

Half a Century of Service

The Story of YV Malla Reddy

After more than 25 years of playing a prominent leadership role in RDT, Malla Reddy became a leader in his own right as Director of AF, taking the organisation forward and playing a leading role in the district in promoting natural farming, diversifying livelihoods, and giving a big push to the voice and power of women at home and at work.

- Moncho Ferrer

Program Director, RDT, Ananthapur

I have known Malla Reddy for most of my life- first as a friend and later as a colleague. Watching him complete 50 years with RDT fills me with immense pride and joy. He has been a key pillar in RDT's incredible journey, helping transform it into a much-loved and respected organization in Ananthapur district.

- Mrs. Anne Ferrer

Founder and Executive Director, RDT Ananthapur

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy is one of his kind. He is a natural leader and leaders like him come but rarely. His authenticity as a leader comes from his first hand personal work, especially in the field and over a continuum of decades. Five decades to be precise.

- Mr. K.R. Venugopal IAS (Retd),

Formerly Secretary to the Prime Minister; Special Rapporteur,
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Hyderabad

Dr. Malla Reddy has been a strong representative of the NGO sector in India and on various international forums. He has emerged as a role model for what an NGO can achieve through practice-led policy advocacy. Beginning his work in his formative years, he was groomed by Dr. Vincent Ferrer founder of Rural Development Trust (RDT)

- C S Reddy

Founder and CEO, APMAS, Hyderabad

Voices from the drylands are often rare; if any, will only ask for canals and irrigation from dams churning out a larger political ambition. Malla Reddy provided a different articulation to development debate in Ananthapur; an articulation of the small holder rainfed farmers and their right to water to save their crops from dry-spells. Droughts and their destructive impact on livelihoods are some things one has to experience to appreciate the need for working in its mitigation

- Ravindra Adusumilli

Director, WASSAN

The history of Ananthapur district is inseparably intertwined with that of Mallareddy. He has had direct and indirect relations for five decades with every village and hundreds of thousands of families in the district

- M.L. Narasimha Reddy,

Senior Special Correspondent, Eenadu, Hyderabad.

Half a Century of Service

The Story of YV Malla Reddy

Half a Century of Service: The Story of YV Malla Reddy



Half a Century of Service: The Story of YV Mallareddy



Anthology of Articles

Published by :

Doreen Reddy

Y.Bharath Victor - D.Sandhiya

28th January 2025

Half a Century of Service: The Story of YV Mallareddy

Anthology of articles

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The contents of this book can be freely used by any body for any social cause,
quoting the author and publisher

Parents



Sri Y. Harinarayana Reddy
Smt. Y. Venkatamma

కలలు కంటూ వుంటాను....
ఎప్పుడు అనంతపురం జిల్లాలో ప్రతి ఎకరం
పచ్చగా పూర్తిగా వికసించి ఫలించునో,
ఎప్పుడు ప్రతి కూలి, రైతు కరువులో కూడా
సంతోషంగా సగౌరవంగా జీవించునో,
ఎప్పుడు జిల్లాలో ప్రజాస్వామ్యం, శాంతి,
సహజీవనం, సహకారం సాకారమౌనో
అప్పటివరకు కష్టపడుతుంటాను...
కలలు కంటూ ఉంటాను...

..డా॥ వై.వి. మల్లారెడ్డి

*I will continue to dream...
Until every acre in Anantapur district turns green,
blossoms fully and bears fruit,
Until every labourer and farmer lives happily,
and with dignity even in times of drought,
Until democracy, peace, coexistence,
and cooperation are realized in the district,
I will continue to work hard...
I will continue to dream...*

- Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy



Vicente Ferrer

Rural Development Trust



Golden Jubilee - 1974-2024

For 47 years - 1976-2023

Dedicated service to empowering people and conserving nature

Dedicated service to empowering women and sensitising on gender



Y.V. Malla Reddy

Director, Accion Fraterna-Ecology Centre, Ananthapuramu, A.P.

Y. Doreen Reddy

Director (Retd.), Women Empowerment, Rural Development Trust.

We recognise his valuable contribution to building and sustaining the RDT during its early years; being an integral part of its struggles and successes; and continuing the same in the AF-Ecology Centre for the past 23 years.

We appreciate her valuable contribution in building and sustaining the RDT during its early years; and for being an integral part of both its struggles and successes.



Anne Ferrer

Anne Ferrer

Executive Director, RDT

28 January 2025

Moncho Ferrer

Moncho Ferrer

Programme Director, RDT





Vicente Ferrer

Rural Development Trust



50th Anniversary of Y.V. Malla Reddy in RDT and AF-Ecology Centre

CITATION

We appreciate Y.V. Malla Reddy for his 50 years of dedicated service, fulfilling the Dharma of RDT and AF-EC, i.e., Concern for Others, Work Beyond Duty, Pursuit of Excellence in Work, and reaching as many poor as possible.

For his lifetime commitment to the development of the poor and a valuable and consistent contribution to the mitigation of drought and desertification in chronically drought-prone Ananthapuramu District, through Watershed Development, alternative agriculture practices and agroecology.

We recognise his valuable contribution to building and sustaining the RDT during its early years; being an integral part of its struggles and successes; and continuing the same in the AF-Ecology Centre for the past 23 years.

Wherever you are, you are part of the AF-EC and RDT family.

ANNE FERRER
Executive Director,
Rural Development Trust.

MONCHO FERRER
Chairperson,
AF - Ecology Centre

Acknowledgement

This is to heartfully thank the following person, who have helped me in bringing out this book.

First, I would like to thank all colleagues-cum-friends in AF-EC, RDT, NGOs, Civil Society and media persons, who have contributed very heart-warming articles. All of them have responded very warmly, willingly and timely. Their articles showed me how much they valued me and my work.

I thank Dr.Harinarayana Rao, Director, PME (Retd) of RDT for his very passionate support and cooperation for translating Telugu articles into English and editing. He has also assisted some of the writers in improving their language and presentation.

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I thank Mr. Fazlulla, my secretary for corresponding with contributors of the articles, putting the articles in some order, collecting their photos, searching the old photos etc.

I thank Mr. Nageswara Rao, Editor, Eenadu for writing the Foreword for the book. He had readily agreed to my request and wrote the foreword.

I thank Mr. Nageswara Rao and Mr. M.L.Narasimha Reddy, who have taken personal interest, and paid attention to every detail in designing the book.

This book would not have come out without the cooperation and support of the above friends and colleagues. I realise how much they all valued me. I acknowledge and thank them with profound gratitude for their very willing cooperation and support. Myself and my family will remain ever thankful for them.

11th January, 2025
Anantapur.

Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy

To my wife with love

I dedicate this book to my beloved wife, Doreen, who has been the cornerstone of my fruitful and fulfilling life. Her unwavering commitment to my happiness, health, and well-being has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Doreen has celebrated my every success as her own, taking immense pride in all my achievements. She has poured the same boundless energy and love into our family, cherishing our son Bharath, Sandhiya, and our two wonderful grandchildren. At the same time, she excelled in her own journey, striking a remarkable balance between family, work, friends, and relatives.

Starting with humble beginnings, she rose through the ranks at RDT to become the Director of Women Empowerment, handling every task, big or small, with unremitting dedication. Her selflessness extended far beyond her immediate family; she supported everyone in need – whether it was father, sister, or Obulamma, the sweeper – be it in their work or personal matters.

Doreen has faced life's toughest challenges with remarkable strength and grace. Despite battling multiple illnesses, enduring three cancers, and undergoing seven major surgeries, she remained resilient, energetic, multi-talented, and ever-smiling.

This book is a humble token of my profound love and respect for the one and only Doreen Reddy, my greatest inspiration and steadfast companion.



16th January, 2025
Anantapur

Y.V. Malla Reddy

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Foreword:

A life of Service and Dedication

- M. Nageswara Rao

Editor, Eenadu

పరుల కొసం పాటుపడని
నరుని బ్రతుకు దేనికని...
మూగ నేలకు నీరందివ్వని
వాగు పరుగు దేనికని...

- జ్ఞానపీఠ్ అవార్డు గ్రహీత డా. సినారె
రచించిన ఒక గజల్

"Of what purpose is a man's life that does not serve others? Of what purpose is the flowing stream if it does not provide wettings to the arid land?"

- Dr. C. Narayana Reddy,
Gnanapeeth Awardee, in a Telugu Ghazal

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy embodies the lofty ideal articulated by the celebrated Telugu poet. My association with Dr. Malla Reddy spans over two and a half decades. His unwavering commitment to drought mitigation and water conservation in the arid Rayalaseema region, particularly in Anantapur – a district with one of the lowest rainfall records in the country – is nothing short of extraordinary. Malla Reddy's dedicated work has earned him nationwide recognition,

establishing him as a respected authority on water conservation and drought mitigation. During Eenadu's



Sujalam-Suphalam campaign in 2001, which aimed to promote water conservation awareness amidst a prevailing drought in Andhra Pradesh, I invited him to deliver a lecture to our journalism students. At the time, he served as the Director of the Rural Development Trust (RDT), an organization synonymous with selfless service.

RDT expanded its activities across 4,000 villages in seven districts of combined Andhra Pradesh. Notable conservation efforts in the Nallamala forest region not only preserved the environment but also improved livelihoods for marginalized communities living along the forest fringes. Be it responding to natural calamities or implementing poverty alleviation programs, RDT

continues to stand as a beacon of hope for the poor and needy.

Malla Reddy's profound involvement with the Trust's activities earned him the affectionate moniker "RDT Malla Reddy." Our first meeting fostered an enduring friendship that remains vibrant to this day – a testament to his warm and welcoming nature. Even at 70, Malla Reddy garu is surrounded by countless friends and well-wishers, a reflection of his remarkable personality.

Poverty Alleviation Efforts

Malla Reddy's contributions to poverty alleviation are manifold. His initiatives generated employment, promoted skill development, and provided professional training for rural youth. Training programs in mobile repairs, electrical works, and driving heavy and light vehicles empowered countless individuals. Furthermore, over 10,000 women were encouraged to start small businesses, and pushcarts were distributed to support impoverished families.

The Ecology Centre, situated on the outskirts of Anantapur, stands as a testament to his vision for sustainable agriculture. This hub of agricultural innovation trains farmers in modern, scientific, and sustainable farming techniques. It also distributes high-quality,

drought-resistant seeds and educates farmers on the efficient management of water resources.

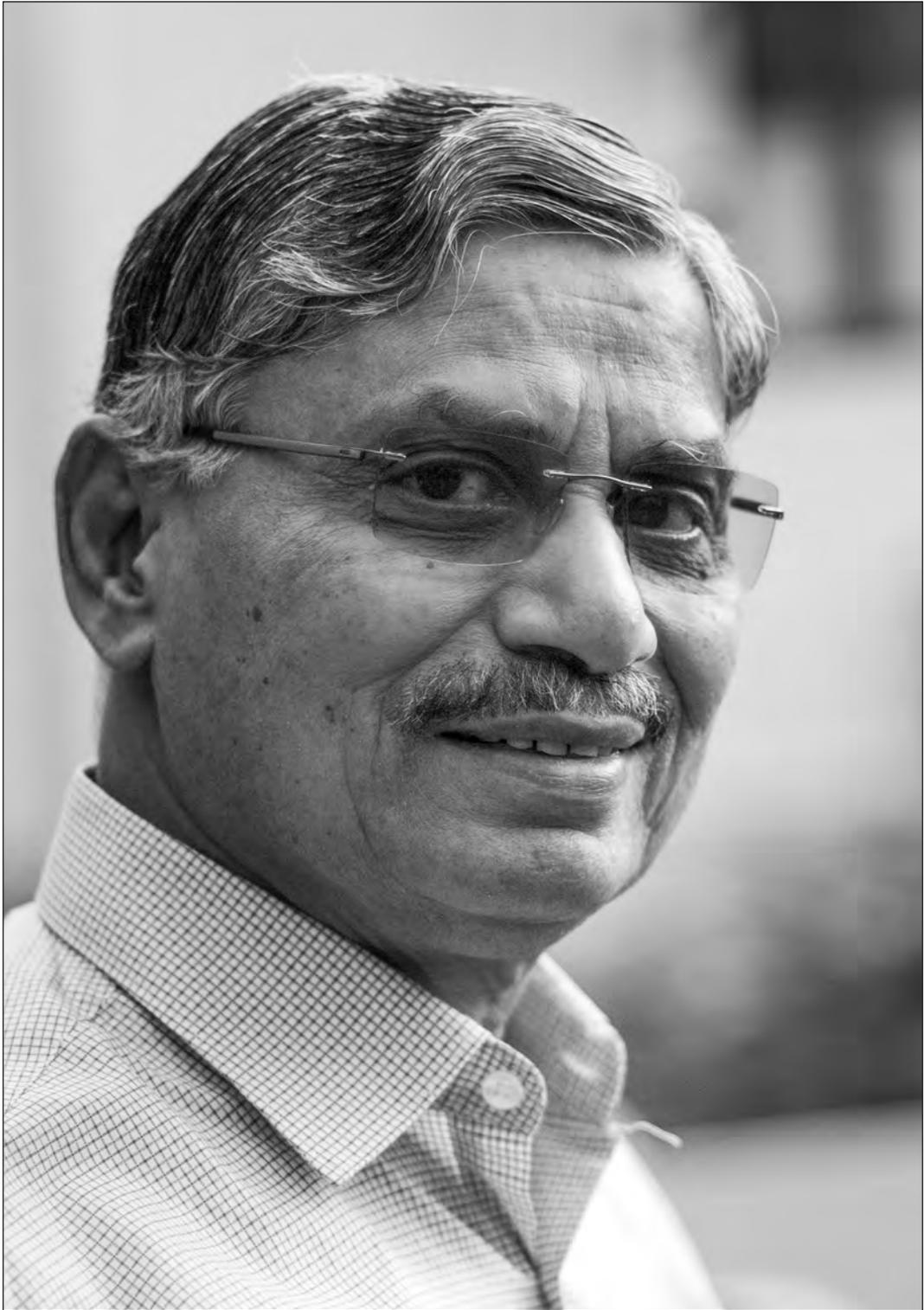
A Jovial Yet Committed Soul

At 70, Dr. Malla Reddy exudes joy and optimism, with a contagious laughter that precedes and follows his every word. Beneath this jovial exterior lies a deeply committed individual, dedicated to uplifting the drought-affected and underprivileged communities of Anantapur district.

Growing up in the remote village of Neerukuntlapalli, which lacked basic amenities like roads and electricity, he overcame significant challenges to transform the region. His wife, Doreen, has been a steadfast partner in his journey, sharing his dedication and selflessness. Together, they have become a blessing to the people they serve, working hand in hand for the welfare of the region with unwavering sincerity and devotion.

Their lives remind me of these profound words:

"At the end of our life, what really matters is not what we bought, but what we built; not what we got, but what we shared; not our competence, but our character; not the success, but the significance. Live a life that matters. Live a life of love."



Some important reflections on my life

- *Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy,*
Director, AF-EC Anantapur

1. My Family Background

I was born and brought up in a remote tiny settlement called Nee-rukuntlapalli in the present Satyasai District. My family background, together with the social and beautiful geographical environment, laid the foundation for my growth and development. My parents, Sri Y. Harinarayana Reddy and Srimathi Y. Venkatamma, both influenced me immensely to be down-to-earth and pragmatic. Being a joint family, my grandparents, three of them, their sons (my uncles), and their families were like the leading lights for me. The naturally beautiful biodiversity and farming rooted me in the nature and ecology, i.e., farming, forests, live streams, water, trees, animals, crops, insects, wildlife, etc.

The village social environment, rural livelihoods, the values, castes, culture, social structure, norms, social status, etc., taught me to understand and be sensitive to

the social dynamics, conflicts, contradictions, constraints, etc. My first teachers, particularly Sri Nabi Sab and Sri Venkatesulu, influenced me to be sincere, responsible, and think beyond.

2. College Education

My early education was in my village and ZP High School, Nallacheruvu. My intermediate was in Jr. College, Kadiri. I joined B.Com. at BT College, Madanapalle, in 1971. During the studies, there were two important political movements in which I actively participated. They were the Jai Andhra Movement (1972), seeking separation from Telangana, and the movement to restore democracy (1974), led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayana against Smt. Indira Gandhi's dictatorial governance. As a state-level student leader, I was very active in both the movements and had the opportunity to work with eminent state-level leaders like Shri Venkata Naidu,

Thenneti Viswaratham, Pasala Suryachandra Rao, Kongara Jaggaiah, C. Basi Reddy, B.V. Subba Reddy, etc. My participation in these social movements gave me some exposure to politics.

3. My First Best Decision: Contrary to my Parents' Dreams

My father's dream was to see me as a lawyer and work in politics. Late P. Bayapa Reddy, a long-standing Member of Parliament, was my relative. He supported my father's idea of a lawyer-cum-politician. So, I joined the B.L. course in the evening college (6:30 pm to 10:30 pm) at Anantapur Government Arts College. During the day, I had nothing to do. So, I approached Father Ferrer for a job. He gracefully offered me a job as a cost accountant in the rural industries section. Lt. Col. C.T. Subaiya (Retd.), Project Coordinator of Rural Industries, was my boss. He was an able administrator. He did not know Telugu, and I did not know English! So, I was forced to learn English. Just after a couple of months, Col. Subaiya was given the responsibility of coordinating the wells programme because it needed a revamping, as there were allegations of misuse of funds by some supervisors. The wells program was implemented by RDT under the

food for work program, supported by CASA (Church's Auxiliary for Social Action) under PL480, the Food Aid program of the USA. Wages were paid to the beneficiary farmers in food grain, palm oil, and milk powder for well excavation work. It was the most appropriate program to overcome drought and poverty of the poor rainfed farmers during the 1970s. My family had owned open wells. They not only provided food, nutrition, and income security but also added status and dignity to our family. So, the program fascinated me.

When the wells program was taken over by Col. Subaiya, it was unorganised and loosely managed. There was no proper accounting of the rations distributed. The reporting to CASA was not in order. There were more than 20 well supervisors working in the program.

Some supervisors were allegedly taking bribes from beneficiary farmers. And I also observed that there was some undue political interference in the implementation of the program. Such improprieties always disturbed me emotionally. I had two of my uncles in government service. Both of them enjoyed a very high reputation for their integrity in work. They had a strong influence on me and were my role models for ethics and integrity.

Further, as a student of law, I could not tolerate both financial dishonesty and political interference, as they caused injustice to farmers. So, naturally, I was up in arms to fight for justice.

Under the leadership of Col. Subaiya, I played a very proactive role in purging and streamlining the wells program. The dishonest supervisors were removed. My strong desire was to keep the wells program free from malpractices and free from undue interference so that we can serve the farmers better. We introduced total transparency and accountability in wage payment in food rations. We developed an excellent manual MIS system to monitor the monthly progress and food grains delivered. We introduced farmer cards and updated the progress in well excavation with every visit and payment. We updated and systematised the accounting system for bulgar wheat (food grain), palm oil, and milk powder. We streamlined the monthly progress reporting to CASA. There were even some inspections done by government revenue officers, and they found the program was well implemented. Father Ferrer was very happy, farmers were very happy, and CASA was also very happy. In all this process, I was like a de facto chief supervisor, coordinating the

work of other supervisors under the leadership of Col. Subaiya.

In the process, I realised that dishonesty and undue interference from vested interests were, to some extent, a part of Indian culture! And they needed a constant vigil and perseverance. There was no one-time treatment for them. This realisation only reinforced my zero tolerance for financial dishonesty and undue interference and strengthened my resolve to pursue them. I made a strong mark in my work as a sincere and effective worker and attracted the attention of Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer. I was excited about my work and charmed by Father. I had been a young, enthusiastic, energetic, loyal, dependable, but immature and impulsive worker. Most probably, among other qualities, my raw and rustic nature attracted Father Ferrer and Sister Anne.

Much against the wishes of my parents and relatives, I decided to discontinue the law course and work in RDT with Father and Sister Anne. This, I believe, was the best decision I took regarding my life. Had I continued the law course and further in politics, I would have most probably shined as a lawyer and a politician, but I never would have had the fulfilment and satisfaction of life I have today.

4. Another Best Decision

The most important and very mature decision I made in 1981 was to get married to Doreen. Doreen was working as secretary to Father and Sister. She was lovable, very capable, and a most responsible lady. We both were brought up culturally very different, but our values and complementary strengths united us. Each added value to the other. Before marriage, we first had blessings from Father and Sister. Then our parents. Our marriage was a big sensation in the district as it was an inter-religious marriage, and it was a social marriage without a priest, purohit, or any rituals. The usual way of an inter-caste or inter-religious marriage, in those days, was to run away from the families, get secretly married, and set up a separate home! In our case, we decided to face it boldly. We invited all our families, relatives, friends, and colleagues – over 500 people – and we declared that we were a married couple from that moment and signed a piece of paper in the presence of Father, Sister, our families, friends, and colleagues. In fact, Father and Sister have been our super parents at all times, before and after marriage. It was a much-talked-about marriage in those days! Our marriage was a big turning point that elevated not only our

personal lives but also both of our families. Doreen took total responsibility for my big family, i.e., parents, three brothers, one sister, and their families. And she was always impeccably responsible in her work, whatever Father or Sister assigned for her. She allowed me to fully dedicate myself to RDT and has been my backbone in my growth and achievements. She was never found wanting either at home or at her work.

5. My Journey and Growth in RDT

5.1 Understanding Father Ferrer and his Philosophy

My journey in RDT from 1974 to 2001 has been very exciting, challenging, and very fruitful. Working directly with Father and Sister from a young age of 20, for so many years, was a great opportunity to learn, to grow, and to transform myself. Among other things, it introduced me to Father's life and philosophy. Those days, life was not so "fast" and one had a lot of time and leisure to discuss many things with Father and Sister. Father Ferrer has been the most learned and deep person I have ever known. He had a deep understanding of all world religions, philosophies, world history, etc. Father did not believe in

'preaching' hungry people. He believed that they have to be provided with food and other basic needs. Father's life and simple slogans like "concern for others," "a man is not a man if he is not a brother," "a brother is one who does an action for another," etc., have deeply made me reflect on the very purpose of life. By now, I began to realise that the very purpose of life is to alleviate the suffering of others. Father's life was the message of "living for others, particularly for the suffering people.". He had been the greatest humanist I had ever known. An embodiment of concern and compassion. I realise that the purpose of life is not to earn wealth or fame. One wanting to live well was not an end by itself. It was a means and an enabler to serve the needy. Father's vision of the society was a just, compassionate, and humane society. I also understood that another important element of human well-being was healthy Nature. People are only the trustees of the Mother Earth and cannot be the exploiters and destroyers of it. Thus, people have a never-ending responsibility to conserve Nature, without which humankind would perish.

5.2 Understanding Development Approaches

Further, I had the opportunity to understand various development

ideologies and approaches, like Marxian, Gandhian, Paulo Freirean, Sarvodaya, etc. I also observed how those approaches worked in different NGOs in the country and abroad. I was fully influenced by Father's development philosophy. Father's development philosophy had been a good mix of relevant elements from all development philosophies and ideologies. His approach had been most practical, down-to-earth, and here-and-now. It all boiled down to doing anything and everything that would alleviate the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged people in a sustainable way. And it also included conserving Nature so that it can feed the people. Father Ferrer used to say that we were not servants of any one ideology; our only ideology is to serve the poor and needy people here and now. He also believed that education and economic empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged communities would lead to their empowerment and a life with human dignity. The economic development of poor women in particular would lead to the holistic development of the family and the communities.

5.3 Confronting the Problems

What I enjoyed most in RDT was confronting the challenges faced by RDT. I did not enjoy much

of any routine work, though I was good enough at it. My energy and enthusiasm were spontaneous to confront the problems and challenges. However, I liked to experiment with new ideas and activities in work. My passion was also to work with enthusiastic colleagues and people in order to ignite their energies and interest for the purpose of RDT. Thus, the community organisation sector was my appropriate field of action. Awareness generation, organising, and empowering people to solve their own problems was the larger objective of the community organisation. For some years, RDT had no funds to implement any economic development activities. Some of us worked for some time without salaries or only with part salaries. Organising and enabling the poor people to access government welfare programs like education, health, land pattas, house pattas, drinking water, fair price shops, etc., were the main activities.

5.4 RDT's First Phase of Expansion

I often was part of Father's kitchen cabinet in the 1980s and 1990s. Father, Sister, Michael Perry, and I formed the kitchen cabinet on the dining table at Father's home. It was an active informal forum in which we discussed all aspects and

issues related to the work and the organisation. RDT started to grow rapidly since 1978, when Action Aid began to fund RDT and expand rapidly with their Child Sponsorship Program in Kalyandurg & Urvakonda areas. RDT transformed Action Aid's Child Sponsorship Program from running hostels for poor students in towns to an integrated community development programme. Its approach was to focus on the holistic development in a continuum of the child, the family, the community, the village, and the project area. Then Aid-et-Action from France also started to partner on similar lines of Action Aid in Kambadur Taluk. Meanwhile, The Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) Netherlands also began to fund community organisation programmes in Kambadur taluk, whereas the Evangelische Zentralstelle fuer Entwicklungsdienst (EZE) in Germany, now known as Bread for the World, was already funding community organisation programmes in Kalyandurg taluk. So, the 1980s were a period of growth and expansion for RDT, and they offered an opportunity to get rooted with the communities.

Thus, the programs expanded to over 300 villages and intensified their activities. Staff numbers, par-

ticularly part-time teachers and others, increased. Essentially there were 3 sectors in those days. They were a) Community Organisation headed by Capt. Ashok Tipnis (which became the Ecology Sector since 1986), b) Community Health Program, headed by Sister Anne, and c) Children's Education Program headed by Michael Perry.

6. Some Important Challenges that Shaped Me and RDT

Father Ferrer always dreamed that RDT should be a strong and dynamic organisation. Every time we confronted a problem, we sent a strong signal to the distractors that RDT cannot be threatened or bullied. Meanwhile, RDT programs took deep roots in the communities, particularly Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other poorer sections of the society.. All three sectors, i.e., Education, Health, and Ecology, created a strong community base. Concurrently, RDT policies, systems, processes, etc., were also gradually formalised. Thus, RDT grew stronger and stronger.

6.1. Staff Agitation in 1979

I was a dashing, impulsive person and a go-getter. So, in addition to my work in community organisation or the ecology sector, I used to take initiative in some gen-

eral organisational tasks. Many a time, challenges and problems came to RDT from persons or groups who wanted to unduly influence RDT for their advantage. Some local politicians or caste groups supported their unjust demands and created problems for RDT. RDT always strived to retain its autonomy and resisted such pressure tactics. Being a local person, I was in the forefront in asserting and confronting such attempts.

As RDT grew stronger and more independent, some employees with vested interests tried to take control of RDT directly or indirectly. One such attempt was an agitation in 1979 by some 30 community organisers, led by Dr. G.N. Reddy, the then Director of Community Organisation. The community organisers formed a "RDT Workers Union" at the instance of Dr. G.N. Reddy. Their main demand was that Father Ferrer should step down from Program Director of RDT and offer it to Dr. G.N. Reddy. The rest of the staff, including myself and Doreen, could not imagine RDT without Father and Sister. In order to confront the agitators, I formed a "Loyal Workers Union of RDT.". Except for the 30-odd community organisers, de facto led by Dr. G.N. Reddy, the rest of the over 200 RDT

staff fully participated in this union and fought in favour of Father and Sister. We all unanimously opposed their unjust demand. We firmly stood with Father and Sister and mobilised the target communities to oppose their unjust demand. We demanded that they leave the organisation immediately so that RDT can further grow under Father's leadership and serve the people. Supported and guided by Father and Sister, I played a pivotal role in leading the struggle, confronting the agitators, and cornering them. The other key leaders among loyal workers in the union included Doreen, Dr. Prabhakar Reddy, Thomas, Dasarath, Sirappa, Sudheer and others. The agitators initially mobilised some support for them from some target community leaders and some politicians. We challenged all of them openly and campaigned intensively on why Father and Sister were inseparable from RDT. We demanded firmly that the agitators should leave RDT. We could mobilise the target people in large numbers to confront the agitators and their supporters. The target people from the villages solidly rallied behind Father and RDT.

The politicians, who were supporting them, were neutralised. The agitating staff were forced to leave the project villages. So, they set up

their camp in Andhra Lodge in Anantapur. We organised public meetings in Anantapur with large numbers and demanded to stop the agitation, leave RDT, and allow it to work. They were demoralised and weakened. As a final resort, they began a relay fast in front of the Revenue Divisional Office (RDO) office demanding that Father Ferrer to step down. In order to counter their relay fast, some of us, including myself, Doreen, Sirappa, Rachel and others started a "fast unto death" just next to their tent. Our single demand was that the agitators immediately leave RDT, as there was no RDT without Father and Sister. We could use every strategy and tactic to weaken and demoralise the agitators and their supporters. A lot of public support also came in support of Father. Finally, we won the war, and they left RDT.

This event was a big milestone in my journey in RDT. This event gave me an opportunity to bring out the fighter in me. It was an opportunity to demonstrate my courage, integrity, loyalty, and capacity and to emerge as a leader in the organisation. It gave me recognition among people, donors, and other NGOs. This event consolidated the bond between me, Father, and Sister, and my commitment to RDT was cemented. Due to this struggle,

RDT emerged strong. The staff began to own RDT, and their commitment to the cause of RDT deepened.

6.2. Struggle for Acquiring First Campus Land

Another important event where I played an important role was in fighting the landowners of the RDT main campus. The main campus was built on leased land owned by Mr. Ramachandra Rao & family. In 1988, the landowner's family made serious attempts to push RDT out and forcefully take possession of the whole campus. They even tried to use goondas to threaten and push RDT out. We, all the staff, were united and resisted boldly and physically prevented them from entering the campus. For weeks, we were all taking turns in the nights to watch and prevent them from entering the campus. Then, they realised that they could not take physical possession of the campus. So, they offered to sell the campus to RDT (the land and buildings) at an exorbitant price! Meanwhile, RDT also initiated a legal battle simultaneously in the AP High Court, pleading for an injunction order not to force RDT to vacate the campus. Finally, after a prolonged struggle, they realised that they could not take possession of the land, nor could they sell it to

RDT at their price. Then they came down for selling the land at a reasonable market price. Doreen and I played an important role in this struggle in protecting the land physically to be in RDT's possession and in demoralising the landowners.

6.3. Mobilising Funds for the Purchase of the First Campus

Then came a challenge of mobilising funds for the purchase of the land. It was estimated to cost about Rs. 60 lakhs, and RDT had no funds to pay for it. It had 4 donors at that time. They were Action Aid, Aide-et-Action, EZE, and ICCO.

I took the responsibility to convince the ICCO and EZE to fund 50 percent of the cost. Father and Sister were confident that they could convince Action Aid and Aide-et-Action to fund the rest of the 50%. Those days, the donor agencies were not willing to fund such infrastructure. However, I travelled to the Netherlands and Germany to negotiate with EZE and ICCO. Thanks to Mr. Fons van der Velden and Mr. Peter Lanzet, the then project officers of ICCO and EZE, for their concern for RDT. Both the agencies agreed to jointly fund the 50% cost. That was a big moment for RDT and myself. The total land of 8.5 acres was purchased by RDT. Purchasing the land over

which RDT had already built the campus was a very big milestone in RDT's history. It gave a feeling of security and permanence for RDT.

6.4. Organisation Development Program

From 1991 to 1998 was the period when I was in full form and contributed to the consolidation of RDT as an organisation. I had just returned in 1990 with renewed energy and enthusiasm from the United Kingdom after completing my MBA. In my MBA, my specialisations were Human Resources Development (HRD) and Organisation Development (OD). Coincidentally, it was the time when several NGOs in the country were going through the organisation development (OD) process facilitated by external OD consultants. The OD essentially was an internal participatory process to clearly articulate the organisation's vision and mission, formalise management systems & processes, and equip human resources with commitment and competence. Father and Sister also were inclined to initiate an OD process for RDT. To start with, Father, Sister, and I began to articulate what RDT was and what it stood for. Until then it was all in the minds of Father and Sister, and they used to explain this to the staff in the meetings. We articulated the first-ever RDT state-

ment. In that statement, Father came up with the new idea of including the Dharma of RDT along with the purpose and the identity of RDT. That was the first document providing direction to RDT's programmes and a code of conduct for its staff. It was a great opportunity for me to closely work with Father in this effort and understand Father's idea of RDT.

Meanwhile the issue of RDT's succession had come for discussion, particularly from all the donor agencies. It was particularly raised by them when we were negotiating the funds for the purchase of RDT campus land. They were concerned about the sustainability of the organisation. RDT decided to initiate an organisation development program in 1992 facilitated by Mr. Stephen of SEARCH. First, when the OD program began in SEARCH at Bangalore, Father resolved the issue of RDT succession by naming Sister as Father's successor and appointing Sister as the associate programme director. It gave confidence to the donors, people, and staff about the future of RDT and its sustainability.

Emergence of Sister Anne Ferrer's Leadership

Sister shifted her role from

backseat driving to co-driving RDT with Father. With that, a new chapter in RDT began to consolidate and strengthen under the joint leadership of Father and Sister. By then I was also known as a very effective trainer. I had gone through a six-month Trainers Training Course (TTC) in SEARCH and studied for an MBA from the U.K. So, in addition to being the Director of Ecology, I was given charge of Human Resources Development (HRD). So, Father, Sister, and I spontaneously formed a team to take forward the process of organisation development. Sister and I were the best-made action team, with complementary strengths and convergence of ideas for the organisation development of RDT. In fact, Father had been the visionary, and Sister had been the real missionary, translating Father's vision into reality. Sister had the aptitude to build the muscle of the organisation. She had been down-to-earth and excellent in building systems and processes in the organisation. She had already built the community health sector effectively, and it was among the best in the country. I was good in conceptual clarity, HRD, and participatory processes. Father was our philosopher, guide, and mentor. The initial OD process facilitated by SEARCH was further continued in-

ternally by Sister and myself.

We initiated a number of participatory OD processes, involving the senior staff from all sectors. The notable OD processes included a) streamlining the organisational structure and structures of the sectors; b) a special drive to train and equip all human resources, at all levels, with RDT's goals, objectives, and dharma; c) equip them with positive attitude, motivation, knowledge, and skills to perform their job effectively; d) a participatory approach to development by involving target people in the programs in all the sectors; and f) building a "leadership collective" of second-line leaders, called the RDT core team, at the central level. All the second-line leaders were first orientated on OD processes by SEARCH and then taken forward to other levels of staff by Sister and myself as trainers and facilitators. Thus, we facilitated the OD process to cover all the levels of staff. In this whole OD process, Lalitha, Doreen, Chalapathy, Damodaran, Dasarath, Sirappa, Sudheer, Thippeswamy, Xavier and others played an important role as facilitators, covering all sectors and regions.

As a result, a lot of new energy began to flow across the organisation among all sectors and cadres. The required conceptual and

technical capacities were built. RDT's history, goals, objectives, dharma, values, and culture were internalised among all the staff. The improvement in staff motivation, commitment, and energy levels was visible. Cadres at all levels began to perform and own the organisation. The core team, consisting of all second-line leaders headed by Father and Sister, emerged as a strong participatory leadership collective. It turned into a springboard of positive energy, commitment, and competence. Each member of the core team had unique strengths and a repository of RDTs, goals, objectives, dharma, values, and culture, and a role model to emulate. Father described the core team members as "each one is superior to the other." The organisation turned out to be very strong, dynamic, and vibrant. Sister and I enjoyed working together, guided by Father. Father appreciated all the OD processes as a visible change in the performance of all the sectors, and the organisation became a Presence in Anantapur. Sister emerged and established herself as the most effective leader of the organisation and provided a feeling of stability and sustainability for the organisation. The staff and the people felt more secure. Father was the happiest of all as he saw that his dream of a strong, dy-

namic, and sustainable RDT had come true!

This was also the time when Fundacio Vicente Ferrer (FVF) in Spain was emerging strong, and RDT was ready to take on the challenge of rapidly intensifying and expanding its operations manyfold.

6.5. Building the Ecology Sector in RDT (1986-2000)

I was made the Director of Community Organisation in 1984. Father's dream was to see Anantapur District as an evergreen garden, producing enough and more to feed the people of Anantapur. I was naturally inspired by his dream. Under Father's guidance, I built the ecology sector as a model that is highly relevant, efficient and effective for Anantapur agro-climatic conditions. It was a model for government and other NGOs to scale up. Though the program was then generally called the Watershed Development Program, Mr. Peter Lanzet of EZE had named it as the Eco-Employment Program. It meant that it had combined the two objectives: Ecological Development and Employment Generation. Both objectives were highly urgent and relevant for Anantapur District in those days. A village was considered as a unit for the program. People's participation was a nec-

essary condition in planning and implementation. The program covered about 100 villages intensively at any given time! The ridge-to-valley land treatment approach was followed. The activities included contour bunding, farm forestry, gully plugging, check dams, mini percolation tanks, restoration of old water bodies, tree plantation in common lands, fodder development, horticulture plantation, rainfed agronomical practices, domestic biogas units, etc. All activities were implemented employing labour, and the use of machines was banned. Labour had full employment all through the year, and wages were paid as per the rates fixed by the government.

Father Ferrer was a springboard of my motivation and inspiration. I had the freedom to plan, raise funds, and implement the eco-employment programme. My family background in farming, understanding of the local ecology, environment, and social dynamics were the sources of my traditional wisdom and knowledge. My senior Watershed team was comprised of Mr. Raghurama Reddy, Mr. Anthony Reddy, and Mr. Ramana Reddy. All three were retired from government service with impeccable technical knowledge in watershed development and agriculture

and were the pillars of the program. They had a high level of integrity, sincerity, and good reputation in government circles. It enhanced the credibility of the program and of RDT. My background in community organisation was the foundation for adopting a people's participatory approach in the program.

It was probably the largest watershed program implemented by an NGO in the country at that time. It caught the imagination of the farmers, and their participation was excellent. It had created a visible impact on the ecology, environment, and agriculture in every project village. It drastically improved the groundwater recharge, green cover, and fruit tree crops. It had changed the village landscape; the area under irrigation increased, farm productivity increased, soil erosion was arrested, and enhanced climate resilience. And equally important, farm employment multiplied and sustained. The distress migration was arrested. It became a model for other NGOs and governments at the Andhra Pradesh state (AP) and national levels. The policies and processes followed by AF-EC were adopted by the government and other NGOs. The program became very popular across the country and attracted thou-

sands of visitors from across the country.

I was a member of the AP Water Conservation Mission (1999-2004) and the AP Watershed Advisory Committee (1998-2007). I advocated and lobbied successfully for the people-centred watershed policies of AF-EC to be adopted. The Government of AP adopted this model for APRLP (Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Program) funded by the Department for International Development, UK, (DFID). Further, when Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was introduced in 2005, Mr. K. Raju, the then Secretary of Rural Development of A.P., took the eco-employment program as a model in deciding the kind of activities and processes to be followed in its implementation. AF-EC was consulted by the Government of AP in finalising MGNREGS guidelines.

6.6 My Role in the NGO Sector

In the last 50 years, NGOs evolved from providers of relief to the poor and disadvantaged to facilitators of integrated development to the empowerment of people. In the process of this evolution, the concepts of people's participation, gender, women's development,

ecology, environment, sustainable agriculture, community health, natural farming, climate resilience, etc., were introduced. I am fortunate to be an active partner in this evolution and transformation process of the NGO sector, from the 1970s to the 2020s.

Since the year 1980, I have often represented RDT in various NGO networks, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc. Thus, I became a sort of face of RDT, particularly in the NGO sector up to the national level. I used to directly deal with EZE and ICCO on behalf of RDT. The donor agencies, particularly EZE and ICCO, used to organise a number of national workshops, seminars, and conferences on themes like approaches to development, gender, environment, sustainable agriculture, the NGO sector, etc. I enjoyed participating in and learning from such events. They had contributed a lot to my growth; I also contributed substantially in those workshops regarding the approach followed by RDT and Father Ferrer's philosophy of development. I had met a number of eminent NGO leaders and developed relations with them. I saw how the NGO sector had evolved from mere relief providers to integrated development to people's empowerment paradigms. I tried to understand

broad streams of development ideologies followed by NGOs like Gandhian, Marxian, Paulo Freirean, Liberation Theology, etc.

Further, there were several thematic NGO networks/federations on environment, agriculture, health, education, Dalits, etc., at different levels, like district, state, and national levels. RDT was prominent in some thematic networks, like the environment, and in some NGO national networks, like AVARD (Association Voluntary Associations in Rural Development), WASSAN, VANI (Voluntary Action Network of India), etc. Either thematic networks or NGO sectoral networks, RDT had an important place, and Father Ferrer was revered by all, regardless of their beliefs and ideologies and approaches.

There was a threat to NGOs freedom and democratic space in the 1980s. The threat came because some prominent NGOs, who were close to the government, proposed to introduce a 'code of conduct' for NGOs. They proposed that NGO staff should be paid only survival salaries, they should lead a very simple lifestyle, and there should be several such do's and don'ts. So, a historical need emerged for NGOs to come together, assert, and protect the democratic space and the freedom of each NGO, not to be re-

stricted by any code of conduct, as it inhibits the growth of the NGO sector. So, RDT, PRIA, SEARCH, SEWA, CINI, and some other credible NGOs from across the country came together and founded VANI (Voluntary Action Network of India) with Rajesh Tandon as its first chairperson and an executive committee. Its main objective was to resist such a compulsive code of conduct. RDT, represented by me, played an important role in founding the VANI. I served on its board for over 10 years, representing RDT. Later Moncho Ferrer also served on VANI for several years. I was also a founding trustee of the Watershed Support Serviced Activities Network (WASSAN, 1999) along with Mr. B.N. Yugandhar and Mr. M.V. Sastry and subsequently, its managing trustee from 2004 to 2022.

I was able to effectively represent RDT in all such NGO forums and build a positive image for RDT and the NGO sector. Similarly, I was also representing RDT in government forums and meetings and bringing various issues affecting people and the NGOs to the notice of the government.

6.7 Creating a Third Voice in Anantapur

In the late 1990s and 2000s, Anantapur District had many non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) and many progressive civil society organisations (CSOs), intellectuals and experts in different fields. The NGOs in the District were federated into two networks, namely the Voluntary Action Network – Anantapur (VANA) and the Anantha Paryavarna Parirakshna Samithi (APPS). I was the chairperson of VANA. The NGOs in VANA included RDT, Timbaktu, MEOS, and some other small NGOs. The CSOs included progressive writers associations, people's science forums, Dalit rights organisations, progressive cultural organisations, singers, actors, blood donor organisations, scientists, intellectuals, etc. And there were some very progressive persons in media. Most of the time the NGOs and the CSOs functioned in silos.

A group of friends from NGOs, CSOs, intellectuals, experts and media felt that there were several issues that all three sections can come together and work on and thereby create a good impact. The most burning issues in the late 1990s included farmers suicides, atrocities on women and Dalits, drought, and poverty. Mr. Singamaneni Narayana (eminent writer), Mr. Imam (editor, Kadalika), Dr. Geyanand (JVV), Mr. M.L. Narasimha Reddy (media), Mr. Basha (HRF), and Mr. Visweswara Rao

(media), and myself took the initiative to bring together the three sections and jointly voice the burning concerns of people. The other active NGO leaders included Doreen (RDT), Mary & Bablu (Timbaktu), Surya & Khasim (MEOS), Rani & Bose, Bhanuja (REDS), Kullay Swamy (CERA), Balaram (JJ), Kristappa (RIDS) and others.

We christened this joint initiative as the Third Voice: the first and second being the government and the opposition. The Third Voice actively mobilised all the progressive individuals, NGOs, CSOs, intellectuals, experts and media persons onto this informal forum. It became a strong voice, particularly on highlighting the issues affecting the farmers, women, Dalits, etc. And it extended solidarity and support to the affected families and communities. It organised meetings and campaigns across the district in order to express solidarity and create confidence among distressed farmers, Dalits, and women. It organised international women's days, mobilising thousands of rural women and inviting eminent women like Arundhati Roy, Mallu Swarajyam, Brinda Karat and others. Such large women's gatherings highlighted the issues affecting women. The Third Voice also initiated a united women's forum

called Mahila Aikya Vedika and started a women's counselling and support centre in order to provide support to the women affected by domestic violence, sexual abuse, etc. It also organised environmental days mobilising a large number of farmers, highlighting the issues of drought, desertification, agricultural crisis, farmers suicides, etc. The speakers in these public campaigns included eminent environmental activists like Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy, Rajendar Singh, Anna Hazare and others.

6.8 International Exposure

International Workshops and Conferences

I represented RDT and AF-Ecology Centre in various international workshops and forums. I participated in the thematic conferences organised by ICCO and Bread for the World on Ecology, Environment, Sustainable Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Gender and so in. The other global forums I participated in included the World Water Forum and UNFCCC, UNCRWH, on issues of water, drought, desertification, and climate change. They had deepened and widened my understanding of such themes.

NGO Leadership Fellowship

Program in the Institute for Development Research, Boston

In 1988, I was offered an NGO Leadership Fellowship Program by the Institute for Development Research (IDR) in Boston. It was a 6-week fellowship program for NGO leaders from across the world. It gave me a good idea of how NGO leaders worked in India and other Third World countries.

MBA in the United Kingdom

In 1989-90, at the instance of RDT, Action A id sponsored my MBA at the University of Hull in the UK. It was a one-year course, 6 months in the university and 6 months in India on project work. I studied for the MBA with a specialisation in HRD and OD (Organisation Development) and passed with distinction. This course reinforced my conceptual understanding of HRD and Organisational Development.

NGO Exchange Program to South Africa

In 1995, EZE/EED organised a 4-week NGO exchange program for South African NGOs for 15 Indian NGO leaders, followed by a reciprocal visit for 15 South African NGO leaders to Indian NGOs. The NGO sector was at an infant stage in South Africa, having obtained freedom from apartheid in 1991.

They needed inputs from the Indian NGO sector, which was quite mature and vibrant. Dr.Kanchana Lanzet, a Cultural Anthropologist with work experience in Women and Development and Community Health, and two medical doctors Dr.Prem Chandran John and Dr.Hari Kumari John, Community Based Community Health experts and I played key roles in orienting the NGOs in South Africa and in hosting the South African NGO leaders in India.

Fulbright Fellowship Program in 2005

In 2005, I was offered the prestigious Fulbright Fellowship Program called the Indo-American Environmental Leadership Program. I spent 6 months in the USA, hosted by several universities, studying agriculture and drought management in the USA. It gave me a good exposure to the agricultural situation, farm policies, and drought management in the USA:

Ph.D. in Human Resources Development

I completed my Ph.D. at Sri Krishandevaraya University, Anantapur (SK University) in 2006. The theme of my research was Human Resources Management (HRM) in NGOs, a case study of RDT. The study concluded that the best ap-

proach to HRM for NGOs would be to recruit and train the local rural youth, educated in local educational institutions, so that the retention and resilience would be better.

