

Success stories of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University Learners

The Empowered VoICES

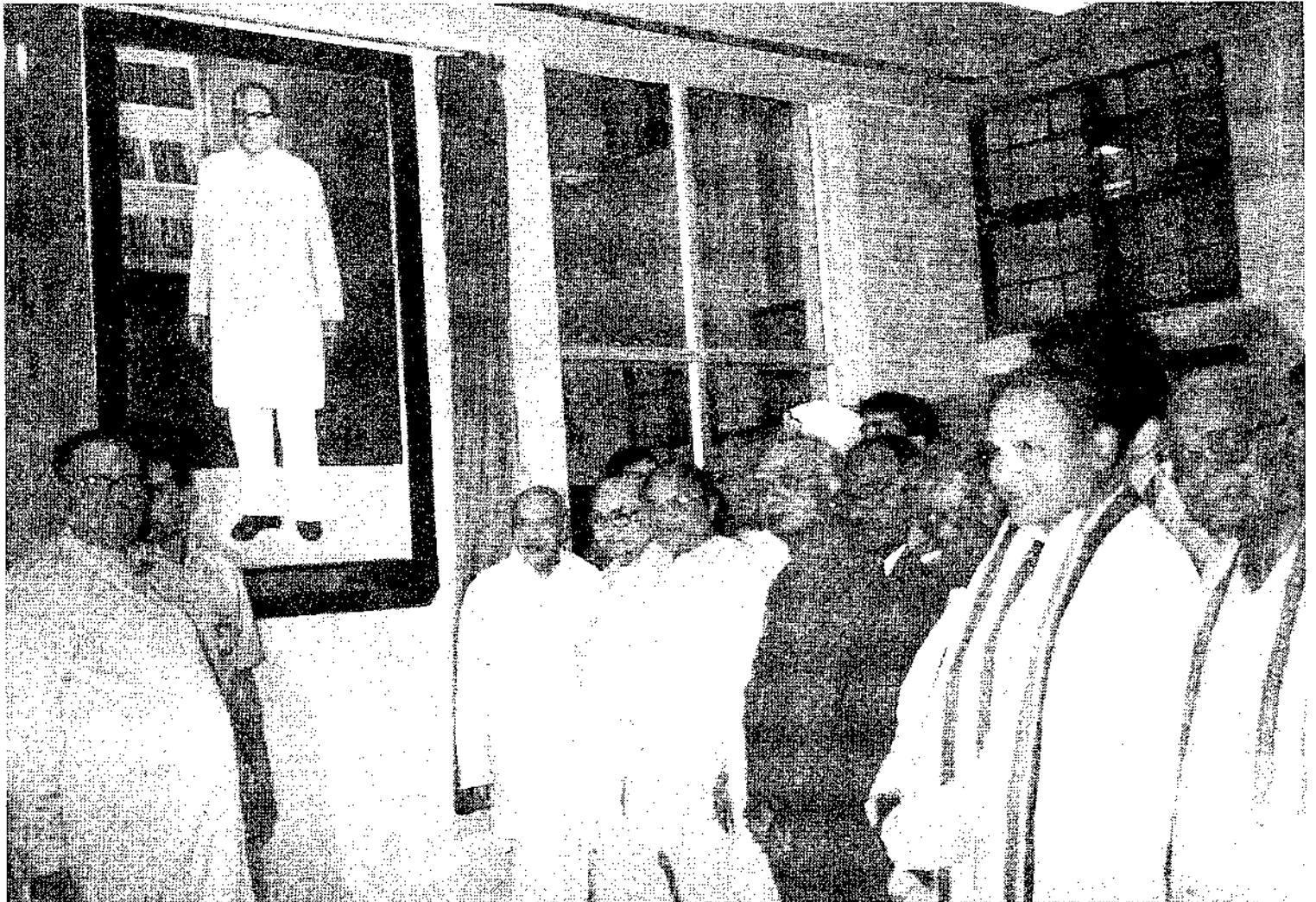
Chakrapani Ghanta

The Empowered Voices

Success stories of Distance Learning



Centre for Social Empowerment
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Hyderabad
2009



Indian Prime minister P. V. Narasimha Rao after Inaugurating the University Campus at Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad on 31 August 1994 Prof. S Basheeruddin, the Vice Chencellor also seen in the picture



University Administrative Building

Centre for Social Empowerment

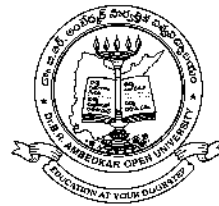
The CSE is funded by Distance Education Council and the focus of the center is to empower the society through education. CSE has a multi-dimensional agenda encompassing social research, policy innovation, projects in the community, and teaching through distance mode. The main objective of the centre is to promote equity through distance education by taking up various activities, short duration modular programmes, seminars, workshops, training programmes and skill development interventions among various sections of the society.

The Centre proposes to take up awareness programmes, education, research, evaluation, training activities in the fields of development, social justice, equity, diversity, gender issues, human rights, livelihood, human development and design programmes on empowerment and capacity building at various levels. CSE shall actively take up training and capacity building programmes for policy makers, authorities, field executives, development staff and social workers to ensure that the concepts of social justice and empowerment are included in the policy making, program delivery, implementation and evaluation. CSE projects interlace academic and applied interests and build bridges across people, non-profit organisations, civil society groups, NGOs, private and public sectors with an emphasis through empowerment on education, skill development and capacity enhancement activities.

The Empowered Voices

Success stories of Distance Learning

Chakrapani Ghanta



Centre for Social Empowerment
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Hyderabad
2009

The Empowered Voices

Success Stories of Distance Learning

by
Chakrapani Ghanta

Copyright©Author

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photo copying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Author.

This book is the outcome of a Research Project conducted by the Center for Social Empowerment (CSE), Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, sponsored by Distance Education Council (New Delhi). This was taken up with a broad objective to understand the "Role of Distance Education in Social Empowerment." CSE acknowledges the services and contributions of the research team in successfully completing the work.

Research Team: Dr. Chakrapani Ghanta (Project Director), Anandavardhan, Bhavani Shankar, Chalapathi Sarikonda, Nagaraju, Nagasundari, Narayana Allam, Ramireddy, Saroja Govada, Srinivasa Reddy, Subrahmanyam, Suneetha Rani and Yelleswar Rao.

For further details:

Project Director, Center for Social Empowerment, Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Open University, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, India.
Tele Fax. +91-40-23608797 Visit: www.braou.ac.in E-mail: cse.braou@gmail.com

ISBN 978-81-908563-1-7

First published: March, 2009

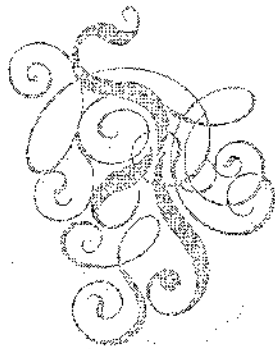
Cover Design: Akbar

Photography: Lavanya

Type setting: Venkat

Price : Rs. 200/-

Printed at : Sai Likhitha Printers, Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha Complex, Khairatabad, Hyderabad.

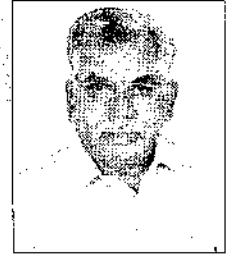


*We may forego material
benefits, we may forego
material benefits of
civilization, but we cannot
forego our right and
opportunities to reap the
benefit of the highest
education to the
fullest extent.*

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



*The President of India Giani Jai Singh inaugurating the University at Nagarjuna Sagar on 26th August 1982,
Chief Minister Bhavanam Venkatram also seen in the picture*



Prof. O.R. Reddy
Vice-Chancellor
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University

A word of appreciation

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University was established in 1982 by the state government of Andhra Pradesh with the intention of bringing educational access to all. It is commendable that as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 2006, the Centre for Social Empowerment of this University has published the success stories of the alumni who have reached great heights after getting education from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The Centre for Social Empowerment, established with the help of Distance Education Council, has brought to light many success stories of the alumni. This book complies some of them. On the occasion of the completion of 25 years of the University's this book illustrates the life stories of 25 students and the success that they have achieved through education. The purpose of this book is not to announce the achievements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. Our main purpose is to familiarize people across the world with the capabilities of the students who have studied in this University. The purpose and aim of the Centre for Social Empowerment will be fulfilled if this collection, designed in a lucid and comprehensive manner to recount the paths of success that the students have taken, succeeds in imbibing interest for education in at least a few people. My good wishes to all those who have studied in this University and the alumni who have risen high in life with the support of this University. Congratulations to all those who are part of the Centre for Social Empowerment that has taken initiative in publishing this book.

Prof. O.R. Reddy



Chakrapani Ghanta

Background

We have brought these unique stories to you in order to draw your attention to the importance of education in human life. None of the stories included in this book is the story of a comfortable life. Each one has moulded one's fate according to one's dreams. Each one of them has longed for self-reliance, tottered and ultimately stood on their own feet. All of them have struggled to exhaustion before they won the battle of life. Although their stories and dreams vary, it is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University that brings all of them together and they all thank the muse of learning. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University was established in 1982. As a first attempt in the country, it introduced distance learning, wiped out the hitherto existing eligibility criteria and obstacles and declared that anybody, anytime, anywhere can pursue higher education. Some people brushed it off and many others hesitated. But still, shattering all the suspicions, very soon it started a new tradition in India. Releasing education from the shackles of confinement it endeavoured to democratize it. It is not easy to access education in our country. Higher education is not possible for every one. Historically also, education in our country was confined to a few people and remained inaccessible to a large number of people. One has to be fortunate to get higher education; has to break several social, cultural and financial restrictions; has to face innumerable difficulties. In spite of that, it is not surprising to know that even today, only less than ten out of hundred get an opportunity to go to the university. This is a fact. With no access to higher education opportunities and universities, and not affording to buy education, many brilliant people are not venturing into education. People are not able to come to urban areas leaving villages, fields, homes and kitchens. They are unable to negate the difficult and rigid restrictions.

In this situation, this university naturally became a haven for thousands by taking higher education to their doorstep. It gave them new hopes; opened the doors for new opportunities; inaugurated new lives; introduced a new generation of educated people to the world. From among them, we are introducing to you twenty-five people as the symbols of the past twenty-five years of efforts. We are hailing the capabilities of our students who have humbly walked in from diverse regions, economic and social backgrounds and living conditions, have acquired knowledge and announced the uniqueness of this university to the world. We have put together these stories with the hope that these success stories will give inspiration to thousands of other students of this university and those waiting for opportunities. The inspiration for this endeavour also came from an "unknown" student. Unknown, at that time, because we could not meet that student. We thought it would be good to establish a centre that functions like a bridge between students and society as part of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the University in 2006. I placed the proposal to establish a special centre called Centre for Social Empowerment before the erstwhile Vice-Chancellor Prof. D. Ramachandram. We have enrolled thousands of students in this University in the past twenty-five years. We have awarded degrees to thousands of qualified students. The purpose of this proposed centre was to study if the Open University education is being useful, how the students are serving the society and how we can serve the society more through this university apart from planning and implementing new programmes for social empowerment. He encouraged me and forwarded the proposal to the Distance Education Council, New Delhi. The Distance Education Council appreciated our effort as a unique project and came forward to extend financial assistance. At the same, a friend from Delhi sent a list of universities where the candidates selected for Civil Services in 2005 had studied. The list showed that 457 candidates from 112 universities in the country have been selected for the highest administrative positions like IAS, IPS and IRS. I noted with surprise and happiness that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University has also found a place in that list. Only one candidate, that is Sadhu Narsimhareddy, who had studied in this University took the civil services examination. It was exhilarating to see that he was successful. While hundreds of candidates studied in other universities appeared for the mains examination and only one or two

of them got selected, the only one who appeared with our university background got selected. Isn't it really excellent! We decided to collect the details of such successful people. We started this project as the first attempt of the Centre for Social Empowerment. We started searching for our students based on the information we had. We came across thousands of people in different strata, positions and jobs who have unimaginably changed their lives. We aimed to make it an anthology of stories of people from different fields and different social, regional and cultural dimensions. Almost for a year we talked to many people, gathered details, took interviews, scrutinised them and decided to publish some of them. We could not publish all of them due to the historical context of the Silver Jubilee and the limited resources. We hope our effort has been successful as the book reflects the success stories of different kinds. Among the people whose stories are included in this volume, not only do you find those who have reached the highest positions, but also those who have lived in miserable conditions, those who have taken up Herculean tasks, those who have stood as the symbols of self-confidence and those who have acquired wealth and happiness with the help of education. In fact, this anthology was ready two years ago but was delayed due to institutional reasons. In the meantime changes might have taken place in the lives, duties, jobs and status of people whose life stories you are going to read. If we get a chance for a second edition, we will update the anthology and also include some more success stories. We are happy that the book is going to be published in spite of this delay. Many people have contributed, encouraged and participated in this project. We express our gratitude to the Distance Education Council that approved our proposal for Centre for Social Empowerment and offered support, especially the Council Director Prof. Swaraj Basu who encouraged our efforts wholeheartedly and Prof. D. Ramachandram who guided us in the initial phase. Our efforts would not have been successful without the encouragement of the distinguished members of the governing board of the Centre for Social Empowerment, Professors G. Haragopal, Umamohan, V.S. Prasad and Sasikumar. The first generation teachers of this university, Professors V.S. Prasad and Pushpa Ramakrishna constantly reminded me of the necessity of the project as an important contribution to research and publication and also wrote Forewords to the book. I am grateful to

them. The main person behind the publication of this book which was about to be stalled is our present vice-chancellor Prof. O.R. Reddy. He helped with the publication by clearing all the obstacles. Moreover, he expressed the hope that this book will contribute to the University's efforts to extend higher education to the remote villages as well. My heartfelt thanks to him. Similarly, thanks to all the friends who contributed to collection of information, writing, anthologising and publishing this book. Many friends, colleagues, staff and officers helped in research and documentation of this book. Many thanks to all of them.

This anthology does not reflect merely the greatness of people who studied in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. It explains how irrespective of the social background, one can achieve anything with the help of education. Also, it proves that there is no other better means than education and that with determination any dream can be realized. Already theoretical discussions regarding the purpose of education have taken place. Philosophers, intellectuals and scholars have said different things based on their location, context and times. While some said education is the tool to access values, wisdom and knowledge, some said education is the weapon to achieve progress, liberty, equality and sustainable development. Our students have been proving and will prove that education is life and that every life has a great social fulfillment. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the ideal thinker who recognized the power of higher education, faced humiliations and reached the heights, said, education is the best aspect in human life. To put it in Ambedkar's words, we may forego even the best benefits of civilization in this world, but not the education and opportunity and right to experience the fruits of education. We want everyone to understand these words. If this book can raise the hope for education, to encourage people who want to study and treat on awareness that education is a fundamental right, our effort would be successful. We hope this book will prove thought provoking for you.

Chakrapani Ghanta



Prof. Pushpa Ramakrishna

- Preface

Commendation

It gives me great pleasure to write the preface to this collection of life experiences of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University students. The school of life puts us through many tests but the guiding hand of education enables us to sail through turbulent times and hardships - such is the message from the twenty five students for all those who read their stories especially those who enroll into BRAOU. That opportunities lost can be gained again if there is determination and a concerted effort to achieve success, is what they reiterate both in their accounts and through their lives. The goals of the twenty five learners are somewhat different - achieving social status, receiving professional recognition, rising in one's self-esteem, establishing financial stability or getting personal credit and social acclaim but the means is the same - Education.

In a stratified social system many like Rambai and Surya Dhanunjay Naik have fought oppressive practices and traditions which have presented education as a luxury not to be aspired for by women. Attaining a personal identity in society through education, after a life of bonded slavery, Jangaiah has risen from being an absolute non-entity to a position of respectability. Many of those whose stories are recorded here have started life from humble beginnings as the children of vegetable vendors, weavers, coal mine labourers or agricultural workers. From their modest lives of social hardships and peer criticism they have managed not only to find personal acceptance in their own fields but have even made their mark in the outside world in exceptional ways. For Madhusudhan who had thought of himself as an academic outcast, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open

University gave a chance to overcome failures and rise to public view giving him courage enough to face his challenges and put up a brave front before everyone through the media.

The lives of many of the women learners are stories of traditional conventions and restrictions. As deprived girl children of large families of lower income groups, thrust into marriage and motherhood they have missed early opportunities for self-development. From such backgrounds, after being educated Anil Jyothi, Neeraja, and Pushpa Leela have found self expression in various ways. Once their self confidence and self respect was restored, they ventured into business, literary pursuits and even politics. The latent potential of students like Triveni Narasimha has come to the fore to enable them to compete with the rest and achieve overall recognition. Their zeal does not end with personal achievement. The desire to help others like them shines through. Even in recounting their life experiences they hope to lead and inspire.

Then there are those celebrated few like Yella Venkateswara Rao who still bow before conventions and desire a certificate for recognition of their social status. Two of the learners Chalapati Rao and Rajanna have had their lives transformed from dreaded prison inmates to acceptability in society and common life. Dattatreya was assisted in his endeavour to turn over a new leaf from law-breaker to a defender of the legal system. The learners represent different communities but they have similar stories to tell. From varied levels of economic, social, physical or psychological helplessness they have risen to positions like executives, teachers and administrators. Some, like Savitha and Padmapriya, extol the advantages of distance learning including its flexibility and opportunities for pacing of study. Their experiences like those of Eshwar show how their capabilities have been recognized without bias by their employers and peers. They stand testimony to the achievement of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University.

It is gratifying to read the life stories and experiences of such learners. Not only has life become meaningful for them who have struggled with single-minded grit and determination to achieve their goals, but also for all those who support and make this educational enterprise possible, it

gives a sense of satisfaction to know that we have played an albeit small, enabling role in their success. Their courage to follow dreams needs widespread commendation. They stand now as role models to enthuse and inspire thousands of others. Having missed opportunities for higher learning and faced criticism and insults they have traversed moments of pain, despondence, helplessness and failure but the turning point in their lives through enrolment with Dr. BRAOU has restored their faith in life itself. They have learnt that education does empower. In their stories many like Pushpa Leela and Rajendra Prasad have acknowledged the help and support they received from their families, friends and teachers. A hand stretched out to help has strengthened their courage to fight the tribulations of fate and fortune. Today, they give back to society what they have gained from it... and more. If education can bring such advantages - success, acceptance, recognition, wealth, mental peace - their desire is to share it and through this book, to spread it to many others.

I congratulate Dr. Ghanta Chakrapani for taking the much-needed initiative to collate and document the stories of these learners. It is a gesture of the University's recognition of their effort and role in leading others. He and his team need commendation for their contribution in researching the histories and personal records of the learners to select twenty five students whose experiences have been put together in this volume. The book needs to be read by every learner for the lesson it teaches - TRY, TRY, TRY AGAIN.... TILY YOU SUCCEED.

Prof. Pushpa Ramakrishna
Director, Academic

24.11.2009



V.S. Prasad

- Foreword

Students are the Inspiration

Establishment of open universities is a unique experiment in the field of higher education. This experiment began in India with Andhra Pradesh Open University (currently Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University) in 1982. Factors like Prof. G. Ramreddy's foresight, the social need to provide higher education to large numbers of students with limited resources and the support of the erstwhile political system mainly contributed to the establishment of this institution called Open University. This institution also had to face certain difficulties that any new institutions in the field of education face in their establishment. Severe objections against distance learning mode and prejudices that quality education cannot be provided through distance learning were prevalent at that time. The University stood up to the historical need of having to overcome all these limitations as the first Open University. This University withstood several ups and downs with the help of Prof. G. Ramreddy's efforts, perseverance and leadership and the social importance of the concept of distance learning. It can be recognized as an educational experiment with a great social motivation. For more than twenty five years now, Ambedkar Open University has played an important role not only in providing educational opportunities for thousands of people but also in setting standards for distance learning in the country. Personally, this is a matter of great happiness for me. I got an opportunity to work in different capacities in this University as a disciple of Prof. G. Ramreddy. This is a great

feeling, experience and satisfaction that I have participated at different levels in this unique experiment. Although there is a lot to be done, I feel that what we have done is also nit insignificant. I am very glad about the efforts of the University that are evident in the narratives of the students in this anthology about the influence of this University on their personal lives. Generally, details like how many students have achieved high positions, how many are working in foreign companies and how much they earn are mentioned when the greatness of a University is evaluated. Instead of that, if we consider how many poor people have got higher education, how many labourers, prisoners, hotel workers, confined-to-house people have changed their lives through higher education, perhaps it is not wrong to say that Ambedkar University stands in the first place in the country going by the experiences of the students in this anthology. I feel that the lives of the students narrated in this book are an inspiration for distance learning. Teachers play an inspiring role in the conventional education system. But, the student-teacher interaction is minimal in distance learning. Students are the source of inspiration in the learner-oriented distance education. The changes that have come about in the lives of distance learners are the beacons for distance education institutions and students. The portrayal of lives in this anthology helps in realizing how everybody is equally talented and how even the so called "failures" in today's society can become successful if given a chance. For instance, I think, the aim of the establishment of this University is fulfilled by the opportunities and success that this University has provided to people from prison-walls, labourers and those whose education was hindered by marriage. There is every need to spread the life stories of these students far and wide. I think these stories will help in analyzing the efforts of this University and making more people opt for distance education with proper understanding. I appreciate the University and the social scientist Dr. Chakrapani Ghanta who has put these stories together considering it as a social

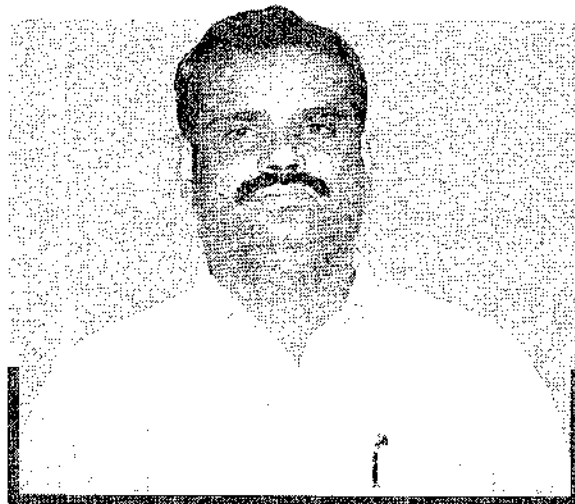
responsibility. It will be very useful to familiarize people in the field of distance education at the national and international level with these success stories. These are a matter of pride for the entire field of distance education. This book should come out in different languages too. Although there is so much to be done and much can be done by this University, I appreciate everybody who is associated with this project for initiating and continuing good work. As a person with along association with this University and as the Executive Committee member of the Centre for Social Empowerment that has initiated this project, I feel very happy to write the Foreword. Universities provide only educational opportunities. If the students get the message from this book that it is for the students to make use of such opportunities, I would think the aim of this publication is fulfilled.

