

## **Summary of Conference Call with Tammineni Nirmala garu**

**The call was attended by:**

- 1. Ravi Papagari, Philly**
- 2. Raghu Dongur, Dallas**
- 3. Ravi Dugyala - NJ**
- 4. Parmesh Bheemreddy - DE**
- 5. Mujeebur Rehman - Philly**
- 6. Arun Ayyagari - NJ**
- 7. Srinivas Reddy - Richmond**
- 8. Babu Rao Bayana - Philly**
- 9. Bhaskar Reddy, TX**
- 10. Naresh Tulluru, NJ**
- 11. Ramachandra Rupireddy - VA**
- 12. Bhanu Prakash Moligi - Philly**
- 13. Kamal Nellutla - Philly**
- 14. Shanti Putta, Boston**
- 15. Vilas Reddy Jambula - NJ**
- 16. Satyapal - MD**

To begin with, Nirmala garu has described about her journey in to the activity. She is originally from Anantapur. After education, she went to US for job. She worked in Florida and later in San Diego at Qualcomm as Oracle DBA. While at San Diego she was associated with AID and served as its President to San Diego group.

She said that at that time she became restless thinking why there are abundant opportunities in one part of the world and not many at the other side (India). She wanted to come back and do something in India. After one year thinking, she decided to come back and requested company to relieve. They suggested to work at Hyderabad location until she finally decide what to do.

She came to Hyd in 2006 and continued her explorations while working at Hyd office. Finally in 2007 she quit the job. Initially she worked in Akshara Network for 3 years supporting organic cotton farmers, weavers and that value chain network. She also worked in CDR org supporting schools in tribal areas. Because she hails from Anantpur, a dry land area, she has some affinity towards dry lands. She visited several time in Palamoor district in 2010, as part of her exploration. She thought it is worth while to work in the most backward area in backward Palamoor, which is Gattu mandal

Finally, she packed one day and left for Gattu. Initially she want to visit villages without any set agenda, just to understand what they are, and what they need. Gattu has only 34% literacy rate (16% women) with highest migration rate. It is rocky area with no ground water re-charge facilities. It has high prevalence of child marriages. She used to eat and stay with the villagers.

After 4 months of wandering, he got a call from NREGA in-charge officer, who requested her to support the implementation of NREGA, while pursuing her own interests, as she is traveling in the area. She found an opportunity to help people and obliged. At that time, out of 24 gram panchayats, only 4, 5 have proper implementation of NREGA. Nirmala traveled extensively, held meetings and brought awareness of NREGA. She was able to help to distribute to people up to Rs. 3.7 crores under NREGA scheme.

Later AP Govet/TCS implemented IVR system, by which the beneficiary worker will get an automated message about how much they received for their work, making system transparent and beurocratic-independent.

Later Stanford U. offered fellowship to three workers, who are currently helping to implement the NREGA, relieving Nirmala garu from the day-to-day involvement. Now people are well aware of their rights and able to question to get things done.

Now Nirmala garu would like to initiate her work in other mandals in Palamoor. She is also planning to initiate to other projects, for which she seeks our help.

1. Learning Centers for Girls - she would like to start 3, 4 centers to educate girls on basic language skills, logic skills (basic Math) and gender-based education to learn about their body system. She want to achieve a progressive change in them, which should have one of the following end result:

1. I learned what is needed and move on with my current life
2. My learning motivated me to take next level vocational training and become earning member
3. I will pursue the higher education

2. Her second project is - to buy a piece of land and start agriculture with SRI method.

She also talked about two approaches to resolve issues:

How to make a positive impact on policy issues - Top Down approach

How to make people aware of their right, issues, strategies and solution - Bottom Up approach.

She does not believe in confrontational and negative approach with politicians and beurocrats. She says there are 30% good beurocrats, and not all politicians are bad. So, we need to work with them and instill good ideas and make them to work for the benefit of people.

Participants suggested to take help from NRI orgs, promote good works on digital media. We also invited Nirmala to visit US to share her work and seek support.

She cited one of the success stories about a boy in Mittadoddi, who was very intelligent in Math, supported by Cornell U. Prof Rajendra Narayan, completed degree in Nizam's and currently preparing for ISI (India Statistical Institute) exam. Such success stories will keep her motivated.

We are all amazed at her perseverance, intellect and great presentation and convincing skills.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

We decided to form a Yahoo Group in support of Nirmala garu work. Narmala garu has agreed to provide a monthly update on her on going work. Who ever is interested to join the group to know and support her amazing work, please email me at rmayreddy@gmail.com.

If you would like to visit and support her work, you can also directly email her at: nirmala.tammineni@gmail.com.

Thank you all for joining the call.

**The next call is on Wednesday (Sept 10th) Night at 9PM EST. with Upender Reddy garu, a dedicated officer in SCERT (State Council Educational Research and Training).**

Thanks & Regards  
Ravi Mayreddy  
Philadelphia Telangana Association (PTA)