

# My Endeavour in PhD with AeU for my Golden Years

By DR. R. VENKATARAMAN

What should I do with my life during the golden years? This was a question that haunted me for some years during my last phase in the corporate world. I have been during the growth years living a dream, a long cherished professional dream. After having had a bright career in the logistics industry for nearly forty years spanning the complete spectrum of corporate hierarchy starting from a sales representative to the levels of a Director and Board member in India and Singapore, the point of inflection dawned upon me to realise that the opportune time has arrived to decide on what I should do in the golden years ahead after I leave the corporate world. After a very prolonged introspection, I decided to make a conscious attempt to give back something within my ability to society that I had accumulated all the years and given me so much comfort.

Being an alumnus of one of the renowned management schools in India, I had a brand equity and recognition in the academic circles. I felt that this coupled with my industry experience can help me to embark on a teaching career post-retirement. So at age of 55, I started to plan my retirement by enrolling for a Masters programme in logistics offered by University of Aston, UK and, successfully completed the same in 2005. I felt that this will help me in brushing up my theoretical knowledge as I need to stay up to date in my teaching career.

I also decided to relocate to India from Singapore to leverage on my management degree I had acquired from Xavier School of Management. I accepted a teaching assignment offered by Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship, Bangalore. I started as a professor and gradually moved up the ladder to become the Director of the Institute.

I then realised my need to do a PhD in Business Administration (BA) as it will complement my academic work and also help me to gain respect among the peers in the academic world. I started my search and realised that it is not that simple unless I give up my job and take up full time studies and I was not very keen to do this. I was fortunate to stumble upon the flexible dual mode of education offered by Asia e University (AeU). The big advantage was that I could retain my job and also do it in India through AeU learning centre.

Today with profound satisfaction I recalled the encouragement I received from various quarters in AeU in reaching this goal I had set for myself. This also acted as a catalyst in driving my mission to improve the lives of the youth who graduate from my school to ultimately

become the corporate citizens of the country. I continued to achieve this mission by mentoring my students in the school where I was a Director at the same time, moving gradually towards my long cherished goal of getting my PhD (BA). My five-year-long journey with AeU had its twists, turns, surprises, achievements, lessons, and growth and I finally came out unscathed and successful to receive the degree in September 2015.

A common perception is that dreaming and following dreams are for only the young. However, this needs to be looked at from a different perspective. After we have had life experience, raised our family, or worked in the career of our calling when we were younger, we often have a much better idea about what we find fulfilling and what we have to offer to the society.

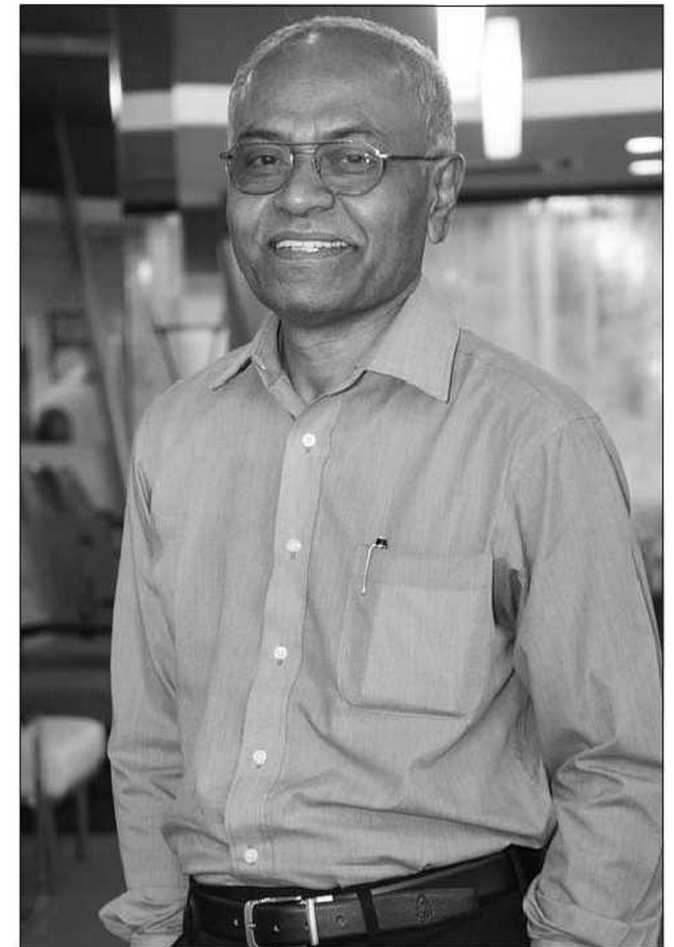
It is important for each of us to recognise that post-retirement, we all have a unique option to live our own lives based on what we believe is true for us and, we also have the luxury of doing what we like at our own terms and pace. I spent a good bit of my life in the corporate running, trying to make everyone happy, and when I did that, I was doing only people-pleasing. Little did I realise that I failed to take into account my own self actualisation needs. Now everyday is an opportunity to begin a new path towards fulfilling many of my dreams of course, one at a time.

Real freedom comes when you think about your life time experiences. I am now living a life that I have designed in alignment with my dreams and thoughts and that is where my true freedom and happiness lies. In my mission to enrich the lives of my students I have also published a book titled "Musings of Strategist" which gives an insight on application oriented strategy formats. The chapters in the book are replete with industry examples for students to understand how theories are put into practice for them to be more realistic in their approach.

Words will not suffice to convey my gratitude to the Dean of AeU's School of Graduate Studies, Prof Dr Siow Heng Loke, as he was a constant source of inspiration for me including all the staff of AeU both in Malaysia and India. AeU thus is a boon for people like me who aspire to obtain their degrees while in employment. Today I can proudly proclaim that the dual mode of education offered by AeU has helped me to live my dream, and is now a proud PhD, graduated from a reputable multinational university with all the associated honours and privileges.

#### Some Facts on AeU

AeU is a collaborative multinational university es-



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established under the auspices of the 34 Asia Cooperation Dialogue Countries (ACD). All its academic programmes are internationally benchmarked and approved by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Today, AeU has an enrolment of more than 22,000 students from 65 countries and over 7,000 graduates. AeU also has a diverse international community of over 1,000 fellow doctoral students from 46 countries who are making a difference around the world.

Besides its presence in ACD countries, AeU has also spread its wings to 17 non ACD countries: Denmark, Hong Kong, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Maldives, Mauritius, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sweden, Somalia, Taiwan, United Kingdom, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Intakes of all postgraduate research programmes are open throughout the year. For enquiries, call Tel: 1300 300 238 or apply online now at [www.aeu.edu.my](http://www.aeu.edu.my)