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VOL. XXXXI NO.4

APRIL 2026

A portrait of Ratan Tata, an elderly man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. He is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is dark and textured.

Learnings from Ratan Tata

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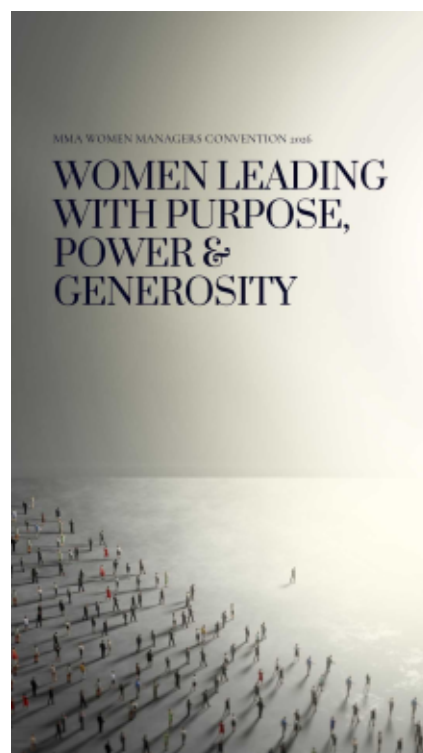
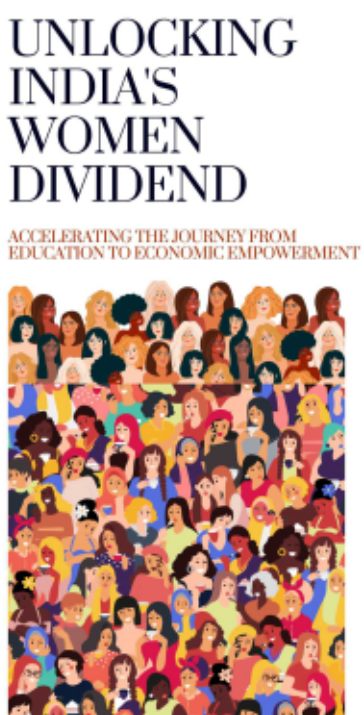
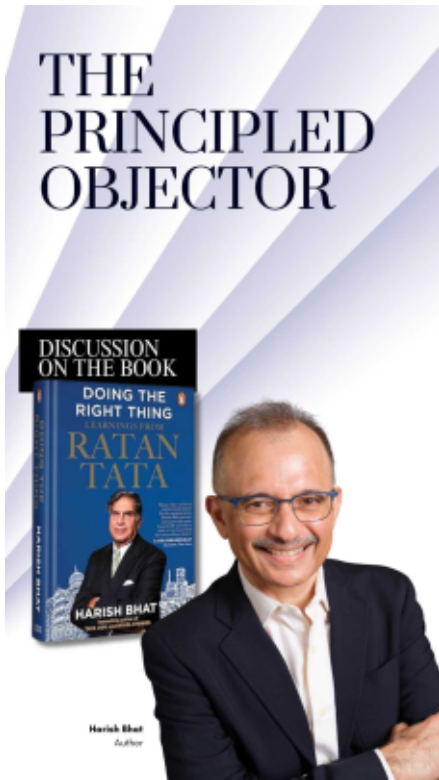
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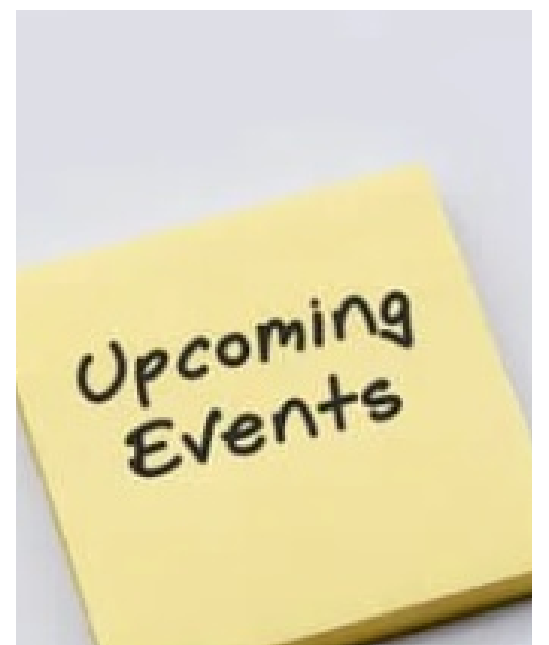
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Gp Capt R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM

End of a momentous Financial Year - A Year Well Led, A Future Well Prepared

As we draw the curtain on yet another significant financial year at MMA, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our members for your steadfast support and engagement. It is your continued involvement that has enabled us to achieve this milestone of all-round excellence. During the year, several new initiatives were introduced with a focus on enhancing managerial capabilities and supporting members in their pursuit of professional excellence.

At the same time, the global environment remains deeply uncertain and challenging. Ongoing geopolitical tensions, particularly the Iran conflict, continue to cast a long shadow over the global economy. Disruptions

Innovation has long been the cornerstone of progress, and platforms that nurture and celebrate it are vital to building a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

in critical trade routes such as the Strait of Hormuz have impacted energy flows, leading to heightened supply and price risks for countries like India. Several sectors, including textiles, are already feeling the strain due to rising logistics costs and raw material shortages during crucial demand cycles.

Even as discussions around ceasefire continue, uncertainty persists, making it difficult for businesses to anticipate the direction of global developments. The economic repercussions—both direct and indirect—are likely to be felt across industries, underscoring the importance of resilience, adaptability, and strategic foresight.

In this context, MMA has remained committed to bringing timely and relevant perspectives to its members. We recently organised a thought-provoking session on *“Weathering the Trumpstorm: Business Strategy in a Tariff-First World”* by **Ambassador Ajay Bisaria, IFS (Retd)**, Strategic Consultant, Author, and Commentator on International Affairs. I am pleased to present an article on this session in the current issue, along with an embedded video, offering valuable insights into navigating these turbulent times.

I invite you to read on and reflect on the perspectives shared, as we collectively prepare to navigate the evolving global landscape with informed strategy and resilience.

THE CAVINKARE–MMA CHINNIKRISHNAN AWARDS 2026

Innovation has long been the cornerstone of progress, and platforms that nurture and celebrate it are vital to building a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. *The CavinKare–MMA ChinniKrishnan Innovation & Great Ideas Awards* stand as a powerful testament to this belief. Since 2011, this initiative has consistently recognised enterprises that challenge convention, create meaningful societal impact, and demonstrate the courage to think differently.

Instituted in memory of Late Shri R. Chinni-Krishnan, whose pioneering “sachet revolution” democratised access to essential products, the awards embody a philosophy that innovation must ultimately serve society at large. As we mark the 15th edition, the significance of this initiative is even more pronounced—encouraging entrepreneurs to innovate with purpose, inclusivity, and scalability.

In an evolving landscape where ideas are the currency of the future, it is imperative that we widen the funnel of participation. I would urge all our members to actively disseminate information about these awards across their professional networks—reaching out to innovators, start-ups, incubators, industry bodies, research institutions, and educational establishments across India. Your outreach can play a crucial role in bringing forward deserving innovators

and ideators who merit national recognition on this prestigious platform.

For detailed information on eligibility, guidelines, and the nomination process for both the Innovation and Great Ideas categories, members are requested to access the brochure and share applications through [the official link](#).

A key highlight of this year's edition is the introduction of the "Great Ideas Award"—a forward-looking category that recognises originality, foresight, and problem-solving even at the conceptual or early stages. This initiative reinforces a powerful message: every breakthrough innovation begins as a simple yet compelling idea. By extending recognition beyond proven innovations to promising ideas, CavinKare and MMA seek to inspire students, researchers, professionals, and aspiring entrepreneurs to think boldly and share their vision for the future.

The CavinKare–MMA ChinniKrishnan Awards are not merely a recognition platform—they represent a movement to inspire, mentor, and elevate innovation in India. As we look ahead, I invite each one of you to contribute actively to this mission—by encouraging participation, identifying talent, and championing ideas that have the potential to transform industries and improve lives.

Let us collectively discover, support, and celebrate the innovators and ideas that will shape tomorrow.

MMA AWARD FOR MANAGERIAL EXCELLENCE 2026

The MMA Award for Managerial Excellence

(MAME), instituted in 2002, reflects MMA's enduring commitment to promoting sound management practices, leadership excellence, and organisational performance across sectors. Over the years, the award has emerged as a prestigious benchmark, recognising organisations that excel not only in outcomes, but in the quality of managerial thinking, strategic direction, and execution.

The 2026 edition marks a significant milestone—the Silver Jubilee year of the MAME Awards—celebrating 25 years of sustained recognition of managerial excellence and its impactful contribution to strengthening organisational capabilities across the region.