6.9 Working with the Government

I realised that a constructive partnership between the Government and NGOs can create a highly positive impact on poverty alleviation, gender & social equity, agricultural development, and improving the natural environment. The best strengths of the government include extensive presence, highly qualified and competent technical expertise, financial resources, and infrastructure. The strengths of NGOs include closer relationships with poor communities, concern for the poor, social mobilisation, and accessibility to the poor and voiceless. Governments can certainly do big things well, and NGOs can do small things well.

The government is a large, impersonal machinery, and it is hard to reach out to poor people, nor can the poor reach the government easily. Whereas NGOs are small and can reach out to the poor with a personal touch. So, I always looked for opportunities to work with government agencies. In this

direction, a very constructive collaboration and cooperation between RDT and the Government began in 1993, when Mr. S. P. Tucker came to Anantapur as the district collector. The very first day when, he took charge as the District Collector, he came to RDT and met Father and myself; and created a very positive environment for collaboration and cooperation between RDT and the District Administration. He had a passion for Watershed Development, particularly for rainwater harvesting, given Anantapur District's drought-proneness and desertification. RDT, particularly the Ecology Sector, worked very closely with the District Administration. RDT was selected as an implementing agency by the District Administration for Watershed Development and other drought mitigation programs of the government.

Central Government Policy on Government-NGO Cooperation

Across the country, the government-NGO cooperation took a leap forward when Mr. K.R. Venugopal, IAS was working as secretary to the Prime Minister and Mr. B.N. Yugandhar, IAS., became the Secretary of Rural Development, Govt. of India. Since then, a government policy on the cooperation and

collaboration between the government and NGOs was formalised and grew positively. Both the senior IAS officers had understood the strengths of NGOs and was inclined to involve them in the implementation of government programs. Mr. Yugandhar had a passion for watershed development. He was personally in touch with the leading NGOs in the country. Since his family came from this district, he had an affinity for the district and towards RDT. All the subsequent district collectors continued to work closely not only with RDT but also with other NGOs. The District Collectors, Joint Collectors, and Project Directors with whom RDT or the AF-Ecology Centre worked closely included Mr. Satyanarayana Rao, Mr. Rajath Bhargava, Mr. Somesh Kumar, Mr. Rajasekhar, Ms. Anuradha, Mr. Sasibhusahan Kumar, Mr. Sridhar, Mr. Janardhan Reddy, Mr. S. Satyanarayana, Mr. Dilli Rao, Mr. Harijawahar Lal, Mr. G.V. Reddy, Mr. Gandham Chandrudu, Mr. Manohar Prasad, and Ms. Anitha Ramachandran. The only police officer I worked closely with was Ms. Anjana Sinha, who worked in Anantapur as Superintendent of Police. The other senior IAS officers with whom RDT and the AF-Ecology Centre had worked closely included Mr. B.N. Yugandhar, Mr.

K.R. Venugopal, Capt. AVS Reddy, T. Vijaya Kumar, Mr. Anil Kumar Punetha, Dr. Jawahar Reddy, and Mr. K. Raju.

I continue to have associations, both at professional and personal levels, with all these officers. Even today we keep discussing issues related to policies and programs on farmers, agriculture, the environment, livelihoods, etc.

I was also fortunate to have had a good relationship with three chief ministers, namely Shri Chandra Babu Naidu, late Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, and Shri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. I have earned the respect of all three of them and they have valued my experience and contribution to Anantapur District, and have offered me the opportunity to serve in several policy making bodies.

7. Accion Fraterna - Ecology Centre

In 1999, Moncho Ferrer joined the organisation. It was a necessity in view of the future succession of RDT as well as the strengthening of FVF in Spain. The complexity was growing because of a) RDT, Women Development Trust (WDT), Rayalaseema Development Trust (RyDT), and Accion Fraterna functioning under one management; b) FVF was growing in Spain, funding

RDT, WDT, and RyDT activities; and c) They were expending all their activities, including the ecology activities implemented under Accion Fraterna; d) Accion Fraterna was funded by Bread for the World and ICCO for its Ecology program. In view of the above complex situation, Father and Sister felt the need to decentralise and separate Accion Fraterna and the Ecology Program under my leadership. So, it was decided that Accion Fraterna would function autonomously and would have a separate campus. It would continue to carry on the ecology activities funded by Bread for the World and ICCO. Accordingly, a separate campus was built. It was initially called RDT-Ecology Centre. Initially, I had very mixed feelings about this decision because RDT had become part of my genes and moving away from it was very painful. On the other side, it was an opportunity to work independently. Anyway, I accepted the decision and gave a fair trial.

I moved to the AF-Ecology Centre in the year 2002.

When Accion Fraterna moved to the AF-Ecology Centre, we were about 50 staff, and the only program was the Eco-Employment program, with about Rs. One Crore budget per year from EZE and ICCO.

The biggest challenge to start with was to build an identity for the AF Ecology Centre. For about 28 years, I was seen by people, staff, donors, and other NGOs as an inseparable part of RDT. So, it was a big challenge for me to project as someone outside RDT! Another challenge was to keep AF-Ecology Centre alive with small funds vis-à-vis RDT with huge funds and large economic support programs. Another challenge was that leading an organisation is not like leading the Ecology Sector in RDT. The role shift from the Ecology Director of RDT to the Director of Accion Fraterna was not easy. The perspective, priorities, and functions were wider for the director compared to the sector director. I weathered all that to some extent and was able to establish some kind of an identity for AF-Ecology Centre. It was neither separate nor part of RDT! Then, the Eco-Employment program of AF-EC became redundant by 2006 due to the introduction of the Government's Employment Guarantee Program. So, it had to shift the program to Sustainable Agriculture and Diversified Livelihoods and future it conceptually and operationally. This called for a drastic restructuring of the program, staff structure, target areas, and target communities. While trying to stabilise

the organisation, a serious crisis came that called for the dismissal of about 50% of the field staff at one go for involvement in some fraudulent activity, though it involved only small amounts. It was very stressful and painful that the staff whom I loved and nurtured began to betray the organisation. They tried to resist the removal but could not confront me due to their unethical behaviour at work. It called for recruiting and training a number of new staff and integrating them into the organisation.

Gradually moving on, organised Community Based Organisations (CBOs) like over 900 Sasya Mitra Groups and their federations in 230 villages, in 8 mandals and covering about 18,000 families and added Drought Mitigation, Natural Farming, off-Farm and on-Farm livelihoods; and the Biogas Carbon Credit Program. Then moved on to Agroecology, Watershed Development (with support from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, NABARD), Carbon Revenue Generation for farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations, Food Processing & Value Addition, etc. Now we are introducing an innovative program on Climate Adaptation and Resilience in Agriculture (CARA). In all our programs, we follow a People's Partici-

participatory Approach, and Women are the front runners; we strive to promote community development led by Women.

Today, Accion Fraternal Ecology Centre works with about 30,000 households in about 300 villages in 20 mandals. It has about 125 full-time staff and 175 part-time women volunteers. We have promoted over 1100 CBOs led by women and nurtured 1000 active women leaders. It is implementing some very innovative projects on carbon sequestration and agro-ecology. It has a strong network with other NGOs and research bodies and has collaboration with the government. The budget has increased from Rupees One Crore in the year 2002 to about Rs. 25 Crores, including direct receipts to the CBOs. It has a strong participatory management system at different levels and a strong people's participatory approach with women as leaders. It has won national awards from the Government of India, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and Mahindra & Mahindra. It has also won awards from the Government of Andhra Pradesh. I am proud to say that the Government of AP awarded me the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023. It is the highest civilian award given by the Government of

Andhra Pradesh.

All through my 50 years of work, the biggest challenge has been that of keeping abreast of the human resources with commitment and competence. The conceptual understanding and the skills required are ever-changing, and updating has been a constant challenge. At present, AF-Ecology Centre has a committed, experienced, and loyal multi-sectoral senior team. It is emerging as a strong and a dynamic leadership collective. The middle management and grassroots cadres have been and continue to be committed and loyal. They are able to constantly upgrade their knowledge and skills and emerge with strong implementation capacities. We are trying to redesign and strengthen the staff structure, particularly the cutting-edge system with updated knowledge and skills in community organisation and technical aspects. It is an ongoing process.

8. My Family Now

I am fortunate to have been endowed with a wonderful family. Doreen has been the best homemaker in spite of her big responsibilities at work. For all practical purposes, I am like a baby at home, ever since we were married. Whether she is at home or travelling

abroad on work, I don't have to bother about any of my daily needs. They all just happen like a clock-work as if she is at home. Bharath, our only son, is a big gift from God! At present he works with INCORA, an aerospace MNC. He loves, respects, and cares as much as we cared for him. Above all, he is a good human being, good at work, at home and with friends. Sandhiya, our daughter-in-law, and Bharath are made for each other with complementary strengths and good compatibility! In reality, Sandhiya is our daughter. She merged into our family so naturally, taking home responsibility as our daughter. She is very caring, responsible, and very mature for her age. I am amazed at the mature way she is bringing up her two daughters, Yassu and Himmu. She has been exceptional at work. When she was working at WIPRO, she won the "Best Employee of the Year" award continuously for several years. At present she works with Infosys, an IT company in Bangalore. Our two lovely granddaughters, Yassu and Himmu, are immensely lovable and make us young and joyful. They love us as much as we love them. Doreen is like a strong magnet at home. Each one of us in our family is more attracted and attached to Doreen. Doreen looks after each

and every one like a mother hen looks after its chicks! Thus, she is like the uniter, harmoniser, and anchor of the family.

Doreen in particular, and Bharath and Sandhiya have been the cause of my success in work and happiness and peace in the family. For both Doreen and myself, our parents' side of our families had not been much support for us. In fact, Father and Sister have always been our super parents. For Moncho and Vishala, Bharath is like their brother. Moncho pampered Bharath since his childhood. Doreen particularly was very much attached to Father's, children, Tara, Moncho, and Yamuna. Even today, Father's family is only our real relatives and our fallback in Anantapur. We have a number of family friends from different walks of life. Fortunately, most of our friends are also professionally related to my work, be it NGOs, government, media, civil society, etc. I have a large network of other friends across the country, as well as in Europe. The professional relations, over the years, have grown as family friends. And over the years we have deepened our association at professional and personal levels and continued.

During the year 2023, I was seriously sick and hospitalised in intensive care for about a month. I

was overwhelmed by the love and care I received from Doreen, Bharath, and Sandhiya. Our staff, particularly Kullai, Ramudu, and Kiran had solidly supported and cared for my recovery day and night. During this crisis, the love and concern we experienced from Sister Anne and her family, Mr. K.R. Venugopal, Mr. M.L. Narasimha Reddy, Dr. Rama, Bablu, Mary, Mr. Peter Lanzet, and Kanchana, Mr. Somesh Kumar, Ms. Anjana Sinha, Mr. Selvyn Jessy, and Mr. Fons van der Velden are exceptional. Some friends of Bharath, like Mr. Suchit and Mr. Aswin, solidly stood with him in taking care of me. There were thousands of messages, prayers, and enquiries from colleagues, friends, relatives, and people from villages. It all made me feel the kind of love and concern they had for my well-being and my family.

9. *Summing up:*

To sum up, I realise that "People's Development" is a very complex process, multi-layered and multi-dimensional. And leading and managing NGOs is also equally complex. All through my 50 years of work, in managing or leading, two things disturbed and troubled me on and off. They were maintaining an organisation financially clean and containing the undue interference by some vested interests. I

have been all through intolerant of any misuse of funds by staff and any undue influence for favours. It has not been easy. I believed that NGOs can be strong and can function effectively only when the staff are honest, sincere, and hard-working. And it should be in a position to resist any undue interferences. Given the Indian context, in some situations, it is most challenging to be honest and sincere. At times, hard choices have to be made in the interest of the larger good. Father Ferrer told me once that, "Sometimes, smaller principles have to be sacrificed in serving the higher principles." It made a lot of sense! I also often remembered one more quote from Father Ferrer and that was, "Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved." Whenever I could not resolve an issue in my head, I resorted to these time-tested principles.

It took a long time for me to realise that things in life are not black and white and they have many shades. Father and Sister used to tell me that I was too scrupulous and impractical sometimes. So, I needed to moderate myself in being scrupulous. It also took a long time to realise that human relations and behaviours were much more complex and were not always

straight and linear. Earlier, I tended to think mechanically, like a computer, rather than like a human being. I learnt from Father and Sister how humans are different from computers. I realised the importance of personal ethics, values, integrity, loyalty, gratitude, etc., in one's own growth and development. Whenever I am in a dilemma over something, I ask the questions like, What is ethical? What is legal? What is gratitude? etc. They helped me to resolve the dilemmas. I also experienced humility from occasional insults and ill-treatment. Father used to say that, if we were serious about serving the poor people, we had to bear such insults and had to have humility.

Coming from a remote rural, farming background, and educated

in very ordinary schools, I had to wash my rawness and rusticity to become somewhat civilised. I have travelled a long way and am still travelling. I refused rightly some well-paid job opportunities in UNDP, DFID etc., and firmly stayed in RDT and AF-Ecology Centre. As of now I feel that I have enjoyed and lived a life of fulfilment. I am fully satisfied with myself. My joy and fulfilment are not of my own making. I gracefully acknowledge with deep gratitude the support of everyone who has contributed to my growth, starting from my own family, Father Ferrer, Mrs. Ferrer, colleagues, friends, relatives, and a number of people.

I would like to conclude my reflections on my life with a feeling of fulfilment, pride, and gratitude.



My reflections on my life

- *Smt.Y.Doreen Reddy,*

Wife, Director (Retd), Women Sector, Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

When I first met my husband in 1975, I could never have foreseen how profoundly he would influence my life. As I reflect today on nearly 50 years of togetherness, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the life we have built, the obstacles we have overcome, and the love that has grown stronger with each passing day.

Our story is not just about the two of us—it is also a story of partnership in the cause of RDT and the people of Anantapur and beyond.

The Early Days of Unity and Vision

We both began our journey during the formative years of the Rural Development Trust (RDT), sharing the bonds of its struggles and victories. Those days were far from easy. Together with Father and Sister, we faced countless challenges and uncertainties, but

through it all, our resolve grew ever stronger.

Malla's integrity, courage, and dedication inspired not only me but everyone around him. He was not just a colleague or staff member; he was a visionary whose ideas, strength, and determination instilled confidence and courage in all of us, especially during the most challenging times. His very presence made a significant difference in any situation.

A Marriage Built on Love and Respect

Our marriage in 1981 was special because it was both inter-religious and social. Our families had many reservations, but with the support of Sister Anne Ferrer, Father Ferrer, my uncle Mutholy, and aunt Usha, we navigated the initial years of our journey together and grew beyond the boundaries of family life. Our relationship has al-

ways been rooted in trust and understanding, enabling us to grow stronger both at home and within RDT.

The birth of our son, Victor Bharath, was one of the most joyous and beautiful moments of our lives. Watching him grow and develop under my care and his father's watchful eye and firm guidance, while instilling morals and values, has been deeply fulfilling. He has also been nurtured by Father, Sister, Tara, Moncho, and Yamuna. Together, they have shaped him into the person he is today – caring, loving, capable, responsible, supportive, and driven by human values and principles.

A Test of Courage and Unwavering Support

Life has not been without its trials. In 1985, I was diagnosed with cancer – a devastating moment filled with depression and gloom. The uncertainty, fear, and pain could have broken me, but Malla stood by me with

unwavering courage, love, and support, renewing my hope and ensuring I received the best treatment. Father and Sister were more than parents to us during that time, and their incredible support helped us emerge from those dark and uncertain days.

September 2023 brought another challenging moment for our family when Malla was hospitalized with life-threatening diverticulitis. Those days were filled with uncertainty and fear, and for the first time in my life, I wondered, "What would I do without him? How would I go on?" Despite his condition, Malla remained strong. Sister Anne Ferrer supported us tirelessly, calling twice daily, visiting him in the hospital, and embracing him in a moment of shared tears.

During this time, the love and support from our family, particularly Bharath and Sandhiya, were astonishing. Friends like Shri K.R. Venugopal, Sri M.L. Narasimha Reddy, Dr. Rama, Ashwin & Suchith, Bharath's friends, relatives, and colleagues also rallied around us, demonstrating the deep love and concern we have been fortunate to receive.

My Journey in RDT

Joining RDT (Rural Development Trust) in 1975 was one of the most defining decisions of my life. It marked the beginning of an extraordinary journey filled with learning, growth, and a deep sense of purpose. In the early days, when RDT was still a small team, I had the rare privilege of being per-

sonally mentored by Father Ferrer, Sister Anne Ferrer, and Capt. Ashok Tipnis, whose guidance shaped both my personality and professional path.

A Turning Point

Initially, I had no plans to stay permanently with RDT. I had applied for another job at the UMT Sanatorium, which offered a higher salary and additional benefits like free board and lodging. However, Sister Anne Ferrer persuaded me to remain with RDT by matching the salary and facilities offered by the other job. At that time, I was living with my aunt Usha and uncle Joseph Mutholy. We were provided quarters on the RDT campus. My uncle, an ex-priest who deeply respected Father Ferrer, also encouraged me to stay. Their combined influence, along with my growing sense of connection with RDT, convinced me to commit to the organization.

I began my journey in RDT as secretary to Father Ferrer. The initial years were not without challenges, particularly as a woman navigating a male-dominated environment. At one point, I was working simultaneously for three people: Father Ferrer, Sister Anne Ferrer, and Capt. Ashok Tipnis, who was our chairman at the time. All three

were remarkable individuals from whom I learned a great deal.

Through determination and hard work, I overcame the obstacles and earned a position for myself. I vividly remember 1978 as the year the Children's Sponsorship Programme began with ActionAid. Sister Anne and I used to handle the correspondence for the program late into the night, after her children had gone to sleep.

Key Moments and Milestones

In 1979, when RDT initiated its Community Organization Program, it appointed 40 postgraduates as social workers and Dr. G.N. Reddy as the Director of Community Organization. However, tensions arose when Dr. Reddy and about 30 of the social workers attempted to dislodge Father Ferrer and take over RDT, questioning Father Ferrer's leadership as a foreigner. The situation escalated into a prolonged agitation.

At that time, the remaining staff, about 200 individuals, formed a union under the leadership of Malla Reddy called the RDT Loyal Workers Union. We opposed the unethical and illegal demands of Dr. Reddy's group and began mobilizing public opinion in support of Father Ferrer. During this period, a woman from their group staged a

"fast-unto-death" protest, demanding that Father Ferrer step down from his leadership position in RDT.

In response, we initiated a counter "fast-unto-death," joined by 12 loyal staff members, led by Malla Reddy and myself. Our demand was clear: Dr. G.N. Reddy and his group must leave RDT immediately and allow Father Ferrer to continue leading the organization. For six tense days, we held our ground, fasting until the District Collector and Superintendent of Police intervened. Their intervention led to the removal of the agitators, including Dr. G.N. Reddy.

This incident became a turning point in my journey with RDT, solidifying my commitment to the organization and making me a permanent member dedicated to its mission.

Fighting Gender Discrimination

When I joined RDT, women staff members were paid less than their male counterparts despite performing the same roles. At that time, discriminatory wages were the norm across the country, whether in NGOs or business enterprises. Women in RDT earned a salary of Rs. 300 per month, while men received Rs. 400. I passionately

argued with Sister Anne about the injustice of this disparity, and she was convinced. By 1977, the policy was changed, ensuring equal pay for equal work—a significant milestone for gender equality in RDT.

My position in RDT was sensitive because I worked closely with Father Ferrer, Sister Anne, and Capt. Ashok Tipnis. Whenever some senior staff members did injustice to staff, I raised the issue. Similarly, when staff acted unfairly toward the organization, I was brave enough to question them. This was my nature. Some staff members, inconvenienced by my questioning attitude, labelled me quarrelsome and even complained to Father or Sister about me.

In 1992, when Mrs. Lalitha, the then Director of Women's Empowerment, left the organization, Sister Anne asked me to take over the Women's Empowerment sector. I was surprised and unprepared for such a responsibility. I hesitated because I lacked fieldwork experience and did not come from a rural background. However, with Sister Anne's motivation, support, and encouragement, I accepted the challenge.

I soon equipped myself with a conceptual understanding of gender and women's empowerment and the skills and ability to

lead the Women's Empowerment sector. In the process, I understood Father's development philosophy, the vision, mission, and dharma of RDT.

To gain field knowledge, I began visiting villages, starting with Kuderu and Uravakonda areas, where my husband was working as the Regional Director. I was accompanied by Mr. Sagar and Mr. Chandra Sekhar Naidu, the Assistant Directors, who helped me connect with rural women and men. We spent considerable time in the villages, building awareness and self-confidence among women.

Many senior colleagues supported me in gaining clarity on organizing women's groups and fostering gender awareness. With the guidance of Sister Anne and the help of my senior colleagues, I managed to build a gender-sensitive Women's Empowerment sector within RDT. This initiative eventually led to significant progress and transformative changes in the lives of countless women and their families.

Women's Development Fund

The Women's Development Fund was initiated to create additional livelihood opportunities for women. It aimed to provide financial support and enable women to

pursue income-generating activities, empowering them economically and supporting their families. The initiative also sought to enhance women's position and respect within their families while boosting their self-esteem, leadership, and financial management capabilities.

Nearly one lakh women from SC, ST, and BC communities were included in women's groups, and through a rotation system, all of them received financial support for income-generating activities. These activities included goat and sheep rearing, saree businesses, incense stick production, basket weaving, and, later, dairy farming. Initially, women were hesitant to purchase cows and buffaloes for dairying due to uncertainties about selling milk. To address this, we collaborated with the Anantapur Milk Dairy officials, who arranged for milk collection vehicles to visit each village. This intervention helped Dalit women overcome their challenges, and over time, they began selling milk to private dairies and even to other communities.

RDT also introduced skills training programs for women in areas such as incense stick production, bookmaking, chalk production, and sanitary napkin manufacturing. These initiatives

provided employment opportunities and increased income for women, contributing to their economic independence and overall empowerment.

Women's Core Team

In 1992, Sister Anne Ferrer envisioned building a gender-sensitive RDT, with women playing a pivotal role in the organization. She selected senior women from various sectors to form a Women's Core Team. This team was further strengthened through extensive leadership development training at SEARCH, Bangalore. The Women's Core Team became a key force in addressing gender discrimination within RDT and raising awareness among men about gender issues. The team also played a significant role in suggesting gender-friendly policies within RDT and its programs.

I was appointed as the Convener of the Women's Core Team. In this role, I helped RDT's women staff understand gender discrimination, build their self-confidence, and encourage them to assert themselves. I also organized special training sessions to enhance their leadership capacities, aiming to promote more women to senior positions within RDT. At the same time, I worked on sensitizing the male

staff to become more gender-sensitive. This process was greatly supported and guided by Sister Anne, who helped sensitise the entire organization to gender consciousness.

Women-to-Women Partnership

Father Ferrer, Mrs. Jessintha, and I were invited to a university in Huelva, southern Spain. During Father's interaction with the women there, the idea for the Women-to-Women partnership emerged. The initiative aimed to foster a supportive relationship between women's groups in Anantapur and Spanish women. It evolved into a unique program that connected Indian and Spanish women, allowing them to share resources and experiences, and providing mutual support and empowerment. The main objective of the program was to build lasting relationships and improve the economic conditions of the sangha women.

Addressing Trafficking and Violence

The Kadiri region had a history of human trafficking. I worked tirelessly to support women and girls affected by trafficking and domestic violence. We identified vulnerable families and counseled them to avoid falling into the trap of

trafficking. Victims were provided with food rations, loans from the Women's Development Fund to start income-generating activities, and access to healthcare. A Vocational Training Centre was established in Gandlapenta village, offering skills such as incense stick making, bookbinding, sanitary napkin production, embroidery, and tailoring for young girls and widows. These initiatives helped victims rebuild their lives and regain their dignity.

These efforts were deeply satisfying for me, reflecting the concern Sister Anne and Father Ferrer had for the needs of women.

For example, in Gandlapenta, a young woman whose husband had abandoned her became a victim of trafficking. She was rescued and returned to the village, only to be stigmatized and excluded from farm work. She and her elderly father lived a miserable life, and without RDT's support, she would likely have returned to her previous circumstances. After being counseled and trained in incense stick making and bookbinding, she now earns between Rs. 200 and 300 per day.

To effectively support such women and girls, we first had to provide counseling. Initially, we lacked the professional expertise to

do this. To address this gap, we arranged training for our staff, inviting counselors from Hyderabad and Bangalore. Today, RDT is equipped with trained staff capable of addressing multiple issues. A mobile counseling center was also established, staffed with counselors to support not just Kadiri, but other regions as well. The counseling services covered victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

During one of my visits to Kadiri, I met a widow struggling to feed her three young daughters, all under the age of four. Her husband had died in an accident, leaving her in dire straits. She lived in a small hut, resorting to begging to feed herself and her children. She would dilute cooked rice with water to feed the three young ones and eat whatever was left. I shared this story with Father Ferrer, who became emotional, and I saw tears in his eyes. He immediately instructed me to start a nutrition support program for such widows and destitute women.

The program provided essential nutrition—ragi, rice, wheat, oil, and groundnuts—once a month. Women with small children, destitute women, and single mothers were supported. The program soon reached hundreds of such needy women across the project area, and

it gave me immense satisfaction to see the relief it brought to those women, alleviating their hunger.

Building Safe Spaces for Affected Women

In those days, one of the most challenging tasks was providing safe shelter for distressed women and girls who had been thrown out of their homes. In some villages, girls had to travel 2-3 km to attend school, and it was not safe. Girls who faced harassment and women who suffered domestic violence had nowhere to go. Initially, they were accommodated in centres designed for disability-inclusive development. Later, with Sister Anne's support, we built a dedicated shelter home in Bathalapalli, ensuring that these vulnerable women and girls had a secure place to stay and facilities to rebuild their lives.

Women and girls from this center were helped to lodge formal complaints with the police to address their issues. Displaced school-girls were re-enrolled in schools and colleges. Eight of them were admitted to the RDT nursing school, and today they are working as ANMs and staff nurses. Some are employed in our disability-inclusive centers, and recently, one of them joined the police force as a constable in Kadiri. The shelter

home has provided these women and girls with a safe haven, helping them rebuild their lives with respect and dignity. It brings me great satisfaction when they share their stories of overcoming suffering and humiliation.

Workplace Safety for Women

In 2013, an Act was passed to prevent sexual harassment of women in the workplace. With the support of Sister Anne, RDT established the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), which I had the privilege to head. The committee was designed to address sexual harassment at the workplace and ensure a safer, more supportive environment. In its first year, the committee resolved six to seven complaints, contributing to a more secure environment for women at RDT. It also helped deter men from taking undue advantage.

Although I am not a trained human resources professional, I equipped myself with the necessary skills to train staff, women, men, girls, and boys, raising awareness about gender sensitivity, discrimination, and behavioural change. My efforts have been deeply rewarding, and I have earned love and respect from the women in the project areas, my colleagues, friends, and from Father and Sister.

This was possible because I was always willing to listen patiently to everyone with empathy.

Reflections and Gratitude

Looking back, my journey with RDT has been one of immense growth, service, and fulfilment. Every challenge I faced and every milestone I achieved were made possible by the unwavering support of my mentors, colleagues, and family. I remain forever grateful for the opportunity to contribute to RDT's vision of creating a more equitable and just society. As I reflect on our journey together, Malla stands out as the guiding force whose wisdom and compassion are unmatched. I am fortunate and blessed to have a loving family – my husband, my son Bharath, my daughter-in-law Sandhiya, and my two granddaughters, Yashu and Himmu, who are my life.

Lastly, I would like to express

my deep gratitude to the great family of Father and Sister, whose unwavering support has been unforgettable. I am also thankful to all the people who have been helpful in my life, as well as for the love and concern shown to me.

Apart from RDT and the people we have worked with, Malla and I are fortunate to have many true friends and well-wishers. Our family friends, such as the late Sri B.N. Yugandhar, Sri K.R. Venugopal, Sri Narasimha Reddy & Dr. Rama, Sri Bablu & Smt. Mary, Smt. Anjana & Sri Selvyn Jessy, Sri Somesh Kumar & Smt. Gyan Mudra, Sri Sasibhushan Kumar & Smt. Amritha, Aswin, Suchit, and Kullai, are a treasure of support, joy, and happiness for us. We also have close friends and relatives abroad, like Mr. Peter Lanzet, Mrs. Kanchana, Mr. Fons, and Mrs. Karin, who have always been concerned about us.

A Heartfelt Salute to A Hero's Journey: My Daddy

- Mr. Y. Bharath Victor,

Son, Strategic Sales Head, INCORA, Bangalore

My parents are nearing a milestone that few achieve—a century of combined dedication to social work and service to society. As a family, we decided to celebrate their remarkable journey and honour their legacy. This occasion is more than just a celebration; it is a moment of pride and an opportunity to reflect on the values they've instilled in us.

This is the hardest article I have ever written; I'm hoping that it would be worthy of my hero. I find myself reflecting on the extraordinary life of my parents; - a journey marked by integrity and a mind-boggling commitment to their work, organisation and family. Outside their remarkable achievements and the hardships, to be the couple today - authenticity, humility, kindness, and simplicity are the core to their way of life. My father is not just a man of valour; he is a man of warmth and wisdom. Myself, Mummy & Sandhya, truly cherish

the times of learning, laughter, love and his firm but loving guidance and the super solid support that have shaped who



we are today. He has always showed immense trust, confidence and faith in me as a child. This has contributed to my individual development as I endeavour to live up to his expectations.

Learning From Failures:

Let me take you back to the year of 2002. I failed my Mathematics exam for the 3rd time in succession in my Intermediate course. Yes, you read it right - I sadly achieved this for the 3rd time! I cannot begin to imagine again what I was going through at that stage. Perhaps the lowest moment of my life. Until this point of my life, my amazing mother, Doreen was

the only real friend I had and the full-fledged support system of my life. Ironically, this happened at the time when my mother was away from India to be with the family of Father Ferrer in Australia.

Late one evening, when I didn't turn up for dinner, daddy found me relentlessly crying in my room. That to me was the beginning of a special camaraderie with him. He very affectionately created a supportive environment, gave me undivided attention, shared his own stories of struggles for education and helped me put it in perspective. This was the first time I was counting my blessings and realised the value of everything I have and how fortunate I am. He steadily mentored me towards a strong positive outlook to understand that failures are not end of the world; only to realise today that failures are opportunities to learn, improve and grow. The strong underlying message that he reinforced time and again was that "if you are not a good human being, however great you are otherwise, it is worthless".

One of my favourite lines from daddy that stood out during these deliberations was "Life teaches us to stand on our own feet and wash our own back" - And today, because of daddy, I am ready!

Understanding the Hallmark of My Father:

I was a notorious child. Anyone who would have seen me as a child would testify this statement. Perhaps, this drove my parents to put me in residential schools at first in Chennai and then in Rishi Valley at a very early age. I literally left home when I was 8 and only returned home for vacations. And most of my holidays were well spent rallying behind my childhood friends and my dear anna, Moncho Ferrer. He always rescued me out of all troubles and stood by me always. Subsequently, I had limited opportunities to see my parents work and comprehend what they meant to the world around them.

I knew him as my dad, as a family member and I knew our family was very close with the Ferrer family. My parents, Father Ferrer and Anne Ferrer worked very closely. Their world was limited to RDT as I understood at that time. I hardly knew what RDT did, and the work centred around Anantapur and beyond.

I came to learn about them through the comments of others and the instances I personally experienced, reflecting the immense respect and admiration that Father Ferrer, Anne Ferrer, and Daddy have earned over the years. My first

encounter with this profound regard happened during my teenage years. I once visited an air conditioning shop with an RDT employee and a friend of mine, Ravi. Ravi introduced me to the shopkeeper as “the son of Malla Reddy.” Immediately, the shopkeeper began speaking about the selfless work of Father Ferrer and highlighted Daddy’s significant role in RDT. He described Daddy as a courageous defender of the organisation and even referred to him as the right hand of Father Ferrer.

When I returned to India after completing my MBA in UK in 2007, I was again going through a rough road without getting a suitable job opportunity. A few days later, I was offered a job for a mediocre salary of INR 12000 per month. I had my dose of social pressure with people letting me know that their children had better salaries. But daddy had the best piece of advice. – “My son, focus on learning, learn to work, do it even if they ask you to make tea and learn to make good tea”. This influenced me to try and be a person who stays grounded, down to earth. The attitude of gratitude slowly started dripping into my life in every aspect as I continued working.

During my stay in Hyderabad (2008-2013), I had two amazing

families as guardians: Narasimha Reddy uncle (Senior Journalist, Eenadu) and Anjana aunty (Senior IPS officer). Narasimha Reddy uncle went out of his way to support me in every way possible. I was awe-stricken by his care and concern, and nothing has changed even today. When I asked him why he and Rama aunty (His wife) care so much for me. His answer was quite straight forward – “It’s not for you, it’s because we value your father and mother. They mean so much to us”. Even today, I am still living off this advantage and pocket free love from them! Anjana aunty (Senior IPS Officer) took this appreciation for my parents to another level by offering me her entire bungalow as she was leaving India to undertake a 1-year course abroad. And today, she calls me “Son”.

My lovely wife Sandhiya and I got married on 18.03.2013. It was an amazing well organised, simple event with about 3000 people blessing us! The gathering included relations, friends, elected representatives, politicians from all parties, businesspersons, media persons, Government officers and staff of RDT and AF. Notable among them were 10 senior IAS officers like Secretaries and Principal Secretaries, Govt. of A.P. They all travelled to Anantapur, in spite that

the budget session of AP was in progress, and they were not allowed to leave the Head Quarters during Assembly sessions. How they managed to escape from that protocol was astonishing! This showed how much daddy means to them.

One of the best appreciations of daddy came in 2015 when I was working in Bangalore as Director for a UK Aerospace & Defence trade organisation called ADS. By this time, I had considerably progressed in my career and was networking with senior executives in the Aerospace Industry responsible for the company's overall direction, operations, and major decisions. The then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Nara Chandra Babu Naidu Garu had organised an international aerospace conference in Hyderabad. I had the opportunity to speak up directly with him and after a 3-minute conversation with him on potential opportunities of working with UK companies, he wanted to know where I am from. I told him that I am from Anantapur and son of Malla Reddy, who worked in RDT. This brought a big smile to his face, and he openly announced that daddy was a very good friend of his and knows him from his college days where they were contemporary student leaders.

In no time, he had his hand over me and expressed how fondly he remembered daddy and his regard for daddy. I was totally surprised! The best I could do was to take his blessings and leave the room with goosebumps!

Art of Leadership & Relationship Building

Over the years, I learnt that daddy is an incredibly charismatic leader, mentor, and widely recognized as an expert in his field, lived and led by example and action. A man with a strong moral compass who stood his ground and never backed down in the face of adversity. His abilities and preparedness to confront the challenges and problems upfront were widely appreciated. A true role-model for anyone in a position of leadership. When I look back at all the experiences & interactions I have had with his colleagues and friend circles, I learn that Daddy played a major role together with Father and Sister in building the organisation and shaping policies and systems. His role was particularly talked about in crisis management, especially during its most challenging times.

One of my biggest learnings from daddy is his continuous effort in fostering stronger relationships and building high-quality connec-

tions at all levels. To build these strong relationships, I spotted that daddy always has a benevolent intention and a sense of purpose.

In Oct 2023, daddy was admitted in Bangalore suffering from a life-threatening condition called diverticulitis. He was admitted for over 30 days and had no intake of oral food for over 27 days. During this difficult time, Anne became our bed rock, offering unwavering support. She called morning and night, lifting our spirits and doing everything she could to aid in daddy's recovery. One of the most profoundly emotional moments came when she visited Daddy at the hospital. As he lay on the bed, she embraced him, and in that quiet moment, both of them broke down in tears, sharing the depth of the pain and love they held for one another. That embrace was a testament to the strength of their bond and the enduring support that has helped carry us through even the darkest days.

Further, while still in hospital, we had several of daddy's friends that showed so much concern and offered help. Remarkable phone calls we received every morning were from K.R.Venugopal uncle (Former IAS Officer & Sathya Nadella's Father-in-Law) from USA. I was truly amazed by uncle's relentless concern and proffers be it man-

power, medical assistance or financial backing- he was ready to go all-out for daddy. We would receive very intense phone calls from another friend of daddy, Somesh uncle (Senior IAS Officer). His plan was simple - "Please let me know the time & I will arrange for a helicopter to pick your father and bring him to Hyderabad, AIG hospital". Overall, daddy had received thousands of WhatsApp messages wishing or praying for him to get well soon during this period. One thing was evident here - there are a whole lot of people who are ready to do a whole lot of things just for my daddy.

Furthermore, all my friends offered all their help, some took care of our meals at the hospital and some transferred monies and even gave me a blank cheque. We had 3 of my friends; Kullai, Suchith & Ashwin who lived some of those moments with us on and off for the entire 30+ days. One of those nights in the hospital, daddy was very ill and had severe difficulty in breathing and mummy asked me to come to the room immediately at 3AM in the morning and told me that daddy wanted to see me that very instant. This was the most terrifying moment of my life. We somehow survived that night - but one of the

best compliments I received from daddy was the next day. He said "Son, the biggest asset you have is not your job, your car, or anything else that you have - it is your friends". That meant the world to me because I have made a career solely by investing and believing in people and building relationships - it is today a way of life for me.

*The Woman Behind the Man
- My Amazing Mother
(Doreen Reddy)*

My mother is the real heroine, because of her strength, courage, bravery, resilience and endurance. The fact that she has been fighting multiple cancers for over 37 years is testimony to the incredible woman she is. She is the super woman of our lives! Over these years, her diagnosis has been unbelievably hard on her, physically and emotionally, yet she never once wavered in her inner strength and determination to recover and get back to living her life. She turned it into something positive by helping other cancer patients and others not to feel despair at their fate. She became a mentor and a counsellor for others going through difficult experiences. The greatest lesson, which she teaches by example, is the power of positive attitude.

For over 40 years now, I wit-

nessed my mom's constant devotion to and love for my dad. I know many men have a wonderful wife, but no one I know has ever had a better one than my daddy. The kind of unimaginable sacrifices she has made for us, the rock-solid support she has always given us, the endless care and the undying love she has showered on us are simply exemplary. Growing up with that kind of love and support made all the difference in our lives; it made me who I am today! Despite several hardships Mummy never complained. Instead, she learned to endure the hard times. She taught me how to endure, to never quit, no matter what. To have a mother like her, you must be the most fortunate boy under the sun - And that happens to be myself, my mom's only Bunny Boy!

Her commitment to her work and to RDT is widely appreciated - half a century marked by steadfast loyalty, exceptional dedication, and transformative contributions that have contributed to the organisation's history. Personally, one of my biggest takeaways from her journey has been her extraordinary attention to detail. Another aspect of her life has been her deep attachment to Father Ferrer's family. This is a legacy that fills me with immense pride, as Father Ferrer's family has

been integral to who we are, and we are forever indebted to them. Mummy's journey is a beacon of inspiration for us all and her legacy is a source of pride and admiration.

The fact of the matter is mummy is the strongest woman I know of – there is absolutely nothing that can shake her and nothing that can ever break her. I can only strive to inherit her bravery and her power to overcome all the obstacles. Love you till I die, Mummy.

Celebrating His Extraordinary Impact - His Lasting Legacy

In the 90's, we had Father Ferrer coming home almost every day in the evenings for a glass of wine or cup of soup, and Anne Ferrer occasionally joined him. The memories and learnings that the living room in our old house gave us are some of the most cherished moments for me as a child. I could not be more fortunate to have so much time and intellect from Daddy and

Father. I certainly learnt the art of giving and the art of forgiving from that very living room over the years. This was a place where a lot of deliberations took place often and sometimes leading up to very intense conversations. The one moment that is very fresh in my mind is when Daddy passionately said, "Father, I have RDT in my blood." I also recall Father Ferrer telling Daddy that he was like a miniature version of RDT, embodying every element he envisioned for the organization. Daddy possessed every quality that Father Ferrer" admired and sought in an individual.

Daddy, I can't be more grateful to you for being my role model, my friend and my biggest source of strength. I cannot thank you enough for the love and the life lessons. Daddy, to say "I love you" is an understatement - I will die for you, smiling. The one thing that I take immense pride in being the "Son of Malla Reddy".

- A special token of appreciation & gratitude to Kanchana aunty & Peter uncle for all their effort & time in framing this entire document.
- My deepest gratitude to the love of my life, Sandhiya for bringing so much light, joy, and love into all our lives.
- All the opinions, thoughts & viewpoints expressed here are a heartfelt account of my learnings and belong solely to me.

A Loving Reflection: Parents Who Shaped My Life,

- Mrs. D.Sandhiya,

Daughter-in-law, Project Manager, INFOSYS Bangalore

To introduce myself though I am the daughter-in-law for this family, in reality, I am the daughter of Malla Reddy (Dad) and Doreen Reddy (Ma). They are one of those very special couple who didn't just make space for me in their life – they became very caring parents to me, in every sense of the word. They are my greatest gift. My heart will never permit me to call them my "in-laws," and it would not do justice to the deep and genuine family that we are today. From day one, they welcomed me not with the distance of in-laws but with the embrace of parents, and I have never been introduced as a daughter-in-law till date.

A warm welcome and silent immersion:

They made me feel like I had always been a part of the family. They opened their hearts to me with

love, warmth, and kindness. They never treated me as an outsider or as someone who needed to earn a place in their home. I feel I am truly their daughter.



During January 2013, 2 months before my marriage, we were having discussions within my family and relatives estimating the costs of marriage and how we were going to finance such a huge expenditure. Bharath was mentioning that there could be close to 3000+ people attending the wedding. Additionally, there were other related formalities and functions surrounding the marriage – a grand 3-day event. We realised that we would have to sell our landed properties, including the house in Hyderabad that belong to my elder sister, Sudha, to cover the marriage costs and meet the expectations. I did not

know how to communicate this to Bharath. However, I gathered courage and explained this to him indirectly in bits and pieces. The next morning, Bharath called me, and the first thing he said was, "Dad has asked me to inform you that he will bear all the costs of the marriage, and you don't have to worry about the expenses." I had no words to explain that moment! Dad had later spoken to my sister Sudha and informed her to please not consider selling any property and to keep them for children in the future. The rest is history, as the wedding on 18.03.2013 was a grand success and a landmark event, completely spearheaded by my Dad and Mom. In short, this is my magnanimous, big-hearted, noble Dad and Mom that I am blessed with for life.

Moving on, it was the evening of March 19, 2013 - my first day in my new home. I was ignorant, and there was anxiety and uncertainty within me, unsure of what to do or not to do. I was a little disturbed about some of the actions of my relatives that evening. Ma saw me a little worried and understood my situation. She immediately called me into the kitchen, gave me a warm, tight hug, and said, "Sandy, you are my daughter, and you belong to me, and this is your home - please remember this at all times."

That was the safest hug I ever received, and I instantly had tears of joy trickling down my face. This is my great Ma - that loves me to the core, nurtures me, protects me, strengthens me, and supports me always.

Similarly, during my pregnancy in 2014, it was the overwhelming support I received from Ma that truly defined her love and concern for me. From the moment I found out I was expecting, Ma stepped into a role that went beyond just being a parent. I was working until the 8th month of pregnancy, and Ma would travel hours together to see me frequently and accompany me for every check-up with the doctor. Then the moment arrived for delivery - the most challenging experience of my life at that point. I looked around the labour room, and Ma was standing beside me, ready to face this moment with me. While I was terribly suffering with contractions, Ma held my hand throughout for over 36 hours, offering words of strength. She stood in that room for what felt like forever, speaking continuously to the nurses and Dr. Jyothi to do something to comfort me. Looking back, I can never fully express the depth of my gratitude for her love and concern for me.

What adds to my happiness is

that there are very cordial relations between my born - family ie., my parents in Hyderabad and sister and her family in USA. Both the families get along well, support and care for each other. In 2020, my father (Devarajulu Reddy) and mother (Pushpalatha) were severely impacted by COVID and were stuck in Hyderabad due to the lockdown with limited access to reliable healthcare facilities. Dad made special arrangements to bring them to Anantapur and have them treated in the Bathalapalli hospital with close attention. After 2 weeks of full-fledged treatments and monitoring from Ma, they were feeling much better and on track to complete recovery. I cannot ever forget the care and respect that each family showered to the other over the years. Ma & dad offered to take care of my parents, showing the same love, warmth, and concern that they had shown to their own family. This kind of mutual respect, support and care between my two sides of the families is very rare and we are blessed to have each other.

Likewise, not too long ago, I was stressed at work due to long hours, and the demanding tasks. It was an emotional toll of balancing stressful work and managing kids, causing exhaustion and anxiety that was hard to cope with. Ma noticed

this stress in me and tried to counsel me to be resilient and cope with it. She was also proposing the idea of taking a break of a long leave and starting a business slowly, which she could support in every way possible. I was wondering how to go about it. One weekend when we were in Anantapur, Dad invited me to his office to speak to me. He told me that a job is not everything in life and proposed that I start thinking of starting a small business. He further offered to pay for our monthly house expenditure and for children's education through their savings. He also assured me to make necessary financial arrangements for me to start a business of my choice. I cannot be more grateful for this kind of love and support, always encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

Both Ma and Dad are the greatest grandparents; they are the heart and soul of my daughters (Shiny's and Himatha's) childhood memories. Whether it's cooking what the children like, baking cakes together, reading bedtime stories, or patiently listening to every story or encouraging them in every small accomplishment, they pour their love into every moment they spend with the little girls. For the girls, Ma and Dad are the most important people in the world. The everyday question

that Bharath asks the kids is whom they love most, and the answer comes in no time - "Nana & Tha-tha." The bond between them is very special and will be cherished forever.

For the last 12 years, the kind of care, unconditional love, and responsibility that they took for me in each and every aspect of my life is immeasurable and cannot be explained in words. While Ma is the cornerstone of my life, always standing by me to help me navigate life challenges, Dad has been my biggest source of confidence and strength, providing the mentorship and direction whenever I needed it.

Today, all I have is a heart full of gratitude. They work tirelessly,

setting aside their own comforts to ensure that Bharath, me, and the kids have the best of everything in life. I have been able to witness my very loving husband in another light, as a devoted, faithful, and loving son to his parents. Ma, Dad, and Bharath have given me more than I could ever imagine in my life, not just in material ways but in the values, guidance, and unconditional love.

