



Speech by Swami Nityanandagiri of Tapovanam
on the occasion of
MSDS National Awards 2015

Hari Om!

Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani, founded by a visionary, Sri P N Devarajan, is an exemplary organization that supports people who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of society.

Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani means—*the Divine Mother who kindles the natural, inborn but hidden inclination in every human being to serve others with love*. I find that Sri Devarajan has proved to be a perfect instrument of the Divine Mother.

A Chemical Engineer with an illustrious corporate experience, Sri Devarajan has woven his Management skills in the social sector in fulfillment of his natural zeal to serve society.

A great devotee of Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharishi and Sadguru Gnanananda, his life has been inspired by their teachings and he has carved a niche for himself as a philanthropist.

Under his guidance, MSDS has initiated many innovative activities to trigger social consciousness among society. The Dal, Oil and Sugar scheme of MSDS reflects the ethos of the popular Sama Vedic hymn – the Sethu Saman – which says that one must overcome the natural tendency to keep and hoard wealth for himself and his family by the habit of giving away freely with joy. ***Daane na adhanam***

The Sadguru Gnanananda Awards have been launched fifteen years ago, and over 95 women social workers, nine families ie. a husband and wife team and 2 socially responsible Corporates have been felicitated.

The Centre for Social Initiative and Management is a pioneering effort of MSDS to bring in professionalism and management skills to the NGO sector and to help the NGO heads and staff to do social work in an entrepreneurial way combining innovation, business skills and social impact. The CSIM alumnus have started NGOs on completion of their training and the sustained and continuous handholding they receive on launching their social enterprises has helped the budding social change agents to evolve as social entrepreneurs.

This made Sri Devarajan realize that financial support lent to young budding start-up NGO heads working in rural and remote areas was very instrumental in reassuring them about the exceptional path they had chosen to work.

So from the year 2012, MSDS has transformed the Annual Awards into a Fellowship programme which is very commendable. Criteria for selecting these fellows have been evolved. But it has been observed that the unsaid and fundamental criterion is a natural inclination on the part of the fellows to offer spontaneously their service as a loving offering to God in the true sense of a ***Karmayogi***. Only such an attitude will ensure the flow of Grace to his/her work and bless it with success.

Celebrating the work done by social pioneers did not stop with the Awards and Fellowships for Sri Devarajan. He has chosen the print media to convey the great work done by hundreds of social change agents across India through *Conversations Today* – the only newspaper that celebrates social work. By compiling the inspiring stories featured in *Conversations Today* and publishing it as a book titled *Unsung Beacons* – he has ensured that these social pioneers will not be forgotten. I also look forward to reading his autobiography which will be released today to make all of us understand what made him the man that he is!!

I pray to Sadguru Gnanananda to bless him with good health and a long life to continue his Manava Seva.

I am very glad to note that this year's celebration is being held at Chennai. Every Award function has been a momentous occasion for MSDS. I congratulate this year's Sadguru Gnanananda fellows – Arun Fernandez, Sandeep Mehto and the couple really extraordinary couple– Ashish Arora& Divya Gupta, on receiving Fellowship and pray that they prove to be prosperous and successful in their social endeavors.

I also offer my congratulations and wishes to the previous years' Fellows present here.

I pray that the Sadguru Gnanananda Fellowship support that each of you have received would help you to build sustainable organizations, which help in transforming the lives of the people with whom they are working.

May we invoke the blessings of Sadguru Gnanananda on all your initiatives and those who come under your loving care! With His Grace, may all of your noble work receive ever-increasing support!

Narayana!