15.01.2009

V.S. PRASAD
Former Vice-Chancellor

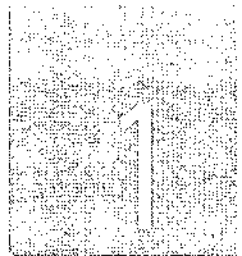
Contents

Jangaiah - <i>Education showers success</i>	2
Chintala Rambai - <i>Dreams realized amidst high-raising tides</i>	8
Madhusudhan - <i>From the school of Ambedkar to the lap of media</i>	14
Anil Jyoti - <i>From depths of hardships to continental fame</i>	20
Chalapathi Rao - <i>Lessions of life within the prison walls</i>	26
Katta Hymavathi - <i>From agriculture to administration</i>	32
Venkateswara Rao - <i>From a pan shop to the Volvo company</i>	42
Kondru Pushpaleela - <i>Education brought the opportunities</i>	48
Rajendra Prasad - <i>Self-confidence is his weapon</i>	54
Surya Dhanunjay Naik - <i>From darkness into moonlight</i>	60
Narender - <i>He conquered fate</i>	66
Jajula Gowri - <i>Invincible consciousness</i>	70
Yella Venkateswara Rao - <i>The music of letters</i>	76
Gottipati Sujatha - <i>Golden history written by education</i>	82
Kishtaiah - <i>Autowala became a lecturer</i>	88
Padmapriya - <i>Towards IBM...</i>	94
Eshwar, Venkateswarlu - <i>A tailor-made research analyst</i>	100
Triveni Narsimha - <i>Letters sharpened through weaving</i>	106
Golconda Krishna Prasad - <i>Unflinching courage</i>	110
Neeraja - <i>Increased self-esteem</i>	116
Srilakshmi - <i>Education is the best medicine</i>	128
Rajanna - <i>Alphabet in prison</i>	134
Sista Savitha - <i>Distance education won the world</i>	142
Mohammed Yaseen - <i>Life-changing sacred learning</i>	150



JANGIAH

*From bonded labour
to a life of self-respect*



Jangaiah

Jangaiah could successfully break the shackles of bonded labour and could climb up the ladder of life with the help of education. Now, he is an employee of a prestigious university in Hyderabad. Although his childhood was spent among the cattle, today he is dreaming of changing the lives of people like him in his village by becoming a sociologist and a social worker. It is the letter that gave him self-confidence.

While Magsaysay awardee Shanta Sinha broke his shackles of bonded labour, BRAOU took him through the corridors of learning and he now has a job in the University of Hyderabad. Jangaiah learnt his first alphabet at the age of 18; today he holds two Post-Graduate Degrees and an unflinching desire to acquire as many degrees as he can, including a Doctorate. This speaks for the success of the distance learning system.

Jangaiah was born in abject poverty in the Chiryal village of Keesara Mandal in Ranga Reddy district. His parents Lakshmi and Beeraiah were labourers and were bound to work with the Patel of the village. Of the eight children, two died, and Jangaiah was the fourth of the six who survived. The rule

There is no need to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti

of the village decided that all the members of a family that owed money to the Patel had to work in his fields as bonded labourers to repay the loan. Thus, the six year old Jangaiah was turned into a bonded labourer. He used to take the cattle of the Patel to the fields for grazing and work from dawn to dusk. Once, he recollects being inhumanly thrashed by a member of the landlord's family for a minor mistake.

This pathetic tale continued till his father was found murdered one day. The crisis deepened further with the arrest by police of his own elder brother. The onus of the family fell on Jangaiah, who had a keen interest in education but was too tired to attend the night school in the village. The silver lining to the dark clouds of Jangaiah's life came through Prof. Shanta Sinha, who was leading a crusade against bonded labour. There was resistance from the landlords. However, braving all the insults inflicted on her, Shanta Sinha liberated the 18-year-old

Jangaiah and 14 others from the clutches of bonded labour.

On acquiring freedom after 12 years of bonded labour, Jangaiah, along with others, was placed in a training camp in the nursery at the University of Hyderabad. Some of the students of the University were encouraged to run the adult literacy classed for the trainees. A certificate was awarded to them which enabled them to write the 10th class examination. That is how Jangaiah learnt the first alphabet at the age of 18. After completing the training, the batch returned home and the sordid story started once again. Sinha intervened again and got them employment in Central University at a daily wage of Rs 15 which was increased to Rs 18 later. The fifth pay commission hiked their pay to Rs 1,800 per month. Sinha took no credit but attributed their success to their hard work, says Jangaiah in complete gratitude for the help and support he received for her. Drawing inspiration from the students of the

University, Jangaiah appeared for 10th class examination in 1991 but could not clear all the subjects in one attempt. However, with unstinted determination, he completed the first board exam in 1993.

Next, it was the turn of BRAOU to step in to his life. The following year, he took the BRAOU entrance examination after he learnt that one could write competitive exams based on the degrees acquired through distance education mode. He joined the degree course in 1994 and also got married in the same year. Further he took up the responsibility of the marriage of sisters and brothers and with this additional financial and domestic train his studies were slightly affected. However, he finally completed his degree in 2000, and joined Post-Graduate

*Education is a progressive
discovery of our own ignorance.*
- Will Durant

course in Sociology in 2003, thanks to the opportunity for part-time study provided by BRAOU. Though the contact classes held by the Open University were very good and useful, he could not attend them regularly as he was posted to Central University hostel, which works on Sundays also. He studied on his own for the M.A. Sociology degree.

Jangaiah recalls a memorable incident in his life when Prof. Shanta Sinha was being felicitated on receiving Magsaysay award at the Hyderabad Central University, where he was working. He wanted to talk about her. He requested her and the Vice Chancellor permitted him to speak for two minutes. He poured his heart out and there was a widespread applause from the audience which comprised scholars and people in high office. He was pleased to publicly acknowledge his gratitude. Having tasted the glory of education, he studied hard and passed the first year P.G. with distinction. In the second year he

secured first class marks and impressed everyone at his work place.

Now, nothing could stop him in his pursuit of education. After M.A., he registered for M. Phil and his ambition is to anquire a Ph.D. Degree. Although he wants to attempt competitive exams and get a Doctorate, he has some difficulty in expressing himself in English, which he thinks may prove to be an impediment. But his ambition has been to keep learning throughout his life. He secured 95 per cent in the Computer course offered by Shramik Vidyapeeth. This apart, he is doing his M.A. in Telugu literature from Potti Sriramulu Telugu University.

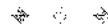
Respect for him has increased at his work place and he is being well-received as an "educated man" though he works as a peon. He studies alongside his daughter and son and makes it a point to study for at least one hour daily. Having faced a miserable childhood, he wants to start a voluntary organization to uplift the poor who are

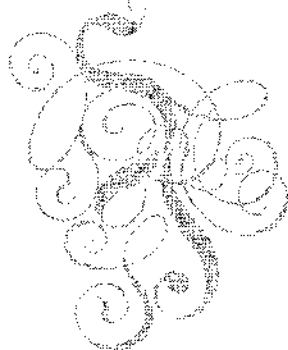
facing hurdles and are unable to take up or continue their studies.

Jangaiah, who now gets calls for advice on education from friends and associates in his village, praises Prof. Shanta Sinha for her social work and BRAOU for launching the distance education mode to benefit people like him. "I feel very happy to receive such calls and think of my father who is no more. He would have been happy to see his son in this position. We had lived in abject poverty and a square meal was a luxury at that

time", he says. He wants to write departmental tests and go up the ladder at his work place.

The innocent village boy, who knew nothing about education until his eighteenth year now has two Post-Graduate degrees and a first hand experience of having treaded the gruesome path of bonded labour and the glorious path of education, and tasting liberation through social upliftment and fine-tuned reforms of the education system of BRAOU.





CHINTALA RAMBAI

*Dreams realized
amidst
stormy tidal waves*

Chintala Rambai

This is the story of forty-five year old Rambai. Shouldering immense sorrow and responsibilities simultaneously, she could successfully realise her dead husband's dreams. With the help of a degree from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, she has now become an upper divisional clerk in a government office. You are going to read the agonies and achievements of her inspiring life.

Forty-five year old Rambai has had the window to a bright future opened and been swept up the ladder from peon to upper division clerk (UDC) thanks to BRAOU that has lit a thousand lights in her life.

Fighting against all odds, she held her own in times of turmoil and made the best use of distance education to bring up her children and sustain her family despite an ailing husband. Standing as a shining example of distance education, she rose in the ranks at her work place and her daughter is married to a software engineer based in Durban in South Africa. Her son is an executive with ICICI Bank.

Born into a lower middle class family with several lights of financial upheavals, her studies were the butt of discussion and

disapproval among her family members. But for her mother, her studies would have ended after seventh standard but she managed to pass her tenth standard in third division.

This itself was not in vogue in their family and Rambai was quickly married off to Chintala Gopala Rao, a security guard with APTRANSCO. Her husband was caring and loving and the glow of her married life added to her sense of joy. She bore two children, a girl and a boy.

Her husband had not completed his tenth class, but he did not compromise on their children's education. Petty financial troubles were there but the couple steered through them and always gave priority to the children's future. Despite minor hiccups, the domestic sure went on smoothly. Their daughter secured a seat in Engineering, and son passed Senior Intermediate. A thunderbolt hit the family in 1997 when her husband suffered a stroke and was

*Ability is of little account
without opportunity.
- Napoleon Bonaparte*

hospitalized. The shock stunned them all and her daughter had to discontinue her studies as the savings had to be diverted to pay the hospital bills. After getting discharged, Gopala Rao applied for leave and requested the authorities to consider giving his job to his wife. They agreed to the proposal and suggested that she would only get a peon's job with her 10th class qualification. They told her that she could be better placed if she pursued higher studies and also told her about Dr BR Ambedkar Open University and distance learning.

They suggested that she could get a good position in the organization with the help of a graduate and Post Graduate degree that the Open University offers, and encouraged Rambai to appear for the entrance test for a getting entrance into the B.A. programme. Gopala Rao motivated his wife to write the entrance test as he wanted to see her in a higher position and he decided to take voluntary retirement to pave the way for a permanent job for his

wife in the organization. Encouraged by her near and dear, she appeared for the entrance exam but was panicky about the outcome. When the results came, her eyes twinkled with joy and she was happy to find her number in the newspaper announcing her eligibility to join the B.A. course. Time management was the greater challenger Rambai faced in the moment of crisis, as she had to carry out her household chores, attend office and take up her studies by attending the contact classes at the study centre on Sundays.

She had to put in her best possible efforts to discharge her duties. Her husband's failing health became the cause of concern and she wrote her first year exams in the midst of uncertain circumstances. In spite of all her efforts, she failed in one subject and

*Action is the foundational
key to all success.
- Pablo Picasso*

the dejected Rambai was very upset. Her husband gave her soothing encouragement and said that failure was only a step towards success and motivated her to study and appear for the exam again. The next year, in 1998, Rambai's life plunged into darkness with the death of Gopala Rao. She took some time to get over the frustration and resumed her studies as a tribute to her husband's view that failure was only a stepping-stone to success.

This time around, her studies were methodical. She studied with determination, prepared notes and sought clarifications from the counsellors at the study centre. She got all round encouragement from the office staff, officers and faculty. A new beacon lit her family with Rambai passing her B.A. in third division. While everyone congratulated her for her efforts, she wept before her husband's photo, as he was not there in person to share her happiness.

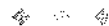
Support and appreciation came in from

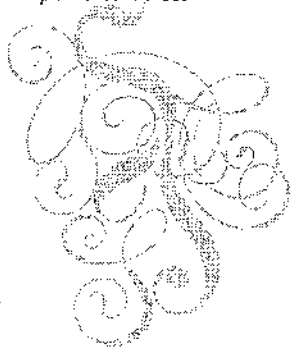
her office as well. Her colleagues and officers congratulated her and one of the officers suggested that she should appear for a departmental test, which was to be held soon. With the guidance and support from her officers and colleagues and her determination to fulfill her husband's dreams, she appeared for the departmental test. The degree from Open University, which propelled her career in the institution, worked wonders and gave her confidence. She wrote the departmental test following the instructions of her officers and other staff members carefully. Word came from her officer one day (she was on leave on health grounds) but she could not go to the office. The next day when she met the officer, he chided her initially for not coming the previous day and broke the news that she was selected in the departmental test. Not surprisingly, it took one full hour for her to come out of the initial shock. Her joy knew no bounds. This was a dream-like situation. She is

now a Lower Division Clerk (LDC) a symbol of status in the governmental hierarchy. She shared her joy with her colleagues and later at home with family and members and expressed gratitude due to the faculty at the study centre where she was groomed to become a Graduate. Two years later another shaft of light sparkled in her life as she qualified for the next stage in her career when she passed Upper Division Clerk (UDC) test.

She got her daughter married to a software engineer and they are settled in Durban in South Africa while the son is employed as an executive with a major bank.

Expressing her gratitude to BRAOU, without which she could never have been what she is today, Rambai says: "Society, especially women, need education. Through education women can achieve their goals and solve their problems."





MADHUSUDHAN

*From the school of
Ambedkar to the
lap of media*

Madhusudhan

Failure in English education subjected him to humiliations. The son of a scholarly Telugu Lecturer failed in Intermediate. Now, he is a well-known journalist. He has grown from a contributor in Eenaadu to the CEO of Dhatri Communications. Ambedkar Open University has not only conferred educational degrees on him, but also introduced him to diverse dimensions of life, says Madhu.

Madhusudhan hails from an orthodox family and was born in the historic Lepakshi of Anantapur district which has the vestiges of Vijayanagara empire. More so, he is the son of a scholar but a false step at a crucial stage in life distanced him from education. But BRAOU stepped in to bridge the gap and took him to great heights in journalism and placed him in an enviable position. Here is his story in his own words: "My father is a lecturer in Telugu and also a priest and his influence instilled in me the nuances of tradition, culture and language. It was a cake walk up to tenth standard as I cleared all exams with first class marks. Our family had a discussion after my tenth standard results and arrived at a decision that I should do my Intermediate with Biology, Physics and Chemistry group and later study to be a doctor. I joined in a junior college in Hindupur, a nearby town. The false step here was to shift to English medium. This was the advent of a series of obstacles and failures in my life. I opted for English

medium despite the warnings of my friends. Till tenth standard, I was in the top five and now my study graph took a slide, as I could not understand anything in the college. I failed in Chemistry in the first year and could not clear my supplementary exams either. This was the first failure in my life. In second year it was two subjects and I came to the conclusion that I was not made for education.

Family members too came to the same conclusion but could not realize that it was the change in medium that was the root cause of the failure. How can a lecturer's son fail? This was the innocent question which people could not digest. My father, who used to write books, did not insist on my studies and I went to Vijayawada to take up a diploma in printing technology. Putting the thought of education aside, I started a printing press in Hindupur. But the technology has fast changing with the arrival of DTP and there were few or no takers for my letter printing.

But my father did not agree to close down the printing press, as he had invested about a lakh of rupees on it. Sometimes we did not have money to pay wages to the workers in the press.

One good thing that happened with the press was that it became a meeting place for all local journalists. At that time Kaluva Srinivas was an 'Eenadu' correspondent. Srinivas, who later entered politics, encouraged me and at times helped me monetarily. I joined 'Eenadu' as a contributor and we sold the press at a loss. This was another failure. There was a lot of resistance for selling the press and snide remarks from family and friends haunted me.

The remarks on my education, rather failure in that field, and loitering without any direction complicated my plight. In the meantime, I came up with many plans to work at Madanapalle to make up the loss that we had incurred in the sale of printing

press. But the plans did not come through. A Suicidal tendency crept in to my mind and I purchased some sleeping pills and went to a film called "Eduritha" (Swimming against the current) in which the hero, also named Madhu, passes through a turbulent time. While seeing the film I could not control my emotions and I broke down. My friend Sampath consoled me and gave me the much-needed word of encouragement to tide over my depression. As Eenadu contributor for Lepakshi mandal, I was getting some money and I enjoyed doing the fieldwork, meeting people and attending seminars. I was promoted as a correspondent from Hindupur. Then I came to know the value of education as I was in the company of highly educated people. The 'Udayam' reporter had a double PG. The 'Andhra Prabha' reporter had a PG and

And yet education is never completed until a man dies.

- Robert E. Lee

could speak Hindi, English and Kannada. The 'Andhra Jyothi' reporter was a graduate. They were identified as the educated class; I was recognized only as the son of Chenchu Subbaiah Sarma. At that time came the notification of the Open University and I appeared for the entrance examination. I was confident of clearing the examination as the papers were of objective type. as I had the option to ante the exam in Telugu. My joy knew no bounds when I saw the results in the newspaper. On Sundays, I attended counseling classes. I studied during the day and worked in night shifts. In all earnestness. I made notes of the study material that I got by post. Public administration, Sociology and Telugu literature were my optional subjects. Meanwhile, I passed the entrance test for Eenadu school of Journalism. In that batch I was one of the two undergraduates. In the campus there were many students with higher degrees. This inspired me further to pursue my higher studies and take a Post Graduate degree.

Despite the quality articles, people never used to give me credit as I lacked educational qualifications. They thought that my versions were rewritten by others at the 'Eenadu' office. After graduation, I completed my M.A. from Sri Krishnadevaraya University, BCJ from Osmania University and MCJ from Telugu University besides certificate courses in Sanskrit and Hindi. The ambition of my life is to take a Science degree from BRAOU. In our circle people did not have a good opinion of Open University degree. They were of the opinion that it was not on par with formal education. Discouragement from the people around me caused concern. However, it was on the foundation laid by BRAOU that I completed other courses and stood as a man of letters among people known to me. It helped me to get good marks in my PG. and BCJ entrance, I was in the top ten while I was the topper in MCJ. I am what I am today because of the opportunity provided by BRAOU. All the

later degrees and distinctions I could get were the result of Open University providing me with a chance to study further. Or else I would have been an Intermediate failed candidate. It was in the study centre that I met a 70 year old Aswathiah who was also taking the degree course. He used to share his problems and

tell me about the hard way he had come up. My plight was nothing before his. After a successful stint in journalism, now I am working as a CEO in a media communications enterprise. My success has brought me laurels in life and my today family members take my advice in all major issues.





ANIL JYOTI

*From depths of
hardships to
continental fame*

Anil Jyoti

She is an adventurous explorer. She is determined to write her own fate.

Emergency played havoc in their family. A girl from poor, rural background could cross the oceans, reach America, face myriad problems and succeed ultimately. In all this, her love for education was her guiding star. She has paved the path for a respectable life for her and her family.

Youngest among the five girl children and deprived of all major childhood dreams, Jyoti was admitted on a false claim as a motherless girl into a social welfare hostel facing obstacles at every step. But, her will power and the BRAOU education took her career to distant America where she is well settled now.

After losing his job as a teacher during the emergency, the father wanted to admit Jyoti in a welfare hostel as the family had plunged into deep trouble. But, there was no chance for that as they belonged to an upper caste. Finally falsely etaimed they that Jyoti was a motherless child and she could secure admission in a social welfare hostel called Balasadan in Hanumakonda. It was an emotionally

disturbing situation for Jyoti to join as a motherless girl. As there was no chance of her mother coming to the hostel, her father used to come and see her and give books of great leaders for her to read which had a great influence on her in the later days. Although Jyoti was away from her parents she had good friends in the hostel where she studied from fifth to tenth standard. She took an active part in music, dance and other group activities, which were useful for her later part in life. Poverty at home made her stay in the hostel even during holidays. She utilized the time to learn typewriting, which became one of the tools in her future journey to success.

Hostel life came to a happy ending with Jyoti clearing tenth standard in first division. By then, her father too had got a job but Jyoti had secured admission into Intermediate in a different place. He pulled her out of college and got

*Always bear in mind that your own
resolution to succeed is more important
than any other.*

- Abraham Lincoln

admitted her to a vocational course in teaching. The certificate, they said later, was not useful to get a job as a teacher. Against her wishes, she was married off at the age of sixteen and gave birth to two daughters. Her in-laws were in agriculture and Jyoti did not like to work in the fields, as she was more inclined towards studies and education. Opportunity came knocking when Nehru Yuvajana Kendra wanted to start a night school and sought applications for National Service Volunteers. Despite resistance from the family she took up the job which paid a monthly salary of Rs 750. She had to tour the district, meet people and organize meeting of youth clubs and women's organizations.

The job lasted only for one year. Her husband took up a private job but that money was not sufficient to run the family. She took to typing, tailoring and running of a private library which

brought in some finances. At this juncture, a glow of light came into her life in the form of the BRAOU notification. After clearing the entrance examination, life followed a difficult path but bearing all the difficulties and discouragements, she continued her studies. Meantime, a notification was issued for the post of special teacher with graduation and vocational teacher training course as required qualifications. Since Jyoti had done her teacher training course, she applied for that job showing the proof that she had appeared for final year Graduation exam of BRAOU. The job and completion of Degree with good marks came at the same time and her joy knew no bounds. Her pay was just Rs 398 when she joined as a teacher. Her tailoring and other petty works supplemented her income. In due course, the job was regularised and there was a hike in salary. Her public contacts helped her to upgrade herself at the school. She worked

in fourth standard then fifth and then in the seventh but not before having a tough time in negotiations and pooling finances. She joined MA English but could not concentrate and was unable to cope with the courses as her studies hitherto were in Telugu medium. Then she shifted to MA Sociology in one sitting. This gave her promotion as a Mandal Girl Child Officer responsible for checking school drop-outs and promoting early childhood education. Then, she set her eyes on a Ph. D. but the top priority on her agenda went for studies in America and a work visa too. She was disappointed to know that she had could not get the visa as she studied in Telugu medium.

