# UNDEFEATED The Inspiring Story of Sarath Chandra



# **UNDEFEATED**

The Inspiring Story of Sarath Chandra



K. M. RANI M.B.A. (Fin.), M.A. (Eng. Lit.)

### **UNDEFEATED**

#### K.M. Rani

M.B.A. (Fin.), M.A. (Eng. Lit.)

First Edition Jan, 2019

Copy Right: Author

## For Copies:

#### K.M. Rani

G2, Shreyas Towers, 2nd Street, R.K. Nagar, Malkajgiri, Hyderabad - 47.

TELANGANA, IND.

e-mail: raninaidu@rediffmail.com

Ph: 9959629923

Printed at:

Karshak Art Printers Vidya Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana 500044

Ph: 040-27618261

# **FOREWORD**

The "Undefeated" is the story of our son, Sri Sarath Chandra, who stood against challenges he faced in his life and won the battle with courage. He did not compromise on any hurdle which came in his way towards success. However small or big it may be he fought against it and made the hurdle or challenge bow down before him.

The Author Ms. K. M. Rani, my wife, narrated the story "Undefeated" with care without leaving out any incident, however small it may be that happened in Sarath's journey.

I believe, this book is very useful and will guide parents not only having disabled children but also for normal children to build courage in fighting against any challenge in any situation.

It's my pleasure to be a part of this story.

K. SRINIVASA RAO

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

"Undefeated" is my first book. I wrote this book based on my knowledge. I appeal to everyone who reads this book to see a mother's heart in narrating the story.

I express my deep gratitude to each and every person, whether mentioned in this book or not, who extended their unstinted support in every walk of Sarath's life to win over the challenges he faced and made us proud.

> K. M. Rani AUTHOR

I am not going to tell you an extra ordinary story. I am going to tell the story of an ordinary person, who lived his life in an extraordinary way, faced the challenges of his life with extraordinary courage and exuberance. It's the story of a wonderful son.



# THE CHILD

The beautiful morning of our lives arrived on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1996. My lone son Sri Sarath Chandra was born at Kakinada, which was at that point in united Andhra Pradesh. His father Kommula Srinivasa Rao hails from Pedapatnam Lanka of East Godavari District and myself from Draksharamam. His father works as an Electrical Engineer of South Central Railway.

Sarath is a baby born through caesarean section procedure. As his body became blue, he was often kept in an incubator till one week. After the first month we took him to Hyderabad to consult a cardiac surgeon as

advised by the doctor. The cardiac surgeon after conducting the ECG and other tests informed that the child had no cardiac related issues. It was a great relief for us to hear that.

Since his father was transferred to Hyderabad, we moved to Kacheguda Railway Quarters. Sarath was only five months old baby. He was soon diagnosed with a pigeon chest and a minor issue in the vertebrae. But he still used to be the normal child who crawls, walks and makes his parents happy.



Sarath at the age of 11 months

The first symptoms of illness surfaced when he caught fever in the 11<sup>th</sup> month. He was then taken to Dr. Karra Ramesh Reddy, a paediatrician who told that "This child appears to be abnormal, Please do consult a neurologist". Sarath was then taken to Dr. Madhava Reddy, a renowned neurologist. We were visiting the doctor every three months for a regular health checkup. Dr. Madhava Reddy who works in Osmania Hospital suggested some other doctors. Then we met an orthopaedic doctor Dr. Sai Reddy, who at times treated Sarath.

Sarath Chandra was diagnosed with Inguinal Hernia at the age of 18 months. Through Dr. Madhava Reddy, we were able to approach Dr. Narasimha Reddy, a civil surgeon and a specialist in child care. Within a gap of three months they performed the surgery for Hernia on both sides successfully.

Sarath Chandra's AKSHARABHYASAM [initiation to studies] ceremony was performed in the famous Basara Saraswati temple. He joined nursery in TINY TOTS SCHOOL in Barkatpura. Sarath was shy as a child. He overcame shyness as he grew up. We were afraid to take him to interviews while seeking admission in the renowned schools, as Sarath used to be silent and did not speak much. We joined him in

nursery. I had to accompany Sarath to school. Though the school is away from home he used to go by walk.

Two months after joining, his nursery teacher told me "I was mistaken about your son. Since he appeared to be very calm and silent unlike the children of his age, I thought he must be a dull student. But to my surprise, he answered each and every question about things I taught for two months in the classroom. He has a very good grasping power".

We later joined him in ST. JOSEPH'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL, King Koti, Hyderabad in the year 2000. We felt that, this was one of the best decisions we have made for our kid. As the P1, P2 classes are for half a day, it was also a great source of relaxation to Sarath. The only thing he was shy about was dancing to the rhymes, though he was fond of dancing.

# THE FIRST GIFT

There was an unforgettable moment about Sarath. Sarath had been garlanded for being "Best Boy" in the class P-II. He came home wearing the garland which made me happy too.

Ms. Agnes Reeves, a teacher, encouraged him in class. With such encouragement, he won the third prize for proficiency in the class P-II. Finally, he received a prize for the first time on stage on the eve of Annual day celebrations held at Lalitha Kala Toranam in Public gardens.



Sarath receiving first proficiency prize(P-II)

The popular singer Krishna Chaitanya, who was in 9<sup>th</sup> class then, also sang 4 songs on that day. Apart from the above Sarath Chandra also won a prize in Interschool Spot Painting Competition conducted by St. Pauls, in the same year.



Sarath receiving Prize in inter-school spot Painting competition

The pleasant journey took tragic turn when we came to know that the Neurologist, Dr. Madhava Reddy had passed away. It was a great blow to our hopes, since we expected that he would improve the health condition of our child.

In 2001, we had taken Sarath to a paediatrician Dr. Sri Laxmi in the railway hospital at Lalaguda. She referred us to Gene Tech in Somajiguda. Dr. Anuradha

Udumudi, Medical Geneticist, had taken counselling sessions for both of us about our son. She asked many questions about the medical history of our family. She enquired about whether any one from paternal or maternal side (up to 4 generations) had such a history of health, for which the answer was a big NO. We enquired from the doctor whether the child's illness was due to the reason that both parents and child had the same blood group "O+ve". The doctor ruled out such a possibility. She finally noted that our son was suffering from Mucopolysaccharidosis (morquio).

For the sake of treatment we used to visit each and every doctor we came to know about, for any possible cure. In the course of time we met a paediatrician in Vijayawada. The paediatrician referred us to NIMS, hospital, Hyderabad. The doctor at Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences [NIMS], after going through the entire case history confirmed that our son was suffering from Morquio syndrome.

In his words "This is a rare genetic problem which happens to one in 10 lakh people. The boy appears to be bright and sharp. But the truth is that, people with this disease have a short life span. They may live only up to 14 - 25 years. I sincerely suggest you people not to keep on visiting more and more doctors, as the child

begins to convince himself that he is a patient. It's better to take him to a hospital as if he is a normal fever patient. There is no cure found for this genetic disorder till date. The health keeps on deteriorating as the boy grows in age. He will face major health conditions in the later age. I also cannot tell you how much his body will co-operate for surgery".

We were shaken to the core to hear this truth from the doctor, as he confirmed the real condition of my boy's state.

We did not yet give up our hope. As we chased every best solution possible to help him recover, we even tried Ayurveda. My husband took Sarath to his friend Kotipalli Srinivas's House in Vijayawada. Both of them stayed in Vijayawada for a month. Sarath was in 3<sup>rd</sup> standard by then. As he used to be a disciplined student, who never failed to attend the class on any day, it was a stressful task for us to convince him to take leave from the school for a period of one month even though the school administration permitted him to go for treatment. He insisted that he have his books with him to continue his studies even at Vijayawada. Finally the treatment began in Vijawayada. Dhara and body massage treatments were given to him. Meanwhile, I used to go to school weekly once to make copies of notes from his

classmates and travelled to Vijayawada, so that Sarath never misses a subject. All our efforts once again ended in failure, as there were no signs of recovery through medication.

Coming back to the classes, Sarath resumed his studies at St. Josephs Public School (ICSE) in King Koti. Sarath used to take rest for a while after coming from school, after which he went out to play with kids in the Railway Colony. He used to have so many friends to play with in Railway Colony.



Sarath in Fancy Dress competition as 'Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru'

St. Josephs Public School had 10 sections for each class. They used to select 20-25 members for group dance on the eve of annual day celebrations. Sarath had a deep desire to dance on stage. Finally, after requesting his 2<sup>nd</sup> class teacher Ms. Seetha Laxmi, Sarath was given a chance to dance on stage on the Annual Day. He danced for the song CHANDU KI CHACHA together with a group partnered by Shreya.

We also had competitions arranged in our colony on the occasions of Independence Day, Republic day and Children's Day. Sarath managed to win the first prize in the running competition at that age.

For further diagnosis we visited CENTRE FOR DNA FINGERPRINTING AND DIAGNOSTICS [CDFD], Hyderabad. It was finally confirmed that our boy had been diagnosed with MPS IV B. Dr. Anuradha at the Gene Tech took copies of medical reports of our kid to be taken to Australia for a doctor's meet where she tried to find out a possible solution. The doctors in Australia too concluded that it was an incurable disease.