Dad, Ma, I can only end this by telling you that every day, I will carry your love with me, and I will strive to make you proud. While I know I can never repay you for all you have done for me, I promise to love and honour you in every way I can.



Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy with Family Members
29.01.2025

A special mention and a token of deepest gratitude for one of Bharath's best friends (Suchith Anna)—he was into qualified astrology and influenced Bharath to marry me.

A Legacy of Dedication: Celebrating 50 Years of Service by Malla Reddy”

- Mrs. Anne Ferrer,

Founder and Executive Director, RDT Anantapur

NGOs, especially those in rural areas, find it really hard to attract committed and professional individuals willing to dedicate a few years of their life to work for the welfare and betterment of rural communities. It’s even harder to find a couple, husband and wife, both dedicated to giving not just a few years but 50 years of their lives to work tirelessly for the progress and development of families struggling to secure a future for their children in the drought-prone Anantapur District.

One such couple is Doreen and Malla Reddy, who both joined RDT in the 1970s and are now celebrating 50 years of dedicated service. Of course, they didn’t join as a couple but made that commitment a few years later, both finding a strong bond in life and work.

Like most of our senior directors, they joined as youngsters, starting at the grassroots level, working hard and conscientiously

to build an organization that people trust and one that is always there to support their progress and development.



Malla Reddy often recalls that first interview, where he was asked if he could coordinate a program to assist unemployed youngsters in learning brickmaking. He was not very fluent in English at that time and asked the interviewer, “What is a brick?” From not knowing what a brick was, Malla Reddy went on to become an expert in drought and its sustainable solutions, writing two volumes of books entitled Anantha Prasthanam. He is also consulted by the Andhra Pradesh government not only on matters of drought and agriculture but also on development issues in general. He continued his studies, completing his MBA in the UK and a PhD in NGO

management from Sri Krishnadevara-
raya University.

Doreen started out as Fr. Ferrer's personal assistant, and after attending numerous development training sessions and courses on gender equality, she later headed the women's sector. For 30 years, she worked tirelessly fighting for women's rightful place both at home and in the workplace. Doreen was never happy unless she was out in the villages supporting women in their day-to-day struggles to be heard and recognised. Even though she faced many health challenges, she remained motivated and active.

One of the important qualities required when working with first-generation learners and their families is the skill and patience to communicate clearly and empathetically. Both Doreen and Malla Reddy have this talent—clarity of mind and an understanding that allows them to express their thoughts in people's own language. Malla Reddy, coming from a farming family in Anantapur District, understood first hand the struggles of small farmers and landless families trying to eke out a living in an area plagued by drought.

Over the years, he expanded and enriched this basic, hands-on knowledge and gained in-depth ex-

pertise in best practices for sustainable farming and living in chronic drought conditions, all while remaining connected to the invaluable local knowledge of farmers. With his commitment, knowledge, and skills, he helped develop the sectors of ecology and community organisation. As Director and a senior member of RDT, he represented the organisation at national and international conferences and worked with donor organisations.

In the course of their work, NGOs often face difficulties and problems, sometimes seemingly insurmountable ones. RDT has faced its fair share of struggles and obstacles in its 55 years, and Doreen and Malla Reddy were always there, at the front, fighting for the organisation through both good times and bad. I remember one such struggle when we had to fight for our organisation, even resorting to a hunger strike in defence of our work. During that time, Doreen and Malla Reddy were there, encouraging our colleagues and fighting for the organisation.

After more than 25 years of playing a prominent leadership role in RDT, Malla Reddy became a leader in his own right as Director of AF, taking the organisation forward and playing a leading role in the district in promoting natural

farming, diversifying livelihoods, and giving a big push to the voice and power of women at home and at work.

Malla Reddy is always remembered for his poetic and beautiful use of the Telugu language. Whenever there was an important meeting or function, he never failed to express relevant thoughts, opinions, and experiences in his eloquent Telugu.

Fr. Ferrer, originally from Spain, and I, from England, found RDT to be our big family, and Doreen and Malla Reddy became our close family friends. We grew together both as colleagues and family friends. In a life spanning

more than 40 years, we helped and supported each other, slowly becoming parents and grandparents. In the absence of family, Doreen, like a sister, helped and supported me in all major family occasions – births, weddings, and other special events in family life.

Doreen and Malla Reddy are always there – committed colleagues and supportive friends. Along with their son Bharat and daughter-in-law Sandhya, we continue supporting each other.

Congratulations to Doreen and Malla Reddy on completing 50 years of dedicated work, and we wish them continued health and happiness.



Mrs. Anne Ferrer, Father Ferrer, Mr. Moncho Ferrer

My thoughts on Doreen

- Mrs. Anne Ferrer,

Founder and Executive Director, RDT Anantapur

Thinking about Doreen what first comes to my mind is “loyalty, commitment, a passion for women’s rights and equality and CAKES”.

To take small things first, in the campus, and outside too, Doreen’s cakes are famous, the plain cake and the chocolate cake, for all occasions and whenever she felt like baking..... Doreen never failed to send me remembering who in the family liked plain and who liked chocolate.....

Once upon a time in one of the many organisation development trainings we attended the facilitator said “ Vicente Ferrer is very lucky (or very intelligent I think) he has somebody for everything.....” what he meant was that in NGOs especially those based in rural areas it’s not easy to find persons with a strong capability in many of the very vast and varied skills required to run on NGO.....and that Fr. Ferrer had one or more really tal-

ented persons for all the major needs – Doreen is one of those few persons with clarity of thought and the ability to communicate those thoughts to people in their own language, so important when you’re working with rural communities. Her first interest was always people, especially women and girls. She was always out early in the morning and back in the evening or late night if work demanded. RDT was her life. Even the most highly qualified professionals and experts are not automatically good leaders. RDT has invested time and resources in leadership trainings and Doreen became a senior leader in RDT, dedicatedly taking on responsibility not only in her sector but also for the organisation always speaking and reminding others of the purpose of RDT and each one’s need to be responsible,



honest, kind and empathetic to people.

Doreen was committed to building a gender conscious and sensitive organisation, persisting with trainings and tireless in follow-up. Doreen headed the women sector for more than 30 years and under her guidance and with her team thousands of women in hundreds of villages made big steps forward both socially and economically. Doreen also pioneered a very important initiative for youngsters and women in rural areas - counselling centres and a team trained to give help and support to the thousands of women and youngsters caught in situations of domestic violence or other forms of harassment. Rural areas suffer from a lack of psychologists or professionals trained to support women in times of crisis. Doreen spent time and effort to bring up these counselling teams who have been able to help many women and girls cope and find solutions to their problems.

It's not rare for NGOs to face problems in their working life and

RDT has faced big challenges in its 55 years. Doreen never hesitated to stand up for the organisation however hard and long the fight was going sometimes months without salary, until the problems were solved.

Working women need support during those crucial and special times of births and marriages which for most women comes from family. Not having family close by during those moments of my life Doreen was a sister to me, not once, not twice but on many occasions during our long friendship spanning 50 years, travelling far and leaving her family to care for me and my children during those very needy times. Thanks Doreen I'm always grateful for your support and affection.

Today whenever I think of reflecting on life and sharing with someone I say to myself: "Let me go and visit Doreen and Malla Reddy".

Thanks Doreen and Malla Reddy for being great friends and partners in life.

Wish you all good health and happiness.

50 Years with RDT

- *Moncho Ferrer,*

Program Director, RDT, Anantapur

I have known Malla Reddy for most of my life—first as a friend and later as a colleague. Watching him complete 50 years with RDT fills me with immense pride and joy. He has been a key pillar in RDT’s incredible journey, helping transform it into a much-loved and respected organization in Anantapur district.

Malla Reddy’s story is deeply tied to RDT’s growth. Under the guidance and nurturing of my parents, Father Ferrer and Anne Ferrer, he blossomed from a young man with potential into a leader in the 3rd sector.. Their mentorship helped shape his natural leadership abilities, instilling in him the values of hard work, and service. These qualities became the foundation for his decades of unwavering dedication to RDT’s mission.

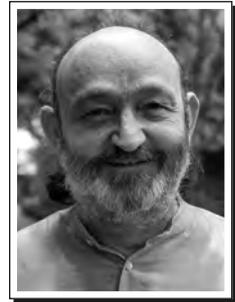
Malla Reddy’s contributions, particularly in the ecology sector, are highly note worthy. He has spearheaded initiatives to combat

desertification, improve soil fertility, and promote water conservation. His efforts have enabled farmers to

reclaim barren lands, improve agricultural productivity, and create sustainable livelihoods. His work is critical for the future of this chronic drought-prone district, and his services remain essential to ensure the continued growth and well-being of its communities.

Malla Reddy richly deserves every award and recognition he has received over the years. His relentless dedication, coupled with his ability to connect with people, has earned him the trust and respect of countless individuals. His natural leadership, honed under the guidance of my parents, has made him an inspiration for those striving to create a better world.

On this special occasion, I ex-



press my deepest appreciation for Malla Reddy's remarkable work. His legacy of service to RDT and the people of Anantapur and his wisdom and leadership remain valuable for the organization's future.

Malla Reddy, your journey is an example of commitment & resilience. Your efforts have touched countless lives, bringing hope and dignity to the farmers and families of this drought-prone district.

Malla Reddy isn't just a col-

league—he and his family, Doreen and Bunny, are like my own family. Bunny is like my little brother, and I will always cherish the many wonderful evenings we've spent together over dinner. Their warmth, friendship, and kindness are very special to me.

I wish you good health and all the best for your future endeavours. May you continue to serve the organization you have helped build.

With heartfelt admiration,



Dr. YV Malla Reddy, Mr. Moncho Ferrer

A Legacy of Leadership and Dedication

- *Visha Ferrer,*

Director, Women Empowerment, RDT, Anantapur

In the realm of social service and community development, there are few who stand out as pillars of unwavering commitment and inspiration. Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy is one such individual whose journey in the NGO sector spans an incredible 50 years. His work has touched countless lives, particularly within the farming communities of the drought-prone Anantapur district. His dedication, discipline, and passion for agriculture have not only transformed the lives of farmers but have also set a benchmark for future generations in the NGO sector. It is this remarkable legacy that I wish to honour today, reflecting on the impact he has had on me personally and on the broader community.

From the Very First Time

From the very first time I called you "Uncle," I felt an immediate closeness that I cherish deeply.

While others may address you as "Sir," I prefer to call you "Uncle," because it makes you feel even more like family to me.



Our First Meeting

The first time I met you was at my wedding in Tirupati. Although you and Aunty were there, arranging everything with such care, I didn't know much about you then. But over time, I began to learn more about you, piece by piece, and my respect and admiration for you grew.

I remember how much I enjoyed listening to you speak, especially in our local language. Hearing you talk in proper village Telugu, with that distinct accent, always brought a sense of warmth and familiarity that I truly loved.

Moments of Impact

Although we haven't had the opportunity to work closely together, there have been moments that left a lasting impact on me. I think back to the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and our involvement with the GGH committee, collaborating with government officials. Those were challenging times, but they were also opportunities for learning and growth. I remember accompanying you to those meetings, observing how you navigated through discussions, and learning from your experience. Being with you during those moments taught me so much about leadership, collaboration, and community service.

Gratitude and Admiration

I'm grateful for every moment and every lesson, Uncle. You have played a significant role in shaping my understanding of service and commitment, and I look forward to learning even more from you in the future.

Your Extraordinary Contributions

Your contributions to organizations like RDT and AF are nothing short of extraordinary. We constantly hear about the tremendous work you do for farmers, and it's clear that your passion for this

cause is boundless. Your dedication, discipline, and unwavering commitment to agriculture have elevated the lives of countless farmers. Your urge to see farmers at the highest pedestal is truly inspiring.

A Role Model for the Next Generation

You are a role model, Uncle—a beacon of dedication and passion in the NGO sector. Your legacy is not just about the incredible work you've done but about the example you set for the younger generation, especially those who are just beginning their journey in the NGO sector. Your discipline, work ethic, and commitment to agriculture are qualities that every aspiring leader should strive to emulate.

The Power Behind the Success

Doreen, your spouse, has been a tremendous support in your journey. Her cooperation and leadership have made your path easier and have laid a strong foundation for your success. Doreen is a good and inspiring leader who achieves what she intends without compromising on quality. Her influence is evident in the way she has helped shape the sector, allowing us to manage its challenges effectively. Behind your success, her imprints are unmistakable.

Insights and Reflections

On the completion of 50 years of experience in the NGO sector, I wish you all the success. May you continue to serve humanity with the same dedication, especially to the farming community of this chronic drought-prone Anantapur district. I wish you and Doreen a happy and

peaceful life, and I expect many more years of impactful service from both of you. Your journey is a testament to what can be achieved with passion, perseverance, and the support of a strong partner, and I am deeply honoured to have had the opportunity to learn from both of you.



Mr. Moncho Ferrer, Mrs. Visha Ferrer, Dr. YV Malla Reddy

A Tribute to Malla Reddy on his Golden Jubilee service in RDT and AF Ecology Centre

- K.R. Venugopal IAS (Retd),

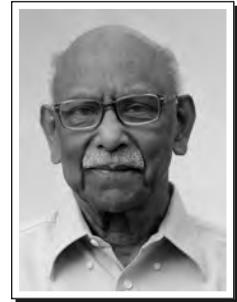
Formerly Secretary to the Prime Minister;

Special Rapporteur, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Hyderabad

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy is one of his kind. He is a natural leader and leaders like him come but rarely. His authenticity as a leader comes from his firsthand personal work, especially in the field and over a continuum of decades. Five decades to be precise. His is not bookish, borrowed knowledge but original knowledge born of hands-on experience by wetting his feet. He is the ultimate worker, a quintessential team person, but always stands out as the natural *primus inter pares*. He is at once a student and scholar of his chosen passion - of dry land and drought-prone agriculture in the acute context of advancing desertification through strategies of moisture conservation and protective irrigation; skill development and livelihoods creation, - all of them integrated at the community level so dry farming remains sustainable, including at the household level. This is not a selective passion to be understood in its

isolation but in the context of the existential challenge to all of India's concerns of food and nutrition security, the fragile livelihoods and the social development and human rights indices of the people inhabiting our country's dry lands, drought-prone and desert areas.

2. Malla Reddy is an expert in his chosen area of work but not a "consultant" in the sense of those who keep their knowledge as a proprietary information to be only sold but not freely shared with everyone for whom life is a matter of everyday predicament in the moisture-scarce fragile geographies of India. His 2017 book *Ananthaprasathanam published by Kadalika Prachuranalu, Anantapur* and his contribution as the co-author of the 2020 book "*Climate- Drought Resilience in Extreme Environments*" - au-



thored by V. Ratna Reddy, Y.V. Malla Reddy and M. Srinivasa Reddy published by Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020 are proof positive of this altruistic truth. Politicians or policy makers, activists or advocates of an India that commands absolute food-and-nutrition security and sovereignty would do themselves a favour if they would educate themselves by accessing the extensive wisdom etched out in these two books. It has been my privilege to have written the forewords to these two transformative books.

3. The reason why I refer to these two books here is they reflect authentically who Dr Malla Reddy is, especially in the quintessential sense of his life-long work. To illustrate the passion I mentioned above of Malla Reddy's life, I intend quoting my own words from those two forewords because those words were based on a close reading of those books in real time.

4. The first book Anatha Prasthanam is "verily a biography of Anantapur District This book on Anantapur is about its contemporary life, its people, its history in the sense of what its life has been in terms of its endowments over a long period, its contemporary predicaments, its climate historically and its consequences for its people

today, - a life described with abiding love but a life that has seen and continues to see hardships almost without parallel but like all life where hope springs eternal in the human breast. It chronicles the current sorrows and woes besetting Anantapur and its loveable, long-suffering people by one of them, who also knows the answers to its questions and who is not afraid to bring those answers to the public domain in concrete terms. Not afraid because he has knowledge, has evidence, has worked among his people and in the field wetting his feetand above all has shared their sorrows as his own. The validity of this book and Malla Reddy's own life emerge from his having been an organic part of Anantapur district and its people, and thus his identification with their very soul. But then, it is not merely a story of Anantapur district but of upward of about 1700 drought-prone, desert and other ecologically fragile development blocks of India, quite a few of which are advancing towards desertification even as Anantapur district has been, and where all human development indices are in disarray. Hence its relevance to a huge segment of India's people, their agriculture, their livelihoods, their human needs as fundamental as drinking

water, health, and education and verily therefore their Right to Life. Malla Reddy aptly highlights that as a Constitutional question.

“The book's relevance is rooted in many truths, the truth of loss of precious lives of farmers and their kin, not loss but taken of their own volition known euphemistically as suicide, not only because of Nature's chronic vagary but the negligent indifference of the State to every aspect of human life here; the State's sheer lethargy to bestir itself to address the in-your-face conditions of persistently gross regional inequalities within Andhra Pradesh, within Rayalaseema and even within Anantapur district; in-human consequences of human migration where the very core of human dignity, especially of women, stands violated on a daily basis in distant cities; the fact that this migration leaves behind without protection the old and the infirm, not to speak of little children, whose education the migrating parents strive to thus protect; the indifference of the Indian State to the indebtedness in which the Indian farmer is born and from which his or her life cannot be separated till death or suicide; the exacerbation of this existential position by a fast deteriorating health and education environment where greed and com-

merce have overtaken time-honoured concepts of care of the sick and the learning of the children, indulgently watched over by the State exulting in the name of economic reforms; and failure to stand by the victims of this cause on the part of the State either initially by way of prevention or even after the event by way of compassion and credible action. All this has been fully documented by Malla Reddy in this book backed by information and data, including that based on personal field level observations over a prolonged period of time rendered poignant by the most recent experiences and studies of the latest happenings.

“There is much in this book that also partakes of the character of a "manual" of agricultural and irrigation administration in rain shadow areas, excepting that this manual comes in the form of a highly readable narrative and exciting ground level tips and answers to frequently asked questions of great significance to these areas. That it makes for absorbing reading to the interested and concerned practitioners of these sciences, will be seen from the chapters on the invaluable commodity that Water is to humankind and Conjunctive irrigation as the answer to the challenges of Anantapur district and

drought-prone dry land agriculture everywhere in India. Every little detail is explained in an easily understood way as to how conjunctive use of water from the four sources of its availability, - rain water, ground water, local surface water and river water through a water grid that can be used to provide protective irrigation and additional irrigation for normal yields and also additional yields, by using appropriate technologies of irrigation like drip or sprinkler, in appropriately designed sowing and water devices, to suit the different manner of planting of crops, whether densely or sparsely. All this is based on original thinking derived from experience and observation, and testing and experimentation in the field at the farm and farmer's level.

“Malla Reddy's message in this book is that any paradigm of development should be inclusive. It cannot be built on the belief that it can be divorced from moral and ethical values or from hard evidence-based technological approaches and scientific applications of lessons learned and tested out over a period of time; and it has to be informed by the urgency of compassion through the exercise of honest political will, strengthened by public vigilance of people's rights”.

5. The second book, “Climate

- Drought Resilience in Extreme Environments” deals with the evolution of watershed development (WSD) in the state of Andhra Pradesh, a history that also tells us of its future relevance to India. Extremely well-researched and full of authentic data, all of it primary and from the field, this book will serve to open the eyes of those concerned with making policy relating to agriculture, water management, food and nutrition security, rural employment, migration, and participative democratic self-governance. I say this for many reasons, including the fact that the question whether there was going to be a serious possibility of a veritable exodus from agriculture as an occupation itself was raised by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in the mid-1990s. The seriousness of this would later manifest itself as a phenomenon of continual suicides by farmers, including in Andhra Pradesh, a situation taken note of by India's National Human Rights Commission that ordered an investigation into it, by me as its Special Rapporteur. Therefore, a study like this one that situates watershed development in the context of issues that go far beyond its original conceptualisation in 1983 so as to include larger environmental and livelihood issues is one that is criti-

cal to the future of the lives of people who inhabit geographies such as Anantapur. The facts that relate to these lives are that only a third of India's agricultural land has assured irrigation, the rest being dependent on uncertain monsoons. Only half the area growing food grains in India has irrigation. Two thirds of India's irrigation comes from groundwater, which is currently depleting rapidly. India, therefore, is essentially a rainfed agricultural country. It is in the rainfed agriculture regions of India that its poverty mostly resides, with low Human Development Indices.

“The significant message the authors give us is that WSD is as relevant as ever, still at the "centre", and a necessary condition as a participatory, integrated watershed programme involving equal participation of women and other vulnerable sections of the community for improving agriculture in these naturally disadvantaged regions. However, this is not sufficient by itself, especially in the context of climate change. Water and land are still inseparable Siamese twins but in dire requirement of a paradigm shift by way of the recognition that there are no perfect solutions to issues nature confronts us with, without involving human and social development interventions. In this context, the

key concept that the authors have employed for assessing the innovative interventions we need, in pursuit of their objectives in writing this book, is aligning WSD with the five capitals that constitute the framework for assessing sustainable livelihoods and resilient impacts on households in drought-induced crises. These capitals are: Natural, Physical, Financial, Human and Social. This alignment should generate "Resilience", "Integration", "Convergence", the recognition that WSD is and would remain a "process in action" calling for internal changes within it, and then integrated with the livelihoods strategies.

“Several important lessons emerge from this book. On the face of it, it may appear that we know some of them already but what gives those a special validity is the authenticity of those lessons drawn not from text books but from field-level work in conditions that are as exhausting as they are for those women, children and men who experience them as if it is a routine fate that cannot be conquered, for example, the concept of Capacity Building as the key to better implementation and livelihoods. That observation looks commonplace till the authors tell you:

"Development of human cap-

ital in a harsh environment like Ananthapuramu is critical for enhancing livelihoods and alleviating poverty. While there are limits for strengthening the natural capital base, due to geographical and climatic constraints, human capital development has greater potential to expand and alleviate for the communities their dire situation. Accion Fraterna - Ecology Centre (AF-EC) strongly believes in this and has focused and invested in capacity building over the years. AF-EC has an overarching approach to capacity building. All their staff is locally recruited and most of them come from the programme villages and many of them have long experience in the organization and have grown within. This automatically ensures better understanding of the local context and also commitment and concern for improving the conditions. Communities also feel comfortable to approach them any time for any kind of support, irrespective of whether there is an ongoing programme in the village or not".

Then comes the conclusion, the essence of this book: "Given the harsh environmental and natural conditions, the contribution of agriculture to the household income is limited despite the fact that majority of the population depends on agriculture. Dependence on agriculture

is mainly due to the absence of viable livelihood opportunities rather than by choice. Agriculture is increasingly becoming unviable in general and more severely in these regions. While strengthening the natural resource base, especially water and soils, is necessary to improve the viability and share of agriculture income, it may not be sufficient to ameliorate poverty in the given natural constraints. A multi-pronged approach is required to bring these regions out of the dire conditions. Strengthening the natural resources base through watershed interventions is a medium to long-term option, enhancing the resilience of the communities is a short to medium-term option and increasing the share of agricultural income or reducing the dependence on agriculture are long-term solutions".

"The AF-EC technical initiatives fostered with appropriate institutional support emphasizes the importance of both short and long-term options. Given the fragility of the region in terms of natural resources and the associated financial fragility of the household economy, AF-EC has realized early on that natural resource-based interventions like WSD are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for improving the economic conditions of

the region (Reddy et al. 2004). The watershed institutions along with other institutions not only sustain the programme interventions but also support the communities in various other activities that strengthen and sustain their livelihoods. Its present approach is comprehensive and integrated, viz., WSD (resource base) + savings and credit-based and livelihoods support institutions (enhancing financial capital) + technical and policy support (drought resilient extension support and new programme interventions). The combined approach appears to be more effective in realizing the programme impacts and livelihood benefits. This approach goes much beyond the now widely adopted watershed plus approach and could be termed as 'watershed plus + plus' - (WS++)." A part of this approach could be strengthened by what the authors have proposed: "..... there are above 3000 small and medium water bodies spread across in Ananthapuramu District. All these water bodies need to be revived and converted into percolation tanks. These are common property resources of the villages, and all households have the right to use the water. If these can be filled with Tungabhadra or Hundri Niva Sujala Sravanthi (HNSS) project water, all farmers can use it for pro-

ductive irrigation through borewells, as percolation tanks recharge and stabilize groundwater. Communities feel that it can support the much-needed protective irrigation in a most efficient way. This is a necessary condition for the evolution and success of groundwater collectivisation interventions and institutions in these harsh environmental conditions".

Finally, the strategic future: Watershed Development and Beyond, where other supportive livelihood strategies provide for the resilience required at the personal, households and community levels.

The authors have emphasized that AF-EC has been effectively drawing additional resources through integration of other related programmes like MGNREGS and Andhra Pradesh Drought Adaption Programmes (APDAP). "While a number of states have been struggling to achieve convergence of programmes, AF-EC could achieve it smoothly through its participatory approaches. In fact, AF-EC has demonstrated to the state government the effectiveness of such integration and convergence. Similarly, all the initiatives, be it water related, land related or livelihoods related, are developed, and implemented in an interlinked and integrated manner rather than in

isolation. The effectiveness of an integrated approach has been demonstrated well".

A crucial point the authors make is this: "Sustaining these initiatives is not easy in the present policy environment, as there is no price support for these crops at the policy level. AF-EC has been lobbying for subsidies for intercrops at par with those extended to groundnut, and for inclusion of millets and pulses in fair price shops (FPS), school mid-day meal programme (MDMP), integrated child development services (ICDS) and in hostels in government schools and colleges. Replacing rice with locally produced millets and pulses also reduces the food miles in transporting rice."

This requires to be widely internalised by all of us interested in the nutrition security of the country. To this, I would further add that the Minimum Support Prices for millets and the nutritive cereals grown in the dry lands of the country should be double that of the Food Corporation of India's purchasing price of fine rice under levy and all the production of these should be mandatorily purchased by the Food Corporation of India. Distribution of these in the PDS, ICDS and MDM should be promoted by widespread health and nutrition education.

India's dry land agriculture should be backed and promoted as part of India's Health Policy.

The authors acknowledge that while "the comprehensive approach of integrating various dimensions of livelihoods like capacity building, integrated resource management, technologies and institutions are making communities resilient to drought... it may be naive or too early to say that the communities are resilient enough to withstand more than one drought, the process is set and moving in the right direction." They also acknowledged that "while AF-EC has been focusing on appropriate crop systems, techniques and technologies, integration of hydrogeology into watershed designing and planning needs more efforts. Our hydrogeology assessment has revealed a mismatch between required and actual RWH interventions."

Thus, this book has rich and relevant material to offer by way of hope for India's rainfed agriculture. The authors deserve our gratitude for courageously setting out what the problems are and how by similar courage and conviction in our own ability and through the social mobilisation of our people's wisdom and resilience, based on the decades of tireless work done by AF-EC under its Director Dr Y.V.

Malla Reddy's leadership, and which he has placed before us in his capacity as a co-author, we can overcome an existential threat to India's agriculture”.

6. While the foregoing paragraphs are the recorded evidence of who Dr. Malla Reddy is and what he has been endeavouring to accomplish, I have had the honour of knowing Dr Malla Reddy as a much-admired activist and later as a close personal friend and sometimes a co-worker for about thirty years. For this, I need to take the readers back to the 1990's while I was in service.

7. I had been Additional Secretary and later Secretary to the Prime Minister of India from January 17, 1990, to April 4, 1995.

I had first come to see Malla Reddy in Anantapur in 1994 immediately after the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) designed and written by me in the Prime Minister's Office, had been announced and put on ground. It was a good but a politically half-hearted step by the Prime Minister instead of a full-fledged national level rural employment guarantee programme for which I had unsuccessfully fought continuously for several months with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.

8. My next visit to Anantapur

again was a few months later. At the 1991 Colombo Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Heads of State or Government had decided to establish an Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation consisting of eminent persons from the seven member-countries to study their diverse experiences on poverty alleviation and to report to the next Summit their recommendations on alleviation of poverty in South Asia. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao appointed me as his personal representative and member to this Commission. The SAARC Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation submitted its report in November 1992 and this Report titled Meeting the Challenge was unanimously adopted at the SAARC Summit at Dacca in 1993. I had actively co-authored this Report and one of the main recommendations of this Report at my instance was about Dry Land Agriculture and the Public Distribution System. The Report recognized that “Even agricultural research did not pay much attention to dry-farming practices in arid lands where large numbers of the poor live and subsist”, and advocated that “the basic strategy in agricultural development should be one of decentral-

ized production, meaning that a breakthrough in productivity should be attempted in all regions, and not in specific pockets,....research must be directed towards evolving drought-resistant seeds and dry-land farm practices". This was my formulation. The Report also advocated "developing new dry-land farming systems, labour-absorbing, productivity-increasing, scale-neutral farm machinery and implements" and a Public Distribution System (PDS) managed by the "organizations of the poor" themselves in such areas based on enhanced local production and productivity. This again was my formulation. These recommendation on dry land farming and PDS are an important answer to hunger and poverty, relevant to large tracts of land in India like Anantapur district as against the centralized Green Revolution strategy based on assured irrigation. Our report Meeting the Challenge also advocated the direct involvement of the poor in national development through human development, - "through social mobilization and participation of the poor in development" based on "building organizations of the poor..... where the poor can save and invest and make their choices" and "assert the right to resources intended for them". This paradigm of

"empowerment of the poor is the means to poverty eradication". To achieve this, the "poor need their own institutions as well as support mechanisms.... including umbrella organizations, because there are serious systemic obstacles to their becoming the mainstream. A key element in the strategy is the poor mobilizing their savings themselves as a first step" so they can borrow among themselves, and also mobilize institutional finance, in view of the importance to them of adequate and timely credit. To sum up, the key to sustain dry land agriculture, especially in the context of women farmers, is a combination of all these pro-poor strategies and technologies that help moisture conservation and drought proofing and creation in these areas of additional/ alternate rural employment rooted in the dignity of the labouring poor. When dry land agriculture becomes sustainable in this manner, Right to Life of the poor in these fragile areas in all its various dimensions is safeguarded. We also called for the Right to Information in our Report. In 1993, after the SAARC Summit at Dacca unanimously approved the Poverty Commission's Report, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao accepted my advice that these strategies must be tested out in Andhra Pradesh in a

large but ecologically fragile geography of the three contiguous Districts of Anantapur, Kurnool and Mahbubnagar inhabited by a large population in poverty, and a programme was launched with UNDP assistance negotiated by me, through the Government of Andhra Pradesh. That's how I planned the institutionalization of the already existing concept of group action exemplified by the DWCRA groups into the Self Help Group Movement as a means to the social mobilization of the poor in Andhra Pradesh. A huge leap from the DWCRA programme. I am proud to be the father of this effort. Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director, AF-EC, Anantapur was the first NGO leader I met in 1994, and Mr. Satya Prakash Thakkar IAS, the Collector of Anantapur district to discuss these strategies in the context of the programme for poverty eradication based on social mobilisation of the poor through Self-Help Groups (SHG). They both gave me invaluable inputs for which I remain grateful. Later, I also met the Chief Secretary and other senior officers of the Andhra Pradesh government to take the concept forward. This was how the Self-Help Groups concept in Andhra Pradesh came to be institutionalised from the office of the Prime Minister. However, experi-

ence has shown that the key to genuinely organizing the poor on these principles is to ensure that these people's institutions are not at any time politicized or used by ruling political parties or others for their own ends. I may add, however, that after laying these foundations in 1995-'96, I was not involved in this programme in Andhra Pradesh as I was invited by the Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) to assist the NHRC as one of its first two Special Rapporteurs, to assist the Commission in its implementation of the Supreme Court of India's order dated 11.11.1997, passed in writ petition (Civil) No.3922 of 1985 requesting the NHRC to get involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 in the country's southern states.

9. My next visit to the district was in the year 2002, when as the Special Rapporteur of the National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC), I investigated the deaths by suicide of farmers of Andhra Pradesh on behalf of the NHRC in NHRC Case No. 441/1/2001-2002, including by visiting and meeting the families of the victims of suicide deaths. At the time as well Malla Reddy and I had met to discuss the farmers' predicaments. The reasons for these sui-

cides require no repetition for they were verily the result of the conditions we have discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. I must here place on record my gratitude to the tremendous support and inputs I received from Ms. Y.V. Anuradha IAS, the then Collector of Anantapur District. Then came our joint association with the memorable work of the Commission on Farmers' Welfare in 2004 chaired by the great economist Jayati Ghosh, - Malla Reddy as member and me as special invitee. By far the most intensive work I have done in Anantapur district with Dr. Malla Reddy was leading and coordinating the conduct of a social audit of the ICDS programme on behalf of the Council for Social Development, New Delhi in 2008-2009, in which effort Dr. Malla Reddy played an unforgettable, stellar role. This was a huge effort involving a large number of 154 Anganwadi centres in 129 villages. I had been in charge of the ICDS programme for all of India while Joint Secretary in the Government of in the Ministry of Human Resource Development in the late 1980's and pioneered certain inclusions into that programme like the adolescent girl, a decisive link in the life cycle of a girl child to her womanhood in the role of a community leader and mother. In

my considered opinion, apart from the specific goals and objectives of that programme, the ICDS programme in its sum total is a social development programme par excellence. It is also relevant to acknowledge here that two foremost commitments of the ten Commitments made by the 184 participating countries at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), Copenhagen 1995 in the Summit's Declaration and Programme of Action, referred to Poverty Eradication and Social Development. I was the leader of the official Indian delegation and India's Chief Negotiator to this World Summit's preparatory process during 1994-95 and had played an active part in formulating these recommendations. The ICDS social audit effort in Anantapur district also gave me the privilege to invite and work with two other senior NGO leaders, the redoubtable Ms. C. Bhanuja of REDS, Kadiri and Mr. K.S. Gopal, the pioneer institution builder- Director of the Centre for Environment Concern, Hyderabad. My book on our Social Audit findings *The Integrated Child Development Services, - A Flagship Adrift* was got published by the Council for Social Development, New Delhi in 2012 - Konark Publishers PVT LTD, New Delhi. This

was later got translated into Telugu by me under the title Udakani Methku and got published by the Hyderabad Book Trust in 2015. Dr. Malla Reddy's contribution to the day-to-day conduct of the Social Audit by way of lending the services of the well-trained and motivated staff of his own organization, training and interacting with the field level investigators, gathering of information on sensitive issues and analysing the data was invaluable to me in framing the Report of the findings, which would subsequently convert into the book The Integrated Child Development Services, - A Flagship Adrift. Here, I must place on record the tremendous administrative leadership provided by Mr. Gurralla Gopal, the head of the District Water Management Agency (DWAMA), in making the social audit a success with his deep knowledge of the ICDS and his amazing problem-solving skills at the field level.

In the midst of all these, I have been a devoted witness to who Malla Reddy has been as a thinker, doer, social mobiliser, and leader and above all a family friend. More of this, later.

10. It deserves repetition that agricultural production and productivity in dry land areas of India that are devoid of assured irriga-

tion, are key to its food security autonomy and sovereignty, and its poor people's food and nutrition security. Much of India's hunger and poor human development indices reside in these areas and if strategies relevant to them are not devised and put into practice, even the fringe of our poverty in its many dimensions will not have been addressed. That we are still to wake up to this can be seen from the failure in the Food Security Act of 2013 to devote any credible attention to Agriculture in general and dry land agriculture in particular. The huge misery of migrants that starkly came to fore in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic also reflects this.

11. When COVID struck us in 2019, I reflected on the predicament of the people of Anantapur district against the background of all the points I have made in the foregoing paragraphs and the lessons I learnt from them. Those lessons were all valid as also my own work as an IAS officer in Government. Whatever I had heard about the implementation of the SHG programme in Andhra Pradesh in the poverty context did not seem to reflect the manner conceived in the Report of the SAARC Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation or the WSSD's Commit-

ments to poverty eradication and social development. I thought and felt that with such proven knowledge and exceptional human resource available at Accion Fraternal in Anantapur district, a project must be established and financially supported for PROMOTING ALTERNATE / ADDITIONAL LIVELIHOODS FOR WOMEN FROM THE FAMILIES OF RAINFED FARMERS AND FARM LABOUR IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT for a period of two years, 2020- '22. I discussed this with my daughter Anupama V Nadella, who readily agreed to donate an amount of Rs. 20 million to Accion Fraternal for this purpose. It was also decided that in doing this, there should be no interference from our family as donors, and full freedom given to the NGO AF-EC to determine its own strategies. Our only expectation was that we should get periodical reports and an evaluation the NGO itself may conduct to assess the validity of the model in terms of the goals and their achievement. I kept Dr. Ch. Hanumanth Rao, Dr. Jayati Ghosh and Dr. Hara Gopal, among a few other friends, about this. Dr. Malla Reddy and Accion Fraternal have ensured compliance with the periodical reports and are now considering an evaluation. When Anupama V Nadella decided to fund the NGO Accion Fra-

terna-Ecology Centre led by Malla Reddy with two million rupees for PROMOTING ALTERNATE / ADDITIONAL LIVELIHOODS FOR WOMEN FROM THE FAMILIES OF RAINFED FARMERS AND FARM LABOUR IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT, she ensured that the District Collector of Anantapur inaugurated it by writing to him personally and seeking his cooperation for this NGO-led project. Dr. Malla Reddy had been closely known to my colleague and late dear friend B.N. Yugandhar, and as a recognition of that relationship my daughter ensured that the project PROMOTING ALTERNATE / ADDITIONAL LIVELIHOODS FOR WOMEN FROM THE FAMILIES OF RAINFED FARMERS AND FARM LABOUR IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT was inaugurated on September 13, the day Yugandhar had passed away in 2019.

12. Now that the project time has been completed, it would be most appropriate for Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy himself to write about this Project, in this book that is being brought out to celebrate the 50 long years of Dr Malla Reddy's services at the RDT and Accion Fraternal-Ecology Centre to the people of Anantapur District. In making this request to Dr. Malla Reddy, I am reaffirming my 30 years of association

with him as an NGO colleague.

13. I would like to end this tribute to Dr. Malla Reddy by harking back once more to the year 1994. The year 1994 was a year that brought some of my most cherished dreams for the social development sector as an IAS officer to fruition. One such dream was how to make Governance human, shorn of the kiss of death of raw power and ham-handedness and bring about an alliance in the best sense of that term between Government and those others in society who are devoted to serve their fellowmen expecting nothing in return. In a genuine democracy, outside the three arms of the State, there are two other estates - a free press and the civil society with whom the State has to interact, whether it likes to or not. The best examples of the world of the NGOs - civil society or voluntary organizations as you like - , whether persons or organizations, have always a decisive role to play in the welfare and progress of a nation and a people. I consider Bunker Roy, Ela Bhatt, Anna Hazare, Father Ferrer, Dr. Samir Choudhuri of CINI, West Bengal, the Aroles of Maharashtra, Aruna Roy, Malla Reddy and Achyut Das of Orissa among others as belonging to this tribe. I am certain there are many others who I may not know about. And the great econ-

omists Dr. Ch. Hanumanth Rao and Jayati Ghosh. And the great IAS officer V.M. Manohar Prasad of the Andhra Pradesh cadre. My belief is that the civil society, apart from the press, remains closer to the people than Governments and therefore their views should always be respected so long as they are not slaves to politics, politicians, and ideologies. I therefore persuaded Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to set up a machinery that would act as a sounding board for the policies and programmes the Government frames for the welfare and development of the marginalized sections of society on the socio-economic front. As part of this effort, with the approval of the Prime Minister, I organized a convention of nearly 200 voluntary organizations drawn from all over the country to consider bringing about a collaborative relationship between the Government and voluntary organizations. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao presided over the deliberations of this meeting held over two full days on March 7th and 8th, 1994. The convention, as had been planned by me, did decide to set up a Joint Machinery consisting of select national level voluntary organizations and Secretaries to the Government of India directly concerned with development programmes where the poor would

benefit, for sharing and scrutinizing information on Government's policies and programmes. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao accepted my further proposal that that the Deputy Chairman of the Planning should be the Chairperson and the Secretary to the Prime Minister should be a member of this Joint Machinery. I am happy and proud to place on record that the Government of India published this decision in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary dated September 9, 1994.

14. The first meeting of this joint machinery was held on December 2, 1994, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi with Mr. Pranab Mukerji in the chair. I was present at this meeting and spoke about the philosophy behind this collaborative effort. It was a very successful meeting. I left the Prime Minister's Office in April 1995 and to the best of my knowledge this joint machinery met only once thereafter. I hope I am wrong about this information but am afraid I am right. The top NGOs of India also have to take responsibility for this as they failed to take advantage of such a handy platform created for them with enormous effort. Some people ask for the moon but when it starts actually coming to them, they won't hold it.

15. I consider Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy as a friend, nay, as a member of my immediate family. As both, to be specific. Not only that. My wife Lakshmi Venugopal and I also consider his soulmate and spouse Mrs. Doreen Reddy, son Bharat Reddy, daughter-in-law Sandhiya Reddy and their two lovely children Yaraswini and Himata as part of our family. Mrs. Doreen Reddy has just retired after 47 years of yeoman service to the Rural Development Trust (RDT), Anantapur. We have turned to Malla Reddy and Mrs. Doreen Reddy often for advice and comfort in crucial moments of our need. What has struck us both about Doreen Reddy is her wisdom in foreseeing events and challenging circumstances in the offing and her ability to intuit and advise how to meet and cope with these in real time. This wisdom of hers is more than matched by her courage in rising to the need of the hour and taking every conceivable trouble to be part of the solution when friends like us need her help. This is at a personal level. At the social and community level these qualities come to the fore a hundredfold when challenges arise in her work life. Those challenges have related issues of fundamental importance to women, children, the differently abled and the marginalized. And

not once or twice, but over the entire period of her lifetime at work. To all that I have mentioned about Malla Reddy earlier, I add and record here my admiration for the concrete work of Doreen Reddy that has benefitted hundreds of thousands of marginalized women in the areas of gender discrimination; women's empowerment; skills development and training; income-generating activities; and women and child hunger and in the all-important area of nutrition.

16. In the midst of all this, this brave lady has fought cancer and survived it.

17. In the words of Sister Anne Ferrer, "Doreen became a senior leader in RDT, dedicatedly taking on responsibility not only in her sector but also for the organisation always speaking and reminding others of the purpose of RDT and each one's need to be responsible, honest, kind and empathetic to people. Doreen was committed to building a gender conscious and sensitive organisation, persisting with training and tireless in follow-up. Doreen headed the women sector for more than 30 years (at the RDT) and under her guidance and with her team thousands of women in hundreds of villages made big steps forward both socially and economically."

An apt recognition! I take this opportunity to congratulate the spirit of the great visionaries Father Vincent Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer for not only recognizing the inherent merits of character in Doreen and Malla Reddy but giving them an opportunity to demonstrate the limitless potential of pure goodness as a human virtue.

18. All the members of my family join me in congratulating Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen Reddy completing a half century of service to the most deserving people of Anantapur district, and their ecology, and spreading their knowledge of how they did this so others facing similar predicaments, wherever they are, may not only cope with those but overcome them as well. May the spiritual tribe of Malla Reddy increase for the greater good of humankind! I congratulate them on their long, loving married life of nearly a half century. Their success in their inter-religious marriage is also a tribute to their common achievements in shared struggles. Indian society desperately needs this.

If we put together the work achievements of this couple, as we indeed should, then we would realize how blessed we are to have them in our midst!

Provider of Critical Input !

On the occasion of Dr. Malla Reddy's Golden Jubilee (50 years) of service in RDT and Accion Fraternal-Ecology Centre

- Peter Lanzet,

Senior Consultant for Development Finance (Retd), Bread for the World, Berlin, Germany

On entering Dr. Malla Reddy's Accion Fraternal office in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, one is overwhelmed by the many plaques adorning the walls of his office. Those are the prizes and awards of "Malla", as many call him affectionately. They bear testimony to his life-long work in Rural Development together with a team that, he has carefully trained and nurtured over the years. These distinctions and honours are the witnesses of his and his team's diligent work and their results towards bringing about positive changes in the lives of women, children and men living in the hundreds of villages and hamlets dotting the huge drought prone and semi-arid district of Anantapur.

I first came to the Rural Development Trust or RDT as it is popularly known in 1983. RDT had sent a project proposal for funding to the then Protestant Agency for Development Cooperation known then as

EZE and today as Bread for the World. I was the project officer for South India and thus I was sent to Anantapur to appraise the said proposal.

Just a year earlier while driving from Hyderabad along the Madras Road on the way to Madanapalle I had to travel through the town of Anantapur. At that time, my driver took us to a roadside tea stall not far from the RDT office. And there lying on the ground I saw a leaflet with big letters on it screaming, "Father Ferrer to be thrown out of Anantapur!" Till I met Father Ferrer a year later I kept wondering what kind of a man was to be thrown out of Anantapur? To my pleasant surprise the man who welcomed me with an open and friendly smile full of curiosity was gentle, soft spoken, kind and compassionate. After a



subtle scrutiny he 'handed' me over to Malla Reddy, to show me around RDT, the region where it worked and to explain RDT as an organization and the details of the project proposal to me.

Almost instantly we clicked. Malla, a few years junior to me, was a young man from the area, idealistic, full of ideas and dreams, and with tremendous self-confidence adding to his personality. Curiously looking at me he took me out to the Kalyandurg area explaining the proposed Drought Relief and Drought Rehabilitation Programme directly in the field.

Malla confronted me with the harsh realities of people living there in settlements and hamlets in tiny huts, clad in rags especially children, women and the elderly, surviving on millets. There were shy and hungry women with malnourished babies, children with big empty eyes and ballooning bellies, few and scrawny animals, water wells far away, lack of hygiene and no health centre or doctor anywhere near. Here RDT had recently started some children's education, adult literacy and health care programmes. The villagers narrated about their lives and struggles and not having enough wage employment because of the drought. If work was at all available it was at wage levels not

enough to maintain a family. They spoke of how seasonal migration was uncertain and full of suffering and it meant having to leave elders and children alone to an uncertain fate. They had either no, too little or only dry land. The land was more pebbles and boulders than soil, hard baked by the relentless sun and erosion, looked totally barren. And if some had land under the traditional village tanks, no water had been seen in the tanks for the planting and growing season for a number of years. It was clear, without additional income they were facing hunger. As a rule, poor families were indebted to land owners sometimes already for generations. The bonded labour system was still quite common.

Water, labour, animals, seeds and loans had been promised by politicians and the district authorities, but very little had come their way, by far not enough to sustain hamlets and villages. The poor were accustomed to combine the income for whatever labour wages they could get with dry land cultivation based on millets and ground nuts and a bit of animal husbandry, which was mostly women's and children's work. Even in normal rain fall years, this had always been a gamble with the weather but at that time, with erratic or even no

rainfall for consecutive years, it had entirely become a losing battle.