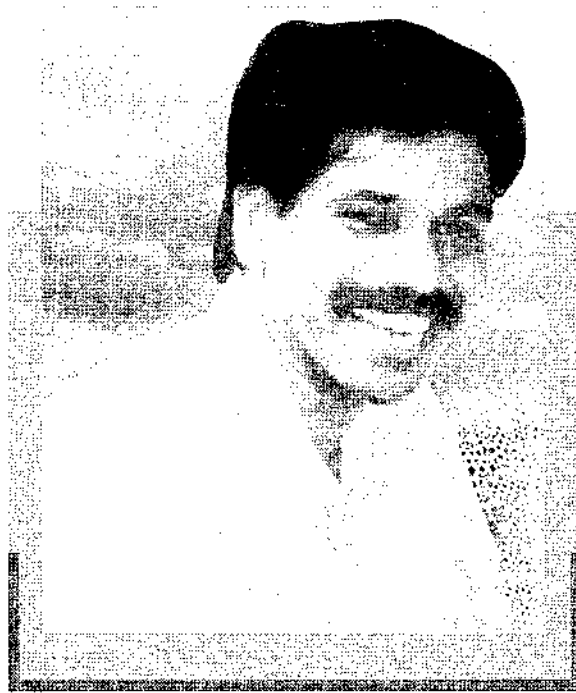
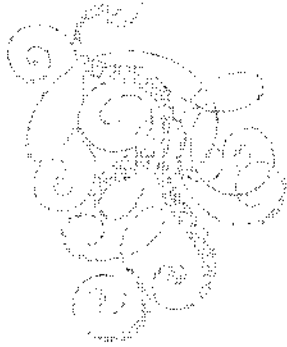
She joined software training classes and came to know that there were other methods to get her visa. Although it was difficult, she admitted her children in a hostel and finally succeeded in getting a

visa with friends' help. Jyoti left for America in 2000 on a visitor visa after applying for long leave. It was not a green pasture that greeted her in America as she had thought of it in India. Friends and relatives stopped answering calls and looked down upon her. Struggle again began for Jyoti but in a distant land. She managed to do some odd jobs and the final breakthrough came when she chanced upon a family friend. She could get a job in a software consultancy firm and it was an upward movement from then on. She moved to a better job with a better pay and comforts. Although it was difficult to leave her children and work in America, Jyoti had no choice. She returned to India only after she acquired a work visa. After spending three months with the family she went back to America. Back in America, she started her own business which did well. In 2005 she could get a green card and her family

moved to the States. Her two daughters Bina and Bindu are now studying in America. However, Jyoti wants to return to India and start an old age home. This

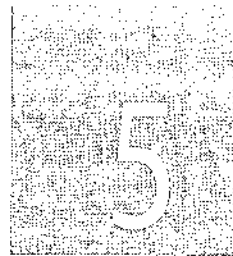
is how a girl from Warangal reached America after a great struggle in life and society to emerge as a successful woman.





CHALAPATHI RAO

*Lessons of life within
the prison walls*



Chalapathi Rao

He was confirmed death sentence by the Supreme Court. Later it became a life imprisonment. He narrowly escaped death and spent fourteen years in the prison. While prison life taught him lessons of life, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University led him towards an M.A. degree in Sociology. The early years of his life were spent as a petty criminal and now he wants to do his Ph.D. in Criminology.

Chalapathi Rao M.A.
This is my nameplate.

Joy and surprise upsurge in equal measure in me when I look at the nameplate. Before acquiring this Post Graduate degree, I served 14 years of imprisonment for a heinous crime liable for death penalty. Had I acquired the degree before committing the crime, may be things would have been different. Here I narrate my story, the sordid past filled with ignorance as a prisoner and the prospective future after acquiring MA Sociology degree from BRAOU, with due gratitude to the institution. I salute BRAOU for its good intention of treating criminals as human beings and extending the benefit of education to them as well.

I hail from a remote village called

Educationists should build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students and become their role model. - Abdul Kalam

Hussainnagar in Guntur district and belong to the Mala community. We took to Christianity. Chinapamulaiah and Kasamma are my parents. I studied in various schools and hostels at Nandigama, Hussainnagar and Narsaraopet. Influenced by the company of wayward friends, I used to harass my parents for money and did not bother where from and how they got the money. My only motive was to fulfill my needs.

Our family shifted to Guntur where my father's elder brother had settled. My father became a vegetable vendor and I developed friendship with people who were economically better placed. I did not disclose my father's occupation as I was apprehensive about insults. We lived in a dalitwada. Most of the people around were rickshaw pullers or auto drivers. I completed my tenth standard and realization dawned on me. I stopped harassing parents for money. I took up jobs as an auto driver and a painter to earn money. Influenced by

films and film stars, I started behaving like one, starting from smoking. I fell in love with Ramani and married her. A daughter was born in 1992. My father fell ill and the onus of the family fell on me. Income declined and expenses were on the rise. To fill this gap, I took to crime in the company of friends. Coming to my heinous crime, it was prompted by vengeance to kill the person who was in love with my sister. We chalked out a plan and wanted to get money, about Rs one lakh, for the legal and other expenses after killing that person.

After many ideas, we approved the plan of a bus robbery, threatening the passengers with petrol. Such an incident was reported in newspapers. Vijayavardhan Rao joined me while two others did not turn up. We boarded the bus as passengers and tried to threaten but the plan misfired resulting in the death of 22 passengers. We were awarded death penalty and President's parole was rejected. But by some quirk of fate, Almighty's wish or human rights

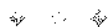
activists' advocacy, we were saved from death penalty and remained life prisoners. Lodged in Rajahmundry jail, I was encouraged to take up studies by some well-wishers but I rejected all the proposals. Finally one Good Samaritan filled up the BRAOU entrance exam form and took my signature heralding a new chapter in my life. My views on education were different. These degrees will neither earn me bread nor will they help in early release from jail was my feeling and I did not show much interest in the first two years. As a result, I failed in one subject in second year while all others (in the jail) passed. It was an unpleasant feeling. The coordinator did not give up hope and asked me to write the third year exam.

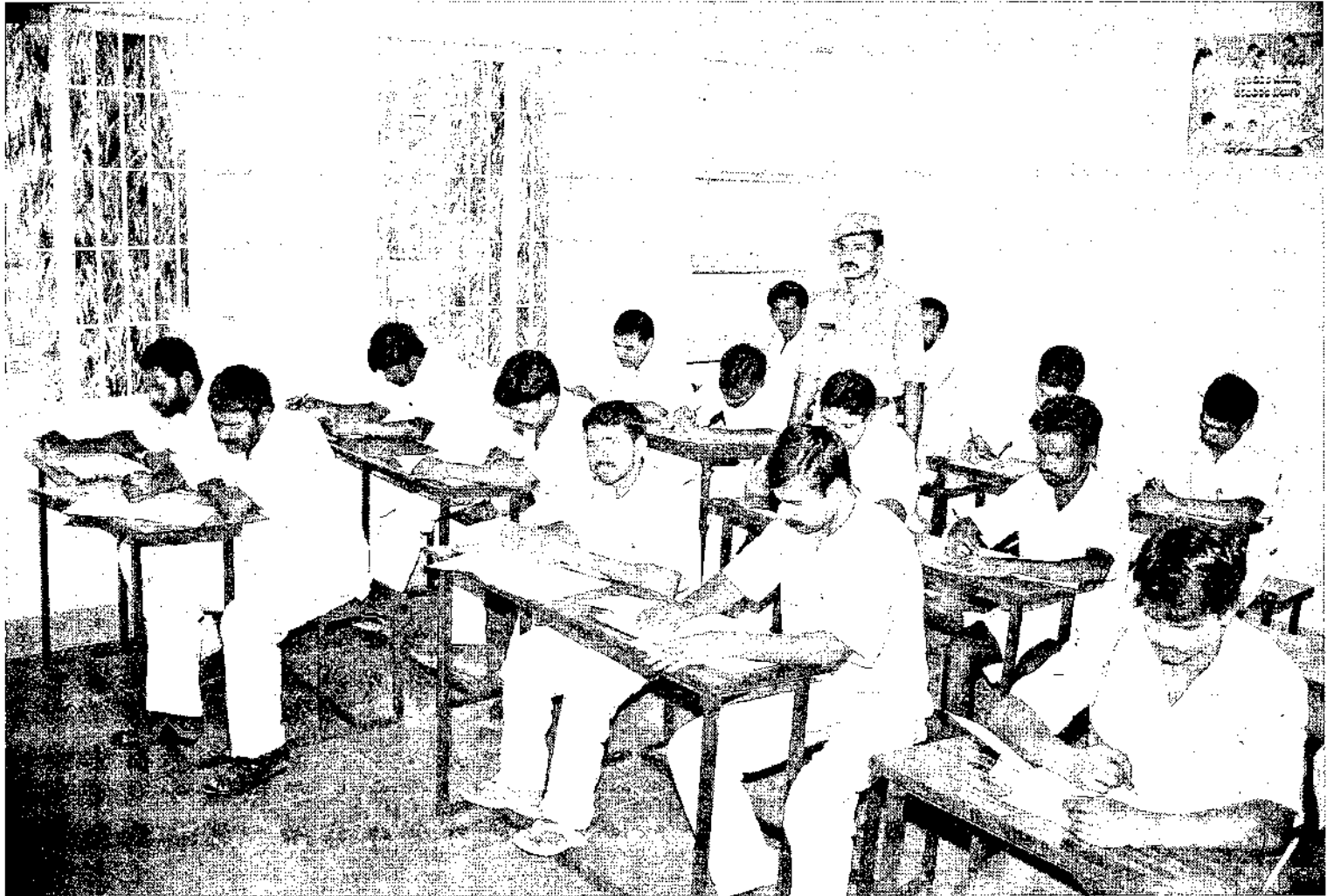
A sudden determination dawned on me and I took studies seriously and achieved success. In 2002, I was Chalapathi Rao B.A. There was pressure from the coordinator Satyanarayana Sir to apply for M.A. But I was not convinced. I had served a ten year

term by then. When my name was not found in the applicants' list, BRAOU Registrar, Ghanta Chakrapani sent in a word to the coordinator who persuaded me to apply. I opted for Sociology. Sunday classes were taken by Mangayamma Madam and Koti Reddy Sir and suddenly the subject appeared to be very easy. How can what is happening in society be study material of a PG subject, I wondered. This thought breathed new enthusiasm into me. I wanted to know more and I gave my heart to the subject. As a consequence I passed in first division which is reflected in the nameplate Sathaluri Chalapathi Rao M.A. Interesting, isn't it? When I was in the outside world, I could pass tenth standard with great difficulty but from jail I could clear M.A. in first division. People started showing respect after my getting the Post Graduation degree. My joy knew no bounds. On looking back at my academic success. I

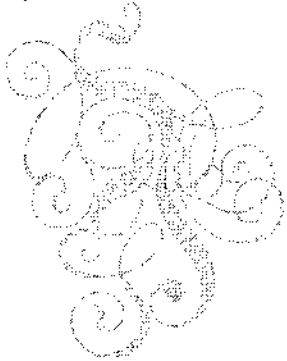
want to do a Ph.D. on attitudinal and behavioral changes in life convicts from a humanitarian perspective.

I have been in jail since 1993 and I am not aware of the outside world barring what is published in newspapers and shown on television. BRAOU has shown me the world of wisdom through education. All prisoners should be ever thankful to the University. Besides studies, I pursued my skills in painting in the jail. I have nearly 600 paintings to my credit which have earned a good name for me. I taught painting to some besides learning bookbinding, screen printing, spray painting and also a little bit of computer science. These are some of the lessons I learned serving life imprisonment and I remain thankful to BRAOU for showing me the path of education and wisdom.



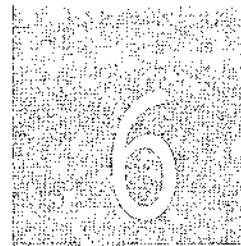


Education for behavioral correction: Prisoners writing their Exams in a Central Prison in Hyderabad.



KATTA HAIMAVATHI

*From agriculture to
administration*



Katta Haimavathi

She belongs to an ordinary agricultural family. She came walking with “soiled” feet to the city. She was most comfortable doing agricultural work like sowing and weeding. On the other hand, she did not forget her dreams and did not give up her goal. This daughter of the soil grew up a deputy collector. She was one among to become four daughters. The happiness of having lived up to the expectations of her parents with the help of distance education shines in her tired eyes. Katta Haimavathi from Guntur district worked and studied simultaneously and became a deputy collector.

I am from Mamillapalli village of Ponnuru Mandal in Guntur district. My father's name is Katta Subbareddy and my mother's is Bharathidevi. Ours is an agricultural family but we had less than four or five acres of land. My parents had four daughters. I was the third. All four of us are pursuing careers that we are interested in. My elder sister does business. My second sister has done her Chartered Accountancy and is practising in Chennai. My younger sister is working as a teacher. I became a deputy collector by qualifying in the Group I examinations. I expected this but I have no words to express my happiness given by this success. I can especially never in my life forget my father's jubilation saying, "you have brought fame to me". The credit goes to my parents for educating us though we were girls. Behind the present happiness of our family is hidden the continuous hardship of years. My parents faced criticism and humiliation from our relatives. We had

no property except a few acres of land. Even that was sold by father for our education. Our relatives tried to discourage us with regard to our education and goals. But, their actions and words made me more stubborn; and motivated me to concentrate more on my goal and struggle to achieve it and that is how I reached my goal and became a deputy collector.

I studied in the formal education system till my Intermediate. From my childhood onwards I had great admiration for education. When we four sisters said we wanted to study, our father never said no. His policy was to say "do what you like". He rarely spoke. Silently he gave us the assurance that he will be behind us whatever we girls did. In 1990 they came to Hyderabad leaving the native village and the land. They gave the land for lease for sometime. After that it had to be sold for our studies. Our labour became the source of our livelihood. We continued

our education doing some job or the other due to the economic ups and downs in the family. Villagers found it surprising that we studied and our father did not object to it. Because, in our community, girls' schooling is stopped after 7th class. Girls are married off when they are fifteen years old. They found fault with my father for sending us to other places for education. They asked me, "When will you marry?" You have sold your land for your children's education. Can you get them married? Can you give them a dowry? What will they achieve by studying?" Their questions went on like that. My parents were not shaken with such verbal attacks. They never stopped our education. They never discouraged us. I was a regular student till Intermediate. But, the situation and surroundings in the village where I grew up were different. I loved education and so I was scared that my education may stop with Intermediate. My heart stopped beating at that very thought. Moreover, comments

from the relatives like, "you are a girl, what can you do, you have to get married and go away," disturbed me very much. But, they also provoked me very much. In such a state, an acquaintance told me about Ambedkar University and that we can study without going to the college. Till then I had not heard about it. That day my happiness knew no bounds. I could see a narrow path. I was full of determination to mould it into a main road. Added to that, I don't lack the stubbornness to refuse to do what I don't like to whoever tries to force me. All these qualities of mine sharpened my determination to go towards my goal. I did not share my goal; I never spoke out about my goal, that is the Government reemittment Tests -Group-I. I could imagine how people would ridicule us if I

*Education is the manifestation of the
perfection already in man.*

- Swamy Vivekananda

failed to achieve such a high ambition. Hardships made me tough and because of my disciplined lifestyle I could face any kind of opposition from any side and did what I liked to without hesitation. I did what I thought was good. The hardships that I faced for my career and education did not go waste. I studied in Mamillapalli till 7th class, eighth to tenth in Cherukupalli A.P. Residential School for Girls in Kavuru and Intermediate in K.S.K. college in Ponnuru. I never liked science subjects at all. From the beginning I had a great interest in society and human relations. Probably because of that I liked Arts courses. I did not get good marks in Intermediate. The reason for that was my lack of interest in science subjects. That is why I was bent upon Arts subjects in Open University. When my father scolded me saying, I won't send you to college if you don't study science subjects, I wept for a month but finally achieved what I wanted. I joined in the History, Political Science, and Sociology group.

I did my graduation in August 1994. In the meanwhile I learnt typing and worked as a typist for sometime. After that I worked at a tax consultant for a while. In 1994-95, I joined as an office in-charge in an enterprise in Chikkadapalli. I got a seat in B.Ed. after qualifying the B.Ed. entrance examination with Arts subjects. I did B.Ed. in Montessori women's college in Vijayawada. I passed and took the B.Ed. degree in 1997. Political Science and Sociology are my favourite subjects. I did M.A. Political Science in distance mode from Osmania University in 1996. After that I did my M.A. History from there. But, I did my M.A. Economics from Ambedkar University. You may ask me about my getting so many degrees. I love education very much. I feel like doing some course or the other all the time. Sometimes I feel that we wouldn't have studied like this if we had elder brothers. I have noticed the concept of marriage for girls and job for boys not

only among village elders but also among most boys. This mindset reminds us always that this is a patriarchal society.

As I studied while working, naturally general knowledge and understanding of the society also increased in me. My mother cooked at home. I did outside work. Because of this, I learnt many lessons pertaining to life. Because I grew up in a rural atmosphere, there was an inbuilt innocence in me. Why, I didn't know that one has to write competitive exams to get a job. Because of my entry into Ambedkar Open University, I understood the ways of the world. I got accustomed to reading newspapers. That is when I came to know about Group-I exams. I decided to write these exams, come what may. Our Open University classes were conducted in Kachiguda. I would like to say one thing here. Ambedkar Open University material is very useful for competitive exams. These are not merely words coming from my

experience. Many people have shared it with me. The standards are also high. If I don't say this, I will be missing a very important reason behind my success. There is one more important reason for my success. Even when I had very important work, I attended the Open University classes without fail. I must say that I acted with discipline in studying while working. I regularly went to Chikkadapalli library at least for an hour every day. That habit has still with continued. Apart from my teachers in Open University, another person who encouraged me was my uncle and a well-known poet Siva Reddy. He always told me, "Don't give up studies. You can achieve what you want to if you study."

In the process of studying while working,

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

- Aristotle

I developed a personality of my own. I never became psychologically weak due to our financial problems. I never thought of stopping studies. It is only when we suffer that we can achieve what we want to and achieve long-term benefits. I studied in a residential school for some time. That taught me how to live with discipline. I acquired the quality of completing a task under any circumstances. I strictly follow punctuality. Another good quality also came to me from my residential school education, where all the students have to sit and read in the library for an hour everyday. My interest and my reading of general knowledge is a habit. I developed from my residential school days. That habit has become my radar now.

I studied according to the elders' guidance only till my Intermediate. After that I studied according to my own planning. I studied what I liked. There is a clear goal and a motive behind my

choosing Group I. My duties as a deputy collector are related to civil society. I think that officers who perform their duties without forgetting the fact that they are there for the people will get appreciation from people. As for me, I will try to do what I can do through my duties. My priority is to do justice to people. I wanted to come into this service to help as many people as possible. My present goal is to do what I want to do in a proper and effective manner.

Probably because of the lessons of life taught by our hardships and problems we faced, a desire took birth in me to help the poor, especially girls in their education. I have seen girls with the desire to study who stop studies with four or five classes as the family condition is not suitable and get confined to kitchens. So, I am paying the school fees irrespective of their caste, religion and region, for a few intelligent poor girls, who cannot continue their education.

From 1999 onwards I worked as a teacher in Saliabanda government school for seven and half years. From then on, I have been helping poor girls. I will support them financially till they get government scholarships. I pay the fees for girls who are studying in colleges also.

I have another reason for having this desire to financially help only the girls. Girls will completely utilise any opportunity that comes within their reach. In order to achieve it, they do not hesitate to work hard. They put in a concerted effort to achieve their goal with discipline and sincerity. They are not fickle-minded. Above all, they clearly realize from what background they have come here to study and with what purpose they are continuing education and they act accordingly. The desire to be self-reliant is also more evident in girls. That is what I would like to see in girls. There are people, especially in rural areas, who think that the lifetime goals is jobs

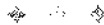
for boys and marriage for girls. The world will understand how girls also can achieve many things only when girls and boys are treated equally.

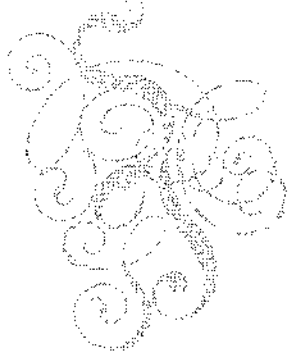
I believe that the Open University is a door of fortune for poor girls with a wish to study. My source of inspiration are people like Ambedkar, Vivekananda, Durgabai Deshmukh, Mahatma Gandhi, Abdul Kalam and many others. Their influence has inspired me in different ways in different contexts. I tried for Group I in 1992. I did not succeed. People discouraged me at that time. In such a context, the words of the great people I have referred to inspired me and made me reach my goal. As a girl I had to miss many moments of happiness in order to achieve my goal. But I did not feel bad and I was not dissatisfied. I could overcome hardships and hit my goal. I gave a form to the goal of my life.

I like gardening very much. I know all

agricultural work. I can sow, reap, sprinkle fertilizers, weed the fields and even graze cattle. In a word, I know all the works that a rural girl does and I have done also. I can swim and easily climb trees. Whether it is rural or urban context. I have only one message for girls, that they should develop their own personality. Then only will they know what they want. Then they can do what they want with ample self-confidence. They can prove their capabilities in action. They won't lead lives of compromise. Credit goes to

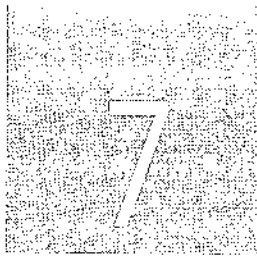
Ambedkar University for bringing my life to this stage. Ambedkar University is a platform of knowledge for the rural, poor and middle class youth. It is a guide that paves a path for a golden future. It is in the hands of the youth to utilize this golden opportunity. Moreover, many people have already proved that rural youth can compete with urban youth in all respects. I do not hesitate to say that this University will continue to stand as a support and inspiration for future generations.





VENKATESWARA RAO

*From a pan shop to
the Volvo company*



Venkateswara Rao

His father was a labourer in the coalmines.... He could hear the bells of the god of death behind the coalmines. His tender heart sank when his father went into the coalmines that opened like a demon. Deaths of coalmine labourers raised questions in young impressionable his mind. This mother's words told him what kind of work the lack of education can lead to and how one has to go to the verge of death for survival. He understood the importance of education. He did not forget his aim of higher education though his financial condition was paving a path of thorns for him and though he had to run a pan shop. He did not forget higher education though he had to do many petty jobs to educate his sister and brothers and had to shoulder the family responsibilities. After doing his MBA from Ambedkar University, he became a manager in a multinational company. He saw to it that his sister and brothers settled down in life. He conquered the hardships of life. Venkateswararao's journey went on from a pan shop to the Volvo company.

I will begin with where I started. I will tell you how economic problems obstructed the growth of a person and how I could release myself from all those shackles. I believe that reaching the destination is possible even when the path is full of thorny bushes if the destination is clear. Please read the pages of my life once...

I am from Godavarikhani of Karimnagar district. My father came here five decades ago and joined as a labourer in the coalmines. There was no advanced technology in 1960s to dig out coal from the earth. Human beings had to dig out coal from the depths of the earth. This was a most dangerous task. Many labourers died in the process. This disturbed my childhood very much. The source of your livelihood swallowed by the earth.... It was unimaginably sorrowful when the bodies of the labourers buried under the ruins of the coalmines were brought home.

Weeping wife, children and relatives...

