 for personalized consultations and community health initiatives.* ”

**Be-Do-Have:**

# The Secret to Living Not Just Existing

**Rtn. Dr. Deepa Shree**

*Imagine Year President  
Rotary Club of Madras Mount*

Life's irony: we spend 70% of our time doing things we think we should do, only to wake up one day and wonder, **“What about the things I actually love?”** It's like running on a treadmill and realizing you've gone nowhere.

**Here's the problem:**

we live in a Have-Do-Be world. **“When I have more time, I'll do what I love, and then I'll be happy.”** Sounds familiar? But here's the kicker: that day rarely comes. It's time to flip the script.

**Enter BE-DO-HAVE**

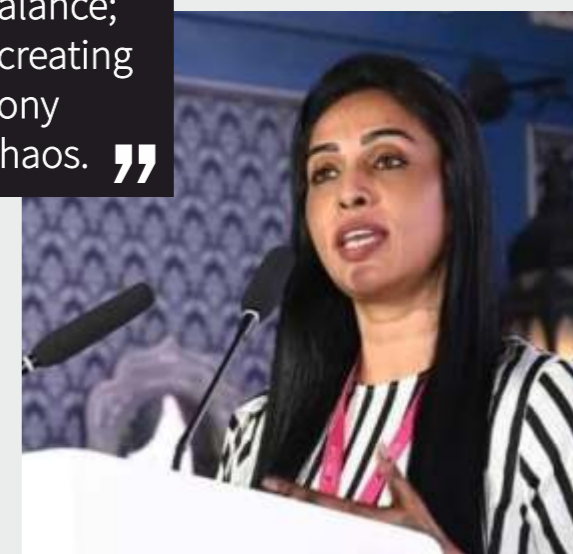
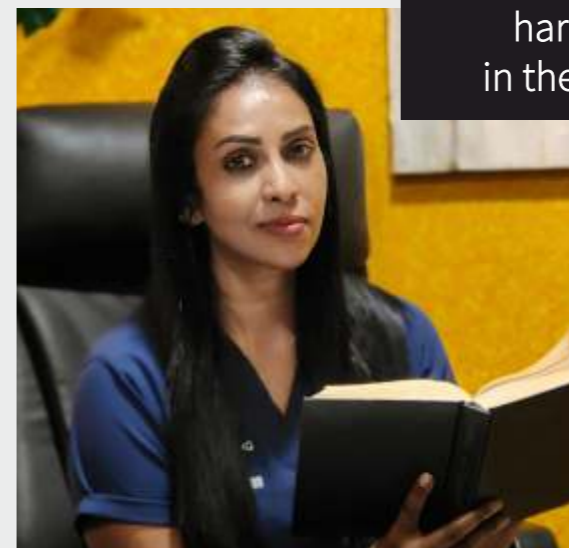
When you start by being, everything else falls into place. For example: When I am happy, I naturally do better, and what I want follows. It's like putting the horse before the cart, instead of dragging the poor thing backwards.

Think about it! happiness isn't something you get after achieving a goal. It's what fuels you to achieve it in the first place.

**“Stop waiting for the stars to align. Be the sun and shine anyway.”**



“Life isn't about finding balance; it's about creating harmony in the chaos.”



**Here's how I look at life:**

**The 4 elements of IKIGAI (Life's purpose)**

Being a doctor is my profession  
– *what I'm good at.*

Dancing is my passion  
– *what sets my soul on fire.*

Being a Rotarian is my mission  
– *my way of giving back to the world*

Writing and motivating others is my vocation  
– *my voice to the world.*

Together, they make my life a buffet of meaning, not just a fixed menu.

**“Life isn't about finding balance; it's about creating harmony in the chaos.”**

The secret? Start with being. Be happy, be curious, be bold. The doing will follow, and the having will come as a natural byproduct. Stop chasing joy like it's a destination and start living it like it's a mindset.

So, the next time someone asks you, **“What do you do?”** flip it on them: **“What am I being? Remember it's not “Doing” that matters; it's the “Being”....** We are human beings and not human doings!

Because life isn't about waiting to live. It's about being alive

# 6

## Compelling Reasons – why Renting IT Hardware Beats Buying

**Rtn. R. Senthil**

*Imagine Year President  
Rotary Club of Madras Golden City*



*“Rtn. R. Senthil leads Sriram Computer Services, Chennai’s premier IT hardware rental company with 20 years of industry expertise. Fellow Rotarians can benefit from special rental packages designed for their business needs. You can reach him at 9444008226/ senthil@srcs.co.in to optimize your IT infrastructure while maintaining cost-effectiveness.”*



As a fellow Rotarian and having spent two decades in IT hardware rentals, I've guided countless businesses through their technology decisions.

Here are six compelling reasons why renting IT equipment makes more business sense than buying – insights I've gathered from serving Chennai's dynamic business community.

**1. Tax-Smart Decision-Making:**

Fellow Rotarians, especially our CA members, will appreciate this: rental costs can be directly written off as business expenses, unlike purchases that need depreciation accounting. This means immediate tax benefits that positively impact your bottom line.

