**Celebrating the life and legacy of Dr R.K. Pachauri**

Words can neither qualify nor quantify Dr Pachauri’s qualities as a person and as a leader. It is rare to know people like him in today’s world. A great divine soul, an immortal legend never dies - we celebrate the life of an irreplaceable global icon who will always be remembered for his vision, intelligence, leadership and humility which touched numerous lives internationally, nationally and locally. The global recognition of his enormous calibre as a great thinker, actualizer who scaled forbidden heights, undreamed and unimagined arenas as **Captain** of many ships has undoubtedly set an example for all. Mahatma Gandhi said “My life is my message” and Dr Pachauri truly translated it in his life. His efforts made a significant mark in the way we think and plan for the future by powerfully boosting the field of Environment and Sustainable Development beyond imagination. What he achieved in his one life time, many don't achieve in multiple. Great institutions are the creation of great leaders. If he had taken a different route, then many people and institutions - **TERI, IPCC, POP, WSDF - wouldn’t have been what they are today!**

My reflections and fond memories of Dr. Pachauri are from direct association, conversations and interactions. I recall my first meeting with him, when he amazed me with his in-depth knowledge about my last name. Dr Pachauri’s exceptional and extraordinary qualities and personal convincing made me leave a coveted job in Delhi University. I worked with Dr Pachauri for more than three decades. My admiration, respect, and reverence for him is as old as my joining TERI in 1985. He worked diligently on defined goals and experienced the fruition of those efforts, which further enhanced his creativity many fold. He had a special knack for understanding the capabilities of each individual and entrusted me with the responsibility to visit Mumbai’s Documentation and Information Centre to facilitate its merger with the TERI Library, New Delhi. I responded by saying that we should try doing it from here, and will visit only if required. ***He smiled, agreeing to it***. In the early days of setting up the TERI Libraries, he placed his trust and confidence on new emerging professionals. He challenged us by setting the bar high and constantly drove us forward by his ***terrific*** example. We started from scratch, continuously innovated and evolved to establish state of the art libraries in 7 and 102 Jorbagh, India Habitat Centre (IHC). Visited and guided Bengaluru Library and set up TERI School for Advanced Studies’ Library (erstwhile TERI University). It has been an exhilarating journey besides being a fulfilling one, with Dr. Pachauri as a constant source of inspiration and a role model for me.

He was sagacious in so many fields that the list of his invaluable accomplishments is endless, and yet he was so modest and kind. He had great qualities to admire and many more to emulate. With him we grew up as a family, sharing all ups and downs of lives. His decency and humanity were profound and extraordinary. I remember once at his home, in his own fun loving and lively way he made me feel special, when he introduced me to Dr Mrs Saroj Pachauri, his wife “***Meet a dear friend and colleague, she is a liberated lady because she has not changed her maiden name after her marriage***”. Dr Pachauri was undoubtedly a fatherly figure. I can never forget his meticulous care which speaks so eloquently of his feelings. I received his personal call and handwritten condolence message when I lost my mother. He used to treat people with utmost respect and never missed any opportunity to send handwritten compliments or emails on each achievement to encourage and motivate us. I felt proud in my humble way when TERI was identified with its dynamic DG sporting a beard - which he so majestically carried like the mane of a lion.

The announcement that the Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded to the IPCC, resulted in a memorable explosion of joy and media excitement in and around TERI, IHC. Our identification with Dr. Pachauri was so strong that we felt proud to be a part of the historical glorious moment. It was justly a very proud moment for TERI and me particularly so - being in TERI since its inception. It gave me the feeling that as if I have been honoured. He graciously gave credit to the thousands of experts and scientists who contributed to the work of the Panel. Truly an Indian, he quoted the philosophy of “***Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam***”, which means the whole universe is one family. When he was returning after receiving the award, we welcomed him at the airport and he met each one of us with great warmth, as if we had won the prestigious Nobel. A few years later when I visited the Oslo City Hall, Norway, where Dr Pachauri delivered his Nobel lecture, it gave me a great pleasure to imagine those moments and the words from his lecture echoed in my ears.