My tender mind could not grapple with the

fact of sacrificing one's life for work. The question of why they were dying like thies tormented me. I poured questions on my mother. Mother told me that the roof of the coalmines collapsed killing the labourers. When I asked her why should one do that work when it involves such a danger, she said, "We have no education. That is why such work." This was when the importance of education left an indelible mark on my mind. I shuddered at the thought of a tragedy in the family. I was afraid whenever my father went to work. My mother told me, "If you study well, you will not have such hardships. Work hard and study well...." Those words gave me guidance. My destination was clear to me in my childhood itself. But I came to know later that it was not very easy to reach it. Because, that path was full of thorns.

We were four brothers and one sister. After revining his life and health in the coalmine, father got one hundred and twenty rupees per month. With that it was difficult to run

the house. Where was the question of education? As it was not possible to pursue education with that money, we opened a pan shop near a theatre in Godavarikhani. It was not possible for father to sit in the shop as he went to work. So, my younger brother and I ran the shop. I was thirteen at that time. I understood at that tender age itself how difficult it was to lead a normal life. Each paisa gathered like that helped in running the house. The burden of work did not allow me to concentrate on studies. But, the goal printed on my mind was education.

With difficulty, I could finish my tenth class. It was my interest in education that steered me through. Had it been shaken a little, I would have been distanced from education and would have been still running the pan shop. After joining the Intermediate I faced another serious problem apart from financial constraints. Father on whom the entire family was dependent was bedridden with illness. He was in bed for six months. I

was in second year at that time after Intermediate. I wanted to go to Hyderabad for higher studies. But, along with father's health, our family's economic conditions also deteriorated. I was at home for one year after Intermediate. I wanted to support my parents within my capacity. But, I did not forget my goal. I could save some money to study in Hyderabad.

Fortunately father recovered shortly. There was happiness at home. As long as he was in bed, nobody in the family was happy. The house regained its joy again when he started going to work. But, he could not go to work regularly as he used to earlier. It was very essential for him to be physically healthy for his job. I decided firmly to go to

We must not believe the many, who say that only free people ought to be educated, but we should rather believe the philosophers who say that only the educated are free.

- Epictetus

Hyderabad for higher studies. I started with the little money I had saved. My younger brother stayed back to run the pan shop and support my parents. I thought of finding a job after my education and look after my people. I was not jobless even for a month after the completion of my Automobile Engineering. I joined a private company. It helped the education of my brothers and sister. My getting the job of a trainee Engineer in a cement plant put an end to the problem of their higher education.

My degree gave me a job but not satisfaction. I wanted to study further. But, quitting the job would take us back to the same financial condition. The education of my brothers and sister would be hindered. So, I did not dare quit my job. I was looking for opportunities to study while working. Meanwhile, my career graph was also going up. After three years, I got a job as the customer support engineer in Birla group of companies. I could go to Godavarikhani on

deputation with the help of my seniors. I got married while I was working there. My son was born there. My father met with an accident in 1991 and took voluntary retirement. The entire burden of the family fell on my shoulders. I was the only breadwinner. In spite of several financial problems, I did not stop the education of my brothers and sister. The incidents that proved the importance of education were sown in my mind in my childhood itself. I did not turn my attention away from education. Education is the only means to change lives.

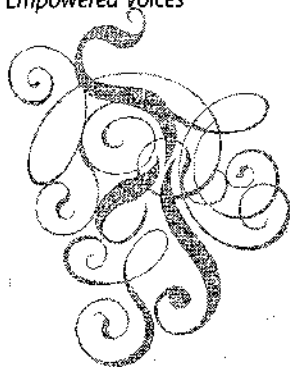
I came to know that Ambedkar University was offering the MBA course by correspondence. Admissions to the first batch were over by the time I came to know about it. I prepared for the entrance examination from then onwards and wrote the entrance examination in 1995. I got the 44 th rank. I could join the study centre in Hyderabad. As it was difficult to come from Godavarikhani every week, I chose the

Warangal study centre. I attended the classes regularly every week. It was difficult to go to Warangal every week. Every Sunday, waking up at 4 and reaching the railway station by 5; getting down at Warangal station by eight; for the classes from 9.30 to 4.30; the train at 5.30. again I reached home at 9.30.p.m. Work in the company throughout the week; studies and journey on Sunday. It was very difficult. But, the classes were very useful. So, I never missed them. Every year towards the end, Ambedkar University conducts summer / winter classes for students of correspondence courses. They were very useful also for acquiring market knowledge. Every year before the exams I applied for leave for one week and prepared for examinations. So, I completed my MBA

without failing. I could finish my MBA in spite of the work pressure. My dream was thus realized and I got an increment also for that degree.

In 2005, I joined the multinational company Volvo as a regional manager. My Brothers and sister also studied well and settled in life. My son and daughter are also studying well. See, how my mother's motivation about education took me to great heights! I could educate myself and also my people. I settled in a good job with an MBA from Ambedkar University. Like Arjuna concentrating on the bird's eye, I concentrated on higher studies from my childhood. I could overcome obstacles and settle down. Ambedkar University helped me in that.





K. PUSHPALEELA

*Education brought
the opportunities*

Kondru Pushpaleela

Ambedkar Open University changed her life beyond imagination. It led her towards college, Osmania University, movements, people, politics and ultimately towards power. An ordinary housewife transformed into an MLA and a minister. Breaking many social restrictions, her life extended into the vast world. The letter changed her life and introduced confidence, esteem and determination to her.

She was a reluctant student, hopping from one school to the other and heaved a sigh of relief when she got married after her tenth standard hoping that it was the end of her education. But little did the young Kondru Pushpaleela know that it was rather the beginning of the study graph with an upward swing supported by BRAOU initiative and programmes. Constantly encouraged by her highly educated husband and the opportunities thrown open by Open University, she completed her Masters Degree, entered public life and served as an MLA and the minister for Social Welfare in the Chandrababu Naidu government and earned an identity for herself in Andhra Pradesh. This could happen only with the canvas of her outlook expanding wide; and

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

- Rabindranath Tagore

with BRAOU creating opportunities for people who discontinued studies for whatever reasons and pushing them at a later date.

With all the juvenile misgivings, and lack of interest in studies, aided by liberal parents, she moved from one school to the other on grounds she then thought fit and somehow managed to clear Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and went into wedlock. Her husband was a man of letters with an M.A. and an M.Phil. degrees and she had passed only 10th standard. She wanted to be a housewife looking after her children and husband but destiny and her husband's intention willed otherwise. He used to constantly tell her about studies and when she casually agreed, he seriously brought Intermediate books. She was reluctant initially. She had the responsibility of looking after the children also. But the routine at home soon became monotonous and she thought, wisely enough, that she should give a try to higher education.

Her tryst with BRAOU took place when they were in Vikarabad. It was here that she took the entrance test for the degree course. When she cleared the examination, her joy knew no bounds. She was elated as she could clear the papers even while performing her chores as a housewife and a mother. She was advised to opt for Keyes High School as the study centre by their family friend Venkataiah, who was with BRAOU. The once reluctant student shuttled between Vikarabad and Secunderabad for the BRAOU classes. Later her husband, a bank officer, was transferred back to Hyderabad. Driven by an unflinching determination and fire of passion, she worked hard coping with domestic demands and transformed into a mature and meaningful person. Having tasted the luxury of being an educated person and a Graduate, she wanted to study further and her husband gave the nod. The ambience of Osmania University infused a feeling in Pushpaleela that she must

study at the campus. Armed with her BRAOU degree, she purchased books, prepared for the P.G. entrance exam and cleared it. Her joy knew no bounds. From Pushpaleela BA to Pushpaleela MA, it was like a dream for her. She went straight from a marriage function to the entrance examination surprising everyone with her attire. Although Economics and Political Science were subjects of her interest, she was allotted Public Administration. She joined Secunderabad Arts and Science College and started competing with the younger generation and won over them with her style. She missed the first grade by just two marks in PG. With a determination to derive optimum utilization of the newly acquired degrees, Pushpaleela started working as a lecturer and again had to study and work hard, this time it was to teach Civics and Public Administration to English medium students. Her education had been in Telugu medium. Later she wanted to go back to the basics and went back to the

BRAOU study centre as a counsellor. She was in the teaching line for six years and stood a testimony for the success of distance education. Looking back at the bygone years, Pushpaleela's eyes glow at the stupendous rise in her career graph. Being in the field of education, she had the opportunity to be in various branches like evaluation and scrutiny and could interact with people from various backgrounds and express her views. A strong advocate of gender equality, she participated in many radio talks, discussions and also acted in films. All this could be achieved with education which is a unique thing that happened to her with the help of BRAOU. In the meantime, she was eligible to study M.Phil with rural banking as the subject and her husband is in the banking field he helped her. As she was busy, she could complete only Paper-I. Her wish is to complete her Ph. D. and become Dr K Pushpaleela.

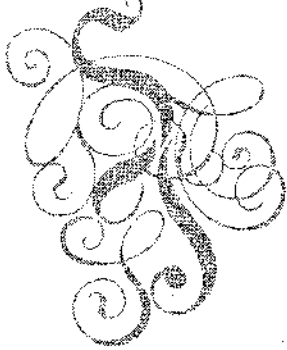
Then came the next canto of her life—

politics. Working as a lecturer she was interacting with women's organizations and her efforts caught the attention of MRPS leader Krishna Madiga which gave her direct entry into politics. A bureaucrat, Satish Chandra, was the chief guest in one of the functions organized by her. Later when she became a minister, the same Satish Chandra summed up her success as a housewife, lecturer and minister. During her college days, she was the city secretary of "Dalit Sena" started by Ramvilas Paswan. She denied an offer to contest the elections at that time. Later in the state assembly elections, her public life and education helped her to catch the attention of the TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu. Initially, her husband's name was considered for Ibrahimpatnam constituency but based on reports, Pushpaleela's name was finalized. The couple travelled by scooter to complete the formalities of filling the nomination forms. Though there was some discouragement on domestic front,

there were some others who encouraged her and she scored a thumping victory in the elections. Then came the cabinet minister rank with the social welfare portfolio.

"All this was possible only because of my education which changed my outlook and broadened the horizons of my perspective. There is no age bar for education", is what she tells others.





RAJENDRA PRASAD

*Self-confidence
is his weapon.*

Rajendra Prasad

Polio debilitated his two legs in his childhood and confined his life to home all alone. He took the resort of books in order to drive away despair and disappointment from his immobile life. The education that moved away from him returned to him through Ambedkar Open University. Now, he writes for newspapers and magazines. He has a small business of his own.

Unshaken by his physical disability and his inevitable dependence on crutches, Rajendra Prasad could scale new heights on the social ladder holding on to one of the many initiatives offered by Dr BR Ambedkar Open University. Hailing from a dalit family in Jagannathapuram of West Godavari district, Prasad's parents Domenil and mother Syamala moved to Hyderabad to work in a private company. He was not vaccinated against polio as his parents were unaware of the disease. Unfortunately, polio affected Prasad, his two legs became numb and he was disabled for life. Movement permanently walked away from his life. The family had to pay a heavy price for their ignorance. This made Prasad think and view things sensitively. The family shifted to Vijaywada as Prasad's father got a job as an ITI instructor. He sent all his children to school as he loved

education. Prasad used to wear calipers which do not bend and the school was on a hillock and the classroom had no benches for the students to sit on. Sitting on the floor was difficult for Prasad as he could not get up easily. One of the teachers advised his parents to keep him away from that strain and risk. That was the end of Prasad's school life.

His brothers used to bring books for Prasad to read. He was very much attracted to the playing children of his age. "I could not go to places so my brothers helped me in getting books and in the process I developed interest in fiction and was very happy reading books. I keenly observed the visitors to our house if they had any books with them", recalls Prasad. It was a period of confusion for him. His disability and determination to study everything were flashing like waves and he was very indecisive. Added to this were the snide

remarks on his abilities. He used to read library books brought for him by his younger brother and he liked the translations of great works which included translations of Spanish literature and Jack London's novels. At this juncture Sri Krishna teacher came into his life. He was a lecturer in Siddhartha College. He gave him books and good counseling which drove the confusion away from Prasad's life. He started giving him some meaningful books which gradually moulded a new personality out of him. "Repu" Telugu monthly also had a good influence on him. His mother wanted Prasad to emulate her brothers who were in good positions, a doctor and an engineer. Prasad could not match her expectations due to the handicap. On the advice of his doctor uncle, Prasad was given a three wheeler which could take him into the outside world. He

joined as an electrician with a salary of Rs 20 per month and joined a correspondence course with "Chitra sutra". He could not afford to pursue his other interest in painting as he could hardly make both ends meet. With the little money he had, Prasad could buy some old books. This raised an ambition in him to start his own home library. At the age of 24 Prasad came to know about Open University and his younger brother Ramana broached the idea of studying for a B.A. degree. After initial hesitation, Prasad agreed and cleared the entrance examination. He did not get a positive response when he tried to learn English. He approached St Rita Spoken English Centre and the principal Ms Lombart, an Anglo-Indian, took a

*Education's purpose is to replace
an empty mind with an open one.*

- Malcolm Forbes

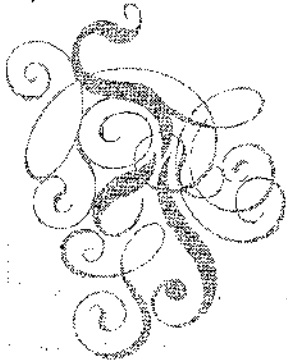
keen interest in him and taught him without taking any fee. She knew no Telugu nor did Prasad know any English but the learning process went on smoothly and in three months he was comfortable with the language which was his main fear in the earlier days. After overcoming the fear of English it was the examination fear which haunted Prasad. Knowing this, his younger brother Ravi arrived from Delhi only to boost his morale. He used to take Prasad to the examination centre and stay there till the exam was over and bring him back home. Ravi was more elated when Prasad passed the exam. This emotional bond gave great courage to Prasad and he completed rest of the course with a second class in B.A. This was the biggest moment in Prasad's life and his courage knew no bounds. At the study centre too he

received good cooperation to clear his subjects comprising Political Science, Sociology and Public Administration. The Study Centre coordinator Raghunath helped him a lot to pass the course. He even shifted the class down stairs to suit the handicapped Prasad. For a man who could not walk, the degree came walking to him, all with the courage and cooperation of his well wishers and the initiatives of BRAOU. Dr. Ambedkar Open University has given Prasad a new lease of life. It provided the real limbs to the handicapped person though nature played foul with him. He had doubts about the utility of Open education even while studying. But such a question was never asked in any of the subsequent interviews he attended which gave a fillip to his morale. A rejuvenated Prasad, who

was interested in literature, joined "Writing for Mass Media" a PG diploma course offered by BRAOU and cleared it with ease. As the media offices were not located in the ground floor, Prasad gave up the idea of joining media. He started a

telephone booth and when things were moving smoothly, the sudden boom of cell phones forced him to shift to a small business to earn his livelihood. Continuing with his hobby, Prasad keeps writing essays and short stories for magazines.





SURYA DHANUNJAY NAIK

*From darkness
into moonlight*

Surya Dhanunjay Naik

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University was the launching pad for Surya Dhanunjay Naik in her long journey of education. Born in a remote tribal village in Telangana, she has a doctorate in Telugu Literature and she is an Associate Professor of Telugu in Osmania University. It was her B.A. degree from BRAOU that functioned as a prologue to her success story.

The girl from a tiny thanda (tribal settlement) of Nalgonda district strode like a colossus on the propeller BRAOU to be one of the first few Lambada women to become an Associate Professor and take a Ph.D. Surya Dhananjay Naik hails from Bhallunaik thanda, a remote hamlet tucked away in Miryalguda of Nalgonda district, which strictly adheres to its own rules set to preserve the inimitable tribal

traditions and their unique style of living. Born in one such thanda cocooned in tribal traditions and taboos, Surya was the ninth of the ten children. Surya took their community by storm when she first stepped out of their settlement to study in a different thanda and leapt to the rank of Associate Professor besides getting a doctorate and BRAOU stands as the central pillar of her success story.

I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. All reforms which rest simply upon the law, or the threatening of certain penalties, or upon changes in mechanical or outward arrangements, are transitory and futile.... But through education society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move.... Education thus conceived marks the most perfect and intimate union of science and art conceivable in human experience.

- John Dewey

Bhallunaik thanda has facilities only up to third standard and breaking the tradition she stepped out to study further in another thanda which has classes up to fifth standard. The determination of the girl to study was so strong that she walked seven kilometers to reach the new school. She had the company of her eldest sister's daughter Majji bhai and the duo was a sight to watch going to school for higher studies. At that time when child marriages were the order of the day in

the banjara community, Surya completed her fifth standard. One day her teacher went to her house and told Surya's mother that the girl was good at studies, and advised her to send Surya to high school at Miryalaguda. As the words came from a man of letters, the two girls were admitted in Miryalaguda government school surprising everyone in the thanda. Brushing aside the snide remarks and marriage proposals the two girls from Bhallunaik thanda marched 15 kilometers daily to attend the school. After one month, they were accommodated in a hostel at Miryalguda and the two-some used to come home only during holidays. When they cleared tenth class, they became the first girl duo to pass 10th from the thanda. They were referred to as the 10th passed girls in the surrounding area and made Bhallunaik thanda proud. After 10th she joined Intermediate with Science subjects and the pressure for marriage was on. She was 17 and it was

too late according to the traditions of the thanda to be single. Surya protested and wept saying that she wanted to study. Her mother consoled her that she has taken a word from her husband to be Dhanunjay Naik that her education would continue. She was married in 1987 while studying Intermediate first year and the next year gave birth to a boy and with that she stopped her studies. BRAOU option came to the fore at this juncture and she wrote the entrance examination in 1989 and passed. There was disapproval from all quarters but her husband stood by her side and encouraged her. At the age of 20 her family responsibilities grew with the second child. As she was very much attached to the children, she could not go to the contact classes of BRAOU. But

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.

- John Dewey

her husband used to get all the material of BRAOU and give her the needed word of encouragement. She studied B.A. from 1990 to 1994 with Public Administration, Sociology and Political Science as optional subjects and cleared all the subjects and became a graduate. BRAOU has played a vital role in the making of history, as this was the stepping-stone for Surya who would become the first tribal woman to win laurels in the field of education in Andhra Pradesh. In the meantime, she practised typewriting and the attachment with children was so strong that she used to take them to the institute along with her. She also registered for B.Ed. at Andhra Mahila Sabha. Although the teaching was in

English, there was a provision for writing the examination in Telugu. With the cooperation and encouragement extended by her husband Dhanunjay Naik, she cleared the B.Ed. examination in 1995. On the advice of her husband, she appeared for the M.A. Sociology entrance examination. At the same time she also got a seat in M.A. Telugu in Telugu University and she opted for the latter. She used to take her children to the College. Around this time she got a job after clearing D.Sc. She was posted as a teacher in a government high school. She went on long leave to complete her Post Graduation. While in the final year, she gave birth to the third child. After completing M.A. she joined the Library Science course which fulfilled her ambition to study in the historic Arts College of Osmania University. Her interest in studies was increasing day by day and she could get overwhelming support from her husband who had foregone a chance to

*"Education is the best friend.
An educated person is respected
everywhere.*

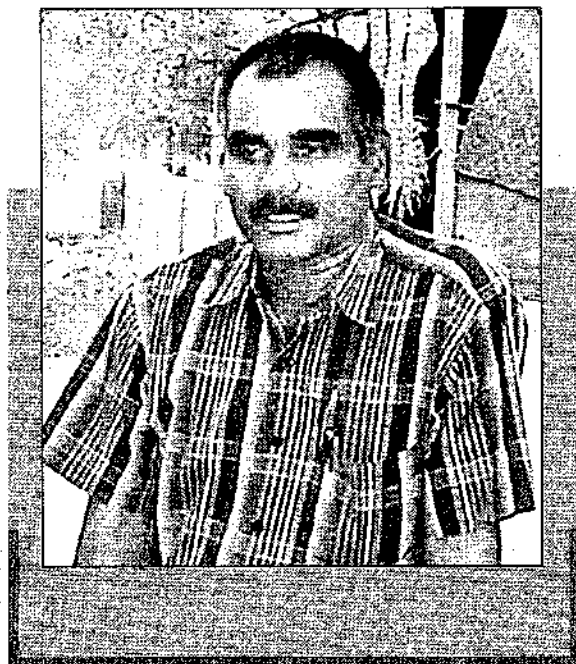
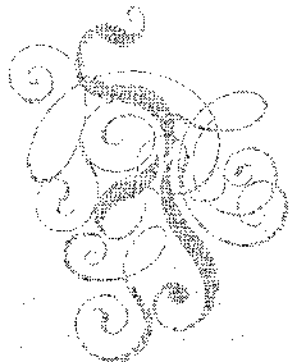
*Education beats the beauty and the youth."
- Chanakya*

study in Cambridge University for her sake. After P.G. in 1997 and the Library Science course in 1998, she joined M.Phil. During 1999-2000 and submitted her thesis on Rama's sojourn in forest and the "ashrams" he visited. During this period she had a couple of job opportunities and she finally joined as a lecturer in a Degree college at Sadasivpet in Medak. In 1999 she was selected as an Assistant Professor in Osmania University and two years later she went on for her Ph.D. on Banjara literature of Nalgonda district. She got a doctorate for her research in 2006. Next year she applied for the post of Associate Professor and was selected which was another feather in her cap.

It was unfortunate that her mother suddenly passed away and could not

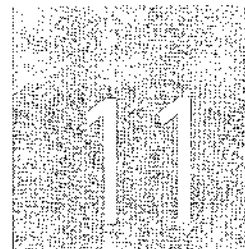
hear about the twin achievements of Surya. Having come a long way and being successful in life, the 37 year old Surya wants to start a Banjara Study Circle for the upkeep of Banjara traditions and help poor tribals and girls, in particular, in their studies. Surya, whose studies came to a halt with Intermediate, was able to reach the peaks with the distance education mode provided by BRAOU in B.A. From the tiny hamlet in Nalgonda district to the heights of Associate Professor in the Arts College Surya, became the wonder woman. She attributes all the credit to the opportunity provided by BRAOU and the relentless support and encouragement she could get from her husband.





NARENDER

*He conquered
fate*



Narender

His tender hands sold sodas and his young feet went from village to village selling milk, curd and idlis. His education stopped with high school and the burden of family responsibilities fell on his shoulders. His perseverance and determination got a degree from BRAOU which in turn reached him to the position of a tahsildar. He drove away the darkness of poverty with the light of education and today he is source of pride for his village.