He started to use spectacles [glasses] from the 3rd class onwards. Dr. Haridas, Eye surgeon used to attend on him regularly. From then onwards, we used to change his glasses whenever there was change in his sight.

I used to have a job from Sarath's 3<sup>rd</sup> to his 8<sup>th</sup> standard. During these times, we used to put Sarath in a crèche care for 1 to 2 hours, until I returned home. Ms. Sridevi looked after him with care at the crèche. Later I had to quit my job to take complete responsibility of my sep.

Happy Birthday
arath Chandr

of my son.

Sarath with
Paternal
Grand Parents



Sarath with

Maternal

Grand Parents

Sarath used to spend his summer holidays in Draksharamam in the home of his grandparents' from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> standard. It was a great time for their grandparents to spend with their beloved grandson. He used to play cricket with his cousins.

Sarath also loved to play Holi in the colony with his friends Sreekar, Magi and Pavan. The parents in the colony used to fill coloured water in buckets in front of their respective houses to let the children play Holi. Ms. Pranati used to tie him Rakhi.

Those days, the morning autos in the colony were completely filled with children of St.Joseph's School. As all the parents belong to South Central Railway, the children had to move out with their parents in case of transfers. The only one left with Sarath was Sudheendra. Sarath always used to call Sudheendra as Anna, as he was two years senior to Sarath at St. Joseph's Public School. Even the parents of Sudheendra, Sri Sharma and Smt. Lalitha treated Sarath as their own child. They used to drop him to school in case of bundhs and when he missed autos.

Not many people may know, but Sarath has a wonderful sense of humour. He never said 'no' to any activity and tried his best to get it done in his own way. That spirit inspired not just me but everyone who were lucky enough to be around him.

- Sudheendra

# THE BEST STUDENT

Sarath used to get 3<sup>rd</sup> rank until 3<sup>rd</sup> class. From 4<sup>th</sup> standard onwards he stood 1<sup>st</sup> rank in his section and in top 3 ranks among all the 10 sections of the class. The school used to give proficiency award to students based on the performance in all exams viz. 1<sup>st</sup> unit, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> unit, quarterly, half yearly examinations excepting Annual examinations. Sarath was awarded the proficiency prize every year on the eve of Annual day. The others used to think that we stressed him a lot to score high marks. On the contrary, Sarath himself showed great interest in studies. He had the habit of

reading the text book on the day of the lesson. He was revising during the examinations. This was the true reason behind him winning proficiency prizes and mementos at school. It was a great boost to my child as he forgot all his hardships because of these achievements. Thus, every annual day had become a special one for him.

Every year his grandparents used to gift him when Sarath won the proficiency prizes. Sarath too loved the gifts from them.

As a child Sarath loved riding bicycle in the colony. As he grew in age, he often caught fever when he rode bicycle due to the strain.



# THE BEGINNING OF DEFORMITY

The signs of deformity started showing in Sarath from the age of 10 onwards. He was unable to fold his fingers and had a bent spine; his short neck and flat foot started troubling him more. We consulted an Ortho Engineer to find some solution to his problems. After taking the measurements, they manufactured a shoe which balanced the difference in length between both legs. He was advised to use a hip belt, when he went to bed. Later he started to complain about sleeplessness because of the belt. He used to wake up in the middle of the night and make us remove the belt. He used the shoes for two years.



Sarath receiving Proficiency prize in 5th Class
[a little deformity]

The problems with walking started during 5<sup>th</sup> class. By the time he reached 7<sup>th</sup> he started to feel exhausted due to asphyxiation. He was accompanied by an ayah who carried his bag to the class room. The school management was so generous that they shifted the class from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to 1<sup>st</sup>floor for the convenience of our child on our request.

On the same issue we met a Cardiologist Dr. Surya Prakash in Care Hospital referred to through Railway Hospital, who after examining Sarath said "Right now I don't see any cardiac related issues. But, as the body growth is hindered, he might face complications later due to contraction of muscles".

Despite problems, Sarath continued to be the best student of his class. He remembered his time table at one glance. Sometimes, he even used to recall the class as per time table. There was one instance when he confused Physics exam for Biology and he studied for the physics exam. To his surprise, he saw the biology question paper. Despite that, Sarath managed to get 88 marks in Biology. His Biology teacher felt sorry for him as her best student could only get a score of 88 though he could have got 98 marks. Sarath was able to score high through all the lessons learnt from class room. Then onwards he started to be alert about the time table and routine.

Sarath had chosen Hindi as the second language and most of his classmates in this subject were Muslims and North Indians. He made a great friend of Adbul Rehman in the class from P1 to 7<sup>th</sup> class.

Sarath has a very enduring character; his strong will power and determination made him excel in studies and face the challenges of life. He never felt embarrassed because of his physical short comings and continued to be one among the able bodied students. He is an inseparable part of my growing up and can never be forgotten. He used to wish me on my birthday.

- Abdul Rehman Wasif

Even though Sarath used to get 100 marks in mathematics, he used to be a little nervous about maths. The teacher used to encourage him by giving geometry boxes as gifts. He even won a Bronze Medal in Memory competition in Hindi in which he participated with the encouragement of his eighth class Hindi teacher.

Sarath had separate subjects English Literature and English Language from 8<sup>th</sup> standard as it was ICSE. The teacher who taught him English literature was Ms. Parvathi, to whom Sarath was always thankful for igniting his interest in English literature. In addition, Sarath took computers as an optional subject.

He had a very good hand writing. He used to present his answers flawlessly and used to score maximum marks in English.

Parvati, 9th & 10Th Literature Teacher, St. Joseph's Public School. He was thankful to all the teachers who taught him and treated him as he was their son. He used to recall the names of every teacher. He used to tell them how much they helped him in the class room.

Ms. Aruna in P-I, Ms. Agnes in P-II, Ms. Priscilla in 1<sup>st</sup> class, Ms. Seetha Laxmi in 2<sup>nd</sup> class, Ms. Glory in 3<sup>rd</sup> class, Ms. Maheswari in 4<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Kumud in 5<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Martha in 6<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Lalitha in 7<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Yojana in 8<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Alice in 9<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Indramani Rao in 10<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Annapurna in 11<sup>th</sup> class, Ms. Deepa in 12th class were his class teachers and Ms. Priscilla, Ms. Yashodhara, Ms. Meera and Ms. Vidya were his in-charges from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> classes.

Ms. Pushpa Latha, Ms. Susobha, Ms. Srilakshmi, Ms. Remola, Ms. Aparna, Ms. Shyamala, Ms. Nirupama, Ms. Prashanti, Ms. Rama, Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Annapurna etc., gave a great support and encouraged my son.

He never used to depend on any one for help but his classmates were so good they used to help him voluntarily. Sarath used to accept every challenge with a smile.

> - Yeshodhara Maths Teacher & Incharge for V & VI class

At first when I saw him I was surprised that he didn't stand to wish the teacher, then the other students told me about him. I felt sorry for what I had felt. Later I was happy that he was a first rank holder. He was kind and soft spoken and never hurt anyone.

- Kumud, 5th class class Teacher

"I recall Sarath as a disciplined and a studious boy. He was always competitive and on top of his studies. What appealed to me are his positive attitude and the determination to overcome any constraints that he had".

> - Meera Shivanarayan Incharge for VII & VIII Class (1983-2011)

It was a pleasure to have Sarath in my class. I was his 8th grade class teacher. He was very friendly and was a role model to all his peers Very sweet child, adorable kid.

- Yojana 8th class class Teacher Sarath was taken to all the picnics during his school days by his school management. It was a memorable time for him.

During his 8<sup>th</sup> class in the year 2012, we took our son to a Cardiac Surgeon Dr. BV Rama Rao, who was our relative. He was impressed by the intelligence of our son. He was the first one who said, "As the science is also developing many folds, let us not give up hope, as there may be a possible solution that will be found out soon". He suggested us to undergo tests in Lucid Diagnosis Centre for Growth Hormones, 2D echo, Thyroid, X ray skull and CT Scan of the brain.

On reaching home after CT scan, Sarath got into fits (seizures). I took him immediately to Railway Clinic in Kacheguda and then to Lallaguda Railway Hospital. He was kept under observation and then discharged. From the height he possessed, Sarath's height fell from 3' 7" inches to 3' 3" inches due to compression of body structure. His weight used to vary between 25 to 30 kg. He was then referred to an endocrinologist Dr. Bipin K Seth. He found out that there was no growth hormone related problem and advised us to consult a neurologist. Sarath was advised to use 2 - puffs of inhaler for weariness by Dr. Rama Rao.

St. Joseph's school had a building with a lift from 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> standard. Sarath was permitted by the school management to be dropped in auto up to the lift.

During the teacher-parent meetings, Sarath was well praised by all the teachers for his behaviour, excellence and commitment to academics.

Sarath was taken to a Neurologist Dr. B. Chandra Sekhar Reddy, who had the Brain, Spine and Nerves clinic in Srinagar Colony. After observing the EEG test report, Sarath has been advised to start taking Levipil Tablets for arresting seizures.

Sarath's problems reached a high level when he was in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard. His body started to lose control on motoring actions. He started to take help of his hands on his knees to support his walking. Ms. Karuna, Mr. Sai Vinay, Mr. Varun, Mr. Siddesh who had become his good friends tried to support him to the best. His problems reached a point where he was unable to take the books from the bag. His classmates used to help him take the books out for each class.