**2. Stay Ahead of Technology Obsolescence:**

In our fast-paced digital world, technology becomes outdated faster than Chennai's weather changes! Why invest heavily in assets that depreciate rapidly? Renting gives you the flexibility to upgrade as technology evolves, ensuring your business always runs on current hardware.

**3. Zero Maintenance Headaches:**

As a business owner, your focus should be on growth, not IT maintenance. When you rent, all maintenance responsibilities rest with us. No more worrying about repair costs or downtime – we handle everything

within four hours of reporting an issue.

**4. Capital Conservation:**

Why lock your precious capital in depreciating assets? Renting frees up your capital for core business activities. In my two decades of experience, I've seen businesses achieve remarkable growth by redirecting their technology purchase budget to business expansion.

**5. Perfect for Project-Based Needs:**

Whether it's a training session, a temporary office setup, or a short-term project, renting provides exactly what you need, when you need it. From basic desktops to high-end servers, you can scale up or down based on your requirements.

**6. Flexibility in Configuration:**

Today's business needs can change tomorrow. Renting allows you to switch between configurations – be it upgrading from an i5 to an i9 processor, or scaling up RAM from 8GB to 64GB – without the commitment of ownership.

As your fellow Rotarian who has witnessed Chennai's business landscape evolve over the years, I can assure you that hardware rental isn't just about cost savings – it's about making a smart business decision that keeps you agile and competitive.



# Kovil Idly



## A Taste of Kanchipuram's

**Ann Chitra Kesavan**

*Imagine Year First Lady*

*Rotary Club of Madras Downtown*

## Temple Heritage

**H**ello friends, prepare to transport your taste buds to the sacred temple town of Kanchipuram. No passport required; just a willingness to embrace a culinary tradition that's more intricate than our club's most complex fellowship project!

Kovil Idly isn't just a breakfast dish; it's a cultural narrative steamed to perfection. Born in the kitchens of ancient temples, this isn't your everyday idly – it's the VIP version that has been gracing temple prasadam plates for generations.

### The Secret Symphony of Ingredients

#### What You'll Need:

- 1 kg Raw Rice (the foundation of our culinary masterpiece)
- ¾ kg Urad Dal (protein-packed partner)
- ½ tsp Fenugreek Seeds (the subtle flavour enhancer)
- 50g Gingelly Oil (liquid gold of South Indian cooking)
- 50g Ghee (because, why be ordinary?)
- 25g Coarsely Crushed Pepper
- 25g Coarsely Crushed Cumin Seeds
- Curry Leaves (nature's aromatherapy)
- A pinch of Asafoetida
- Dry Ginger (the secret weapon)
- Salt (to taste)



*Ann Chitra Kesavan, culinary enthusiast and wife of Past President Kesavan, bridges traditional cooking with modern passion. Connect with her for authentic South Indian cooking tips and Kovil Idly masterclasses ;- ).*



### Detailed Preparation Steps:

1. Soaking Process: This isn't just about throwing ingredients in water. Carefully wash the raw rice, urad dal, and fenugreek seeds multiple times. Then soak them for exactly 3 hours. Think of it like preparing for a Rotary project – precision is key!
2. Grinding Technique: Drain the soaked ingredients. Use a stone grinder or wet grinder to create a coarse batter. Here's the secret: add crushed dry ginger and asafoetida while grinding. The consistency should be thick, reminiscent of rice upma – not too smooth, not too rough.
3. Fermentation Magic: Transfer the ground batter to a large vessel. Add salt and let it ferment for a minimum of 8 hours or overnight. This is where patience truly becomes a virtue. The fermentation is crucial – it's the difference between an ordinary idly and a temple-worthy delicacy.
4. Spice Roasting: Dry roast the crushed pepper and cumin seeds in a small pan. Low heat is essential – just 2-3 minutes to release those magnificent flavours. It's like roasting ideas in a Rotary brainstorming session!
5. Tempering Process: Heat gingelly oil and ghee in the same pan. Add the roasted pepper, cumin, and curry leaves. Let them dance and become fragrant. Pour this aromatic tempering into the fermented batter and mix thoroughly.
6. Preparation for Steaming: Generously grease your idly plates or small tumblers with gingelly oil. This prevents sticking and adds an extra layer of flavour. Think of it as preparing the ground for a successful project.

7. Steaming to Perfection: Fill the greased moulds with the batter. Steam for exactly 30 minutes. The result? Soft, fluffy idlies that tell a story of tradition and technique.

8. Serving Suggestions: Serve hot with idly podi, vathakozhambu, or coconut chutney. Each bite is a journey through Kanchipuram's culinary heritage.

Kovil Idly isn't just a dish – it's a cultural experience that brings the essence of temple kitchens directly to your dining table.

