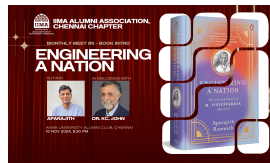


IIMA Alumni
Association
Chennai Chapter

**MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER**



BOOK INTRO EVENT
YT VIDEO

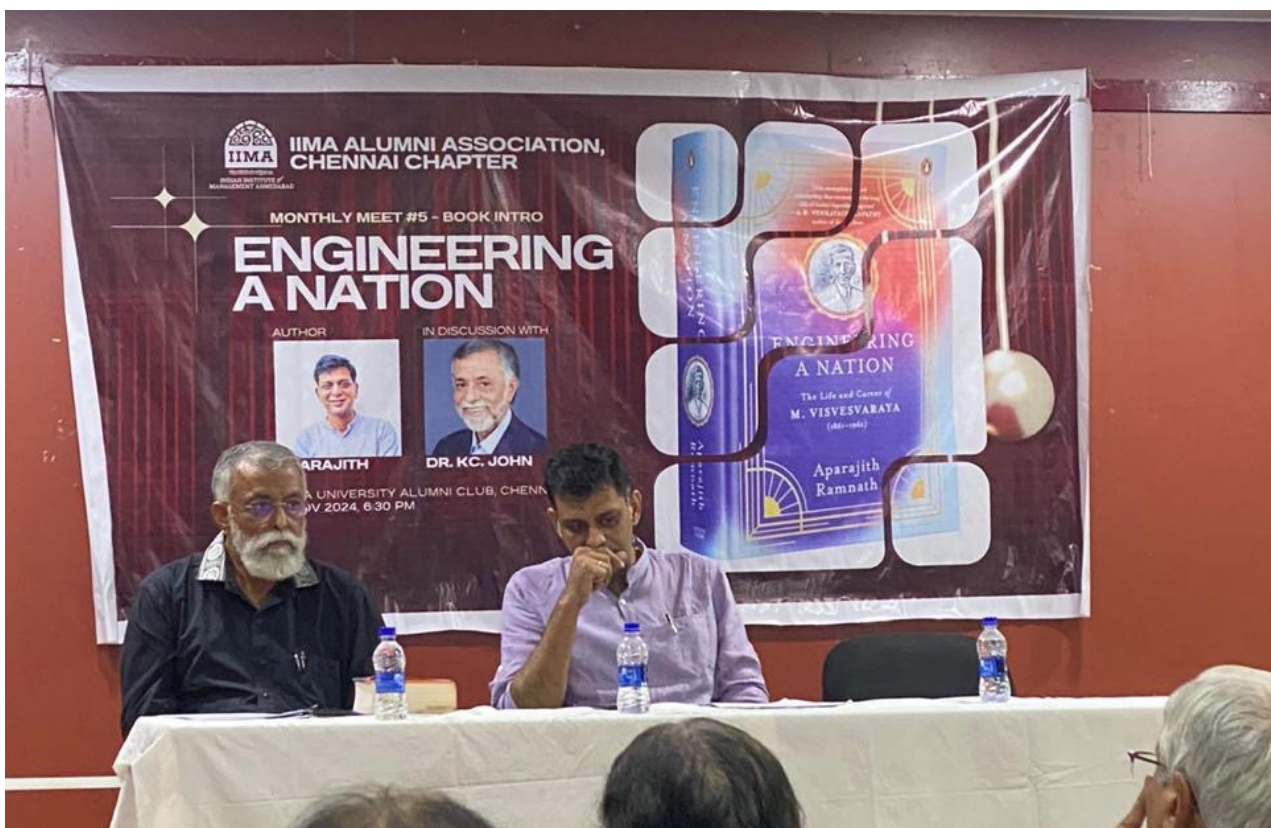


GALLERY
G-DRIVE LINK



COLLABORATION
SURVEY
LINK

CAC TIMES



Trilling a Book

Anupama Narayanan, PGPM, 2016

The Chennai Chapter of the IIMA Alumni Association met on 15 November 2024. At the heart of the Friday gathering was a book introduction: Author, historian and professor Aparajith Ramnath was the guest of honour and spoke about his work: 'Engineering a Nation: The life and career of M Visveswaraya'.

The event began with the President's address: Mr Shanmuga Sundar, gave his first talk since assuming office. He began with a

Dr. John bowled many a googly in his signature booming voice and yet, Professor Ramnath batted them with aplomb

- writes Anupama

respectful tribute to senior alum, Mr Rajagopal, who passed away in October. His fond recollection of memories with Mr Rajagopal struck a chord in many in the gathering. Mr Sundar anchored the Chapter back to the very purpose of the IIMs in 'creating change makers'; he urged for active participation from the Chennai alumni through attending regular meetings and participation in diverse, meaningful initiatives of the chapter.

