

THE
Club Elite



OAR X SPEAK

BOAT CLUB NEWS

IN HOUSE MAGAZINE | APRIL 2018



Editor's Note

TED THADANI

CAPTAIN'S DESK

School Regatta

DM Reid - a past secretary of the Boat Club

V SRIRAM

'Heads'-up on Balance

DR. ARVIND PARTHASARATHY



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COVER PHOTO COURTESY: GAYATHREE KRISHNA

Editor's Note

Dear Members,

With the summer and the school/college holidays upon us no doubt quite a few of you will take a break from your normal routine.

It would be nice if some of you would share your holiday experiences with fellow members through the pages of Oarspeak. May be some tips on what to do and not do, and perhaps cost effectiveness of destinations.

For those that may not be able to go away, training on the waters would be invigorating. The school regatta held in April can be an inspiration to some young ones to sharpen their rowing skills and take part in future regattas.

With the membership that the club has, there must be a very good representation of professions, skills and knowledge. Wonder if any member would come forward to write regularly on the following subjects;
General health tips..."Health Capsule"

Tips on finance and investments and tax.. "invest wisely and Save Tax"

Tips on fashion... "Fashion Friend"

Cooking... "Cook Book"

Holiday suggestions... "Leisure and Pleasure"

Foodie on a ... "A New Place in Town"

Home maintenance tips... "Handyman"

Looking after your car... "Care Care"

Unusual or funny incidences... "Life is like that!"

There can be many more! Music, instruments,magic for children, simple experiments for children to thrill them.
There can be many more!



We have been thrilled with the response so far but could increase the content if more came forward to take on some topics.

We are moving along!

Help build the momentum!

TED THADANI

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Captain's desk

Dear Member,

In the second week of April, our Club saw about 100 school and college students participate in nearly 100 races to make the MBC Schools & Colleges Regatta a resounding success. We had 40 schools and colleges participate from 4 states – Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, and Karnataka. The participants were aged 10 upwards, with 5 age categories (under 12, under 14, under 16, under 18, and college) for boys and similarly for girls as well. I am happy to report that the feedback from the participants and their parents was very positive.

In this, the second edition of the Regatta, we had double scull categories in addition to single scull. Colleges were also a new addition this time. Though students from about 10 colleges in Chennai had signed up, what with exams and other concerns, it was unfortunate that only a few were able to participate. Hopefully as the Regatta grows we will see more participation from the colleges, from Chennai and elsewhere. I would like to add a word of appreciation for all the youngsters, particularly the under 12 children who showed great spirit and hard work. To encourage the younger ones who did not make a podium finish, a small memento (Club mug) was given.

SDV HSS from Alappuzha, Kerala won the Iron Man Rolling Trophy for Overall School Champion. They also won the World of Jass Rolling Trophy for School Champions (Boys) and World of Jass Rolling Trophy for School Champions (Girls). Among the colleges, the Guru Nanak College Rolling Trophy for College Champions (Men) was won by Loyola College and the MBC Rolling Trophy for College Champions (women) by MOP Vaishnav College. Congratulations to all!

I must thank our sponsors too. We had generous contributions, to sponsor the trophies, from World of Jass, Guru Nanak College, as well as our members- Mr. Subramanian, Mr. Nachiappan, Aravind Kumar, Kartik Raghava Murthy, and our President, Mr. Arun Krishnan and several others. Last but not the least, I must thank the regatta organizing team – Mr. Robbie Rao, Sumana Narayanan, Divya Reddy, Sandeep Somani, Niranjana Rao, and Devika Rao without whom this regatta would not have come together.

Summer Camp 2018

By the time this issue of Oarspeak reaches you, the Annual Summer Camp will be well under way. We have had an excellent response to the Camp with over 90 applications coming in. As you can imagine, with such a large number of participants, as well as our regular rowers and the Club team training for Madras-Colombo, it is rush hour on the Adyar this month. I would like to request members' cooperation and patience as there will no doubt be longer waiting periods for boats and for the raft to clear.