In today's dynamic business environment, organisations that align vision with execution, respond with agility, and deliver sustainable growth stand out as true exemplars of managerial excellence. The MAME Awards seek to recognise such organisations across Manufacturing, Services, SME, and Educational sectors, thereby creating role models for the wider business community.

As we commence this landmark edition, I urge all our members to actively identify organisations within their networks that are performing exceptionally well in these four categories and nominate them for the awards. Your recommendations will enable MMA to connect with these organisations and take the evaluation process forward, ensuring that deserving institutions receive due recognition.

Members are also requested to refer to the detailed award brochure and nomination guidelines [available here](#).

The MAME Awards are not merely about recognition—they are about showcasing excellence, inspiring others, and elevating management standards across the region.

Let us come together to identify and honour those who set benchmarks in managerial excellence.

A WELCOME MOVE BY RBI TO SAFEGUARD INDIA'S DIGITAL PAYMENTS ECOSYSTEM

With effect from 1 April 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated that all digital payments be authenticated using at least two independent factors. This important move seeks to address vulnerabilities in systems that rely on a single layer of verification and aims to significantly reduce risks arising from compromised credentials. Notably, RBI data indicates that bank frauds surged to 36,014 crore in FY 2024-25, marking a sharp 194% increase in value over the previous year.

The new regulations apply across digital payment platforms, reinforcing the need for robust security protocols. Banks will be held accountable for compliance, thereby strengthening responsibility within the financial system. This initiative represents a decisive step towards tightening the digital payments framework and fostering greater trust among users.

As India continues its rapid transition towards a digitally driven economy, such proactive regulatory measures are essential to ensure safety, resilience, and sustained growth. By enhancing security and accountability, the RBI has taken a timely step in reinforcing confidence in the digital payments ecosystem and enabling its wider adoption.

ELECTIONS 2026 – A CALL TO CONSCIENCE

The announcement of elections to five legislative assemblies, including Tamil Nadu, once again underscores the scale and strength of India's democratic process. Conducting elections across over 2.19 lakh polling stations in four states and one union territory is a monumental task—even for a nation with over 75 years of electoral experience.

Consider the dedication involved: polling officials trekking for hours through the challenging terrain of the Varusanadu hills in Tamil Nadu's Theni district to serve just five electors at the Vellimalai polling station. Such examples reflect the extraordinary commitment of the Election Commission and its teams to uphold every citizen's right to vote. In the face of such effort, the responsibility of the voter becomes paramount. The right to vote is not merely a privilege—it is a sacred duty. Exercising this right with awareness, integrity, and a sense of responsibility is essential to preserving the spirit of our Constitution. Falling prey to short-term promises diminishes the true power of the vote and weakens the foundations of democracy.

Let this election be a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to democratic values and a tribute to the tireless efforts of those who make this process possible. Do exercise your franchise—thoughtfully and without fail.

BACK TO BOOKS: REDISCOVERING THE POWER OF READING

In an era often defined by digital fatigue and fast-paced lifestyles, an encouraging trend is emerging—

the revival of reading. Bookstores are witnessing renewed interest, and the publishing industry is experiencing a notable upswing, driven by younger audiences, growing global recognition of Indian authors, and a fresh enthusiasm for print books.

At MMA, this resurgence finds meaningful expression through our *Read & Grow* series, which has steadily grown in popularity. This initiative continues to attract a diverse audience, including students and professionals, both online and offline, fostering a culture of continuous learning and thoughtful engagement.

It is heartening to see students and members alike rediscover the simple yet profound joy of reading—the act of turning a page, reflecting, and growing. This renewed connection with books is not merely nostalgic; it is a powerful reminder that knowledge, perspective, and leadership are deeply rooted in the habit of reading.

I am pleased to share access to over fifty sessions from our *Read & Grow* series and encourage you to explore these enriching discussions. May they inspire you to cultivate the habit of reading and lifelong learning. After all, to be a great leader, one must first be a great reader.

LIVING WITH AI: PREPARING FOR AN INTELLIGENT FUTURE

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution is no longer a distant possibility—it is an inevitable reality that is reshaping every aspect of human life. Unlike earlier technological shifts, AI has a pervasive influence across domains—be it healthcare, law,

business, education, or governance. This makes it imperative for individuals and organisations alike to understand, adapt, and prepare for this profound transformation.

In this context, MMA association with Pond's Veterans, is organising the *V. Narayanan (Pond's) Memorial Endowment Lecture on "The 'I' in AI: Empowering Individuals in an Intelligent Age"* by **Mr B Santhanam**, Former CEO, Asia Pacific & India and Chairman, Saint-Gobain India, at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 9 April 2026 at the MMA Management Center. A live streaming link is also made available, and I request all members to participate and gain valuable insights into how individuals can remain relevant and empowered in this evolving landscape.

I am also pleased to present in this issue an engaging article on the session "*AI - For the Rest of Us: An Illustrated Introduction*" by **Mr. Sairam Sundaresan**, AI Engineering Leader and author, held at MMA on 12 February 2026. The article, along with the embedded video, offers a simplified and practical perspective on AI for a wider audience.

Every new technology may appear overwhelming at first, but with the right understanding and mindset, it becomes an enabler of growth and opportunity. AI is no different. Let us embrace this change, learn continuously, and position ourselves to thrive in the age of intelligent technologies.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS: BUILDING RESILIENT INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS

Conversations around mental health are more

prominent today than ever before. Encouragingly, organisations are beginning to recognise the importance of employee well-being. When individuals do not feel valued or supported, it impacts not only their personal well-being but also their engagement and commitment at work.

Mental health is not merely an individual concern—it is deeply influenced by the systems we are part of, including corporate, educational, social, and economic environments. Unless we address these underlying drivers of stress and imbalance, efforts to promote well-being will have limited and short-lived impact.

At MMA, we continue to facilitate meaningful conversations and initiatives that support personal and professional growth. Our Mentor–Mentee programme is a timely initiative that enables individuals to reflect, learn, and benchmark themselves in a supportive environment. Equally important is the need to cultivate balance in our lives—creating moments of stillness amidst constant activity. In this context, reading remains a powerful and enduring habit that nurtures clarity, perspective, and inner strength.

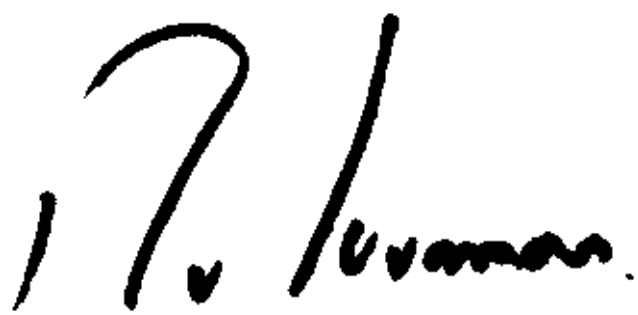
Great leaders understand that organisational success is built on a foundation of empathy, patience, integrity, and a genuine human approach. An exemplary role model is **Mr Ratan Tata**, Former Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, whose leadership continues to inspire generations. In this issue, we are pleased to feature an insightful article on the book *“Doing the Right Thing: Learnings from Ratan Tata”* by **Mr Harish Bhat**. Through compelling anecdotes, the book highlights the values and leadership qualities

that contribute to building not just successful organisations, but truly meaningful and humane workplaces.

Let us strive to create environments where people feel valued, supported, and inspired—because strong organisations are built on the well-being of their people.

As always, we would be happy to hear your views, comments and suggestions.

Happy Reading!!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Human". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