Aparajith Ramnath, Associate Professor at Ahmedabad University's School of Arts and Sciences, oriented the audience to his book through a few, striking slides containing visuals and key excerpts. Dividing the icon's life into three chapters viz. Engineer, Administrator and a Constitutional analyst and development thinker, he succinctly summarized the life and work of Bharat Ratna M Visveswaraya.

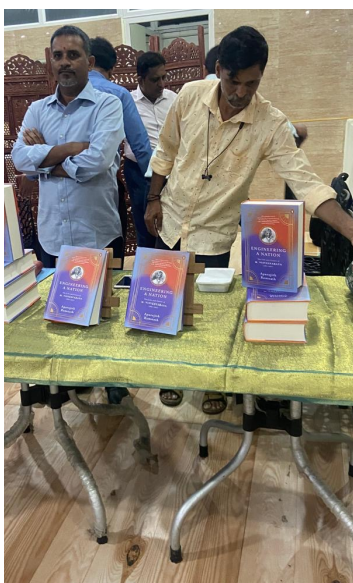
What followed was an intellectual treat to the audience – a one-of-a-kind discussion that unravelled the national icon's life – its glory, challenges, momentous events, times of courage, conviction, and resolve.

Dr KC John, FPM 88, distinguished management studies Professor, sustainability expert and mentor to startups held a fascinating discussion with the author. In a conversational Q&A format, Dr John bowled many a googly in his signature booming voice and yet, Professor Ramnath batted them with aplomb.

The carefully curated questions had the topics revolving around Sir M Visveswaraya's early childhood, influences and career, his stint as the Dewan of Mysore where he spurred private enterprise and impressively navigated conflicts with the then Madras Presidency on the building of the KRS dam as

well as the University of Mysore, his nuanced relationship and crossing of paths with Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru, the author's own research methodology and more.

The event was streamed live on YouTube and about 150 watched it. Professor Aparajith Ramnath distributed signed copies of his biography at the event venue to many eager readers. The event concluded with dinner and a big 'all-smiles' group pic, joined in by the author's parents.



More pics from September and October events



Our sincere thanks to
generous alumni sponsors
for the Monthly meets:

- Saravanan of IdeaRX,
- Magesh Matapathy,
PGPX 2017 and
- Anand R of Sundaram
MF

Thank You!



Change Agents of Chennai

The President's letter. Shanmuga Sundar, President, IIM-AAA Chennai. PGPX 2010.

This is my first president's letter. I will cover many of the points covered in the November event and add some more. Meaning to make this a regular in our monthly newsletters, so that, I stay connected with our members.

First I should explain the etymology for CAC Times. You would have seen the photo booth standee frame circulated in the whatsapp group. CAC stands for Change Agents of Chennai. The newsletter will document the journey of our CACs. May we hope the times of CAC are golden. I pick the Cacti with flower

one incident about Sir M V to highlight the light that Raj was. Visveswaraya was taking up as Dewan of Mysore and representatives of multiple religions and groups were talking about what the government should do. Finally Visveswaraya rose to give his acceptance speech. He said "Thank you. But what will you do?" How poignant? Government enables. People do. For any worthwhile progress, like two sides of the coin, the people have to contribute equally. Raj can't be equated just as member because he was in the EC for 2 years. But even when he was not, he was more active



as a representative image. Through our initiatives may we be the flowers to the lives of the underprivileged.

We lost Raj, Ananthaswami Rajagopal, PGP 77, last month. On the month we analysed the biography on Sir M Visveswaraya, I will quote

than even the EC members. He was so connected with many of us. If the connect was sport for me, it was wildlife tours with Aniket, tennis with Vasu Krishnan, Church with David, Food with Shreeya. Lent his place for EC meetings. Hosted a meeting for young alumni at his place. He was very active in all

whatsapp groups. He was the glue in sports group. What more could a member do? If Visvesvaraya met him - he would have given Raj the Medal for Best Citizen. May we all aspire to be better citizens.

In this EC we took our goal to be: "To make the IIMA Alumni Association Chennai Chapter a vibrant community." We are planning to do multiple initiatives towards the same. CAC Times is one among them. We will build and maintain presence in multiple social media platforms. Like the other side of the coin, please engage and keep them buzzing. Hope you all know about the Prestige Inter Chapter Competition. They are asking us for number of events, number of attendees etc. I wish they measured number of messages in our informal group. We will beat any other chapter 1100:100 on per day message count. Please show the same activity in linkedin, facebook and youtube. Here are the links:



[@iimaaachennai](#)



[LinkedIn Page](#)



[LinkedIn Group](#)



[Facebook Group](#)

Please join if you are not there already. A vibrant community stays in touch.

