

## Interview of Thiru Parama Viswanathen Valaydon, C.S.K.



On the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015, Thiru Parama Valaydon conducted a seminar on ‘Small and Medium Enterprise – From Backseat to Backbone’ in the presence of Hon. Sunilduth Bholah, Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives.

Thiru Parama Valaydon graduated at the London School of Economics in 1974 with a Honours Degree in Economic and Econometrics. He is also a Financial Analyst with specialization in Industry and Finance. He has also been a consultant to several international institutions including The World Bank and UNIDO. He has held various positions in Mauritius and abroad (1975 – 2008) namely:

- Statistician/Econometrician at the London Board of Inland Revenue
- Head of the SME Department at the DBM
- Senior Advisor, Ministry of Industry and International Trade
- Chargé de Mission at the Indian Ocean Commission
- President IOIB/SBI Commercial Bank
- Principal Economist/Personal Adviser to the President of the African Development Bank
- Vice-President of the Mauritius Economic Society

Thiru Valaydon was also the first Chairman of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust (2001) and was one of the principal author of the book on African Development published by ADB. He has published several articles on Economic Issues and Development.

Pathirikai has asked him a few questions.

**Pathirikai :** *Vanakkam Aya. We are very pleased and proud to welcome you on Pathirikai. The seminar you conducted on 'SMEs : From Backseat to Backbone' was a successful event and the room was packed. What was your main reasons for conducting such a seminar?*

**Parama Valaydon :** Having worked for the UNIDO and the World Bank in the SME sector and with my long experience in the same field at the African Development Bank, I was requested by the Mauritius Economic Society to share my experience on the challenges and strategies of SME's in Mauritius. This sector is of growing interest as it features as one of the main objectives and sector priorities of Government in the next five years. You may wish to note that SME's are primary drivers for job creation and GDP growth; they contribute to economic diversification, social stability, redistribution of income and poverty alleviation.

**P:** *After having presented your findings to stake-holders, will there be any follow-up of the outcomes of the studies you conducted?*

**PV:** Definitely, there will be a follow-up on my research proposals; that is the setting up of a strategic implementation PLAN OF ACTIONS by the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. There will be a need to regroup export-oriented SME's, screen them and provide a new institutional and regulatory framework backed by a coherent National Export strategy and banking upon new emerging sectors of our economy such as Blue Economy, Bio-Technology, Green Energy, Seaport Modernisation, Agro-Industry and Knowledge-based Economy.

**P:** *You are also well-known as a professional flutist. Why this passion for classical music?*

**PV:** I am not a professional Flutist, but I have reached a fair degree of proficiency in Carnatic music flute playing. It has been my passion since childhood and I have also been recipient of scholarships from Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR, 1998 and 2005). I have had the opportunity to learn from Maestros like Sri Raghuraman, Ramankalyan, Pandit Prasaana in Delhi (Hindustani Classical Flute) and Sri Ramanujan in Tamil Nadu. I am also grateful to Mr Radha Tirvengadam who was my first one to initiate me in Carnatic Music.

**P:** *What is your evaluation of the preservation of Tamil Culture and Tradition in Mauritius, in particular Carnatic music?*

**PV:** Carnatic music is one of the most colourful, complete and evolved melodic systems of the world. It has over 7.2 million melodic scales (Ragas) and hundreds of rhythmic cycles (Talas). Carnatic music is drawn from Tamil music and culture which is as ancient as its Aryan counterpart. Unfortunately very few people have discovered the beauty and profoundness of Carnatic Music. The lack of interest is mainly due

to language difficulties, teaching and listening facilities and limited career prospects in the field of Carnatic music. Culture is a dynamic concept; and we should let the Tamil culture and tradition evolve further and continue to bloom. What is most important thing to remember is to be first a good human being.

**P:** *As you are aware, the present Government has declared their intention of nominating a Tamil as Vice-President of Mauritius. How do you welcome this intention and who do you think can fit into that position?*

**PV:** Tamils in Mauritius have always contributed to Nation Building and prosperity of our country. The proposal of our Prime-Minister to nominate a Tamilian as Vice-President of the Republic is a welcoming decision and we should thank him for his kind consideration to the Tamil Community in recognition of their contribution to National Unity. However, this is the prerogative of our Prime-Minister and he is the only one to decide on the person that should fill this constitutional position. As you know Sir Anerood Jugnauth is a man of words and of great experience. I only know, that in his wisdom, he will choose the right man to fill the post of Vice-President based on the merits; profile and ability to serve the nation.

**P:** *Is there anything you would like to add?*

**PV:** I would finally wish to congratulate Pathirikai for the excellent work that is being done to inform the Tamil Community on economic, religious and social matters. Keep it up.

**P :** *Thank you Aya. It has been a pleasure to chat with you. Pathirikai wish you all the best, and pray that Murugapp Peruman keeps you in good health. Mikka Nandri.*