In these early years of Civil Society's response to the recurring droughts in Anantapur and other drought prone areas on the granite dominated Deccan plateau, one still used food for work and cash for work programmes. The American food aid programme known as PL 480 started in the 50s, was still common in starvation rehabilitation efforts, even though the Government of India had promoted the Green Revolution to end India's food dependency. EZE believed in 'teaching the hungry how to fish and cultivate rather than distributing fish and food'. Against the impact of the drought, it had earlier donated a number of bore-well drilling machines (rigs) to Action For Food Production (AFPRO) and other partners to dig bore wells. Yet, drilling a borewell for every drought prone small farmer was not an option, the machines were supposed to be used for collective irrigation as well as for community drinking water supply. Soon, RDT too was operating these rigs and had gained good expertise in ground water studies to determine, where a borewell should be drilled. Later drillers were also rented from the market as part of drought rehab programmes. However, borewells

were an expensive option. They depleted the ground water resources and tended to help farmers with water more than their dry land colleagues and very soon borewells were not any more considered a pro-poor development measure.

Malla and RDT however, stood for a new approach to drought response: RDT had started to experiment in the early 80s with social organisations by organising people from the Backward Castes, Dalits, Tribals and Shudras as they were both socio- culturally and therefore also economically, the poorer section of society.

I had been highly energised by this new thinking myself. To me, it held lots of promises for the empowerment of people and not just for economic betterment alone. It coincided with all the new sociological ideas and thinking of the 1968-student socio-cultural and political rebellion, a generation from which I had grown which emphasised on the self-assured and reflective individual in the group and based on such members on rational, value based and democratic collectivism. I was convinced, such a cooperation could bring about much better development results than an individual alone ever could achieve. Such collectives could fight exploitation and discrimination much better.

And they could substitute with the contributions of the sheer numbers of people and participants the often-missing financial capital, a critical component of any development initiative, relevant to collective approaches in agriculture as well as all other sectors.

In India all hopes in this direction took the form of organising Backward Castes, Dalits, Tribals and Women into Sangams. Sangam members met regularly to discuss and share their problems and during these discussions they discovered individual struggles were also collective struggles. Led by a facilitator or a trainer they were helped to define how they could together improve, health, nutrition, education and especially the income of their families, be it through labour, dry land cultivation, animal husbandry, forestry or a mix of it all.

In addition, they would also struggle for their rights, privileges, reputation and property ownership with those groups and castes in villages and beyond, keeping them downtrodden, exploited and poor. This approach had actually grown out of earlier RDT co-workers, who developed the Sangam approach by both taking inspiration from Paolo Freire's process for action and reflection for literacy and liberation from Latin America and from In-

dian anti-colonial struggles for liberation and emancipation. By the turn of the 80s, RDT had become a centre for new ideas and leadership for development and empowerment. And slowly I began to understand, why "Father Ferrer was to be thrown out of Anantapur". The local elite saw in him the harbinger of change, a change they could not as yet see as advantageous for the overall development of the district. Malla - in the middle of all activities- became one of the most influential creators of that change.

By this time, he had himself undergone training in social organisation, adult learning, the use of village theatre and many more skills and techniques for what was then called "conscientisation", i.e. Freire's Action/Reflection concept. So, there we were, two young guys in the middle level management, maybe a little naïve but extremely eager to embrace new ways of overcoming age-old structures. And when we were riding back from this visit to Kalyandurg to Anantapur in the middle of the night in one of RDTs old Willies Jeeps, with Malla at the wheel, we were extremely enthusiastic about what that new approach could achieve, when carried out as measures in this drought rehabilitation proposal. For me this was the moment of my bonding

with Malla. He and his bottomless depth of trust in things becoming better, the basic goodness of people, his strength of character his unwavering loyalty to RDT and his co-workers and staff have never ceased to amaze me.

Here, a little anecdote should be in order: It must have been around 1986/1987, when a consortium of ICCO, Aide et Action, Action Aid and EZE were negotiating a new proposal of RDT. We had achieved an understanding on the scope and content of the program, yet in the total budget the cost of salaries, benefits and wages had taken a proportion out of sync with what the agencies were ready to give. We, the project officers were about to curtail the salaries of the staff. There, Malla rose to the occasion: he stood up, grew almost double his size as it seemed, face dark red, his voice that of a sergeant major or of a vice-principal of a school with unruly students, he gave us a quarter of an hour lecture about the struggles and travails of his staff, their competence and knowledge, their spirit to sacrifice and their suffering and devotion in the face of innumerable difficulties and challenges. Total silence followed. Father Ferrer's face had become purple, Malla's white, we project officers were shocked, de-

feated and without resistance to anything proposed. That day, Malla established himself as the unquestionable leader of RDT's drought relief work. Later on, in a donors consortium meeting in Paris in January 1987, Malla strongly argued for the need of a long term funding commitment from donors, since development was seen as the process spanning generations. None of the agencies had understood this point better than EZE, turning into EED which even later merged with Bread for the World: Even today, 40 years later, there exists a strong partnership between Accion Fraterna (RDT's sister organisation) and Bread for the World .

In the years to follow, the watershed approach to drought prone agriculture swept the dry lands of India, supported by Government and Non- Government Organisations alike but with quite different accompanying socio-organisational activities, education, health, horticulture and all kinds of agriculture related and non-agriculture development activities. Malla Reddy and his team, who in the meantime had taken over "Accion Fraterna" (AF) had gone full swing into the technical as well as the social challenges and opportunities of the watershed approach. He and so many dry land farmers participating in village wa-

tersheds over the years developed the full scope of the participatory watershed concept for the development of a dry and eroded land under a low external input agriculture approach in a sustainable perspective that nevertheless gave a meaningful income to the farmers as part of the overall income of their families. In my mind, Malla became Mr. Watershed in the district of Anantapur, especially after he gave leadership to the Voluntary Action Network of Anantapur (VANA) in 1995. VANA was a network of about 50 like-minded NGOs, which became a voice of the poor not only in Anantapur District, but in entire Andhra Pradesh.

Subsequently, in 1998 I took over another responsibility in my organisation, but I always remained in discussion with Malla, especially on the experiences and impact of Accion Fraterna's work. We often discussed which combination of development initiatives could help to bring about a sustainable multi-pronged economy. An economy that would secure even for poor families an income from a mix of ac-

tivities, labour or self-employed, with traditional or new levels of technology and capacities, local or international market related, with or without the direct involvement of Accion Fraterna, that would move everyone in this largely rural district ever closer to a comfortable rural living standard well above the poverty line.



In early 2024 Malla gave my wife Dr. Kanchana Lanzet and me the opportunity to once again visit the area of Kalyandurg, which I had first visited 40 years ago with Malla as narrated above. Kanchana and I were happy to find people who were proud of what they had achieved. They talked about how the drought management and employment programs of the 80s had been replaced by more sustainable

watershed management programs in the 90s, first with the support of the RDT and later with that of Accion Fraterna, later even with funding and cooperation of the government. For the dry land farmers among them, this transformed their earlier barren and eroded land into an agricultural resource and gave them the chance to cultivate drought-resistant crops like millets, pulses or groundnut and even vegetables and fruits!

As climate change had resulted in increasingly erratic and ill-distributed rainfalls, farmers began planting fruit trees three years ago using mobile drip irrigation with water sharing from group owned borewells aided by Accion Fraterna. Under this horticulture concept the various trees were selected in such a way that they would give income throughout the year because of their different harvesting times. The drought tolerant fruit trees survive under rainfed conditions and only during exceptionally long dry-spells need mobile irrigation!

Many more job opportunities and self-employment activities have been added to the income list of people in the area since the 80s especially, in construction and transport, horticulture, agricultural processing, skill formation for all kinds of jobs, especially also for and

by women initially organised by RDT and AF. In this, Malla's wife Mrs. Doreen Reddy played a similar role in RDT regarding the women's work as Malla did for the agriculture of the poor in Action Fraterna. The Government's employment guarantee law provided opportunities for thousands of drought-affected people, bridging ever more erratic drought seasons without income. Already in the 90s, women's groups stood surety for each other for the taking of small loans for income generation. They organised themselves as part of rural health programs, provided by RDT. They looked after the schools and teachers of supplementary education of their children provided by RDT which comes on top of the Government's basic education and has now been available for already two generations of village children.

Today, one does not see huts but proper houses in Mallapuram, built by RDT according to local taste. Most houses have electricity and a water tap, if not in the house then somewhere nearby. All houses have an outside bathroom, few trees and a small kitchen garden. There is a cooperation of various state and civil actors to ensure basic health in the village and the RDT Hospital at Kalyandurg is not far away. There's a total change in the labour /em-

ployer relations with daily wages sometimes as high as 1000 Rupees. With that also a great change in the economic relations between the castes got established, though one may still see subtle forms of social discrimination. When landless labourers earlier had to wait at common spaces for a chance of an employer picking them up for the day, we now saw workers are picked up from home and dropped at farms by autorickshaws arranged by the employing farmers. In one instance we even heard of labourers giving a loan to the farmer to cover the cost of planting, tending and protective irrigation.

Villagers say their greatest assets are their children, who for now almost 5 decades can receive a good basic and supplementary education. That has enabled many to reach out to higher education and good jobs in the big cities of India. They are now teachers, soldiers, administrators, business people, police men, IT- operators and specialists. With their income they are further able to substantially raise the overall income of families. RDT's approach to education and health forms in many ways the backbone of the multitude of activities that have unfolded. The villagers can now trust to earn sufficient family income despite the

uncertainties of the weather.

There's no doubt that the mix and multitude of interventions from Government, universities, local religious foundations like Puttaparthi Sai Baba and the ever-expanding markets in India have also contributed to the considerable expansion of the income cake of poor families in Kalyandurg. But without the early initiatives and relentless work of RDT and AF and long term critical financial support from donors, the villagers of Kalyandurg may not be as happy as we found them.

The Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, of which Anantapur is one district, belongs to India's drought prone areas, with lots of barren and unfertile land. The State and Central Governments could not expect great contributions from these areas to the countries' agricultural markets and to the National Public Distribution System in feeding the growing population of India. Its topography, average rainfall, crop pattern and water resources could not compete with areas in coastal Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra or parts of Tamil Nadu and would economically not justify the high external input agriculture applied in those areas. Rayalaseema had to find its own way to make ends meet. The way forward was a

sustainable low external input and rain fed agriculture, accompanied with a broad diversification of the village economy underpinned by a good basic and secondary education and primary and secondary health care.

With the benefit of hind-sight we can see how great spirits, i.e Father Ferrer and his wife Anne have laid the foundation with their long-term interventions in education and health which even today make all these initiatives fruitful and effective. From an economic point of view, it was important, that Malla Reddy and his colleagues as part of RDT and later of AF corroborated these activities with large scale inputs into watershed and low input sustainable agriculture and horticulture. The income from these provided the people with that part of their total food, cash and where-withal that is required to help making ends meet. It provided the basis for the families to look at seasonal migration as one of several income options not an annual time of suffering. Now they can also stay on and develop other opportunities for the betterment of their families and communities. With RDT's and AF's

projects, their children are educated and nourished and there is health care for mothers and the elderly, while they were working in the fields or selling produce to a market or go for jobs or a self-employment activity. It is important to point out that all this was never a dole. People worked hard to achieve all that of which they are so proud of today. And proud indeed, they can all be! And Malla stood out in initiating, motivating, giving directions and confidence to all the different approaches and experiments. Of all his technical, organisational and conceptual inputs and innovations that he masterminded, implemented or accompanied, his steadfast and positive attitude and leadership was the most critical input.

The diversified and flexible approach to the local and regional economy may well prove a good basis to face the challenges and future impact of climate change in Anantapur.

Three cheers to Malla and cheers to the up-and-coming leadership for a bright future of Anantapur.

Tribute to Malla Reddy:

A dear friend and man with a mission

- Fons van der Velden,

Former Director & Founder, Context, Intercooperation, The Netherlands

Introduction: the context – Anantapur District

In the Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteer about Anantapur (published in the year 1971) - which provides a historical multidimensional and multi-sector overview of the history of the district - , it is stated: 'The district is unfortunately vulnerable to famines. It lies in the heart of the Famine zone with an exceedingly light rainfall, poor soils and precarious irrigation sources'. Subsequently an extensive historical overview is given of the famines that ravaged the district and its inhabitants from the fifteenth century on. The authors remark: 'Economically, Anantapur is one of the relatively backward districts of the State. This is mainly due to the agricultural nature of its economy, the nascent stage of its industrial development, its susceptibility to recurring and virulent famines'.

This is, even today, in a nut-

shell the district where father Vincent Ferrer decided to work when Mrs Indira Gandhi allowed him to return to

India after he was expelled from India on account of his work in Manmad in Maharashtra.

Rural Development Trust

Rural Development Trust, the main vehicle for father Ferrer's work in Anantapur District was founded in 1969. Father Ferrer promoted in those years a humanitarian approach ('A man is not a man if he is not a brother'): poverty alleviation through increase of agricultural produce; fair distribution of the benefits of those produce; enhanced awareness of lower and higher castes and classes about injustices in society. Initially the focus was on Food for Work Programme (based of input which were pro-



vided by the United States of America under Public Law 480/665). Nutrition centres for children were built; a Leprosy Centre emerged; houses were constructed; an open well irrigation programme was started. The organisation developed and expanded rapidly: a Community Health Sector and Land Development Programme were added in 1976. This development has continued: during the past 55 years RDT has developed as the biggest, prestigious Non-Governmental Development Organisation in the district.

My first contact with Malla

Within this context Malla Reddy and I met for the first time in the summer of 1976. Malla was working as well supervisor in the wells department headed by a retired lieutenant colonel with its office in a residential area across the Anantapur Highway. With the consent of colonel he was so kind to allow me on a few occasions to join him on his motorcycle when he went for meetings with beneficiaries of the wells programme.

Earlier in that year I had the fortune to be introduced to father Ferrer when he visited (together with Ram Esteves, who was in those years his Personal Assistant) the Netherlands on a fund raising

tour. In those years, the Department of Political Science at the University of Nijmegen was a hotbed of students interested in the power question: who gets what, when and on what conditions? I was interested in the theory and practice of power relations and change processes in low income countries. Many of my classmates decided to go on internships to Central America (Nicaragua where with the Sandinista revolution had taken place was especially popular); for a number of reasons my then partner Gemmie Pepping I decided to go to India.

And so one hot summer day, we ended up at the railway station in Anantapur where we were soon shown the way to the 'Ferrer office'.

We stayed in Anantapur for half a year and had the opportunity to experience all aspects of RDT's work at first hand: the agricultural programme (of which the wells programme was the largest part at the time); rural industries (soap and brick factories, tanneries, batik and candle workshop); the health care programme; the social education and evaluation department, which had just been set up under the guidance of a sociologist from the National Institute of Community Development (NICD) in Hyderabad.

I am still grateful to Father

Ferrer and Anne, and their colleagues including Malla, for giving us ample opportunity to see and learn what poverty and exclusion means in practice, and how complex change processes are in practice. It was a special learning period. Moreover, being at RDT led to life-long professional and personal friendships, such as with Malla and of course Doreen.

Cooperation and co-creation with Malla

Our relationship and collaboration over no less than almost half a century has not been, and is not static: we got to know each other as young inquisitive searchers at the beginning of their careers; we have had a lot of contact in a donor recipient relationship (I worked for the Dutch co-funding relationship ICCO in the period 1987 - 1994); but got to know each other mainly after Malla became the director of Accion Fraterna in the projects we subsequently carried out together as professionals.

This joint collaborations included among others the following programmes and activities: exploring joint collaboration of big NGDOs in India (SISIN); a national workshop about the future of the NGDO sector in India (From Govindpur to Anantapur); a workshop about organisational learning

(Workshop bringing learning to the life of organisations); seminars, workshop and meetings about Social Business as a transformational process in general and the Social Return on Investment in particular (among others learning trajectory Social Business: an approach for transformational change?!). In all these programmes Malla played an important crucial, if not pivotal, role.

Apart from the more official and structured collaboration over the years we have had many ad hoc joint reflections and interactions

Malla Reddy: the institution

The social and institutional context as described above, and the various programmes and activities in which Malla and I have had the opportunity to working together, have taught me a lot about his professional competencies and personality. Malla combines a number of personality traits, which I think you rarely come across in the NGDO sector (not only in India but also globally 😊).

- *Pracademic*: Malla earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration and wrote a PhD later in life. He is in my view someone who has an eye for, and interest in, development theory and at the same time knows how

to turn it into practical action. Malla is in my view a real pracademic.

- *Network*: this approach has led, among other things, to him having a large network in the academic community and among practitioners; he has the ability to bring both groups together in a connecting way; has the ability to combine best of both these worlds.
- *Multi-stakeholder management*: operation in such a manner in the complex physical and socio-political context of Anantapur District demands the ability to manage relationships with multiple stakeholders of government, business and civil society and last but not least the international (quite often unpredictable) donor community. Malla has proven to be an expert in this area.
- *Applying the learning*: The above overview of our collaboration shows that Malla is an inquisitive mind; driven by curiosity and always looking for new approaches, strategy and tactics. He is not only looking for them, but knows how to apply what he has learned in concrete terms in Accion Fraterna's work like no other.¹
- *Striking a balance*: in the introduction to this contribution, I indi-

cated that RDT and Accion Fraterna operate in a, in many ways, challenging and complex context. Not only does the climate present major challenges, but also the socio-political relations in the district. It is a situation where relatively simple strategies do not suffice. The literature on transition processes distinguishes between more technocratic approaches on the one hand, and political economy approach on the other.² Linked to this is often the question: does the focus of NGOs need to be on awareness raising and organisation building (e.g. through sanghams), or should the focus be on more technical assistance. In my opinion, Malla's greatest merit is that he has stayed away from these (mostly ideological) discussions, and as chosen a strategic path that is primarily informed by the grass root realities at village and district level.

But apart from all these personality traits, he is above all a valued, reliable and inspirational good friend.

Malla Reddy the family man

Half a century service to poor and marginalised communities, and being respected for your work lo-

cally, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, nationally and internationally is of course a tremendous achievement, which can definitely not be achieved by one man alone. In my view it is a result of a family labour

in which apart from Doreen, Bharat and Sandhiya and the small girls, Malla himself plays definitely also an import role . Congratulations. I look forward towards our joint collaboration in the years to come.



Ph.D. Convocation with Father Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer at S.K.University,Anantapur – 17.02.2007

¹ During the workshop Workshop bringing learning to the life of organisations (which was organised together with James Taylor of the CDRA from Cape Town, South Africa and Pradeep Esteves), we woke up one fine morning to see that Malla had immediately changed the name of the Training Hall to Learning Hall. (The paint was still wet.)

² The technocratic approach primarily promotes technological innovations in order to foster sustainable development. In such an approach transition is not positioned within the political and economic context of the world's contemporary challenges, and change processes are perceived as predominantly technical, value-free and neutral trajectories. The political approach acknowledges that transition is a broader process than mere technological improvement – it is about deep radical, and fundamental social transformation.

Reflections on the Golden Jubilee of a “Pucca” NGO Man

- Bram van Leeuwen,

Retired from ICCO, The Netherlands

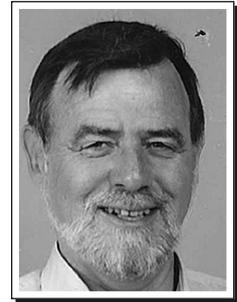
A Journey Begins

As a young project officer working with ICCO, I made my first trip to Anantapur in 1978 to learn more about the work of RDT. At that time, I could not have imagined that this visit would mark the beginning of a long-lasting relationship of cooperation and friendship. With deep emotion, I write this contribution to commemorate Malla Reddy’s 50 years of service to the Dalit, Tribal, and other impoverished communities and his efforts to improve the natural resource endowment in the semi-arid Anantapur District.

A Lifelong Commitment

Malla’s career has been with RDT from the very start. He met Vincent and Anne Ferrer soon after they arrived in Anantapur during his student years. Hailing from Neerukuntlapalli, a tiny remote village, Malla was easily convinced by the visionary Vincent Ferrer of the

importance of “The Big Project”: a challenging, long-term program aimed at saving the deteriorating agricultural land through effective measures to combat chronic drought conditions. Malla joined, stayed on, and dedicated his life to “the Big Project” – spending 25 years in various roles at RDT and another 25 years as the director of AF - Ecology Centre.



Measuring Impact

Numerous reports, studies, and articles have documented the transformation of harsh living conditions in the Tribal, Dalit, and other vulnerable communities of Anantapur District since the 1970s and the significant role RDT - AF has played in this process. Without a doubt, Malla can look back on his career with immense satisfaction –

a career made possible not only by his dedication but also by the supportive environment of his family, colleagues, friends, and, above all, the people in the villages.

Enduring Principles

Over the years, strategies and projects have evolved, adapting to changing contexts, insights, and opportunities. What has remained constant are the “old-fashioned” four guiding principles: concern for others, work beyond duty, pursuit of excellence, and helping as many poor people as possible.

A Memorable Encounter

I still remember my conversation with Mr Ramesh, one of the farmers I met during a field visit with my guide and translator, Malla, in the 1980s. Ramesh was removing stones from his field—a Herculean task in Rayalaseema—supported by an RDT food-for-work program. Both of us were deeply moved as Ramesh detailed his future cropping plans for his field once the stones were removed and the drought prevention measures were completed. I am convinced that the willingness to listen to these voices is essential for any change agent to be relevant in the struggle for justice. This is RDT-AF’s practice; this is Malla Reddy’s practice.

A Path of Independence

More than by the advice of outsiders—friends and experts from within or outside India—RDT/AF has followed its own path, guided by the four principles in close cooperation with the aspirations and ambitions of the people in poverty-stricken village communities. The emphasis on independence in designing and implementing programs, based on decisions made by the experienced and dedicated core staff, has undoubtedly been a key factor in the success of these programs. I admire this firm stance of the organization, as it must be a significant challenge to remain independent while relying on grants from “highly professional expert” donor organizations abroad or contributions from major business companies in India and government institutions known for their limited local knowledge and rigid procedures and criteria.

Personal Reflections

On a more personal note, I want to express my deep appreciation for the long years of friendship and hospitality. Whenever I wanted to visit Anantapur, whether alone or with relatives, Malla and his team warmly welcomed me. They were always ready to accompany me on field visits and explain the progress of work and dilemmas,

and there was always early morning coffee on the guesthouse veranda served by kind colleagues.

Recognition and Hope

With great interest, I read about high-level press conferences and prestigious awards recognizing the contribution of the AF-Ecology Centre to natural resource management. Despite the shrinking space for civil society organizations in many countries, it is hopeful that the role and contribution of NGOs are still recognized by some bureaucrats, politicians, and the media. Conflicts and bitterness at local and national levels are often linked to regional and global developments. Today, confidence in the problem-solving capacity of national governments and international

associations is dwindling, and civil society organizations and networks worldwide have: “Work to do. And a world to win,” as stated by Arundhati Roy in *Azadi* (p. 202, 2022).

A Vision for the Future

The role of civil society in our increasingly divided world is of utmost importance. Hopefully, the AF-Ecology Centre will continue with creativity and enthusiasm, inspiring many other NGOs in and outside India to join hands for a more just and humane world. I wish Malla another 25 years of excellent health, great happiness, and continued energy and wisdom to “do a lot of work and ... win a world” in the belief that: “Nothing is impossible” (Vincent Ferrer).



Inauguration of Community Centre From Left: Prasanna Mathew, Sampath Kumar, Father Ferrer, Malla Reddy, Usha Mutholy, Rani Thomas.

A Guiding Light for All

Reflections from My Experiences

- G. Bhaskar Babu,

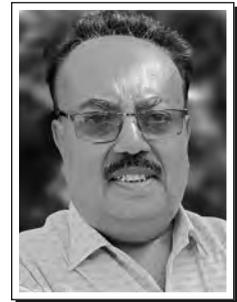
Coordinator, CBO, AF-EC, Anantapur

A Journey of Mentorship and Dedication

For over 36 years, I have had the privilege of working with AF Ecology Centre, during which I've been fortunate to witness and learn from Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy. His human values, integrity, and sense of duty have set an enduring example. In my view, after Father Ferrer, Dr. Malla Reddy embodies these values most profoundly – a figure of humility, dedication, and compassion who honours everyone, regardless of status or age. His humility is not just a trait, but a guiding principle that inspires us all.

In the early years of my career, especially from 1988 to 1998, I was in Kalyandurg as an STO and Field Supervisor, so I observed Dr. Malla Reddy from a distance. But from 1999 onwards, as a Team Leader, I had the chance to work closely under his leadership, gaining first-

hand insights into his leadership style and ethos. While there are countless instances I could share, here are three that left an indelible impression.



First Incident: Resolving Conflict with Leadership and Poise

In 1995, a challenging situation unfolded at AF. Many engineers at the time were reportedly engaging in unethical practices, and as a consequence, the organization dismissed about 32 engineers in a single month. In response, these engineers protested, going on a hunger strike at the Kalyandurg RDT field office, disrupting the usual flow of activities. Father Ferrer assigned Dr. Malla Reddy to mediate this sensitive situation.

On the morning of September

16, 1995, Dr Malla Reddy, accompanied by senior directors, arrived in Kalyandurg, where the protestors blocked the office entrance and refused to allow anyone inside. In a display of humility and calm, Dr Malla Reddy sat on the road beside the office with the senior staff. Together, they staged a peaceful counter-sit-in, which drew the attention of local political leaders, including Bhangi Pratap, who approached Dr. Malla Reddy to negotiate.

Dr Malla Reddy expressed with utmost respect, "This organization operates on values of integrity. I won't step inside until justice prevails." By the end of the day, his demeanour and respectful communication dissolved the tension, and the engineers ultimately agreed to end their protest. Dr Malla Reddy's peaceful approach to resolving the conflict reassured everyone, and later held a meeting to explain the gravity of the situation, bringing everyone to an understanding.

This event highlighted Dr. Malla Reddy's natural talent for conflict resolution, leadership, and integrity. He emerged as a dynamic leader, and even Father Ferrer commended his diplomatic prowess. That day, it became evident that Dr Malla Reddy had the skills to de-

fuse even the toughest conflicts – a role model for everyone at RDT.

Second Incident: Compassion in Action During the COVID-19 Crisis

During the COVID-19 second wave in 2021, a valued colleague, Ameen Khan, a computer operator at RDT, was severely affected by the virus. He was admitted to the Bata-lapalli RDT Hospital with Dr. Malla Reddy's assistance. His health continued to decline, and he became increasingly distressed, refusing medication and treatment. The doctors and staff faced difficulties caring for him as he resisted the necessary interventions.

During a Zoom meeting, Dr. Malla Reddy received a call from the hospital regarding Ameen's condition. Although the call was accidentally audible to all staff on Zoom, it allowed us to witness Dr. Malla Reddy's genuine concern. He addressed the staff on the phone with heartfelt words, urging them to continue giving their best to Ameen. His care was akin to a father's tenderly requesting that they should do all they could for Ameen. Many of us were deeply moved by his empathy. He not only felt responsible for Ameen's recovery but also conveyed immense respect for his team.

Thanks to Dr. Malla Reddy's relentless support, Ameen eventually recovered. To us, Dr. Malla Reddy was more than a leader; he was a compassionate father figure who went beyond expectations for the welfare of his people. This experience reinforced his status as a benevolent leader and a "Man with a Golden Heart" in the eyes of his staff.

Third Incident: Personal Guidance and Support

Beyond the workplace, Dr. Malla Reddy has also been a mentor in my personal life, guiding me and my family through health and other challenges. Without any family elders, I have often sought his advice, treating him as an elder brother and a guiding light. His wisdom and support have been invaluable, helping us make informed decisions during trying times. This relationship is deeply personal, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have such a

compassionate and wise mentor.

Dr. Malla Reddy's leadership, empathy, and ethical foundation have shaped not only the organization but also the lives of individuals like me. His humility, integrity, and unwavering support for his team have made him an irreplaceable role model. As a leader, Dr. Malla Reddy has brought to life the values that Father Ferrer held dear, fostering a culture of trust, respect, and responsibility within RDT.

In Conclusion

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's journey is one of compassion, resilience, and unwavering commitment to his values. His contributions to RDT and the community go far beyond his professional duties. To many of us, he remains a beacon of hope, a source of strength, and a role model. His enduring legacy as a leader who cares for his people with humility and respect will inspire future generations.

A Life of Dedication and Inspiration for the Youth

- K. Brahmeswara Rao,
Team Lead, PME, AF-EC, Anantapur

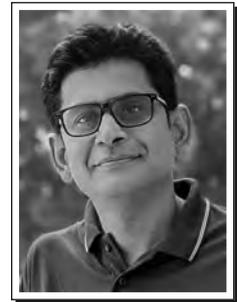
Introduction

Dr Malla Reddy is a dedicated advocate for the impoverished, a steadfast friend to farmers, an expert in rural development, a compassionate environmentalist, and a committed leader who has persistently tackled the recurring challenge of droughts. His journey from a humble farming family to a distinguished figure in social service is a testament to his unwavering dedication, passion, self-reliance, and commitment.

Early Beginnings and Pioneering Contributions

Dr Reddy began his journey as a field-level worker with the Rural Development Trust (RDT), making substantial contributions under Father Ferrer's mentorship. His exemplary work led to his role as Director of RDT, where he played a pivotal role in shaping the organization's initiatives. His subsequent

leadership in various governmental and non-governmental organizations has been instrumental in delivering vital services to farmers, agricultural labourers, and the rural poor. His impactful work in policy-making and program implementation has profoundly affected these communities.



National and International Recognition

Dr. Malla Reddy has actively participated in numerous national and international conferences, offering innovative solutions to pressing challenges such as drought, agricultural difficulties, and rural poverty alleviation. His exceptional service has earned him numerous prestigious awards at both national and international levels, recognizing his

contributions and innovative approaches.

Transformative Contributions in Anantapur District

Dr Reddy's contributions are particularly noteworthy in the context of the Anantapur District. His deep insights into agricultural conditions, traditional farming practices, natural resource management, drought mitigation, and rural livelihood enhancement have led to transformative changes. His book, "Anantha Prasthanam," provides a comprehensive guide for farmers, policymakers, and development practitioners, reflecting his profound understanding and practical recommendations.

Achievements Under His Leadership

Over the past 30 years, under Dr. Malla Reddy's leadership, the AF organization has effectively implemented various programs, including watershed development, sustainable agriculture, drought mitigation, and additional livelihood opportunities. These initiatives have significantly improved the lives of farmers and agricultural labourers, leading to notable enhancements in their socioeconomic conditions.

Personal Experience with Dr. Malla Reddy

Having worked with Dr. Malla Reddy for nearly 11 years, I have consistently been impressed by his approach and dedication. He exemplifies key virtues such as integrity, commitment, and an unwavering dedication to social service. His leadership effectively addresses challenges and fosters positive change, establishing him as a respected leader and a catalyst for social transformation. The following three qualities stand out particularly:

- **Systematic Thinking:** Dr. Reddy possesses a thorough understanding of his work, other organizations, community needs, and government procedures. His long-term perspective on sustainable development underscores his belief in the importance of systematic and continuous efforts. He emphasizes that true success comes from consistent, well-planned endeavours rather than focusing solely on immediate outcomes.
- **Core Values (Integrity, Commitment, Compassion, and Patience):** Dr. Reddy embodies Father Ferrer's teachings, focusing on benefiting others. He demonstrates profound compassion for the poor and agricultural la-

bourers, continually developing innovative programs to support them. His initiatives within the AF organization, including food aid, health services, and vocational training, reflect his commitment to improving their lives.

- **Effectiveness in Execution:** Dr. Reddy exhibits exceptional effectiveness in managing organizations, implementing programs, and leading development initiatives. His practical approach and dedication have significantly strengthened both the RDT and AF organizations. His hands-on involvement in managing resources and ensuring effective project implementation has been crucial in achieving positive outcomes.

Commitment to Lifelong Learning

Dr. Reddy is devoted to lifelong learning and diligent work. He views work as the essence of his life and adheres to this ethos even amidst challenges. Despite resource constraints, his resilience and unwavering commitment highlight his dedication to his mission. His focus on achieving results while maintaining core values, even in difficult situations, is truly commendable.

Final Note

Dr. Malla Reddy's 50 years of professional life are exemplary and a testament to his commitment and impact. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him and his family, wishing him continued good health and many more years of impactful service to society.

Insights and Reflection

Dr. Malla Reddy's journey is a compelling testament to the transformative power of dedication and innovation in driving meaningful change. His approach to rural development exemplifies the crucial integration of traditional wisdom with contemporary practices, creating solutions that are not only sustainable but also deeply rooted in cultural relevance. By seamlessly blending these elements, he has ensured that his initiatives are both effective and respectful of local traditions.

His leadership is characterized by a steadfast commitment to core values – integrity, compassion, and perseverance – while achieving significant, tangible outcomes. This balance is a hallmark of effective leadership, demonstrating that enduring success comes from adhering to one's principles while

adapting to evolving needs and circumstances.

Dr Reddy's work highlights the necessity of a compassionate and informed approach to addressing the complex challenges faced by rural communities. His innovative strategies and relentless pursuit of

betterment serve as a model for how persistent, value-driven efforts can overcome multifaceted issues and foster lasting progress. His legacy underscores the importance of resilience and thoughtful action in creating impactful, sustainable change.



Watershed Development Committee Meeting at Mallapuram Village of Kalyandurg mandal

A Pillar of Strength for the Farmers and Labourers of Anantapur District

- Amara Rudraiah,

Coordinator, SADLP, AF-EC, Anantapur

Our family extends heartfelt congratulations and warm wishes on the remarkable occasion of Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Sister Doreen's 50-year journey with the Rural Development Trust (RDT). May they continue their mission with health and peace for years to come.

An Exemplary Journey of Learning and Dedication

For the past 25 years, I have had the privilege of observing Dr. Malla Reddy. His journey reflects continuous growth, drawing valuable lessons from life's experiences and consistently striving for self-improvement. Having travelled to various countries, he has gained knowledge that is not only vast but deeply practical. He has become an extraordinary figure at RDT from humble beginnings, thanks to his hard work, dedication, resilience, and unending passion for learning.

Dr Malla Reddy speaks and writes in a way that resonates with

ordinary farmers, often using simple village dialect and proverbs that make his messages heartfelt. His patience

stands out; during meetings, he attentively listens to every presentation and takes notes on key points, providing guidance that is always practical and contextually relevant.

A Visionary for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

Dr Malla Reddy is continually focused on the well-being of farmers, especially those engaged in dryland agriculture. Thirty years ago, he advocated for filling traditional water bodies in Anantapur district with water from HNSS and HLC – a vision that led to the recent filling of village tanks through the Handri-Neeva project over the past five to six years. Long before anyone realized the potential of car-



bon revenue, in 2010, he initiated carbon farming and biogas programs to bring additional carbon income to farmers.

Collaboration with Government for Lasting Impact

Traditionally, NGOs tend to avoid working closely with the government. However, from the outset, Dr. Malla Reddy has prioritized collaboration with government entities, recognizing that this partnership allows for broader benefits to reach the people. He emphasizes that the first responsibility for community development lies with the government, which has the financial resources and infrastructure necessary for impactful change. His persistence has fostered strong relationships with senior government officials, allowing RDT's programs to benefit the public significantly.

Water Conservation for Sustainable Development

Under Dr Malla Reddy's leadership, the watershed programs initiated by the AF-EC (Accion Fraternal- Ecology Centre) have transformed the lives of farmers and labourers in the region. I witnessed the benefits first hand while working as an STO in Chadalla and Charlopalli villages. During a period when villagers struggled to find work and food, the watershed

initiatives provided them with employment, increased water storage, and enhanced groundwater levels, ultimately boosting agricultural productivity.

A Mentor and Guide in Personal and Professional Growth

Dr. Malla Reddy's guidance has been instrumental in my professional and personal growth. His values of cooperation, partnership, transparency, and a nurturing spirit guide the organization's approach. He has supported me on several occasions. During my wife's job interview, a technical glitch was resolved with his intervention, and when a transfer was needed, he helped us navigate that, too. Over the years, he has extended support for our family's healthcare expenses and children's education, providing both assistance and reassurance. Today, our family enjoys a respected place in society due to RDT's support and Dr Malla Reddy's generosity – a debt we will forever cherish.

A Guru and Divine Presence in My Life

Dr Malla Reddy is not only a mentor to me but is akin to a divine figure. For as long as I live, I will continue to follow in his footsteps, working tirelessly for the betterment of RDT and the people it serves, just as he has taught me.

*The Protector of Anantapur's Farmers – A Paragon of Virtue,
Blessed Son of Smt. Y. Venkatamma and Shri. Hari Narayana Reddy*

The Legacy of Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy: A Beacon of Hope and Valour

*- Hakim Rizwana Begum,
Coordinator, ALP, AF-EC, Anantapur*

With the determination of Ekalavya, the victory of Arjuna, the support of Karna, and the courage of Bhishma

Following the footsteps of Alluri Sitarama Raju, the courage of Bhagat Singh, the bravery of Andhra Kesari, and the principles of Gandhi

With the wisdom of Chanakya, the courage of Ashoka, the vision of Father Vincent, and the radiance of the sun

With thoughts as fresh as green fields, a heart that melts like butter, and the beacon of hope for Anantapur's farmers, the great man who believes water is life

A champion of women's growth and development, a soul who filled the hearts of all with the essence of motherhood

Our Malla Reddy... we offer our sincere obeisance to you... You will live forever in the hearts of all...

This poem is dedicated to our beloved, revered, and honoured Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy.

Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy, a shining beacon for Anantapur's farmers and rural communities, has proven that Anantapur is not a place of scarcity but a land of endless opportunities, unwavering support, and hope. Through his selfless service and dedication, he has become a source of strength, guiding the community with compassion and commitment.

With profound respect and gratitude, we offer our heartfelt obeisance to you, Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy, with a million salutations.

A Heartfelt Reflection on Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's Inspiration

I have had the privilege of working with our Director, Sri Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, for the past 14 years. Throughout these years, I have gained many inspiring experiences, and I wish to share one such experi-



ence with all of you. In my role at the organization, I have had the opportunity to deliver training sessions, and every class conducted by Sir has continuously enhanced my skills and clarity. Today, I want to share a key lesson I learned from him.

Sri Malla Reddy Sir has explained to us that RDT and A.F. Ecology principles are the same. Designing these principles involved a great deal of hard work, and Sir emphasized the dedication involved in shaping them.

- *The First Principle – Compassionate Thinking:* He shared that Christianity should not be viewed as a religion but as part of history. We have seen how individuals suffering from violence and oppression are loved and cared for. From this, we crafted the principle of Parachintana—a deep sense of empathy and love for those in need.
- *The Second Principle – Striving Beyond Fate:* In Hinduism, it is crucial to distinguish between right (Dharma) and wrong (Adharma) and believe that every person has their own Dharma. By understanding that serving humanity is akin to serving the divine, we crafted a principle focused on going beyond one's fate and putting in extra effort for the betterment of all.

- *The Third Principle – Collaborating with Those in Need:* Islam teaches us to think of others and give back. A portion of our earnings should be given to those in need. We adopted this principle, emphasizing collaboration and support for the underprivileged, and introduced programs like India for India.
- *The Fourth Principle – Adherence to High Standards of Quality:* Drawing inspiration from Dr B.R. Ambedkar's vision of social equality and justice and Father Ferrer's teachings on service to others, we adopted the principle of maintaining high-quality standards in everything we do.

Our principles should align with our behaviour and actions and be visible in our lives. We should strive to spend our resources for the benefit of the less fortunate. The ideas of how to serve and assist others and the importance of taking the first step have led to transformative changes within our organization and the community.

Through these profound principles and his teachings, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy has inspired me and led me to achieve better results in my work. I offer my heartfelt thanks to him for his vision, leadership, and the positive change he has fostered.

In the Footsteps of a Visionary: A Tribute to Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Mrs. Doreen

A Legacy of Unwavering Dedication

- *Jakka Murali Krishna*

Chief of Operations, AF-EC, Anantapur

In the esteemed tradition of Father Ferrer, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy Sir and Mrs. Doreen Madam have dedicated their lives to advancing the missions of R.D.T. and A.F.E.C. Dr. Malla Reddy's profound commitment to environmental stewardship and his tireless efforts to protect farmers from the ravages of drought were not merely professional responsibilities but sacred callings. His enduring legacy is defined by this unwavering dedication to his noble causes.

A Deepened and Personal Connection

Upon joining the R.D.T. organization in 1995, I began my journey in the finance department, while Dr. Malla Reddy Sir led the Ecology Department and Mrs. Doreen Madam directed the Women's Department. Even before my official tenure, Dr. Malla Reddy Sir's reputation for exceptional staff training had reached me, leaving a deep impression.

However, my role in the finance department often left me feeling a personal void in guidance, a gap that was felt acutely due to the lack of direct mentorship in my specific field.



A Commitment to Operational Excellence

During my initial years at R.D.T., the Accounts Department utilised manual accounting systems. Every record, from vouchers to cash books and ledgers, was meticulously managed by hand. Dr. Malla Reddy Sir and Mrs. Doreen Madam would carefully review each voucher, providing detailed feedback and invaluable guidance. Their thorough involvement and constructive advice were pivotal in enhancing our operational efficiency and ensuring the success of the department's functions.

Championing Sports and Wellbeing

Dr. Malla Reddy Sir's passion for sports was as profound as his commitment to his professional responsibilities. In 1996, he played a crucial role in organising the district-level employees' cricket tournament under the Anantapur District Cricket Association. His support extended to managing the R.D.T. employees' cricket team personally. Additionally, his encouragement to engage in activities like playing volleyball in the evening left a memorable impact on all participants, fostering a sense of community and well-being.

A Transformative Influence at A.F.E.C.

My association with Dr. Malla Reddy Sir grew even deeper when I joined the A.F.E.C. Ecology Center in 2012. I had the privilege of working across various departments, consistently seeking the opportunity to learn from his expertise. His mentorship was a cornerstone of my professional development, and I remain profoundly grateful for his guidance and support throughout my career.

An Inspirational Dedication to Sustainable Agriculture

Dr. Malla Reddy Sir's dedication to sustainable agriculture was nothing short of inspirational. His relentless efforts to promote

sustainable farming practices among marginalised and small-scale farmers were transformative. He was a role model whose values and commitment to progress continually inspired those around him, making a lasting difference in the field of agriculture.

A Family Embodying Compassion and Values

The values exemplified by Dr. Malla Reddy Sir and his family have deeply resonated with us. Our families have formed a strong bond, and we are deeply appreciative of the support and guidance they have provided, which has significantly influenced our own growth. The unwavering support and kindness shown by Dr. Malla Reddy Sir's family, especially his son Bharat Reddy and daughter-in-law Sandhya, will always be treasured.

A Prayer for Continued Blessings

I offer my heartfelt prayers for Dr. Malla Reddy Sir, Mrs. Doreen Madam, Bharat, Sandhya, and their entire family. May they be continuously blessed with health and happiness. May their enduring efforts and contributions achieve even greater success and continue to benefit countless others.

With deepest respect and gratitude,

Honouring Sri Malla Reddy : A Legacy of 50 Years in Service

- *M. Shaiksha Vali,*

Campus Manager & IT Incharge, AF-EC, Anantapur

As we celebrate the monumental achievement of Sri Malla Reddy, who has dedicated 50 years of his life to serving the community, we are filled with deep respect and admiration. Alongside his wife, Mrs Doreen, he has tirelessly worked to uplift the community, following the inspiring path set by Father Ferrer. Their unwavering commitment has positively impacted countless lives and serves as a shining example for future generations.

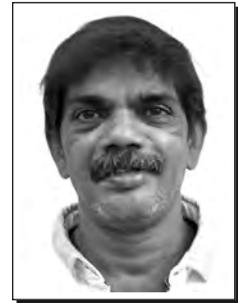
In 1992, Mrs. Doreen employed me as a typist at RDT, marking the beginning of a journey of professional growth under her steadfast support. With Sri Malla Reddy's encouragement, I gained the skills necessary to manage technical tasks related to computer networks and hardware independently, a testament to his effective mentorship.

Sri Malla Reddy's insightful words continuously guide us toward development. He believes in

every individual's responsibility to protect nature, and his guidance has been instrumental in creating a thriving ecosystem at the AF Ecology Centre. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a clean, plastic-free environment and promotes the wise use of water resources, drawing from his vast experience in this field.

I have learned invaluable lessons from Sri Malla Reddy, and my education continues every day. His support has propelled me from a junior employee to the position of Campus Manager. Furthermore, the organization has provided job opportunities for my family, significantly contributing to our growth and stability.

During a challenging period when my health declined, Sri Malla Reddy ensured I received the nec-



essary medical attention. He referred me to a reputable hospital, where I underwent surgery in 2019. Both he and Mrs. Doreen were a constant source of encouragement, checking on my health daily and providing emotional support. We share a deep bond with their family, and the values instilled by them have greatly enriched our lives.

Their respect for staff, unwavering commitment to excellence, and strong moral values serve as a continuous source of inspiration for me. They work tirelessly, often sacrificing weekends and holidays. Over the past 50 years, it is estimated that they have worked over seven years on Sundays alone. Sri Malla Reddy firmly believes that empowering women is crucial for the advancement of families and communities. He is always focused on aiding farmers, viewing the protection of their livelihoods during droughts as a sacred duty.

Sri Malla Reddy exemplifies integrity. He openly acknowledges his mistakes and readily forgives the errors of others. His warm demeanour when welcoming visitors reflects his profound respect for everyone he meets. He ensures that guests are well taken care of, showing genuine concern for their well-being.

In the Anantapur district, many government officials seek Sri Malla Reddy's insights when developing programs. His respect transcends political boundaries, and he maintains strong relationships with people from all walks of life.

In 2020, during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Malla Reddy's leadership shone brightly. He tirelessly provided masks and essential supplies to thousands of underprivileged individuals, particularly those who lost their jobs due to migration. His selfless dedication during this crisis not only served as a beacon of hope but also underscored his unwavering commitment to serving others, inspiring us all.

We are truly fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside a remarkable leader like Sri Malla Reddy. His ability to cultivate meaningful relationships with numerous officials and community leaders is a testament to his exceptional leadership and we are honored to be part of his team.

As we honour Sri Malla Reddy and Mrs Doreen, I pray for their continued good health, happiness, and many more years of impactful service to the community.

With heartfelt respect,

A Leader of Integrity and Inspiration

- B. Fazlulla,

Secretary to the Director & HR-MIS, AF-EC, Anantapur

I am B. Fazlulla, and I have had the privilege of serving as the secretary to Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy at the AF Ecology Centre for the past 16 years. It has been an enriching journey, and I feel fortunate to share my experiences of working closely with such a remarkable leader. Dr. Malla Reddy's rise from a modest farmer's family to a highly respected director at both RDT and AF Ecology Centre is truly a testament to his hard work and dedication.