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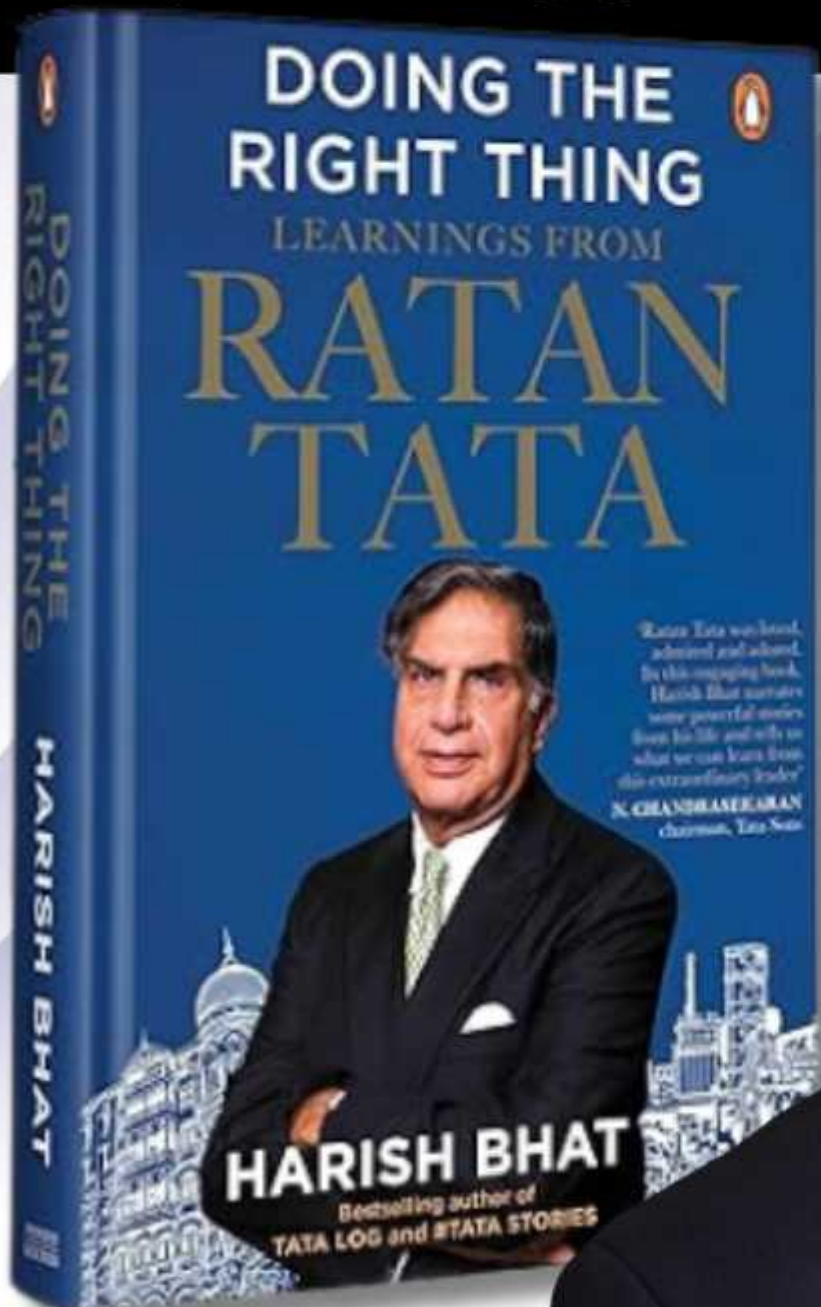
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THE PRINCIPLED OBJECTOR

DISCUSSION
ON THE BOOK



Harish Bhat
Author

Inspiring MMA discussion revisits Ratan Tata's life, highlighting leadership rooted in integrity, compassion, and the courage to choose wisely.

Harish Bhat

Former Brand Custodian, Tata Sons | Author

I was also deeply moved to see, as I walked in, a photograph of Mr. Ratan Tata right outside this hall — receiving the MMA Business Leadership Award. And in looking at MMA's history, I found that the very first recipient of that award, many decades ago, was none other than JRD Tata. There is, quite evidently, a very strong Tata lineage associated with this institution.

Now, let me tell you the story of why I wrote this book — because I think that story matters as much as the book itself. Ratan Tata passed away on the 9th of October, 2024. Around 11 that night, I received the news in Bangalore and felt deeply saddened. He had been on the interview panel that recruited me into the Tata Group in 1987, and over the following decades he was a constant source of inspiration in my life. The next morning, I took the first flight to Mumbai to pay my last respects at the National Centre for Performing Arts, where his body was kept in state.

On the flight itself, I met a man who had been a packaging vendor to Titan for many years. He too was



heading to Mumbai. He told me he had never met Mr. Ratan Tata personally, yet he felt he owed his entire career to the Tata Group. At the NCPA, there was a queue several kilometres long. People raised slogans — *Ratan Tata amar rahe* — the kind of outpouring you associate with statesmen, not industrialists. The last time I witnessed anything comparable was when President APJ Abdul Kalam passed away. I saw people breaking down and crying as they paid their respects. I received a message from a lady entrepreneur who had arrived late and missed the viewing — she asked simply: could she at least see Bombay House, so that she could go back feeling she had paid her respects somewhere?

When I returned to Bangalore and spoke with people, so many told me: we never met him personally, and yet when he passed, we felt a personal loss. That question stayed with me. Was it because he was a successful businessman? He grew the Tata Group from \$5.8 billion in revenues in 1991 to \$100 billion by 2012 — remarkable by any measure. But there are other successful businesspeople who do not



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inspire this kind of love. Was it his philanthropy, the cancer hospitals, the charitable trusts? Was it his graceful humility despite holding the most powerful private sector office in the country? Was it that he had championed startups in his final years? Each reason, by itself, seemed insufficient. You respect and admire business leaders — but love and affection are not terms commonly associated with them.

So I decided to research more rigorously. I spoke to 20 to 25 people who had worked very closely with him — managing directors of Tata companies, senior leaders at group headquarters: R. Gopalakrishnan, Ishaat Hussain, B. Muthuraman, R. Mukundan, Kishor Chaukar, KRS Jamwal, H.N. Srinivas, and many others. And one common thread ran through every single conversation: he always tried to do what his conscience told him was the right thing. Then I came across an interview where an internal Tata Group magazine had asked him about his legacy. He said — and these are his words — 'I hope I will be remembered as a person who always tried to do the right thing in whatever I did.' That is where this book was born.

This is not a biography of Ratan Tata. It does not recount his life chronologically. It examines some of the most difficult decisions he ever faced and looks at them through the lens of doing the right thing. The book contains more than 35 stories from his life — each one carrying a lesson that any of us can take forward. I chose stories deliberately, because frameworks fade from memory but stories do not. That is how we are built as human beings. ■

Q&A

Vinay Kamath, Editorial Consultant, The Hindu

BusinessLine: The book is full of stories that illuminate Ratan Tata's character. In a nutshell, what did 'doing the right thing' actually mean to him — what is the essential takeaway?

Mr. Harish Bhat: The back cover of the book carries a quotation from Ratan Tata himself: 'At all times ask yourself if you are doing the right thing.' But if you go deeper, doing the right thing meant several distinct things to him simultaneously. First, it meant putting the nation first — above the interests of the Tata Group itself. Everything in his career, every major decision, placed India above industry advantage. Second, it meant being a custodian of the Tata legacy. He once told our group legal head: 'Don't talk about my legacy — I am the custodian of the Tata legacy. I received it when I became chairman. My job is to leave it stronger.' Third, it meant doing what was ethically right, and sometimes that meant walking away from business opportunities if the ethics were not sound. Fourth — and this is a crucial nuance — it meant going beyond what was legally required to do what was morally correct. Fifth, and perhaps most fundamentally, it was about care and compassion for people — and for animals. His mantra, as shared by Ishaat Hussain, was consistent: 'Protect the dignity of the person on the other side. Never make anyone feel small.' And finally, it meant keeping every

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commitment, however small. Once he gave his word, he was restless until he had honoured it.

People often asked him why doing the right thing mattered so much. His answer has stayed with me: 'I would like to be convinced that I have not succumbed to doing something wrong, and I can go to bed peacefully at night.' That nightly reckoning with his own conscience was, for him, a non-negotiable practice.

Can you share a story from the book that best illustrates his care and compassion — and what is your personal favourite story in the entire book?

The story of the 26/11 attacks on the Taj Mahal Hotel is one that most people know in outline, but the details that came to light when I spoke to those who were present are extraordinary. Within 40 to 45 minutes of the attack beginning, Ratan Tata had reached the Taj. The police would not let him enter. So he remained on the pavement outside, near the Gateway of India, throughout that night — feeling helpless, but determined to be present in solidarity with the people inside. The real heroes of that night were the Taj's own staff, who formed human chains to guide guests to safety, and 14 of whom lost their lives in doing so.

When the commandos finally neutralised the situation after three days and Ratan Tata was permitted to enter the hotel, he was already thinking about rehabilitation — not just for Taj employees but for every family across the city of Mumbai affected by the attacks. He made a public commitment before anyone had even counted the casualties. A senior executive standing nearby whispered a concern about the scale of financial liability. Ratan Tata whispered back: 'How does it matter? Let's get the data

and find out. The city of Mumbai has given us so much over the years — now the city needs help, and we will do whatever is required.' The Taj Public Welfare Trust was established within 15 days, with contributions from across the Tata Group, and it provided medical care, livelihood support, and educational assistance to hundreds of families across Mumbai — not only those connected to the Taj.

