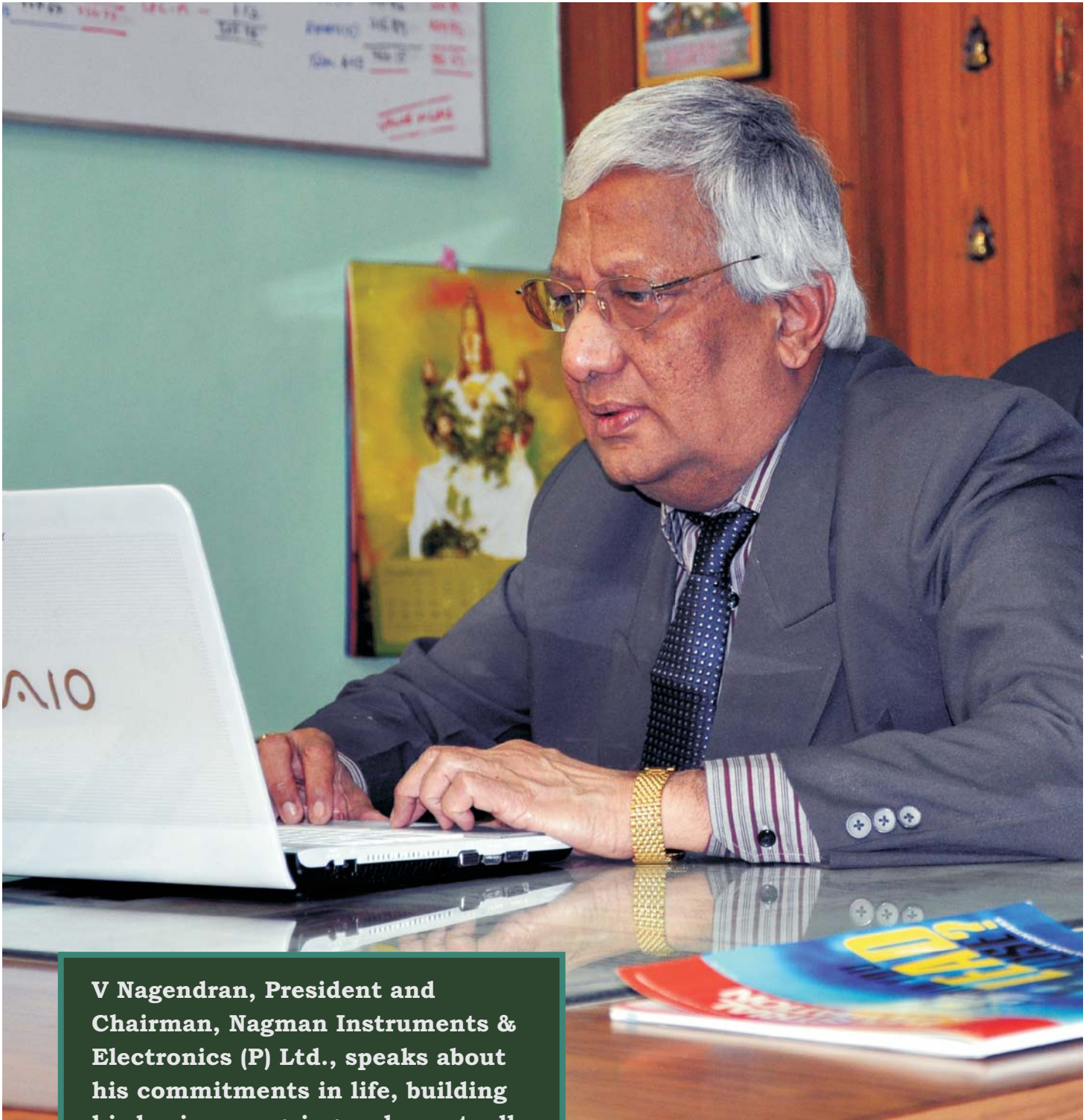


Up Close and Personal

A Definite Dream



V Nagendran, President and Chairman, Nagman Instruments & Electronics (P) Ltd., speaks about his commitments in life, building his business, ageing and eventually, 'hanging up his boots'

Action without vision often leads to nothing. For V Nagendran, President and Chairman, Nagman Instruments & Electronics Pvt. Ltd., the ability to look into the future and carve his own identify has been the essence of life. Nagendran, 68, like an able business leader created his vision, articulated it and relentlessly drove it to completion.

CAREER CALL

An instrument technologist from the batch of 1965, Nagendran says instrument engineering, which today, is an integral part of automation, was his “automatic choice” for a career. “In my school days, physics was my favourite subject while chemistry and arts subjects were not as comfortable. Even as a student, I was very industrious, with an analytical and questioning frame of mind, trying out one or other experiments.” recalls Nagendran. The foundation for Nagendran’s career was laid when his father, a civil engineer with a contracting company that built the hostel blocks at the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) in Chennai, pushed his elder brother into the prestigious institute. “My brother chose the discipline of instrument technology and I watched him closely, reviewing his books and visiting the MIT campus often to serve him,” says Nagendran, adding that his aptitude for physics coupled with his industrious traits and the inspiration from his older brother, made him take up instrument technology in MIT.