He began his education at the age of 11, completed his degree, and joined RDT in 1974 as a Community Organizer. Over the years, through sheer perseverance and commitment, he grew into senior leadership positions, becoming a director at both RDT and AF Ecology Centre. His life, service to society and achievements are well known, but I would like to share some of my personal experiences and impressions after working closely with him for

16 years.

Work Ethic and Leadership Style

Having worked with several IAS officers during my time as a camp clerk, I can confidently say that Dr Malla Reddy's approach to work is on par with that of an IAS officer. He is a perfectionist when it comes to work, ensuring that every task is done with the utmost quality. Whether it's writing or planning, he will review drafts several times until he is fully satisfied with the outcome. He also values timeliness, making sure that tasks are completed on time without any delay. His sharp memory is admirable – he remembers details from years ago, including letters, documents, events, and the names of people. Despite his senior position, he maintains strict discipline, never taking unnecessary leave and al-



ways ensuring his presence in the office. He trusts his team, allowing them the freedom to work once he is confident in their capabilities. He also has the ability to make quick and effective decisions when needed.

Character and Humility

What sets Dr. Malla Reddy apart is his humility. Despite his position, he treats everyone with respect, whether they are senior colleagues or junior staff. He never looks down on anyone and always maintains decency and politeness. In my 16 years of working with him, I have never seen him act arrogantly or speak harshly to anyone, regardless of their position. He greets everyone with warmth and respect, no matter their rank. His remarkable character has been shaped by his self-discipline, learning, and dedication to practising what he believes. Achieving such a high level of integrity and character is no easy task – it requires deep knowledge, patience, courage, and compassion.

Personal Habits and Health

Dr. Malla Reddy is highly disciplined in his personal life, especially when it comes to health. He is careful about his diet, avoiding unhealthy foods and maintaining a balanced intake. He exercises regularly, especially walking, to stay fit.

Even when faced with significant health challenges, such as knee and neck surgeries, he displayed immense courage, patience, and resilience, which was a source of inspiration for me. His ability to overcome these challenges with such grace is not something one sees every day. Additionally, he extends his care to others by offering health advice and financial support to his colleagues when needed. Many in our AF staff look to him as a source of strength, knowing he is always there to guide them in times of need.

A Source of Continuous Learning

Throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to learn many valuable lessons from Dr. Malla Reddy, not only about work but also about life. His leadership, discipline, humility, and care for others have shaped my understanding of what it means to be a true leader. I feel proud to have worked as his secretary and to witness his relentless dedication to improving society.

In conclusion, I wish Dr. Malla Reddy, Mrs. Doreen, and their family continued health, happiness, and peace. May they keep inspiring all of us for many years to come with their unwavering commitment to service and integrity.

Impact of Dr. Malla Reddy's Leadership in Anantapur District

- *N. Nagashiva Shankar Reddy,*

Coordinator, Youth Resource Centre, AF-EC, Anantapur

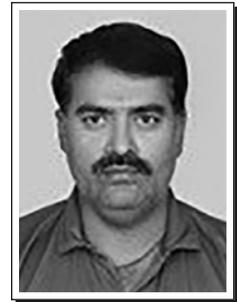
During my tenure as the State Head at the Nudge Foundation in Bengaluru, our organization focused on addressing unemployment among the youth in Anantapur district. As part of this initiative, I was transferred to Anantapur. During my work, when I met with various NGOs and government officials, I was consistently advised to meet Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director of the AF Ecology Centre.

I first met Dr. Malla Reddy in 2015. During our initial meeting, which lasted about two hours, we had an in-depth discussion about providing skill development training to the youth in Anantapur to address unemployment. I was deeply impressed by Dr. Malla Reddy's profound understanding of the unemployment issue and the challenges faced by the district. On that very day, he instructed his team at AF to provide the necessary support to our foundation's Gurukul

program, which aimed to empower youth through skill development.

With the cooperation of Dr Malla Reddy and his team, over the next three years, we were able to provide various skill training programs to approximately 5,000 unemployed youth, helping them secure job opportunities. Dr. Malla Reddy's support was invaluable in the successful implementation of these programs.

In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread disruption, leading many organizations, including ours, to shut down their projects in Anantapur. However, in 2021, Dr Malla Reddy invited me to take up the responsibility of the Youth Resource Centre at AF Ecology. With his guidance and inspiration, we were able to conduct skill training and job fairs for around



7,000 youth in Anantapur, significantly improving their employment prospects. Throughout this journey, Dr. Malla Reddy's continuous encouragement helped me achieve many milestones in my work.

Under Dr. Malla Reddy's mentorship, I developed a deep understanding of the challenges faced by the youth and the strategies needed to overcome them. His profound knowledge and foresight made him a remarkable leader with over 21 years of experience.

Additionally, attending the training sessions conducted by Mrs.

Doreen, Dr. Malla Reddy's spouse, further motivated me and enriched my knowledge. I strongly believe that the contributions of Dr. Malla Reddy and Mrs. Doreen have brought about significant changes in the lives of the people of Anantapur district.

I pray that God blesses them with good health and prosperity, and I hope that under their leadership, more developmental programs will be implemented to improve the lives of the people in the region.



In World day to combat drought and desertification day 17.06.2014

Reflections on My Journey with Respected Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy

- G. Hanumantha Rayudu,

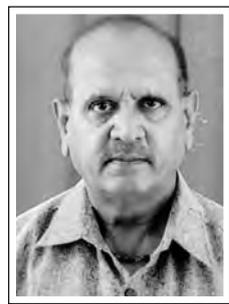
Coordinator, CARA Project, AF-EC, Anantapur

I joined RDT in 1981, during which time Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy was already working in the Kalyandurg area. Initially, I was transferred from Kuderu to the Kalyandurg region, where I had the opportunity to work under Dr. Reddy's guidance. He served as the Director of Community Organization, and working with him provided invaluable learning experiences.

Dr Reddy is an exceptional trainer with a practical approach to everything. His deep understanding of rural communities, farmers, and the unique geographical conditions of the district is remarkable. Being a native of the district, he possesses a comprehensive awareness of its environmental conditions. His perseverance and self-motivation are his greatest strengths. Under his leadership, the organization conducted SEARCH training programs, which helped many staff members rise to leadership positions.

Dr. Reddy also presented me with a rare opportunity to work in AF, a chance I consider golden. This opportunity allowed me to fulfil my long-held aspirations of contributing

to drought mitigation, integrated environmental development, and the promotion of eco-efficient agriculture and practices. Under Dr.



Reddy's visionary guidance, I was able to make a meaningful contribution to causes that are close to my heart.

Dr. Reddy, a lifelong learner, poet, and writer, always offers direct and practical suggestions. His advice is designed to help others achieve their goals effectively, without belittling them. His guidance is deeply rooted in a desire to see others grow and succeed.

Reflecting on my 44 years of experience working with Dr. Reddy, I can confidently say that I have learned immensely from him. Dr. Reddy undoubtedly influenced the community organization skills I practice and the knowledge I apply in implementing environmental development programs. I consider him my foremost mentor and guide.

An Everlasting Gem of Anantapur

- G. Venkatesulu,
MTL, AF-EC, Kundurpi

For the past 50 years, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy has been a beacon of hope for the underprivileged, illuminating the lives of countless people through his dedicated service at RDT. For 50 years, he played a pivotal role in establishing his unique identity in Anantapur district.

Early Life and Career Beginnings

Born into a humble farmer's family in the remote village of Nee-rukuntlapalli in Kadiri Taluka, Dr Malla Reddy completed his education and began his journey with RDT in 1974 as a social worker. Through his dedication, he rose to the position of Director at AF Ecology Centre, an independent organization affiliated with RDT.

Deep Understanding of Rural Hardships

Growing up in a rural farming family, Dr. Malla Reddy intimately understood the multifaceted struggles of the poor. His empathy for

those facing water shortages, irregular rains, and crop failures – pushing farmers towards despair and even suicide – was deeply moving. The rural migration for work opportunities also struck a chord with his socially conscious mind.



Search for Solutions to Save Rural Lives

Determined to find sustainable solutions, Dr. Malla Reddy spent many sleepless nights exploring ways to rejuvenate village life. Leveraging his connections with various countries, he learned about their agricultural methods and water management practices. He shared his vision and thoughts on district-wide issues in numerous national and international forums.

Advocacy for Water Management: Ananta Jalavalyam

Witnessing the rapid decline

of the agricultural sector, he stressed the need to construct the "Ananta Jalavalayam" in Anantapur district. He consistently urged the community to mobilize and demand 100 TMC of water to revive agriculture. His passion for this cause was evident in his interactions with farmers and his efforts to pressure the government.

Thought Leadership: Publications on District Challenges

Dr. Malla Reddy has written extensively on the challenges facing the district, publishing numerous articles and two books, Anantha Prasthanam. His work has served as both a documentation of challenges and a guide to potential solutions.

Transition from Factionalism to Watershed Development

Twenty years ago, factionalism was rampant in many villages, often leading to violent conflicts. In a bold move, Dr Malla Reddy called upon village leaders and people to abandon violence and focus on watershed development, coining the phrase "No to blood shed, Yes to watershed" His leadership inspired many factional leaders to unite communities, resulting in successful watershed programs in faction-

affected villages.

Watershed Program Impact

Through watershed initiatives, social forestry, soil conservation measures, and water retention efforts such as check dams and pond restoration were undertaken across numerous villages. These activities positively impacted natural resource development, agriculture, and rural livelihoods, serving as a model for government policy changes.

Leading the Charge for National Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

At the national level, Dr Malla Reddy played a key role in the struggle to establish the Employment Guarantee Act, advocating for employment as a right. Beginning in 1984, his efforts culminated in the passage of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. The program was inaugurated in Bandlapalli village of Narpala Mandal in 2006 by then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and then Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy.

Eco-Employment as a National Model

Under Dr. Malla Reddy's leadership, AF Ecology Centre's "Eco-

Employment" program became a guiding light for national policy, particularly in setting regulations for environmental development under the NREGA scheme.

Honoring Achievements and Service

In 2014, Dr Malla Reddy was honoured with the "Ananta Aanimuthyam" award in Penukonda, recognizing his immense contributions. In 2002, the Andhra Pradesh government appointed him to the Water Conservation Mission, and in 2004, he was selected to serve on the Farmers' Welfare Commission. In 2019, he was appointed to the newly formed State Agriculture Mission. His invaluable insights and suggestions have greatly benefited the government in ensuring farmers' welfare.

Receiving the YSR Lifetime Achievement Award

In 2023, the government pre-

sented him with the prestigious YSR Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his lifelong service to Anantapur district. By this time, he had already received several national and international honours. We wish him many more accolades in the future.

A Legacy Carved in People's Hearts

Dr. Malla Reddy stands as the third person, after RDT and Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to be etched in the hearts of the people of Anantapur. His leadership and service will never be forgotten.

Personal Reflection

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside Dr. Malla Reddy. He has been a source of inspiration and motivation for my own life.

A Guide and Mentor

- P.S. Amin Khan,

Communication Associate, AF-EC, Anantapur

I have been working in the A.F. Ecology Centre for almost six years, during which time I've had the privilege of observing and interacting with Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy. He is a person of remarkable character, embodying humanitarian values, pride, and righteousness in everything he does, which is truly a testament to his personality.

Our district was severely affected during the second wave of COVID-19 in 2021. Unfortunately, I contracted the virus and was admitted to Battalappalli RDT Hospital with the help of Dr.Malla Reddy. My health deteriorated rapidly, making it challenging for the doctors, nurses, and staff to treat me effectively. Fear grew as my condition worsened.

Throughout this difficult time, Dr.Malla Reddy constantly checked on my condition, speaking directly with the hospital doctors and staff. One day, during a Zoom meeting with all the staff, Dr.Malla Reddy

received a call from the hospital. Unmuted, everyone could hear him. The caller informed Dr.Malla Reddy that my



situation was critical, but instead of simply acknowledging this, Dr.Malla Reddy earnestly requested the staff to do everything possible to save me and ensure I received the best possible care. His concern for me was as deep and genuine as if I were his own family. This level of care is something I will never forget.

After recovering, I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Malla Reddy, and he gave me advice that deeply touched me: "Treat your parents well." His words made me realise that just as my parents gave me life, Dr.Malla Reddy and the organisation gave me a second chance.

Dr.Malla Reddy's care and

concern for his staff, especially during times of health crises, are unparalleled. His actions and responses during such times are unlike any other leader I've known. Many of my colleagues at A.F. Ecology Centre have also expressed their admiration for how he handles such situations.

When Dr. Malla Reddy himself was unwell, my family and I prayed for his recovery, just as he had been there for me.

Throughout his 50-year professional journey, Dr. Malla Reddy has achieved numerous accomplishments. Under his leadership,

the A.F. Ecology Centre has flourished, earning awards at district, state, and national levels. He has been a mentor to many and has had a profound impact on my life.

I wish Dr. Malla Reddy and his family continued health and strength, and may he continue to do great work for many more years to come.

"Dr. Malla Reddy's actions reflect this sentiment perfectly. His dedication to improving the well-being of those around him and his deep compassion mark a truly great leader and mentor."



Malla Reddy's Namaskaram to Father Ferrer

A Journey of Learning and Inspiration: My Experience with Sri Malla Reddy

- J. Shanthappa

Former Ex.Field Supervisor, AF-EC, Anantapur

Introduction

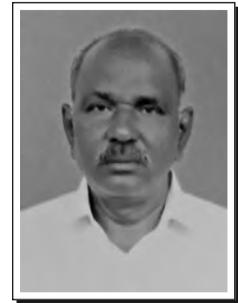
Human birth is considered the most superior of all living beings born on this earth. Only a few individuals make this life meaningful, and I believe Sri Malla Reddy is one among them. He often said that the human race would not be destroyed by atomic bombs but by the depletion of natural resources. Sri Malla Reddy, a Kohinoor diamond for the Anantapur district, dedicated his life to conserving and restoring these vital natural resources.

On the auspicious occasion of his completion of 50 years with RDT and AF Ecology Centers, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him.

My Journey with RDT

I joined RDT as a Field Assistant on April 2, 1987, at Venkatanpalli, a small settlement in the Uravakonda area. Since 1998, I have been closely associated with him. His leadership qualities, such as his

ability to inspire and his unwavering commitment to the cause, have greatly influenced me. As I was promoted to Field Supervisor in watershed programs, I had the opportunity to work more closely with him.



Innovations in Watershed Development

For many years, watershed programs in our country were fragmented and uncoordinated, often implemented haphazardly by officials without public participation. However, Sri Malla Reddy's comprehensive and integrated approach to watershed development, taking a village as a unit and involving the community in the process, has been a beacon of hope and inspiration.

As the Ecology Director, he also brought significant changes to

government watershed policies and programs, particularly in their implementation. The key changes included comprehensive program implementation, transparency, public participation, accountability, the promotion of non-agricultural livelihoods, extensive planting of fruit trees, and the development of natural resources like soil, water, greenery, and biodiversity in villages, with cost-sharing from the community. These innovative approaches had a profound impact on village development.

Transforming Unproductive Lands

Initially, watershed programs did not include constructing farm bunds with pebbles, as these lands, abundant in stones, were unsuitable for agriculture. By implementing farm bunds construction using these stones, he developed the land and demonstrated this to the then District Collector, Sri Rajasekhar, who subsequently incorporated it into the watershed program. As a result, thousands of acres of assigned lands, once unsuitable for agriculture due to stony terrain, were transformed into productive agricultural lands.

Enhancing Revenue through Tamarind Plantations

The 'Chinta to Nichchinta'

program was another notable initiative. Under the guidance of the then Collector, Sri Somesh Kumar, tamarind plantations were established on revenue lands. For example, in Kotturu village of Kambadur Mandal, this program was implemented on 30 acres, making it a model for the district.

Advocating for Employment Guarantee

Sri Malla Reddy was crucial in advocating for the Employment Guarantee Scheme. He coordinated with all voluntary organizations in the Anantapur district to collect signatures on over 200 sarees from women across villages, demanding employment guarantees. These sarees, signed by thousands of agricultural labourers, were displayed in Delhi in collaboration with national-level voluntary organizations as part of the campaign to implement the Employment Guarantee Act. This was a significant milestone in the struggle of voluntary organizations to bring about this legislation.

Personal Reflections

Personally, I consider Sri Malla Reddy as my mentor, and I often mention this to many people. He not only gave me life in the organization but also instilled in me valuable lessons about training, dis-

cipline, hard work, and integrity, which have shaped my character and for which I am deeply appreciative.

Life After RDT and AF-EC

I left the organization in 2010, but the experiences, knowledge, and wisdom I gained from working there, particularly under the guidance of Sri Malla Reddy, helped me find opportunities in other organizations. His mentorship and the lessons I learned from him have been instrumental in shaping my career and personal life.

Admiration for Mrs. Doreen

Although I did not work directly with Mrs. Doreen, I hold her in high regard and consider her an

equal mentor. I want to share a bit about her personality as well. When my family and I, including my daughter and son-in-law, visited their home, the warmth, affection, and hospitality shown by this couple are still vivid in my memory. Their hospitality is something I will always cherish and be grateful for.

Final Thoughts

I could share many more experiences about my time with Sri Malla Reddy. This account is just a small part of them. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with him on the implementation of watershed development programs. His influence has been profound, and I will always cherish the lessons I have learned from him.



Doreen Reddy, Bharath and Malla Reddy at Kodaicanal

A Personal Tribute to a Legacy of Dedication and Service

- P. Ramesh,

Ex. STO, AF-EC, Anantapur

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy is not just a name; he is a beacon of hope and inspiration for the farmers of Anantapur and beyond. Over the last 50 years, I have witnessed his unwavering commitment to uplifting marginalised communities, particularly women and farmers in drought-prone areas. His journey is a powerful testament to the profound impact one individual can have on the lives of many, and it fills my heart with gratitude to reflect on his legacy.

Lifelong Commitment to Agricultural Development

When I became aware of Dr. Malla Reddy's work with the AF organisation, his deep commitment to agricultural development struck me. His relentless passion and tireless efforts have brought transformative changes to our region, significantly improving the livelihoods of countless farmers. I have seen first-hand how his strategic decisions emphasise sustainable practices that meet

immediate needs and foster long-term growth. His approach exemplifies a philosophy that sees agriculture as a pathway to dignity and empowerment, which resonates deeply with those of us who share his vision for a better future.

Empowerment of Marginalised Groups

Dr. Malla Reddy has a unique gift for empowering marginalised groups. I've admired his unwavering advocacy for the economic and social equality of women farmers and single women. He ensures that their voices are not only heard but celebrated. His initiatives provide essential resources and support systems that enable these women to thrive and contribute to their communities. Witnessing the smiles of empowered women and their families is a constant reminder of his belief in the potential of every individual.

A Visionary Leader

As a leader, Dr. Malla Reddy's

commitment to accountability and quality is inspiring. In our monthly progress meetings, I've observed how he actively engages in evaluating reports from staff, aligning them with the realities on the ground. His ability to inspire self-reliance among community members is transformative, encouraging them to seek sustainable livelihoods instead of relying on temporary relief. I have always admired his calm demeanour and patient wisdom. He listens deeply and adapts gracefully, fostering an environment of trust and collaboration that brings out the best in all of us.

Advocacy Against Corruption

Dr Malla Reddy's firm stance against corruption and anti-social activities has always impressed me. He cultivates a culture of integrity within our organisation, treating every employee like a valued member of a family. This ethos not only strengthens the foundation of our work but also builds trust within the communities we serve. His moral compass is a guiding light, making him not just a leader but also a mentor to many. I feel fortunate to have learned from his example.

Lasting Legacy

Despite facing age and health

challenges, Dr Malla Reddy continues to dedicate his life to empowering the farming community and women. His contributions to the AF organisation and the development of farmers reflect an extraordinary commitment that goes beyond professional achievements. I have seen how he views each success not as a personal victory but as a collective triumph for the communities he serves. His passion and determination have instilled hope and empowerment in all of us who have had the privilege to work alongside him.

As he continues to champion these causes, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy will be remembered as one of the great leaders of our time. His commitment to service and community upliftment inspires me and future generations.

Sir, I recognize your unparalleled contributions and congratulate you on your remarkable journey. You have earned my deepest respect, and I sincerely wish you continued health and longevity to serve the organisation and its mission for many more years. Your life and work resonate with values of compassion and dedication, inspiring all of us to strive for a brighter future.

Celebrating Your Inspiring Leadership

- M. Thippe Swamy,

Chair Person, Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

Dear Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy Anna,

I want to take this opportunity to appreciate your relentless service and dedication for over 50 years.

Your personal journey from Neerukunta Palli, a remote village with no proper roads, vehicle transportation, electricity, or even an elementary school, to your current significant leadership position is a testament to your dedication and resilience. Despite the challenges, you emerged as a remarkable individual.

You are the third member of the family to your parents, Sri Harinarayana Reddy and Smt. Venkamma. Despite the lack of educational facilities in your village, your parents encouraged you to learn from esteemed teachers, leading to your gradual growth and progress.

You chose to leave university studies midway to join the RDT, inspired by the selfless service of late

Father Vincent Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer, who are deeply cherished by all of us. Starting as a small employee, you dedicated yourself with unwavering commitment and rose to significant heights within the organisation. You won the hearts of the founders and quickly became one of the most important figures in the organisation.



Accion Fraterna and Your Impact

Today, you hold the esteemed position of leading Accion Fraterna-Ecology Centre (AF-EC), an organisation that is making a tremendous impact in a drought-prone Anantapur District. Your leadership has significantly contributed to AF-ECs high regard within the farming community, among other circles at the district, state, and national

levels for its innovative and effective initiatives in agriculture—a field you are deeply passionate about.

As Anna Hazare wisely said, "When you have passion for what you do, you will find ways to overcome all obstacles and succeed." Your passion and dedication to agriculture have not only driven you to introduce numerous innovations but have also revitalised hope among small farmers, making them feel valued and integral to the cause.

Your role in (AF-EC's) success cannot be overstated. Your abled and skilful coordination between the people and the donors, strong relationships with both, and dedication, hard work, and faith in the organisation have set an exemplary standard. You have continually inspired your colleagues and worked tirelessly for the organisation.

Even as you've aged and faced increasing work pressure, your enthusiasm for learning new things has remained constant. Your pursuit of higher education, achieving an MBA with distinction and later a Doctorate, reflects your enduring commitment and drive. You strongly believe that education is about acquiring knowledge and skills and developing the ability to think and act responsibly.

During a time when rain-fed agriculture was failing, and farmers were struggling, you used your passion and vast experience in farming to establish the AF Ecology Centre, a sister concern of RDT. In a short period, you introduced numerous innovative reforms that revitalised hope among small farmers in the district. Your significant contributions to the agricultural sector have earned recognition from state and central governments, and you have been selected for many prestigious committees, extending your innovations beyond our region.

Your dedication to improving the lives of small farmers, your goal-oriented approach, and your unwavering commitment are truly commendable. Your awareness of societal issues and the positive impact you have made make you a role model for many. You believe that real change arises from the collective efforts of people determined to make a difference. You are a shining example of someone who not only aspires to make a difference but achieves it with remarkable success.

Family and Personal Blessings

The saying that behind every successful man is a supportive woman rings true in your case. Mrs. Doreen Akka has been an indispen-

sable part of your success, not only in your personal life but also in every achievement you've made.

To put it simply, "What you are today... is Doreen." The credit for your success belongs entirely to her. Her support during your personal and marital life and her encouragement through tough times have been beyond measure. This is not an exaggeration.

You are also blessed with a son who shows great affection and respect for you, a daughter-in-law who fulfills the role of a daughter, and grandchildren who bring divine joy into your life.

Finally, the bond between us is not just of today but has been nurtured over 46 years. This relationship has provided our families with countless sweet memories. Particularly, your support in my early days at RDT, from a small employee to a senior position, is something I will always cherish. Working alongside

you, sharing experiences, and overcoming challenges together are memories that remain vividly in my mind.

The love, affection, and respect we have shared are invaluable. I have learned so much from you, and it has greatly contributed to my growth. Your personality, precision, sincerity, and selfless dedication are qualities that define you. You embody the belief that meaningful change comes from the dedicated efforts of those who truly want to make a difference. Your achievements are a testament to this conviction, demonstrating your ability to turn aspirations into impactful realities.

I wish you and Mrs. Doreen Akka a life filled with divine blessings, good health, and happiness. May your continued service bring about further positive changes in the lives of the poor in our district.

From Roots to Wings: 50-Year Journey in RDT-AF Ecology Centre

- *Dr. Hari,*

Director (Rtd.), M&E & Projects, Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

Iheartily congratulate you on completing 50 remarkable years of dedicated service at RDT and the AF-Ecology Centre. Your journey from humble beginnings to becoming a pillar of strength in the organization is not just inspiring but a testament to your unwavering commitment and leadership. Your growth and success have been fuelled by the motivation, philosophy, and guidance of the founders of RDT, Fr. Ferrer and Sr. Anne Ferrer.

The Meaning Behind the Name

I tried to imagine your parents' good intentions in naming you MALLA Reddy. After a quick brainstorming session, I got the clue. The name "Malla" has its roots in various cultures and languages, each contributing to its rich tapestry of meanings. In Sanskrit, "Malla" signifies "wrestler" or "athlete," which indicates strength and combat skill. You are always ready for

work 24/7 and always pursue excellence in the work you do. Hence, you are always on the heel to work untiringly, for you believe that work is true worship. You are a role model leader for many who are associated with you.



Grateful Beginnings

My professor, Muralidharudu, who is your friend, introduced me to RDT. You were the first to interview me and refer to Father Ferrer, who finally inducted me into the University of Development, which nurtured me and brought out talents that were dormant. I have shared this with everyone I interacted with, and my gratitude to you for your guidance and support goes beyond words and comprehension.

Leadership Lessons

I still vividly recall your feedback on leadership and gender training programs. The image I drew – a bird in a golden cage, eating a small guava fruit and gazing at birds soaring high – initially left me disheartened. However, your constructive feedback proved invaluable. You suggested I break free and spread my wings by opening the lock I had bolted inside. This insight prompted me to work hard, learning from each experience in my daily tasks. I realized that true immersion in RDT's mission involves more than just holding a position – it requires deep engagement and understanding of the community we serve.

Impactful Feedback

During one session, you sarcastically praised my report in the training session and added that it looked like reading today's newspaper, which would be a waste of paper tomorrow. This comment greatly impacted my reporting style. Your communication used to be straight and to the point without twists and turns. Your style of writing reports carries depth, depicts ground realities, and is highly readable, even by a common reader with minimal education.

Passion and Contributions

Your passion for Telugu, in-born love for Nature/Environment, concern for farmers in drought-prone regions, and your innate ability in the field of community organization, gender and leadership, your research on eco-efficient agriculture and sustainable livelihoods deserves appreciation and approbation. You played a significant role in the growth of the ecology centre, which attracted the attention of National and International funding agencies, researchers, development workers in the NPO sector, academicians and government functionaries.

Behind Every Great Leader

Behind your growth from the grassroots to sky heights lies your hard work, the blessings of Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer, and the support of your spouse, Smt. Doreen Reddy. She strained every nerve to help you realize your dreams. She also played a constructive role from the Secretary of Father Ferrer to the Director of Women Empowerment for over three decades. She is a self-styled leader with born leadership qualities imbibed with a kind heart and an uncompromising attitude towards those who are gender insensitive and misuse authority and

given responsibilities. Behind your success and accomplishments lies her role as a spouse, and your influence also influences her to emerge as one of the inspiring leaders and trainers in RDT.

Irreplaceable Legacy

Your place is irreplaceable, and your critical thinking cannot be copied. You are unique, and your visionary leadership remains an indelible mark in the field of sustainable development. This will allow you to achieve many more credentials and let AF further reach its newer heights, becoming a role model organization with replicable models of agriculture, environment development, and sustainable livelihoods.

Wishing You Continued Success

May God bless you with good health and sustain your motivation to see the land of chronic drought-prone Anantapur district transformed into a green belt capable of catering to the growing needs of farmers and consumers who rely upon them. Your aspiration to value the role of farmers in building a sustainable economy will soon become a ground reality, and AF claims a share in such a worthy contribution.

From Roots to Wings: Celebrating Dr. YV Malla Reddy's 50-Year Journey at the RDT-AF Ecology Centre

*From humble beginnings,
you took your stand,
A journey long, a vision grand.
Fifty years of dedication and might,
With unwavering heart,
you brought forth light.
Guided by the founders'
noble creed,
Fr. Ferrer and Anne
planted the seed.
Their wisdom became
your guiding star,
You soared beyond, reaching far.
"Malla," a name
that echoes strength,
A wrestler's spirit,
relentless at length.
Through tireless work,
day and night,
You became a beacon,
burning bright.
Grateful beginnings,
your humble start,
Your guidance forever
touched my heart.
Introduced by friends
with sincere cheer,
Your unwavering support
brought me here.
Leadership lessons
you shared with grace,*

*Wisdom and kindness
in every embrace.
A bird once caged,
now soaring free,
Your words unlocked
the strength in me.
Impactful feedback,
sharp and clear,
You shaped my work
with wisdom dear.
Reports once dull
now come alive,
With depth and
insight, they thrive.
A passion for
Telugu and the earth,
You've shown
the farmers their true worth.
Eco-efficient dreams you weave,
In sustainable futures,
we believe.
Behind a leader
strong and wise,
Stands Smt. Doreen,
with supportive eyes.
Her love and strength
lifted your dreams,*

*Together, you became
an unstoppable team.
Your legacy,
unique and true,
Irreplaceable, through and through.
With visionary leadership bold,
New heights for AF will unfold.
May health and strength
be yours to keep,
As you transform the land so deep.
Anantapur,
once drought's domain,
Now thrives in green,
free from pain.
You uplift the farmer's role so high,
Their efforts now touch
the clear blue sky.
Your dream of a sustainable land,
Is turning into a reality grand.
From roots to wings,
you've paved the way,
A journey celebrated here today.
With heartfelt thanks
and deep respect,
Your legacy,
we will always protect.*

A Tribute to Sri Malla Reddy's Legacy in Rural and Ecological Development

- Mr. Dasarath,

Retd. Director, Disability Inclusive Development, RDT, Anantapur

Hearfelt Congratulations on a Remarkable Milestone

Let me take this opportunity to extend our warmest and most heartfelt congratulations to you on reaching the extraordinary milestone of 50 years of dedicated service with the Rural Development Trust (RDT) and Accion Fraternal! This achievement is a testament to your endurance and commitment and a reflection of the profound impact you have had on countless lives and communities over the past five decades. We are deeply grateful for your work, Sri Malla Reddy, and we cannot thank you enough for your unwavering dedication and the countless lives you have touched.

A Journey of Growth and Contribution

When you first joined RDT, two years ahead of me, we were young, energetic, and just begin-

ning our journey in the field of rural development through community work. Little did anyone know then that



your career would evolve into one marked by immense growth in experience and wisdom and a remarkable one in ecological development, which would bring many national accolades to Anantapur. Over the decades, you have transformed into a seasoned expert with a deep understanding of the ecological challenges faced by rural communities and an unwavering dedication to improving their lives and crops. Your journey from a young and energetic individual to a seasoned expert has not just been a professional one but a deeply personal mission to uplift farmers in challenging ecological settings, a mission that has inspired many.

Transformative Contributions to Rural Ecological Development

Throughout these years, your contributions have been nothing short of transformative. You and your trained team have touched countless farmers' lives, helping them survive and thrive in challenging environments. Your efforts to promote sustainable agricultural practices and restore the ecological balance in the Anantapur district are deeply valued. Your influence, which has extended far beyond the district, has made you a key figure in rural ecological development in Anantapur and across the entire state of Andhra Pradesh. Your expertise and commitment have not only made you a beacon of hope but also a source of inspiration for many, and your influence is felt in every corner of the state.

A Legacy of Service and Compassion

Your role in advancing rural development is truly commendable. Your positive impact is evident in the flourishing communities and the empowered individuals who have benefited from your work. Your legacy is one of service, compassion, and unwavering dedication to the cause of rural development, and it will be remem-

bered in the minds of all beneficiaries.

Personal Reflections and Cherished Memories

My association with you has been one of the most cherished aspects of my life. I vividly recall how your insights and views on gender sensitivity profoundly impacted my life and perspective. Your training sessions were a revelation, and I was consistently impressed by your ability to convey complex concepts with clarity and precision. You possess the qualities that define an exceptional trainer – patience, empathy, and a deep understanding of the subject matter. You are not just a senior colleague or a mentor; I always see you as the finest trainer I have ever had the privilege to learn from. Every interaction with you, whether in person or during meetings and training sessions, has been a valuable learning experience, enriching my personal and professional life.

The Quiet Strength Behind You: Doreen Reddy

While you celebrate your achievements, it is essential to acknowledge the quiet yet profound role that your spouse, Doreen Reddy, has played in your journey. Behind every great man is a great

woman, and Doreen has been the steadfast pillar supporting you through the minutest details of life, always by your side during the toughest periods. Her presence has been a source of strength and stability, enabling you to pursue your mission with unwavering dedication. Having Doreen as your spouse is truly divine providence; it is a blessing that you share this journey.

You are further blessed with a wonderful family – your son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughters, who undoubtedly bring joy and fulfilment to your life. I wish Doreen and your entire family continued health and happiness, and may you all achieve many more endeavours together.

Standing Together Through Challenges

I also fondly remember the times when we stood together to support RDT during challenging moments. One such instance was when a neighbour attempted to encroach on the first campus land, and another was when certain vested interests organised a strike against RDT. We stood firmly with truth and together with the organisation you worked for 50 years and myself for 48 years. We were able to protect the organisation during those diffi-

cult times. These experiences have strengthened our bond as colleagues and friends who share a common vision and commitment to the cause.

A Bond Beyond Professional Ties

Beyond our professional association, we have developed a close and enduring friendship that I deeply value. Our families have grown close over the years, and I consider you not just a colleague but a dear brother. As you progress, I wish you continued good health, happiness, and fulfilment in all your endeavours. Your legacy of service, compassion, and dedication is a shining example for us all, and I am honoured to have shared this journey with you.

Reflections on Legacy and New Beginnings

For many, a new chapter in life often means stepping away from a long-held profession. Yet, in your extraordinary journey, time was never about earning money but building trust, gaining respect, and leaving an indelible mark on the communities you served. Your life has been devoted to a cause far greater than yourself – uplifting the most vulnerable and championing

sustainable development in even the most challenging environments. Your work has been fuelled by passion and purpose, not profit.

As you embark on this next phase of your work, your legacy will continue to inspire generations of rural development workers, ecological champions, and community leaders. You have been much more than a captain steering the ship of ecological development; you have been a mentor, a guide, and a beacon of hope for many who will now carry forward the torch you have lit. The seeds you have sown over these 50 years will continue to bear fruit, nurturing the lives and lands you

have tirelessly worked to protect and uplift.

This is not a conclusion but a rejuvenation—a time to reflect, recharge, and make a difference in new and meaningful ways. Your journey is far from over, and your impact will resonate for generations to come.

We all will remember you as a leader and pioneer whose contributions to rural and ecological development have left an indelible mark on this world. Working alongside you has been an honour, and I am confident that your influence will continue to shape the future.



Father Ferrer, Malla Reddy and others in a village meeting in early 1980s

Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Y V Malla Reddy's 50 years of dedication to the heartbeat of Anantapur

- *G. Nageswara Reddy,*

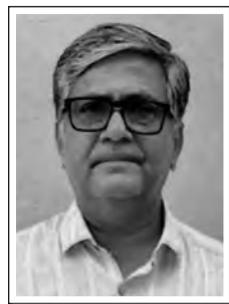
Director (Rtd), Ecology & Sustainable Livelihoods, RDT Anantapur

Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy's 50 years of unwavering service is a testament to his extraordinary dedication. His every heartbeat resonates with the struggles and triumphs of the farmers of Anantapur, whose lives are the cornerstone of our economy.

Farmers are the unsung heroes who drive our nation's growth, yet they face immense hardships and challenges daily. His commitment has been a guiding light for these hardworking individuals, working tirelessly to improve their conditions and uplift their lives.

Through his collaboration with the RDT organization and the inspiration from Father Ferrier and Sister Anne Ferrier, Dr. YV Malla Reddy has made a profound impact. His selfless efforts and gen-

uine concern have left an indelible mark on the hearts of many farmers, highlighting their vital role in our community.



His journey is a shining example of true leadership, characterized by deep dedication and empathy. Personally, I have gained invaluable insights from his mentorship and training, and he continues to inspire me profoundly. I sincerely hope that his legacy of service continues to support and elevate our district for many years to come, honouring the essential role of farmers who endure so much for our collective prosperity.

Recognizing Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's 50 Years of Exceptional Service and Leadership

- *D. Chandrasekhar Naidu,*

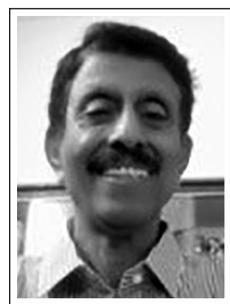
Director (Rtd), Education Department, Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

With deep respect and admiration, we celebrate Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's remarkable milestone of 50 years of dedicated service with RDT and AF (Accion Fraternal), a journey enriched by the blessings of the esteemed Father Vincent Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation for Dr. Malla Reddy's steadfast commitment to the betterment of farmers in our district.

A half-century of service in a public organization is a testament to extraordinary dedication, integrity, and perseverance. Dr. Malla Reddy has exemplified these qualities, consistently working with a profound sense of duty and purpose and earning the admiration and respect of many.

My association with Dr. Malla Reddy began in 1991 when I joined the Integrated Development Activities Unit as an Assistant Director. During my two-year tenure working closely with him, I witnessed his

exemplary leadership. His approach to empowering team members, coupled with his deep understanding of programmatic issues, motivational guidance, and strategic analysis to enhance team effectiveness, was truly inspiring.



Before 1991, my professional experience was primarily in the Education sector. However, under Dr. Malla Reddy's mentorship, I gained invaluable insights into community organization and leadership. These learnings significantly contributed to my professional growth and successful application of these principles in my subsequent roles, a testament to Dr. Malla Reddy's profound influence on my career.

Dr. Malla Reddy's leadership became apparent within the first week of my joining. I participated in

an Organizational Development Programme (ODP) hosted by SEARCH, a Training Organization in Bangalore, which included a rigorous Area Performance Review. There were notable performance challenges at that time due to previous management issues. Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy addressed these concerns with a detailed presentation, taking full responsibility for the identified gaps and underscoring the importance of effective leadership, showcasing his exceptional problem-solving skills.

The subsequent year saw our teams, under Dr. Malla Reddy's guidance, achieving exceptional results and top rankings in the Bangalore ODP. His acknowledgement of the team's contributions during his presentation was a powerful example of leadership that fosters collective success while taking responsibility for challenges.

The adage "A flower, as soon as it blooms, gives off fragrance"

aptly describes Dr Malla Reddy. A conversation with a college peer from Besant Theosophical College in Madanapalle revealed that, unlike others, Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy was known for his diligence and efforts to improve his English skills. This dedication is clearly reflected in his professional approach.

Such individuals as Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy are rare, and their profound impact endures in the legacy of organizations like RDT and Accion Fraternal (AF). His contributions have become a foundational part of our history and will be celebrated as a significant achievement in our collective journey.

Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy and his family, including Mrs. Doreen Reddy, have been an integral part of our community, bridging personal and professional relationships with warmth and dedication. We wish him continued health, longevity, and the strength to contribute meaningfully to society.

In My Thoughts: Mrs. Doreen Reddy Celebrating a Remarkable Milestone

- D. Chandrasekhar Naidu,

Director, (Rtd), Education Department, Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

With the cherished blessings of the esteemed founders of R.D.T., Father Vincent Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Doreen Reddy on her remarkable achievement of completing 50 years of dedicated service with R.D.T. I offer my sincere gratitude for the profound impact she has had on both the organisation and the community. Her diverse roles and unwavering commitment have not only shaped the organisation but also left a lasting impact on the community.

Early Contributions

Before the 1992-93 fiscal year, Mrs. Doreen Reddy contributed significantly from behind the scenes at the head office, showcasing her exceptional understanding and commitment to every task she undertook. Her dedication to R.D.T. has always been evident through her meticulous approach and tire-

less efforts.

Leadership in Field Programs

1992 - 93
marked a significant shift in Mrs.



Doreen Reddy's role, as she took on the position of Director for Women's Development Programs, transitioning from behind-the-scenes work to direct fieldwork. This move demonstrated her adaptability and unwavering commitment to the cause. She spent extensive time at the grassroots level, gaining a profound understanding of the programs and leading them with innovative strategies. I had the privilege of witnessing this transformation first-hand. Mrs. Doreen Reddy's extensive knowledge in various domains has been a great learning experience for me. Her discipline, integrity, and dedication to the organisation and its founders are commendable, setting

a standard for others to follow.

Empathy and Personal Support

Mrs. Doreen Reddy's compassion extends deeply to those facing hardships, illness, or distress. My personal experiences underscore her exceptional empathy:

- In 1987, following a piles surgery while working in Uravakonda, I visited the head office within a week to process my bills. Mrs. Doreen Reddy, then stationed at the head office, noticed me waiting outside the empty accounts section as everyone had gone for lunch. Despite my exhaustion and pain, her warm gesture of opening the cash box and disbursing the Rs. 3,150 owed to me was a profound act of kindness. Though seemingly small, her inquiry about my lunch plans and genuine concern left an indelible mark on me.
- Between 1998 and 2013, I underwent three surgeries, and Mrs. Doreen Reddy's steadfast sup-

port was a source of immense strength. Her unwavering presence and encouragement were akin to those of a close family member, making a significant difference in my recovery.

Understanding and Compassion

Mrs. Doreen Reddy's preferences (likes) and aversions (dislikes) are well-known, yet the reasons behind them are best understood by those who have had the privilege of knowing her closely. Her approach remains practical and empathetic. Even in matters she may not favour, her willingness to assist those in need, especially in health-related concerns, reflects her deeply compassionate nature.

A Cherished Bond

Our families share a deep bond, and Mrs. Doreen Reddy will forever be cherished as a beloved sister in my memories. I pray for her good health and longevity and that her compassionate concern for those in need remains steadfast.

A Journey of Inspiration: Lessons from Dr YV Malla Reddy and Smt. Doreen Reddy

- *Krishna Reddy,*

Director, Transport, RDT, Anantapur

I wanted to take a moment to share how two remarkable individuals at RDT have profoundly shaped my journey. Dr YV Malla Reddy and Smt. Doreen Reddy are not just exceptional leaders, but they embody the very principles they advocate, showing us how great people influence others by living out their values. Their guidance and examples have been pivotal in my growth, transforming uncertainty into purpose and inspiring me to pursue excellence.

A Warm Welcome

When I first joined RDT, I was uncertain about what lay ahead. I knew very little about the organisation, but a few motivating words from Malla Reddy Sir, resonating with his influence's power, made a lasting impression. He reassured me, saying, "Krishna Reddy, RDT is as enduring as the stars and the mountains. You can build your career here with confidence." His

words were a beacon of motivation, helping me to focus on learning and growing within RDT rather than chasing after government or private sector jobs despite the comparatively modest salary.



Starting with a Guiding Example

As a new community organiser, I was unsure how to begin. Malla Reddy Sir's example, which still resonates with me, proved transformative. He shared his own journey of uncertainty when he first started, revealing how he didn't even know the term "brick" itself, let alone how to make one. Despite his initial hesitations, his humility and willingness to learn illustrated a key lesson: commitment and a willingness to learn are crucial for success.

Malla Reddy Sir's journey is a

remarkable testament to transformation and resilience. Despite not knowing the word "brick" when he began, he became a cornerstone of RDT. His evolution from unfamiliarity to becoming an integral part of the organisation exemplifies how dedication, humility, and a readiness to learn can turn initial limitations into powerful strengths.

Defining Development

I had the privilege of watching Sir in a television debate, during which he offered a simple yet profound definition of development. He described it as the moment when people start identifying their problems and seeking their own solutions. This perspective on development emphasised that it's an ongoing process driven by self-awareness and problem-solving, which benefited me a lot in my personal and professional life.

Leadership and Inspiration

Malla Reddy Sir's simplicity in dress, majestic demeanour, and respectful rapport with staff speaks volumes about his leadership. His rise from a regular worker to an internationally respected leader is a testament to his determination, discipline, and relentless quest for knowledge. His decisions and leadership style, pivotal in RDT's growth, showcase how decisive and

confident leadership cannot just steer but significantly elevate an organisation to new heights.

Personal Guidance and Wisdom

In my career, I often sought Sir's guidance. One piece of advice stood out: "Problems are inevitable, but your attitude determines how you face them. Be strong like an elephant, and problems will crumble like papads under your feet." This analogy has inspired me to tackle challenges with resilience and a positive attitude.

The Exemplary Personality of Malla Reddy Sir

RDT's reputation and Malla Reddy Sir's goodwill, alongside his rapport with government functionaries, reflect his exemplary personality. His readiness to extend support to anyone who approaches him, including those considered his competitors, highlights his remarkable character and commitment to fostering positive relationships.

Excellence in Every Role

Malla Reddy Sir's eloquence, especially his poetic use of Telugu, his deep knowledge of agriculture, ecology, and livelihoods, and his ability to train staff on community organisation and leadership speak of his exceptional capabilities. His

dedication to nurturing these skills has inspired many within the organisation.

The Remarkable Smt. Doreen Reddy

Smt. Doreen Reddy, with her kind heart and uncompromising work ethic, complements Malla Reddy Sir perfectly. Her straightforwardness reminds us of our responsibilities, while her smiles keep our spirits high. Her service to Father Ferrer during his hospitalisation demonstrated her respect and dedication. Her expertise in training staff on RDT's mission and vision and her fluency in English have inspired many leaders, including myself.

A Lasting Legacy

Together, Malla Reddy Sir and Smt. Doreen Reddy have profoundly shaped RDT's growth and reputation. Their united efforts ensure that RDT will be remembered

not only by us but also by future generations. Their legacy of dedication and leadership will continue to guide and inspire the organization in its mission to make a positive impact.

As I conclude, I want to acknowledge the deep influence their perspectives on the practicalities of development have had on my professional life. Their unwavering character and integrity, exemplified by their loyalty to the organisation, have positively shaped my mindset, and I aspire to embody these qualities. Furthermore, their approach and attitude towards Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer are thought-provoking, and I intend to follow in their footsteps with the same dedication and respect throughout my life.

I wish them and their family members a healthy and peaceful life as they continue pursuing their mission with unwavering commitment.

A Tribute to Your Guidance and Inspiration

- Krishnaveni,

Director, Procurement, RDT, Anantapur

Congratulations on completing 50 years with RDT-AF! This milestone is a testament to your unwavering commitment, exceptional leadership, and the profound impact you have had on the organization and its people. It is an honour to celebrate this significant occasion with you, and I wish you continued success and fulfilment in your journey.

