

## *Profile of E. S Ramamurthy*

A Master's Degree Holder in Solid state Physics from Madras University, Ramamurthy had a distinguished career in Industry spanning more than 30 years. Towards the end, he was functioning as the Head of Electronics division of Bharat Heavy Electricals, responsible for an annual turnover of Rs 2.5 billion. At a personal level, he was specializing in renewable energy sources, a field in which he acquired a high profile for himself. For more than a decade, he was on most advisory panels under the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in his individual capacity. His expertise was also utilized often by other Departments, like Electronics and Science and Technology in their respective policy making bodies and panels. He was an internationally recognized expert on Solar Energy, with papers in reputed journals to his credit.

In recognition of his expertise, he was invited to function as a Senior Consultant to the Government of India. He was deputed to represent the country in the preparatory meet to the Earth Summit at Rio in '92. During this period, he has also had occasion to function as an UNDP expert for solar energy technologies.

In view of his personal interest in the field, Ramamurthy used to be involved in the field studies concerning energy needs of remote and rural communities, and in the process has toured extensively across the country. When he finally opted to quit his career at its peak in order to involve himself in a socially productive cause, this exposure to the needs of the poor led him to look at education as a vital social issue needing a purposeful intervention.

After a careful study of the system and the field conditions lasting six months, he started a program in Nov '01, by the name of Sikshana. It is aimed at improving the quality of education in the public school system at the primary level, with the goal of evolving a sustainable and replicable model through adoption of modern management concepts and techniques. Working from within the system and building on its strengths and circumventing its weaknesses, the program has been making significant progress since its inception. Sikshana covers presently 46 schools with more than 10,000 kids. Plans are on the anvil to increase the coverage to more schools so as to get statistical validation of the results obtained in the first phase. Details on the program are available under the web site [www.sikshana.org](http://www.sikshana.org) .

Experience under the program over the last few years has demolished quite a few myths and shown interesting possibilities for achieving the objective.