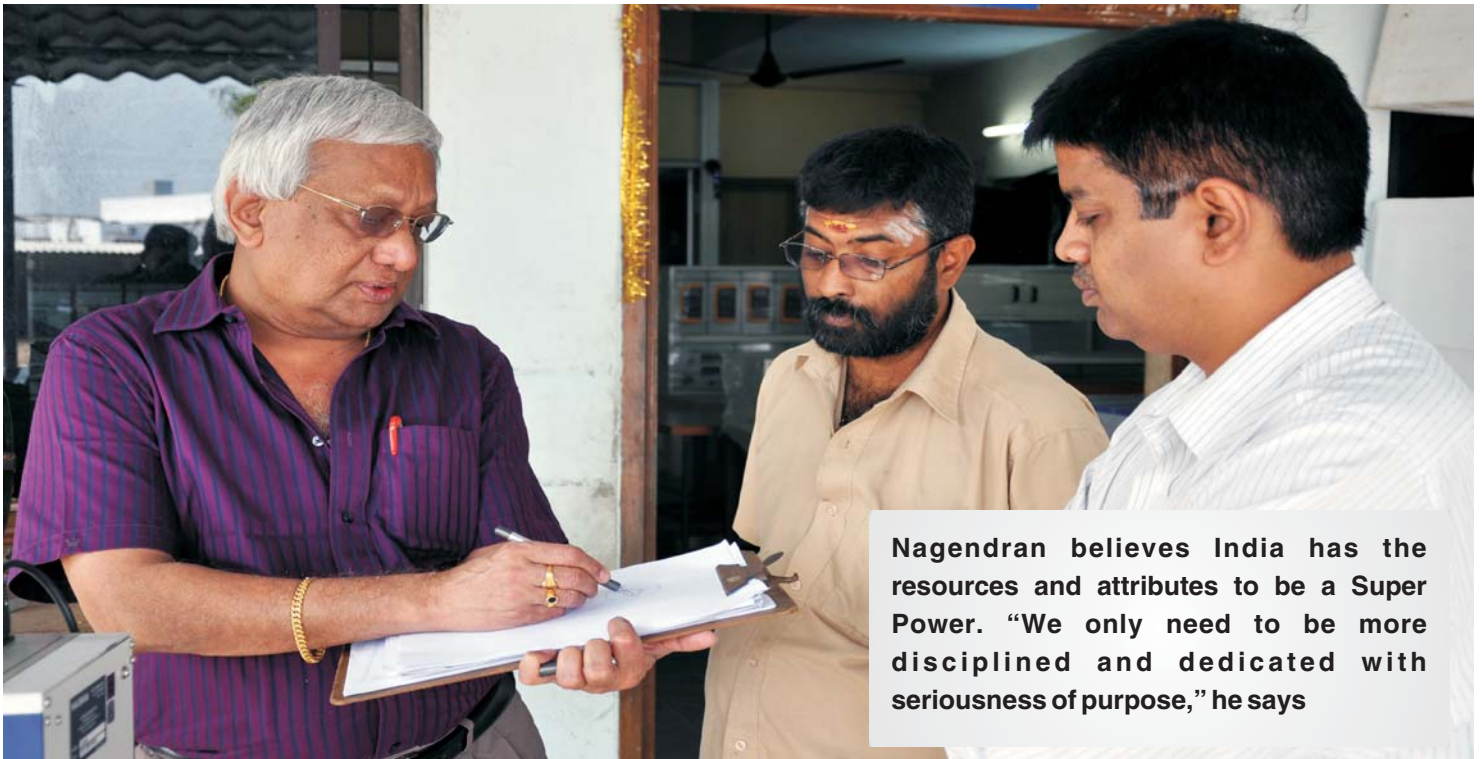
While Nagendran spent most part of his day with his mates at the MIT campus, he did not have a chance of experiencing hostel life. However, he does admit being ragged. “Ragging was very much a part of MIT, but once the chore was over, I became a close pet of many seniors. This went on to blossom into close friendships during the

later years of life and several of my close friends today, are my seniors from MIT,” says Nagendran. As an under graduate, Nagendran was active with N.C.C. and became the “under officer”, bringing his batch mates as well as seniors under his command. “I learnt the trick of managing and controlling my seniors, which immensely helped me through my career and business,” says Nagendran.

THE LAUNCH OF NAGMAN

Nagendran recalls his zeal for the “practical training” sessions of instrument technology. His first was with standard motors (manufacturers of standard/herald cars, now defunct) and the second with allied electronics, where he assembled a couple of electronic trainer kits and aids for his college. Once done, he was asked to “cost” and “price” the kits, much to his surprise. “I was intrigued when I learnt the then prevailing ratio of cost vs. price from A Lakshmi Narayan,” says Nagendran, adding that the professor remained his inspiration for life. The one question from the professor had sown in his mind, the seed of his own business idea! “It was the turning point of my life as I decided my career and the purpose of my own enterprise,” he says. However, he had to wait for seven long years before making his dream come true. “In order to gain some valuable experience in industry, meanwhile, I worked at the Rourkela Steel Plant (now part of SAIL) from 1965 for seven years. It helped me hone my creative skills and my abilities at solving difficult and intricate problems with troubleshooting analysis. I earned several appreciation certificates, an accelerated promotion and even an award from the National Inventions Promotions Board,” recalls Nagendran.