On activities and events we will maintain a RDS mantra. RDS for Regular Diverse and Social. We will do monthly meet to keep regularity - come what may you will not have a month without an IIMA alumni event. Right now most of our events are intellectual or mental. We want to bring in physical through Sports and Arts. When creating the IIMs one of the founding principles was to create "Change Agents". Shouldn't we be at the forefront of change in Chennai? What are we doing towards that? Take any vibrant community, don't they all have a social component. In order to be vibrant, you have

to be social. As humans, only when when we care about others we become beautiful. We covered Porul (material living) and Inbam (pleasure) of Thirukural with intellectual meetings and arts and sports. Shouldn't we cover Aram (virtuous living) too? We have discussed a few initiatives. One of that is adopting a school and helping unsupported children. The school system has two components. School and Home. One study says that school accounts for only 30% of learning. School is taken care by government. When home is broken, who will care? We think we can help. Many of us are in powerful positions - right from running companies to running governments to running NGOs. If we can't, who can? Second We have experts in Finance, Healthcare, Education and every field out there. We think we can consult for government departments. We call that Impact Consulting. You would have seen the collaboration survey. Please fill that survey if you want to collaborate on any of our projects. There can not be any action without your support.

On membership and engagement - back when I was secretary in John's term we started having the google form for membership registration from 2016. 84 of you re-enrolled in 2022 as part of a drive for data collection for members before 2016. We had 28 people join during Ram's term and 15 during Shreeya's term. So we have data for about 130 but our whatsapp group has 282 members and e-group has 390 members. One, we need to bridge this gap. Two, Our data is relatively old except for the last 20 members. So, I urge you all to fill the collaboration survey floated. Here is the [link](#) to the survey.

Until we meet in the next letter, ciao.

EC Meeting

Your Executive Committee met on Wednesday, 20th November 2024. Mr. Saravanan, CEO of IdeaRx, graciously hosted your EC in his board room. Although he wasn't available on the day, EC thanks him wholeheartedly. The following of your EC members attended the meeting in person: Col Ganesan, Rajagopal S, MC Srikanth, Krishna Ponnada and Shanmuga Sundar. The following of your EC attended the meeting online: Umasanker, Maruthi Raj and Aniket Burma. Various topics were discussed in a two hour long meeting. After the EC reviewed the events and finances from the last 6 months, a decision was made to raise funds through annual membership fee. Please find below the details:

In the last six months (June - November) the chapter has organized 7 events. We saw over 261 attendees in these events with many attending multiple events.

We have had generous sponsors on multiple occasions: Mr. Saravanan of IdeaRX, Magesh Matapathy, PGPX 2017, Anand R of Sundaram MF and HDFC Mutual Funds. However we are still in the red with over 1 Lac INR deficit against money collected. Continuation of such meetings will be untenable and will deplete the corpus funds despite the sponsorships. 50% of the spend have to be covered by individual members. The EC wants to align with the financial year end of March and raise annual membership fees of INR 5000/- from all members.

- **Annual Membership Fee: INR 5000/-**
- **Period: Jan 2025 to March 2026**
- **Entry free for monthly meets.**

In case a member opts not to pay the annual membership, they may attend the meet by paying the event fee. This will be about INR 1000/- per event and will depend on the event.

For indoor events, the same experience in terms of quality of speakers, venue and food will be retained. Please await the announcement with payment details. The EC looks forward to your continued support. Donors may donate over and above the INR 5000/- and EC proposes to do a slideshow of donors and annual members at each monthly meet.

Activity Update:

December Event:

The planned event on Dec 7th, to trek at Tada Falls, needs to be rescheduled due to Cyclone Fengal.

Social Media:

Our first youtube live video, the one of the book intro event, got over 140 views. We have over 100 subscribers for our channel.



- We are looking for volunteer editors and columnists for CAC Times
- If you want to publish your article or you have feedback, please email to Lssundar@gmail.com

Writer's Corner

Featuring Author Professor Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy, PGP 1994

Can AI drive brand loyalty

PUBLISHED IN
ET - BRANDEQUITY

In the article, featured in ET Brand Equity, Professor Rajeshwari K and co-authors explore the role of AI in driving brand loyalty—a critical objective for marketers investing heavily in customer retention. Brand loyalty, traditionally rooted in emotional bonds and trust, has been reshaped by digital interactions, where AI now plays a significant role in personalizing experiences and enhancing engagement.