We were referred to Dr. Siva Reddy a neuro surgeon in Care Hospitals by Dr. Chandra Sekhar Reddy. Dr. Siva Reddy after conducting MRI of the brain and

MRI of cervical spine found that Sarath was suffering from Hydrocephalus, CV Junction abnormality and he needed to undergo surgery. Sarath was studying 10<sup>th</sup> class by then. He was reluctant for surgery, stating that he could not stop to attend 10<sup>th</sup> class exams at that time.



Sarath receiving proficiency prize in 10th class [increased deformity]

Despite all these issues Sarath managed to write his own records. The school administration allotted a special room and an invigilator for Sarath to write his exams. He was also given grace time for completing his exam as his motoring skills are getting down and writing had become slow. He took help only in case of geometrical drawings. Other than that, he wrote his exams by himself.

On the first day of his final exams the principal of the school, Sri UG Reddy along with Sri Lurthu Reddy and the priest used to pray for all the students at the meeting hall and for Sarath they used come to his room and pray for him. The teachers and students used to come to wish him "All the best" for the exams. The teachers who came for the invigilation also did the same.

After Sarath had written his 10<sup>th</sup> class examinations he was taken to the Neruo surgeon Dr. Siva Naga Prasad of Railway hospital. After seeing the reports, he suggested us to take a second opinion about the surgery as it was a critical surgery. We met Dr. B.V. Rama Rao for second opinion and he referred to Dr. RTS Naik, who is an experienced neurosurgeon at Apollo Hospitals. Dr. Naik too insisted on surgery for Hydrocephaly, CV junction repair, which in case of failure would lead to failure of path from brain to spinal cords.

The period for surgery would be 6 hours. It took a while for acquiring permission for the operation from the Railway Hospital.

By then results for X standard came out. Sarath was able to score 87 percent in ICSE. He felt so bad for not being able to achieve 90 percent, since students with above 90 percentage of marks would get the gold medal. He also prevented us from distributing sweets in the colony.

He never complained and worked doubly hard than any of his classmates.

He changed the lives of not only his teachers but also his classmates. Knowing the struggles he faced would forever change their perspective about what it means to be empathetic Human Being.

- Alice Kurian, 9th Class Class Teacher,

A wonderful student always willing to listen and respond promptly! Never bothered about his drawbacks, wanted to be treated equally like any other student!

> - Puspa Latha 9th & 10th Biology Teacher

I remember one incident of his involvement in listening. One day I was teaching a story in the class. He was so involved in the story and started weeping automatically.

- Sushobha 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Hindi teacher,

His interest to learn always boosted my spirit to teach. He used to always have a smiling face. He will always be remembered.

- Indramani Rao 10<sup>th</sup> Class Class Teacher

Sarath was admitted into the Apollo at the end of May 2012. Once again he underwent all the presurgery medical tests. Dr. Naik and his team belonging to Endocrinology, Cardiology, Anaesthesiology, and pulmonology had spoken to us regarding the results. All of them concluded that Sarath had issues with respiratory system and so, even though the surgery would be successful, we could not tell you about how his body would cope with post-surgery ailments. It was a high-risk situation. Finally, after a long chain of discussions, we had to withdraw from the idea of surgery. Instead, he

was given short course of steroids (IVMP) and discharged from the hospital. We started to meet Dr. RTS Naik, neurologist and Dr. Mallikarjuna Rao, pulmonologist, once in a month, and then later visited once every three months.

As time passed urine and motion control problems aggravated. Walking had become a real problem now. As we asked for advice from Dr. Naik, he advised us to send Sarath to college, as he was keen on studies. He suggested us to use diapers and also to accompany him to school.

## ISC 11th & 12th STANDARD DAYS

We joined him in the same school. There were MPC, MEC, AEC groups available for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standards for ISC students. As we knew Sarath's nervousness with mathematics, we opted AEC for him. I had spoken to his in-charge madam Ms. Vidya about the medical treatments and status, so that they would be handling him with better understanding. They arranged an attender named Mr. Paramesh to help Sarath. A classroom close to the lift was allotted to Sarath. The auto driver Mr. Siraj used to take him until the lift and Paramesh used to accompany him up to the class room.

Sarath had an ambition of becoming an Indian Civil Servant (IAS). He used to write the same when asked during the exams. Once the Principal Chief Electrical Engineer of South Central Railway, Sri Jagaddish Kalia, who came to know about Sarath asked his father to bring our child.

He asked Sarath "why do you want to become an IAS officer?".

The answer from Sarath was simple and clear.

"I want to serve the people and develop my nation".

"Is our country not a developed one?"

"India is still an underdeveloped country. We need to develop more".

This impressed him so much that he gifted him a big chocolate box.

Later Sarath's hopes had come to a halt on coming to know about a mandatory civils examination rule that "Four limbs need to work in order to attend the exam".

Sarath used to be very strict in attending school. No matter what the health condition might be, he never bunked classes. He used to tell me, "When I become a collector, I would pass a new rule, to award a gold medal to children with 99 percent of attendance.

There was one such instance in which Sarath went to school in spite of ill health. Sarath suffered from high fever and was asked to take rest for some days. After a day, he went to the class stating that it would double the work if he missed the classes. But later the fever grew worse and he was admitted to the hospital. It took 5 days for him to be discharged from hospital. From then onwards, he started to listen to my advice to take rest whenever he fell ill.

Even though fever was not so frequent, it was during winters when his immunity levels troubled him much, Dr. Lydia Samson, Sr. MS & Dr. Prasad, Sr.MS in Railway Hospital used to attend on him whenever he fell ill with fever. Often, we used to visit Dr. Mallikarjuna Rao in Apollo whenever he was not well since he knew about Sarath's health condition.

Even though Sudheendra's family shifted from the colony after Sudheendra completed his 10<sup>th</sup> class, fortunately Sarath found new friends Swaroop and Chaitanya in the opposite quarters in the colony, who joined St. Joseph's. They were helpful to him.

Our family settled in the same area. We shifted our Railway Quarter from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to 1<sup>st</sup> floor and then to an individual quarter for the sake of Sarath. We decided

not to change place as it was very near to his school and hospital.

Another problem Sarath used to encounter since childhood was body pains. We were regularly applying ointment. By the time he reached 12<sup>th</sup> standard in ISC the problem with pains aggravated.

Until the 10<sup>th</sup> standard I helped him in bathing, eating and dressing. Later the same tasks were shared by my husband. His interest in playing outdoor games was hindered by his health condition from 9<sup>th</sup> standard onwards. Diapers were mandatory for him while going outside home. The diapers were immediately removed whenever he came back home. We had to accompany him whenever he went to toilet.

On doctor's advice to ease the muscles, we opted for physiotherapy. Again, carrying him to a physiotherapist had become a challenging task. With the help of a railway colleague named Mr. Masjeed Khan, we arranged a physiotherapist named Mr. Tarachand, who was experienced in the field since last 30 years. He used to visit our house to do physiotherapy daily in evenings. After taking advice from pulmonologist for breathing we started to use Incentive spirometer.

Sarath used to take rest for 2 hours after coming from the college. Then he took snacks and milk. This was followed by physiotherapy sessions. He then read books for two hours. Then he used to watch TV. Sarath co-operated a lot with the physiotherapist and so the physiotherapy sessions went on very well. Out of respect for Mr. Tarachand he started to use walker (stand type) but all those attempts went in vain, as his body didn't co-operate.

From the 12<sup>th</sup> standard onwards, he was unable to take food comfortably. As per the suggestions of Dr. Naik we started to give him food in short intervals in small quantities so that he could easily consume. He used to have oats and milk for breakfast as it could be swallowed easily. It was only on Sundays he had pesarattu or puri for breakfast. He even drank milk (boost) in slow intervals. Later he suffered from constipation as there was no movement of body muscles, to which we were suggested to use cremaffin during nights.

The subjects in his AEC group in ISC were Literature, Accounts, Economics, Commerce, Business Studies. There were external exams in 12<sup>th</sup> standard only. He had new friends like Bharath, Aradhana, Ekroop Singh in his 12<sup>th</sup> standard. Bharath and others used to help him in taking the books from bag. There was also another friend called Ekroop, who was head boy of the

school. He used to kneel down in front of Sarath to reach to his height while talking to him. My son was so blessed to have such friends. Once, Ekroop arranged the birthday of Sarath in a most surprising manner. Even the teachers and in-charge madam were brought to his birthday cake cutting function in the class room.

He always had a charm that made me keep talking to him. He made all his efforts to finish his notes and homework before all of us. He had answers for the questions and was indeed a very bubbly kid. I know, his name just brings smile on everyone's face.

- Aradhana, AEC (ISC)

Sharath was a very dedicated & a keen learner. He always was so eager to learn new things.

- Bharath, AEC (ISC)

Sarath's 11<sup>th</sup> standard percentage in ISC was better but his grade further declined in 12<sup>th</sup> standard. As the economics and accounts were hard subjects to him and with his slow writing because of his poor health conditions, he could not note down the taught subjects in class, which remained a key for his success. This led to decline in performance in exams.

He didn't opt for scribe even at the time of exams. He was allotted a separate invigilator for him. In addition, he was granted 15 minutes extra time for every one hour. The entire school was waiting for him to return his answer sheets.