For a boy who lost his childhood to the unkind society, education was a far fetched dream but the initiatives of BRAOU moulded Narendra into a person holding a high position in the government besides providing a respectable status in society. Let us read Narendra's story in his own words:

I had a turbulent childhood and the family was very, disturbed after my father took to drinking following Naxalites occupation of our land. We moved from our native Warangal to Nizamabad and I joined a BC welfare hostel but could not complete seventh standard. Back at home things were difficult. I had to do some odd jobs like selling curd, milk, soda. My mother lent a helping hand and I used to sell the idlis she prepared and household expenses were taken care of to a certain extent. Finally, I

appeared for the 10th standard examination from Kothapalli Zilla Parishad School in 1986-87. Lady Luck did not smile on me and I failed in English by one mark. People poked fun at my result. Unable to bear the unpleasant remarks, we shifted to Madhapur and started a hotel. I worked as a security guard in a bottling company at nights. With the money saved we started a dairy and I used to supply milk to Mr Giridhar, who was the joint collector of Nizamabad district then. His personality cast a spell on me and I wanted to emulate him. This made me turn towards studies again. He also encouraged me to take up education when I told him what I had in mind.

We shifted to Hyderabad after some time and I used to drive an auto-rickshaw and had no specific plans for my future. I used to share a room with others who told me about BRAOU. I was elated to know that one can study graduation even without any formal education. In 1991 I cleared the entrance examination and opted for Giriraj

*You have to dream before your
dreams can come true.*

- Abdul Kalam

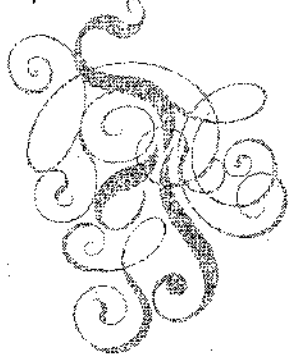
College in Nizamabad as the study centre. I could complete the degree in 1995 with average marks and did well in Osmania University course and moved on to PG course but in my heart of hearts, the desire to write competitive examinations was growing.

I went to a study centre and was stunned to see the books and coaching which was in English. I found it very difficult. So I purchased some books and returned to my room where my friends made fun of me and my dream of becoming a collector. The fear of rejection increased my resolution to clear the competitive exams. From then onwards, I started writing all competitive exams and my determination was to emerge as sub collector in the coming days. In 2001, I got the first job as Assistant Station Master. Next it was junior lecturer with posting at Alladurgam in Medak district. My joy knew no bounds. From a person who sold soda, milk and curd

bearing the brunt of discrimination, I have now turned into a person with a respectable job and a good place in the social strata.

Elated by this, I immediately took up the job and in 1999 appeared for Group II exam. In 2004 I appeared for the Group I exams also. I came out successful in Group II exams and got the posting as Deputy Tahasildar in my native Warangal district. I had struggled throughout my childhood to sustain my family and had to face many insults and difficulties. Still it was the determination that helped me to fulfill my dream and find a respectable place in society.

Financial constraints cannot be a hindrance to higher studies. BRAOU had been providing a helping hand and anyone who could not continue their regular studies can join the Open University at any time. Open University education is on par with formal education and I am a living example this fact.



JAIULA GOWRI

*Invincible
consciousness*

Jajula Gowri

She knows how letters can twinkle like stars in the lives surrounded by darkness. She has experienced how education can spread light and can empower the disempowered. Her struggle through humiliations is a witness to her voyage towards success and knowledge. Married at 13 and a drop out from school, she has proceeded from daily labour to LLM. A well-known writer Jajula Gowri has realised her dreams with the support of BRAOU.

She worked her way to success, literally. Starting her work as a daily wage employee earning Rs. five a day, Jajula Gowri is today a celebrated writer, lawyer, has a masters degree in journalism and the satisfaction of achieving something in life. Being the first in the family to have education, daughter of a mason, Jajula Gowri stunned the audience and won the first prize when she gave an emotional and forceful speech on Dr BR Ambedkar. BRAOU provided the grace and opportunity to the talented poet, who was very much interested in literature and songs from her childhood, as Gowri realized that anyone can attempt and become a graduate through distance education irrespective of their academic background. Her collection

"Most successful men have not achieved their distinction by having some new talent or opportunity presented to them. They have developed the opportunity that was at hand."

- Bruce Barton

of short stories, "Mannu Buvva" has a special place in Telugu literature and Gowri has many useful contributions in Ekalavya magazine run by KG Satyamurthy.

Married at the tender age of 13, the eighth standard dalit girl achieved her first success when she could convince her family to take up work in a nearby factory on a daily wage basis. The earning of the couple was not sufficient after the birth of two children. She moved from one job to the other and bore many insults at her work place as her family needs had enlarged. She wanted to admit her children in an English medium school but it was expensive. Financial constraints and family needs made her bear insults and inconveniences. Drawing inspiration from her primary school teacher who cared for the little dalit girl, Gowri chanced upon the BRAOU notification while she was working in a factory. She made two attempts to procure the application from for the BRAOU entrance but could not succeed. Finally her colleague got her one in 1992-93. There was

discouragement from some quarters but her determination to study ignored it. Her condition was so pathetic that the fee was paid by her friends. She did not spare any effort in studying for the degree course. It was but natural for her to opt for Telugu literature. In the second year, she was very much impressed by Aluri Bairagi's poem "Naku Koncham Nammakamivvu" (Give me some confidence). The poem made her realize that she is the only architect of her own destiny. She joined a private company as a receptionist with a salary of Rs 700 and the proprietor encouraged Gowri to study and also paid the examination fee. He used to raise her pay for every additional degree she acquired and she reached up to Rs 3,500. Gowri nearly converted the reception counter into a study desk and worked hard besides pursuing her literary career though it did not meet with any success at that point of time. Gowri had enthralled the entire faculty at BRAOU. The university was celebrating Dr BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary and asked the students to give

in their names if they wanted to talk on the occasion. Gowri like many others did not give in her name but went to the seminar. It was here that the orator in Gowri sparked. While other speakers were only talking about Dr BR Ambedkar's achievements, his struggle went undiscussed. Gowri was given five minutes to talk and she held the audience spell-bound with her 20 minute speech. Eventually she was given the first prize. A guest lecturer, who was present there encouraged Gowri to study journalism and published her poetry in Ekalavya magazine. She joined BCJ in Osmania University in 1997 and after completing it, she moved to Telugu university for MCJ. The BRAOU roots were strong in Gowri, she returned to it to study MA Public Administration. She started her career as a writer while studying journalism. "Utiki Arestha" in Ekalavya and "Dalita Samrajyam" in Osmania Dalita Dandora were published and brought her a good name as a poet and writer. Later on responding to a call for scripts from Madiga community, Gowri sent

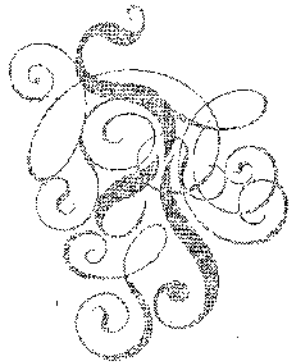
her work for which she received a four page appreciation letter from Dr Nagappagari Sundarraju of Central University. She was also made the Vice President of Madiga Sahitya Vedika. Encouraged by the literary success and improvement in financial condition, life appeared to be settled for Gowri but the company in which she was working was closed down. She tried Group I Services exam twice but could not get through. The news item that doctors can be held on charges of negligence of duty brought back old memories to her. A child died due to

untimely surgery in the hospital where she was working earlier. She decided to study law. She passed the entrance examination but had no money to pursue her studies. She attempted the second time and joined Padala Rami Reddy Law College and completed her LLB course by 2005. Currently she is pursuing her LLM. *Mannu Buvva*, her compilation of short stories, won the 2004 Susheela Narayana Reddy award besides two other awards. She next wrote *Mannu Bidda*, a novel. She wants to study for as long as possible and her ambition is to get a Ph D in Law.





University Convocation: The Founder Vice chancellor Prof. G. Ram Reddy awarding the Degrees



YELLA VENKATESWARA RAO

The music of letters

Yella Venkateswara Rao

It is surprising to note that the mridangam authority Yella Venkateswarrao had no primary education. He got a doctorate from JNTU, functioned as the Head and the Dean in Telugu University and introduced many courses. He could not go to school in childhood as he started giving concerts at seven. His long-cherished dream of getting a degree was fulfilled by BRAOU.

Yella Venkateswara Rao – He is a music maestro.... Music reverberates in his very presence. It is all like a symphony. Yet there was a missing stanza, Some void little known to many. Despite being a big name in music and a Dean in a University, he had one shortcoming – lack of formal education. BRAOU provided this missing stanza to make his life's symphony complete through distance education. Overburdened with the hectic schedule and concerts, Yella Venkateswara Rao did not attend any school. This vital connotation was set in place to complete the successful symphony of his life when he registered for a degree course with BRAOU.

Moving with people in high office, Rao badly felt the need for education and it was former chief minister NT Rama Rao and

*Is not enough, we must apply.
Willing is not enough, we must do.
- Johann von Goethe*

former Vice Chancellor Dr C Narayana Reddy who suggested that he should register with Open University for a Degree course.

"This is how I enrolled myself and my wife Trimurthulamma also joined me in the B.A. course", says the much-acclaimed Mridangam Vidwan from Palakoderu in West Godavari district. Born in to a family of musicians, music came naturally to him and he started giving concerts right from the age of seven. His father Yella Ramana Murthy was a violin vidwan. Along with his fame and his stature grew his determination to acquire a Degree. He took the entrance exam seriously and prepared well in general knowledge and related subjects along with his wife. The maestro who was felicitated by Presidents of India, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, APJ Abdul Kalam, Prime Ministers of India, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, PV Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee and chief ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, T Anjaiah,

NT Rama Rao, Marri Chenna Reddy, N Janardhna Reddy and N Chandrababu Naidu prepared carefully and sincerely to take the entrance exam for B.A. in Drama at BRAOU.

When both of them qualified for the degree course, Rao said, "my dreams came true with this Open University. If there was no Open University system, I would not have had any Degree, which was my dream". The creator of the world record by staging a non-stop "Mrudnga yagnam" for 30 hours, a unique experiment which merits a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records, was unable to attend the contact classes due to his busy schedule while his better half evinced keen interest and was regular to the classes.

Rao, known for his curly locks of hair baffled the Music Department in Paris with his mrudangam when he played the same beat of jazz with an equally stunnins effect. The faculty tested the Indian instrument and

was surprised. With all the fame, hype and tight schedule, Rao completed the first and second year of B.A. in one beat with the equal dexterity of producing a melodious nada. Former chief minister NT Rama Rao appointed the Mrudangam Vidwan as member of a committee of the newly formed Telugu University. A clause that eminent personalities in their chosen fields can be taken into the faculty, whether or not they have academic qualifications, put him in the hot seat.

This newfound status increased the urge in him to complete his degree fast but Rao, who won many national and international awards, could not attend two papers in the final year as he was scheduled to give a concert in America on the same dates. Rao, who was to write the syllabus for the

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Telugu University, had himself to study hard and complete his B.A. When the final stanza was successfully complete, he felt very happy. "I was really proud at that the thought time. The thought that I too have a B.A. Degree gave me immense pleasure. Earlier, I was feeling shy," he said.

Armed with the newly acquired B.A. Degree, he joined as a professor in the Music Department of Telugu University. The musician, whose deft hands bring out the best of rhythmic beats was entrusted with the responsibility to write the syllabus for a course in Mridangam. "Initially I was a bit scared but the B.A. Degree gave me the required confidence and I worked as the Dean for 15 years," he said. Rao, who produced, directed and choreographed numerous musical ballets and plays in

*Always bear in mind that your
own resolution to succeed is more
important than any one thing.*

- Abraham Lincoln

classical carnatic, folk and light styles, thought of pursuing his studies further but time was hard pressing. His wife, however did her Masters in Public Administration from BRAOU.

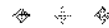
During his stint at All India Radio, Yella Venkateswara Rao became synonymous with mrudangam and continued the rich tradition of classical music with his programmes. Carrying the Indian flag and its classical music afloat, Rao won the Hoso Bonko Award in Indonesia for his play Sivathandavam during the international radio music competitions held in 1979 in which 79 countries took part.

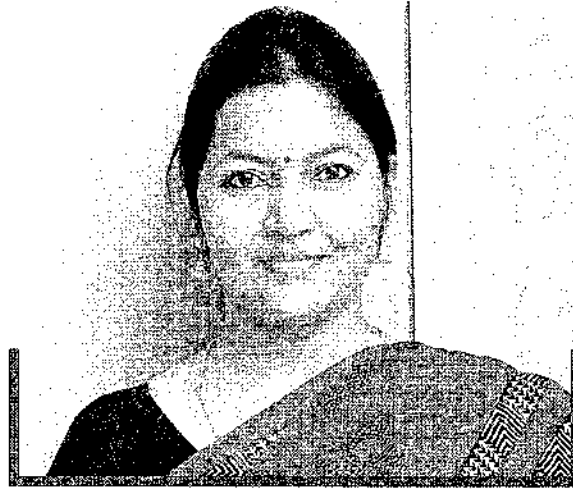
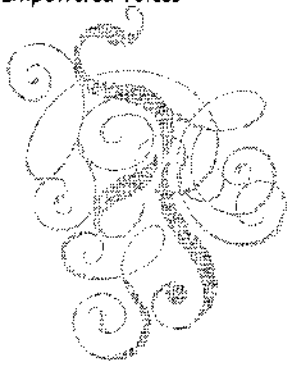
Rao accompanied many stalwarts during concerts and he is a member of numerous associations here and abroad. Having felt the void of education in his career, he started a free institution under Guru Kula System where free boarding facility is provided to poor students. About 500 students from India, USA, Germany,

Singapore and France were trained in the name and style of Yella International Institute of Mrudangam and other Percussions since 1969.

The master for mrudangam is offering Mrudangam Therapy to mentally retarded children at Thakur Hariprasad Institute for

Mentally Handicapped children for the past seven years and at the same time working on Mrudangam therapy, acclaimed as the first of its kind in the world. Yella Venkateswara Rao's life symbolizes a symphony studded with stanzas of achievements of which a B.A. degree from BRAOU is the melodious one.





GOTTIPATI SUJATHA

*Golden history
written by education*

Gottipati Sujatha

She failed twice in English in tenth class. But, later she stood state first in B.A. with English Literature as one of the subjects. She writes speeches for the Governor and the Chief Minister now. She has gained the confidence that education can conquer the world. The golden history of Sujatha, who is working as a Deputy Director, PR, in APSFC began with a degree from BRAOU.

Having failed tenth standard in English twice, she went on to win a gold medal in English literature and emerged as a speech writer to Governors and chief ministers on national occasions – this is the story of the golden girl, Gottipati Sujatha. Not just to people who are deprived of education for various reasons, BRAOU addresses also the needs of people who neglect studies for various reasons but have a burning desire to settle in life with the help of higher studies. Moving in the company of modest people Sujatha failed tenth standard twice in three subjects each. After a gap of three years, BRAOU provided her the plank to hone up her skills and come out with flying colours winning gold medal in her BA English Literature through distance learning. There was no stopping the gold rush from then on. BCJ, MCJ, BPR – she achieved a gold medal in all the courses and now works as a Deputy Director (PR) in APSFC.

Sujatha's father was a headmaster in Beerkur of Nizamabad district and his tireless effort of innovation and indifference towards material things at times caused some hardships to him and the family. With all his entrepreneurial inclinations, her father moved from teaching to agriculture and to Gujarat where he took up civil works. He ended up in major financial loss in all the adventures. May be this had done good to Sujatha in the long run, she reflects, on hindsight. Her Primary education oscillated from Beerkur to Chennai and back to her native place where the entire batch failed in tenth standard. She was then 13 years old, and she failed in Mathematics, English and Science. The only solace left for Sujatha was her acumen in sports and she won many prizes in various games. As age was on her side, she repeated tenth standard but the story was no different and she failed in the same subjects and life went on at the same

pace, with friends, games and studying books which were not academic. The girl with a casual approach towards life had a beautiful dream in which she saw that she studied well and conquered the world. Next came the day of self assessment. She had a strong resolve of seeing her dream come true.

Meanwhile, marriage proposals were being discussed at home. She fought her way to convince the family members to allow her to give a try to education. This was the turning point of her life with BRAOU coming into the picture. She appeared for the degree entrance exam conducted by BRAOU and Andhra University simultaneously and cleared both. Since there was no study centre for Andhra University, she opted for BRAOU and that was perhaps the first batch. In degree, Sujatha opted for English literature, Political Science and History. Her father was baffled at the choice of her subjects, English in particular. But the young Sujatha was

unrelenting. She drew the inspiration to study English literature from a press conference of former chief minister NT Rama Rao. Questions posed by journalists and his replies and the way they were reported the next day in newspapers made her resolve more firmly. That a strong foundation in English helps to succeed in Journalism has been the belief of many; Sujatha was no exception. Attending the study centre classes on Sundays Sujatha learned English the hard way, word by word with primary grammar books, dictionaries and other reference material. BRAOU provided the platform to fulfill her dreams. After her final year exams, she was in Hyderabad with relatives when a letter addressed to her was redirected from her native place. It

*"Success doesn't come to you...
you go to it."
- Marva Collins*

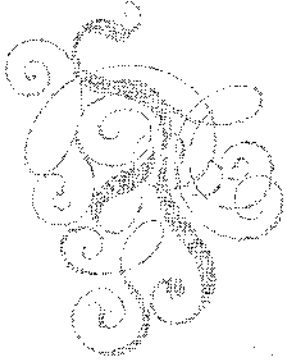
revealed that she stood state first in BA and won a gold medal. Journalists poured in followed by photographs and interviews, all published in newspapers the following day. She was elated and was on cloud nine. As her father was broke after the adventure in Gujarat, she had to take up a job. She applied for a job in Andhra Jyoti and Andhra Prabha and was selected for both. She joined Jyoti and shifted to Prabha and worked as a journalist for about six years. Enjoying her stint in journalism which gave her exposure to various fields, she authored many articles. By that time she was married and had a daughter. While in Prabha, she joined BCJ (Bachelor in Communication and Journalism) in Telugu university. Family obligations, work and studies – she did the balancing act with dexterity and came out with flying colours, with a distinction and a gold medal. This was the second gold medal for a girl who failed tenth standard twice. After BCJ,

she went back to BRAOU where she took her BPR (Public Relations) Degree. She stood state first and won a gold medal. Next she joined MCJ in Osmania University, no wonder she stood in the first state and won a gold medal again. The foundation for the golden path was however laid by BRAOU. The struggle she had to undergo in her graduation paid rich, nay golden, dividends in later years. Her wish to do M Phil was not possible with the birth of a son and growing responsibilities at work and at home. She joined government service through APPSC and her journalistic background made her job as DPRO in Krishna district much easier and more interesting. She was very successful in her career and shaped the state-run Andhra Pradesh magazine making it more colourful and increasing its circulation. She also has the credit of suggesting the name e-seva for government's multi-utility service. She was the speech

writer the during Independence and Republic Day functions read out by chief ministers and governors on many occasions. She is widely traveled and has enlarged her social canvas besides increasing her quality of thinking. A girl who failed the tenth

standard, passed without fail remaining exams after BRAOU gave the confidence and went on to receive Vidya Ratna award. Sujatha's success story could be perhaps one of the most colourful feathers in BRAOU's cap.





KISHTAIAH

*Autowala
became a Lecturer*

Kishtaiah

Kishtaiah inherited only an old auto rickshaw from his father. With the support of this auto rickshaw, Kishtaiah started exploring life and paved a new path of his life. Born in the outskirts of Hyderabad in a dalit village, he became untouchable for letters as well. His childhood was mortgaged to daily labour. BRAOU showed him the path to higher education. Now he is a Lecturer who stands an inspiring model for his students not only in terms of his teaching but also in terms of his journey of life.

I was born in a small village called Kandi, about 50 k.m from Hyderabad in a dalitwada and used to drive an auto-rickshaw for livelihood. Dr BR Ambedkar Open University has changed my life and today I am working as a lecturer and am propagating the need for education among the youngsters who are often confused. The change in my life did not take place overnight.

My parents, Manayya and Pochamma were daily wage workers. I have an elder brother, a sister and four younger brothers. With such a big family, it was a hand-to-mouth existence and I used to work in the brick kiln during the summer vacation along with my parents. Despite my troubled childhood, I drew inspiration for higher studies from our neighbor who had passed M.Com. and was employed with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The other inspiration in my life was our social studies teacher who gave me a book of Dr BR Ambedkar's life story. One of our teachers who used to sing well also

had left a strong impression on me and I used to sing folk songs well.

With all the poverty, shortcomings and discouraging environment at home, I managed to clear 10th class in second division in 1990. I still remember the day I had to walk to the examination centre in Sangareddy as we could not afford the bus fare. Our parents arranged money for the remaining days. I joined in Intermediate with Maths, Physics and Chemistry. I faced difficulty particularly with the science subjects and I had to appear for supplementary examinations. Meanwhile, my interest in music came to the fore and I organized a small seven-member music troupe. We participated in the government sponsored literacy drive programme and toured villages giving performances on literacy and awareness on social discrimination.

In the meantime, I worked for some private companies but the urge to pursue higher

studies was intensifying. The turning point in my life came when I read in a newspaper that one can appear for civil services by taking a degree from BR Ambedkar Open University. I took the entrance exam in 1993 and joined in first year undergraduate programme. To support my family, I needed to earn and I learnt how to drive an auto for my livelihood. This is how I could fulfill my family responsibility and my personal longing. I used to drive the auto from seven in the morning to six in the evening and made it a point to study the material provided by BRAOU for one hour every day.

On Sundays there were contact classes conducted by the University and I strictly adhered to the time table set by BRAOU and my time management has brought in good results as I passed Degree course in 1996 in the third division. This helped me to make friends with graduates from our village and we used to discuss general topics during our spare time. After graduation, my urge for learning increased

and I wanted to study Law. I wrote the entrance exam Lawcet and in the first attempt, I could secure a 5,000 rank but in the second one I made it below 1000. I had to pay Rs 5,000 as fee and with great difficulty, I managed the fee but the course did not start that year due to political reasons.

Next, I set my eyes on Osmania University and went there in my auto to by the application for Post Graduation (Political Science) entrance exam in 1998. I cleared it and secured 38th rank out of the 2000 applicants. With great difficulty, my family agreed to my higher education in Hyderabad and I had to work hard. It was just study, study and study, be it college or hostel and I completed the MA Previous and Final with good marks and got the 4th rank in our batch. Government gave me a scholarship of Rs 5,000 in recognition of my effort.