# Four-Way Test of Modern Cooling

## Why VRF Wins

**Rtn. Velmurugan**

*Imagine Year President*

*Rotary Club of Anna Nagar Adhitya*

As I reflect on my two decades in the air conditioning industry, one thing stands clear – the way we cool our commercial spaces has evolved dramatically. Dear friends, as business leaders who value efficiency and smart investments, let me share why Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) systems are revolutionizing commercial cooling in our beloved Chennai.

Remember those days when we'd install individual AC units in every room? While that approach served us well, it's like using multiple autorickshaws when you could have one comfortable air-conditioned bus! VRF systems represent that quantum leap in cooling technology, and here's why they make perfect sense for our businesses.

First, let's talk about what matters most to us entrepreneurs – the bottom line. While the initial investment in VRF might seem higher, the operational costs tell a different story. These systems can reduce energy consumption by up to 30-40% compared to conventional split AC units. In Chennai's climate, where air conditioning runs practically year-round, these savings add up significantly.



But it's not just about money. As Rotarians, we understand the value of efficiency and smart resource utilization. VRF systems excel here by allowing different areas to be cooled at different temperatures simultaneously. Imagine your conference room being cooler during meetings while maintaining moderate temperatures in less occupied areas – all from a single system!

Maintenance is another game-changer. Instead of managing multiple service schedules for different units, VRF systems require less frequent maintenance and offer centralized control. This means fewer disruptions to your business operations – something we all appreciate.

What about space utilization? In our bustling Chennai commercial areas, where every square foot counts, VRF systems have a significantly smaller footprint than multiple individual units. Plus, they're considerably quieter – no more struggling to hear each other over the drone of multiple outdoor units!

As someone who has witnessed countless business transformations through proper cooling solutions, I can confidently say that VRF is not just an air conditioning choice – it's a business decision that reflects foresight and strategic thinking. After all, isn't that what we Rotarians are known for?

*Rtn. Velmurugan is the MD of Subhashree Solutions. With over 20 years of experience in air conditioning solutions, he has helped numerous businesses optimize their cooling efficiency.*

*For personalized consultation on how fellow Rotarians can benefit from VRF solutions, contact him at 98412 33766. Subhashree Solutions specializes in design, sales, installation, and maintenance of advanced cooling systems.*



# Unlock Your World: The Power of Learning Multiple Languages

**Ann Sheela Anand**

*Imagine Year First Lady,  
Rotary Club of Chennai Akshaya*



In our vibrant Chennai, where auto-rickshaw drivers seamlessly switch between Tamil, English, and Hindi faster than they weave through traffic, we're already living in a multilingual paradise. Yet, as I often share with fellow Rotarians, learning additional languages, especially foreign ones, can open doors we never knew existed.

Think of each new language as a master key – not just to communication, but to entire new worlds of opportunity. In our Rotary circles, where international connections are the norm rather than the exception, speaking multiple languages isn't just impressive – it's increasingly essential. Imagine connecting with a potential business partner from Japan or Germany not just through translated words, but through shared linguistic understanding. That's when real magic happens!

But here's what fascinates me most: learning a new language is like giving your brain a premium gym membership. Research shows it enhances memory, boosts problem-solving skills, and improves multitasking abilities. Who knew that learning to say "Good Morning" in five different ways could actually make you smarter?

The cultural insights gained are invaluable. When you learn a language, you don't just memorize words – you absorb perspectives. It's like having a secret window into another society's soul. As Rotarians committed to international understanding, isn't this exactly what we strive for?

For professionals in our community, multilingual skills have become a superpower in today's globalized

world. It's not just about communication; it's about creating authentic connections. Whether you're closing an international deal or participating in a Rotary International convention, speaking someone's language shows respect and builds instant rapport.

The best part? Age is no barrier. While our children might pick up languages as easily as they master smartphone apps, we adults can still become proficient learners. Start small – perhaps with common phrases, move on to simple conversations, and before you know it, you'll surprise yourself with your linguistic abilities.

Remember, in a 'increasingly connected world, each language you learn multiplies your opportunities exponentially. As they say in French, "La vie est trop courte pour ne parler qu'une langue" – Life is too short to speak just one language!



*Ann. Sheela, Past First Lady  
of Rotary club of Chennai Akshaya  
is a passionate advocate for multilingual  
education and an active Rotarian too.*

*As a member of the Rotary family,  
she has experienced firsthand how  
language skills enhance both personal  
and professional relationships in our  
international community.*



**Unlocking Harmony:**

# The Ancient Wisdom of Vastu Shastra

**Rtn. S. Shivarāaman**

*Imagine Year President, Rotary club of ERA*

In the intricate dance of life, our living spaces play a pivotal role beyond mere shelter. Imagine a home that doesn't just house you, but nurtures your well-being, prosperity, and inner peace. Welcome to the fascinating world of Vastu Shastra – a 5,000-year-old Indian science of architectural harmony that goes far beyond traditional design principles.

At its core, Vastu Shastra is about creating balance. Think of your home as a living, breathing entity – much like the human body – where energy flows like lifeblood through its spaces. Understanding and respecting cosmic energies can transform our living environments into sanctuaries of positivity and potential.