I used to wait outside the hall, each and every day for his exams. They were generous towards us. The Headmistress Ms. Kalyani said that "we are never wasting our time. Indeed we waste a lot of time for simple things. Let us feel happy by helping your son as much as we can".

I remember one incident in his 12th class when group photo for the outgoing students was supposed to be taken. Everyone wanted Sarath to be a part of it. In fact no body was ready for the photo without him when our attender Parmeshwar brought him on a two wheeler from his class to the ground instead of thinking negatively about his condition he was so happy as if he was flying in the air. I can't forget his happiness on the day on his face.

- Prasanthi, 11th & 12th Economics Teacher

His face was so expressive one look at him and I would know he has understood what is being taught. Many being normal wouldn't have achieved what he achieved through sheer determination. Hats off to such a student. He always made us proud.

- Deepa, 12th Class Class Teacher

The annual day in the 12<sup>th</sup> standard was a very special one for Sarath. He was awarded proficiency special prize together with "BEST AMONG THE BEST OUTSTANDING AND OUTGOING STUDENT" award. They lifted Sarath on to the dais to make him sit in a chair. He was given a standing ovation. All the family members too attended the function. That was a memorable moment for Sarath. Our family was in tears on watching him receive the prize with applause.



## A PASSIONATE KID

Sarath had a great habit of maintaining his books in a beautiful and organized manner. All the books he read appeared to be like new ones. He didn't like the idea of folding the pages, which he wanted to remember. Instead, he used to memorize page numbers. He gave a special place for old books in his racks and never allowed those books to be cleared by us. After a long effort, I convinced him finally to remove the books up to 7th class when he was in ISC.

Sarath also used to take care of all the toys he played with. He used to place them in a carton box with my help. As he grew older, I once gave all of Sarath's toys to the neighbours. It was so painful seeing them

broken in no time because Sarath had preserved them for years. But the teddy bear gifted by Kumar uncle for his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday is still with us.

Sarath had a great sense of humour. He speaks so well in Godavari dialect with witty answers. Once during his stay in his paternal grandfather's house in Pedapatnam Lanka, one of our relatives asked him "You don't look like your mom or dad", Sarath replied immediately "If you join the faces of mom and dad, you can see me".

Another instance was when we were all travelling in a vehicle for a marriage. I said, "He was born on Shravana Sukravaaram(Friday), I might have named him as Lakshmi if he was a girl. Sarath replied in no time "Dear mom, I am Kubera now".

Sarath used to imitate the voices of the others. He used to imitate the voices of Sri YS Rajasekhar Reddy, Sri Jagan Mohan Reddy, and Sri K Chandra Sekhar Rao.

## THE COLLEGE TRIALS

St. Joseph's school is having academics up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard i.e. ISC only. Hence after ISC i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> standard, Sarath expressed his desire to pursue his graduation in English Literature at the English and Foreign Language University (EFLU). When we contacted his English teacher Ms. Ramela for information, she said that the EFLU Entrance exam was held just a day before. She was expecting that Sarath would opt for CA, and so didn't inform us.

It was a very challenging period for us. Sarath didn't agree with his father to wait for a year, which would

mean losing an academic year of studies. He didn't agree to the idea of distance education. On seeing his determination, we decided to search a better college for him. We searched for more than 25 Government and Private colleges nearby. To our surprise all the colleges were with B.Sc. and B.Com. degrees. It is then we came to know that only two colleges near us were offering English Literature at Bachelor Degree level. They were Nizam College and St. Joseph's Degree College in Abids area. Hence, we decided to admit Sarath in Nizam College.

In the meantime, Sarath was declared with 90% disability by the Team of doctors who examined him and issued a disability certificate.

When we went to Nizam college for verification, the Asst. Prof. in English Dr. C. Sarada, came to Sarath and told us "My daughter is a co-student of your son. He was a bright student ". As I already heard some of her lectures, I was happy that my son was being admitted in a college with such kind of professors.

## THE NIZAM COLLEGE STUDENT

Sarath got seat in Nizam College. There were 8 combinations for BA in Nizam College. There were two combinations with English Literature: Psychology, English Literature, Philosophy(PEP), Psychology, English Literature, Marketing (PEM) in BA. Sarath opted for BA (PEP).

After visiting the classrooms, we found that English Literature was the only one on the ground floor. Philosophy class room was on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Centenary building. The Centenary building was away from the English Department. The psychology class was on the

2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Social Science Block near the second gate of the college. The Hindi Department was above the Principal's office in the Administrative building, which was also away from the English department. Nizam college had no lift facility for any building. The principal in those days was Prof. T. L N Swamy, and Vice Principal was Prof. G. Veerabhadram. When we met the Principal to speak about the classrooms and the inability of my son to climb the steps of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, he advised us to rethink once again about joining our son in college.

We took Sarath to St. Joseph's Degree College. English Literature was available in the Mass communication combination. He might have to go outside for that subject.

For our surprise his ISC, St. Joseph's friends Ekroop & his twin sister Arshar and Bharath had joined BBM course in the same college. They all requested him to join in their course, stating that he would have no discomfort for mobility through the college because of wheel chair facility and lift facility being available. But Sarath did not like the BBM course.

Finally, Sarath came back to join Nizam College and started to attend classes. I met all the HOD's to explain the situation of my son. I met the Psychology HOD, Dr. Venu Mohan Reddy, Philosophy HOD, Dr. Vamseedhar & Hindi Department HOD, Dr. Avinash Jaiswal and asked for the possibility of changing the classroom to the ground floor. Since the classrooms allotted to these departments were fixed for years, they told me that changing to the ground floor was not possible but they will extend every possible facility to Sarath Chandra in every aspect and all exams would be conducted on the ground floor for him.

Then I met English Department HOD, Professor Murali Krishna. The English Language classes would be conducted for B Section in ground floor. But Sarath was in C Section for which classes were being conducted in the main block. On our request he permitted Sarath to attend section B.

The auto driver who used to accompany him told us that he would help him once again. After helping for 10 days, the auto driver informed that he would not be able to drop Sarath to the college.

This was a new problem, which we didn't foresee. We had to find out a new auto driver to drop our son to the college and bring him back home. A boy, Mr. Zaheer, who was working in the nearby nursery, was assigned the task of lifting Sarath to the Philosophy class room.

The college also consisted of 30 percent of foreign students. Sarath met his new South African friend called Mathew. He is a super senior of Sarath who was doing BA (PSP) course. He used to meet Sarath and greet him in the philosophy class room. He was so amazed by Sarath's grasping power.

He once found Sarath sitting alone in the class room and asked Sarath "why didn't you go to the next class". After coming to know about Sarath's health condition, he carried him to the next class in the psychology building with the help of another friend Adithya. Then I got hope that if anyone can carry Sarath to the Psychology classes, he could attend the class too.

I met a student called Sai Sree studying BA (PSM) final year. We both met the Marketing Department HOD, Ms. Laxmi to find a solution to our son's mobility problems. After listening to the issue, she arranged an attender called Srinu to accompany my son to the psychology class. From the next day onwards Sarath started attending classes regularly.

I had to step in now to help my son more. After each and every class I used to bring an auto to carry him from one block to the other. The Nursery boy Mr. Zaheer had also used to accompany me up to the class room at Centenary Block. There we were leaving the class after placing all the books in front of Sarath. I did the same for the psychology classes too. Here, I took the help of the attender Mr. Srinu.

I used to recall the story of competition between Vinayaka and Kumara swamy as Sarath was the first to come to the classes despite all the hardships he had to go through.

The class routine used to be English Language, Philosophy, English Literature and Psychology. Every day he had to change 4 autos to attend all the classes. The same scenario continued for all the three years of degree.

We brought two wheel chairs, one for home and the other for use in college. But it was only useful for English Classes because there was no ramp with lift facility available in the other blocks. Sarath was reluctant to use wheel chair at home and we were lifting him to take him from one room to the other.

Sarath was very fluent in English, Telugu and Hindi languages. By the time he reached his graduation his voice had reached a low level, probably due to compression in vocal chords. Only people standing close

to him could listen to his voice. Once his teacher in 1st semester of graduation Asst. Prof. Dr. Madhavi had given a task for class to speak about each and every friend. As his voice was not at all audible, she asked him to write. Then she read his essay aloud. Sarath's expression about his friends was wonderful. Everyone in the class came to him to congratulate and drenched him with praises.

His English writing was so good that there were no spelling & grammar mistakes. Whenever he was confused about the spellings and meanings, he used to check his mobile dictionary for the right way to spell it. He also stated that we should know the exact meaning of the word though we understand the meaning of the sentence.

Sarath could not answer many questions asked by his teacher as his voice did not reach his teacher due to his low voice. Dr. Naik suggested us to consult a speech therapist for improvement. The speech therapist suggested some neck exercises for him. But due to severe pain and immobility of the neck part, he was unable to continue the exercises. Then the speech therapist suggested a new alternative called amplifier. We have taken a good quality amplifier for the same purpose. But Sarath refused to use it, as it made more noise in the class room which was disturbance in class mood.

