

## Interview of Thiru Sen Ramsamy

For this month's interview, it has been a privilege interviewing Mr Sen Ramsamy, who has paved his way to the top from humble grounds. I personally believe that Sen Ramsamy is an asset to our community and an example for the younger generation. As he himself says *"To reach the top in any field of activity, one has to transcend the notion of communal appurtenance, understand and enrich himself/herself from the values inherent in all other communities."*



*"We are what we think. Positive energy within leads to inner joy and inner joy leads to positive thinking. And in turn this leads to success in life."*

### Brief profile of Sen Ramsamy

Personal Life	Academic Background	Professional Life	Major Achievement
Married to Ambal  3 children  2 sons, Lovishen and Kavishen,  1 daughter, Taniya Mayuri.	The George Washington University School of Business - Post-Graduate, Tourism Management from 1992 – 1994  University of Madras - BSc, Mathematics  Université Panthéon Sorbonne (Paris I) - Tourism Management	Managing Director - Tourism Business Intelligence from 2011 – Present  Currently piloting the Hotel Classification Project for the Ministry of Tourism and Chairperson of 2 Advisory Committees at the MTPA  Member of the Panel of Experts of the UN World Tourism Organization since 2004.  Senior Manager - Atlas Hospitality Dubai from 2007 – 2011  CEO of AHRIM from 1996 – 2004	Winner of the World Award for Sustainability, Energy Globe 2003 in Linz, Austria.

1. **CEO of AHRIM for 8 years!!! That was a real challenge... Could you tell us more about this position?**

That was indeed one of the most challenging positions that I decided to take up in 1996 after 13 years of dedicated service to Government. At that time, AHRIM did not even have a proper structure or an office space from where I could work. For the first 3 months, I remember working in my car parked in front of the Cathedral in Port Louis. The job was not easy as it entailed bringing harmony among competitors and symphony among different players of the tourism industry where each player enjoyed playing a tune different to the other. But that was part of the game and I am happy that after 8 years of hard work, rigour and discipline, AHRIM has been made a professional and respected organization with a sense of direction. It has since been playing a vital role in the decision-making process for tourism development in Mauritius. These relate to tourism policies, overseas marketing, air access, training and human resource development, safety and security, environmental protection and more. I was also invited to interact regularly with several international institutions like the World Bank, IMF, WTO and I even served as resource person for the UN World Tourism Organization, ILO, Economist Intelligence Unit and many others. The association has also been solicited by various countries to share its experience of the inclusive model that I had created to make it a credible private sector tourism institution. I did not conceive it as a lobby organization with a shopping list to Government. I was constantly on the fore-front to help bring solutions where there were problems in tourism and take proactive measures with a sense of vision. It was never my habit to conveniently place industry problems at Government doorstep. I was always part of the solution. My greatest satisfaction remains the fact that with a team of 5 staff we were able to thrive on several fronts at the same time dealing with wide ranging issues from training of airport taxi drivers, tourist guides, creation of the Tourist Police, air access policy to economic analysis, forecasting, international marketing, airport development. To crown it all, we won the World Award for Sustainability for the Tourism Environment Charter at a grandiose ceremony in Austria under the high patronage of the United Nations and the European Union. That was in 2003. I left AHRIM in 2004 with a strong feeling of "devoir accompli".

**2. Do you believe that our tamil professionals in Mauritius reach their potential?**

Any professional from any community has always something more to offer if he/she is given the opportunity and the right platform to serve. In all communities there are professionals with lots of potentials which are yet to be tapped and which our society needs. I strongly believe in our young talents and we need to give them enough space to perform, to create and to innovate. In this beautiful concert of cultures, the Tamil professionals have also been playing a significant role in the process of nation building. They are also very dedicated people and as high performers, they will certainly contribute to our country's development. In these difficult times of crisis and economic uncertainties, it is important that we give the chance to the professional brains in respective fields from all the communities to put their minds together to help stir our country forward with determination and vision, on the basis of merit and fairness, and in a spirit of true patriotism.

**3. You are an example of a young tamil who paved his way to the top – how hard was it?**

I am flattered by your question, Kobashni. Thank you for that. However, I cannot tell you whether I am a good example and I am not sure whether I have made it to the top yet !! But indeed it was very hard to pave my way to where I am, the more so that I come from a very modest background. To reach the top in any domain, one has to transcend the notion of communal appurtenance, understand and enrich himself/herself from the values inherent in all other communities. Reaching the top is when you start getting into a zone of isolation. I much prefer to be at the top in thinking and remain down to earth in actions. We should be able to build bridges with all our fellow country men and women and achieve great things together for our country. Life has not been easy for me. Like many, I have also come the hard way. If I attend to a task, it has to be well done or else I don't do it. This is perhaps what has been paving the way for my works to be recognized but I have still a long way to go. I think everything lies in the mind. We are what we think. Positive energy within leads to inner joy and inner joy leads to positive thinking. And altogether this leads to success in life.