During 1999-2000, I was also busy with

preparation for the competitive exams. I could not succeed in the first attempt and a deep financial crisis hampered my second chance. I also attended a study circle for six months to get a better view of the competitive exams. I returned to my village for a brief spell but went back to the university campus, as I wanted to make the best use of my education. In response to the notification of M.Phil, I appeared for the entrance exam and I stood fifth. I had put in my best efforts for the civils exams but 15 days after I appeared for M.Phil. I was selected as a Junior lecturer and was posted in China Kodur mandal in our native Medak district. People in our village and surrounding areas were surprised to know that an auto driver of three years ago has now become a lecturer. All this could be possible only because of the opportunities thrown open by Dr BRAOU and this medium of distance education which is helping people like me in more than one way. I used to study the material supplied

by BRAOU even for my competitive exam preparation and it was very useful. But for the university, an Intermediate failed student like me could not have become what I am today. Having learnt things the hard way, I concentrate on guiding the youth who are confused a lot during their Intermediate. I faced many problems and with my experience, I am committed to give a proper direction to the youth.

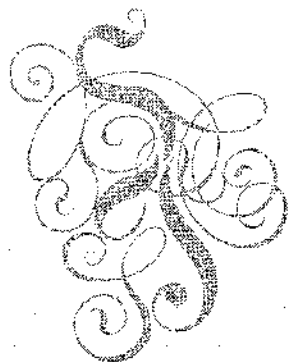
This is my story in brief.

Drawing inspiration from our cousin who was a bank employee and maturing with a book on Dr BR Ambedkar and his struggle to climb the ladder in the society, which discriminated people in the name of caste, and joining chorus with a jovial teacher to start a music troupe, I made it to the Masters degree and to the position of a lecturer. All this became possible because of the methodical distance education provided by BRAOU.





Foundation stone for the Campus, Vice President of India 24 July 1988



PADMAPRIYA

Towards IBM....

Padmapriya

Padmapriya's journey from a computer trainer to a Manager at IBM holds a mirror to the role of a catalyst that BRAOU could play. A polytechnic diploma holder settled in a small job could transform her career by accessing higher education through Ambedkar University.

From professors to lawyers, officials to scientists, BRAOU has produced them all but here is the story of Padma Priya who went on to secure a job in IBM, the multinational company which has been the dream of many aspiring youngsters. In an age, when engineering, computer science and jobs in big MNCs are the hot favourites, Padma Priya achieved more than that without even stepping into an engineering college but with the help of BRAOU and its useful courses on offer.

Padma Priya completed her tenth standard and joined a polytechnic to secure an early job. After completing the technical course with distinction in electronics and communications, she could not continue her studies and engineering course due to her family conditions. Around this time she came to know about BRAOU and appeared for the entrance exam and joined B Com. She was attending weekend classes and on the remaining days went for a job to sustain/supplement the family needs.

Praising the flexibility and high utility of BRAOU study centres, Padma Priya says that the week-end classes were very useful and lecturers were very cooperative. "We get useful tips on how to prepare for the exams in these classes and the teaching methodology is superb," she says. "On Sundays whenever I visited my mother, I used to attend the classes at the study centre in that locality. We can attend classes at any of the study centres of BRAOU according to our convenience," says Padma. The fee structure too is affordable and with all the examinations being held on Sundays in the afternoon(?) employees need not take leave to write the exams, she says. Padma Priya, who was working with a computer training centre teaching programming with a salary of Rs 2,000 before graduating from BRAOU, was promoted as a Technical Coordinator with a pay hike. This was the first fruit of success BRAOU gave to Padma Priya. She joined MBA with BRAOU but could not continue. Unlike other universities, BRAOU has

flexibility for packing study. Once you pay the fee, you can complete the course within nine years. She needed the job but at the same time she had to forego it to pursue MBA, if it were other universities, but in BRAOU one can continue with the job and study MBA. Family pressures kept her away from studies for two years, but she coped well with studies and completed her first and second year terms at one go, that's the flexibility offered by BRAOU. Assignments are part of MBA course and the project director and lecturers at the study centre were very helpful, says Padma Priya. I was working with a software company while studying my MBA. BRAOU gave her an Advanced Diploma in Management certificate after completing two years in the Masters course. The certificate was equivalent to PG and would be useful to further her career even while studying.

It helped her to get a job in Delloitte, a multinational company. An MNC never undermines the certificate which tells that

Padma Priya has done the course through distance education. It values the capabilities of individual. Their requirement was a document to certify education and practical education which she had and she got the job. Time and again it was proved that distance education is on par with formal education and the former has far more benefits.

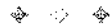
Padma Priya continued her studies with BRAOU while working with the MNC. The BRAOU syllabus is good and its foundation is solid, she confirms and rules out the view that Open University courses are not useful for pursuing a good career. She completed her MBA (HR) from BRAOU while in Delloitte and moved on to IBM, the dream company of millions of youngsters in software field. The IBM job

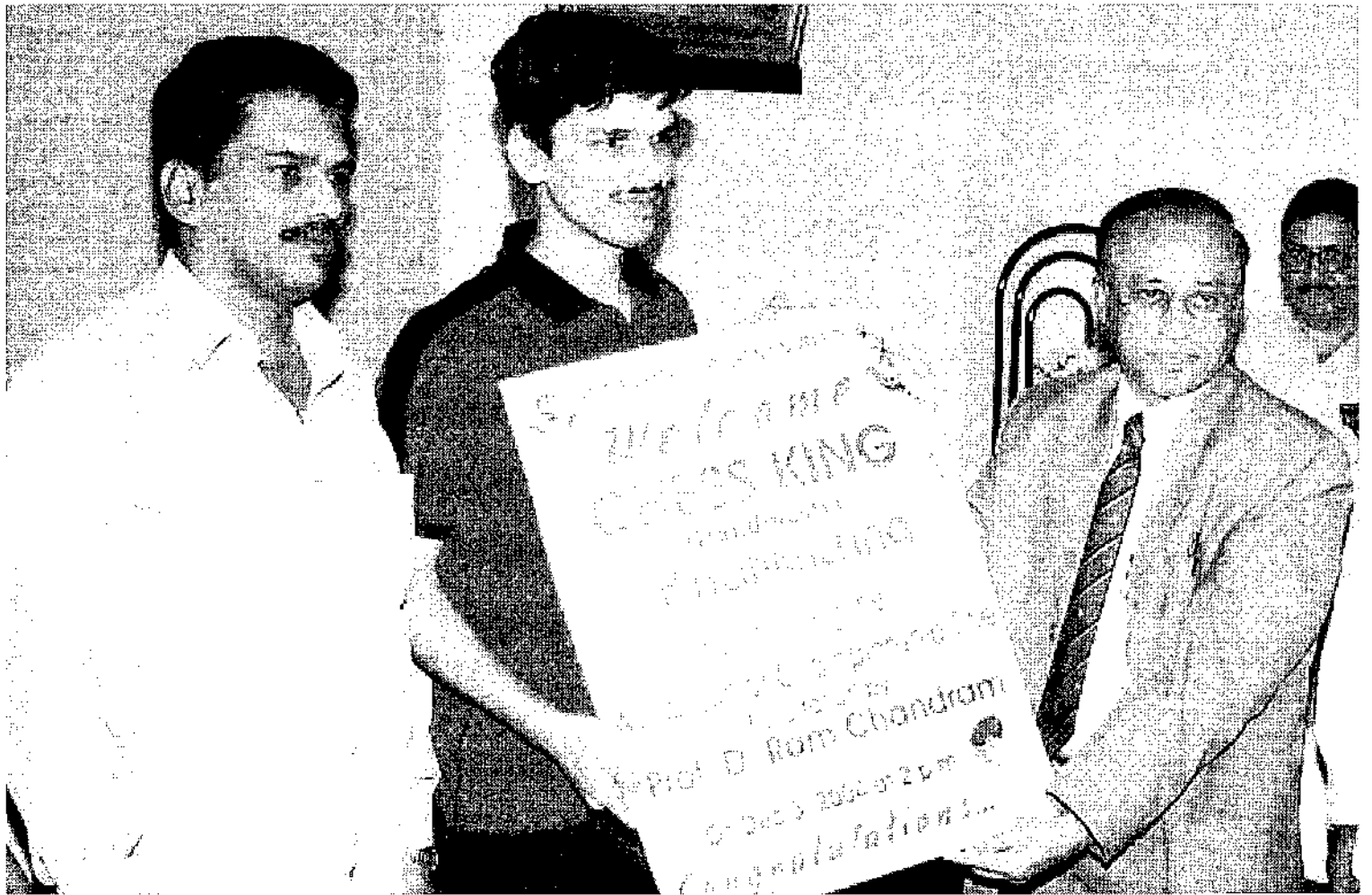
*Dream is not what you see in sleep.
It is the thing which does not let you sleep.*
- APJ Abdul Kalam

came on the basis of her MBA certificate issued by BRAOU and this is what people, who do not consider distance education on par with formal education, should know.

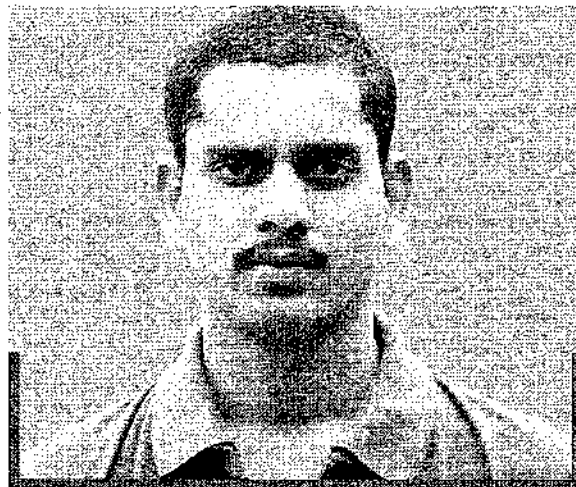
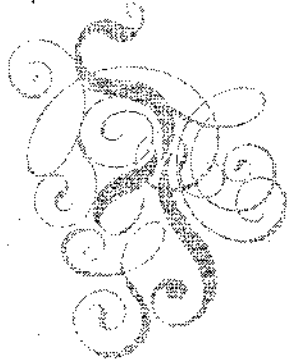
Padma Priya is working as Manager (HR) in IBM and stands as a shining example for

the career opportunities available for Open University students. After the log in at IBM, Padma Priya plans to study PG in HR with BRAOU, the institution which she thanks profusely for providing her the opportunity. Changing her line from polytechnic she switched over to Management courses to chart a successful career.





Mr. P. Hrikrishna, the Grand Master of 'Chess' alumni



ESHWAR

*A tailor-made
research analyst*

Eshwar, Venkateswarlu

Primary education itself became a burden for Eshwar with unfavourable economic conditions in the family and the school situated miles away from his village. He could pass tenth class with difficulty but failed in Intermediate and settled in a small job. Ambedkar University offered him guidance to reach DRDL as a computer research analyst. His younger brother Venkateswarlu, who is in Indian Army, also followed his footsteps and acquired a degree and could get promotion in service.

From lab assistant to a Research Analyst in the country's premier Defence Institutions, Eshwar has come a long way, on the path paved by Dr BR Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU). When the household conditions did not permit him to pursue his studies, Eshwar, who hails from Cherukapalle village of Devarakonda mandal in Nalgonda district, joined a college as a lab assistant. Little did he know that this job would change his social status for life. The college he went to work happened to be a study centre of BRAOU; the exposure led him to higher planes in his career, and he became an inspiration to his family members, friends and many others.

Youngest of the four children of a tailor, Eshwar used the needle of determination and the thread of hard work to pursue his studies, as he walked five kilometers daily to attend the school. His father, a widower, wanted all his children to study well. Despite the poor economic conditions and

the hand-to-mouth existence at home, Eshwar showed the perseverance and motivation to study well and come up in life.

All his passion and hard work paid him well and they reflected in the 10th standard board exams as he passed in first class from the Kalvakurthy government high school in 1994. Next, he joined Intermediate with Science as the main subject but support of any kind was lacking from home front as the income of his father was very meagre and he had five mouths to feed. Undeterred by the situation at home, he continued his studies but could not clear his Intermediate as he failed in two subjects. At this juncture he had to drop his studies. With no other option left, he had to take up a job. Luck smiled on him when he joined MKR Degree College as a Computer Lab Assistant as he had learnt the basics in computer science during his Intermediate days. Not knowing what was in store for him; he was not happy with the job and thought the pay

was meagre. But his job was a blessing in disguise as BRAOU had opened a study centre at MKR Degree College. Students coming to the BRAOU study centre caught the attention of Eshwar and he slowly started developing an interest in the activities of the classroom and distance education.

Inspired by the thought that he too could enroll for a course and pursue his studies, Eshwar consulted some of the students who encouraged him and told him in detail about the BRAOU. Encouraged by the faculty members and the students of distance education, he appeared for the eligibility test and cleared it securing a seat in B.Sc with Science (Botany, Zoology and Chemistry).

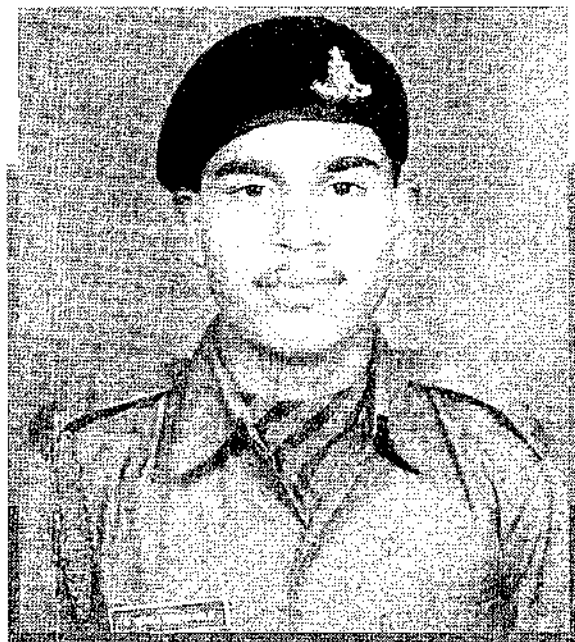
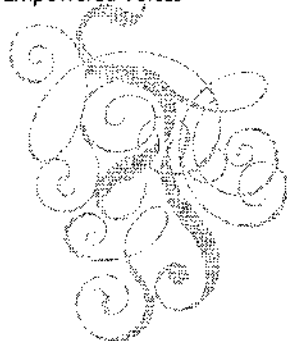
After completing his work as a lab assistant at the college, he used to attend the study centre assignments with all seriousness. He depended only on the material supplied by BRAOU and learnt it thoroughly at home with all the required attention. He used to

go back to the study centre and seek the help of the faculty for any doubts and worked hard. He did not take any tuition but depended only on the material provided by the study centre. All his hard work paid well as he completed his B.Sc. in second division. He thus gained confidence and was convinced that distance education is on par with conventional (formal) education. "I passed B.Sc. through distance education, while working. So why shouldn't I get a better position than my present job, was my thought and I approached the faculty who suggested that I take Information Technology (IT) which has many openings", says Eshwar. Armed with a Degree of BRAOU and having computer

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone.

This is the way to success.

- Swami Vivekananda

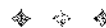


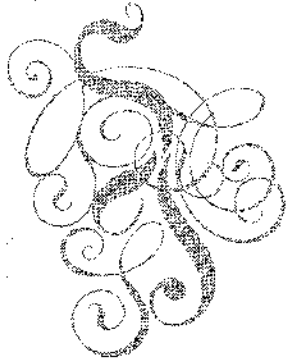
VENKATESWARLU

skills, Eshwar opted for M.Sc. (Information Technology) offered by Nagarjuna University, Guntur. Meanwhile, there was an advertisement in the newspapers for the post of a Research Analyst at DRDL for their Imarat Research Centre in Hyderabad. The post required a Bachelors Degree and three years experience in computers. By then Eshwar had both. Having worked in the college as a lab assistant, he had the computer skills and BRAOU had provided him with the Degree. Encouraged by the faculty, he applied for the post and he got a call letter for the interview. His joy knew no bounds when he was told that he was selected as a Junior Analyst. Eshwar's work involves research and analysis in a medi-care project of the premier Defence institute. He moved to Hyderabad to take up the job. The lab assistant from a small village in Nalgonda district has turned into a Junior Analyst at the premier Defence laboratory DRDL. The proud Junior Analyst did not leave his

mission of education but continued as he wanted to get a Masters Degree in Information Technology. To meet this goal, he has registered with Siddhartha P.G. College as his study centre to pursue his Masters in Computer Science.

Playing the role of a torchbearer for the family of distance education learners, Eshwar started spreading the message across and convincing people that this form of education is on par with formal education. Having achieved success, Eshwar is now sharing his success with others and advising his family members and friends to take to distance learning. His brother Lokesh was initiated into the B.A. course of BRAOU. Lokesh completed his degree and joined as an office assistant in a private junior college. Venkateswarlu, another brother has also been a student of BRAOU. After completing his B.A., he joined in Masters Degree with Public Administration. May this tradition continue.





TRIVENI NARSIMHA

*Letters sharpened
through weaving*

Triveni Narsimha

She was born into a weaver's family which was caught up in the web of poverty. She became a daily labourer in a spinning mill. With the help of that money she passed her Intermediate and became a vidya volunteer. Her step towards BRAOU brought her laurels in the form of M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. Her career graph also started shooting up. She became a counsellor, lecturer and now she is an assistant professor in Telangana University.

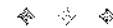
This is the success story of Triveni who at one point of time had thought of commity suicide but desisted because of her children. She worked all the way for the children and in the process became a celebrated writer and BRAOU has been the backbone of all her achievements. Using the dye of education provided by BRAOU to infuse colour into her otherwise poverty-ridden life, Triveni weaved her dreams into reality to redefine life which was not kind to her during her youth. From a daily wage earner in a spinning mill, Triveni has spun her life garment – thread by thread and with needle after needle – to rise to the level of an Assistant Professor and unfurl her ambition with vibrant colours as a research scholar and a writer.

Born into a traditional weaver's family, it was a hand to mouth existence with five children and Triveni's father took to teaching as the family could not be sustained with the handloom trade. Four sisters had to stop their education at tenth standard due to poor economic conditions and join a spinning mill on daily wages to supplement their father's income. Three of her elder sisters got married

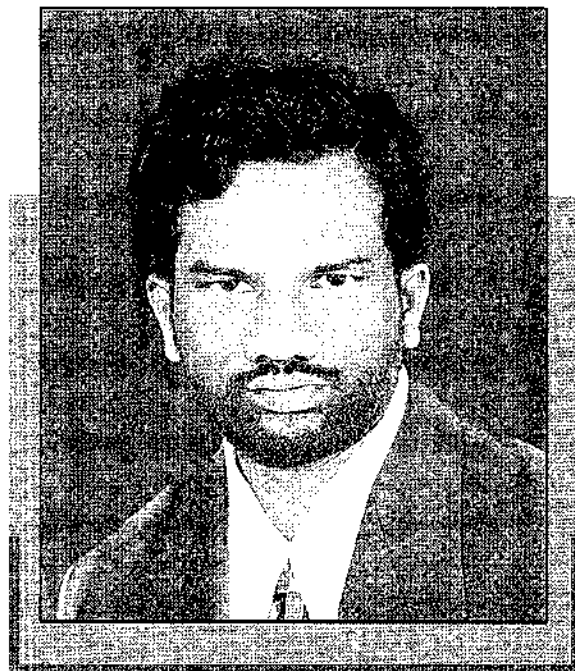
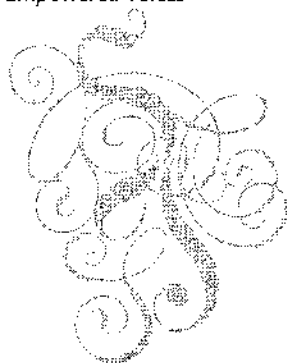
and the condition turned from bad to worse. Triveni was brilliant in studies but the economic conditions did not permit her to pursue her studies. At this juncture while working in the spinning mill, she passed Intermediate in one sitting and secured a job as a Volunteer teacher in her native Lalgudi Malakpet village bringing relief from her spinning mill job. BRAOU has thrown a new light into her life as she joined B.A. with her favourite Telugu literature, Sociology and Public Administration as main subjects. She was encouraged by her school-day colleagues and one of them was working with BRAOU's Engineering section. The private teacher studied hard and was married after she cleared the first year. Although her husband was not educated, he had reverence for education and encouraged her giving new hope. After that, there was no looking back for Triveni, after completing BA through distance learning. She wanted to do PG in Telugu but BRAOU did not have that course and she had to move to Osmania University. Based on the strong foundation laid by BRAOU she completed her MA, M Phil and Ph D from Osmania University. Her study graph constantly rose as she also completed Telugu

Pandit training and could secure Pandit Grade I and Grade II jobs through D Sc. She also received the distinction of a Junior Research fellow (?) award after completing her PG. She joined Koti Women's College in 2005 as a lecturer while continuing her research. Without forgetting her roots she also worked as a counselor for Telugu literature with BRAOU study centre at YMCA Junior College for Boys. By coincidence this was the same college where she had done her graduation. Triveni crossed one more milestone when she was appointed as an Assistant Professor in Telangana University in 2007. From a daily wage earner in a spinning mill to a voluntary teacher, research scholar, teacher, lecturer and an Assistant Professor, Triveni has come a long way on the path laid by BRAOU. After touching uncharted peaks in academics she turned towards her favourite subject Telugu literature, which was inherent in her blood. Her forefathers had a literary background with a devotional touch. She published her work Tuneegalu besides writing poetry and essays. In M Phil her subject was Chillariga Swaraja Lakshmi's poetry. She published her father's elder brother Vangari Venkata

Narsimhacharyulu's works: Vamana Charitramu, Markandeya Puranamu, Sri Ramalingeswara Sathakamu and Bhaktitvatva Sankeertanalu. Triveni also wrote the biography of Venkata Narasimhacharyulu and her current research topic is on the works of Mudiganti Sujatha Reddy. She is all set to publish her book offree verse Vipanchika. Former president APJ Abdul Kalam's words about ambitious dreams are thoroughly reflected in her life and achievements and could be an example to many others. The strong will to study is the only requirement to go ahead, marriage, family, poverty – nothing can be an obstacle if the determination is strong. It can be fulfilled and goals can be achieved, she says. Thanking BRAOU for laying the foundation for her great achievements, Triveni says that the degrees, awards and recognition have come her way only because of the launching pad that BRAOU gives for people like her.

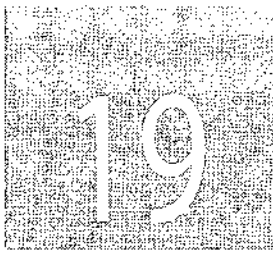


*Always bear in mind that your own
resolution to succeed is more important
than any one thing.
- Abraham Lincoln*



GOLCONDA KRISHNA PRASAD

Unflinching courage



Krishna Prasad

The missing beat of his heart compelled him to miss his destination. But, it could not erase his enthusiasm, courage and perseverance. He wanted to become a doctor, but his ailing body did not support him. He took his degree from BRAOU and his target was to become an IAS. With an unstinting courage, he has settled down as a teacher now.