The teaching staff during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of graduation were Dr. Madhavi and Dr. Nageswar Rao for English Literature, Mr. Srikanth for philosophy, Ms. Lavanya and Dr. Venu Mohan Reddy for Psychology, Dr. Parameswari for English Language. Ms. Lavanya used to encourage him by making all the students in the class to applaud whenever he answered the questions.

Sarath had a great habit of not using study materials. He used to read only reference books suggested by teachers. He started to read everything he was given. He became topper of PEP class in the 1st Semester. Thus he regained his topper position again. Everyone in the college including Principal, teachers, friends appreciated him for his great accomplishment.

Till the age of 10, he used to celebrate his birthday with all the friends in the colony and family members for cake cutting. In those days there were 30-40 children in the colony and everyone attended his birthday. Sarath used to call his elders by calling them as akka, anna, Nadeem anna, Sameer akka, Seema akka, Divya akka, Vaseem Anna, Chandu anna, Pawan anna, Tammu Anna, Parvathi akka, Sowmya akka, Abhilash anna and so on. From the 11<sup>th</sup> year onwards, it was reduced to family members.

While in Nizam College, he told me "If I was normal like everyone else, I too could have gone out with all the other friends and enjoyed well". Then onwards, I started to take him and 10 of his friends for lunch on his birthdays to a nearby hotel. Of course, Sushanth used to bring cake as a surprise. I made a new habit of taking all his friends to lunch in a hotel at the end of semester exams. Of course, every child felt relaxed after the examinations.



Sarath's birthday celebrations with Nizam College Friends

#### **HANDWRITING**

Sarath's handwriting used to be cursive and beautiful. As the grip in his hands started to weaken from the 11th standard onwards, the beauty in his hand writing too started to decline. It started showing its impact on his second semester UG examination marks. We were very much surprised to see our boy who couldn't even hold a glass, able to manage writing the entire exams by himself to the surprise of doctors who said that people with this kind of problem seize to write from the 7th class onwards. I think it is his will power which made him the strong human being that he was.

#### SARATH'S HANDWRITING IN SCHOOL

	Pollulion is the introduction of substances
	or energy into the environment resulting is deleterious
	Musto of such as nature as to endanger human health
	horn living recourses and ensystems and inpair or
	Thorm living recourses and evolutions and impair or inferre with amerities and other legitimate uses of the
	envisanmenti
	AIR POLLUTION
	/ NR I OLL GIO
	Gasious, liquid or solid substances which
	Iwhen present is sufficient concentration for a sufficient
,	time and under writing conditions land to unorythe time
	human comfort, health or welfare and cause
-	environmental damage Air pollution causes aid
	rain, organo depletion, photocremical smag and other
-	sub phenominan
_	PARTICULATE MATTER
	Mionte airborne liquid orsolid particles
	Towner dut lump mix come muche that causes
	Esubas dust, jums, mist, smog, smoke that cause airs polluliso. Particulate matter may vary greatly is
	colour, density, size, shape and electrical charge from
	place to place and from time to time.
	pine a pine

## **SARATH'S HANDWRITING IN GRADUATION**

Page
Gloab
complete my degree suveryully and then I want to pursue a b part graduate degree in
then I want to purous
as de port graduate degrees in
Strature along with taking appropriate coaching in order to appear for air Gervius Examinations
appropriate coaching up order
to appear for wil Gervies
Examinations
By bearing an IAS
officer of the pends and Dower
a positive change in the lives
of the needy and power
by educting them and
by educting them and making recessary changes in
order and law of the government
and making now laws which
can alve horas dow their
futures and thus helping
futures and thus helping in country's prograss
I will swelly make
a are effort which I
feel would be as good
contribution to my society
a an effort which I feel would be as good fortification to my society and country

There was also another reason behind his decision to write by himself. Even though, there was a facility to use SCRIBE during exams, his voice was low and continuous speaking created asphyxiation (breathlessness). The handwriting issue started to reduce his marks from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester onwards. Though he passed in distinction, Sarath felt upset with the marks he got. He used to send the papers for revaluation. But that didn't fetch the desired marks often.

There is an auditorium next to the philosophy class in the centenary block. Sometimes, many activities and cultural programmes were held in that auditorium. Sarath used to attend those programmes in the leisure period.

There were no proficiency prizes like in Joseph's school. But there were many competitions held before the annual day. Sports, Rangoli, Bathukamma and essay writing competitions were held. The Hindi department HOD, Dr. Avinash Jaiswal used to encourage him a lot to participate in Hindi Essay writing. Sarath used to win prizes in essay writing competitions both in English & Hindi. The principal used to get down the dais to reach Sarath who was sitting in the wheel chair to hand over the prizes won by him with standing ovation. There was also a thunderous applause for 5 minutes whenever Sarath used to win a prize.



Sarath receiving prize from Prof. T.L.N. Swamy, Principal, Nizam College,

As philosophy and psychology were new to him, he showed more interest in those subjects. The subjects comprised of Western philosophy in the first year, Indian philosophy in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Ethics and Logic in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. He used to refer to Frank Thilly's "History of philosophy (western), A clinical survey of Indian Philosophy by Chandradhar Sharma, "A Manual of Ethics" by Jadunath Sinha and also read books published by the Telugu Academy. He used to explain with analysis each and every question posed to him. In psychology "General Psychology" by S.K. Mangal, "An initiative psychology" by Beena, Parameshvaran, Introduction to psychology by Clifford T. Morgan, "Devlopmental Psychology" by Elizabeth B. Hurlock. For Literature he used to have all the text books to refer.

I still remember the lines said by him about suicide:

# "Death should be natural. We should accept all the pains till that day".

Once we took his grandmother, Smt. Anantha Lakshmi to our house when she suffered a paralysis stroke. They went back to village stating that they could not get accustomed to city life. As Sarath's health began to fall, the frequency of his visit to the village reduced.

His paternal grandmother Smt. Anantha Laxmi, passed away at the age of 88, during his 2<sup>nd</sup> year first semester exams. It was just two days before the examinations. He was very distressed by this incident, as he loved them very much. We had to bring my parents to our house to take care of him as we had to attend to the final rites of my mother in law. On the next day I returned. Sarath continued to write his exams. On the day of Hindi exam, Sarath suffered severe asphyxiation. He ignored all my requests to attend the hospital first. We went to hospital immediately after the examination. The pulmonologist then on using Nebulizer for breathing.

After the passing of his paternal grandmother Late Smt. Anantha Lakshmi, we brought his grandfather Sri Basavaiah Naidu (94) to our house. He loved to spend time with Sarath a lot. Though Sarath tried a lot speaking to him, his voice is very low for his grandfather to listen to him. Both of them spent most of the time watching each other. Sri Basavaiah Naidu had a lot of admiration for children. Sarath used to spend a lot of time, with his grandparents during the holidays when he was a kid. His grandfather used to narrate a lot of stories of Indian epics like Mahabharath and Ramayana.

Dr. Naik was always telling our son to take Dr. Stephen Hawking as inspiration. Our boy was so

fascinated and moved by his story. Sarath used to have uneasiness while going to first class after the holidays every time. This was due to the relaxed mood and rest to the body during holidays. Later we came to know that the fact in psychology about "Our body gets accustomed to what we do for 21 days continuously". Remembering this, though we planned to join him in some activity during the summer holidays, we were forced to drop the idea as we felt it would be a strain on him.

During the summer holidays, he used to watch cricket which he loves a lot. He even watched test matches and highlights of previous ones. During the examinations too, he watched live cricket scores through mobile. He has a lot of love for his nation. No one can speak against Indian cricket in front of him. M.S. Dhoni & Virat Kohli are his favourite cricketers.

In summer holidays Sarath used to watch TV more to spend time. As the habit of watching TV grew, we consulted Dr. Naik for a solution. He personally gifted Sarath a sports book and asked him to watch TV less which he obeyed.

Slowly we were able to divert his attention once again towards books in summer holidays. "Wings of Fire" by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, "Autobiography" by Arun Tiwari, "Mini Bible", "Mini Quran" were his new friends.

After recovering from a fever, he once went into fits (Seizures) during the final year 5th semester. There were previous symptoms of fits, which he suffered only, once long ago. Dr. Naik suggested increasing the dosage of Levipil and usage of Brainwise syrup.

Sarath used to remember the birthdays of each and every person he knew. He even remembered the birthdays of his friends, relatives, schoolmates and used to wish them. He was still in touch with Adbul Rehman, Siddesh, Ekroop and Bharath among his childhood friends.

After the completion of degree, Sarath decided to choose the English Literature in post-graduation. He ensured not to miss any kind of notification from EFL University by checking regularly. He, together with some other friends, applied for the EFLU Entrance.

Sarath and his classmates requested Dr. Melissa Helen, Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju to guide them for the EFLU entrance examination. Then the faculty of English department conducted special classes for 10 days to prepare students for the EFLU entrance. It was a stressful time for Sarath. With the hectic schedule of internal exams, the final semester exams and projects, he had very less time to prepare for EFLU Entrance. The exam was conducted in February.

His final year project for Psychology was on "State and Trait Anxiety". The project team consisted of Kondal, Laluprasad and Sarath. Their project was on State and Trait Anxiety among Working women and Nonworking women. Sarath had experience in doing projects in ICSE & ISC.

Sarath's selection and approach were different from others. Usually everyone does a literature project on Shakespeare and other poets. But Sarath selected "ORANGE" movie as his project with the permission of his literature teachers.