At the end of his seven year contract service with



Nagendran believes India has the resources and attributes to be a Super Power. “We only need to be more disciplined and dedicated with seriousness of purpose,” he says



**“My Wife is the Best Part of My Life - a Boon!”
- Nagendran**

Rourkela Steel Plant, Nagendran launched my own dream enterprise in Chennai in November 1972, in partnership with his older brother. “It was my token of gratitude to him for all his support!” he says, recalling his father’s disagreement to Nagendran’s decision to quit a successful job for his own enterprise. “Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to see me prosper an entrepreneur and industrialist, realizing my ambitions,” says Nagendran, whose brother parted ways after his initial support to the venture.

LESSONS AND VALUES

The second among four siblings [he has two younger sisters], Nagendran has drawn inspiration from his father’s dynamic persona, hard working, enterprising and disciplined nature as well as his willingness to lend a helping hand to the needy, especially for education, at any time. “I have taken to most of these qualities. I am also composed in crisis situations and continue to be a strategic thinker and planner,” he says. Coming from a family that always laid emphasis on education, Nagendran says education is of great importance to him. “I always encourage people around me to get better qualified most senior executives in my company pursued MBA at my instance” says Nagendran, who has completed his own MBA by attending part time classes in the Madras University at the age of 40. Learning, for Nagendran, continues to be a never ending process. He updates himself about the changing technology trends through the internet, industrial journals, exhibitions, seminars and conferences as well as professional affiliations.



“I am tired, but i honestly do not believe I will ever accept to be cut off totally from my business,” says Nagendran

Nagendran, senior member of International Society for Automation (ISA) and a life member of Instrument Society of India (ISOI) is also a member of the governing and academic councils of some engineering colleges.

With great stress on being systematic and organized, Nagendran says he makes notes of his plans and thoughts for review and action. "I do not accept 'no' for an answer and also prefer considering the viewpoint of the other person before issuing a command. I also strongly believe in fundamentals & in depth analysis, making these principles and practices the pillars of my success in business as well as life. Nagendran feels appalled by the attitudes of most young professionals of today, who ignore the fundamentals, and are disorganized and unsystematic, with sheer lack of dedication and seriousness. "Of course their talents otherwise, sharp grasp of higher planes of engineering and technology pleasantly surprise me. If only they also can imbibe the above stated virtues as well," says Nagendran.

AWAY FROM WORK

Nagendran believes in spending quality time with family as much as work. Nagendran has four children three daughters and a son all of whom have taken to instrument engineering after their father. "My son and daughter-in-law as well as my eldest daughter and son-in-law help me in running the business," says Nagendran. As family, eating out once a month and spontaneous shopping sprees apart from extended annual family vacations is a must. A self-confessed health freak, Nagendran has a massage chair, sauna, steam bath and Jacuzzi, at home. He says, "I indulge when time permits." A strict vegetarian, Nagendran, who often travels overseas on business visits, confesses being a "good cook". At most overseas locations, I hire apartments with a kitchenette," he says, adding that when at home in Chennai, his wife does not allow him to hone his culinary skills.

Nagendran credits a lot of his success to his wife, who brought up their children well, allowing Nagendran a free mind to concentrate on the business. "My wife is the best part of my life and a boon. With her strong faith and conviction on my capabilities and wisdom, she had stood solid behind me through thick and thin," says Nagendran.

AIMING HIGHER

Looking back at his bright career, Nagendran says, he is not yet contended with what he has achieved. "I still have a burning desire to achieve more I do have business ideas, product designs, which I wish to try out," he says. Nagendran wants to continue to contribute to the field of technology to set examples and guide the younger generation.

However, he admits that the four decades of hard business have taken a toll on him. "I do feel tired at 68 and have been contemplating a retirement for the last four years, gradually reducing his direct involvement in his business. I want to spend more time with my family and connect and socialize with old friends," he says. But even today, at a pinnacle of success, he continues to feel

the urge to better his aspirations. "I will certainly hang up my boots, but I cannot be complexly cut off from my business. I am eager to see what the future is holds for me," he says.

HIS JOURNEY



After a brief stint at HSL (presently SAIL) between 1965 & 1972, Nagendran founded (in Partnership with another DMIT Mr. V.G. Subramanian) the parent company in 1972, serving Indian and Overseas clients since the last 38 years. Today, the brand name "NAGMAN" (an ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company) is recognized, considered & accepted at par - all over the world with reputed World Brands - offering them tough competition.

Nagendran feels that lack of enterprise, poor planning and policies of government have created hurdles in the way of quicker adaptation of changing technology "Industry in India must concentrate on qualitative output and enhance the confidence and acceptance levels overseas," he says.