My favourite story, though, is one that Mr. B. Muthuraman — Managing Director of Tata Steel for many years — narrated to me, and when he told it, he had tears in his eyes. Muthuraman and Ratan Tata had opposing views on a significant business deal. They had to reach a decision by 10 p.m. Ratan Tata was travelling back from Delhi and said he would call from the car. He did call — they debated, reached an impasse, and Tata finally said: 'If this is what you want, go ahead — but leave me out of it.' And then the phone went dead. Muthuraman was distraught. Had his chairman banged the phone down on him? Within five minutes, however, the phone rang again. It was Ratan Tata. 'Muthu, about the deal — you decide and do whatever must be done. That is not why I am calling. I am calling to tell you that I did not bang the phone down on you. My car went over a bump, and the signal dropped.' Muthuraman told me: 'Can you imagine the chairman of the Tata Group calling back only to say he had not hung up on you? All the way from the car, he put his hand on my shoulder.' He said even today, years later, that story makes him want to cry — because it captures the essence of Ratan Tata's respect for every single person he worked with. That, to me, is the finest lesson in this entire book: before he was the chairman of the Tata Group, he was a human being. And he acted like one, always. ■



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DISCUSSION
ON THE BOOK



Sairam Sundaresan
Author

A lively book launch explores how AI can become understandable, practical, and human-centered for everyone, not just experts.

Sairam Sundaresan

AI Engineering Leader, Author, *AI for the Rest of Us*

It is 1943 in Chicago. The world outside is burning — millions of lives lost and millions more at stake. Yet in a basement, two unlikely collaborators are waging a quieter war. Warren McCulloch, a neuroscientist, and Walter Pitts, a self-taught logician with no fixed address and no institutional backing, are trying to understand one thing: how does the human brain work? Their hypothesis was elegantly simple — the neuron, that biological cell that fires every time you think or feel, is not magic. It is logic. True or false, one or zero, on or off. And if you connect enough of these logic units together, you can simulate thought, reasoning, and problem solving.

That idea is now over eighty years old, and we are living inside the edifice it built. We walk through it every day — yet most of us do not know which walls are load-bearing, which corridors lead to meaning, and which lead to darkness. My book is the floor plan I wish to offer.

The most dangerous recurring problem we face is



not a problem of technology. It is a problem of ego. In 1966, Marvin Minsky and Seymour Papert at MIT assigned undergraduate students the task of solving computer vision in a single summer. What could possibly go wrong? It turned out to take fifty years, billions of dollars, and countless failed experiments before a machine could reliably distinguish a cat from a dog. We are repeating that exact mistake today with AI agents — spending billions, wasting trust, and falling prey again to what is known as Moravec's Paradox: what is easy for humans is very hard for AI, and what is easy for AI is very hard for humans.

The CEOs who purchase AI models often believe they have bought a truth machine — an oracle. What they have actually bought is a probabilistic engine that dreams, guesses, and predicts. It is brilliant at finding hidden patterns at scale. It will write 100,000 lines of compiler code and pass 99 per cent of the test suite. But ask it to carry the implicit, unwritten context of your organisation — the engineer who left in 2012 and added a comment saying 'do not touch this line' — and it fails. We have automated the power of reading,

but not the power of understanding. We have automated the data pipeline but not the meaning pipeline. Garbage in, garbage out.

In this age, creation is free. The highest-value skill for the next decade is not creation — it is curation. Taste is knowledge. It is the ability to see what is good from bad, and to know when something works. A rising tide lifts all boats, but only the boats with sails move faster. Curation is that sail. I hope this illustrated book gives you the floor plan you need to navigate this extraordinary structure we are all living inside.

Suresh Raman

Past President, MMA, Former Vice President & Regional Head, TCS Chennai

Before I went through the book, I asked myself a few honest questions: Am I a data scientist? Do I code every day? Am I an AI architect or a machine learning expert? Am I a mathematician or a statistician? Being in the IT industry for decades, I can say with confidence that I am none of those things at an expert level — which means I am squarely among the rest of us. And that is precisely why this book matters.

What struck me most in reading the 250 pages over 25 days is that instead of dry technical definitions, you get real narratives. There is literally a story about a robo-baker and stolen muffins to explain supervised learning. There are practical, real-world examples showing how we are already encountering AI in daily life — whether it is a spam filter using logistic



24TH. MMA AWARD FOR MANAGERIAL EXCELLENCE 2026

NOMINATION CLOSES ON
20 MAY 2026



regression, Netflix recommendations built on collaborative filtering with embeddings, or the moment Instagram tags you in a photograph through convolutional neural networks. Sairam has made things easy. A lot of these are buzzwords that intimidate most people, but he strips away the mysticism.

I also came to understand how transformers revolutionised language processing by solving a deceptively simple problem: how do you make a computer understand that in the sentence 'the animal didn't cross the road because it was too tired', the word 'it' refers to the animal and not the road? That kind of contextual reasoning is something we take completely for granted, and yet it was the frontier problem of a generation of researchers. This book helps you appreciate what AI is, what it can do, and how we can leverage it — without requiring you to write a single line of code.

Antony Prashant

Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India Pvt Ltd —
Life Sciences & Healthcare Consulting Leader, South
Asia

I lead life sciences and healthcare consulting at Deloitte South Asia, and what Sairam's mountain analogy captures perfectly is the central question my sector is wrestling with every day. You can reach the summit by helicopter or by climbing — both get you there, but only one of those journeys transforms you. AI is the helicopter: it streamlines, automates, and compresses timelines dramatically. The question is whether we use it wisely.

In diagnostics, the typical cycle is painfully long. A patient walks in, sees a general physician, is sent for blood tests, then MRI, then perhaps a PET scan, and eventually a biopsy — six to eight weeks can pass before a clear diagnosis emerges. AI models trained on thousands of scans carry the combined knowledge of more than a hundred physicians. They can correlate data across multiple imaging types simultaneously and flag a potential issue far earlier than a single clinician reviewing results sequentially. The question this raises for me is: is a physician with AI more valuable than a physician without AI? And what happens to the emotional dimension — someone still has to sit with the patient, explain the diagnosis, and hold their hand through what follows?

I tend not to call it artificial intelligence. I call it assisted intelligence, or augmented intelligence. That framing matters because it orients us correctly. AI should be doing the heavy analytical lifting — pattern recognition at scale, early flagging, reducing diagnostic lag — while the human physician retains accountability, exercises clinical judgment, and provides the emotional presence that no model can replicate. For any high-stakes decision in medicine, law, or finance, you must keep a human in the loop. Not as a checkbox, but because the model has been trained on data, and if that data carries historical bias or poor annotation, the output is not just wrong — it is dangerously confidently wrong. Augmented intelligence, done right, gives us the best of both. ■

<p>THU, 2 APR 5:00 pm ONWARDS MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>SRM-THE HINDU-MMA FUTURE CAREER CONVERSATIONS (BY INVITATION ONLY)</p>
<p>MON-TUE, 6&7 APR 9:30 am ONWARDS FEATHERS A RADHA HOTEL, CHENNAI</p>	<p>SRM-THE HINDU-MMA DEEP TECH SUMMIT 2026 (BY INVITATION ONLY)</p>
<p>THU, 9 APR 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>THE SIXTH V NARAYANAN MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT LECTURE THE 'I' IN AI: EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS IN AN INTELLIGENT AGE</p>
<p>SAT, 11 APR 6:15 pm to 7:30 pm TANISHQ, ANNA NAGAR</p>	<p>TIMELINKS GOLDEN EDGE SERIES LECTURE WHAT MADRAS TEACHES US WHICH NO B-SCHOOL CAN</p>
<p>SAT, 11 APR 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm THE INSTITUTE OF INDIAN FOUNDRYMEN, CHENNAI</p>	<p>THE INSTITUTE OF INDIAN FOUNDRYMEN, CHENNAI CHAPTER (IIF, CHENNAI)</p>
<p>THU, 16 APR 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>MMA-THE PENINSULA FOUNDATION-DECCAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS-KAS DISCUSSION</p>
<p>FRI, 24 APR 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>LAUNCH & DISCUSSION ON THE ENLIGHTENED MANAGER: A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO WORK AND LIFE</p>
<p>TUE, 28 APR 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>READ & GROW SERIES QUIET LEADERSHIP: SIX STEPS TO TRANSFORMING PERFORMANCE AT WORK</p>
<p>WED, 29 APR 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm ANDHRA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</p>	<p>ANDHRA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DESIGN THINKING FOR EVERYDAY LIFE: SIMPLE IDEAS, SMARTER DECISIONS</p>
<p>WED, 29 APR 9:00 am to 5:00 pm MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER</p>	<p>MMA - SUCCESSVERSE ASK FOUNDATION SUCCESSVERSE HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE CONCLAVE 2026</p>

[● REC] ▶ RECORDED EVENTS

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**Conclave on
Unlocking India's Women Dividend**
Accelerating the Journey from
Education to Economic Empowerment
6 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
Chief Guest
Gangapriya Chakraverti

**Launch & Discussion on
Doing the Right Thing**
Learnings from Ratan Tata
12 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
Harish Bhat **Vinay Kamath**

MMA Women Managers' convention 2026
Women Leading with
Purpose, Power & Generosity
14 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
Meetha Ramesh