He was a big fan of Chinrajeevi. He also watched movies from other members of mega star family, Pawan Kalyan, Ram Charan, Allu arjun etc., He liked Ramcharan a lot. He used to watch movies with us in the theatre. We used to take him to Kacheguda Multiplex where there was a lift facility.

Later, Sarath had given a wonderful presentation in the class room on his project on literature. Dr. Melissa Helen asked all the students to come close and sit near him, so that they could hear his voice. After he concluded his presentation, she made everyone clap and said that the presentation should be like this and all should give such a beautiful presentation.

Sarath Chandra was no ordinary student.

His sense of liveliness, joy and sense of humour is also noteworthy. His punctuality and dedication to studies are highly remarkable and appreciated.

His mother who gave up her career for him and carried him literally many times on her shoulders to say the least is a role model to all mothers.

> - Dr. Melissa Helen Head. Department of English Nizam College

During Sarath's second year, English Language was taught by Mr. Srinivas, EVS by Dr. Bhavani and Indian Philosophy was taught by Dr. Vamseedhar.

The teachers of Sarath during his final year were Asst. Prof. Dr. Mrudula Lakka Raju and Dr. Melissa Helen. In psychology Dr. Venu Mohan Reddy used to take General Psychology, Ms. Swapna for Health Psychology. In Philosophy, Mr. Srikanth used to teach ethics, Dr. Vamseedhar used to take Logic. Everyone used to help him a lot. Even the lab assistant Ms. Sirisha too helped him.

Sarath liked the teachings of Dr. Mrudula a lot. Once she suggested me to take Sarath to the Hyderabad Literature Festival at Hyderabad Public School. We went

and Sarath enjoyed every moment of the Literature Festival. Sarath also loved listening to the speeches of the national and international level authors.

When I think of Sarath, what I recollect is his enthusiastic, bright eyed look in the class. He is an example I still often quote to my other students. His health condition was immaterial to him in his pursuit of knowledge and he had made us forget too.

- Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju Assistant Professor Department of English Nizam College (OU)

Sarath's commitment towards punctuality was very high. He never liked to go late to the class. He used to joke that "Everything becomes Greek and Latin, if I go late to the class".

He was very regular and punctual to class. He was very industrious, sincere and polite.

- Dr. V. Venumohan Reddy Dept. of Psychology Nizam college. Hyderabad He has innocent smiles, pleasant looks, words just like a six months boy. Inside he is quite brilliant; he has high command on subject on par with teachers.

> - Dr. Ch. Vamseedhar, Head, Dept. of Philosophy, Nizam College(A), OU

Initially he was troubled a bit, whenever Zaheer or Srinu was not available to carry him to class. Later his friends started to carry him to the class room. Hemanth and Mathew were very helpful with him in the first year. Later Srinu, Sushanth, Mahendar, Sai, Raju, Aravind, Karthik, Govind, Naveen started to help him by carrying him to the class room. Ayesha, Janani and Neha also used to help in the class room. Sushanth was the most beloved among them.

His innocence, brilliance, patience, presence what not even his anger make you to love him more and more

- Sushanth



Sarath with his friends at Nizam College

He was always loyal towards his work. One such example of his loyalty was 'Sarath always completes all assignments given by our professors without a single miss, whereas the whole class comes without assignments'.

- Syeda Ayesha Jabeen

Finally with all the hardships and effort Sarath had completed his graduation. **HE WAS AGAIN TOPPER OF THE PEP IN THE FINAL SEMESTER.** 

By this time Sarath proved that if we support them in their interested field, they do miracles.

### **CELEBRATION OF FESTIVALS**

My brother Sri A. S. Rao and my elder sister Smt. Sarveswari used to live in Malkajgiri in Hyderabad. Instead of going to our ancestral place, we welcomed Sarath's grandparents from Draksharamam to his uncle's house in Hyderabad during the festivals. We used to go to Malkajgiri for every festival. Our stay used to be only for one day in festival holidays and three days during Pongal as Sarath insisted on not missing the school on the opening day.

Sarath's dearest cousin was Siva Manikanta (my brother's son) and he used to call him Bava. They used

to play with kites along with another cousin Mr. Raja. It was one of Sarath's favourite times. His Bava, Mr. Siva Manikanta was very much fond of playing with crackers during Diwali. Sarath used to join him. As their house is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and the apartments had no lift, Sarath's frequency of going to their house came down from 12<sup>th</sup> standard onwards.

His cousin Mr. Siva Manikanta joined MBBS in Ukraine during Sarath's 11<sup>th</sup> standard. Whenever he used to come back to India once a year, they both used to meet each other. During school days, Manikanta used to wait for Sarath's arrival and now it's Sarath's turn to wait for Manikanta. Sarath always used to see his cousin Manikanta's DP in WhatsApp.

Sarath is the most beloved kid to his maternal grandparents. His grandfather Sri Ammi Raju used to admire his qualities a lot. Sarath was the doctor to his grandpa's mobile phone. He used to repair in case of any problem in his mobile. They used to share a lot of things. As the time progressed, his grandfather's ability to listen was reduced, whereas Sarath's voice became weak gradually.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> standard onwards we started to celebrate a get together on the occasion of Ugadi (Telugu New Year) at our house. Sarath's father is the

youngest among his family. The families of the brothers and sister of his father used to come in the mornings and used to celebrate the day till the evening. Sarath enjoyed the day the most. Bhanu anna, Talli akka, Ravi anna, Naani anna, Naidu anna are Sarath's beloved cousins. The frequency of visits came down after the passing away of my mother in law Smt. Anatha Lakshmi.

## A BEAUTIFUL FAMILY MEMBER

Sarath's pet name at home was "Chandu". Parents and relatives used to call him with the same name. He used to call us as "Nanandi and Amma". Whenever he was asked who among the parents he loved the most, his answer was always both.

At home, Sarath used to call his father and make him sit beside him by holding his hand while watching cricket and movies. He also used to call and message to his father whenever his father used to be late. He also reminded his father about TV and mobile recharge 4 days before the expiry date. If he wished to eat something from outside, he used to message his father "Bring something to eat". His father also brought more than whatever he asked for.

He made me bring a cake for the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of his father. Of course, my husband is also a jovial person. They both used to make a lot of fun at home. They both used to play jokes on each other at home.

He used to hold our hands me and my husband's and say "It's our family".

His father used to get him ready by freshening him up, feeding him breakfast and dressing him up. I used to help him with lunch and dinner. After his father coming from office, we both used to help him to do the rest of the tasks. We were never tired of helping him. Indeed, it was a great pleasure helping our son. He was a part of us.

He used to share all his feelings with me. Values are the only things in which we used to be strict with him. Whenever he used to speak something wrong, I used to be silent with him for some time. That was the only punishment we gave him. Sarath used to beg pardon for a long time by messaging me "Amma Sorry" many times.

While I was in the kitchen and garden, Sarath used to call me for any help by blowing a whistle or by calling from the mobile to the land line.

Even though we were non-vegetarians, Sarath used to be vegetarian. He had a very specific choice about his favourite dishes. Mothichur laddu from Balaji sweets, Dosa from Swathi Hotel, Idly from Sweekar, Paneer Butter Masala from Pancharatan Hotels, Veg Puff & Pineapple cake from Master Bakery, Lays potato chips etc., were among his favourite items. He didn't eat all curries. He had a great liking for potato fry made at home and often asked for the same dish. He loved Gulab Jamun made by me. He loved murukulu made by his grandmother. He used to download recipes for various dishes and send it to me.

Every year, our neighbour Ms. Pujitha, came to tie a rakhi for him and also used to call him Tammudu (younger brother). Whether we invited her or not, she used to bring gifts to Sarath on his birthday every year.

Sarath insisted that we save money for emergency purposes. He also showed a lot of interest in financial news. He used to feel a lot whenever the Sensex falls down. When asked why you are feeling about Sensex, he used to say that it affects the entire country.

Sarath had a great habit of praying to God. He used to pray each and every day in the morning and evening for a period of 15 minutes.

He wanted pin drop silence in his house, while he was reading. Sometimes when he was upset with the sounds outside, we used to counsel him by saying that we could maintain silence only in our house but not outside. Saying that we were used to close the window doors.

During the exams, he was not allowing anyone into our house. We had to reluctantly stop relatives who wanted to come to our house during those days. Once, his grandparents came to the house during his exams. On seeing the expression on Sarath's face, they started to plan to visit our house, when there were no examinations.

## ANOTHER PROBLEM

Sarath selected M.A. English Literature in Osmania as 2<sup>nd</sup> option. He would opt for it in case he didn't qualify for EFL. He also had chosen philosophy as 3<sup>rd</sup> option. He started preparation for it immediately after final year exams.

While he was preparing in this way, he once caught fever. The fever had become normal after using the medicine suggested by Dr. Mallikarjuna Rao. After a week, when he sat at home after fresh up, water started to come from his nose. We thought, it was a normal cold and we cleaned his nose. After having lunch, he

started vomiting and he could not relish even milk. He went to bed for rest. While waking up, we found that, half of the towel had become wet. Scared to the core, we immediately took him to Railway Hospital to meet Neuro Surgeon Dr. Siva Naga Prasad.

