

## 7. OUR COLLEAGUE NARAYANBHAI

From around 1985 Govindbhai was having indifferent health and so most of the time he was staying in Baroda with Atulbhai and so very often we had to visit Baroda to get his advice and report about Excel's work. In those days Atulbhai had developed good intimacy with Narayanbhai and was studying Gita under him. Narayanbhai had his own computer centre. Our visits gave us opportunities to interact with him. His background of the past with big corporations had given him a fine vision and also unique opportunities to look at problems. This was giving me an opportunity to develop friendship with him.

By the beginning of 1986, Govindbhai decided to hand over Excel management to Ashwin and Me. Till then my focus had been on technical subjects only. So we felt that a person of Narayanbhai caliber can become a great asset for managing the company. We felt that for future steady growth a committed team with transparent and participative approach was a must. Narayanbhai was helping us mostly in that. Excel had five manufacturing sites and four marketing zones, but very poor information exchange. The seniors were functioning in isolation. Govindbhai was able to take right business decision. I was certainly not built that way. I needed a very open participative team at the top.

We had to make seniors sit together and share. Narayanbhai has coined a wonderful phase "Offer and Receive". It turned out to be not just an eye opener but slowly a heart opener. Slowly perhaps very slowly in the initial day's positive changes in the behaviour of senior members started. Initially, Narayanbhai needed to stay in Excel, but I felt his staying with us in our house can give us more opportunities to share, to search for newer ways to reach out. He would normally get up at 4 am and start putting his thoughts on paper which he could share with me and then with others. Not only we had to build a good team within but we had to create such a transparent and intimate team spirit with our Chairman and other Board Members too.

Narayanbhai had a unique capacity to remain focused and not get dishearten or dismay. This approach of offer and receive with our senior team members made everyone see greater potential within each other. This revelation of excellence within generated exacted results on the work front on the sites. Transparency and excellence went on percolating in the manufacturing areas and marketing field also. We could create greater intimacy with our customer's and even bankers. A new bright future for Excel was not only seen within the company but in the outside world. The good officers started looking at us with higher respect. Excel become a favorite company in the stock exchange. In the ten years, that I had the opportunity to work along with him with our team Excel grew very well. What Narayanbhai helped in creating was a truly participative organization. We used to say "young old, male female, highly educated to other with whatever colour caste or creed from North, South, East or West we all work together to build a great institution."

In those ten years we received many corporate excellence awards also. These ten years gave me confidence to go back to my Kutch and serve to build our rural areas, our mother earth. It was wonderful to have Narayanbhai and work with him. On the occasion of Narayanbhai and Sujanabhabi's Golden Wedding Anniversary, I congratulate them and wish them many more years of togetherness.

**(Kaka & Kaki)**

**Kantisen Shorff - Chairman Emeritus Excel Industries Ltd**

**Chanda Behn Shroff - Managing Trustee - Shrujan Trust**