Once he was invited by Director General, National Archives of India, Government of India to make a presentation, but on account of some other commitment he expressed his inability. However, he thought of empowering me, and consequently he nominated me and wrote to them ***- “My senior colleague, Dr. Paliwal is heading our Library at IHC and she would be able to deal with it competently. For further communication, Dr. Paliwal may be contacted directly***”. When I was sent to TERI University on deputation, though the place was closer to my home, an uneasy thought of restarting from scratch (after experiencing tough initial phases of Jorbagh and IHC) made me meet him to express that very openly. The university was very close to his heart and he valued libraries, so in his unique way by flattering me he asked “***Can you give me one name who is as experienced and knowledgeable as you to handle a new challenge*?”**

There is plenty of knowledge available in the libraries - but its real worth lies in its application for the wholesome betterment of human kind. Then there are the thinkers and the doers, who have enormously enriched us. Dr. Pachauri as a skipper of TERI, IPCC, POP, WSDF achieved a harmonious balance between the two. What a wonderful person he was finds reflection in his ideas and actions, no wonder he was so respected and thought of so warmly. His passion for our planet, intelligently planned policies & actions not only got noticed and appreciated nationally and internationally, but **his name and the institutions became synonymous and had a global impact, ushering in a better world for the future.**

His sustained interest in the welfare of his colleagues and their families touched me in a great measure; he was thrilled to know that my daughter got into an Ivy League University, and The World Bank. He said, “***Time just flies, I remember giving her a prize in TERI’s painting competition, when she was a kid.*”** Dr Pachauri was genuinely happy when I got global opportunities. He wrote **“*Dear good friend Bharati - God works in mysterious ways. I am so happy about you and your daughter's career. May God bless you and your loved ones.*”**

My association with Dr. Pachauri continued even after I left TERI. We always kept in touch. We stayed connected even while he was globetrotting - on occasions, greetings, enquiring about his health, and ideas to promote The Mukteshwar retreat office, in which I contributed my bit.

In his last few years he called from Kiev, Ukraine; sent messages from Astana, Kazakhstan; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Changsha, China etc. Even in his busy schedule, he never stopped texting and once wrote to me “***Can't get through to you” “Are you still in the US? How long would you be in DC?”*** I wonder if there will ever be a leader like him, who is so concerned and compassionate for personal problems too, as expressed in one of his messages **“*I am so sorry to learn about your daughter's injury. I hope she recovers soon. Your presence there would help her a great deal. I am in Changsha, China. I am on extensive travel these days. Take care and give my best wishes to your daughter*.”**

He never ever failed to reply back. “***Warm greetings from Mexico City.******You are a very good human being, kind, sincere, truly a gem, steadfast colleague and lifelong friend. I admire you. We must meet when both of us are in Delhi*”**. I saluted his resilient spirit and humble heart when I received his response *even when he was in a hospital in Mexico.* ***“I had a medical emergency and am hospitalized in Monterey, Mexico. I shall talk to you in the few days*”**. He was deeply spiritual and once mentioned “***There is a God above, who knows everything. He will find a way”.*** My last interaction with Dr. Pachauri was in early January 2020. Being at his cremation was very heart breaking. It is hard to live without sorely missing his presence. God must be happy to meet his great creation, a great leader, a great human, a hero of millions.

Every brick in TERI breathes of him and we are eternally indebted to him. He dedicated himself, tirelessly worked with all his **Energy** and **Resources** for a sustainable world. His institutes are synonymous with Dr. Pachauri and Dr. RKP will remain synonymous with Global Climate Change. If we all together can carry forward even a fraction of his vision, we would pay him a great tribute. In our hearts he is a Timeless Being, his memory lives, and his love and legacy endures. May we be inspired by his lifelong example, never cease working for a better planet and strive towards his vision.

**20th August** is a Special Day for eternity, what the French call and he did **La** **Joie de Vivre**.

Dr Pachauri - I will always miss you, I am deeply grateful and thankful to you. Dr Mrs Saroj Pachauri - I will always be with Pachauri family. Dr Rashmi, Dr Shonali and Dr Ash Pachauri – As you told me, “Dad left us one big family. We will always be that way.”

Dr Bharati Paliwal, Fellow, Area Convener, TERI Librarian, TERI University Librarian (1985 - 2016)

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