He found out that this was not a normal cold and asked us to shift him to referral Hospital immediately. After completing the procedures in the Railway Hospital, we took him to Apollo. Dr. Naik immediately sent him for CT Brain Scan and after taking the opinion of ENT specialist, Dr. Srinivasa Reddy. They finally found out that water is coming from the brain itself. A kind of minor membrane crack in fore head. It is said to be leaking due to ACF Defect. We had been prescribed to use tablets for a week. But they told us that the healing period would be between weeks to months. From the evening onwards, we gave him idly with tablets. Everything had become normal by morning.

But after three days, we encountered a new problem. Sarath was not even able to sit down for a minute. Even for toilet we both had to lift him to wash room. He was not at all able to take support from us, due to his health problem. When my sister came to visit him, he told "God might be calling me".

Suspecting this new health issue as a side effect of the medicine we used, we again met Dr. Naik. He told us to reduce the dosage instead of stopping the tablets. After 4 days Sarath was able to become normal once again. During this time the entrance exam for Osmania University English Literature was held. Sarath was so sad to have missed the exam because of his health.

During this recovery time, his philosophy exam had commenced. His centre was at Bhadruka College. On Sarath's insistence, we took him to the college for exam. Luckily the coordinator of exams were very cooperative with us. It was also an objective type exam. This was the first time he took the help of a scribe to complete the exam. A teacher came forward to help him as scribe. Even in this kind of situation he managed to get 28<sup>th</sup> rank.

15 days after the exam, his grandfather Sri Basavaiah Naidu passed away at the age of 95. Sarath used to call him as "Tatandi". Sarath was completely distressed with this incident. The 10<sup>th</sup> day ceremony was held in our house.

# THE EFLU STUDENT

Later, Sarath was finally selected to EFL University into the MA English Literature. They asked Sarath to attend the medical verification. Sarath was very happy after hearing this news. He attended the medical verification with his parents on 21st July 2017. There was a Cell for the Disabled in the Administrative Building, Room no.30. The supporting systems like Xerox machines, PC systems and Braille machines were in the room. He first met Dr. Rajasekhar, who was the deputy co-ordinator for disability section. He also met his classmate Sivamani, Surendra (Ph.D. in Hindi), Siva (B.A. Spanish) and other students with disabilities.

Dr. Rajasekhar had a small introduction session and arranged tea & snacks for everyone, who attended the medical verification. In the NAB Block, an Orthopaedist from a Government hospital conducted the verification procedure for Sarath at EFLU. After completion of all the procedures, Sarath was finally admitted into the institution.

The course coordinator for M.A. English Literature, Dr. Rajeev C Krishnan sent a mail to Sarath about further information. The college opened from August 1<sup>st</sup> onwards. There would be an induction programme from 2<sup>nd</sup> August, in which we would come to know about more details about the entire course. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> would be the days for registration.

We attended the induction programme in the Seminar Hall. The EFLU administration welcomed all the new students to the courses. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Suresh Kumar addressed the gathering. Proctor and disabled cell coordinator Prof. Dr. Prakash Kona, Prof. Samson and others spoke about EFLU culture and about rules and regulations of the University, hostel facilities, and library. They spoke about the semester and credits system in the University. Every student was needed to acquire 80 percent attendance. Prof. Sonba Salve, HOD of M.A. English Literature and Prof. Rajiv C Krishan spoke about course details.

Prof. Sonba Salve & Prof. Rajiv C Krishnan had clarified all the doubts of literature students. They introduced us to some senior students of MA English Literature. Sarath felt as if he was entering into a new world. He felt that it was better than what he expected.



Sarath Chandra at Induction programme in EFLU, Prof. Suresh Kumar, Vice Chancellor addressing

On taking suggestions from seniors and previous teachers, Sarath took these courses:

Course	Instructor
Shakespeare: History as literature	Dr. Prakash Kona
John Milton's Poetry	Dr. V Rajasekhar
The Neoclassical period	Dr. DilipNayak
Fiction of the Indian diaspora	Dr. Sonba Salve

As his father was working as Assistant Divisional Engineer in Lallaguda workshop, he used to drop me and Sarath at NAB building in EFLU Campus and then leave for his work. The ride was comfortable to Sarath as EFLU was on the way to his father's office. As his father was dropping us in the morning, we used to come back home by Auto.

Dr. Rajasekhar's and Dr. Dileep Naik's classes were in 1<sup>st</sup> floor in Room no.3 in NAB Block and Dr. Prakash Kona's class was held in the auditorium in the ground floor Room no.1. Dr. Sonba Salve's classes were held in the Administrative building on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor at times. As the buildings were near to each other and there was a lift facility, it was a comfortable situation for us to move easily. The NAB Buildings used to have ramps up to the lift, which was a great help for us.

Sarath always preferred to sit in the first bench since his P1 class. Even though he came to the class in wheel chair, he insisted that he would sit in the first bench only. We used to lift him and put him in the first bench.

There were more than 100 students in Dr. Prakash Kona's class. Most of his classes were conducted in the seminar hall. There were some good topics like "Power" in Shakespeare's History of literature, "Coriolanus", "Henry V" & "VI", and "King Lear". Sarath also read "Macbeth" and "As you like it" during his school days and in his degree. He loved the classes of Dr. Prakash Kona so much that he once said to me "Kona Sir, personifies Shakespeare himself while teaching". Dr. Prakash Kona also used to come near Sarath and ask him "How are you? Do you have any doubts?". He used to kneel down in front of Sarath to query about any doubts. Even Dr. Rajeev C krishnan used to kneel down in front of him, whenever he met Sarath near Admin Building to ask about him. Sarath once told me "These teachers were amazing. They were kneeling down in front of me like my friends in St. Joseph's School".

He loved life and it showed in his love of learning. His eyes sparkled and he smiled gently when something amused him. Most of us complain about petty problems. We forget that for Sarath the little things of life did not matter. The only thing that mattered to him was that he must give his best to the work he did. Nothing else came in his way.

- Prof. Prakash Kona
Department of English Literature
The English and Foreign Languages University
(EFLU)

Dr. Dilip Naik's Neo-classical period consisted of "Tom Jones", "Gulliver Travels" and "Preface to Shakespeare". He used to explain each and every topic beautifully. He also used to give information about courses and exam to me outside the class room hours.

Dr. Rajasekhar's classes included the topics of John Milton's poetry: Paradise Lost and other Milton's poetics. Even though Dr. Rajasekhar was visually impaired, Sarath was inspired and amazed to observe his knowledge. As he was the disability cell Deputy Coordinator, he used to ask me about any requirements which Sarath needed.

Dr. Sonba Salve's classes consisted of Fiction of Indian Diaspora course, Shadow lines by Amitav Gosh, Inheritance of loss etc. Indian Diasporic Literature was one of the most interesting topics to Sarath. Once when Dr. Sonba Salve fell ill, Sarath prayed a lot for his recovery. He even sent a message to him on Teacher's Day wishing him a speedy recovery. Dr. Sonba Salve used to quote his messages later after he joined back into classes.

Whenever there is an opportunity to ask the teacher Mr. Sarath Chandra is very interested in asking the teacher, the questions he has in his mind. I found Mr. Sarath Chandra a very interested and persuasive student.

- Prof. Sonba Salve Head. Department of English Literature, EFLU

Sarath's English Literature classes were from Monday to Thursday. Monday & Wednesday classes were from 9am to 4pm. The classes on Tuesday and Thursday were from 11am - 1 pm. Sarath insisted on coming to EFLU at 9 am itself with his father even though the classes were at 11 A.M as it was difficult to get transport from Kacheguda at that time. During that gap of time he asked me to take him round the entire campus of EFLU. Sometimes we used to go to the library.

It was a relaxation for us as the classes were only held for 4 days. The rest 3 days were utilized for preparation and taking rest to recoup his body strength. Sarath used to feel sad as he was unable to write running notes. Sometimes he would request me to write from friends notes for him. He mostly used to use Nayana's Notes. Nayana, Amala, Amrutha, Arya, Cresline, Suman, Sivamani, Neelam and Mrudula used to meet me and Sarath. They also used to give him important information about the course. Having a low voice, Sarath used to talk less. But he used to listen to each and every one. There were students from all the states as it was a Central university. The teachers also used to talk to Sarath, especially Dr. Sharadamani used to ask him about his wellbeing.

The best thing about him was he used to listen to the class so carefully and most often you can see him responding to the professors very positively. I remember him in Professor Naik sir's class where he subtly laugh at professor's sarcasm and jokes.

During our elections, Sarath also ensured that he would participate in the voting process by attending with the help of his mom.

> - Amrutha MA English, EFLU

I did not have many long conversations with Sarath. But a smile from him covered up all those unsaid words. That smile of his always helped to build a never-ending bond with all those whom he met.

- Arya MA English, EFLU

Dr. Rajasekhar used to send information in emails to all the disabled students. There was a workshop held in the University about "The rights of persons with disabilities". Sarath attended the workshop with both of us. It was the first time that we were attending a meeting on disability. This was jointly conducted by the Cell for the Disabled, EFLU and Hyderabad Human Rights Society (HRS).

Dr. N. Annavaram, HCU, Member of Expert Committee, Shri Rajeshwara Rao HRS Gen. Secretary & an Advocate, High court attended the event. Students belonging to VH, PH category too attended the event.