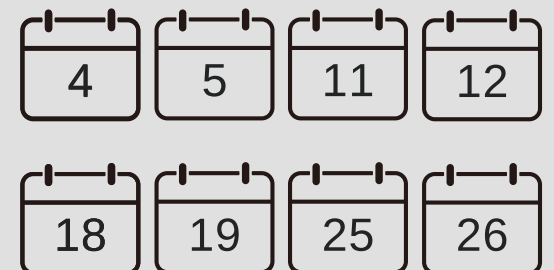
READ & GROW
The Outward Mindset
How to Change Lives and
Transform Organizations
17 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
Babu Krishnamoorthy **Sivakumar Palaniappan** **M.L. Raghavan**

**Launch & Discussion on the book
WISE WEALTH**
23 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
Geetanjali Vikram **Rajmohan Krishnan** **Ganesh S Iyer** **Aarthi Lakshminarayanan** **Sreepriya NS** **S Seetharaman**

**Launch & Discussion on the book
The Mirror Within**
Unveiling Hidden Perceptions through Image Audit
26 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
C Siva Kumar **Prime Point Srivassan** **K Anokan** **Priyadarshini Rahul**

weekend ONLINE QUIZ

MMA – KAS Weekend Quiz on
every Saturday and Sunday from
9:00 AM to 9:00 PM - MAR 2026



**Discussion on the Book
CHANAKYA and SUN TZU**
A Business Lens on Trade, Thought and Travel
27 MARCH 2026 | MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER
R Gopalakrishnan **Nirmala Isaac** **Shastril Ramachandran**

Q&A

Suresh Raman: You describe the book as analogy-driven with zero coding and real-world examples. As someone who sits squarely among 'the rest of us', I found the robo-baker story explaining supervised learning delightful. But my question is this: India has an extraordinary ability to leap technology generations — we went from a passbook airline ticket to DigiYatra facial recognition in two decades. What role do you see AI playing in shaping our country's economy, and what gives you confidence that we are ready?

Sairam Sundaresan: You are absolutely right that India is exceedingly good at adopting new things and skipping generations. AI is no different — except that with AI there is no user manual. There is no single prescribed right way or wrong way, and the guidelines are being rewritten every time a new model is released. But what we do have as a culture is courage. We are not hesitant to try things, and that willingness to experiment and update one's priors is the single most important trait for AI adoption.

Think about what AI does for a young person with a brilliant idea. Previously, you needed funding, a pitch deck, a team. Now you have a tireless Swiss Army knife

next to you that is very good at most things you are probably not good at. Instead of building a pitch deck, you can build a working prototype on day one, put it in front of users, collect feedback, and iterate. Imagine the number of solo entrepreneurs who can emerge without needing a traditional four-year degree or months of fundraising. In a country like India, with so many bright minds trying out ideas in parallel — that is the economic impact I feel AI can have. The only thing stopping you is your own inertia.

Antony Prashant: I lead life sciences and healthcare at Deloitte. In our sector, an AI model trained on thousands of MRI scans can detect critical disease months before a physician can — yet there is also a human being in that consulting room whose life is at stake, who needs not just a diagnosis but empathy. Is the future a physician with AI, or does the emotional dimension mean there are places where AI simply must not replace the human? I tend to call it assisted intelligence rather than artificial intelligence — does that framing resonate with you?

Your framing resonates completely, and I would extend it further — augmented intelligence captures it even better. What AI does in diagnostics is remarkable: it analyses scans at a scale that represents the combined knowledge of more than a hundred physicians, and it can preemptively flag something before it becomes visible to a single pair of eyes. That shortcut in the diagnostic sequence — from months of sequential tests down to an early alert — can be the difference between a life saved and a life lost.

But here is the thing: would you truly believe a diagnosis from a machine, delivered cold and without

context? Or would you believe the same finding from a physician who has seen hundreds of thousands of patients, who can explain it to you not just logically but with the warmth and clarity that a frightening moment demands? For any decision where the stakes are high — medicine, law, finance, education — you must keep a human in the loop. Not because AI is incapable, but because the model has been trained on data, and if that data was poorly annotated or carries historical bias, you are trusting something that is entirely false. The future I would love to live in is one where AI is precise and tireless in the operating theatre and in the clinic, while the physician carries the emotional intelligence, the accountability, and the human touch that no model can replicate. That is augmented intelligence at its best. ■



WORKSHOPS

APRIL 2026

ART OF STORYTELLING - BUSINESS PRESENTATION

17th April 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

MMA-NIPM STRATEGIC HR MANAGEMENT COURSE - 3 SATURDAY

Commencing 11th April 2026 | 09:30 AM to 05:30 PM | MMA Management Center

FIRST TIME MANAGER

21st April 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

MMA'S EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COURSE - 6 MONTHS CERTIFICATION

Commencing 25th April 2026 | 09:30 AM to 05:15 PM | MMA Management Center

AGENTIC AI

25th April 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

MMA-ZEAL 12 WEEKS LEADERSHIP COURSE

Commencing 11th April 2026 | 10:00 AM to 01:30 PM | MMA Management Center

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WORKSHOPS

MAY 2026

EFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL SKILLS FOR SENIOR PROFESSIONALS

12th May 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

ESSENTIALS OF KAIZEN

16th May 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

NAVIGATING COMPLEX B2B BUYING CYCLES

19th May 2026 | 10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

GREEN BELT - SIX SIGMA CERTIFICATION

22nd May 2026 | 23rd May 2026 |
28th May 2026 | 29th May 2026 |
10:00 AM to 05:30 PM
MMA Management Center

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WEATHERING THE TRUMPSTORM

BUSINESS STRATEGY IN A
TARIFF-FIRST WORLD



Ajay Bisaria, IFS (Retd)
Strategic Consultant & Author

Panelists dissect Trump's tariff storm, offering strategies for Indian businesses to navigate geopolitics, diversify risks, and thrive amid uncertainty.

Amb. Ajay Bisaria, IFS (Retd.)

Strategic Consultant, Author, Commentator on International Affairs

Let me begin with something that illustrates just how volatile this moment is. When Mali asked me the tariff rate before this event, I checked my phone and it was 10%. I checked again minutes later — it was 25%. That tells you everything about the world we are operating in. This is about the time Trump wakes up and tweets, and that changes the world again, dramatically. In many ways, Trump has been to geopolitics what Tiger Woods was to golf — the interest in geopolitics, not just as something that affects you directly but as a spectator sport, has gone through the roof.

What I want to do today is contextualise the Trump storm within the larger hundred-year play of geopolitics. After World War II, we had a stable bipolar system — the US and the USSR, mutually assured destruction, nuclear deterrence — that gave the world a degree of order for 45 years. When the USSR broke up in 1991, we moved to a unipolar world that lasted,



in my assessment, until about 2008, when Russia woke up from the dead and pushed back in Georgia. From 2008, we have been living in an emerging multipolarity — a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, the VUCA world — true for countries, true for business, true for individuals.

Four forces are compounding this. Geopolitics is shifting, geoeconomics is being weaponised, technology is disrupting faster than governance can respond, and climate change is adding another layer of systemic risk. The US-China rivalry sits at the centre of all four. China now produces 33% of global output. It controls critical minerals. It is challenging the US in AI, in supply chains, in standards, in Africa, in Eurasia. For Russia and Iran, the challenge to US primacy has already turned hot — in Ukraine and in West Asia. With China, it remains a cold war, a war of weaponised trade and supply chains. And India, I should note, sits at precisely the short end of this problem: our largest source of imports and our largest export destination both weaponised trade against us in the same period.

India's response has been consistent with its historical instinct: strategic autonomy. What has changed is the vocabulary — from non-alignment to multi-alignment. The India Way, as Jaishankar framed it, is to engage America, manage China, reassure Russia, cultivate Europe, deepen ties with Japan and the Middle East, and champion the Global South. The challenge today is that all four major powers — the US, China, Russia, Europe — are behaving more volatily, making that balance harder to manage. The US remains indispensable but is now a less reliable partner. China remains the strategic rival but we need tactical accommodation to keep the hundred-billion-dollar trade deficit from escalating into conflict. Russia is declining but still occasionally useful. Europe is ascending as a partner, particularly with Macron's visit and the Rafale deal.

The India-EU trade deal — fifteen years in the making — is perhaps the most consequential development of recent months. It happened because Trump forced middle powers to hedge. That is the paradox of the Trump storm: it is accelerating precisely the diversification and coalition-building that India needs. The India-US deal framework was moving towards 18% tariffs, but yesterday's Supreme Court ruling put that back on the drawing board. The administration says keep calm and tariff on — they will use other legislative routes to get back to 18%. For India, paradoxically, the stronger negotiating position is now ours. The Indian strategy should be: keep calm and negotiate short-term, diversify in the medium term, and strengthen the economy and defence capacity over the long term. Selective globalization —

not retreat from the world, but engagement on our terms, with the right partners, in the right sectors.