A Heartfelt Tribute

I am profoundly happy to share my work experiences and cherished memories with you. Your kind guidance and insightful suggestions have shaped me into who I am today. I feel incredibly privileged and fortunate to have had your association throughout my journey, which has moulded me into a leader.

Journey with RDT

I joined the RDT family on July 26, 1987. During this journey, I have been greatly influenced by

Father Ferrer,
Sister Anne Ferrer,
Smt. Doreen
Sister, and many
senior directors
and colleagues.
They have be-



come an integral part of my growth, offering a platform to learn through the exchange of thoughts and ideas. They remain my enduring sources of inspiration and motivation.

Inspirational Guidance

I can proudly say that I am a member of the RDT family, and this is my world. Although I have received support from many, you, Malla Reddy Sir, have been my greatest inspiration and role model. Your guidance has been instrumental in shaping my career. It is truly an honour to share my experiences associated with you. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of your journey and for the profound impact you have had on me.

Memorable Experiences

There are several instances in our association that have profoundly impacted me, and I would like to highlight a few that have left a lasting impression:

- **Expansion of Programs (1997):** When RDT expanded its programs to new areas in 1997, you and Mr. Tippeswamy conducted an orientation program. Out of 36 staff members, I was the only female. The prospect of working in new areas with limited accommodation and no transport facilities was daunting. Despite my fears and challenges, including the responsibility of caring for my 6-year-old daughter, you provided unwavering support. You assured me of assistance and encouraged me to face my fears with confidence. Your encouragement and practical solutions helped me overcome my apprehensions and embrace the challenge. This experience taught me to never use gender as an excuse and profoundly changed my approach and thinking.
- **Facing Adversity:** During my tenure as Regional Director at Kadiri, I faced a distressing situation when an unknown magazine published derogatory articles about RDT directors, including myself. This caused me signifi-

cant distress and led me to contemplate suicide. However, Smt. Doreen Sister and you, Malla Reddy Sir, counselled me with compassion and treated me like a close family member. You shared the metaphor of the elephant and the barking dogs, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and ignoring negativity. This counsel was instrumental in helping me regain my strength and continue my journey with renewed resolve.

Enduring Influence

These experiences are just a few examples of how you have guided and inspired me. Your practical approach and motivational actions have greatly contributed to the organization's success. Your continuous efforts, along with those of our founders, have elevated RDT to its peak. You have been a mentor, guide, and inspiration, fostering the development of future leaders—a crucial element for the organization's sustainability. Your concern and compassion for others, especially during their suffering, are truly immeasurable. You always speak from the heart and show respect whenever we meet. We continuously seek your blessings and support.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity

Honouring a Mentor's Legacy: Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy

- K. Sagar Murthy,

Director (Retd), Rural Development Trust, Anantapur

A Guiding Light

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy has been an exceptional mentor, teacher, and guide, profoundly influencing my professional and personal growth. Our journey together began when I was in the Education Department at the Rural Development Trust (RDT). His invitation to join the Community Organization Department, where he served as Director, marked a pivotal moment in my career that I embraced with enthusiasm and commitment.

A Journey of Growth and Learning

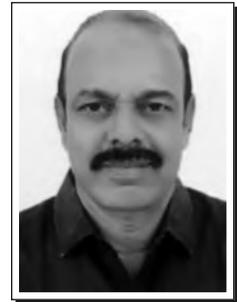
In 1986, I transitioned to the Community Organization Department under Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's leadership. His dedication to community development was evident in his approach to training, which included sessions on Community Organization, Group Dynamics, Self-Analysis, and Transactional Analysis. He also facilitated our

learning through external institutions focused on NGO management. His tireless efforts to impart knowledge and skills fostered a deep sense of commitment to the organization's vision.

In 1990, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy promoted me to Project Coordinator and assigned me to the Marimakupalli area. During this time, I was involved in the Watershed Development Program, and his guidance was crucial in mobilizing effective community participation.

Achievements and Recognition

In 1992, as Assistant Director in Kuderu, I oversaw the implementation of the "Vanjuvanka Watershed Project" in collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Despite the tight timeline, our team's efforts, supported by Dr.



Y.V. Malla Reddy's timely and insightful guidance, were crucial in the successful completion of the project. A notable highlight was the visit of Sri. K.R. Venu Gopal, IAS, then Secretary to the Prime Minister, who expressed satisfaction with the project's quality and community engagement. This recognition significantly boosted my motivation and career.

Enduring Influence

Even after Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's move to Accion Fraternal Ecology Centre, our relationship has remained strong, a testament to the enduring nature of professional connections. His continued support and insights have been invaluable to my career development. I had the honour of hosting him in 2006 during the inauguration of a housing colony in my native village.

Lessons from Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's career offers several valuable lessons:

- **Commitment to Continuous Learning:** Embrace ongoing education and stay in tune with the evolving development field. Dr. Malla Reddy's dedication to learning and adapting to new knowledge is a model for professional growth.
- **Sharing Knowledge:** Actively share your insights and experi-

ences with others. Dr. Malla Reddy's willingness to impart his knowledge has profoundly impacted those around him.

- **Reflect and Apply Insights:** Regularly reflect on your learning and integrate these insights with common sense. This practice ensures that new knowledge is effectively applied to real-world challenges.
- **Persistent Aspiration:** Never relax until your goals are achieved. Dr Malla Reddy's relentless pursuit of his objectives exemplifies the importance of dedication and perseverance.
- **Recognizing and Addressing Shortfalls:** Be quick to identify shortcomings and address them meticulously. Dr. Malla Reddy's ability to recognize and work on areas needing improvement has been key to his success.

A Legacy of Dedication

Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy's passion for social work and his dedication to improving the lives of drought-affected farmers in the Anantapuram district are truly inspiring. His relentless pursuit of learning was particularly moving when he received his Ph.D. from the Governor & Chancellor of S.K. University in Anantapuram, coinciding with Father Vincent Ferrer receiving an honorary Doctorate.

A Tribute to a Remarkable Couple

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Smt. Doreen Reddy stand as an exemplary duo in the field of development. Their partnership is a profound testament to the power of mutual support and dedication. Smt. Doreen Reddy, with her exceptional patience and insight, plays an indispensable role in Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's achievements. She possesses a unique ability to anticipate and address his needs, often providing support without being asked. This seamless synergy between them not only enhances their individual contributions but also

drives the advancement of the development field. Their collaborative spirit exemplifies how a shared commitment and understanding can lead to transformative and sustained impact.

Conclusion: A Heartfelt Congratulations

As Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy completes five decades of service in the social sector, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes. May both Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Smt. Doreen Reddy continue to be blessed with peace, harmony, love, and good health.



Malla Reddy, Thomas, Chalapathy in a meeting in M.M.Palli in Kambadur Mandal.

For Shri Malla Reddy

- *Rani and Thomasayya,*

Ex-RDT, Ravipadu, Narasaraopeta

Every life born on this earth carries certain responsibilities assigned by God, Nature, or Creation. It may appear that some individuals are given particularly demanding roles that are arduous, unique, and seemingly unattainable. These special responsibilities are allocated by divine or natural forces, setting them apart from those faced by others.

I have had the privilege of meeting several distinguished individuals, including Smt. Indira Gandhi, Shri. Brahmananda Reddy, Shri. Vengal Rao, Shri. Roshaiyah and Shri. N.T. Rama Rao. Through discussions with some of them, we could influence them to make necessary legislative changes for the benefit of the public.

My greatest pride comes from working with the remarkable RDT organization founded by Father Ferrer. The extraordinary achievements of RDT, including its service champions and ecological initia-

tives, are well-documented on platforms like Google and YouTube.

Among the many service champions of RDT, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy stands out as an unforgettable and unparalleled figure. On the occasion of his completing 50 years of dedicated service, we extend our heartfelt admiration to him for his unwavering commitment and relentless struggle in service.

I joined the RDT organization in 1978. By then, Dr. Malla Reddy was already engaged in various fields at RDT and was part of the team training new service champions. He was one of our trainers. Later, as the Coordinator of Kalyandurg, Dr. Malla Reddy took on numerous responsibilities in education, agriculture, arts, and training programs, showcasing his unique approach and creating re-



markable achievements.

We are devoutly religious and follow the principles of karma. However, Dr. Malla Reddy challenged traditional beliefs, suggesting that caste and religion are human constructs and that all people are fundamentally the same. Although I did not abandon my faith, it was from Dr. Malla Reddy that I learned to question many deeply held beliefs.

Dr. Malla Reddy's teachings extend beyond mere words. His marriage to Doreen, which transcends caste and religion, is a testament to his principles. Their marital life is exemplary, characterized by mutual respect and affection. They are an extraordinary couple whose love is unshaken by caste, region, or religion. While we generally refer to a couple as brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or simply as a couple, we refer to them as elder brother and elder sister. Their love is such.

Many who served at RDT have passed away; some are now retired. The couple who have perhaps served for 50 years and continue their service are Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen. Despite numerous opportunities in politics and other fields, they have devoted their lives to genuine public service and remain invaluable jewels of RDT. They are remarkable individuals who have dedicated their lives to

the greater good.

The Malla Reddy and Doreen family will always be remembered as an extraordinary, unforgettable, and compassionate family. Many who worked with us have passed away, including Ramappa, Bhimappa, Chalapathi, Sudheer, Raghu, Buden, VeeraReddy, Jani, Zakria, and Jaffer. Their contributions and dedication are deeply cherished, and their legacy inspires us.

They continued to serve with integrity through many challenges, and their dedication is a testament to overcoming hardships. Names like Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen are among the revered figures of RDT. Rani and I learned from Dr. Malla Reddy's guidance and worked alongside him. Many cherished memories, including shared laughter and jokes, were part of our time with him.

The values we learned from Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen are integral to our principles. Life at RDT has been a significant part of our journey. The time spent with RDT as a family, alongside individuals like Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen, who supported Father Ferrer, is truly unforgettable.

I pray for Dr. Malla Reddy and Doreen's good health and long life and hope that their contributions continue for many years to come.

My Journey with the Visionary

Dr Y. V. Malla Reddy

- G. R. Prameela Kumari,

Regional Director, Bathalapalli, RDT, Anantapur

Respected Dr Y. V. Malla Reddy, Sir, it is both an honour and a privilege to share the profound impact your mentorship and example have had on my life. Known far and wide across Anantapur and Sathya Sai District for your dedication to community welfare, you are not only a respected leader but a true embodiment of compassion, integrity, and wisdom. Your humility and unwavering respect for everyone set you apart, and your presence brings both strength and encouragement to all who work with you.

Your approach to every challenge is deeply inspiring. Whether guiding entire communities or engaging in a single conversation, you consistently demonstrate the value of creative thinking and compassionate leadership. Your lifelong mission to protect the people, animals, and natural environment of our drought-prone districts is extraordinary. Sir, your commitment

to humanity, especially to those in the most difficult circumstances, has left a lasting legacy.

I fondly recall your invaluable support for constructing the Father's Temple in Kundurpi, a gesture that will always be remembered. One particularly moving moment was when you spoke at Women's Day in the Settur area, emphasising the resilience of women who have transformed their lives against incredible odds. Your words touched everyone deeply, showing that you not only uplift communities but also understand the heart of their struggles.

When I was in Kadiri, I saw your encouragement of women to learn auto-driving—a simple yet powerful way to foster independence and empowerment. I have been fortunate to work closely with



you for over 20 years at BOT, and every meeting brings new insights and inspiration. Even during health challenges, your commitment to participating in evaluations showed an unmatched dedication, motivating everyone around you.

One memory that stays with me is from an RDT incident. We had just experienced an accident, and seeing your calm and compassionate response as you explained everything to Father was incredibly reassuring. Your genuine care goes beyond words and actions; it radiates a sense of security and trust.

On a personal level, your kindness has always shone through. Though you rarely ask about family matters, when I shared my concerns about my son's health, you gave me such heartfelt support, a moment

that truly strengthened me.

I cannot speak of my journey without mentioning Doreen Madam, who stands beside you as a pillar of strength. Her discipline, integrity, and commitment are unparalleled, and she has always been there to offer encouragement and support when needed. Her simple "Don't worry" is more than just words; it is a powerful source of reassurance I carry with me.

Your family's kindness and influence have left an indelible mark on my life, shaping me personally and professionally in ways I will always treasure. Thank you, Sir, for the countless opportunities to learn, grow, and witness your inspiring leadership. It is a privilege to be a part of this journey with you.



Malla Reddy with Father Ferrer and Sister Anne

Celebrating Friendship and Purpose: Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy

- *Choitresh Ganguly (Bablu)*,
Secretary, Timbaktu Collective, C.K.Palli

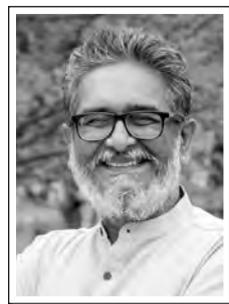
Meeting Visionaries: A Life-Changing Journey to Young India Project

In the mid-1970s, I first heard about a commune and voluntary organization called the Young India Project, led by the charismatic Narendra Bedi. This group of young people from urban India had settled on a farm near Penukonda in Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, to engage in rural development. On April 1, 1978, I traveled by train from Bengaluru to Penukonda to learn more about this intrepid initiative. Inspired by what I observed, I decided to stay and join the project. I have lived and worked in Andhra Pradesh ever since.

Encountering a Kindred Spirit: Dr. Malla Reddy and the Rural Development Trust

As I settled into life with the Young India Project, I learned of another voluntary organization, the

Rural Development Trust (RDT), based in Anantapur town, founded by the late Vicente Ferrer, a former



Jesuit from Spain who had been in India since the early 1950s. Eventually, I met Ferrer, his wife Anne, and their son, Moncho. During my early visits to RDT, I encountered a dignified and sincere young man named Malla Reddy, who was working as a community organizer.

While our paths crossed occasionally, it wasn't until 1993-94 that I got to know Malla more personally. Our friendship deepened, thanks to our mutual friend, Peter Lanzet who was based in Bangalore and was the Consultant to the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) a German aid agency and who brought us together informally at a partner workshop. EED is now known as Bread for the World.

Warm Hospitality and Friendship: Malla and Doreen Reddy

Getting to know Malla also meant meeting his wife, the charming and gracious Doreen Reddy, and their son Bharath, who happened to attend the same school as my children. Despite her demanding role as a senior RDT member, Doreen managed to orchestrate the most delightful meals. Visiting their home was always a treat – a mix of culinary delights, laughter, and heart-warming conversations. Over the past 30 years, Malla and Doreen have been the most wonderful hosts, always welcoming us and tolerating our eccentricities.

A Friendship Built on Shared Dreams and Mutual Respect

Malla is not only a friend but a mentor, colleague, and member of the Collective's general body. His punctuality, dedication, and seriousness of purpose are truly inspiring. I have learned much from Malla over the years: from his pioneering work with the Accion Fra-

terna Ecology Centre (an offshoot of RDT), his interactions with people, his generosity, clarity, and wisdom. Whenever I find myself uncertain about a course of action, I turn to Malla for counsel.

Shared Vision: Transforming Anantapur's Social and Ecological Landscape

Together, Malla and I have dreamed of transforming the social and ecological fabric of Anantapur District. We collaborated to unite other NGOs, set up networks, raised grants, and organized seminars, lectures, and rallies. His patience, respect for others, and ability to build strong relationships with government officials played a crucial role in our success. Looking back, I can confidently say that we have made our mark.

Cheers to a Lifelong Friend

To you, my friend, Dr. YV Malla Reddy – thank you for being a guiding force and steadfast companion. As an anonymous quote says, "Having a male friend is like having a brother who doesn't share your DNA but shares your heart."

Celebrating 50 Years of Dedication and Service

- Mary Vattamatom,
Timbaktu Collective, C.K.Palli

A heartfelt congratulations to Malla on his remarkable achievement of completing 50 years of dedicated work in the development sector. It is an immense privilege and honour to have known and befriended Malla and Doreen over the past 45 years. Our friendship is a treasure that I deeply value and cherish.

A Friendship That Stood the Test of Time

I first met Malla and Doreen in the scorching heat of May 1978 when I arrived at the RDT campus. Fresh out of postgraduation in social work and travelling alone for the first-time outside Kerala, I was welcomed with warmth and sincerity. My eldest brother, who was working at RDT, had invited me, and from that moment, there was an immediate connection with Malla and Doreen. This blossomed into a lasting friendship that has endured over the years, and that ini-

tial meeting remains etched in my memory.

The Turning Point: A Journey Into the Development Sector

At that time, I also met Father Vincent Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer, whose insights during informal conversations deeply influenced my future. It was during my month-long stay at RDT that these discussions led me to decide to join the development sector. After working in various parts of Andhra Pradesh, I returned to Anantapur district in late 1986, bringing with me the wisdom I had gained.

The Timbaktu Collective: A New Chapter

In 1990, my friendship with Malla and Doreen took on a new di-



mension as Bablu and I embarked on the journey of starting the Timbaktu Collective, which has now completed 34 years. This path was not always smooth; we faced immense challenges, particularly in a place where neither Bablu nor I were from. There were times when we felt disillusioned, when our trust was broken, and nothing seemed to make sense. During these moments, friends like Malla and Doreen became pillars of support, offering a sense of belonging and reminding us that we were not alone in this journey.

Learning from a True Leader

I had the privilege of working closely with Malla during our involvement in the Voluntary Action Network Ananthapur in the mid-90s. His diplomacy, capacity to build consensus, and respect for everyone, regardless of their behaviour, were inspiring. Watching Malla's impeccable work ethic and his ability to create meaningful change was a true learning experience. His unique contributions to the people of the region and the de-

velopment sector through RDT, Accion Fraterna-Ecology Centre, and countless other initiatives reflect his unwavering commitment to improving lives.

Malla's Signature: A True Advocate for Farmers

If I had to define Malla's signature characteristic, it would undoubtedly be his authentic and profound connection with local farmers. His understanding of their struggles and tireless efforts to revive the agrarian sector speak volumes about his dedication. Coupled with his scholarly rigour and impactful public speaking, Malla has truly set the bar high in the development sector.

A Friendship Like No Other

It is a true honour to call Malla and Doreen my friends. Their journey of service, dedication, and commitment continues to inspire me. I am forever grateful for their friendship and wish them both the very best in all their endeavours. Stay blessed, Malla and Doreen!

Ajathashatru of NGO Sector: Dr. YV Malla Reddy

Five Decades of Crusade against Poverty & Hunger!!

- C S Reddy,

Founder and CEO, APMAS, Hyderabad

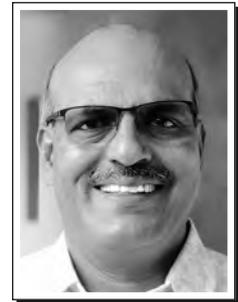
Lifetime Contributions to the Development Sector

It gives me immense pleasure and I consider it a great privilege to write about the lifetime contributions that Dr Malla Reddy has made to the development sector in India for over five decades, particularly in the area of rainfed agriculture in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Dr Malla Reddy has emerged as a champion advocating for the government's attention to the problems and challenges faced by the rainfed farmers. He has been strongly engaged in piloting innovations and promoting natural farming among over 30,000 farmers in Anantapur district, led by women and their organisations, including farmer-producer organisations (FPOs).

A Strong Representative of the NGO Sector

Dr. Malla Reddy has been a strong representative of the NGO

sector in India and on various international forums. He has emerged as a role model for what an NGO can



achieve through practice-led policy advocacy. Beginning his work in his formative years, he was groomed by Dr. Vincent Ferrer of Rural Development Trust (RDT). Dr. Reddy eventually promoted Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre (AF EC), an associated non-profit organisation of RDT, to focus almost exclusively on agroecology – an inspiring journey and story of a development professional.

A Journey of Collaboration and Innovation

More than 30 years ago, when I was still working with CARE International in India, I heard of the

phenomenal work that Dr Malla Reddy was doing at RDT in the Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh. I developed an acquaintance with him during the formative years of Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS), which I founded in 2001. Over the years, this acquaintance grew into admiration as I learned from his experience and innovations, and in later years, it blossomed into a valued friendship. Together, we worked to promote government-NGO collaboration for the empowerment of women strongly and to achieve a synergistic impact.

Dr. Malla Reddy and I worked closely on the following themes:

- Government-NGO Collaboration in Andhra Pradesh - Across all sectors
- Promoting FPOs and FPO Federations as thriving business organisations for farmers, with a special focus on recognising women as farmers and their leadership in FPOs
- Promoting Natural Farming / Ecological Agriculture as a long-term solution for the rainfed farmers of the Rayalaseema region
- Leading A.P. NGO-Government collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic

Laying a Strong Foundation for Government - NGO Collaboration in Andhra Pradesh

While we always believed in the greatest impact achievable by Government and NGOs working together, Dr YS Rajasekhar Reddy's tenure as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh presented a golden opportunity to formalise this partnership. In 2005, a State-Level Government - NGO Collaboration was formalised with Mr Smarajit Ray IAS (retd.) as the first Vice-Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Government - NGO Coordination Committee. Dr. Malla Reddy played a significant role in conceptualising and designing the formalisation of this collaboration. Later, when Mr Chandrababu Naidu became Chief Minister, the initiative gained further momentum with the establishment of the Smart Andhra Foundation (SAF), a registered society. Mr SP Tucker IAS (retd.), former Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh, organised several meetings with the AP CM, with both of us leading those events. Dr. Malla Reddy served as the Chair of the Smart AP Foundation, and I was a member of the Executive Committee. Together, we organised numerous workshops, conferences, and meetings under the banner of Government-NGO collaboration and

promoted sector-level partnerships.

Leadership During the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, RDT/AF Ecology Centre and APMAS led the NGO efforts, ensuring the participation of around 1,000 NGOs in relief operations across almost all the mandals of Andhra Pradesh. This included awareness campaigns and rehabilitation efforts for COVID-19 victims. Many NGOs also managed COVID Care Centres (CCC) to treat patients. Dr KS Jawahar Reddy IAS (Retd.), former Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh, conducted weekly virtual meetings with NGO leaders to forge a cooperation between NGOs and the Government in COVID management. Relief kits were distributed to millions of families across the state.

Tireless Advocacy and Support for the NGO Sector

Dr. Malla Reddy has always been available to take up any agenda related to NGOs at the district, state, and national levels. He made tireless efforts to promote district-level NGO forums for sharing, learning, and engaging with the District Administration. Considering his immense contributions to the sector, the Voluntary Agencies Network of India (VANI) sought

his involvement. Any senior government official or NGO representative visiting Anantapur would always visit Dr. Malla Reddy to spend time with him, learn from his experience, and understand his perspectives. In all NGO forums, Dr. Malla Reddy demonstrated selflessness and strongly represented the sector. NGOs across the state have always felt confident when Dr. Malla Reddy represented the NGO sector in various meetings, workshops, and conferences, thanks to his deep understanding of ground realities, his positive approach in speaking for all NGOs, and his passion for people-led development.

Promoting Women Sasya Mitra Groups (SMGs), FPOs, and Their Federations in the AF EC Operational Areas

Dr. Malla Reddy, a strong believer in social mobilisation and community organisation, particularly among women, focused on organizing smallholder farmers, especially rainfed farmers, at the habilitation, village, mandal, and project levels. Women were mobilised into groups called Sasya Mitra Groups (SMGs) and federated at these levels. Over the past 20 years, as the concept of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) gained recognition, Dr. Malla Reddy, through AF EC, promoted several FPOs in

their operational areas. Each FPO set up a “Rythu Angadi” to sell inputs and implements required by farmers, with an emphasis on natural farming. APMAS served as a Resource Agency for capacity building in these FPOs. At the FPO level, infrastructure such as Collection Centres for grading and sorting, storage facilities, and cold storages were developed. As part of the natural evolution of the FPO system, all FPOs promoted by AF EC were federated into the Ananta FPO Federation, Rythu Nestham Food Producer Company Ltd (RNFPCL), which established a state-of-the-art secondary processing facility to process millets and groundnuts into ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products. These FPOs also promoted natural farming and marketed the produce.

AF EC and APMAS conducted various workshops, training programs, events, and conclaves on agriculture and FPOs. Two major workshops were organised in Anantapur, including a regional workshop on FPOs to promote food processing and the Rayalaseema FPO Conclave, which attracted around 800 participants. Ministers, State-level Secretaries, and District Collectors actively participated in these events to develop guidelines for creating an enabling ecosystem for FPOs in Andhra Pradesh. Civil

society organisations’ efforts have created a favorable environment for FPOs to thrive as social enterprises. The Government has recognised FPOs as partners, providing support such as procurement centers under the Minimum Support Price (MSP), expeditious issuance of licenses, and infrastructure support for Collection Centres and Cold Storages, with 75% subsidy under MIDH, RKVY, and PMFME.

Promoting Agroecology / Natural Farming

Given the semi-arid nature of the Anantapur area, Dr. Malla Reddy recognised the importance of ecological agriculture early in his development career. With his passion, vision, and foresight Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre (AF EC) was established to promote agroecology, with women playing a pivotal role. Over the past 25 years, under his leadership, several innovations in soil moisture conservation and water-use efficiency have been piloted and scaled. Dr. Malla Reddy played a pivotal role in conceptualizing and designing Rythu Sadhikaratha Samstha (RySS) and the Andhra Pradesh Community-managed Natural Farming (APCNF), serving as a lead training agency for master trainers and scaling up innovations.

Dr. Malla Reddy also contrib-

uted significantly to the conceptualisation and design of the Andhra Pradesh Drought Mitigation Project (APDMP), implemented by the AP Government through NGOs and funded by IFAD. Recognising his expertise and experience, Dr. Malla Reddy served on various committees established by the Government of India and the State Government on agriculture. Notably, he was a member of the AP Water Conservation Mission, the AP Farmers Welfare Commission, and the AP Agriculture Mission, all constituted by the AP Government. For his contributions to dryland agriculture and natural farming, Dr. Malla Reddy received numerous awards and recognitions. As a founding member of WASSAN, he made significant contributions to participatory watershed management development.

Over the years, Dr. Malla Reddy has been relentless in promoting millets and other produce from Natural Farming. Almost every year AF Ecology Centre in partnership with other NGOs in Anantapur, organises Millet Festival and more recently a 3-day large-scale event was organised called "*Rayalaseema Pantalu – Vantalu*" (the crops & recipes of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh) in partnership with almost 20 other orga-

nisations. It was a major success as a large number of farmers also participated in the mela to learn about the indigenous crops of Rayalaseema and the age-old recipes with traditional crops. A large number of food stalls were organised and all the farmers who attended the 3-day event were also provided millet-based food. APMAS was also a partner in organising the event along with several NGOs working in Anantapur district. To address climate change, Dr. Malla Reddy promoted Biogas Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), among very few NGOs in this sector. He has also initiated carbon sequestration project focusing on agroecology & agroforestry with all his efforts, Dr. Malla Reddy is also known as "*Ananta Rythu Bhandu*"

Strengthening Partnerships Between AF Ecology Centre and APMAS

Over the years, AF Ecology Centre (AF EC) and APMAS have evolved into strong partner organisations, formalising their collaboration to deepen their impact on the communities they serve. Beyond the two organisations working together, colleagues at various levels have also joined forces in organising events of common interest at

both the Anantapur and field levels. Events such as Farmers Day, Millet Day, and Environment Day have become a platform for joint efforts. APMAS has also made optimal use of the remarkable training facilities developed by Dr. Malla Reddy over the years. Located on the AF EC campus, APMAS has its office there, and the training facility has become a hub for organizations, including the government, promoting Natural Farming. Many programs, such as those by RySS and other NGOs, are conducted at this centre which has earned recognition as a "Centre of Excellence."

The training, meeting, and residential facilities at AF EC are widely utilised by donor agencies, creating an ideal environment for collaboration. Staying at the AF EC campus offers an additional perk: experiencing the wonderful traditional food served with care and love in the dining hall. The guest rooms are always well-maintained and ready for use. The presence of Dr. Malla Reddy on campus adds a personal touch to the experience. His warmth, combined with a shared appreciation for ragi (finger millet) malt, makes visits to AF EC even more special. The welcoming atmosphere at AF EC fosters a sense of belonging, making it feel like home.

A True Friendship and Shared Vision

Dr. Malla Reddy's exemplary character shines through in his positive, inclusive, and approachable nature. His humility, empathy, and ability to assert himself when necessary have made him a trusted friend, philosopher, and mentor over the years. He possesses remarkable patience, perseverance, and a collaborative spirit, especially when addressing complex, long-standing issues. His focus on tackling challenges through teamwork has made him an invaluable ally in addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, particularly small-holder farmers. The relationship between Dr. Malla Reddy and APMAS has grown into a deep mutual trust, with both parties supporting each other and recognising their shared goals. Together, they have become a formidable team, unafraid to speak with one voice on behalf of the NGO sector, representing the collective aspirations of marginalised communities.

Knowing Dr. Malla Reddy's family has also added to the warmth of visits to Anantapur. The hospitality of Doreen and the delightful fish brought by his son Bharat from fresh waters made these visits memorable. Over the years, the collaboration has not only been

professional but has blossomed into a deep personal friendship. The mutual inspiration shared between Dr. Malla Reddy and APMAS has strengthened their shared vision for the future.

A Bright Future Ahead

Looking ahead, the bond between AF EC and APMAS is expected to continue growing stronger. Their collaboration will only deepen, contributing to the improved quality of life for marginalised communities, particularly in

Rayalaseema. The mutual learning and synergistic actions of the two organisations will be key drivers in achieving long-term positive change. As Dr. Malla Reddy continues to lead AF Ecology Centre, his health and happiness remain the wishes of those who have benefited from his mentorship. There is also hope that he will take the time to pen a book, sharing his wealth of experience and insights gained from his decades of work in the development sector.



Inauguration of Smart A.P.Foundation in 2015 From left:
Hon'ble CM Sri Chandrababu Naidu garu, Malla Reddy and Mr.C.S. Reddy (APMAS)

A Tribute to Five Decades of Transformative Leadership in Drought Mitigation and Sustainable Development

- Ms. Kalamani,
APMAS, Hyderabad

I am deeply humbled and honoured to express my utmost respect and admiration for your extraordinary dedication and unwavering commitment to the development sector over the past five decades. Your relentless efforts, particularly in drought mitigation and dryland farming in the Rayalaseema region, especially the Anantapur district, have left an indelible mark. You have not only mitigated the devastating impacts of drought but also profoundly improved the lives of vulnerable communities reliant on agriculture and allied activities in this drought-prone region.

Your leadership, rooted in strong values and ethics, has been a beacon of hope and guidance – not only for your team but also for the communities you work with and the many stakeholders you have influenced along the way. The passion and resolve you have demonstrated have driven remark-

able innovations in dryland farming and sustainable livelihood models. You have inspired authorities to replicate these models through your advocacy, making dryland farming viable and attractive for small landholders. Your mission has alleviated immediate suffering and laid a solid foundation for long-term resilience and sustainable development.

What has always stood out to me is your holistic approach, recognising that true sustainable development must put people – especially women – at its core. You have diligently organised farmers and women, empowering them with knowledge and skills while nurturing a spirit of self-reliance. The farmer groups and cooperatives that Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre (AFEC) has established are now pillars of strength in



the community, fostering mutual support and a shared commitment to overcoming the risks associated with drought conditions.

It has been nearly a quarter-century since we first met, and it has been a privilege and great satisfaction to know you and work closely with you on many occasions. I often reflect on the challenges you have faced and how you navigated them with maturity, integrity, and a deep sense of purpose. Our mutual respect and bond have deepened over the years, and I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed your relentless pursuit of a

cause with such passion, perseverance, and humility.

The legacy of your work in this drought-prone region will continue to inspire farmers, future generations of development workers, and stakeholders in the ecosystem. Your wisdom, compassion, and persistent efforts over the past 50 years will continue to guide and inspire countless others as they take up the mantle of transforming lives and livelihoods in drought-prone, semi-arid zones, not only in our country but around the globe.



Brahma Kamal flower bloomed at Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's residence on 09.09.09.
Blooming Time: The Brahma Kamal flower blooms only once or twice a year.
Night Blooming: It blooms for only two hours from 11 pm to 1 am at night.

Malla Reddy: The Man of Drylands!

- Ravindra Adusumilli,

Director, WASSAN, Hyderabad

“These ‘Sarva-Dalwa’ fellows can never appreciate the issues and aspirations of people in drylands” - Yugandhar, a great visionary of rainfed areas, often used to say referring to the people from irrigated coastal areas having Kharif and Rabi systems of agriculture! Rootedness in drylands is important for one to understand the multiple risks imposed by climate, fragility of the land and ecosystem impinging on the livelihoods of the people.

Voices from the drylands are often rare; if any, will only ask for canals and irrigation from dams churning out a larger political ambition. Malla Reddy provided a different articulation to development debate in Anantapur; an articulation of the small holder rainfed farmers and their right to water to save their crops from dry-spells. Droughts and their destructive impact on livelihoods are some things one has to experience to appreciate the need for working in its mitigation.

Born in an agriculture family in Anantapur district, Malla’s articulation comes from his years of struggle to evolve



what is appropriate for the small holder dryland farmers in Anantapur as a development worker and as a leader in RDT and Accion Fraterna. He echoed the voice of many such small holder dryland farmers in Rayalaseema region and provided leadership to resonate their voices in the mainstream political structures, going beyond the NGO domain.

Three distinct contributions I could make out that have strengthened our policy articulation in WASSAN or the national Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network.

The first and foremost is paraphrased in Telugu as the ‘Rakshaka Tadulu’ – protective irrigation for meeting the contingencies imposed by a gap of over 15 days between

two rainfall events in rainfed crops during monsoon season. While we were articulating this to be the primary motivation for irrigation policy in drylands, Malla made it a people's voice with a bold portrayal of why not transport water in tankers and provide life saving irrigation to small holders? After all, the further livelihoods of those farmer and the loss or gain on her investment so far, depends on the survival of the crop till the next rainfall event! Tankers were modified to suit protective irrigation, transported water from borewells to the far-off orchards and crops in Accion Fraternal led by the bold imagination of Malla. Survival is the essence of living in drylands!

It did not stop there; the imagination caught on with the Government system during one of the severe droughts in Anantapur. Malla could influence the Chief Minister and the apparatus to go in a big way for protective irrigation. We have photographs of fire-engines providing protective irrigation with sprinklers to save groundnut crop in that year! Who would have thought of providing irrigation to the crops hit by dryspells with water tankers designed for the purpose, transporting water from long distances! The point on allocation of water resources for securing dryland crops is made emphatically.

Converting singular agendas into mission mode is the hallmark of Malla, his second major contribution. That Anantapur has massive Mango plantations/ horticulture taken up over years under any scheme that we can name, be it watersheds or MGNREGS, was under his advocacy. AFEC / RDT provided the backend nurseries of good planting material once they saw the survival rates are low. A 'good deal' for the dryland farmer is always the force driving Malla. Taking the soil-cement mix lined farm ponds at scale is another protective irrigation measure after the largescale implementation of watershed development programs.

While there is always a larger cynical view on the investments in drylands / Anantapur - we have Malla's voice affirming that the investments made so far is a pittance compared to the size of the district, its population and in comparison with the irrigated areas. Voicing the investment needs of the drylands in public advocacy forums and convincing governments to invest in drylands is the third major contribution. His voice helped development of many programs with a focus on Rayalaseema; AP Drought Mitigation Project was one of them we were closely associated with. Always encouraging, providing all the

support that he could for the cause of drylands, Malla stood behind us in our advocacy efforts; in our struggles to let government programs be managed by the community.

When I first visited AF Ecology Centre while it was under construction – I was surprised – ‘an NGO and so much infrastructure’ !! But over years I saw the wisdom of the man that Malla is! The Ecology Centre is now the only place in the entire region having facilities to host meetings of the civil society; which we could not afford otherwise! It has become the centre for meetings of civil society to deliberate and evolve programs. At least four larger initiatives of WASSAN took birth in conversations and consultations in that Centre. Building organisations and infrastructure requires dedicated long term commitment and lifetime effort.

While WASSAN was proposed to be registered as an organisation in 1999 by Sastri garu of CWS under the leadership of Yugandhar, Malla took all of us to RDT and to Father Ferrer, and got us the first commitment of support from his organisation at that time. Taking over the Chairperson ship after Yugandhar joined the Planning Commission, Malla provided leadership to WASSAN as its Chair. The team has benefitted immensely by Malla’s strong support encouraging us to take bold steps and risks over a decade of his

tenure in evolving the agenda and in building the organisation. In Yugandhar and Malla, the two persons coming from Anantapur district – the core dryland area of the country, the foundation for strong organisational commitment for drylands in WASSAN was laid out; the concept of ‘drylands’ – later expanded to ‘rainfed areas’ to include the high rainfall tribal regions when Dr. J Venkateswarlu pointed out the exclusion in the term.

Shaping up the thinking on drylands, giving autonomy to the team in rolling out their bold imagination, standing by the team in times of contingencies and strong governance guidance provided by Malla as the Chair of WASSAN laid strong foundations of the organisation which is gearing up to celebrate its 25th year. With Malla Reddy as the Chair, WASSAN embarked on two OD exercises where the institutional structure and policies were radically redefined keeping in view the growing agenda, personnel and area of operations.

As we move towards our 25th year of committed service to the rainfed areas, WASSAN also celebrates the proactive leadership that Dr. Malla Reddy has provided to the team in shaping its own space in the sector and to the agenda of securing lives of dryland rainfed farmers.

A Visionary Leader of Rural Development: Sri Malla Reddy

Celebrating Five Decades of Service

- C. Bhanuja,
CEO, REDS, Anantapur

Hearfelt congratulations to Sri Malla Reddy, fondly known as the "Farmers' Soulmate of Anantapur," on completing 50 years of unparalleled contributions to rural development. It is an honour to celebrate this milestone and reflect on the immense impact of your work. I wish you continued strength, good health, and inspiration to achieve many more such milestones in the years to come.

A Journey of Brotherhood and Collaboration

My association with you dates back nearly 36 years, a relationship nurtured with mutual respect and warmth. It is a bond that has grown stronger over decades of working together for the upliftment of rural communities. As I recount the milestones of this shared journey, I feel immense gratitude for the privilege of learning and growing under your mentorship.

The Vanasamarakshana Program: A Beginning (1988-90)

Our journey began with the Forest Conservation Program, where we first joined hands. This initial collaboration marked the start of numerous impactful projects in the undivided Anantapur district, addressing critical rural challenges with determination and vision.



Farmers' Courage March: A Beacon of Hope (1999-2003)

In response to the tragic rise in farmer suicides, you played a central role in organising the "Rythu Aathma Sthairya Yatra" (Farmers' Courage March). This district-wide initiative brought together NGOs, poets, writers, artists, and citizen groups to tackle the crisis with em-

pathy and action.

Through field visits to villages, interactions with affected families, and public awareness campaigns, we emphasised that suicides were not the solution. You inspired farmers to unite and demand policies that addressed their problems. Your leadership ensured that the voices of the farmers were heard, and a detailed report was submitted to the government, paving the way for actionable change.

Social Audits: Setting New Benchmarks for Accountability (2006)

Your instrumental role in the first-ever Social Audit of the Employment Guarantee Scheme in 2006 set a precedent for transparency in governance. This pioneering initiative involved national experts, NGOs, and government officials, creating a collaborative framework for monitoring and accountability.

Despite the challenges, including resistance from officials, your tactful coordination and resolve ensured the audit's success. The findings led to significant policy reforms at the national level, marking a historic chapter in the program's implementation.

Reforming Anganwadi Centers: A Groundbreaking Effort (2010)

Under the guidance of Retd.

IAS Officer Sri K.R. Venugopal, you played a pivotal role in the social audit of Anganwadi Centers in Anantapur. This initiative sought to enhance the efficiency of these centres, which are critical for the welfare of rural children and women.

The audit faced intense scrutiny, resistance, and emotional confrontations. However, your ability to mediate, resolve conflicts, and drive constructive outcomes ensured its success. The recommendations from this audit resulted in tangible improvements in the delivery of Anganwadi services, benefiting countless families.

A Lifelong Commitment to Farmers

For five decades, you have championed the cause of drought-prone farmers, earning their unwavering trust and admiration. You have uplifted thousands of farming families through initiatives like drought mitigation, promotion of protective irrigation, and research on sustainable agricultural practices.

Your book, *Anantha Prasthanam*, reflects your deep understanding of the region's challenges and offers a roadmap for addressing the twin crises of drought and poverty.

An Inspiration to All

You are a true embodiment of punctuality, dedication, and compassion. Your emotional responses during discussions on farmer suicides reveal your profound empathy for their plight. Your ability to mediate and resolve conflicts between voluntary organisations and government authorities has been instrumental in fostering collaborative efforts.

For me and many others in the

field of social work, you have been a guiding light—a mentor who inspires us to strive for meaningful change.

Wishing Health and Happiness

Anna, as we celebrate this milestone, I pray for your continued health, peace, and fulfilment. May your legacy continue to inspire generations as we work together to carry forward your vision for rural transformation.



Malla Reddy with Sri K.R. Venugopal IAS, (Retd) Formerly Secretary to the Prime Minister; Special Rapporteur, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Hyderabad

A Golden Tribute: Malla Reddy's Five Decades of Development and Friendship

- Pradeep Esteves,

Development Consultant, Bangalore

Reflecting on the 50 golden years of my dearest friend Malla Reddy's dedication to the development sector brings to mind the treasured moments of our enduring friendship.

I first met Malla towards the end of 1978 at the RDT campus. I accompanied Ram Esteves to reconnect with his old colleagues and friends. I vividly remember waiting late into the night for Malla to return from his fieldwork on his iconic "bullet" motorcycle. There was an instant connection from the moment we met, and our friendship has flourished over these 47 years. I cherish the wonderful times we shared personally and professionally throughout this remarkable journey.

I fondly recall Malla falling in love with my dear friend Doreen, who has been an incredible pillar of support for him. Their son Bharath also plays a significant role in supporting his father in every possible

way.

Malla has been a driving force, not only as a dedicated colleague in the development sector, particularly at RDT but also through his subsequent work focusing on Ecology and Agriculture at Accion Fraternal—a cause close to his heart and soul. He has built a remarkable learning organization that is a joy to visit and witness the impactful work being done.

Known for his generosity, Malla has never confined his knowledge and experience to his endeavours. He has continuously shared his expertise with others and supported numerous organizations across the country, especially in the former state of Andhra Pradesh.

Later, I had the pleasure of working closely with Malla during the VANA network days, an experience that was both enjoyable and



enriching. This period added another layer of learning and collaboration to our journey together. Throughout our shared experiences, we have cultivated lasting friendships with many who have been part of this journey. Malla, I

am grateful for your friendship and look forward to celebrating the next milestone – the platinum jubilee of our enduring bond and shared journeys. My warmest wishes to you, as always.



Left: Visha Ferrer, Father Ferrer Mrs. Anne Ferrer, Malla ReddyA combined celebration of Father Ferrer & Mrs. Anne Ferrer's wedding anniversary and Moncho Ferrer & Visha Ferrer wedding anniversary celebrated on 10.04.2005

Celebrating Malla Reddy: A Pillar of Integrity and Innovation in Development

- K S Gopal,

Centre for Environment Concerns, Hyderabad

Father Ferrer pioneered and fostered voluntary work in Andhra Pradesh, and Malla Reddy stands as his truest disciple, embodying the values of a true Jesuit.

Malla Reddy is an untiring supporter and well-wisher of NGOs, expecting nothing in return. His role and contributions extend far beyond the communities he engaged within India's lowest rainfall district. Many of us have adopted his ideas, practices, and innovations on natural resources, environmental goods, and livelihoods in the semi-arid regions of India. He embodies the integration of theory and practice with integrity, delivering high outcomes and tirelessly working for the betterment of poor communities.

I always turn to his ideas, inputs, and insights when faced with challenges. Working with Malla is a joyous experience, allowing for the deepening, implementation, and in-

tegration of development initiatives in drought-prone areas. These include the National Rural



Employment Guarantee Scheme, improving ICDS delivery with Sri K. R. Venugopal, and validating the System of Water for Agriculture Rejuvenation (SWAR), to name a few.

Knowing Malla Reddy for forty years, I recognize him as a crown jewel in the development landscape. He exemplifies the values of solidarity, conviction, humility, and earnestness—a principled comrade with unwavering commitment.

Best wishes on his continued quest to contribute to human and planetary well-being, with Jesuit spirituality deeply embedded in the bounties of nature.

Dr. Malla Reddy: Pioneering Rural Development in Anantapuram

Honoring Dr Malla Reddy: A Champion of Rural Progress and Environmental Stewardship

- *Balaram Pitta,*
CEO, Jana Jagruti

Inspiration Through Dedication

Dr. YV Malla Reddy's impact on rural development has been nothing short of inspirational. His unwavering dedication to addressing poverty and drought in marginalized communities has left a lasting legacy.

Transformative Development Efforts

His efforts to engage with NGOs and district administration to improve the ecology of the district have set a high standard for development work. His emphasis on natural resource management through the watershed development concept with NABARD has been truly transformative, particularly with the introduction of protective irrigation for rain-fed crops. This initiative has positively impacted the lives of poor and marginalized farmers.

A Model for Progress

His significant improvements to the District of Anantapur serve as a model for other districts, reflecting his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to progress. His guidance and support have enabled countless others, including Collectors Mr S.P. Tucker, Mr Somesh Kumar, and Smt. Anuradha, Mr. Janardhana Reddy, and many front-line officers, to make a meaningful impact on rural development.



Celebrating 50 Years of Contribution

On the occasion of Dr YV Malla Reddy's 50th anniversary in the development field, we take this moment to honour his extraordinary contributions and express our deepest gratitude for his unwavering support. His legacy is a beacon

of inspiration, illuminating our path as we strive for continued positive change.

Additional Contributions

Dr. Malla Reddy also contributed to writing a book on the district's traditional water sources,

which revealed many water bodies and promoted natural farming in many villages of the district.

With warm regards and admiration for Dr. YV Malla Reddy's exemplary leadership,



Dr.Malla Reddy and Dr. Yellamanda Reddy at Field visit

A Tribute to Dr. Malla Reddy: Celebrating Five Decades of Dedicated Service in Anantapur

- V. Kistappa,
RIDS, Anantapur

Pioneering Change: A Journey of Compassion and Practical Solutions for Rural Communities

Dr. Malla Reddy's unwavering commitment to addressing the issues faced by impoverished communities in the unified Anantapur district is commendable. His close examination of the challenges faced by the marginalized and the services he provided have practically transformed lives. His ascent as the Director of the AF Ecology Centre, alongside his role as a sister organization with self-reliance, is noteworthy, especially as we reflect on the remarkable journey spanning over eighty years.