ET BRAND EQUITY.com
From The Economic Times

FULL ARTICLE
[LINK](#)

The article highlights AI-driven strategies for building loyalty, such as personalized content at scale, predictive customer service (e.g., AI chatbots), automated loyalty programs, and sentiment analysis. Examples like Netflix, Amazon, and Coca-Cola show how AI can effectively tailor offerings and enhance customer satisfaction, fostering loyalty in the digital age.

Is User-Generated Content (UGC) a double edged sword for Marketers?

PUBLISHED IN
CMR - BERKLEY

User-Generated Content (UGC) has become a game-changer in modern marketing, especially when integrated into Above-the-Line (ATL) strategies like TV and outdoor advertising. By leveraging authentic consumer voices, UGC fosters trust, engagement, and emotional connections with audiences. Campaigns like Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" demonstrate how UGC can boost brand relevance and amplify reach through organic sharing. The key strengths of UGC lie in its authenticity, scalability, and community-building potential. Consumers trust real experiences more than traditional marketing, making UGC highly effective for enhancing brand loyalty. Its participative nature encourages consumers to contribute, feel valued, and share content, extending campaign reach while reducing production costs.

California
Review
Management
FULL ARTICLE
[LINK](#)

The changing role of the Indian CMO

PUBLISHED IN
ET - BRANDEQUITY

In the article featured in ET Brand Equity, Prof. Rajeshwari K and co-authors



note that the role of the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) in India has transformed significantly in recent years. Once primarily focused on brand promotion, Indian CMOs now play a pivotal role in driving business growth by leveraging digital tools, data analytics, and customer-centric strategies.

ET BRAND EQUITY.com
From The Economic Times

FULL ARTICLE
[LINK](#)

The rise of digital marketing, coupled with the need for personalized consumer experiences, has made CMOs work closely with technology teams, adopt innovations, and integrate purpose-driven marketing to align with changing consumer values.

Spotlight

Featuring Krishna Kumar Ponnada, GGPX 2007 and Umasanker Kandaswamy, MDP 2008

Krishna addresses the 5th National Agribusiness Conclave

Krishna Kumar Ponnada, GGPX 2007, was invited as a Panelist to the 5th National Agribusiness Konclave held at School of Rural Management, KIIT - Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology - University, Bhubaneswar. He spoke about “Emerging Trends and Transformations in the Agri-Food Supply Chain for Farmer Prosperity”. The deliberations focused on critical areas of supply chain such as Digitization, Post Harvest Losses, Climate Impact, Traceability, D2C, FPO participation etc. to enhance supply chain efficiency and reliability. Krishna also interacted with the students of Agribusiness Management and Rural Management MBA programs. Krishna is the founder of Transity, which enables growth of agri and food based organisations, especially FPOs, Foundations, SHGs through its Digital Agriculture Platform.



Krishna at the 5th National Agribusiness Konclave.

Umasanker's Avtar receives 'Doing good for Bharat Award'

Avtar Human Capital Trust of which Umasanker, MDP 2008 is the trustee, was honoured with the Prestigious 'Doing Good for Bharat' Award at the India CSR & ESG Summit 2024. The Doing Good for Bharat Awards celebrate organizations and individuals driving meaningful social impact across sectors such as education, healthcare, climate, rural development, and inclusion. Avtar Human Capital Trust's flagship initiative, the Project Puthri, which has empowered thousands of underprivileged girls to pursue career-focused education, earned recognition in the Grassroots Action category. Avtar's work spans over two decades, building an ecosystem where talent from underserved communities can thrive, while also supporting organizations in building diverse, future-ready teams.



Umasanker receiving the “Doing Good for Bharat” Award



Reflections

Magesh Matapathy, PGPX 2017 reflects on the book intro event

I get a call from our EC President Mr. Sundar. He quietly asks, “Magesh, can you introduce our guest?” and I said “Yes” without knowing much about who or what I would be talking about.

When I got the details from Mr. Sundar, I was pleasantly surprised to find I was going to introduce a ‘science historian’. I had known scientists; I had known historians. This combination was a first to me! My interest piqued and I quickly jumped online to find out more about the author and the subject, in general. I was not disappointed!

Dr. Aparajith Ramnath, the science historian, has an impressive academic profile. More than impressive, many would say! Starting out as an engineer from BITS Pilani, the author went to Oxford to do his master’s in the history of science, medicine and technology. A significant shift indeed! The author discovered his interest in history early and pursued his interest with passion.