This is the story of a brave-heart, who fought his cardiac disease and braved many hurdles to come out successful in the civil services exam with the help of the BRAOU initiative. When heart ailment shattered his dream of becoming a doctor, Golconda Krishna Prasad, a rank holder in 10th standard, was forced to take the job of a teacher and his newfound love for the Civil Services took shape through distance education. His dream of serving the poor by taking up the medical profession was in a way fulfilled through distance education as he acquired the required Bachelors Degree to get into government service and thereby became able to look after the needs of deprived sections of the society.

Coming from a middle class background, Prasad, son of a schoolteacher, was good at studies. As he was in a transferable job, Prasad's father moved from one place to another frequently and in one of the sojourns, they happened to live beside a

hospital. It was here that the thought of becoming a doctor sank into the young mind of Prasad after seeing the plight of poor patients from close quarters.

He did not have the heart for games and used to concentrate on studies. Prasad who hails from the remote Kadipikonda village of Warangal district, reaped a rich harvest in terms of the scores as he passed the 10th standard with a distinction 545 marks and he stood 11th in the State.

Prasad opted for the B.P.C. group in Intermediate and the local college offered him a free seat and other facilities. All went well in the first year. However, in the second year, he fell sick and doctors revealed that he had a heart ailment and advised him not to take on too much strain.

This parents took good care of him but due to failing health, he could not get

good marks in the final exam. In EAMCET his rank was much below the required number to get admission into medicine. The desire to become a doctor did not die down and he took the entrance exam the following year again but he could not get a seat in MBBS. While his father advised him to take a Diploma course in Education (D.Ed), he appeared for the entrance test and secured 72nd rank in 1998. However, he convinced his parents that he would take one more chance at EAMCET. His health was a matter of concern and he had to visit the doctors frequently and could not succeed in EAMCET again. When he appeared for D.Ed. for the second time without putting much effort in to it, he secured the 100th rank and joined DIET College in Warangal in 1999.

It was here that the then Municipal Commissioner of Warangal, Mr. Venkatesham changed the course of his

life. The dejected Prasad poured his heart out and Mr Venkatesham gave him the required courage. Even without being a doctor one can serve the poor by becoming an IAS officer, he advised the disappointed Prasad. The Municipal Commissioner told him to complete the D.Ed. course and take up a job to support the family first and then he could prepare for the Civil Services exams.

Emboldened by the suggestions of the Municipal Commissioner, Prasad completed D.Ed., applied for D.Sc. to secure a teacher's job in which he secured the 85th rank in the state. That was not all. He was not qualified to write I.A.S. exams, as it requires a Bachelor's Degree. It was here that BRAOU provided the platform for

*The roots of education are bitter,
but the fruit is sweet.*

- Aristotle

Prasad to secure the degree. He enrolled in 2001 for the degree course. Initially, he was scared, as he had to shift from Science to Mathematics stream. The material supplied by the Open University and the cooperation of the faculty cleared all apprehensions and he took up the course with all seriousness without missing a class. Overcoming the initial hiccups, realizing the importance of practical classes he completed the course in the 2001-04 batch with first division marks.

BRAOU thus fulfilled his renewed dream of securing eligibility for the competitive examinations. With rejuvenated interest, he started preparing for Civil Services Examination with the guidance of Mr. Venkatesham. He appeared for the exam in 2004 but did not qualify. Undeterred by the reversal, Prasad took the exam for the second time in 2005 and cleared the Mains but was unable to get through

the interview. Next year, he applied for APPSC Group –I and cleared both Preliminary and Mains. He appeared for the interview also. The results were held up due to litigation but his dream of getting into government service at a decision making level has come true. His trust with BRAOU did not end at graduation level. He took admission in the Masters programme in Chemistry from Nagarjuna University and completed it with first class marks. He completed B. Ed also from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

Prasad who is a teacher in Intikanne village of Warangal district, says; "BRAOU has changed my life. Otherwise, I would have wasted my time on EAMCET. The material supplied by the university is very good. There is no need to look for other material. Other universities (for instance, Nagarjuna University from where he

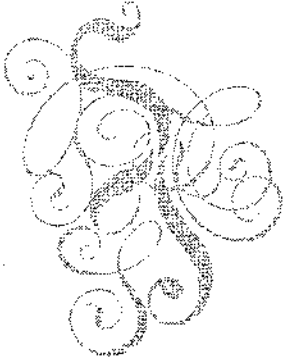
took Masters Degree in Chemistry) supply only 60 per cent of the required material”.

Taking a leaf out of his experience, Krishna Prasad said: “The Bachelor of Arts programme of BRAOU is very useful for those who are preparing for Civil Services exams. They can find almost all the syllabi of the competitive examinations in the text book provided to the students”. Prasad said that he would be getting a higher grade in the school based on his experience and the additional qualifications. Showering his gratitude on

BRAOU, he said that he is also coaching students appearing for competitive exams at an institute, which is giving him additional money and respect.

The man with a fragile heart turned out to be a brave-heart when it mattered most. Changing the course of his thought and education to suit his economic and health conditions, Prasad has put in his best efforts to pursue his career and the BRAOU Degree did all the magic for him. He also expresses his deep gratitude to Mr Venkatesham, who guided him and stood as a mentor.





NEERAJA

Increased self-esteem

Neeraja

A girl from the countryside completed her Intermediate with difficulty amidst economic constraints. When she came to the state capital in search of a job, she did not even know which bus would take her where. She continued her interrupted education in BRAOU and she is immersed in her M.Phil. work now. She is also successfully carrying out the duties of a Dalit human rights activist.

An indifferent, spendthrift father and pathetic domestic conditions forced Neeraja to move to the city after clearing Intermediate in one sitting and graduating from BRAOU while fighting for the dalit cause. Working with the NGO Sakshi for seven years, she came to believe that her problems were micro in nature when compared to the atrocities dalits are facing in the society.

Domestic restlessness arising out of her father's behaviour forced her mother to take charge of the family affairs with the limited resources she had. When the dispensary they were running was closed down, Neeraja's mother joined as a nurse in a hospital and she was the only bread earner of the family.

She admitted Neeraja in an SC hostel. Neeraja cleared tenth standard from Kothapeta government school. By that time, Neeraja's elder sister completed graduation and was married. When her elder sister

came for her delivery, Neeraja had to take care of her as their mother was working as a nurse. As a result, she failed in Physics in Intermediate. She cleared it by taking the instant exam. Neeraja observed the helplessness of her mother at close quarters as she could not arrange for the money when Neeraja cleared the polytechnic entrance examination. After this incident, she had no heart to continue her education.

At this juncture, a close relative advised Neeraja to shift to Hyderabad where she could find employment and be a help to her mother. The suggestion was well taken and she landed in the city of pearls. In Hyderabad, Neeraja started working as a documentation assistant with Sakshi. Coming from a small village Pulletukurru in East Godavri district, Neeraja looked in awe and perplexity at the enormity of Hyderabad.

Lodged in a womens' hostel, Neeraja took a couple of months to adjust to the pace of

the city. Her job was to read 23 district editions of newspapers and mark news related to atrocities on dalits, women and human rights violation and follow up the incidents. This opened the new horizons in her world. She joined BRAOU while working with Sakshi and did the balancing act despite some difficulties. Her work was based on society, and Sociology was one of her subjects in B.A. Thus, her work and studies were complementary to each other.

Since she was aided by the social work she was in Sunday classes at the study centre were enough for her. She enjoyed the contact classes very much and actively participated in the group discussions that followed the classes which proved to be very helpful. Enjoying the work and study which are closely related, she had no difficulty in clearing the three year course and she graduated comfortably. This led to her Post Graduation which she cleared with ease and she gives credit to her batchmates who were intelligent. With her Sakshi

background, Neeraja did a project on domestic violence and completed her PG with 66 per cent.

Neerja, who at one point of time was convinced that Intermediate would be the end of her studies has now completed her Masters in Sociology and is heading towards M Phil. This is a dream which BRAOU made true. It seems unbelievable to her at times. She joined M Phil in Madurai Kamaraj University. In fact she applied in Osmania University and when every thing was set for joining at the counselling, there was an announcement that her seat was cancelled as she was a non local.

Education is not merely a means for earning a living or an instrument for the acquisition of wealth. It is an initiation into life of spirit, a training of the human soul in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue.

- Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit

While BRAOU helped her to attain academic heights, it was Sakshi that gave her a true exposure to the society and the will to fight atrocities against dalits and women. While in Sakshi, as a follow up measure, she often visited places where the offence was committed and was very much moved while documenting the incident. Her sensitive nature prompted a police official to remark, "you are a young girl. Why are you after all these human rights and all such activities? Why don't you take care of your studies?"

Neeraja used to highlight the plight of dalits under the banner "Nigha" in Sakshi and expose many cases of exploitation of dalits and violation of human rights. She feels sorry that on many occasions the accused were let off. She lost some opportunities earlier due to lack of money and while working in Sakshi she cleared TTC. But the Director of the NGO said, "there is no dearth of teachers in the country.

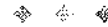
What society needs is people who can voice concern and fight for dalit rights. If you are in this field you can do something". Inspired by the pep talk, she tore the TTC call letter and remained committed to the NGO for seven years after which she had to quit for various reasons.

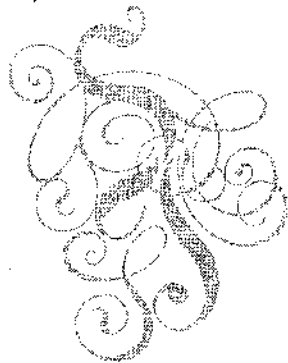
Her response to a notification of Rural Development was rewarded with the post of Assistant Project Director in APRALP and she was assigned to work in Mahboobnagar on the subject gender. As she could not shift from Hyderabad, on her request she was given the post of Project Executive for comprehensive Land Development Programme (Indira Prabha) and she is continuing in that post. With their experiences and the hard way they have come up, Neeraja and her sister, working as an anganwadi teacher, provided quality education to their brother who completed B.Ed and is working as a lecturer in a private college.

People coming from dalit families have to struggle to settle down and education comes to them the hard way. Education is the light of freedom for dalits and it is the only tool for success, says Neeraja. She strongly believes that illiteracy is the singular cause for the backwardness of dalits, who are still being subjected to exploitation at various levels, rural areas in particular. She is of the opinion that despite all the legislations and tall talk on literacy, the implementation part does not match the decisions taken in the corridors of

power and that there is a need for a substantial increase of government schools in rural areas. This helps girls to study and make a good start as most of them are not in a position to go to other places for education, says Neeraja.

While Sakshi has put her on a social trajectory and given her a voice to fight for the dalit cause, BRAOU has honed up her academic skills and led her from graduation to Masters in sociology and M Phil which brought her stability and a government job.





DATTATREYA

*From paths of forest to
the destiny of letters*

Dattatreya

He believed that armed struggle was the only way for the emancipation of the exploited and turned into a naxalite. And now, he says that education showed him the path of fulfilment. He took his degree from BRAOU at the age of 30 and has settled down as a lawyer in Mahaboobnagar. His education gave him not only a degree and livelihood but also a responsible and respectable position in society and a new way to liberate people.

At the age of thirty, he appeared for the Intermediate exams but not before abandoning studies after tenth class and taking to naxalite movement; from pen to gun and back to pen. Dattatreya is now a Post Graduate and a Law Graduate all of which was possible because BRAOU provided him the perfect launching pad to complete his graduation. It is a strange story having all the complex conflicts of contrasting confluences for Dattatreya as he went out of the academic education scared by the studies, but was attracted to the same studies in forests as dalam commander. Studying LLB on the one hand, he used to attend court as an accused in the cases filed against him while he was in

The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think - rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men.

- Bill Beattie

the naxalite movement. While the rigours of underground life brought him closer to studies, BRAOU made his dream a reality after he surrendered and Dattatreya is now a practicing lawyer in Mahaboobnagar. Dattatreya was never interested and was very scared of studies. He joined in Intermediate and later had a brief stint with ITI but the activities of RSU had a greater influence on him than studies which converted him in to a full timer by 1989. When he was in the open, he was afraid of studies but once he became a dalam commander and started moving under cover he developed interest in studies. Constant reading of party literature, study camps, workshops and exposure to works by great writers like Sri Sri and Taapi Dharma Rao must have been the reasons for the shift in his attitude towards studies. He could not adjust to the life in the movement and decided to surrender which took place after he wandered aimlessly for some time. The weak Dattatreya took to studies in jail and completed his

Intermediate and wanted to do Law. With the help of his ITI he could join BRAOU without entrance while he cleared the Law entrance exam and joined Padala Rami Reddy College of Law. The actual struggle began here. He was simultaneously doing graduation and LLB one in Hyderabad and the other in Mahaboobnagar after his release from jail. Monday to Sunday he attended Law classes and on Sundays he went to his native place Mahaboobnagar to attend BRAOU classes for his degree. Although his father helped him initially, he opted for marketing to earn some money and started selling gas stove tubes as a door-to-door salesman. Dattatreya continued his studies and his joy knew no bounds when he cleared first year of LLB. After college hours, he used to turn into a salesman and Dattatreya had his own views on education and employment and he was a strong votary of the dignity of labour. Education is for gaining knowledge and employment is for earning a livelihood and there need not be correlation between the

two always. At this juncture, he got married and also purchased an auto to continue his life's journey. Back to education after crossing 30s had been a point of debate in Dattatreya's circle of friends and some of them discouraged him and advised him to start some business. English troubled him from the beginning but he could overcome it by taking special coaching. In LLB students called him uncle but he continued the studies, undeterred by these comments. Realisation for education and entry of BRAOU into his life happened a little late for Dattatreya. He completed his Degree but did not have a fair idea of the process that goes into play in the system. He joined MA Sociology in Osmania University distance education but could not get the required marks to go ahead with Ph D. He came back to BRAOU and is doing his MA in History. His aim is to complete his research and he wants to be identified as Dr Dattatreya MA, Ph D. Having closely worked with tribals and migrant labour, he wants to take up research on these issues. Migration

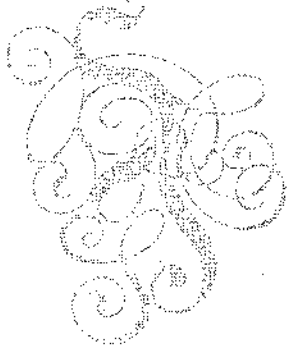
of labour is a very painful phase in any village. Children of migrant labour would be the most affected. These factors are not reflected in the Sociology we study, he says. Dattatreya is now practicing law in Mahboobnagar and teaches Sociology at the Tandur BRAOU centre as a gesture of gratitude to the Open University which gave a novel dimension to his life. Before completing his Degree in Law, Dattatreya wanted to see to it that the cases against him were dropped by the state government. Some of the cases in which he was accused were referred for withdrawal. For this he had to constantly visit the Andhra Pradesh Government Secretariat to pursue the withdrawal on grounds of his surrender. His determination has surprised

many officials in the corridors of power. All the cases are now withdrawn and Dattatreya who is practicing law in Mahboobnagar always feels happy to read about candidates who top in competitive exams. Looking back at his career, he feels satisfied by the turn of events. Comparing his growth graph with others of his age, Dattatreya feels that he is more successful and gives the credit to BRAOU. "Only after the advent of BRAOU did people like me get opportunities to study and pursue their long cherished dreams and prosper in life," says Dattatreya. He has started an NGO called Shelter and wants to work for the welfare of Devadasis and migrant labour. He is also working as district Convenor of the Child Rights Protection Forum.





Dr. (Smt.) Savita Bhimrao Ambedkar receiving the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature from the Chancellor at the Seventh Convocation on August 23, 1994



SRILAKSHMI

*Education is the
best medicine*

Srilakshmi

Education became the remedy for her psychological and physical ailment. Her association with BRAOU wiped out her depression and filled her with incredible courage. From then onwards, she did not look back. Now she is a programme officer monitoring development of the rural poor in 25 villages. She compares herself to the phoenix bird and profusely thanks BRAOU.

Wriggling out of depression and coming out of a 12-year hibernation, S Sri Lakshmi today stands as an award winning government official, thanks to BRAOU which has given her a new life, literally. Because of the rigours of family life and health problems, studies took a back seat in her life for over twelve years. Undergoing traumatic moments which demanded psychiatric care, Sri Lakshmi's life has changed and changed for the better with the degree from BRAOU.

After clearing her tenth standard with a first class, the girl who grew up in Miryalguda town and her native village Munugodu, Sri Lakshmi was married and her studies were stalled early in life. Family responsibilities, children and poor health made her life troublesome. Psychiatric treatment for depression and other health problems kept her away from studies but after 12 years, with the encouragement of her husband and mother, she chanced upon the BRAOU notification and appeared for the entrance

examination in 1996. For three more years, health and family conditions did not permit her to take up serious studies. In 1999 she appeared for the first year exam. She could not attend the study centre classes held at Railway Junior College. Studying on her own with the material supplied by BRAOU she cleared her first and second year exams. The success in exams rejuvenated her and infused new enthusiasm in her. Her psychiatric problems slowly faded with every successful step in BRAOU. Things settled down for good when she reached the final year and she started attending study centre classes regularly. She got the required encouragement from family and her children too. With the backing from all quarters, she became a graduate. BRAOU provided the magic medicine of education to all her ailments, she registered for MA in Sociology. This has cast an everlasting influence on her life. She had the opportunity to work with various tribes and study their lifestyle, problems, health or otherwise. She stayed with a rare tribe of

Adilabad in the remote forest area for four days and enjoyed every bit of the stay. It was a welcome break for her to have a first hand experience of their food habits, culture and heritage. She had to leave the place much against her wishes as the area had naxal influence and talks with the government were scheduled to be held there. It was only because of my education, That I could go to that place, says Sri Lakshmi. She also toured the florosis affected areas in Narketpalli region. Although there was no initial response, the state governor toured the same place and announced a package of Rs 110 crore. There was a sea of change in her life within six years. She started studies after the the birth of children and was very active in field work. This made her a leader and a guide. Sri Lakshmi is proud of her association with BRAOU which changed the course of her life, from the ailing patient to a philanthropic activist; from a depressed to a delightful and most sought-after officer, from a abpit drop out to a post graduate

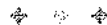
and later on a law graduate. After PG she had joined LLB in Osmania University. Fulfilling family chores and going to college was never troublesome to Sri Lakshmi, instead she enjoyed it and after completion of the Law course, she got a job. She was appointed as an officer to oversee the Employment Guarantee Scheme and was responsible for 25 villages in Choutuppal mandal of Nalgonda district. She led the team with renewed vigour and proved to be very successful. As in the process of implementation of any scheme, there was little or no response initially. But with the help of the lessons she learned from her life, she could convince villagers by interacting with them with a personal touch and could draw many of them towards work. The scheme was a great success and "Best Programme Officer" award was

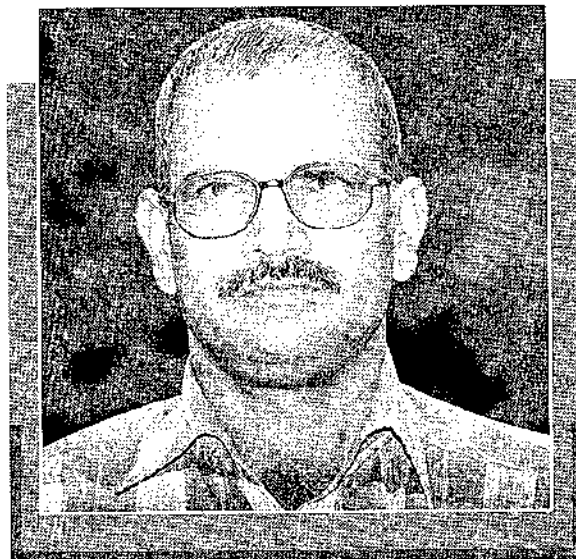
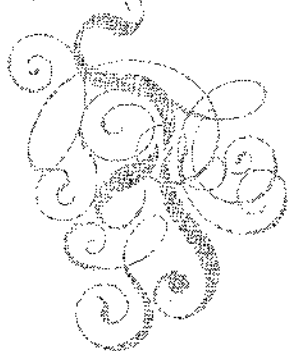
"Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm."

– Winston Churchill

conferred on her. Being a woman was never a problem for her when touring villages; in fact she believes that women can do such work better. Interacting with villagers and moving around as one among them was the secret of her success. In the process she became very popular and won their hearts. "My life is an example to show to the world how education can change attitudes and lifestyles of people. BRAOU must have changed the life style of many people like me," says Sri Lakshmi and profusely thanks the Open University without which she could not have been what she is today. Having experienced the benefits of education first hand, she enrolled some of her assistants in BRAOU thus showing gratitude to the institution and providing

guidance to people in need of education. She also has the desire to work for an NGO which imparts education to the poor and needy who want to study further. She is willing to teach such students. Sri Lakshmi also wants to work for the voluntary organizations involved in creating awareness on AIDS. Her focus on education is still sharp and Sri Lakshmi has plans an M Phil Degree. Fighting the to go ahead to secure phenomenon of trauma with education has been the singular positive event in Sri Lakshmi's life which BRAOU provided. The power of distance education has traveled far and wide and BRAOU has been churning out people who are shaping into successful individuals.





RAJANNA

*Alphabet
in prison*

Rajanna

Rajanna lost his parents in his childhood and his education stopped with sixth class. He was caught in a murder case and was given death sentence which was later changed to life sentence. While his early life filled with darkness reached him to the prison, his imprisonment reached him to the treasure of education. In his ten years of prison life he learnt Hindi, Sanskrit and got a degree from BRAOU. Now, he is a transformed person.

Rajanna lost his parents early in his childhood and his education ended with sixth class. Darkness surrounded him. Life was a lonely journey. A Major setback in that journey came when he was trapped in a murder case. He developed anger and hatred for the society and the system. He was awarded a death sentence which was later changed to life imprisonment. While the darkness in his life distanced him from education and reached him to jail through the murder case, imprisonment sent him to the fold of education. He says that he studied only because he was going through imprisonment. Apart from several other life-experiences, The study of Hindi, Sanskrit and Ambedkar University also find a place in what he has learnt in his ten years of jail life. He says that Ambedkar University changed his life completely. He thanks the Ambedkar University degree for enabling a reduction in his jail sentence and release

later, bringing him respect in society, helping him get settled and married and get a job. Let us visit Rajanna's life once... It was getting to be dark.