Fostering Collaboration: Uniting Diverse Stakeholders for Drought Relief and Development

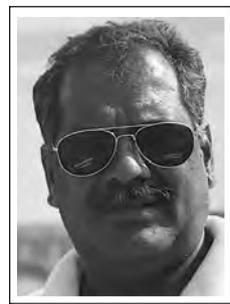
Over the decades, Dr. Malla Reddy has collaborated with various political leaders, government officials, voluntary organizations, and individuals from different so-

cial backgrounds. Together, they have addressed issues such as district drought relief and development.

Numerous discussions, programs, and meetings have revolved around alleviating the pressing challenges faced by farmers in Anantapur, including groundwater depletion, environmental degradation, declining crop yields, migration, and farmer suicides.

Empowering the Marginalized: Uplifting Women and Underprivileged Groups in Anantapur

Dr. Malla Reddy has successfully navigated the complex landscape of rural development by implementing practical programs tailored to the immediate needs of the people. His ability to identify and address the pressing needs of drought-affected communities,



such as access to drinking water, livestock feed, and livelihood solutions, has significantly improved their quality of life.

Sustainable Development Initiatives: Implementing Innovative Solutions for Lasting Impact

Through extensive research and knowledge-sharing, Dr. Malla Reddy has emphasized the need for integrated water management and collaborative governance across various levels, from grassroots to state and national levels. His efforts in advocating for water grids and sustainable agricultural practices have paved the way for resilience in the face of climate challenges.

Legacy of Leadership: Honouring a Visionary's Commitment to Social Justice and Community Empowerment

Having collaborated with RIDS for over two decades, Dr.

Malla Reddy's leadership in comprehensive rural development projects in the Papagari constituency has been invaluable. His insights and strategic planning have resulted in significant funding allocations for development initiatives, leaving a lasting impact on the communities he serves.

In conclusion, Dr Malla Reddy's dedication to uplifting the marginalized and his tireless efforts toward sustainable development stands as a testament to his unwavering commitment to social justice. His legacy inspires current and future leaders in the fight against poverty and inequality in the region.

Celebrating 50 Years of Impactful Development: A Tribute to Mr. Malla Reddy's Legacy

- *Surya and Khasim Peera,*

Mass Education Anantapur

On the occasion of Mr Malla Reddy's remarkable achievement of completing 50 years in the development sector, we are honoured to share our reflections on his illustrious career. Our association spans over four decades, during which we have collaborated on a range of critical issues, including environmental challenges, violence against women, land development, percolation tanks, and water conservation.

Notably, as early as 1978, Dr YV Malla Reddy was a Selection Committee Member for recruiting "community organisers" for a major RDT project. At the young age of 25-26, he quickly emerged as a key member of RDT, one of the largest voluntary organisations in Andhra Pradesh. His dynamic personality, exceptional oratory skills, and commanding presence were instrumental in this early achievement.

In his subsequent role as Di-



rector of the Ecology Sector at RDT, Mr. Malla Reddy became a pivotal decision-maker, following in the footsteps of the late Fr. Vincent Ferrer and Ms. Anne Ferrer, the founders of RDT. He was a trailblazer in natural resource development, particularly in watershed management. Under his leadership, RDT initiated impactful projects, including land development, afforestation, check dams, percolation tanks, and large-scale water conservation efforts. These initiatives significantly improved groundwater levels and enhanced greenery in the most underdeveloped villages of Anantapur District. RDT's support helped thousands of impoverished farmers cultivate crops and restored

numerous irrigation tanks.

Beyond his rural development efforts, Dr YV Malla Reddy actively participated in the Rayalaseema Movement, advocating for a fair allocation of river water to the Rayalaseema region, with a special focus on Anantapur District. His influence extends well beyond local development; he is a prominent public figure in both Anantapur District and Andhra Pradesh.

He is highly regarded among district and state government officials for his extensive work uplifting marginalised communities, including SC/ST groups, and for his successful efforts transforming barren lands through watershed projects. His vast experience in the development sector has led to numerous invitations to serve as a

chief guest or speaker at public and social events and government functions.

In 2000, Mr. Malla Reddy took on a new leadership role with the Accion Fraterna-Ecology Centre (AF-EC), an NGO founded by Father Ferrer. The AF Ecology Centre has become a vital development hub in Anantapur District, hosting training programs, seminars, and meetings on societal and developmental issues. Additionally, Mr Malla Reddy played a key role in establishing the Voluntary Action Network for Anantapur (VANA), a network of voluntary organizations.

In conclusion, Mr. Malla Reddy's contributions to rural development in Andhra Pradesh are both profound and enduring.



Dr. Malla Reddy at agriculture field visit

Fifty Years of Transforming Lives

- Kiran Pasupuleti (Kittu),

Work Place Trainer, Pfizer Pharma, Melbourne, Australia

Dear Malla Reddy Uncle and Doreen Aunty,

Congratulations to both of you on reaching the incredible milestone of 50 years of dedicated service at RDT and Accion Fraterna-Ecology Centre! This remarkable achievement stands as a testament to the passion, commitment, and selfless devotion you both have demonstrated toward social work.

Cherished Memories

Growing up, I heard countless stories about your unwavering dedication to making a difference in people's lives. Some of my most treasured memories are of your visits to Melbourne. Those three days we spent together completely changed my perception of Uncle. I had always seen you as a serious person, but during that time, I discovered a cheerful, lively side of you I never expected. Aunty, as always, was a delight to be with—so

full of life and positivity. Those moments of laughter and connection will remain etched in my heart forever.



A Family of Compassion

I cannot thank you enough for the kindness and support you and your family have shown my mother whenever she visited Anantapur. Knowing she had your unwavering support gave us immense comfort and spoke volumes about the kind, generous, and compassionate people you are.

Your values shine brightly in your son, Bharath, whose actions reflect the care and empathy you have nurtured in him. Witnessing his compassionate nature and willingness to help others is truly inspiring. I have no doubt he will carry forward your legacy of service and make an even greater differ-

ence in the lives of those around him.

Wishing You New Adventures

As you enter this new chapter after five decades of remarkable service, I hope it brings you as much joy and fulfilment as you have given to others. May this next phase be filled with new adventures, meaningful connections, and

opportunities to continue spreading your positivity and care to many more lives.

Congratulations once again on this extraordinary journey. I am sending you all my love and best wishes for the exciting times ahead.

Warmest regards,

Kiran Pasupuleti and family



Malla Reddy & Doreen Reddy

A Struggle for a Vibrant Civil Society

- Dr. Geyanand,

Ex-MLC, Anantapur

The Transforming Landscape of Anantapur

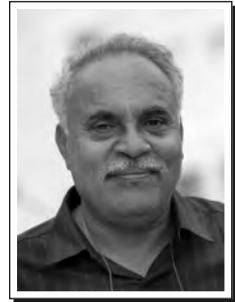
Two or three decades ago, Anantapur was markedly different from today. The early 1990s marked the advent of a new civil society in the region. Liberalized economic reforms had just begun making their way into society. While the urban middle class benefited marginally, rural areas and the agrarian sector faced invisible setbacks.

Compounded by recurring droughts and water scarcity, these were times of unrest, marked by large-scale leftist movements advocating for irrigation and the welfare of the impoverished. It was against this backdrop that I, following my MBBS from Kurnool Medical College and subsequent training in Nellore, returned to my hometown and started a medical practice in 1990.

The Emergence of Collective Action

By the late 1990s, a powerful civil society began to take shape in

Anantapur. Visionaries like Malla Reddy played a pivotal role in uniting voices against the adverse effects of liberalized policies, especially those impacting the underprivileged and marginalized regions. Agrarian failures were taking a toll, leading to an alarming rise in farmer suicides. During this period, I became involved in the Jana Vignana Vedika (JVV), which worked alongside government efforts to promote literacy and social consciousness. My first meeting with Malla Reddy left an indelible impression—his approachable, knowledgeable, and courteous demeanour stood out.



Strengthening the Third Voice

Malla Reddy's collaboration with other like-minded individuals like Narasimha Reddy, Visweswara Rao, and myself catalyzed re-

sponses to pressing issues. Together, we conceptualized “The Third Voice,” a non-partisan platform aimed at amplifying the demands and concerns of the people. It became a robust medium for articulating the voices of the marginalized, conducting field visits, preparing reports, and holding public meetings. Notable activists, including Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy, and Anna Hazare, were invited to Anantapur to inspire local communities. These gatherings became milestones in raising awareness and mobilizing people toward social progress.

Empowering Women Through Collective Efforts

The district witnessed a disturbing rise in violence against women. In response, we established the Mahila Aikya Vedika (Women’s Unity Forum), which provided legal aid and social support to victims. A counseling center was set up on Court Road, offering free legal services under the leadership of women like Jayalakshmi, Dr. Rama, and others. The publication of *Cheyutha*, a book chronicling the struggles and victories of these women, remains a testament to this historic movement. Malla Reddy’s unwavering support and insights were instrumental in these endeavours.

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Malla Reddy’s contributions extended beyond activism. His leadership in initiatives like watershed programs and sustainable agriculture brought transformative change to over 200 villages. He consistently advocated for the integration of tanks in the district into a water network named “Anantajala Valayam,” aiming to address irrigation challenges and support livelihoods.

A Personal Bond

Our families shared a warm friendship. Malla Reddy frequently visited our home, and I, along with my wife Prasoon, often visited his. These moments of camaraderie are fond memories that highlight the personal side of a man deeply committed to societal well-being.

A Diminished Civic Spirit

Reflecting on those dynamic years, it is disheartening to see the present stagnation in civil society. Political and voluntary organizations now lack the broad vision and courage of the past. The need for a forward-thinking, vibrant civil society is greater than ever. Our society awaits the rise of new forces with a progressive outlook, ready to shoulder the responsibility of truth and justice.

Anantapur District Encyclopedia:

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy

Tribute to Dr Y.V. Malla Reddy and Mrs Doreen Reddy

- S.M. Basha,

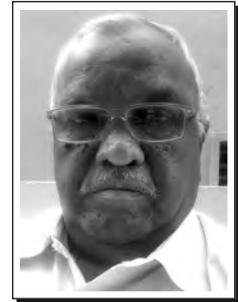
Former Vice President, Andhra Pradesh Human Rights Forum

As Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Mrs. Doreen Reddy celebrate their fifty years of life journey, heartfelt congratulations are extended to them. Their dedication and exemplary service have been truly inspiring. On this significant occasion, it is wished that they continue to enjoy complete health and profound joy, and may they also have the opportunity to celebrate 75 years of their remarkable journey with the same grace and vitality.

The Art of Living

Life is a magnificent opportunity bestowed by nature. Some view this wonderful opportunity as personal wealth, pleasures, or ultimate goals, while others see it as serving humanity, selflessness, loving fellow beings, and humanistic thoughts. The Reddy couple falls into the latter category. Finding a husband and wife sharing the same life goals and values is rare. This couple is exceptional in this regard.

Their alignment in thoughts and actions is a result of walking alongside Father Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer. In a district like Anantapur, which is constantly plagued by drought, it is no small feat for them to work for half a century without losing purpose or hope for the helpless. Finding satisfaction, mental joy, and happiness in this work is their art of living.



Early Acquaintance and Observations

Though I had a minor acquaintance with Malla Reddy since 1974, I knew very little about him initially. During that time, various groups of friends with diverse thoughts would frequently meet at the Aram Hotel in Anantapur town. Every Sunday, when Malla Reddy's group of friends met, I would observe him. About ten years later,

our friend Imam, Bhuman, and I started a "Kadhalika" magazine focused on Rayalaseema issues. Naturally, I would discuss not only Rayalaseema issues but also concerns related to Anantapur district's farmers, agriculture, droughts, water resources, and irrigation with Malla Reddy. He patiently provided detailed information on the Anantapur district's development and other necessary details, greatly aiding my understanding of district issues.

Handling Challenges with Grace

It is astonishing how Malla Reddy handles even situations that may evoke frustration or anger from others with the utmost calmness, forgiveness, and discipline. When I inquired about how this is possible, he mentioned it was a trait developed under the guidance of Father Ferrer. Believing in the inevitability of conflict for social change, he convinced me that social changes can be achieved through peace, non-violence, and altruism. When Father Ferrer passed away, Malla Reddy helped me understand Father Ferrer's personality by writing two pages as a tribute. Understanding and writing about Father Ferrer remains one of my most cherished experiences.

Advocating for Anantapur

Malla Reddy effectively explains the issues of droughts, backwardness, and rural farmers of the Anantapur district on both national and international platforms. He has been a member of all committees appointed by the central and state governments to study and report on Anantapur's drought and agricultural crises. His role in formulating recommendations and guidelines for drought relief plans is unparalleled. He demonstrated through thousands of farmers that using tankers from nearby water sources to provide protective irrigation can save crops from drought damage. He also provided necessary tankers and mobile drip equipment to farmers. Consequently, the Telugu Desam Government of that time designed policies to supply motors, pipes, and sprinklers to farmers.

Vision for Water Management

Malla Reddy proposed that the only solution to the lack of rivers, low rainfall, depleting groundwater, and farmer suicides in Anantapur district is the establishment of the "Ananta Jalavalayam." This involves connecting groundwater, traditional village water bodies (surface water), and river water from projects like HNSS, HLC to provide water at every village level in all mandals, thus improving groundwater levels

and enabling farmers to cultivate crops. Protective irrigation can save rain-fed crops from drought. He referred to this as the "conjunctive use of water." By integrating the three types of water available in the district, he suggested that decentralization methods could provide water to farmers in all mandals. Moreover, filling ponds with river water would benefit other livelihoods, animals, birds, and the environment. Unfortunately, implementation has been lacking despite the government's consideration of these suggestions.

Promoting Fruit Orchards

Malla Reddy advised farmers to grow fruit trees on dry lands as an alternative to rain-fed crops. He encouraged farmers to cultivate local fruit varieties like mango, guava, custard apple, and tamarind, which can provide reliable income despite drought. He provided high-quality saplings and financial aid for digging pits and watering plants. Farmers with access to some water and those in extremely water-scarce areas have found joy in becoming owners of fruit orchards and receiving a steady income. In areas like Kalyandurg, which had previously been barren except for a few tamarind trees and rocks, farmers are now extensively cultivating mango orchards in every vil-

lage. The state government also introduced the Dryland Horticulture Scheme in response to these outcomes.

Building Civil Society

Malla Reddy proposed the establishment of a civil society organization to work on development issues and farmer problems independent of politics. To this end, civil society organizations, intellectuals, and activists, including individuals like Singamneni Narayana and Dr. Geyanand, came together to create the "Third Voice". This platform allowed us to address public issues and engage in numerous activities. Between 1999 and 2004, Anantapur district faced severe drought, leading to unprecedented farmer suicides. Under the "Third Voice", we undertook efforts to provide moral support to farmers and encouraged them to stop suicides, not lose hope, and not leave their children orphaned. We conducted campaigns with posters and leaflets and discussed them with farmers, somewhat restoring their morale. Third Voice also played a significant role in attracting government attention by meeting officials and leaders to request aid for farmers. Consequently, in 2004, the state government established the Farmer Welfare Commission under Jayati Ghosh to study and provide per-

manent solutions to farmer issues. Malla Reddy was appointed as a member of this commission. The role of the civil society in facilitating official orders to provide compensation to the families of farmers who committed suicide was crucial. Malla Reddy played a key role in all these activities, and it has been a fulfilling aspect of my life to have had the opportunity to contribute significantly.

Communicating Development

Furthermore, Malla Reddy entrusted me with the responsibility of managing a four-page monthly newsletter titled “Mana Samachara” for their farmer assistance programs. He advised me to use local easy telugu language for ordinary readers to understand. Usually my telugu used to be complex and rapid writing style. As a result of this adjustment, I received praise from friends for making articles and translations on complex topics like irrigation and agriculture understandable to everyone.

Advancing Rural Skilled Employment

Malla Reddy believes that development in the Anantapur district requires not only agricultural advancements but also the implementation of various industries and

rural skilled employment programs. He has been implementing programs to prepare farmers for natural farming, which is a better solution than chemical fertilizers and pesticides that harm nature and lead to farmer debt. He has set up self-employment training for youth migrating to cities due to lack of employment in their villages. He has also established groups for helpless, single women and other women in rural areas, providing them with savings and loan support to start their own businesses. These women are now standing on their own feet financially, supporting each other in difficulties and family issues, and sharing responsibilities equally with their male counterparts. They are also providing mutual support beyond economic activities, without regard to caste or class differences, and improving their families and communities. Financial stability has increased respect and recognition in their families and neighbourhoods. There is a silent revolution happening in the villages.

A Visionary Leader

Malla Reddy is not just an encyclopaedia of Anantapur district but a visionary with foresight.

Ananta Anna Hazare: Dr.Y.V. Malla Reddy

- *Tarimela Amarnatha Reddy,*
Convenor, Humanity Blood Donors Organization

For the past 55 years (since 1969), the Rural Development Trust (RDT) has been lighting up the lives of millions of underprivileged people in the Anantapur district through its various service initiatives. Since 1974, Brother Malla Reddy has been playing a central role in this organization, earning a special recognition for himself in the district. His commitment to rural development and his tireless efforts have earned him admiration and respect, making him a prominent figure in the area. Through his leadership and dedication, Brother Malla Reddy has become a beacon of hope for the rural poor, impacting lives in meaningful ways across the region.

The influence of RDT's founders, Father Vincent Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer, has had a profound impact on Malla Reddy. Their humility, simplicity, and service-oriented spirit shaped his values



and actions. Malla Reddy often credits them for his growth as an individual, a sentiment that highlights the depth of his respect for their teachings. Raised in a modest farming family in a remote village near Kadiri, Malla Reddy's journey began with humble beginnings. After completing his education, he started as a supervisor in RDT and, through years of hard work, rose to become the Director of the Ecology Centre (AF- Ecology Centre). His close relationship with the Ferrer couple, founded on trust, was key to his ascent within the organization.

A Lifelong Commitment to Rural Revitalization

Born into a farming family, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy witnessed firsthand the struggles of rural life. He saw the hardships of poor farmers whose crops failed due to lack of irrigation and unseasonal rains, while many resorted to the heartbreaking decision of taking their own lives. On the other hand, he observed rural people migrating in search of livelihood opportunities, leaving behind their homes. The bleak reality made him deeply concerned about the future of rural areas, fearing they would lose their very existence if such conditions persisted. In his quest to find solutions for rural revitalization, he spent many sleepless nights grappling with these issues.

Malla Reddy travelled across the world, visiting various countries to understand their farming methods and lifestyles. His experiences in international conferences became a platform for him to voice the concerns of Anantapur district. He shared the plight of local farmers, emphasizing the need to change the status quo. He pointed out that while there were no farmers in the U.S., agriculture thrived, but here in India, despite having plenty of farmers, agriculture was dying. For him, the solu-

tion to sustaining farming lay in securing at least 100 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic Feet) of water. He passionately advocated for raising awareness among the people and called for the removal of corrupt and ineffective leaders. His fervent calls for action, often voiced in public forums, reflect his deep emotional connection to the cause of rural empowerment.

Vision for Rural Development and Empowerment

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, driven by his deep understanding of rural issues, has authored two volumes of essays, *Ananta Prasthanam*, which provide not only insights into the challenges faced by the district but also propose concrete solutions. His contributions to rural development go beyond writing, as he actively engages in finding sustainable solutions for the region's water scarcity. On March 29, 1998, he invited Anna Hazare, the creator of the successful Water Sheds concept, to Anantapur, where a large public gathering of rural farmers attended, despite the occasion coinciding with Ugadi. The concept of watersheds, which prevents the wastage of rainwater and increases groundwater levels, inspired Malla Reddy to take action. With the cooperation of rural communities, he initiated the participatory water shed development to

preserve and restore the water resources.

Malla Reddy's work earned him the admiration of many, with some even calling him "Anna Hazare of our district." This acknowledgment is not an exaggeration but a testament to his dedication to sustainable rural development. Apart from his leadership role at RDT, Malla Reddy continues to provide valuable advice to governmental and non-governmental organizations, leveraging his extensive experience to influence rural policies. His advocacy was pivotal in the successful implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which guarantees legal employment for rural labourers, tackling migration and improving livelihoods. Despite his constant engagement with his own organization, Malla Reddy actively participates in numerous public welfare initiatives. His involvement in the "Drought Farmers' Outreach Program" in 2003, alongside prominent writers and social activists, further demonstrates his commitment to the well-being of rural communities.

Passion for Rural Farmers and Their Struggles

A memorable moment that often comes to my mind is from a village meeting where Singamneni

spoke about the need to waive off farmers' bank loans. At that moment, some villagers, engrossed in their own matters, casually called out, "Sir, please waive off the loans!" Frustrated, I retorted, "While you are busy playing games like MEKANAKKA, we will work to waive off your loans," causing everyone to laugh. This incident highlighted the lack of awareness among the people, a situation where they were unaware of their own struggles. Although there were occasional meetings in press clubs or NGO forums demanding 100 TMC of water, these discussions remained confined to journalists. It was clear that unless the people themselves rose to the occasion, change wouldn't come.

On another visit, I asked the labourers in Nidimamidi village about the condition of the farmers there. They replied with deep sympathy for the farmers, saying, "We used to feed ten people rice, but now it's a struggle to even feed ourselves. We can't afford to marry off our daughters or provide for our sons. Our village might be poor, but when we get work, we just take whatever comes to survive." Their words were heartbreaking, and it moved me deeply, shedding light on the dire conditions that farmers were enduring.

Hearing this, I was compelled to write a poem titled "*Ananta Raitthanna Atmahatya Maanuko*" ("O Anantha Farmer, Stop committing Suicide"), which was published in the first volume of *Ananta Prasthanam* in 2007. The poem passionately urges farmers to rise above despair, reminding them that they hold the power to change their destiny. "Farmers, stand tall, for when you perish, the village dies. If Delhi does not survive, don't be cowardly. Fight with dignity, demand irrigation and fair prices for your crops, and save the villages!" The poem received a positive response from the public, resonating deeply with their struggles and aspirations.

Acknowledging Dr Malla Reddy's Contributions to Rural Welfare and Community Service

On April 24, 2003, I had the opportunity to participate in a session at the Police Complex, where Rajendra Singh, the recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award and known as the "Water Man of India," spoke about water issues, policies, and resource management. During this event, I humorously remarked, "Malla Reddy always talks about water... water... but I talk about blood... blood... because there are no politics in blood. In our district, the shortage of blood has been resolved, but there are still politics in

water, which is why the water crisis persists." This remark brought laughter to the audience, and I express my gratitude to Malla Reddy for giving me the platform to share this thought.

On May 5, 2019, I had the honour of having Malla Reddy preside over the book launch of my works "*Communist Movement Tarimela*," "*Our Tarimela Stories*," and "*Amar Thoughts*." His leadership and support made the event a resounding success, and I am grateful again for his invaluable contribution.

Recently, I have had the privilege of working closely with Malla Reddy and Vishal Ferrer as Government Hospital Development Committee members. Through this association, I have had the chance to share my thoughts and collaborate on various initiatives. I would also like to thank Sister Anne Ferrer, who swiftly sanctioned approximately six lakhs for repairing medical equipment at the Blood Bank upon my request.

Malla Reddy's efforts in addressing rural issues are commendable, as he continues to lead various initiatives. One notable initiative is his skill-building trainings at Ecology Centre, where unemployed rural youth are trained in various professions, providing them with livelihoods. Many women in Anan-

tapur who drive autos today have benefitted from the training at these centres. Malla Reddy's dedication to improving the lives of the rural poor is a testament to his leadership.

Another facet of Malla Reddy's multifaceted character is his love for humour. Every year, on December 31st, he organizes a laughing comedy event at Ecology Centers to bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new one, accompanied by a delicious feast. Both comedy lovers and food enthusiasts eagerly await this annual event. Given his love for humour, I fondly refer to him as "Ananta Anna Hazare," a title that suits him perfectly.

As someone born in Nee-rukuntlapalle, Malla Reddy is deeply passionate about water conservation and tirelessly advocates for water management policies. He has also been an outspoken critic of the portrayal of the district's image in media, rejecting the characterization of our region as a place of vio-

lence and instead promoting it as the land of blood donors. In 2003, I was honored to receive the *Ananta Animum* award from J. Pratap Reddy, the founder of Gagan Mahal, Penukonda Sahiti, for my work promoting blood donation. Working alongside Malla Reddy to advance these humanitarian causes was a privilege.

Lastly, I must acknowledge the invaluable support of Malla Reddy's wife, Mrs. Doreen Reddy, who has played a key role in his success. Her unwavering support has been instrumental in his achievements, and I express my heartfelt gratitude to her.

In 2023, Dr. Malla Reddy was awarded the prestigious Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy Life Achievement Award, a well-deserved recognition for his decades of service to the rural people. As I look forward to seeing him receive a Ramon Mag-saysay Award in the future, I am confident that a page in the history of Anantapur district will always be dedicated to his name.

Article 1:

My Experience with Malla Reddy

- Panyam Subramanyam,
Irrigation Expert (Retd), Anantapur

Collaboration in Water Resources Projects

During my tenure in the water resources sector, particularly while working on projects like the Tungabhadra and Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi projects in Anantapur district, I gained valuable insights and experience that led to the development of a strong friendship between Malla Reddy and me. Our collaboration was grounded in shared knowledge of the irrigation sector and the challenges faced in the region.

Discussions on Irrigation Challenges

Over the past 40 years, his remarkable personality and friendship led to many meaningful discussions. We often examined why the expected outcomes from large-scale irrigation systems were not achieved. We deliberated on the reasons for the shortfall in water availability, from the construction phase of projects to the failure of designated irrigated lands receiving

sufficient water. We discussed technical aspects of project design and identified the issues causing discrepancies in the delivery of water. These discussions were frequent as we sought answers to these pressing concerns.



Exploration of Droughts and Meteorological Analysis

However, Malla Reddy's approach wasn't limited to technical matters alone. He consistently explored and analyzed the cyclical droughts, which were well-known in the region. The recurring droughts, where three out of every five years witnessed water scarcity, were a significant point of focus. He thoroughly studied meteorological conditions, including rainfall data, rainy days, crop impacts, and their effects on agriculture. His detailed research into these factors was crucial for a better understanding of

the challenges faced by the region's farming community.

Understanding Large-Scale Irrigation Projects: Visiting Major Irrigation Projects

As part of the process of understanding large irrigation projects, Malla Reddy, myself and Imam visited important projects like the Tungabhadra, Handri-Neeva, PothiReddypadu, Srisailam, Krishna Barrage, Dhavaleswaram Barrage, and Polavaram. During these visits, I made an effort to explain to him the construction objectives, the technical aspects followed, the phases of construction, the pumping stations, and their capacities.

Agriculture and Drought Mitigation in Anantapur

In the unified Anantapur district, across 63 mandals, we engaged in extensive discussions with many farmers and experts about rain-fed crop cultivation, the severity of droughts, their impact on farmers, and the technical methods needed to protect crops during droughts. We explored how farmers have historically coped with droughts and examined the crop strategies they used in the past. Additionally, we delved deeply into issues related to food security, income security, and how these aspects were managed in the past.

Empathy and Commitment to Farmer Welfare

Malla Reddy's dedication to the welfare of farmers and his constant concern for their well-being never failed to surprise those who worked closely with him. His empathy and drive to improve the conditions of farmers in the Anantapur district were evident in his continuous efforts to find solutions. In some instances, his deep empathy also evoked a sense of sympathy for him from others. He tirelessly worked to address the question, "What can we do to support the farmers of Anantapur district?" Malla Reddy also paid attention to what agricultural research institutions were suggesting for the development of rain-fed farming in drought-prone areas, comparing it with practices in other countries.

Based on these studies, he made several attempts at field experiments to apply them locally and successfully advocated for farmer-friendly policies through awareness campaigns with government officials. Through meetings with farmers and experts in agriculture and irrigation, he facilitated the creation of action plans and their subsequent implementation. Furthermore, he worked hard to restore traditional irrigation resources like ponds and tanks, which are an

invaluable part of Anantapur's heritage.

Reviving Traditional Water Resources in Anantapur

Efforts to Restore Tanks and Ponds

Collecting Information on Traditional Water Sources

In Anantapur district, Malla Reddy worked diligently to gather comprehensive information about traditional water resources such as tanks and ponds, which were created during British rule and are referred to as "memories of tanks." To understand the volume of water required to fill these tanks with Handri-Neeva project water, he made me calculate the necessary amount of water, which we estimated to be approximately 22 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic Feet). These tanks only receive rainwater once every five or six years, making it essential to fill them annually with Handri-Neeva water for the benefit of farmers and villages. This concept was named "Ananta Jalavalayam" (Anant Water System) by Malla Reddy.

Government's Response and Impact

The government responded positively, and several tanks have been filled with Handri-Neeva water, resulting in significant benefits for the community. This initiative brought immense satisfaction

to Malla Reddy and his collaborators. Through this collaboration, I experienced first-hand the impact of his efforts, which helped nurture my own creativity.

Innovative Solutions for Drought Relief

Another major innovation by Malla Reddy in drought relief was the creation of "Rakshakthadulu" (Protective Irrigation). In regions where rain-fed crops suffered from one or two dry spells, he suggested using water from nearby tanks or bore wells to create minimum-level protective irrigation, thus saving the crops from drought. To support this, he introduced a mobile micro-irrigation system that transported water via tankers from bore wells and tanks. By using mobile drip irrigation, across thousands of acres, during dry spells providing relief and yielding good results. The efficacy of these protective irrigation was demonstrated on the ground to Honourable Chief Minister Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu, who, with his initiative, helped implement Rakshakthadulu as a government policy. Over 600 farm ponds were established in fields to make this process easier, providing effective drought mitigation.

Addressing Water Scarcity for Livestock in Anantapur

In Anantapur district, during

the summer season, water scarcity for livestock becomes a significant concern. While most attention is given to providing drinking water for people, Malla Reddy recognized that animals also require equal importance in this regard. He collected data on the number of animals in the district and, with the help of veterinary doctors, calculated the amount of water required daily and annually for these animals. He advised the government to consider the water needs of livestock while planning water supply systems for human consumption. Through his organization, the A.F. Ecology Centre, he set up special water facilities for animals in several villages.

Writings on Rural Development

Malla Reddy's thoughts on agricultural issues and rural development were published in several articles in the magazine Kadalika. These articles were later compiled into a book titled Ananta Prasthanam by Imam of Kadalika. Even without reading the entire book, one can gain an understanding of the problems of Anantapur district by going through the index and reading the selected articles. The book offers a deep insight into the district's drought and poverty issues. By reading Ananta Prasthanam, one can fully comprehend the challenges faced by the people of Anantapur.

Inspiration from Great Personalities

Malla Reddy drew inspiration from notable figures such as Sir Arthur Cotton, Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya, and Father Ferrer, who dedicated their lives to rural development. He also found motivation in the work of these pioneers, which led him to dedicate over 50 years of his life to the farmers of Anantapur through his work with RDT. Born into a farmer's family in Neerukuntlapalli village, Malla Reddy was not a scientist, but he made it his mission to understand and apply the principles of nature to his work. He emphasized the importance of the five elements (earth, water, air, sky, and fire) in maintaining ecological balance, which modern science also acknowledges.

He believed that agricultural practices should align with nature rather than harm it, and this understanding led him to establish the Ecology Center as his organization. Through this centre, he worked toward promoting sustainable agricultural methods that respect the environment. Malla Reddy viewed Ananta Jalavalyam as a crucial solution to the water scarcity issue in Anantapur, considering it as his life's mission. The article titled Ananta Jalavalyam in his book reflects his commitment to this dream.

Article 2:

Ananta Jalavalayam – His Dream

- Panyam Subramanyam,
Irrigation Expert (Retd), Anantapur

Malla Reddy's Dream Vision for Anantapur's Development

Malla Reddy actively participated in various civic forums and discussions organized by civil society organizations concerning the development of the Anantapur district. He consistently advocated for the construction of Ananta Jalavalayam (Anantapur Water Grid) as a crucial step toward the district's holistic development. His argument was clear: to ensure comprehensive progress in Anantapur, it was essential to fill nearly 1,500 traditional village water bodies across the district with water from the Tungabhadra and Handri-Neeva projects. He believed this would directly contribute to the district's overall development.

The Concept of Ananta Jalavalayam

Malla Reddy's concept of the Ananta Jalavalayam was based on linking various water resources to create a sustainable water system for Anantapur. He named this ini-

tiative the Anantapur Water Grid. The idea behind it was conjunctive water use, where surface water from tanks, groundwater and



river water from projects would all be integrated to ensure consistent water supply throughout the district. This system would ensure that every tank in the district had water accessible to the community, throughout the year and all the years.

Impact on Rural Development

The implementation of the Ananta Jalavalayam would not only improve surface water availability in the tanks but would also positively impact groundwater levels. As a result, the water levels in borewells and open wells would rise, providing much-needed water for agriculture, dairy farming, and livestock breeding in rural areas. This

interconnected and conjunctive water management system would enable drought free sustainable farming practices and create a better future for the district's farmers, developing both the agricultural and livestock sectors.

The Vision of Sustainable Water Resources for All

Malla Reddy strongly believed that every village tank in Anantapur district could serve as a multi-purpose project, similar to the Nagarjuna Sagar. His argument was that when there is water in the village tanks, it benefits all sections of the village community. The water would not only support agriculture but also enhance animal husbandry, rural livelihoods and even other rural livelihoods. This, he believed, would foster comprehensive development across all sectors.

Environmental and Ecological Benefits

In addition to supporting agricultural growth, Malla Reddy emphasized the importance of water in the development of the environment and ecology. Water from the tanks, he argued, would be a lifeline for various forms of life – human beings, livestock, trees, birds, plants, insects and rural industries alike. The interconnectedness of these ecosystems, all sustained by

water, would contribute to a holistic approach to rural development.

A Key Solution to Drought and Poverty

Malla Reddy proposed the Ananta Jalavalyam (Anantapur Water Grid) as an effective and viable solution to the district's persistent issues of drought and poverty. Recognizing the pivotal role of water in supporting life across Anantapur, he envisioned this water grid as a means to address the rayalaseema region's backwardness. With unwavering dedication, he has worked tirelessly to turn this dream into reality, driven by a vision to improve the lives of all in the district.

Against Regional Inequality in Water Distribution

Malla Reddy vehemently opposed the idea of limiting water from the Tungabhadra and Handri-Neeva projects to only a few select mandals for conventional irrigation purposes. He argued that such a practice would lead to regional inequality and injustice, both at the state and district levels. By restricting water access to only certain areas and farmers, many mandals and villages would be excluded, resulting in growing disparities among mandals, farmers and communities. This could further exacer-

bate water conflicts, creating tensions and disputes between villages and farmers over access to this precious resource.

The Importance of Integrated Conjunctive Water Use

To ensure equitable regional development and social justice, Malla Reddy proposed this concept of Conjunctive Water Use (Anusandhana Neeti Vinayogam). He believed this to be the only solution to the inequalities caused by traditional methods of water allocation. By integrating the use of water from various sources, such as project river water, surface water in tanks, and groundwater, all villages and mandals would benefit equally. This would foster a sense of unity, where water serves to connect rather than divide communities.

Water as a means of uniting people, Not a Divider

Throughout human history, water has brought people together and unified in human settlements along rivers and streams. Rivers like Ganga, Godavari, Krishna created ancient cities and civilisations. However, with the rise in population and increasing water scarcity, water has now become a source of division, leading to conflicts. In Andhra Pradesh, these divisions have manifested in regional disparities be-

tween Rayalaseema and the coastal areas, as well as in ongoing interstate water disputes. Malla Reddy believed that the Anant Jalavalyam (Anantapur Water Grid) was crucial for ensuring both regional and social justice, uniting people and communities through equitable and sustainable water management.

Dissimination of the Anant Jalavalyam Concept to the farmers:

One of Malla Reddy's significant achievements was successfully spreading the concept of the Anant Jalavalyam (Anantapur Water Grid) to the farmers in Anantapur District. Not only did he take this idea to the grassroots level, but he also succeeded in bringing it to the attention of the successive governments. When N. Chandrababu Naidu was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 2002, he established the Andhra Pradesh Water Conservation Mission, with Malla Reddy being appointed as a member. This provided Malla Reddy with the platform to passionately advocate for the need of Anant Jalavalyam for the Anantapur district, effectively conveying the concept to the Chief Minister.

Support Across Political Leadership

When Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy became the Chief Minister in 2004,

his government established a Farmers Welfare Commission, chaired by Smt. Jayati Ghosh, in which Malla Reddy was also appointed as a member. During this tenure, he again raised his strong arguments for the Anant Jalavalayam, highlighting its importance for the district's sustainable development. Similarly, when Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy took office as Chief Minister in 2019, he formed the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Commission, where Malla Reddy continued to emphasize the necessity of the Anant Jalavalayam, underscoring its scientific foundation. Across various governments, Malla Reddy's persistent advocacy was met with support for the Anant Jalavalayam

concept.

People's Demand for Action

For over two decades, Malla Reddy's vision resonated with the people of Anantapur district. Whenever any public representative visited the villages, the local communities passionately demanded that their village tanks be filled with water from the Handri-Neeva project. This widespread public support has gradually prompted the government to take action, albeit slowly. With the continued backing of both the people and government officials, it is hoped that Malla Reddy's dream will soon be realized.



MGNREGS : Left : Sri Gopal, PD DWMA, Sri K.R.Venugopal IAS., Malla Reddy and Sri K.S. Gopal with villagers

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy: An example in the Journey of Service and Transformation in Anantapur District

- Saleem Malik,

Manavatha Blood Donors, Association, Anantapur

In the journey of countless voluntary organizations, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's name stands as a shining example.

In Anantapur District, both before and after independence, the term "drought" was frequently heard. It is no exaggeration to say that everyone familiar with the district's drought situation knows the name Malla Reddy.

The history of Anantapur district, from the feudal system to British rule and the post-independence governments, has been primarily marked by drought. Amidst these challenges, it is impossible to overlook two significant names: Puttaparthi Sathya Sai Baba and Father Vincent Ferrer (RDT). Though they had different ideologies, both played a crucial role in the survival of the district's people. Their contributions, alongside government assistance, were almost equally pivotal, a sentiment shared by many.

Father Vincent Ferrer began his services in Anantapur District in 1969. Initially, some raised slogans like "Father, Go Back," but today, those same people say "Father, Long Live." Father Vincent Ferrer (RDT) was cen-

tral to the silent revolution that transformed the social and economic conditions of Anantapur's impoverished communities. Dr. Y.V.



Malla Reddy, who closely followed Father Ferrer's guidance from a young age and adopted his path, has now been on his social journey for 50 years. The various initiatives led by Malla Reddy have created a lasting impact in the district, establishing him as a significant figure in the community.

In the agricultural sector, he has consistently communicated the needs of both the government and farmers, integrating modernity with traditional farming. Through initiatives like the "Accion Fraternal" Ecology Centre, he has helped farmers understand and adapt to the changes in agriculture at the grassroots level. His continuous work in agriculture, irrigation, finance, social, and political spheres will undoubtedly be remembered and recorded in history in golden letters.

A Visionary Leader Bridging NGOs and Civil Society: Malla Reddy's Legacy in Anantapur

- M.L. Narasimha Reddy,

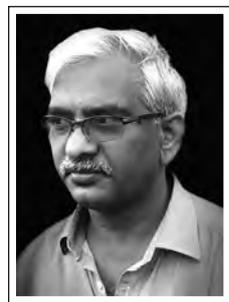
Senior Special Correspondent, Eenadu, Hyderabad.

The Catalyst for Transformation

The recent history of Anantapur district is inseparably intertwined with that of Malla Reddy. He has had direct and indirect relations for five decades with every village and hundreds of thousands of families in the district. Not as a public representative or a political party leader, but as a person who ceaselessly worked and strived for the development of the district, the welfare of farmers, and transformation in the lives of the poor. He earned widespread recognition. Beyond political parties, social groups, or government administration, he is respected by all. His selfless personality and simple way of life are his hallmarks. Treating everyone equally, with respect from office assistants to central government officials, is a defining trait of Malla Reddy.

He is one of the few individuals in the country who has deeply studied and understood issues such

as drought, poverty and the implementation of watershed programs. He constantly focussed on solutions that would provide lasting benefits to farmers.



As a dynamic activist in civil society:

Generally the operations of, voluntary organizations (NGOs) are limited to a few villages or mandals with specific objectives, programs, and projects that they implement. However, the other civil society organizations (CSOs) respond to a wide range of social issues, current developments, and government anti-people policies, continually mobilizing and raising awareness among the public. Though there is some overlap in the goals of these two types of organizations, their scope and functioning styles are different. Typically, they rarely work together.

In Anantapur district, civil society organizations have been playing a crucial role on various social issues for a long time. Both types of organizations shared the goal of social development, but their structures, scope, opportunities, and activities were different. However, Malla Reddy thought differently and more extensively. He believed that if these two types of organizations worked together on various social issues, it would lead to better results. So, he initiated this collaborative approach between CSOs and NGOs.

In the Anantapur district, progressive writers, poets, artists, doctors, lawyers, journalists, university professors, and teachers actively participated in civil issues affecting the people. However, it was in 1998 that the active collaboration between NGOs and civil society organizations in the district began. The credit for that goes to Malla Reddy. Working together on contemporary issues added a lot of voice and influenced public representatives, and officials on various social and economic issues. They raised awareness among the public, mobilized people on social issues, invited nationally and internationally recognized social activists, and carried out movements that were independent of political

parties. These combined efforts of CSOs and NGOs led to a significant impact and recognition for the district.

Perhaps without Malla Reddy's initiative, the collaboration between NGOs and civil society would not have taken place. A federation called the Voluntary Action Network - Ananthapuramu (VANA) existed, with Malla Reddy serving as its president. Key members like Doreen, Bablu, Mary, and others were actively involved in the network. This network worked on various social issues in collaboration with civil society groups. The social issues they were raising included drought, farmers distress, atrocities against SC/ST communities, violence on women etc. In all these initiatives, this NGO network partnered with civil society organizations.

More importantly, the idea of the Women's United Forum emerged from these collaborative work. On one occasion, a discussion among social-conscious friends, including Dr. Rama, Dr. Prasoon, Mary, Doreen, Bablu, Malla Reddy, and Geyanand took place at Malla Reddy's house. It led to the creation of the Women's United Forum. The activities of this forum left a special mark on Anantapur. Doreen, Dr.

Prasoona, and Dr. Rama played prominent role in this initiative. With a variety of ideas coming together in one place, civil society and NGOs worked to offer assurance to the people of Anantapur district. In this process Malla Reddy played a central role. Local officials, including the District Collector, Superintendent of Police, Judges and others also joined hands in this efforts. Every year, on International Women's Day, large gatherings were organized with thousands of participants, where prominent women like Arundhati Roy, Nandita Das, Mallu Swarajyam, Aruna Roy, Brinda Karat, Medha Patkar, and Geeta Mahajan participated. Malla Reddy was one of the key planners behind these programs.

Anantapur Water Grid as solution for drought

For Anantapur's development, Malla Reddy always advocated that the solution lies in the "Ananthapur Water Grid". He would argue in every meeting and forum, that this was the only solution for Anantapur District. He strongly believed that the district's integrated development could be achieved by filling the approximately 1,500 lakes across the district with water from the Tungabhadra and Handri Niva

projects. He consistently brought this argument forward both to government and in public forums. When water is filled in the village tanks, it would benefit all sections of the village. Restricting Tungabhadra and Handri Niva water for irrigating in just a few mandals was unjust and unscientific. Malla Reddy argued that for the greater good, the solution lay in filling all the lakes across the district. He never missed an opportunity to discuss this issue wherever he could. This persistence stands as a testament to Malla Reddy's determination for achieving Anantapur Water Grid.

For three decades:

For three decades, our families have shared a bond of friendship that has grown into something more profound – we are, in essence like one family. My acquaintance with Malla Reddy gradually transformed into a close friendship. Since 1998, the families of Malla Reddy-Doreen, Rama, Bablu, Mary and myself are inseparable. Whether in times of hardship or happiness, we are always together. Personally, I shared a deep connection with Malla Reddy and Doreen akin to that with my own parents. We enjoy such closeness that we could freely share anything with each

other. Although my bond with them has been particularly personal, every family they knew was treated as their own.

Malla Reddy and Doreen treated every family that worked in Rural Development Trust (RDT) as their own. No matter what was the issue Malla Reddy and Doreen gave the assurance and great comfort to many families. Father Ferrer had the utmost respect for Malla Reddy, and this was well-known to all. However, there was something unique in my case. Father Ferrer never gave interviews to journalists, but when I expressed my desire to interview him, Malla Reddy spoke to Father Ferrer on my behalf, and he agreed. This rare occurrence was a testament to the respect Malla Reddy had for my journalism, and the respect Father Ferrer had for Malla Reddy.

In fact, the personal relationship with Malla Reddy was significant, but the professional relationship was even more extensive. We often visited drought-prone areas together and engaged in discussions. For the past three decades, no MP in the Lok Sabha, whether from Congress or Telugu Desam, ever failed to consult Malla Reddy before speaking in parliament, on any issue. In a sense, Malla

Reddy's views were always reflected in the Parliament. He had a complete understanding of issues related to the district, such as rainfall, farmer suicides, water bodies, irrigation, migration etc. With his experience, he analyzed data and produced detailed reports. His relentless desire to bring the agricultural crisis of Anantapur district to the attention of the country was evident, as was his hope that even the smallest improvement might emerge from it. Malla Reddy's relationships with several senior IAS officers further supported this work.

Even though political representatives and leaders tried to get close to Malla Reddy, he always maintained a certain distance, keeping his boundaries intact. He expressed his views directly and candidly, but always with sensitivity. He was straightforward in doing what he could, and also candid about what he could not do. Malla Reddy's contribution to literary and cultural movements in the district cannot be overlooked. He was directly or indirectly involved with every major movement in the District. When it comes to Malla Reddy, RDT, and Anantapur, they are inseparable. The bond between the person, the organization, and the district is one that cannot be broken.

Water is Strength: Good Work and Transparency are friends

- S.V. Rao,
MEIC,

Time is critical in the course of Universe.

Time is of paramount importance in the universal course. While there are six seasons in the Indian calendar according to nature, spring holds special significance. During this period, trees sprout, flowers bloom, and nature is enriched with colours, adding beauty to the world. This is why the spring season is given such high importance.

However, the rainy season is even more critical in the Anantapur district, a region that has suffered from chronic drought conditions for centuries. Anantapur, known for the lowest rainfall in the country, relies heavily on rain for agriculture and livelihoods due to lack of irrigation resources.

The united Anantapur district, the largest in the state by area, stretches across landscapes with barren mountains, rocky hills, and dry soil, resembling a desert. Its plight as a permanent drought proneness stems from insufficient and erratic rainfall. While many other districts in the country man-

age through dependable irrigation resources, Anantapur remains at the mercy of rain.