The science is beautifully complex yet wonderfully simple. It's not about rigid rules, but about understanding how the five fundamental elements – ether, air, fire, water, and earth – interact within our living spaces. Each direction, each corner holds significance. The northeast, for instance, is particularly revered, where morning sunrays first kiss the earth, bringing renewal and hope.

A fascinating aspect of Vastu is the concept of “Vasthupurusha Mandala” – the cosmic man present in every plot of land. This divine presence lies with face and stomach touching



the ground, head pointing northeast and legs extending to the southwest. Understanding this fundamental principle helps in aligning our living spaces with natural energies.

The science emphasizes the importance of proper orientation and placement. Energy flows from the North, moving towards the Southeast and Northwest corners before settling in the Southwest sector. Each quadrant of your property corresponds to different elements: Air in the Northwest, Water in the Northeast, Fire in the Southeast, and Earth in the Southwest, with Sky pervading throughout.

For those considering a property purchase or construction, timing can be crucial. Vastu provides specific guidelines about auspicious dates when the Vasthupurusha awakens, making these times ideal for important decisions. The most favourable months for house-warming ceremonies are Vaikasi, Aavani, Karthigai, and Thai, followed by Chitthirai and Aippasi.

Consider something as simple as the placement of a well. Traditional wisdom suggests that wells in the Northeast or North bring peaceful life and improved wealth, while other locations might have different effects on family dynamics and personal well-being. These nuanced insights reveal the depth of this ancient science.

For Rotarians who value community, continuous improvement, and holistic thinking, Vastu Shastra

offers a fascinating lens through which to view our living and working spaces. It's not about superstition, but about intentional, mindful design that respects natural energies. While Vastu doesn't promise luck or fame, it provides a framework for creating spaces that help us better cope with life's challenges and enhance our potential for success.

**“**  
*Rtn. S. Shivarāaman, author of this article, a past president from Rotary club of ERA is a distinguished Vastu consultant with comprehensive expertise, backed by statutory approvals and years of experience. His unique approach blends traditional wisdom with modern architectural insights, helping individuals and organizations create spaces that support their deepest aspirations. Whether you're planning a new construction, renovation, or seeking to optimize your current space, his expertise ensures that ancient principles serve modern needs effectively.*  
**”**  
*Seeking Personalized Vastu Guidance? Reach out to Rtn. S. Shivarāaman at +91 9380579706 for expert consultations and transformative Vastu solutions. His company undertakes projects on a JV basis, Turnkey contract, and contract basis in and around Chennai city.*





# Dressing Indo western

for Chennai's "Chilly" Season

**Rtn. Radhika Udhayakumar**

*Imagine Year President, Rotary Club of Chennai Utsav*

Ah, Chennai winters. While the rest of the country is busy bundling up in layers, we're over here trying to decide if a thin shawl might be a bit too much. But hey, even though the temperature stays tropical and rain takes the spotlight in December, that's no reason to skip out on some fabulous Indo-Western fusion fashion! After all, when it rains, it pours...style.



*Radhika Udhayakumar, the author of this article, past president of the Rotary Club of Chennai Utsav and founder of Lotus Lane, is your go-to expert for all things fashion and style.*

*From chic outfits to perfect accessories, she knows how to make every look a statement. For more tips or to revamp your wardrobe, give her a buzz at 72999 90384. Stay fabulous with Radhika!*



**Layering for the Tropics: Less Is More (But Still Fun!)**

When we say "layering" in Chennai, we don't mean woollen sweaters or bulky jackets. Instead, think breezy, lightweight overcoats or flowy shrugs that won't make you break a sweat by noon.

Pair your sleeveless tunics with a mojkdern, sheer cape or a lightweight long jacket. For an effortlessly chic vibe, add a kaftan into the mix. Whether you layer it over slim-fit pants or let it shine on its own, a kaftan brings that perfect blend of comfort and glamour.

**Raining? Perfect Excuse for Some Fusion Footwear**

Rainy weather in December means one thing: don't wear your fancy chappals! Instead, upgrade to Indo-Western ankle boots or stylish rubber-soled shoes that can handle a puddle or two. You'll look chic while avoiding that awkward "my sandals are wet" shuffle. And nothing pairs better with a fusion kurta and jeans than rain-ready boots that scream, "I'm fashionable and functional."

**The All-Weather Stole: A Chennai Essential**

If there's one thing you need in Chennai during December, it's a stole – not for warmth, but for versatility. Your stole can be your umbrella stand-in, your windbreaker, and, of course, your fashion statement. Opt for Indo-Western designs with delicate floral patterns or metallic threads that complement your fusion wardrobe, and drape it over your kurtis or tunics. Your stole is your best accessory for sudden rain showers and breezy evenings.