Dr. Vasu Deva Reddy, the Chairman, Vikalangula Co-operative Corporation, Telangana inaugurated the programme. Mr. Raja Lingam was accompanied by Dr. Annavaram from HCU. When they asked Sarath about any problems regarding his present status, Sarath spoke about his problems. "It's really hard

for me to write due to the weak grip in my hands and my hand writing losing its pace and spoiling my score in exams. I cannot afford to use scribe, as my voice is too low to narrate to them. I hope you all will find a solution to this problem faced by people like me".

Later Rajalingam & Suman, Disability Student Secretary, (OH) had spoken about various problems related to disability. Suman and Rajalingam spoke about Sarath's problem as they stated that it was a very severe problem which needed medical expenses, separate transport with an attendant support. They also demanded the government to come forward to help such people as a common person cannot bear the expenses for such problems.

There were many internal assignments conducted. There used to be 2 to 3 assignments for each and every subject. Some of them are to be written and some of them are to be mailed. Sarath treated each assignment as a PHD thesis. We used to bring books from library and he used to specify the required parts from where I should type. After I completed it, he used to proof check before submitting by paper or online.

Everyone was given more corrections and ideas after submission of assignments. He submitted all the

assignments. Dr. Dilip Naik after going through Sarath's assignment praised him for not having spelling and grammatical mistakes. But his only advice was to write better and try more creative presentation. Dr. Prakash Kona too praised Sarath and asked him to reduce introduction part and write more creatively.

Sarath found more students in the campus, who had disability issues like him. There were about 100 students with disability. He was amazed at the talent of some of his friends Sujith (Cerebral Palsy) doing MA, Suresh (VH), Krishna (VH), Ganesh (PH), Surendar (VH) who were pursuing their Ph.Ds in the University. Sivamani(VH) was very good with his cricket commentary.

Every student who enters the campus likes to complete his Ph.D. there. The atmosphere itself inspires such kind of mood among students. Sarath too wanted to complete his Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Prakash Kona. We too felt that, Sarath would live some more years with zeal to achieve that ambition.

Govind also used to attend the classes for B.Ed in the same NAD Block. He often used to meet Sarath and help him in cases of need. Sarath also voted during the College student Union Elections.

He was the one who comes first to the class and go home the last. I learned so many things from him.

- Tongle Govind B.Ed, EFLU

There was a cultural programme conducted for disabled students named "Tunes of Difference". Sarath attended the function with his family. The Vice-Chancellor also attended the event. Suresh(VH) along with anchoring sang many songs. Krishna(VH) recited poetry, Surendra(VH) performed group singing event along with the instruments. The day ended with the programmes went so well. Dinner was also arranged after the event.

The wheel chair measurements were taken for the Physically Disabled students who needed wheel chair by an outside agency. They also had taken the measurements that are convenient for Sarath's posture in the disability cell. The cost of 1 lakh was totally borne by EFLU itself. EFLU provided medical insurance for its students. It provides Rs. 5000 for an outpatient and Rs. 1,00,000 for an inpatient.

Sarath missed the Hindi essay writing competition in Hindi varotsav due to lack of information. NSS conducted an Essay writing competition on Swatch

Bharath under the guidance & supervision of Prof. Suvarna Lakshmi. Sarath participated in that. It was told that the prize distribution would be done by the Vice-Chancellor which was scheduled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

There were many prizes won by Sarath since his P1 to the University in Interschool Painting Competition, Running competition, Proficiency prizes, Best outstanding outgoing student, Hindi medal, English & Hindi essay writing competitions.

It was surprising that he won **20 prizes** in total despite the challenges he faced. He felt so happy to know that he was going to receive his 21st prize from the Vice-Chancellor in EFLU.

The final exams of first semester started in November ending. The table mate was taken from the house to the exam hall, as it was more convenient to be used by Sarath. Even I was permitted to sit beside Sarath during the examination to attend him. Sarath also felt happy, as his mother was sitting next to him. I used to draw margin lines on paper as he could not draw. Sarath was also given extra time to complete the exam. First exam was on Neo-Classicism. The next exam was on Shakespeare.

### THE LAST CHALLENGE

After the Shakespeare exam, Sarath caught cough. While he was preparing for the Indian Diaspora on 28th November, he was unable to sleep on 26th November night due to cough. He also continued to prepare for the exam on 27th. He finally completed writing the Indian Diaspora exam on 28th. He submitted hard copy and soft copies to Dr. Rajasekhar. He completed all the formalities needed to be done at the end of the semester. Sarath was unable to meet his friends due to severe cough.

He was unable to sleep on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> November. His maternal grandparents came to meet him after exam from my sister's house and then left for Draksharama. The cough used to be dry and there was no phlegm. As the cough syrup seems not to be working, we gave some antibiotics and took him to the pulmonologist. We then met Dr. Mallikharjuna Rao, who found out that the oxygen levels were 85 percent and suggested us to use Nebulizer for two times a day. He asked us to continue antibiotics for 5 days.

We purchased a nebulizer while we were going home. Sarath suffered with sleeplessness that night. In the meantime, his father was advised by the pulmonologist to use nebulizer 3 times a day. When we took him to the hospital on 5th December, doctors on seeing X-ray report found that Sarath was having symptoms of Pneumonia. Even the oxygen percentage was only 67 percent. We immediately admitted Sarath into hospital. For 3 days he was given injections and oxygen supply. He was advised to stop using cough syrup. Sarath again faced the problem of sleeplessness in the hospital too. Dr. Naik also attended on him.

Sarath used to tell me "No matter how clean and tidy the hospitals are, there is nothing as comfortable as our house". Sarath was still in his senses at that time. Food intake was also normal during this time.

He was finally discharged from the hospital on 8<sup>th</sup> December. Our neighbour Dr. Amala, DMO, Railway Hospital checked him after we came from hospital.

Sometimes his legs used to give a jerk and shiver previously. Now the hands also started to jerk. He asked whether he could write again. I counselled him saying that after you recover you can write again.

Once again Sarath fell ill with blocked nose (cold). There is sputum but no phlegm and the cough still continued. He was uncomfortable when he was laid on bed and he asked us to make him sit.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> December Dr. Lydia Samson, who came to know about Sarath's health visited our home. She suggested us to meet an ENT specialist. The ENT specialist suggested us to get a CT SCAN done. The next day was 13<sup>th</sup>; we went to meet Dr. Naik, neuro surgeon and pulmonologist Dr. Mallikharjuna Rao. They advised us to stop medication and advised us to continue using allegra for 5 to 10 days. When we asked whether he had any more symptoms of pneumonia, he answered that the patients of pneumonia would never be like this. And when asked about the swelling in the legs, he stated that it was common in wheelchair patients. He suggested us to meet an ENT Specialist regarding nose blockage.

We met Dr. Srinivasa Reddy, ENT Specialist and he advised us to have CT scan & PNS done to him. It took a while to undergo both the tests. Finally, we returned home at 7 pm.

After having the dinner, Sarath sat and started watching cricket on TV along with his father. His uncle A.S Rao came to see him and left. We used nebulizer for some time, for respiration. All of a sudden, he suffered from minute seizures. Whenever he suffered with seizures, he would twist his mouth and fall unconscious for a little time. In the same way, he recovered after suffering some time. After becoming normal he again started watching cricket match. He felt happy after seeing India win the match.

After that we made him to sleep on the bed at 9:30pm. We woke him at 10 pm and gave him milk with regular medicines and again asked him to sleep. But he again suffered sleeplessness that night. He asked us to lift him to make him to sit. Finally, he went to bed.

# At 00:00 pm on 14th December 2017

As me and my husband were watching the difference in the sound of his breathing, Sarath suddenly, turned his face and mouth aside, while in seizures. Feeling that it was seizure attack once again, his father just lifted him to help. All of a sudden, he got a cardiac arrest and left his body in his father's hands.

I immediately called Dr. Amala for help and also "108" ambulance. She came to us within 5 minutes and she also did the CPR. And also the 108 ambulance too came quickly. Everything was in time, but Sarath didn't give us the time we needed to get him back. He left us.

Sarath left all of us on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 on 00:15 am. My world had just disappeared within seconds, which I hoped would last a little longer.

After some days, the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester were announced. Sarath passed with A+ grade. He still remained "UNDEFEATED" till the last challenge of his life.

We believe that he used to pray for his studies rather than for his health.

As a mother I may have thousands of feelings to share. But what I will always remember and learn from my son is his enormous will power.

Till this day, I always feel that,

"IF SARATH COULD HAVE DONE SO MUCH WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS HE HAD, HOW MUCH MORE WE ALL COULD ACCOMPLISH IN OUR LIVES".

He reached every small goal in life with such passion and dedication. What I am left with are the beautiful memories and inspiration.

"You are the best child in the world, Sarath".



He loved life and it showed in his love of learning.

His eyes sparkled and he smiled gently when something amused him. Most of us complain about petty problems.

We forget that for Sarath the little things of life did not matter.

The only thing that mattered to him was that he must give his best to the work he did. Nothing else came in his way.

#### Prof. Prakash Kona

Department of English Literature
The English and Foreign Languages University(EFLU
Tarnaka, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500605 - India