Rabindranath B

CEO & Co-Founder, Quantrium

You described 2026 as potentially India's geopolitical sweet spot. The China-plus-one story is well understood — Apple's manufacturing presence in Chennai is the most visible example. But what I am seeing is an emerging US-plus-one diversification as well. Canadian pension funds I work with have 40 to 70% exposure in the US market — something that was simply inconceivable a year ago. They are now actively looking to India and the EU. That outflow of capital looking for a stable, growing alternative is a real tailwind. Indian companies need to move beyond being alternative suppliers and become indispensable partners — and that means going global, not just waiting for the world to come here.

Arjun Chakraverti

Independent Management Consultant

If I put Trump tremors at six on the Richter scale of business disruption, the AI revolution is nine or more — and the dimensions of its impact are still being discovered. The ambassador mentioned at the Delhi AI Summit that technology is running well ahead of governance. My own preparation for this evening confirmed it: I gave the invite brochure to Gemini and asked it to generate discussion questions. I was relieved to find the questions still weren't good enough — there is still some relevance for the rest of

us. But only just. Every management institution, every business, every government needs to decide right now where it wants to sit in Jensen Huang's five-layer AI stack — chips, infrastructure, models, applications, and the edge. India will not compete at the bottom of that stack. But at the model and application layers, there is a real opportunity if we move with urgency.

Jagannathan Narayanan

Director & CEO, Fourth Dimension Technologies

The question of regional integration matters as much as global diversification. India lives in a genuinely tough neighbourhood — two traditional adversaries, two failing states on our borders. But the Sri Lanka story is a positive one, and Bangladesh is turning. The best model for reform, in my view, is competitive federalism — let states compete for investment the way countries compete for trade. Foxconn picked three Indian states not by accident, but because those states competed hard. That is the model: enable at the centre, compete at the state level, and make India the most attractive destination not just for global capital but for regional startups from Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the wider neighbourhood.



Q & A

The institutions that held the postwar order together — the UN, WTO, NATO, the Paris Climate Accord — have been battered by the Trump storm. Are we witnessing the sunset of multilateralism, or will it reinvent itself? And how do Indian businesses navigate this upheaval?

There is no clean answer, because this emerging multipolarity is going to be defined by rules we haven't yet agreed upon. We are in a hybrid order — part 19th-century might-is-right, part remnants of the 20th-century rules-based system. What is clear is that the UN Security Council has failed to bring peace. The 20-point plan for Gaza is Trump's. The Ukraine deal framework is Trump's. The UN is not in the room.

India's position is that we need a reformed multilateralism — one that reflects the realities of today, not 1945. What that means practically is a G20 world more than a UN world, and a proliferation of opportunistic alliances: the Quad, BRICS, IMEC — the India-Middle East-Europe corridor. For business, this creates real opportunities precisely in these alliance frameworks and in the reshoring and friend-shoring supply chains they enable. My honest assessment is that it will take a decade before we settle on a new order. But that decade is also a decade of opportunity for those who are watching carefully.

Given the scale of anti-immigrant sentiment in the US — the \$100,000 H1B fee proposals, potential tariffs on Indian software exports, even talk of banning H1B visas — how seriously should the Indian IT industry view these threats?

The Indian IT sector is facing a triple challenge simultaneously: geopolitical pressure, anti-immigrant sentiment, and the AI disruption. That is a formidable combination. But I would distinguish between noise and policy. The MAGA crowd does not like immigrants, but at the moment those voices are being checked by the tech bro oligarchy from the West Coast. Musk was explicit — he is willing to go to war on this one, because Silicon Valley was built on Indian talent. The fringe bills you are referring to — the higher H1B fee, the proposed tariffs on software exports — I think they will not see the light of day because there are simply too many countervailing interests. You may see anti-immigrant sentiment on the streets, but it will not become policy, at least not for the Indian tech professional. That is, I think, the more reassuring reading of where things currently stand.

If you were advising a young Indian entrepreneur today, which sectors or global corridors would you consider most promising over the next decade?

Follow the money and follow the trade deals. Europe is suddenly emerging as a massive opportunity — political leaders are coming to India precisely because they have problems with China, Russia, and now the United States simultaneously. That combination of geopolitical pressure is creating real appetite for Indian partnerships. West Asia — UAE, Saudi Arabia, the GCC

— is both a capital pool and a growing market. We now have a trade deal framework with the six GCC countries. And East Asia and Africa are also important emerging geographies. The Brazilian president's recent visit is part of that same story — countries diversifying away from a mercurial United States. These three geographies — Europe, West Asia, and East Asia — are where I would focus if I were advising a young entrepreneur building for global markets today.

When redesigning supply chains, should companies prioritise cost efficiency or geopolitical alignment?

That is actually a question with a clear answer, and it is the central argument of everything I have been saying today. The most efficient supply chain is not the most effective supply chain for your business. The risks to an efficient supply chain are too great in the current environment. The world believed China could be made the permanent sweat shop of the global economy — the most efficient division of labour possible. Clearly that model is broken. A geopolitically aligned, friend-shored supply chain — even if it costs more — is more resilient, more sustainable, and ultimately better for long-term business performance. Build in optionality. No more than 25% dependency on any single geography for inputs or markets. Map your risks before your competitors force you to. ■

UNLOCKING INDIA'S WOMEN DIVIDEND

ACCELERATING THE JOURNEY FROM
EDUCATION TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



MMA and GLIM's conclave spotlighted a crucial truth: India's women dividend will remain untapped unless education leads to safe housing, formal jobs, and real economic mobility. Two white papers were released at the event:

* *Young Adults at Work in India: Intense Work for Some, Insufficient Jobs for Many*

* *Unlocking Women's Employment Through Safe Housing: Lessons from Tamil Nadu's Thozhi Hostels*

The Data Behind the Dividend

Professor Vidya Mahambare

Union Bank Chair Professor of Economics, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai

Most employment studies look at the 15–59 age group, but both white papers we have released today deliberately focus on young adults — those between 20 and 29 years of age. This is a cohort of roughly 200 million people. If they were a country, they would rank as the eighth most populous nation on earth. More importantly, a 22-year-old entering work today will spend four decades in the labour force — this generation will quite literally carry India forward. They are also the most educated cohort in our history, they will drive innovation, and they will create the jobs of tomorrow. That is why we focus specifically on them.

Out of those 200 million young people, only about 93–94 million are currently employed — just under half. Of those who are working, merely 19 million are



in institutional enterprises — that is, the corporate sector, government, and NGOs. The remaining 80 per cent work in household enterprises, which typically offer lower wages, lower productivity, and no social security. Our aim must be to move more young people into formal employment while simultaneously drawing those outside the workforce into paid work.

The state-level picture is sobering. The all-India employment rate for young adults stands at 46.7 per cent. Even the leading states — Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu — have not crossed 60 per cent. At the bottom are Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, precisely the states that contribute most to the demographic dividend we keep celebrating.

The gender gap is among the sharpest in the world. Within this age group, 79 per cent of men are employed; only 18.2 per cent of women are. Even among single young women — before the constraints of marriage arrive — fewer than three in ten are in paid work. The southern states do better: Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat record women's employment in the range of 24 to 26 per

cent, but even that means only one in four.

One of the most striking findings is what happens at marriage. Men's employment rises sharply — social norms dictate that a man must have a job before he marries. Women's employment falls by half: from 29.5 per cent among single women to 14.5 per cent among married ones. And even among those who are employed, the double burden is unmistakable. Women work nearly as many hours in formal employment as men do, but their total daily work — paid and unpaid combined — is substantially higher once you account for caregiving, housework, and elder care. That is a primary reason why many women eventually exit the workforce.

The second paper addresses the location mismatch directly. Educated women across India aspire to service-sector jobs — in IT, healthcare, financial services. But those jobs are concentrated in cities, and women live in interior districts. Safe, affordable urban accommodation is often the only barrier between aspiration and employment. Tamil Nadu's Thozhi Hostel programme, run under a public-private partnership model, is a direct response to this gap. Nineteen locations, near-100 per cent occupancy in Chennai. The women staying there come from at least twelve different states. They are engineers, IT professionals, healthcare workers. When we visited four of the five Chennai hostels, we found clean, well-maintained buildings with study rooms, social spaces, and an atmosphere that was genuinely empowering.

The evidence from our surveys and in-depth interviews is consistent: once women have stable, safe housing, their behaviour changes. They stay in

employment longer. They delay marriage by choice. They build financial independence, send money home, grow in confidence, and network with peers from diverse sectors. The journey from employment to empowerment is real — and the hostel is the hinge on which it turns. Our policy recommendations are to recognise hostels as economic infrastructure rather than mere welfare housing, expand capacity with fiscal sustainability, prioritise working women on waiting lists over students, and consider income-linked transitions for residents whose earnings have grown.