**Monsoon-Proof, Indo-Western Friendly Fabrics**

Now, let's talk fabrics. December might not call for thermal wear, but it does require some strategic fabric choices. Go for quick-drying materials like cotton blends or even linen, which stay breezy and won't get too clingy if you're caught in a drizzle. Or try silk-cotton fusion pieces that blend luxury with tropical practicality. Because who says you can't be glamorous while dodging raindrops?

**Embrace the Chill... Or Not**

Chennai's winter might be more about dodging rain than embracing the cold, but that doesn't mean we can't dress for the occasion. An asymmetrical Indo-Western kurta paired with cigarette pants?

Yes, please. A fusion sari that combines traditional elegance with contemporary flair, perfect for any occasion from a relaxed brunch to an evening soirée. Absolutely. And if anyone asks if you're feeling cold, just smile and say, "This is Chennai, darling. We don't do winter—we do style."

So, grab your umbrella, slip into some Indo-Western fabulousness, and remember, no matter the weather, you're always dressed to impress.

# Morning Miracles:

## A Leadership Metamorphosis

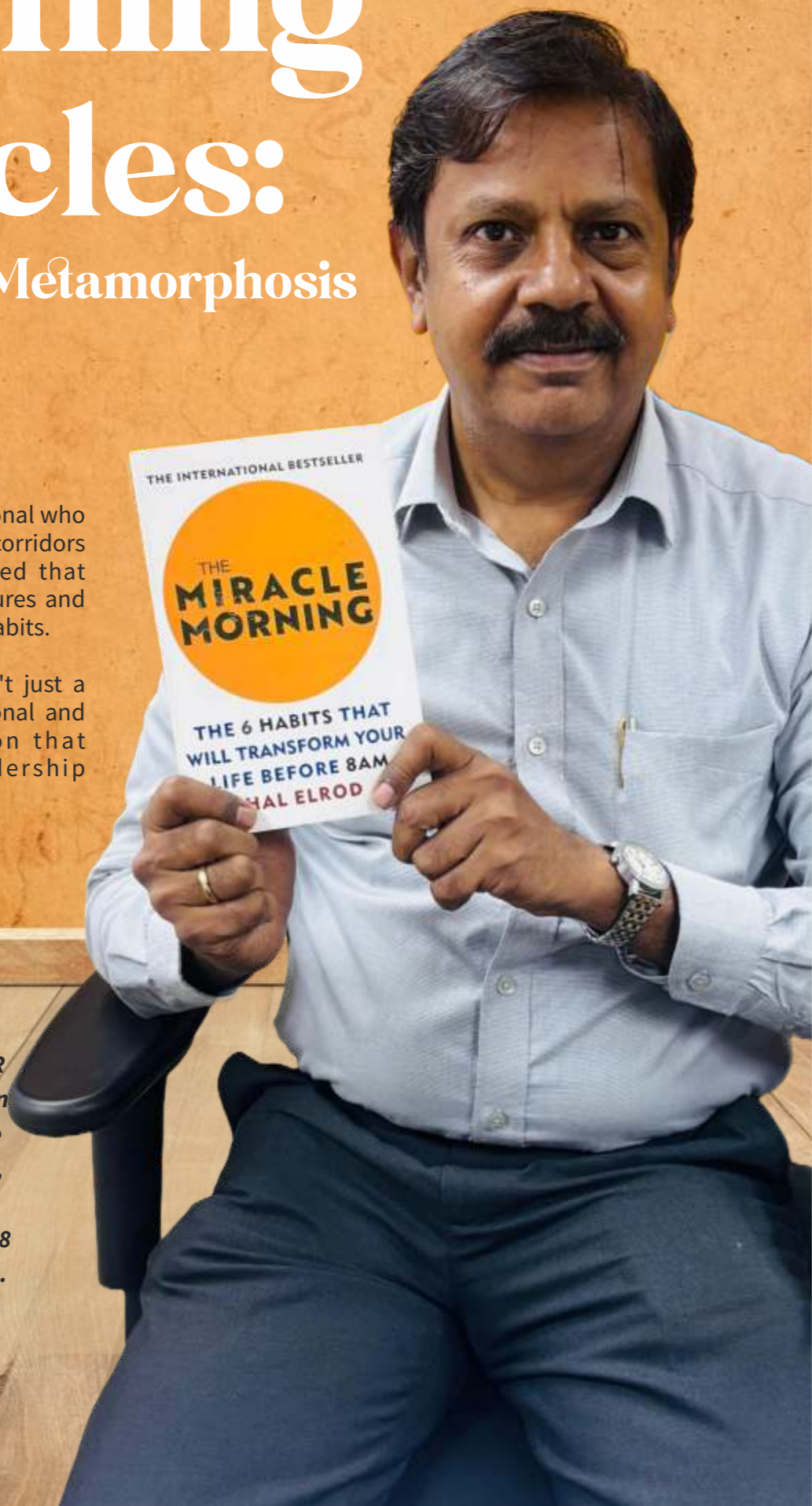
**Rtn. S. Ramesh**

*Imagine Year President*

*Rotary Club of Chennai Radiance*

**A**s a seasoned HR professional who has navigated corporate corridors for decades, I've learned that success is less about grand gestures and more about consistent, strategic habits.