My parents were quarrelling. At that age, I did not know the reason for their quarrel. From their faces I could gather that it was a serious issue. It went to the extreme. Father pushed mother out. It was late in the night. My mother took me along with her to her mother's village. Our village was on the border of Maharashtra. My mother was from Maharashtra and my father was from Kapri village in Adilabad. I still remember. It was raining heavily. My mother's health was also not alright. We did not have even a single paise with us. We had to cross the stream called Penganga to reach my grandmother's village. There was something like a boat called Ruka to cross the stream. My mother pleaded with the boatman and reached my grandmother's house. That

was the beginning of our hardships. My grandmother's village was Kayar in Maharashtra. My mother worked for daily wages there. As it is her health was not alright. Added to that, there were problems at home. Mother passed away when I was in fourth class. I became completely alone. I stayed with my grandmother and my maternal aunt. I studied in Marathi medium. Nobody enquired about me after my mother's death. I had no proper schooling only wandered about with friends, railway workers and labours. Someone I studied up to sixth class. My education stopped there. Fifteen years later I went to my maternal aunt in Adilabad. She has no children. They are also not rich but she took me along with her. I stayed there and worked for daily wages. No one thought about education. My life changed there. I was trapped in a murder case. There was a vicious person called "Poraka Dora". The situation resembled the film

Mabhoomi. We fought. I don't know how he died. It was all like a dream. I surrendered in the police station. The case went on in the court. The trial was based on lies. I lost trust in the judicial system. I threw my shoe at the judge. At that time I did not know the seriousness of the case. My behavior prompted them to give me a death sentence. What I did in impulse in self-defence brought me a death sentence. They called me a dangerous person in the judgement also. Many people met me during the trial - Lawyers and the police. Although I was not educated, I understood what the world was like. I hated the system itself. I felt that the whole society is based on injustice. I did not apply for forgiveness either. What to do even if I live in this

If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti

society, I thought. There was a jailor called Joseph. Everyday he met me in morning and evening and told me, "Appeal for forgiveness. What will you achieve by dying? I am praying for you." I never listened to him. I told him I did not want to live. He came to meet me even at midnight. Ultimately he convinced me to appeal. My death sentence was changed into life imprisonment. I was sent to Chanchalguda jail. I was accused of with naxalites being friendly. For sometime they kept me in the naxalite barracks. Later I requested the jail officials telling them that I had no association with the naxalites. They shifted me to the ordinary barrack. Ambedkar University people started their classes in the Prison. He prison officials and Ambedkar University teachers told us about free education. That is how I entered into education. One batch was over already. Three of us wrote the entrance in two batches. All the three of us qualified and joined the B.A. Degree

programme. We used to get a newspaper called "Dakshina Samachar" in the jail. I wrote letters and small articles in Hindi for the paper. I studied in Marathi medium, so I could easily learn Hindi. The Prison became the study centre. We had newspapers. Every Morning and evening they gave us permission for two hours to read. After the work, we studied in our cells after six in the evening. Ambedkar University classes would be telecast at that time. The Prison officials gave us a radio. All of us sat in a room and listened to the lessons. There were classes every Sunday. So, it was not difficult for me to study though I stopped my schooling with sixth class. We could complete graduation without failing even once. I felt very happy. I wrote to the Dakshina Samachar that I wanted to read their paper. They published that letter in the paper and sent the paper to me regularly from then onwards. After that I regularly wrote letters and articles and I developed

a familiarity with the editor through letters. I finished my graduation, applied for forgiveness and was released. I stepped into the outside world after almost ten years. By then I had passed the Ambedkar Open University degree programme, Hindi Prachara Sabha's Vidwan and Bharatiya Vidyabhavan's Sanskritakovida. In fact, I feel that I could study only because I went to jail. If I were outside I would have spent my life in petty labour. Prison...it is an amazing world. The inmates can become any thing, intellectuals or criminals. It gives them scope for anything. Depending on your path, you will get your destination. Fortunately I could find the path of education. The prison offers an opportunity to study whatever you want. One can even do a doctorate, moreover free of cost. All accessories and freedom are available there. It is a temple of learning. Bharatiya Vidybhavan's Sanskrit courses, Hindi Prachara Sabha's Hindi

courses...Universities also offer education by distance mode. We should access them with wisdom. Many prisoners feel dejected about education. After my release, I met the editor of Dakshna Samachar. I was released only because of him. I followed his word. He gave me work in the newspaper office. That paper had a column about the details of Ambedkar Open University. I collected that news. In that way my association with Ambedkar University increased. I joined Ambedkar University as an attender. At that time my daily income was sixteen rupees. The erstwhile vice-chancellor Prof. RVR Chandrasekhararao told me, "You are a graduate, learn typing, you will get promoted." I learnt typing in an institute. I was given temporary

However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act on upon them?

- Buddha

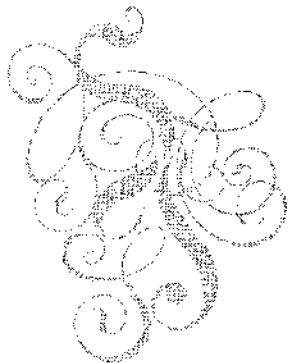
upgradation as a junior assistant. I am working as a Junior Assistant since then. The post is yet to be made permanent. I went to Maharashtra when I was working as an attender. My aunt had migrated from Adilabad to Maharashtra. When I went to her, people forced me to get married. I had a job but I had no money. Friends contributed money and got me married. It was like a child's play Initially, they hesitated to give their daughter to me in marriage. Murder case, prison life....they were scared of all this. Later I somehow got married. Now I have two children. My daughter is studying Intermediate and my son is in seventh class. I know the importance of education, that is why I am educating them. Running the family and my children's education became a burden financially. As the temporary job in Ambedkar University did not fetch me enough money, I joined in Hindi Milap as a

translator. The Ambedkar University job provides us food while the Hindi Milap job supports my children's education and necessities. That is how I am pulling on in life with the help of two jobs. As I have passed M.A. (Hindi) from Osmania University, it has become easier for me to do two jobs simultaneously - in Hindi Milap as a translator and editor. Hard-earned education is very delicious. My life changed only because of education. Ambedkar University helped me in my release. I could do post-graduation in Osmania University. Having a degree in hand by the time I was released from prison increased my self-confidence. Otherwise, where would I be? I would not have had the eligibility to apply for forgiveness without my graduate degree. I would have come out whenever they released me. I would have gone to the village and done some labour. But, it would be difficult to live in the village

with the label of a murderer. Now, with this degree, I have some recognition in society. Ambedkar University helped me in settling down at some level after the release. Banks are ready to give me a loan as I am a graduate. All this

became possible because of education. It is because of education that I am doing two jobs now. Although I could not study when I was outside, I could study in the jail and settle down like this.





SISTA SAVITHA

*Distance education
won the world*

Sista Savitha

Sishta Savitha's achievements answer all the apprehensions about distance education. She did her B.Sc., M.Sc. and other courses from BRAOU and now she is settled in California after her higher education from the prestigious South Florida University. She acknowledges the foundation laid by BRAOU which empowered her to compete with students from across the world.

There is a wrong notion among the general public that Distance Education is only meant for adult learners, physically challenged and other deprived sections of the society. The story of Savita Sista demystifies this illusion and proves that an opportunity coupled with hard work and determination will pave the way to success for the young learners as well. Hailing from a middle class family, Savita Sista always dreamed to be different from others. While her co-students opted to study science through traditional universities, she decided to study through distance mode. Her motive behind this was her strong intention to stand on her own, earn for herself, while she continued her studies. In her own words, "I was looking for an undergraduate degree program which offers quality, convenience and flexibility. I wanted to balance work and

other personal responsibilities while building a foundation for the future". In the beginning, she was not convinced of studying a science degree through distance mode. However, after she came to know about the lab infrastructure at Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Open University, she sought admission into the B.Sc. program of the university. When she enrolled for the B.Sc. degree program in 1990 she was only 18 years old. At that time distance education did not enjoy as does much popularity as it today. The learners were uncertain about the validity of the degrees of the Open University and whether they would get due recognition from other universities. She says "The low penetration of distance education amongst the vast majority meant that the recognition was a big concern. It was a difficult task to explain to visitors and friends that this form of education was no different from the ones traditionally offered". She has set an example to denounce this illusion. Now, she proudly admits that the experience at Open

*Take the first step in faith. You don't
have to see the whole staircase, just
take the first step.*

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

University boosted her self motivation levels and it is this experience that has helped her to withstand the competition at the International level.

Savita Sista was an average student when she joined the University. She was associated with the university for almost 10 years. In this period she successfully completed four programs – UG program in Science, M.Sc. in Applied Mathematics, Certificate Course in Food and Nutrition and P.G. Diploma in Environmental Studies. By the time she left the University she had moulded herself into a self-directed student with distinction marks. Her interest in studies, her disciplined approach to education received the recognition of the Commonwealth of Learning and fetched her an award from COL during her study at the Undergraduate level. "Distance Learning is self-driven and requires a high degree of personal commitment and effort", says Savita. She had to strike a

balance between her work at office, teaching and studies. She has learnt how to manage her time for these diverse duties and to cope with the pressures of studies, course work etc. In her own words, "My experience at Dr.BRAOU was both challenging and rewarding and the program allowed me to balance my schedule and family. The program's broad curriculum exposed me to a variety of disciplines and prepared me for the academic challenges." Recollecting her experiences as a distance learner at BRAOU, Savita says "Academically, my experiences at Dr.BRAOU have been invaluable, and being able to get my degree while keeping a day time job was

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

- Mark Twain

a big advantage." While continuing her studies, she worked for Dr. Prasad Labs Pvt. Ltd. from 1991 to 1999. She started her career as an Administrative Assistant, was promoted gradually to Executive Administrative Assistant and Executive Assistant. She also used to teach Maths for students of class X as a part time job. Savita says that the self formatted study materials are self-contained and allowed her to read and study at her own convenience. Written assignments submitted on a regular basis helped her to review her progress in studies and helped her to increase her skills. She expresses her happiness with BRAOU courses in that the university offers a lot of flexibility in choosing electives with different combinations from sciences, arts and commerce. Focusing on the use of multi media instruction of BRAOU, Savita says that she has fully utilized the medium alongside the face-to-face counseling with professors and the lab training sessions during her course.

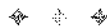
According to her, she has gained good control and confidence over learning goals, evaluation strategies with the support of the self-directed course material and the motivation given by the instructors. After the completion of her studies at Dr. BRAOU, she had career plans to continue her studies in USA. Impressed with her educational achievements, two Universities in US accepted her applications and offered her teaching assistantship. She Joined the University of South Florida for her M.A. in Mathematics, specializing in Statistics. She was also given financial support and fee waiver. " This admission, assistantship and financial support were given purely based on the degrees, awards in multi disciplines that I earned at Dr. BRAOU and by the recommendation letters given by my professors", says Savita. Competing with students of top Universities from all over the world, she completed her masters' degree in USF with an overall percentage of 92. Savita expresses her gratitude to the

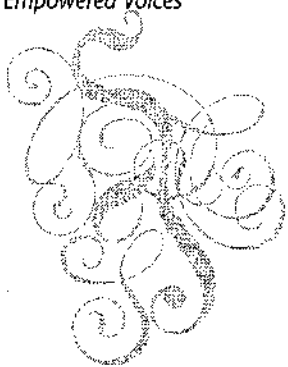
University for instilling the necessary competence and skills in her to face the challenges in her studies at the International Level. In her own words, "Graduate studies in US universities expect a lot from the students. Generally, a traditional Indian student initially struggles a lot to receive this new change, whereas I don't find much difference to face it. Thanks to my course work at Dr.BRAOU". Her academic skills were recognized at University of South Florida and she was also the recipient of best teacher award at Urban Scholars Outreach Program. This program is intended to advance the scholastic ability of students to be academically competitive in entering the leading universities. She taught maths, science, reading and writing skills as part of this program. Savita says that she has directly benefited from Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Open University in building her career and personality. "Open University allowed me to enroll in multi-disciplinary courses, and

this is one of the criteria why I was selected at USF and also helped me to get an assistantship, apart from other skills. I developed good management and coordinating skills at Open University which helped me at USF to manage department work, teaching, coursework, household work and volunteer work," says Savita. Savita is now happily married and settled in San Jose, California, USA. Apart from discharging her family responsibilities, she volunteers for Santa Clara City Library taking care of the Internet Database and providing services as Database Administrator. Awaiting her Green Card to be processed, she is planning to take up a career in Teaching with her statistics background. With her rich experience in distance learning and her successful career, she opines that self-directed effort and time management skills are important to be a successful distance learner. She narrates her experiences as a distance learner and says, "The best thing in distance learning

is that you are at your own pace. The worst thing is that no professor would be there to remind you about your assignments and progress. You control your class and the class does not control you. Therefore it requires dedication on the part of the distance learner." Her advice to the future distance learners is to make sure that they have good communication with at least one professor or advisor. Creating a schedule and adhering to the schedule are very important. "If you are a person with a tendency to procrastinate, be in a study group and with a counselor with more frequent interaction between students and teachers. This environment usually has set time schedules and deadlines which will help the procrastinator. You may get a feeling of isolation at some point of time

during your studies but don't be discouraged. Look for help of counselors and professors who will assist you. Try not to fall behind"; is Savita's advice and warning to the young distance learners. Savita also has a few suggestions for the improvement of the University. The university should make extensive use of technology to serve the students and faculty in a better way. Continuous evaluation and feed back on the learning process will contribute to improving the services thereby helping the learners to realize their dreams. She takes this opportunity to acknowledge all the teachers, family and friends who are instrumental in her success with their edifying influence. She thanks all those who always fuelled her with confidence, imbued her with plenty of verve, buttressing her spirits all the time.





MOHAMMED YASEEN

*Life-changing
sacred learning*

Mohammed Yaseen

Mother's ill-health and economic constraints distanced him from education. He had almost given up hope of getting education when BRAOU breathed life into his long-cherished dreams. BRAOU degree proved a turning point in his life. Once a drop out from junior college, Mohammed Yasin is a junior college lecturer now, thanks to BRAOU degree.

A college drop out, Md Yaseen, turned in to a Lecturer and the process was given shape by Dr BR Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU).

It was financial problems and his mother's failing health which forced Mohamad Yaseen to leave studies and look after his family. Yaseen was good at studies. He completed tenth standard with good marks. It was in Intermediate that all the trouble began. At home his mother was sick and was stated to be dying. So he was asked to marry. Although Yaseen wrote the second year exams, he failed in Physics and did not have enough money to fund his studies. Father of three children, Yaseen led a hand-to-mouth existence and joined a dispensary assisting the doctor and started earning Rs 25 to Rs 30 per month. Around this time, Yaseen saw the BRAOU advertisement and joined the first batch in 1983. Joining the course increased his

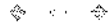
enthusiasm towards higher studies. Financial constraints, notwithstanding, he worked as para-medic in Mujahilpur which improved the domestic conditions. He set aside three hours from 9.00 pm for studies and his wife was very helpful and encouraging. On Sundays he attended Open University classes without fail which were very useful, says Yaseen. Extending his study timings as the exams approached fast, he completed the Degree course by 1987. The BRAOU degree was the turning point in Yaseen's life and he was soon appointed as a teacher in Hyderabad. Shifting his family to the state capital, teacher Yaseen enrolled himself for B.Ed. It was a difficult task to sustain himself with the limited resources but despite all the struggles and sacrifices, he could complete his B.Ed. He immediately got D.Sc. and was selected as a full scale school Assistant under SGT, but he had to face some hiccups which he sorted out legally. After

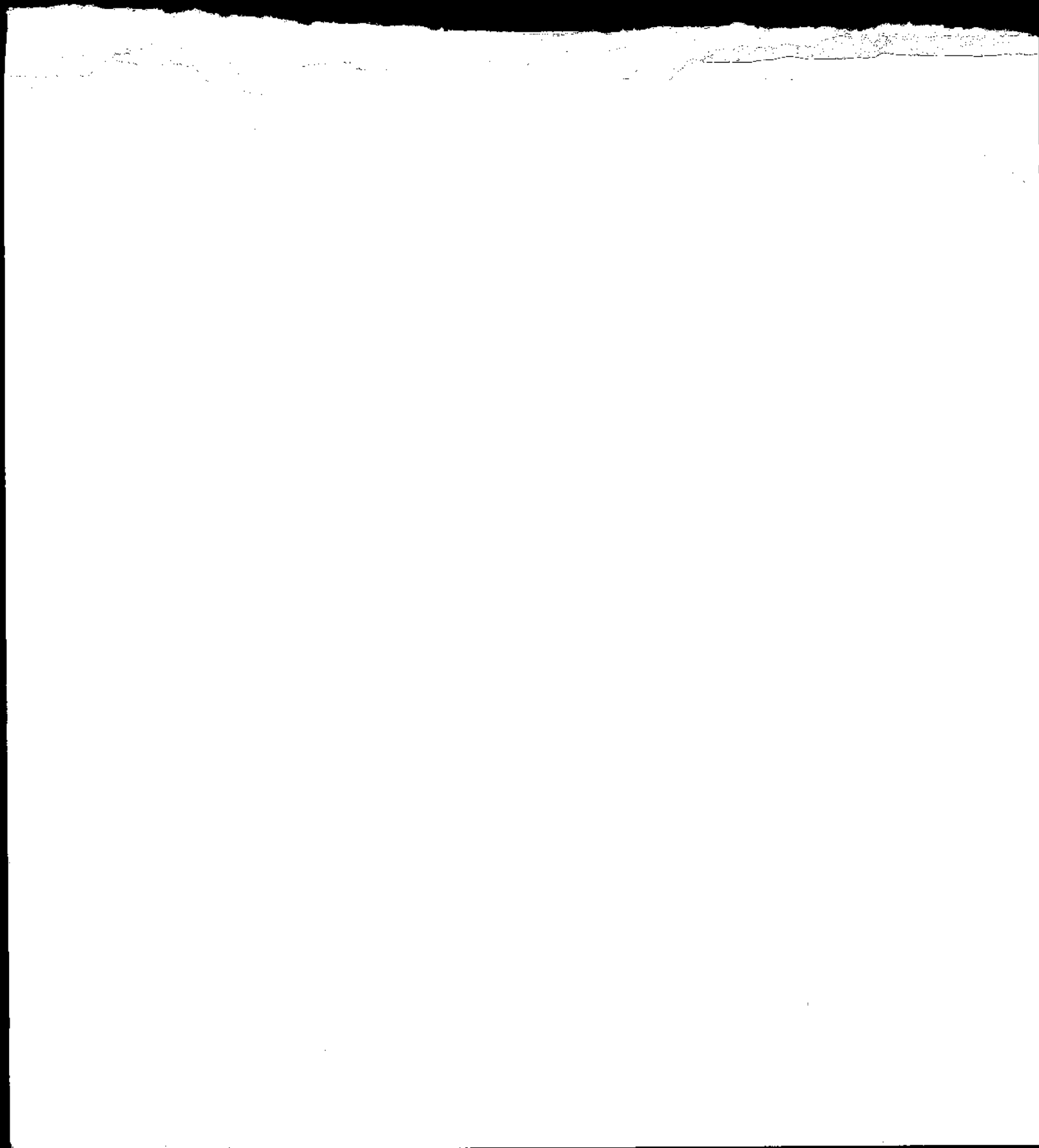
winning the battle in the tribunal, he was posted as a school assistant at Yalal of Ranga Reddy district. Yaseen did not settle down then. He went for higher education and registered for MA Political Science with Osmania University. Having gone through the grind of studying under pressure earlier, the Post Graduation degree came with a choreographed effort in 1991. In 2001, Yaseen was posted as a Junior Lecturer in Pedda Yamul and moved to Tandur Junior College. Looking back, Yaseen feels that it was BRAOU which changed the course of his life. Without the distance learning degree, he would have been languishing in some odd jobs and there would not have been what has come to be known as "settlement in life". Yaseen keeps saying that BRAOU is a boon to students who, for whatever reason, have discontinued their studies. It is the best stepping stone for success and it is only through education that one can scale good

heights. Being a lecturer, Yaseen has ample opportunities to spread his message far and wide. Narrating his story, he carries around the message with the intended effect to the target group. Marriage cannot be a hindrance to studies, contends Yaseen, "My wife helped me a lot while I was studying and her encouragement has given me more enthusiasm". She also encouraged his brother to study and Yaseen helped him to study up to graduation. She also encourages their children, three daughters, in their education. While the eldest is studying medicine, no wonder, emulating her father in his early days, the second one is doing her Post Graduation in English Literature. The third one is preparing for the Civil Services examination. "But for my education and the initiation by BRAOU, I would not have been in a position to give support, moral and economic, to my children in all aspects", Yaseen says and profusely thanks

BRAOU. In a special mention, Yaseen said that the syllabus of Open University was good and comprehensive. The methodology was motivating and very useful to people who were deprived of school and college education,

particularly in rural areas. Study centres and study material are very helpful for people who can study at home and can be successful in competitive exams besides pursuing careers in higher education, says Yaseen.

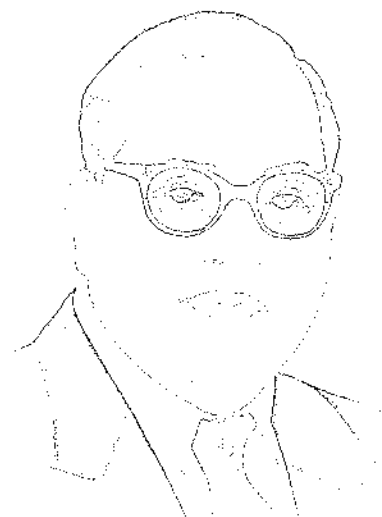




Chakrapani Ghanta

The Empowered Voices

JANGAIAH
CHINTALA RAMBAI
MADHUSUDHAN
ANIL JYOTI
CHALAPATHI RAO
KATTA HYMAVATHI
VENKATESWARA RAO
KONDURU PUSHPALEELA
RAJENDRA PRASAD
SURYA DHANUNJAY NAIK
NARENDER
JAJULA GOWRI
YELLA VENKATESWARA RAO
GOTTIPATI SUJATHA
KISHTAIAH
PADMAPRIYA
ESHWAR, VENKATESWARLU
TRIVENI NARSIMHA
GOLCONDA KRISHNA PRASAD
NEERAJA
SRILAKSHMI
RAJANNA
SISTA SAVITHA
MOHAMMED YASEEN



*We may forego material
benefits, we may forego material
benefits of civilization, but we
cannot forego our right and
opportunities to reap the benefit
of the highest education to the
fullest extent.*

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Centre for Social Empowerment
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Hyderabad



ISBN 978-81-908563-1-7



Price : Rs. 200/-