The Infrastructure We Owe Women

Ms Gangapriya Chakraverti

India Site Head & Managing Director, Ford Motor Company

This theme — getting young, educated people into meaningful work — covers two of my most favourite constituents: young people and women. I believe diversity, inclusion, and leadership are not merely ethical imperatives; they are strategic necessities for any thriving society or organisation.

India has achieved something remarkable: near gender parity in higher education. More than 21 million women were enrolled in higher education in 2022–23, matching men in absolute numbers. That is a monumental achievement. And yet, that parity has not been mirrored in employment. This is what I would call a leaky pipeline — educated women, particularly single women, are not transitioning into paid work at the rate we expect or desire. Less than half are currently in paid employment, and the unemployment

rate among highly educated women in Tamil Nadu alone stands at around 20 per cent.

One of the most significant and under-discussed reasons for this is the location mismatch. Most jobs are created in urban centres. Most educated women come from other parts of the state or country. And there are very real constraints — foremost among them the absence of safe, affordable housing — that prevent women from migrating independently for employment. While a high proportion of women migrate, less than five per cent do so for work. A vast majority — around 87 per cent — migrate because of marriage. That tells us everything about what we need to build.

The study of Tamil Nadu's Thozhi Hostels, conducted in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Working Women's Hostel Corporation, clearly demonstrates that these government-backed facilities are far more than places to stay. They are essential infrastructure for the labour market. By offering affordable, secure, and officially recognised accommodation, they empower educated women to move to cities, secure employment, and build lasting careers. The research describes a 'hostel-mediated empowerment pathway' — safe housing leads to living stability, stability leads to employment persistence, persistence fosters confidence and autonomy, and autonomy culminates in career progression. That is a virtuous cycle worth investing in.

The transformation we seek is not merely economic — it is societal. It requires collective action from governments, corporations, educational institutions, and civil society. When women lead, they

bring diverse perspectives, foster collaborative cultures, and drive sustainable growth. Their economic participation is not a zero-sum game; it is a multiplier for national prosperity. Each one of us has a role to play. I urge every organisation represented here to engage in thoughtful dialogue, share innovative solutions, and commit to actionable strategies so that every young person in India has the opportunity to contribute to the economy and lead with confidence.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Professor Poonam Munjal

National Council of Applied Economic Research,
New Delhi

The paradox of low absorption but intense work is something we need to sit with. In certain sectors — formal enterprises, urban employment, and largely among men — we have simply normalised overwork. Around 37 per cent of young people in formal enterprises are working more than nine hours a day, excluding breaks but including commute. In the household sector, the picture flips: underemployment is widespread, and it is disproportionately women who are stuck in that underemployed tier.

The barriers to women's workforce entry are not one or two — they are a dense web. From access to the right education and skills, to social and cultural norms, to care responsibilities that fall disproportionately on women, to the immediate

practical reality of safety in transport and at work. Marriage is one of the biggest structural shocks: a woman working before marriage is typically required to quit when she moves to her husband's location, and most would rather stay home than begin job-hunting in an unfamiliar city. Safe accommodation and safe transport are not peripheral issues — they are core infrastructure. States that have addressed even part of that infrastructure show significantly higher women's participation rates, and that in turn drives up the overall young adult participation rate. The correlation is direct and strong.

Sharanya Ari, IAS

Additional Director, Social Welfare & Women Empowerment Department; Ex-officio Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Working Women's Hostels Corporation Ltd

Tamil Nadu's women's workforce participation rate is among the highest in the country — around 44 per cent, compared to the national average of 41 per cent, and well above the urban average of 33 per cent elsewhere. Sustaining and improving that requires us to actively build the enabling environment. The most immediate priority is safe and affordable housing. Urban accommodation is expensive for anyone, but especially for young women whose starting salaries cannot support private rental costs in metropolitan areas.

We started the Thozhi Hostel programme as an SPV in 2019, became operational in 2020, and have evolved through four phases since. What are our non-negotiables? Safety, security, accessibility, and

affordability. Every hostel is placed after a detailed feasibility study — our Coimbatore hostel is right next to the IT cluster; the Taramani hostel is adjacent to an IT park. We now have 25 operational hostels, with 22 more in the pipeline, targeting 47 facilities by end of next year. The entire booking and payment process is digital and transparent — no human intervention, no gatekeeping.

We have also recognised that housing alone does not solve the problem. Women are the primary caregivers in most families, and that responsibility does not disappear when they enter employment. We are actively working on a paid crèche model modelled on the Thozhi approach — an 'Anbukudil' — for children of working mothers, and an 'Anbucholai' day-care model for senior citizens in the family. The Tamil Nadu Skill Development programme's 'Naan Mudhalvan' initiative bridges the gap between college curricula and industry requirements. 'Vetri Nichayam' offers free online reskilling courses in AI, generative AI, and other emerging skills — specifically designed for mothers returning to work after a career break. We are also enforcing POSH compliance rigorously across all employers with ten or more workers. The vision is for the Working Women's Hostel Corporation to act as an umbrella aggregator — setting standards, bringing private facilities into the formal fold, and becoming a platform rather than just a provider.

Arul Prabhu

MD, Salcomp Manufacturing India Pvt Ltd

In electronics manufacturing, we employ around 80

per cent women across all age groups — and the data we heard today mirrors our operational reality almost exactly. India is still at 7 per cent of global electronics output despite significant growth over the past decade. To reach the scale that competes with China or Taiwan, we need massive labour — and women are central to that ambition.

The Thozhi model was genuinely a revelation when I first encountered it. For manufacturing, where we are focused on technology, quality, and delivery, we have not always had the bandwidth to build and manage residential infrastructure. The government stepping in with its name and guarantee on the facility changes the equation — parents in remote villages are reassured, and we find recruitment becomes meaningfully easier. Clusters are the next logical step: large-scale shared dormitories near industrial zones that can serve multiple companies, reduce transportation costs, and provide the sense of community that prevents the isolation and early attrition we see today. Public-private partnership is not optional — it is the only model that can scale.

Mahesh V

Executive Director, NCR Atleos, Mahindra World City

When we recruit from tier-2 and tier-3 colleges across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, we see a fundamental difference in what young men and young women ask. Men ask about compensation. Women ask about safety, accommodation, career progression, counselling, and mentoring. They are not leaving their family

commitments at the factory gate — they are thinking about how to manage both simultaneously, and they deserve workplaces and ecosystems that take that seriously.

One of the most effective things we have done for retention is hand-holding in the first two weeks. A senior employee assigned to every ten new joiners — guiding them on transport routes, canteen access, factory layout, everything that is disorienting when you arrive alone from another district. Once employees cross that initial period of isolation, retention improves dramatically.

The vision I want industry to rally behind is simple: instead of asking women to work from home, let us create home at work. Build the full ecosystem — accommodation, crèche, counselling, co-working, skilling — and the workforce follows.

Aswini Ravikumar

Manager, Thozhi Hostel, St Thomas Mount

I came to this hostel first as a resident — a young woman from outside Chennai who had lost her father and needed both a safe place to stay and the stability to prepare for a government examination. The Thozhi Hostel gave me that. What I found was not just a room. I found 145 women from different religions, different districts, different backgrounds — and we became a family. Women who are Christian, Muslim, Hindu — all under one roof, looking out for each other.

Now I am on the other side, as the hostel manager. The biggest challenge I see every day is the

same one I faced: a woman stepping out of her home for the first time needs a safe shelter before anything else. Without that, her family will not allow her to go. Without that, she cannot focus on her work or her ambitions. The hostel provides counselling, job fair information, study rooms, a crèche, common areas for networking and recreation — but the foundation of all of it is the knowledge that this place is safe, that someone is looking out for you. When that foundation exists, women stay longer, grow faster, and — as I can say from personal experience — eventually give back to others who are just beginning the same journey.

The conclave concluded with the release of both white papers and a commitment from all stakeholders to treat safe women's housing not as a welfare measure but as economic infrastructure — as essential to India's growth story as roads, power, and connectivity. ■

Link for White Papers:

<https://greatlakes.edu.in/chennai/pdf/Young-Adults-at-Work-in-India-White-Paper-3.pdf>

<https://greatlakes.edu.in/chennai/pdf/Unlocking-Womens-Employment-Through-Safe-Housing-White-Paper-4.pdf>

MMA WOMEN MANAGERS CONVENTION 2026

WOMEN LEADING WITH PURPOSE, POWER & GENEROSITY



How climate, resilience, and self-belief intersect, and the need for women to replace helplessness with agency and action.

Mridula Ramesh

Founder, Sundaram Climate Institute &
Executive Director, Sundaram Textiles Ltd.,

Thank you for having me. I have attended this convention a couple of times before, and I can tell you — you are truly in for a treat. Every time I have been here, people stayed the whole day. It is one of the most inspiring events I have ever attended.