He went on to attain his doctorate from Imperial College of London. These days, we see many Indian children aiming to get into top universities like Oxford, Imperial, etc. Dr. Aparajith’s profile will serve as a further inspiration for our younger generation!

Dr. Aparajith was an international scholar of the Society for the History of Technology (a society with participants from over 40 countries spread across 4 continents!). The author also received the Young Historian of Science award in 2018. The

author is also a Charles Wallace India grant awardee and Sangam house writing fellow. An earlier work that was published in 2017 was “The Birth of an Indian Profession: Engineers, Industry and the State, 1900-1947”.

I spent my 2 minutes on stage, quickly sharing these impressive details about the author and went back to my seat. I was eager to listen to what the author had to say about the book. And more importantly, I was eager to see what interesting questions Dr. John had in store for Dr. Aparajith! Again, I was not disappointed! Next hour or so was super interesting, with many details about Dr. Visvesvarayya’s personality, his relationships with other great personalities of Indian history, his achievements in the context of pre- and post-independence period of Indian history were discussed. Before the session, I was not sure if I would read the book fully. But after listening to Dr. John and Dr. Aparajith, I got very curious and decided to read the book end to end!

In your words

Feedback on event and the first edition of CAC Times in Whatsapp group

Congratulations, Sundar. Indeed CAC Times an apt title - **Ramnath P**, PGP 72

Good start. Much needed item for closer and continuing communication with the members of the chapter and inter -alumnus engagement. My congratulations to Sundar & team for launching the first issue of CAC newsletter. Best wishes. - **Srinivasan**, PGP 70

Good way to communicate with alumni and increase awareness & hopefully engagement too. - **Chandu Nair**, PGP 83

Very good initiative by all your team headed by you. Unless you communicate like this, many non active silent members as well as other interested parties will not know the good activities of our association by the dedicated team of the Office bearers. You can give some more information about the details of the speakers and summary of their delivery content even though it may be repetitive information besides WhatsApp and group email communication. Wish you all the best for the continued bringing of this monthly bulletin with more innovative features. - **S V Ravi**, PGP 70

Congratulations Sundar! Great step forward in sharing the info about our Chapter activities and increasing engagement with all stakeholders! Keep it up, Sundar - **Kandaswamy Bharathan**, PGP 78

Congratulations Sundar and team on the launch of first issue of CAC Newsletter! It's a fantastic step in keeping your audience informed and engaged. Looking forward to seeing insightful content in the future issues. Every Best Wishes!! - **Dr. K C John**, FPM 88

Heartiest congratulations to Sundar & team for organising a very lively and interesting program last evng. Dr KC's booming voice reminded me of late Prof SK Bhattacharya's voice keeping the audience fully awake and attentive - **S Madhavan**, PGP 68

What I found interesting was Aparajith saying that MKG was not anti-tech because he knew he needed a microphone to address his gatherings and here 100 years later we had KCJ with his booming voice not needing a microphone! - **Vijayaraghavan**, PGP 80

Oh, what an enjoyable evening it was! In retrospect, it was redundant and foolish to suggest to Dr. John to ask tough questions. 'Tough -tougher- toughest' is his natural style. He bowled many bouncers and bodyline deliveries with his stentorian voice and intimidating tone. Aparajith was equal to this. He defended with authoritative aplomb. A lesser historian would have crumbled. But Dr. John was not someone to give up that easily. He persisted and made Aparajith forget a few names here and there. A nice conversation between two intellectuals. One thing puzzled me. Why did Dr. John repeatedly say 'Mohandas Karamchand' when a simpler appellation is available? The organizers deserve an applause. - **Srivarahan**, PGP 75

One engrossing event! ✨ Cheers and here's to many more. - **Anupama**, PGPIX 2016

@L Shanmuga Sundar an excellent event today - book launch on Dr Visvesvaraya by Aparajith. Well organised and we had a good crowd too. Congrats to the entire team and look forward to many more - **MC Srikanth**, PGP 83

Usual Suspects

some missing! but still...



From left to right: (kneeling) Anand, Andrew, Ashok, Sundar, Bama, Rajagopal, Ram, Aayilyan, Santhosh, Shanthakumar (sitting) Anupama, Ravichandran, Rajalakshmi, Sandilya, Srivaran, Gopal, Niranjana, Ramnath, P Natarajan (standing) Narendran, Bama, Vinod, Priya, Navin, Kumarasamy, Magesh, MC Srikanth, Ramesh, Sethuram, Visagan, Ramkumar, Girish, Maruthi, Jayesh, Sid, Ganesan, Umasanker