Hal Elrod's Morning Miracles isn't just a book – it's a blueprint for personal and professional transformation that resonates deeply with leadership principles we cherish in Rotary.



*S. Ramesh, General Manager – HR at Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited and Past President of the Rotary Club of Chennai Radiance, brings 30+ years of corporate wisdom. Reach him at 94440 44758 for a good reading list suggestion.*



## The SAVERS Framework: A Leadership Toolkit

Elrod's ingenious SAVERS approach is essentially a daily leadership development program you can implement before your first cup of coffee:

- S Savers**  
In the high-pressure corporate world, meditation isn't a luxury – it's a strategic necessity. Ten minutes of mindfulness can recalibrate your emotional intelligence and decision-making capabilities.
- A Affirmations**  
Think of affirmations as your personal leadership mantra. When you consistently reinforce positive self-talk, you're essentially reprogramming your professional narrative. "I am confident, I am strategic, I am a catalyst for change" – these aren't just words, they're leadership declarations.
- V Visualization**  
Top executives don't just plan, they envision. Spending moments visualizing success creates a mental roadmap. It's like conducting a pre-mortem strategy session with yourself every morning.
- E Exercise**  
Physical fitness directly correlates with professional performance. A 20-minute workout isn't just about health; it's about building the stamina required to lead effectively.
- R Reading**  
Ten pages daily translates to 20 books annually. In a knowledge economy, continuous learning is your competitive advantage. This habit alone can transform your professional perspective.
- S Scribbling**  
Journaling is reflective leadership in action. By documenting thoughts, challenges, and insights, you're creating a personal development log that becomes your most valuable career guide.

The magic isn't in complexity but in consistency. One dedicated hour can fundamentally reshape your professional trajectory.

As Rotarians, we understand the power of personal growth and community impact. Morning Miracles isn't just a self-help book: it's a roadmap for becoming the best version of ourselves. Whether you're leading a business, a club project, or your personal life, these principles are your compass. Remember, true leadership begins the moment you decide to invest in yourself, one morning at a time.

**The Sacred Red:**

**My Journey with**

**Kungumam**

**Rtn. Vasanthi Surendran**

*Imagine Year President*

*Rotary Club of Chennai Sunrise*

**A**s a daughter of Madurai and a custodian of our rich cultural heritage, I've spent years understanding the profound significance of Kungumam – a tradition that transcends mere decoration and touches the very essence of spiritual wellness.

**The Divine Science of Spiritual Marking**

Kungumam is not just a mark; it's a sophisticated system of spiritual and physiological communication. When applied precisely at the Ajna chakra – the mystical third-eye location – it becomes a conduit of extraordinary energetic interactions. Modern research suggests that this ancient practice stimulates crucial nerve centres, enhancing mental acuity and emotional equilibrium.

The vibrant red powder, traditionally crafted from turmeric and slaked lime, is far more than a cosmetic substance. It's a natural reservoir of healing properties, scientifically proven to reduce stress, boost immunity, and create a protective energetic shield around the wearer.

**Beyond Tradition: A Woman's Spiritual Armor**

For centuries, Kungumam has been a silent narrator of a woman's journey. It speaks of her marital status, cultural roots, and spiritual connectivity. But in today's dynamic world, it represents something more profound – a conscious choice of spiritual empowerment.



**The Madurai Meenakshi Legacy**

Being from Madurai, I take immense pride in our Thalamboo Kungumam – a product that carries the divine essence of the Meenakshi Amman Temple. Each grain is a testament to our rich cultural lineage, meticulously prepared using age-old techniques that preserve its spiritual potency.

**A Modern Interpretation of Ancient Wisdom**

Today's women need not view Kungumam as a restrictive tradition but as a powerful tool of self-expression. It's a bridge between our ancestral wisdom and contemporary understanding of holistic wellness.

By understanding its deeper significance, we transform a simple mark into a powerful statement of cultural identity, spiritual connection, and personal strength. It's an invitation to embrace our roots while confidently stepping into the future.

**An Invitation**

I invite you to explore this sacred tradition – not as a relic of the past, but as a living, breathing practice of spiritual and personal empowerment.

Your Kungumam is more than a mark – it's a revolution of spirit. Are you ready to rediscover our timeless feminine power?



*Rtn. Vasanthi Surendran, a dynamic entrepreneur from Madurai, is the proprietor of Sri Nandini Enterprises, a 28-year-old business pioneering spiritual and pooja products.*

*She specializes in manufacturing authentic Madurai Meenakshi Thalamboo Kungumam, Suganthi Sambrani, and comprehensive pooja accessories under brands like Sundari. Her enterprise also manufactures lamp oils in the brand name Sudar, continuing a legacy of quality and traditional craftsmanship.*





# The Perfect Smile:

## Engineering Your Confidence

### Ann Dr. Poorna Pradeep

*Imagine Year First Lady, Rotary Club of Madras Down Town*

As an orthodontist who has spent years transforming smiles, I've learned that a perfect smile is far more than just aesthetic – it's a powerful tool of communication and connection. Beauty truly is power, and a smile is its most eloquent sword.