Let me start by asking you to look at the world today. The uncertainty, the wars that seemed so far away — just last week, friends and family from Dubai were sending photographs of missiles saying, “now it has come home.” We are all wondering how much gas is left in the cylinder. The war that was very far away has entered our homes, entered our kitchens. And in moments like this, it is so easy to feel like a victim — hurt, vulnerable, at the mercy of forces far bigger than us.

My latest book is a climate thriller. In it, the villains manipulate energy markets, exploiting war to create volatility. The hero is a broken man — a



recovering alcoholic trying to outrun forces far more powerful than him. But he is not led forward by money or power. He is led forward by two strong women: his daughter, and his daughter's teacher. Halfway through writing, my own daughter came to me and said, "Aamma, why don't you put magic in the book?" That one sentence completely upended the plot. I went down a rabbit hole looking for magic that is truly Indian. Not Harry Potter magic. The wisdom of the Siddhars. And at the heart of the book is a verse from Sattaimuni Siddhar: "Andathil ullathae pindam, pindathil ullathae andam" — as within, so without.

That phrase may sound esoteric, mystical, far removed from a management convention. But the way I understand it is this: no matter what happens in the world around you, we still have agency. We still have some power to act. The breakthroughs in my life have come every time I stopped seeing myself as a victim.

I started my climate journey about thirteen years ago when I ran out of water at home. We drilled 500 feet and found nothing. My first reaction? I cried. I blamed the government, blamed everybody. But when

the bills started to pinch and it became clear that no one was going to help me, I started asking: what can I do? And it turned out there was a lot I could do. I learned to track where we were using water, installed meters, lowered tap pressure, set up drip irrigation, used compost so the garden held more moisture. Each small action added up — *siruthuli peruvellam*, as we say in Tamil: little drops make a mighty ocean. Within months, we stopped buying water. Three years later, Madurai experienced its worst drought in 140 years. Everyone was buying water. We never did.

That thinking took me to investments in startups incubated at IIT Madras, and today hundreds of homes and factories are more water-secure as a result. That is the magic — not supernatural power, just a shift in perspective.

And here is something very relevant today when everyone is worrying about gas cylinders. Around the same time we addressed water, we began managing food waste. It turns out that properly processed food waste generates biogas. We now have a small biogas plant at home — a little bigger than this podium — that gives us nearly one cylinder a month. India throws lakhs of tonnes of food waste into streets and landfills every day. We see it as rubbish. It is a resource. A simple shift in perspective is all it takes: instead of asking “why is this happening to me,” we ask “what can I do?”

Now let me bring this to all of you as managers. Today, the headline word is AI. They say it is frightening. Jobs will disappear. Machines will replace people. Ten years ago, we in textiles said the same about robots. The industry did not vanish. It evolved.

We incorporated robots and moved on. And that evolution depends on skills machines cannot replicate: the ability to deal with difficult people, to motivate a team, to build trust, to navigate uncertainty. These are irreplaceable human capabilities. In this wonderfully uncertain world, when ChatGPT gives you a completely wrong answer, you really need a human being. But that requires the same small act of magic — moving from seeing yourself as a victim to seeing yourself as someone with agency.

Next time the world feels overwhelming — and I can tell you it is feeling overwhelming right now — remember the verse: as within, so without. Each of us has the power within us to decide how we respond. When one woman changes her perspective, she changes her life. And when thousands of women change their perspective, they change the world.

Panel Discussion



Dr Ranjini Manian: What a beautiful panel we have — a dancer, a singer, and two personal brand

ambassadors of their own authentic selves. MMA asked us to explore personal branding, self-care, and what wellness looks like for the professional woman. As managers, all of you are asking: what do I do for my professional success and personal happiness? This session will address both. Take away something from these stories the moment you walk out the door.

Radhe Jaggi: In Khajuraho, we performed the story of Shiva and Parvati's wedding. Shiva comes in disguise as a Brahmin while Parvati is in deep tapas. He challenges her: you are a princess, you will come as a beautiful bride, and he will arrive naked with ash smeared on him — is this really the man to marry? And Parvati says: he will come draped in the night sky full of stars. How does my silk sari compare to that? He says your flower garlands will wither; he will garland you with a snake. She says: do you even understand the beauty of a nagamani? My garlands will wither, but that beauty is eternal. He says he has no home, no servants, no marital bed. She says: all the mountains are his, all the rivers are his, everything belongs to him — so what do I have to worry about?

What is personal branding in this story? Parvati had a moment of clarity. She understood something deeply and no one — not even Shiva himself coming to dissuade her — could shake that conviction. When young managers are climbing the corporate ladder and have a certain vision of where they want to be, should they be listening to every opinion, or should they be asking: I know the brand I am building and the person I am becoming?

Personal branding begins with capability. Ask yourself honestly: is this product — meaning me —

capable of everything I claim? Do I have the skills? If tomorrow I am given the opportunity I want, am I capable of handling it? If not, can I upgrade now so I am ready when it comes? Once you have that clarity, stop worrying about how someone else dresses, speaks, or climbed the ladder. Their path may not be yours. What matters is: do I understand my own capability and am I working at it?

Listening, though, is a different skill entirely. If the wisest person in your life speaks, listen. But even if a donkey is speaking, listen — because you do not know what they will say before they say it. A dancer who does not care what the audience understands has no reason to be on a stage. Performance is based on purpose, but also on connection. Ask: does what I am offering have value for others?

Tanvi Shah: I was never supposed to be a singer. I am actually a designer. I could hold a note, I used to sing for fun, and someone shared a karaoke session of mine that somehow reached A R Rahman. The rest was history. He called at 2:45 in the morning. I am not a singer, and someone calls at 2:45 and says, “Hi, this is A R Rahman. I want you to sing for me.” I thought it was a prank. But there is something I have always had in me — a keera, a bug — that says, okay, let me try this. Maximum, they will throw me out of the studio. So I went. My first song was a Fanna from Yuva, and the journey kept going.

After that first song, I started western classical training. I did not want to be a one-song wonder. I wanted to see if I could go ahead in this. So I just kept at it, kept enjoying the process, kept learning. And that gumption — to stay at it, to keep enjoying the

process even when I was not trained — is what I would offer as a lesson. Music was my passion, not my profession. My passion became my profession. And that, I think, is success.

At the Grammys, I was given the choice to dress completely western. I chose to wear an Indian outfit. I was representing the women of my country, and on that stage, in a saree, I stood out. That is when I understood what being authentic truly means — being comfortable in your own skin. Confidence and practice will get you there. You have to practise. I am still practising and I know I always will be. Once you build confidence and authenticity, the path opens.

Radhe Jaggi: I am not Sadhguru's daughter. I am not Sandeep Narayan's wife. I am not a Bharatanatyam dancer. I am not a yoga teacher. I am none of these things. I have certain capabilities and certain responsibilities. The privilege of being somebody's daughter means that wherever I go, the love people have for him overflows and spills onto me. I have great appreciation for that. But when I sit here, I am not thinking of those labels. They are not a reflection of my capabilities. I am just Radhe, and I will fulfil all of these responsibilities to the best of my abilities.

I was one of the worst dancers in my class at Kalakshetra. There were fifteen of us, and none of my teachers or classmates ever expected I would take up dance professionally. But many girls who were beautiful, naturally gifted dancers in my class are not dancing anymore. I just knew that I loved it, and if I wanted to continue, I had no choice but to become good at it. Nobody wants to watch a bad dancer. Hard work trumps talent every time.

Tanvi Shah: Silence. And I learned it only after my cancer diagnosis. Until then, I was going to the gym, surfing, doing everything. I thought I was fine. When that jolt hit, I had my trials and tribulations. If you need to cry, cry it out. We are human. But within seven minutes of my doctor telling me the news, I looked up and asked: okay, what next? There were still tears, but I asked, what do we do now? And that question — what next — is what I would leave with you. At some point every day, learn to switch off. Cut the cacophony outside. Sit with yourself. That is when you can plan your day, decide what matters, and charge yourself for what comes next.

Radhe Jaggi: There is a fundamental misunderstanding about what yoga is. People think it is about twisting into complex postures. As Sadhguru says, if you look like a leftover noodle, people think that is yoga. But yoga is not about what you are doing with your physical body. How are you within yourself? When you get angry, is it because you chose to be angry, or because someone else made you? Why do you give somebody else that much control over your inner experience? If there is a certain stability within yourself, you decide how you experience life. The Miracle of Mind app is a simple, guided seven-minute practice — it draws a distinction between this is my body, this is my mind, and this is who I am. Once a little distance comes, you deal with your body and your mind the way they need to be dealt with, not because somebody else provoked you. Your brand is who you are, and you are comfortable with who you are. That is what success looks like. ■

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