



Colloquium: A Working Model of Decentralized Governance by Elango Rangasamy

Speaker:
Elango Rangasamy

Date / Time:
August 28, 2014 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Venue:
10th floor auditorium, Pixel A, Azim Premji University.

Abstract:

Mahatma Gandhi said that India lived in villages. He wanted the villages to be prosperous, self-sufficient and peaceful. However, it is easier said than done. As a village in Tamilnadu, Kuthambakkam had numerous social problems: caste clashes between dalits and non-dalits; inadequate basic facilities like safe drinking water, drainage and roads; no assurance to food; violence against women and children and others. The scenario completely changed after 1996. R. Elango was chosen as the panchayat president that year and his role in the transformation of Kuthambakkam is widely appreciated. The village is now a self-sufficient economy and a model village. Elango feels that though India has around 2.70 lakh Panchayats covering around 6 lakh villages, there are only 100 to 200 model villages like Kuthambakkam. In his talk, he will share a working model for better decentralized governance in India through his experiences as a panchayat president.

A Note on the Speaker:

R Elango, born and brought up in Kuthambakkam village, in the adjoining district of Chennai City was involved in social work right from his childhood. After completing his B.Tech in Anna University, he joined Oil India and shifted to CSIR as a Scientist. His village Kuthambakkam with 7 hamlets and with more than 50% of Dalit population was always facing caste clashes. Due to illicit liquor trade, the poor villagers were losing money, health and family relations. As President of Kuthambakkam panchayat in Tamilnadu, Rangasamy Elango had imagined, pursued, and achieved much that any leader could be proud of. Community-integrated housing, indigenous industry, gram swaraj; these and other ideals of local government aren't merely plans in Kuthambakkam. In this tiny hamlet outside of Chennai, aspirations had concrete ways of turning into realities. He was chosen as the CNN real heroes of 2009.