Imagine walking into a Rotary meeting and lighting up the room with a confidence-radiating smile. It's not just about looking good – it's about feeling extraordinary. What makes a smile truly perfect? It's a fascinating blend of science and art. Anatomically, it involves a precise coordination of facial muscles – the zygomaticus major pulling mouth corners, orbicularis oris elevating cheeks – creating an expression that speaks volumes without uttering a word.

But perfection goes beyond muscle mechanics. An ideal smile reveals minimal gum (no more than 2mm), with pink, healthy gum tissues. Teeth should be properly aligned, with consistent size, shape, and colour. The dental midline shouldn't deviate more than 4mm, and the incisal edge should nearly touch the lower lip.

For Rotarians seeking that transformative smile, modern cosmetic dentistry offers remarkable solutions. We can now digitally design smile makeovers, addressing alignment, colour, and structural considerations through various interventions:

- Teeth alignment in vertical and horizontal spaces
- Colour enhancement via bleaching and veneers
- Anatomical modifications through crowns and implants
- Smile line corrections through precise surgical procedures

Interestingly, smiling isn't just about appearance. It triggers endorphin release – our body's natural painkillers – and has the remarkable ability to heal rifts, dissolve hatred, and create positive connections. In the world of service and networking, your smile is your most potent professional asset.

As professionals who build relationships and create community impact, Rotarians understand that a confident smile can open doors, build trust, and inspire others. It's not vanity – it's strategic personal branding.

**Smile big, serve boldly – because in Rotary, and in life, your grin is your superpower!**



*Dr. Poorna Pradeep is a practicing orthodontist and dental college professor specializing in orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics.*

*She can be reached at 95513 15059 for personalized smile consultations and professional dental guidance for Rotary members.*





# Precision, Passion, & Pastry: A Culinary Engineering Story

**Annette Varshini  
Ramesh**

*Rotary Club of Chennai Radiance*

**M**y dear Rotary family, let me let you in on a sweet secret – sometimes life's most delicious opportunities rise just like a perfectly baked cake. As an engineer turned pastry entrepreneur, I've learned that the recipe for success is remarkably similar to my eggless vanilla cake: a blend of precision, passion, and a pinch of unexpected magic.

Picture this: COVID-19 locks down the world, and instead of losing my mind, I found my calling. Who knew trading engineering blueprints for baking sheets would lead to Pastry Capital (my sweet baking startup)? Certainly not my engineering college professors!

“  
**Annette Varshini Ramesh,  
founder of Pastry Capital,  
transforms engineering  
precision into culinary art.**

*A testament to Rotary's spirit  
of innovation and community.*

*Connect for baking tips,  
custom orders, and  
sweet conversations at  
+91 8072 324 607.*

”



## **The Eggless Wonder: More Than Just a Cake**

### **Ingredients:**

- 285g Curd (*Your rising agent of transformation*)
- 1/2 tsp Baking soda (*Small but mighty!*)
- 170g Sugar (*Life is sweet, after all*)
- 1/2 cup Oil (*Smooth operator*)
- 1 tsp Vanilla essence (*Flavour's best friend*)
- 180g Maida (*All-purpose flour, just like us Rotarians*)
- 1 tsp Baking powder (*The Silent Hero*)
- A pinch of Salt (*Because life needs balance*)

### **The Baking Chronicles:**

1. Mix curd and baking soda – think of it as a chemical romance that makes your cake rise to the occasion.
2. Sieve dry ingredients. Pro tip: This is where engineering meets culinary art. No lumps, no problems!
3. Whisk oil and sugar until they're so smooth, they could negotiate world peace.
4. Fold ingredients with the gentleness of a Rotarian extending a helping hand.
5. Bake at 180°C for 35-40 minutes – patience is not just a virtue, it's a baking requirement.

The result? A cake that proves life – like baking – is about creating something beautiful from simple ingredients. Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too? Not this Rotarian!

This recipe is more than just food. It's a celebration of innovation, resilience, and the sweet possibilities that emerge when we dare to mix things up – both in the kitchen and in life.



# The Power of Soft Skills

**Ann Aparna S Pillai**

*Imagine Year First Lady,  
Rotary club of Chennai Celebrities*

## in Today's World

**H**ave you ever thought that success is no longer defined solely by technical expertise or academic credentials? The real difference-maker is a set of essential abilities called soft skills. These skills are based on our emotional intelligence, communication, and teamwork, which in turn influence how we interact, work together, and make an impact in our personal and professional lives.

So, what are soft skills?

Soft skills encompass a wide range of non-technical abilities enabling individuals to interact effectively and harmoniously. They include communication, empathy, adaptability, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, and leadership, among others. Unlike hard skills, which are role-specific, soft skills transcend industries and job functions, making them universally relevant.