In other regions, such as the twin Godavari districts, farmers are safeguarded by irrigation systems that ensure stability regardless of local rains. Unfortunately, Anantapur lacks such resources, and despite tireless efforts, no permanent solution has yet been implemented.

One of the most dedicated persons working toward resolving Anantapur's drought is Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, whose relentless efforts span nearly five decades. Focused on drought mitigation and sustainable agricultural development, improving rural living standards, and preserving environmental balance, Dr. Malla Reddy is a visionary leader fighting against drought and poverty in Anantapur District.

His work with government officials, political leaders, and vol-



untary organizations has been instrumental in addressing these challenges. Observing his dedication over the years, I firmly believe that the "permanent solution to Anantapur's drought lies in bringing river waters". There have been notable improvements in irrigation facilities in the district compared to the past. The Tungabhadra Upper Canal, reservoirs like PABR and MPR, and the Yadiki Canal system have contributed to this progress. The construction of the Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi Lift Irrigation Scheme has further enhanced water availability.

However, these developments remain insufficient for the vast and growing needs of the district. Dr. Malla Reddy emphasizes that the district's 32 lakh acres of red soil can achieve agricultural excellence only with adequate water resources are obtained.

Dr. Malla Reddy advocates for feeding water directly into the district's 1500 traditional water bodies from the Handri-Neeva project. He proposes increasing the capacity of the Handri-Neeva main canal from 3820 cusecs to 6200 cusecs to address water demands effectively.

In addition to his technical expertise, Dr. Malla Reddy prioritizes transparency and encourages extensive discussions involving all stakeholders. His commitment to public

participation has made him a credible and exemplary leader in the field. As a journalist during the severe droughts of the 1990s, I worked closely with Dr. Malla Reddy. At that time, he was working as the Ecology Director in RDT. The Government was collaborating with NGOs to implement the Food-for-Work scheme, under which rice was paid for wages and created rural employment.

Dr. Malla Reddy's integrity and commitment were evident when accusations of mismanagement arose against some NGOs. He responded by publishing a detailed 35-page booklet listing the villages, farmers, and works accomplished and inviting journalists for on-ground verification. His transparency and proactive response demonstrated his honesty and dedication to public welfare.

Dr. Malla Reddy's efforts in water resource management and sustainable development continue to inspire. His unwavering focus on finding permanent solutions to Anantapur's water crisis is paving the way for a brighter future.

Let us hope that his work culminates in a lasting solution, bringing relief to a region plagued by centuries of drought and transforming Anantapur into a model for sustainable water management for generations to come.

The Ruby Found in the Soil of Anantapur

- *Imam,*

Editor, Kadalika, Anantapur

Anantapur is a drought-prone district, with Kadiri being one of the backward areas. This region is known for its famous temples, such as the Yogi Vemana, Timmamma Marrimanu, and the Kadiri Narasimhaswamy temple. From a humble farming family in a remote village, Neerukuntlapalle, Dr. Malla Reddy rose to prominence in this region. He began his journey 50 years ago with a salary of Rs.300 at the Rural Development Trust (RDT) in Anantapur (then known as Rayalaseema Development Trust).

Dr. Malla Reddy maintained strong relationships with district collectors and other officials in Anantapur, raising their awareness about the issues the district faced, including drought conditions, farmers' suicides, and the distress migration of people to other states for survival. He suggested various immediate measures for relief and proposed long-term strategies in order to help the people of the dis-

trict become resilient to drought. He also contributed significantly to the formulation of government policies in the state. For example, during the tenure of Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, he was appointed as a member of the Farmer Welfare Commission, chaired by Jayathi Khorsh, where he played a crucial role in developing the report on farmer welfare in Rayalaseema.



Furthermore, Dr. Malla Reddy played an instrumental role in establishing the Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI), the country's largest federation of voluntary organizations. VANI's primary goal is to bring together voluntary organizations in the country under one umbrella, enabling them to work effectively and advocate for necessary enabling government policies. He served on VANI's Ex-

ecutive Committee for two terms, contributing actively for over a decade. In 1998, he also founded the Voluntary Action Network of Anantapur (VANA), uniting nearly all voluntary organizations in the district to foster cooperation and strengthen the voluntary sector. Through VANA, he was able to create a positive environment of collaboration between the government and voluntary organizations, enabling them to participate in various government programs.

Mr. Peter Lanzet and Mrs. Kanchana Lanzet from Germany, who were very close to Dr. Malla Reddy, greatly supported VANA by helping with fund raising, capacity building and strengthening the federation. Despite his busy schedule with RDT, Dr. Malla Reddy used his influence and time to strengthen the voluntary sector. During that period, both VANI at the national level and VANA at the district level became strong voices for the voluntary sector in the country.

Malla Reddy played pivotal role along with Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer in the development of the RDT organization. His local roots, initiative, courage to face challenges, and strong principles of ethics and integrity gave significant strength Malla Reddy.

Another notable person to mention in this context is Mrs. Doreen Reddy. In my personal opinion, Mrs. Doreen Reddy played a crucial role in the journey of Malla Reddy's rise to prominence. For many, Doreen and Malla Reddy are role models and source of inspiration in RDT. She played a key role in the District as the Director of the Women Empowerment, advocating for women's development. Mrs. Doreen worked with determination to ensure that women lived a life of self-reliance, empowerment, self-sufficiency, and dignity.

As part of the efforts to empower women in the district, every year on March 8th, on the occasion of "International Women's Day," large public meetings were organized with nearly 10,000 women in attendance. Malla Reddy and Doreen Reddy played a crucial role in successfully organizing these events. The local voluntary organizations, journalists working in civil society, especially Narasimha Reddy from Eenadu, the news reporters like Sri Visweswara Rao, and other journalist friends, along with human rights platform leaders like Sri Basha, peoples science forum leaders Dr. Geyanand, Dr. Prasoona, and Dr. Ramadevi played an active role in celebrating Women's Day in an unprecedented

manner.

The public meetings held on International Women's Day saw the participation of prominent women like Ms. Arundhati Roy, Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy, Vandana Shiva, and the Telangana women's freedom fighter and freedom fighter, Mrs. Mallu Swaraajvam, among others. The role played by Malla Reddy in organizing and driving these initiatives was immensely significant. These events were promoting women's empowerment and bringing Government's attention to the issues the women face.

Malla Reddy repeatedly emphasized in his writings and various forums that "solutions to drought in Anantapur district are possible." He strongly advocated for the complete restoration of the district's traditional water resources, such as lakes and ponds, urging the government and the public to take action. His efforts were particularly focused on the expansion of watershed programs. During his tenure as District Collector (2000-2003), Sri Somesh Kumar prioritised the restoration of water bodies and the effective implementation of watershed programs. Under his leadership, detailed data about the traditional water bodies in the district was collected from every village. He recognized these

water bodies as the district's most valuable heritage asset. Sri Somesh Kumar, along with Mrs. Suvarna, the Director of the Desert Development Program (DDP) took initiative in compiling this data. This data was later published in a book by me to which Malla Reddy and Suvarna contributed with valuable forewords.

Malla Reddy had close working relationships with several district collectors, including Sri S.P. Takker, Sri Satyanarayana Rao, Sri Janardhan Reddy, Mrs. Anuradha, and Sri Satyanarayana. These officers sought Malla Reddy's guidance and support and worked towards development of Anantapur District.

Malla Reddy regularly provided them with useful suggestions and advice, which directly benefited the farmers of the District. For his contributions to the district, Malla Reddy received heartfelt thanks from the people of the District. The efforts of "Kalluri Subbarao" and "Pappuri Ramacharyulu," who played a crucial role in formulating the Sri Bhag Agreement are widely appreciated. And the contributions of individuals such as Dr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Sri Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Sri Challa Subbarayudu, and particularly the renowned writer Sri Vidwan Vish-

wam, known for his works “Penne-tipata” and “Rayalaseema Kavya,” were key in the district's development.

Malla Reddy has always maintained strong relationships with political leaders across different parties. However, his focus remained firmly on district development, transcending party politics. This ability to build and maintain relationships with political leaders for the betterment of the district speaks volumes about his commitment to public service, as well as his values of integrity, honesty, and dedication to public welfare. His approach to these relationships for achieving district development goals reflects his unwavering dedication to the cause, beyond mere political ambitions.

A notable achievement in the journey of RDT was the acquisition of Indian citizenship for Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer. During the tenure of Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy as Chief Minister (2004), I, along with Malla Reddy, requested him to confer Indian citizenship upon both Father Ferrer and Sister Anne Ferrer. His very favorable response, which led to the swift approval of their citizenship, is highly commendable. Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy personally intervened and persuaded the central

government for their citizenship. The way he spoke about the contributions of Father Ferrer and Sister Anne during this process left us both astonished, as he acknowledged their selfless service with great appreciation.

During the tenure of Sri Chandrababu Naidu as Chief Minister (1999), Malla Reddy was appointed as a member of the Water Conservation Mission. Nationally renowned environmentalists, including Anna Hazare, Rajendra Singh, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, and Sunita Narayan, were also appointed to the mission. Malla Reddy played a pivotal role in designing and implementing various water policies, particularly in advocating for the introduction of the WALTA (Water Land and Tree Act) to regulate the over-exploitation of groundwater. Malla Reddy's involvement was instrumental in ensuring that the water conservation mission succeeded in implementing sustainable water conservation strategies. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu frequently sought Malla Reddy's advice on several grassroots-level issues, where his succinct and clear insights proved invaluable. Malla Reddy's discipline, commitment, and dedication to achieving his objectives made him an exemplary figure in

social and environmental work.

During the tenure of Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy (2019-2024) as Chief Minister, Malla Reddy was appointed as a key member of the Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Mission. Further, Malla Reddy actively participated as a representative of rural development organizations, such as the Rural Development Trust and the Ecology Centre, on national and international platforms. His efforts to bring global attention to the geographical and climatic conditions and the drought situation of the Anantapur district were instrumental in securing international aid and support for the district's development. Through his strategic efforts, he successfully attracted collaborations from international agencies for the advancement of the district.

On a personal note, I fondly recall our daily walks from the Ecology Centre to Upparapalli village, covering approximately 5 kilometres every evening for over 15 years. This distance is equivalent to walking from Kanyakumari to Kashmir twice. We discussed various eco-

nomic, social, and political issues during these walks. During these discussions, I came to deeply appreciate Malla Reddy's vast knowledge, discipline, and deep insights into different subjects. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to publish his articles on various critical topics such as drought, environmental issues, and farmers' struggles. These articles were later compiled into two books, *Ananta Prastana - 1* and *Ananta Prastana - 2*, which reflect the district's challenges and solutions. These books have become a significant source of knowledge and insight into Anantapur's problems and solutions.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Malla Reddy and Doreen Reddy for their 50 years of dedicated service as social activists in the district. I sincerely hope they will continue receiving numerous opportunities to bring more achievements and recognition to their lives. I also express my gratitude to Malla Reddy for inviting me to write an article for his book on 50 years of his social life.

The Extraordinary Personality: Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy

- K. Govindraj Chowdary

Ex-RDT & Translator (English-Telugu)- Anantapur

Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy has joined the Rural Development Trust of Anantapur district 50 years ago as a Social worker. He soon took on the main responsibilities as one of the main positions of the organization and provided special services as a pioneer in the environmental protection department. Apart from that, he also supported and encouraged the activists working in rural areas, who were passionate about rural development. Thus, he became the reason for their success, and later, as the head of the Action Fraterna Ecology Center, he is working tirelessly to overcome the drought conditions in the district. A person of immense hard work, a tireless environmentalist, and a brave warrior, Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy Garu has been ahead of voluntary organizations not only in the district but also in the state and across the country, providing appropriate advice and guidance, and in recognition of that, he has also

received an award from the Government of India. I feel that even if I was to write something about my esteemed friend and mentor, Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy garu, who has completed half a century of service, it would be an adventure beyond my level. Sri Malla Reddy garu is an extraordinary person who embodies an extraordinary personality. These days, there are usually employers who expect only work from their subordinates and claim their successes as their own. However, it is only people like Sri Malla Reddy who appreciate even the small achievements of the subordinates and make the higher management take notice of that effort and shower their appreciation on those petty employees. Apart from this, if the subordinates make any small mistake, they correct it promptly with-



out getting upset and are able to motivate them not to make such mistakes in the future. 'A small snake should be beaten with a big stick' is a proverb we have heard from elders. Malla Reddy garu has an extraordinary mentality of looking deeply into even a small mistake with a keen analytical eye, imagining the consequences and gently training his staff so that they do not make such a small mistake in the future. On this occasion, I will tell you about a small experience I had with him, who worked under his leadership. Those were the early days when we were working in the soil conservation program of the organization's environmental department. I was working as a supervisor in the Settur area. In those days, it was customary to write the details of the soil conservation work done in the area on a chart and display it on the wall. Since those were not digital days, we used to show it mostly on paper. I think it was 1993. One day Malla Reddy garu came to the Settur area office. He saw one of the charts that I had written in the office room. It contains the details of the land area of the soil conservation works carried out so far that year. Normally, one only sees the progress details in the chart, and the review is done based on those figures. Even though it is a routine,

while expressing satisfaction and appreciating those figures that day, Sri Malla Reddy noticed a typo that I had written in that chart. In fact, it was not a typo that had been made without knowing it. He had written it thinking that the spelling of that word was correct. Then, without mentioning the matter directly at all and without hurting anyone's feelings, he said as part of his review, "There is no theory that everyone should know everything exactly. However, if we work with the desire to know, and if we do not know the spelling of a word, we will also learn the spelling of that word by looking at the dictionary and writing it correctly. Similarly, those who read it will not think anything. Similarly, others who see such a typo should also try to correct such a typo. Otherwise, others will also follow it, thinking that it is correct. Look at this chart, where PARTICULARS should be written, it is written PURTICULARS. If you read it quickly, it may not seem like much of a difference. Where A should be, there is a U. It seems like a very small thing to see. Those who hear what we say orally do not remember every letter. But the written letter remains the same forever. Thousands of people see it many times. Every time they see it, they underestimate the person who

wrote it. They look at it lightly. If any new donors come and see it, they are likely to think:

1. The staff working in the organization does not have the language knowledge. They do not care about spelling mistakes. If people with superficial knowledge are in leadership positions, then all the lower level staff members are even less.

2. The top management does not try to keep the staff on the right path. They take mistakes lightly.

3. It is a waste to give this organization a donation if the staff is so unskilled.

This way, there is an opportunity to go into depth and analyze it

often. The consequences are very serious. "So, if we do not take any small matter seriously and work carefully, we will have a future," he concluded with a more in-depth analysis. Then I realized why the elders used to say, 'Even a small snake should be beaten with a big stick.' In fact, that was the biggest lesson I have ever remembered in my life. Since then, I have studied every small matter deeply. Not just in terms of language, but in all matters. This is just one of the many things I have learned from Sri Y.V. Malla Reddy garu. If you keep writing like this, you can write a book. Everyone who has worked with him has had such experiences.

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy's Membership in Important Government Policy and Advisory Bodies

- **Member – A.P. Water Conservation Mission (2000-2004).** Comprising National level experts on water issues and headed by Honorable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. – A policy Advisory Body on Water Management Policies to the Government of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Member – Commission on Farmers Welfare, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh (2004),** a 13 member commission, comprising National level experts on farmers crises agriculture and distress, headed by Dr. Jayathi Ghosh, set up to study the causes for distress of farmers and to recommend policy initiatives to address the farmers distress.
- **Member – Governing council, Andhra Pradesh Water, Land and trees Act 2002-2004 (APWALTA)**
- **Director on the Board of Directors, Sree Ananta Grameena Bank (now Andhra Pragathi Grameena Bank (APGB) (2003-06),** Anantapur, a Regional Rural Bank, sponsored by Syndicate Bank.
- **Member (1998-02) – AP State Level Watershed Advisory Committee,** An advisory body set-up by Govt. of A.P. on Watershed Development Programmes.
- **Member (2003-07) – NABARD State Level Watershed Consultative Committee** of National Watershed Development Fund.
- **Chair Person, Smart AP Foundation 2014-19:** Smart AP Foundation is a State level nodal agency for facilitation, networking and advocacy of “Smart Village – Smart Ward” Promoted by Government of AP and the Chief Minister as the patron.
- **Member 2019-24 - Andhra Pradesh State Agriculture Mission,** Chaired by the Chief Minister. It is an advisory body on the policies of agriculture and farmers' welfare.
- **Member – A.P. State Jal Shakti Abhiyan-2020**

AWARDS & APPRECIATION

Accion Fraterna - Ecology Centre and Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy

1. GOVT. OF ANDHRA PRADESH LEVEL

JALAMITRA AWARD (Gold Medal & Rs. 50,000/- (2003))

The Govt. of A.P awarded JALMITRA AWARD, Comprising a Gold Medal and Rs. 50,000 cash in the year 2003.

2. AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- YSR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2023 FROM HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR OF AP SRI ABDUL NAZEER AND CHIEF MINISTER OF ANDHRA PRADESH SRI Y.JAGANMOHAN REDDY ON 01.11.2023
- NATIONAL WATER AWARD 2022 in Special mention (consolation) rank in Best NGO category by Ministry of Water Resources, Govt. of India.
- FICCI Award 2022 for 'Best Sustainable Agriculture Practices' from Union Agriculture Minister, Govt. of India on 30.09.2022
- BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AWARD 22.05.2021
- DR.I.V.SUBBA RAO RYTHU NESTHAM AWARD BY VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA, MR. M.VENKAIAH NAIDU 30.10.2021
- PADMA VIBHUSHAN ACHARYA N.G.RANGA KISAN SEVA SAMITHI AWARD 07.11.2020
- GLOBAL ACHIEVERS FOUNDATION AWARD, Excellence Award for National Social Activity in the year 2012
- KRISHI SAHYOG SAMMAN, (Runner-up) by INDIA AGRI AWARDS, Mahindra & Mahindra company in the year 2011.
- d. EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR NATIONAL SOCIAL ACTIVITY (2012) by Global Achievers Foundation, New Delhi
- e. SMT. DURGABAI DESHMUKH AWARD for excellence in NGO

leadership, 20.04.2018

3. ANANTHA ANIMUTHYAMU

An honour given to persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the development by Sahithi Gagan Mahal Trust, Penukonda

4. ANANTAPUR DISTRICT LEVEL

- CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION AS COVID 19 WARRIOR AWARDED BY THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 15.08.2020
- FELICITATION TO COVID 10 WARRIORS IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT BY DISTRICT COLLECTOR 13.11.2020
- CERTIFICATES OF OUT STANDING CONTRIBUTION (in several years) by Anantapur District Collector on Independence Day and Republic Days.
- CERTIFICATION OF COMMENDATION BY THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR ON THE EVE OF 71ST INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS 15.08.2017

5. INTERNATIONAL LEVEL:

International Status Award for Intellectual Development

Individual contribution for International Integration in 2013 by Global Achievers Foundation, New Delhi, presented in Bangkok, Thailand.

Photo Gallery..

Marriage event of Malla Reddy & Doreen



Malla Reddy and Doreen Wedding photo 09.08.1981.



Certificate of our social marriage on 09.08.1981



Malla Reddy and Doreen Wedding photo 09.08.1981.



Doreen signing our marriage certificate on 09.08.1981



Malla Reddy's father, Y. Harinarayana Reddy signing Malla Reddy and Doreen's wedding certificate



Doreen & Malla Reddy wedding day on 09.08.1981 with Doreen's family

Marriage event of Bharath & Sandhiya



Bharath & Sandhiya on their wedding day 18.03.2013



Malla Reddy & Doreen with Bharath & Sandhiya wedding. (18.03.2013)



Bharath & Sandhiya wedding on 18.03.2013, with Mrs. Anne Ferrer, Moncho Ferrer & Vishala Ferrer



Bharath & Sandhiya on their wedding day



Doreen Reddy, Malla Reddy, Devarajulu Reddy, Victor Bharath Reddy, Sandhiya, Pushpalatha, Lakshmi Sudha and Veda (Small girl)

With Chief Ministers



Meeting with Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy, the Chief Minister on 22.08.2009 in CMs office at Hyderabad.
From left: Satheesh (DDS) Malla Reddy, Sudhakar MLA (Madakasira) and Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy



An NGO-Government meeting in A.P.Secretariate in August 2015.
From left: S.P.Tucker, Chief Secretary, Hon'ble CM Sri Chandrababu Naidu garu, Malla Reddy



Live demonstration of protective irrigation systems to Mr. Chandrababu Naidu in the Farmers Exhibition at Kothacheruvu in 2017.
From left: Mr. Raghunatha Reddy (Minister), Malla Reddy, Hon'ble CM and Kona Sasidhar, District Collector

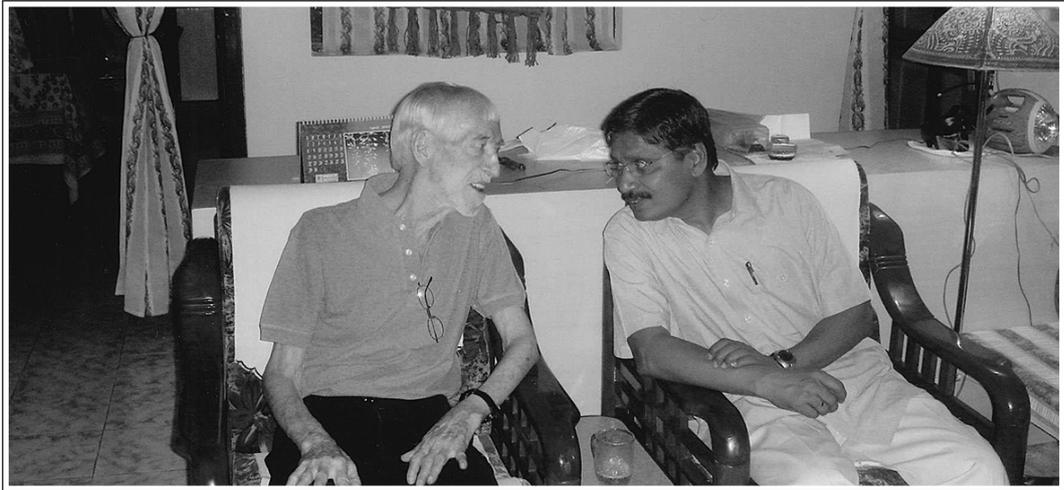


Live demonstration of rainfall drought-tolerant cropping systems with Millets and Pulses in Yeruvaka program in Kamakapalli, Kalyandurg mandal.
From left: Malla Reddy, Hon'ble CM Sri Chandrababu Naidu, Hon'ble President of India Sri Abdul Kalam, Mr. Hanumantharaya Chowdhury, MLA, Kalyandurg



A.P.State Agriculture Mission (AP-SAM) meeting chaired by Sri Y.S.Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister and Mission Chairman on 14-08-2019

Father Ferrer's Family



Father Ferrer and Malla Reddy in Malla Reddy's residence in RDT campus.



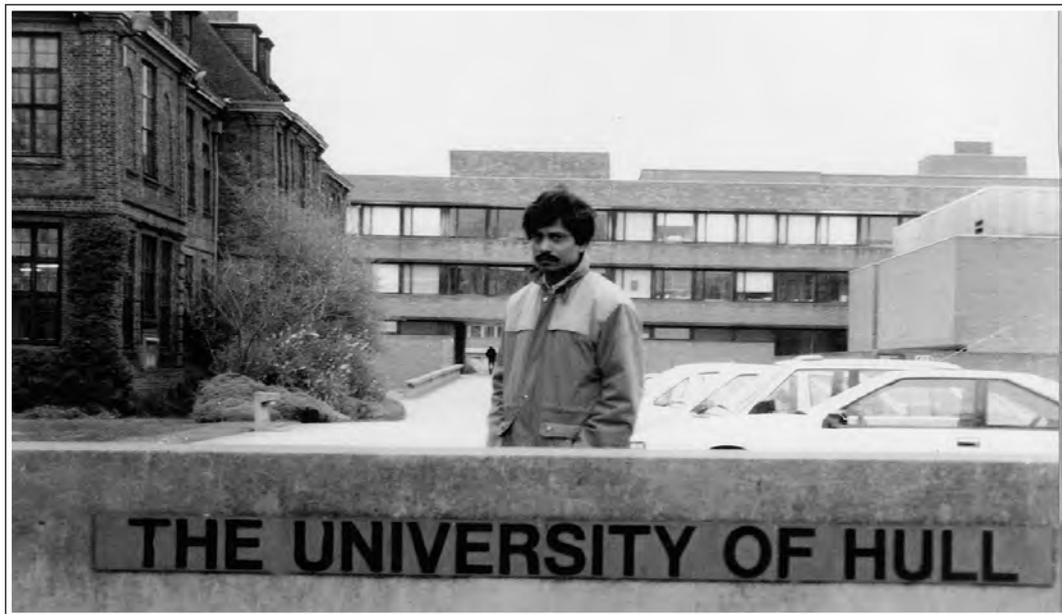
A combined celebration of Father Ferrer & Mrs. Anne Ferrer's wedding anniversary and Moncho Ferrer & Visha Ferrer wedding anniversary celebrated on 10.04.2005

From left: Doreen, Charitha(Baby) Moncho Ferrer, Visha Ferrer, Father Ferrer, Anne Ferrer, Malla Reddy and Bharath

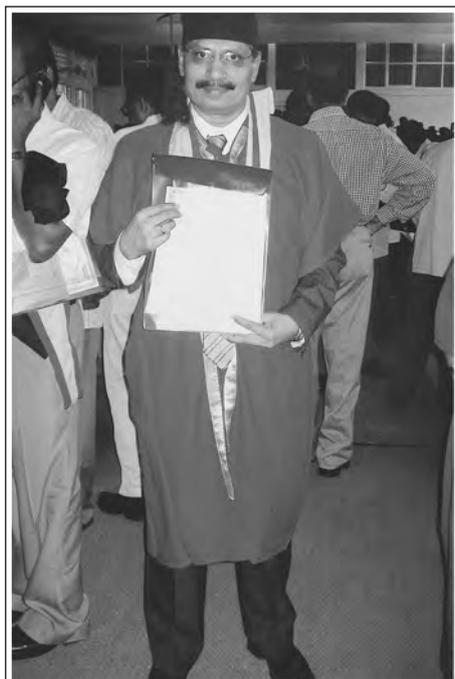
Tara and Farid's wedding on 02.1.1997 in Jordan. The wedding couple with Father Ferrer's family and Doreen & Malla Reddy



Dr.Malla Reddy Education



Malla Reddy in University of Hull, U.K. MBA Course 1989-91



Ph.D. Convocation photo S.K.University,
Anantapur – 17.02.2007



NGO Leadership Fellows program at Institute for Development
Research (1988) Boston University, Boston, USA

With Azim Premji



Dr. Azim Premji's visit to Anantapur, hosted by AF-Ecology Centre (5-11-2016) visiting fields in Muchurani village in Dharmavaram Mandal

Azim Premji's visit to Anantapur, hosted by AF-Ecology Centre at the instance of Sri Vijaya Kumar, Addl.Chief Secretary in 05-11-2016.

From left: Sri Srirama Murthy (JDA), Dr.Yellamanda Reddy, Sri Vijaya Kumar, Addl.CS, Sri Azim Premji and Malla Reddy



In a meeting in AF-Ecology Centre:
From left: Malla Reddy, Mr. Kona Sasidhar (District Collector) Mr. T.Vijaya Kumar (Addl.CS and Sri Azim Premji, Founder of Azim Premji Foundation on 05.11.2016

Photo Gallery



Father Ferrer, Malla Reddy, Susairaj and others in a village meeting in 1977, when community organisation sector began work in villages.

Inauguration of Community Hall at Laxmampalli. Group photo with all the staff in the Kalyandurg and Kambadur taluks in 1982



Father Ferrer, Malla Reddy, Thomas and others in a village meeting in 1980s

Trainers Training Course (TTC) in SEARCH, Bangalore (1985) participants from RDT. From Left: T.V.Chalapathy, Sharma (Facilitator) Malla Reddy, Thomas, Rani, Venkatesh and Lalitha.





Father with the staff of Kalyandurg area on the inauguration of Kalyandadurg Field office

From left: Usha Mutholy, Joseph Mutholy, Thomas, Malla Reddy, Father Ferrer, Dr. Janardhan, Rani, Teresa



Father Ferrer, Malla Reddy, Ira Subaiya, Michael Perry in a village meeting

From Left: Doreen, Gopal Reddy, Surya Kumari, Mary Vattamattam, Medha Patkar and Malla Reddy





Malla Reddy, Thomasaiah and Chalapathy, the pillars of community organisation in early 1980s, in a village meeting

Father Ferrer, sharing a lighter moment with Malla Reddy and Thomasaiah in a village 1980s



Malla Reddy addressing a village meeting. Father Ferrer and Mrs. Anne Ferrer sitting next to him (1980s)

Mr.M.L.Narasimha Reddy, Eenadu Beuro, Anantapur interviewing Father Ferrer (1998) in Malla Reddy's residence at Anantapur. First personal interview by Father Ferrer after Father Ferrer was awarded- Prince of Asturias Award for Concord by Spanish Government in 1998

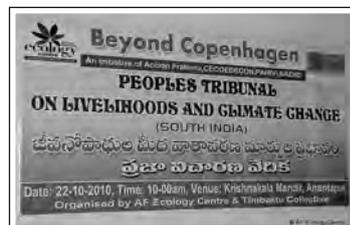


Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy visiting a Tomato farm in Arizona, USA as Fullbright Scholar in 2006 (Indo-American Environment Leadership Program) in USA 2006



Sri Somesh Kumar, IAS, in a valedictory function and distribution of certificates for trainees trained by Skill-pro at the instance of AF-Ecology Centre on 25.09.2008

Drought & Desertification Day organised by AF-Ecology Centre (17.06.2010)
From left: Mr. L.Murali (Project Director) Dr. B.Janardhana Reddy, District Collector and Malla Reddy

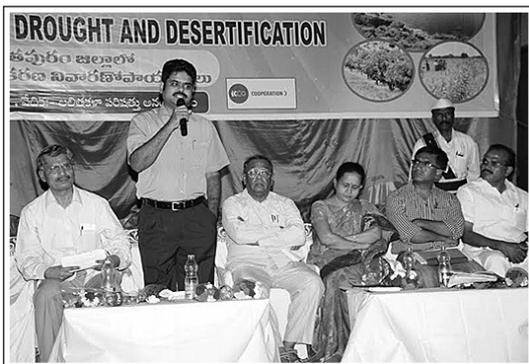


Beyond Copenhagen : Peoples Tribunal on Livelihoods and Climate Change organised by AF-Ecology Centre and participated by Justice Sri Laxmana Rao (Retd) High Court Judge on 22.10.2010



ZBNF mega training programme with Mr. Palekar organised by AF-Ecology Centre and Timbaktu Collective from 15.04.2011 to 25.04.2011

International Mother Earth Day with Sri Durgadas, IAS., District Collector, L.Murali, Project Director, DWMA, T.V. Subba Reddy, DFO on 22.04.2013



World day to combat drought and desertification day organised by AF-Ecology Centre. Mr. Lokesh Kumar, IAS., District Collector addressing the farmers on 17-06-2014

Visit of Dr. Solomon Arokiya Raj, IAS., District Collector's to Raminepalli village for observation of drought mitigation technologies. on 18.08.2014



World Water Day organised by AF-Ecology Centre. on 22-03-2014 with _



World day to combat drought and desertification day 17-06-2015 : Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy, Bablu Ganguly and other dignitaries

World Water Day 24-03-2015



Rayalaseema Pantalu - Vantalu at Rythu Bazaar on 13-15 March, 2015 Organised by AF-Ecology Centre, RDT and other NGOs in the District, Mrs.Anne Ferrer inaugrating the program on 13.03.2015



Ms Kerstin Ania Hahn, Programme Officer, Bread for the World, Women Auto operator trained by AF-Ecology Centre on (24, Nov 2016)



Release of Anantha Prasthanam – 2 book by Shri K.R.Venugopal, IAS Retd., Moncho Ferrer, Singamaneni Narayana, Panyam Subramanyam Retd. Engineer, Imam, Editor Kadalika on 16.05.2017 at Z.P.Hall, Anantapur



Visit of Mr. Ulrich Gundert, Continental Director & Mr. Dieter Pohle, Director of Public Relations, Bread for the World on 25-02-2014



World day to combat drought and desertification day 17-06-2017 : Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy explaining about the drought mitigation practices to Sri G.Veerapandian, I.A.S, District Collector, Anantapur



PROMOTING ALTERNATE / ADDITIONAL LIVELIHOODS FOR WOMEN FROM THE FAMILIES OF RAINFED FARMERS AND FARM LABOUR IN ANANTAPUR DISTRICT 2020-22 AND BEYOND funded by Mrs. Anupama Nadella
Inaugural function on 13.09.2020 with Sri Gandham Chandrudu garu, IAS,
District Collector. (Sri K.R.Venugopal IAS., Retd. and Smt. Laxmi Venugopal participated online).



Millets Farming for Farmers Welfare organised by AF-Ecology Centre. Dr.Khader Vali as Chief Speaker at Kalyandurg on 15.11.2020.



Covid-19 - Distribution of Masks, Sanitizers, posters, banners with Sri Anantha Venkatarami Reddy MP, Anantapur and District Collector Sri Gandham Chandrudu.

Bharatha Prajalainaina Memu: Constitution Day organised by AF-Ecology Centre with Sri Gandham Chandrudu, District Collector as Chief Guest at Kalyandurg on 12.12.2020



Covid-19 Awareness Campaign in Dharmavaram : Ms.Nagalakshmi Selvarajan, IAS, District Collector, Anantapur, Malla Reddy and others on 25.08.2021



Virtual inauguration of construction of 2 primary processing centres (PPCs) by Hon'ble Chief Minister, sanctioned by the Government for 2 FPOs facilitated by AF Ecology Centre. District Collector Smt. Gauthami, IAS., Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, AF Ecology Centre and other District officers participating from video conference hall at Collectorate on 25.07.2023



World day to combat drought and desertification day 17-06-2024 : Dr.Vinod Kumar.V, I.A.S., District Collector and other District Officers

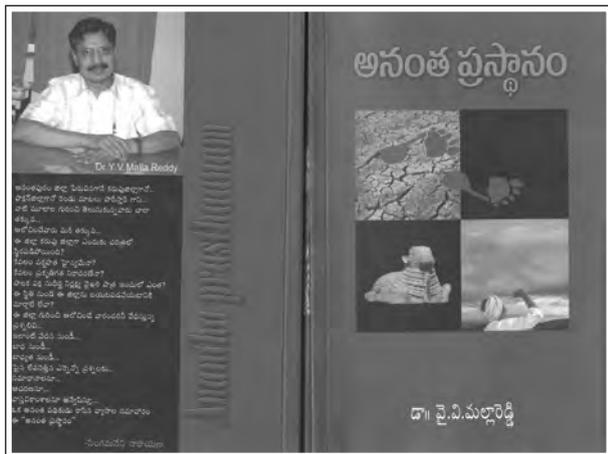


Visit of Chiranjeevi Chowdhury Head of Forest Force, Govt. of AP. to Agroforestry farm under carbon sequestration program by AF Ecology Centre (08.09.2024)



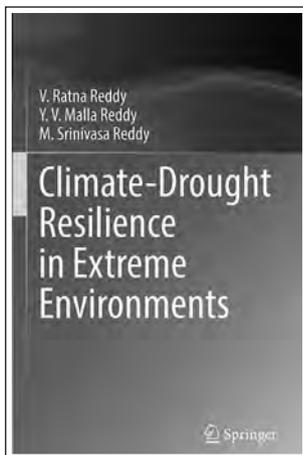
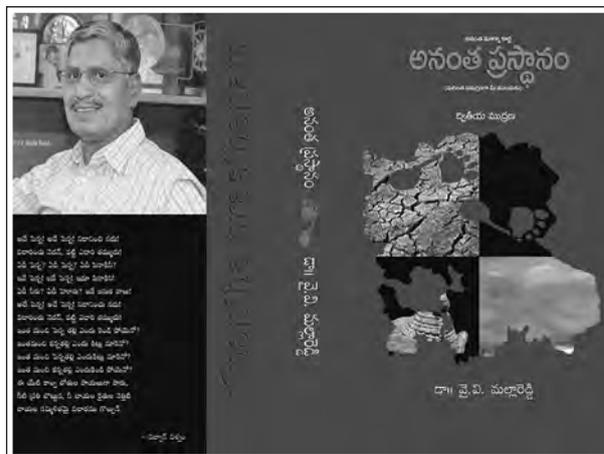
Millet Festival 2024 organised by AF-Ecology Centre and other NGOs in the District from 20.01.2024 to 22.01.2024

Books published by Dr. YV Malla Reddy

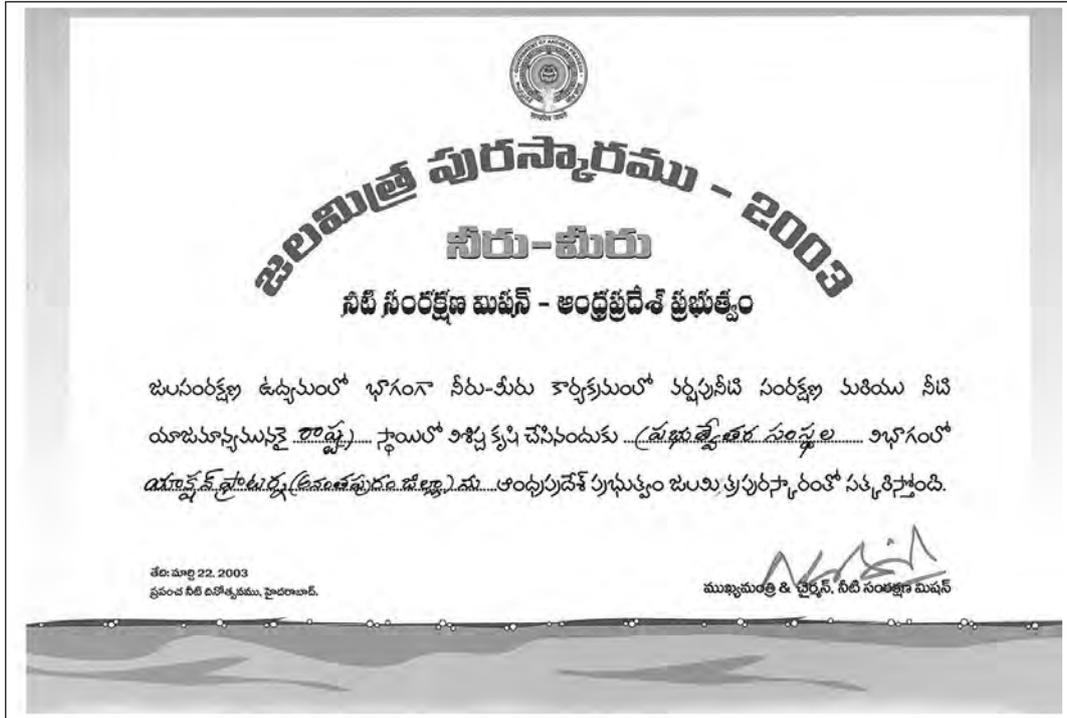


Ananta Prasthanam -1
2007

Ananta Prasthanam -2
2017



Co authored with Dr. V. Rathna Reddy and Dr. Srinivasa Reddy
Published by Springer's Nature, Germany



Government of Andhra Pradesh awarded "Jala Mitra" (Friend of Water) award to Accion Fraterna for its outstanding work on rain water conservation. The Award carried a Gold Medal and a cheque of Rs. 50,000/- by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri N.Chandra Babu Naidu, it was given to us for our outstanding work on Rain Water Conservation for the year 2002-03

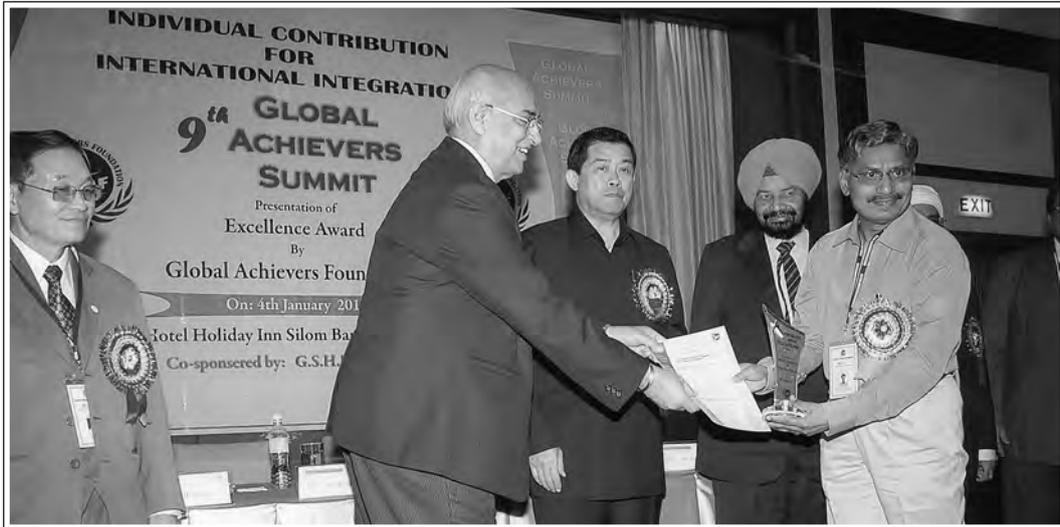
(Received by Mr. Raghurami Reddy, Technical Director, AF-EC)

Krishi Sahyog Samman National (Runner up) Award - 2011



INDIA AGRI AWARDS – 2011 by Mahindra & Mahindra company awarded to AF Ecology Centre “Krishi Sahyog Samman (Runner up) National award. The Award carried a memento and a cash of ‘Rs. 1 lakh.’

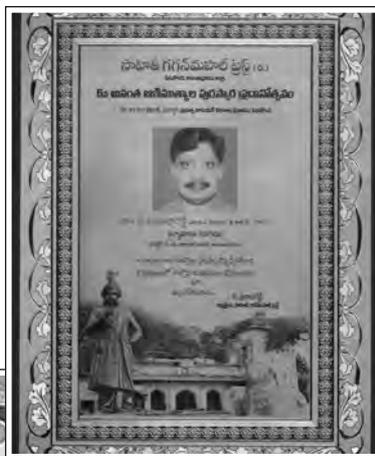
International Status Award for Individual Contribution for International Integration



Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy received Award from Global Achievers Foundation. The award was presented by Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand Mr. Korn Dabarnasi, at Bangkok on 4th January, 2013.

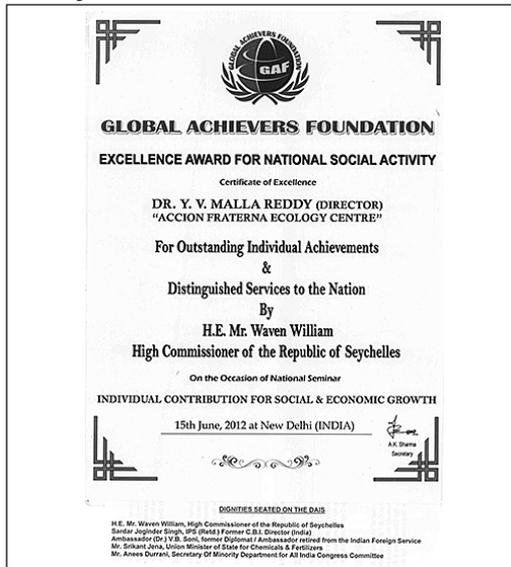
Anantha Animuthyamu Award

An honour given to Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, AF Ecology Centre, for outstanding contribution to the development of Anantapur district by Sahithi Gagan Mahal Trust, Penukonda on 31.01.2015



Excellence Award for National Social Activity

Presented to Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre for Outstanding Individual Achievements & Distinguished Services to the Nation By H.E.Mr. Waven William High Commissioner of the Republic of Seychelles at New Delhi on 15-06-2012



Certificate of Commendation

Certificate of Commendation by the District Collector on the eve of 71st Independence Day Celebrations (15.08.2017)



NATS

Malla Reddy honoured in the National Convention of NATS (North America Telugu Society) on 04.07.2016 in Los Angeles, USA.

Award presented by Shri P.Raghunatha Reddy, Minister of Andhra Pradesh

National Water Awards, 2022



AF-Ecology Centre was selected for National Water Award for 2022 in the Best NGO Special Mention Category by Ministry of Water Resources Development. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhavath, Minister WRD, Govt. of India presented the Award on 17.06.2023, received by Malla Reddy and Mr. Murali Krishna



Durgabai Deshmukh Award

Smt Durga bai Deshmukh National Award for Excellence in Voluntary Sector awarded to Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, AF-EC (20.04.2018)

Biodiversity Conserver Award

Biodiversity Conserver Award-2021 On the occasion of International Biodiversity Day 2021 on 22nd May 2021



N.G.Ranga Award

Padma Vibhushan Acharya N.G.Ranga Kisan Seva Samithi Award (07.11.2020)



Felicitation to Covid 19 Warriors

Felicitation to Covid 19 Warriors in Anantapur District by District Collector Sri Gandham Chandrudu (13.11.2020)



Dr. I.V.Subba Rao Rythu Nestham Award

Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre, Anantapur received Dr.I.V.Subba Rao Rythu Nestham Award from the Vice-President of India, Mr.M.Venkaiah Naidu organised by the Mupparapu Foundation and Rythu Nestham, in Vijayawada on 30-10-2021



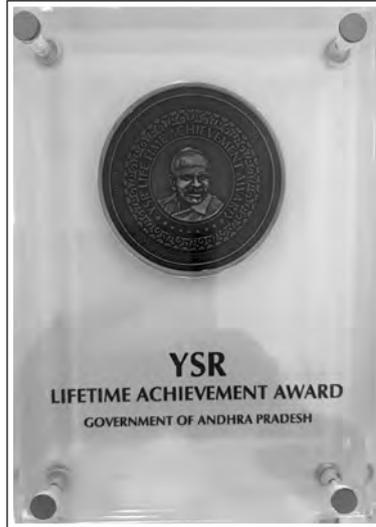
National First Award-2022

National First Award-2022 for Best Sustainable Agriculture Practices for AF-Ecology Centre by FICCI. Dr. Malla Reddy & Mr. Murali Krishna receiving the Award from Mr. Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister for Agriculture in New Delhi on 30th November, 2022.





YSR Lifetime Achievement Award 2023



Dr.Malla Received YSR Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 by Govt. of AP presented by His Excellency Governor of Andhra Pradesh Sri Abdul Nazeer and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri Y.Jaganmohan Reddy on 1-11-2023