*“Dubai was a fantastic experience with a great lifestyle. I have travelled the world but Dubai remains my second home.”*

**4. Your years in Dubai as Senior Manager, tell us more...**

I spent nearly 5 years in Dubai. They have been challenging and yet the best years of my life. This is a country which attracts talents from wherever they are in the world devoid of consideration of color, community, race, religion etc. The result is a city full of creative minds, with an excellent administration, a vibrant economy, great quality of life and people with “la joie de vivre”. The result: everyday is a new Dubai. I was appointed Senior Manager for Business Development in Tourism and Hospitality Management for a big Arab conglomerate. I have worked on several magnificent projects for the Palm Island, Abu Dhabi and several locations in Dubai. I had the privilege to work with and enrich myself from people of different nationalities from the Emirates, Europe, India, Pakistan, Morocco, Philippine, Egypt, Palestine and many more. In Dubai, the conditions are set for people to think the unthinkable, to bring innovation in all spheres of life. Dubai simply wants to be the best model in everything. One does not have time to feel home-sick in Dubai. We work hard but we also have plenty of facilities for leisure, sports, cultural activities, art, music, you name it. Food in Dubai is as diverse as it is in abundance. Cost of living is very affordable with no tax. People are generally very law-abiding and it is a safe place. The Rulers are extremely mindful of the happiness and quality of life of all residents indistinctly. I was deeply touched when His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, in spite of his many great achievements as Ruler of Dubai, he once stated in an interview that he is not a politician at the service of his nation, but a Poet mindful of the well-being of all residents. Dubai provides a great lifestyle and it was a memorable experience. I have travelled the world but Dubai remains my second home.

**5. You are now back in Mauritius, any special reason why? What are you doing now?**

In a way, I have been forced to come back home for family reasons. My family stayed back and I also have lots of personal matters here to look after. My prolonged stay in Dubai would not have been very convenient on that score. I have set up a new company called Tourism Business Intelligence which specializes in consultancy services for tourism, hospitality management, investment facilitation and training. I am also contributing to the works of the Ministry of Tourism by piloting the Hotel Classification project announced in the 2012 Budget Speech. I have also been requested by the MTPA to chair its Technical Advisory Committee for the Vanilla Islands concept for regional tourism and I also chair a similar Committee to help boost tourist traffic from the Middle East. I hasten to add that I attend to these responsibilities purely on a voluntary basis as a true patriot. During some of my spare time, I lecture at Institut Vatel which is a world famous training institution for tourism where students come from various countries. Having said that, I wished I could contribute more to help uplift my country as I did in the past, especially at this time of crisis. But I remain hopeful that as always our country will rise up to the challenge and surf the waves of economic turbulence to a brighter future.

**6. I believe that it is through the experience and success of others that youngsters can get inspiration. What do you think of the future generation?**

I am a strong believer in young talents. The youngsters are our future. But they need to understand that success is not plucked from a tree of good contacts. There is no short cut to

success. Our youngsters need to learn the hard way and climb the ladder of perseverance. Making mistakes on the way is not a fatality in life; it is a process of learning. The world of work can be very cruel especially in terms of meritocracy and fairness but we have to consider it as part of the game. Superficiality in actions, jealousy and greed are the best recipe to fail. The future generation should avoid these traps. It needs to embrace a culture of positive thinking at all times. The new generation has to be mindful of the need of others, work hard with a sense of rigour, self-discipline and respect of our values. Respect of the law, respect of our elders, respect of others' cultures and traditions, respect of human dignity. They need to empower themselves now through education to propel our country to new heights. They are the architects of Mauritius Tomorrow. I have strong faith in our youth and their capabilities. Our country has made lots of progress through the hard works of our elders and the present generation. They have to get ready to play their part in a more competitive world with a new vision. They should develop their own "audacity of hope" !

#### **7. What advice would you give to young graduates?**

Young graduates should not entertain the illusion of being the boss overnight after graduation. They have miles to go. Even with a first class degree in hand I joined the world of work as a layman. And I learnt a lot from it. But our young graduates need to nurture a dream, a dream of a better society with better living conditions for the people. Like many generations before us have experienced, they will come across many a crises in life, in business, in the country at large. Humanity has encountered crises of all magnitudes throughout history. It is ongoing but in different shapes. Mankind has always come out relatively safe through his intelligence. This is the power of the human brain. This is where their determination to succeed and their will-power will be put to the test of time. They will have to elbow their way safely and with lots of dexterity, intelligence and business flair to succeed. They need to be daring in life.

#### **What do you think about this latest concept of tamil paper online?**

I like your play of words: a tamil "paper" online. I think it's a step in the right direction. The challenge with online news is to ensure maximum readership. It should grow into a news vehicle on economy, people, arts, culture, technology etc and attract a wider readership. It should even stand out as a bridge to all other communities in Mauritius and friends abroad. Why not interview a patriot of another faith for his/her outstanding performance in a specific field. Our youngsters will learn from these as much as others will also learn from it. It can also be a powerful instrument for value sharing within the community but also with our fellow compatriots of different faiths. This is what will make it command respect at different layers of society. To be read, a publication has to be credible with relevant information that highlights the achievements of the people, its concerns about the ills of our society, opportunities lying ahead, lessons of life and positive thinking for our children and why not, with some positive Breaking News from time to time. I am confident that this online News Channel has set sail to a bright future with young talents like you with a positive mindset. I wish it every success.

*By Kobashni Pillay  
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