**Why soft skills matter is the right question to ask**

In any given place, soft skills foster collaboration and innovation. A leader who communicates with clarity and empathy can inspire teams to perform at their best. Similarly, employees who excel in teamwork and adaptability can navigate challenges and drive results in dynamic environments.

Soft skills also play a pivotal role in personal growth. They enhance relationships, improve conflict resolution, and build self-confidence. In a world increasingly defined by automation and artificial intelligence, human-centred skills like creativity, empathy, and active listening are irreplaceable.



**Ann Aparna S Pillai from the Rotary club of Chennai Celebrities is a certified life coach, author, and communication expert with 20 years of experience in training individuals and organizations in soft skills, business communication, and leadership development.**



### Soft Skills in Rotary's Vision

The values upheld by Rotary are all about service, fellowship, integrity, diversity, and leadership – and all align seamlessly with the essence of soft skills. A Rotary leader, for instance, must exhibit empathy, cultural sensitivity, and conflict-resolution skills to drive impactful service projects across diverse communities. Effective communication ensures that Rotary's mission reaches a broader audience, inspiring more individuals to join and contribute to its goals.

As Rotarians, cultivating and enhancing these skills not only strengthens our ability to lead but also deepens our impact on society. Whether it is mentoring youth, initiating community projects, or forging global partnerships, soft skills are at the heart of every meaningful interaction.

### How to Cultivate Soft Skills

Soft skills are not innate; they can be developed and refined through consistent effort and self-awareness.

#### Here are some practical steps:

- 1. Feedback:** Honest feedback from peers and mentors helps identify areas for improvement. I recommend SWOT for self-evaluation.
- 2. Practice Empathy:** Engage in active listening and put yourself in others' shoes to understand diverse perspectives. I recommend being a part of conversations.
- 3. Take Initiative:** Participate in leadership roles, both big and small, to hone decision-making and collaboration skills. I recommend participating in events and celebrations.
- 4. Invest in Training:** Workshops, webinars, and courses can provide valuable tools and strategies to enhance specific skills like public speaking or time management. I recommend you to invest in yourself.
- 5. Reflect and Adapt:** Regular self-reflection helps you adapt your approach and continue growing. I recommend a journal helps to reflect, revise, and reinvent your true potential.

### Soft Skills for a Better Tomorrow

The world today needs compassionate leaders, empathetic communicators, and resilient problem-solvers qualities that soft skills inherently nurture. As members of the Rotary community, embracing these skills empowers us to create a culture of understanding, inclusivity, and progress.

In conclusion, soft skills are more than just a professional asset – they are a way of life. By valuing and investing in them, we can transform not only our careers but also our communities, leaving a lasting legacy of impact and inspiration.

Let us, as Rotarians, lead by example, demonstrating that true leadership lies in the strength of our character and the depth of our connections.

# Little Hearts, Big Emotions:

## A Preschool Teacher's Guide to Understanding Your Little One

**Ann A. Sangamithra**

*Imagine Year First Lady  
Rotary Club of Madras North*

As someone who spends her days surrounded by tiny tots at Sakshi Play School, I often tell parents that running a preschool is like conducting an orchestra where none of the musicians have read the music sheet – and that's the beauty of it!

Every day brings new surprises, challenges, and countless moments of joy.



Fellow Rotary families often ask me, “How do you handle tantrums?” Well, let me share a secret: tantrums aren't problems to be solved; they're conversations waiting to happen. When a 2.5-year-old throws themselves on the floor because their banana broke in half, they're not being difficult – they're experiencing perhaps the biggest crisis of their little lives so far!

In our two decades of nurturing young minds, I've learned that today's children are different from our generation. They're smarter, more aware, and yes, more expressive. The old “Because I said so!” approach simply doesn't work anymore. Instead, try getting down to their eye level and acknowledging their feelings. It's amazing how “I understand you're upset” can work better than “Stop crying!”

**Here's what I've learned works best:**

First, put away those mobile phones – both yours and theirs. Children need our undivided attention, even if it's just for 15 quality minutes. When a child acts out, they're often saying “Notice me!” in the only way they

know how.

Second, remember that every child is unique. What works for one might not work for another. At our school, we've seen children who need a quiet corner to calm down, while others need a tight hug and reassurance.

Most importantly, be patient. As I often tell parents, your child isn't giving you a hard time; they're having a hard time. Our role is to be their safe harbour in the storm of their emotions.

And yes, sometimes they'll outsmart us – today's children are remarkably clever! Just last week, a 3-year-old explained to me why she needed two snack breaks instead of one, using logic that was hard to argue with. These moments remind us that we're not just teaching them; they're teaching us too.

Remember, these challenging phases don't last forever. One day, you'll miss these 'dramatic' moments – well, maybe not all of them!

*Ann. A. Sangamithra is with the Sakshi Play School in Saidapet. She specializes in early childhood development and believes in creating a nurturing, joyful learning environment for every child.*