Warm Regards,
James Joseph
Captain of Boats



MBC SCHOOLS & COLLEGES REGATTA 2018



COLLEGES POINTS TALLY

SNO	TEAM	COLLEGE GIRLS - 1X	COLLEGE BOYS - 1X	COLLEGE GIRLS - 2X	COLLEGE BOYS - 2X	ERG BOYS	ERG GIRLS	OVERALL POINTS
		CG 1X	CB 1X	CG 2X	CB 2X			
	SAKI TANAKA	2						2
	MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK							0
	MOP VAISHNAV	4		11			8	23
	PES UNIVERSITY	7						7
	LOYOLA COLLEGE		11		7			18
	SRM UNIVERSITY		2		4			6



Schools Points Tally

TEAM	SCHOOL GIRLS - 1X			"SCHOOL BOYS - 1X"				SCHOOL GIRLS - 2X		SCHOOL BOYS - 2X			ERG BOYS	ERG GIRLS	TOTAL POINTS-BOYS	TOTAL POINTS-GIRLS	OVER ALL POINTS
	U12	U14	U16	U12	U14	U16	U18	U14	U16	U12	U14	U16					
AMM Matriculation Higher Secondary School					7								1		8	0	8
APL Global														3	0	3	3
Bishop Cotton's Bangalore		4												3	0	7	7
Chettinad Hari Shree Vidyalayam	4				2					4	7			3	13	7	20
DAV Girls Senior Secondary School			7											5	0	12	12
GD Birla School		2													0	2	2
Govt Vocational HSS				7			7						10		24	0	24
Julien Day School						4									4	0	4
Kendriya Vidyalaya - MEG & Centre													5		5	0	5
National High School For Boys												4			4	0	4
National High School For Girls								6	2						0	8	8
PSBB Senior Secondary School, T Nagar				2						7			1		10	0	10
Ram Mohan Mission High School							2								2	0	2
Saraswathy Kendra Learning Centre					4								3		7	0	7
SDV BHS/ HSS						9	4					7	9		29	0	29
SDV GHS		7						7						6	0	20	20
Sishya School				4					11				3	1	7	12	19
Smt Mehras High School													1		1	0	1
St Michael's Academy	7													5	0	12	12
St Michael's High School													3		3	0	3
Sushila Birla Girl's School			2												0	2	2
The BSS School			4												0	4	4
The Velammal International School											4				4	0	4
Vidya Mandir Senior Secondary School												2			2	0	2

MBC SCHOOLS & COLLEGES REGATTA 2018

RESULTS

CATEGORY	CREW	SCHOOL/COLLEGE	POSITION
U12G 1X	ANOUSHKA PRAKASH	ST MICHAEL'S ACADEMY, CHENNAI	GOLD
	HANA SARAVANAN	CHETTINAD HARI SHREE VIDYALAYAM, CHENNAI	SILVER
U14G 1X	JESNA CJ	SDV GHS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	R.S.JAI SREE	BISHOP COTTON'S GIRLS , BANGALORE	SILVER
	ATIRIYA DASGUPTA	GD BIRLA SCHOOL, KOLKATA	BRONZE
U16G 1X	P SURABI	DAV GIRLS SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, CHENNAI	GOLD
	SONY KUMARI SINGH	THE BSS SCHOOL, KOLKATA	SILVER
	SWARA POPAT	SUSHILA BIRLA SCHOOL, KOLKATA	BRONZE
CW 1X	KEERTHANA T.K	PES UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE	GOLD
	POOJA S	MOP VAISHNAV COLLEGE, CHENNAI	SILVER
	SAKI TANAKA		BRONZE
U14G 2X	JESNA CJ/ MEENAKSHY VS	SDV GHS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	HARSHITA/KAVITA	NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, KOLKATA	SILVER
	SRESTHA/ KRITTIKA	NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, KOLKATA	BRONZE
U16G 2X	ANUSHKA DHANDA/ TARISHI GUPTA	SISHYA SCHOOL, CHENNAI	GOLD
	AYUSHI SOMANI/ TULSI SRIRAM	SISHYA SCHOOL, CHENNAI	SILVER
	HARSHITA/KAVITA	NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, KOLKATA	BRONZE
CW 2X	POOJA S/ THAMIZHAZHAGI	MOP VAISHNAV, CHENNAI	GOLD
	M SARANYA/ S SRUTHIMOLE	MOP VAISHNAV, CHENNAI	SILVER
U12B 1X	SOORAJ S	GOVT VOCATIONAL HSS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	ADIV PHILIP MATHAN	SISHYA SCHOOL, CHENNAI	SILVER
	THAVISH VIVEK	PSBB SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, T NAGAR, CHENNAI	BRONZE
U14B 1X	S JADON MOSES	AMM MATRICULATION HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL, CHENNAI	GOLD
	V S. DEVANATHAN	SARASWATHY KENDRA LEARNING CENTRE, CHENNAI	SILVER
	S. MAHINTH SIMMAA	CHETTINAD HARI SHREE VIDYALAYAM, CHENNAI	BRONZE
U16B 1X	SIVA SATHEESH	SDV HSS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	SANGLAP BOSE	JULIEN DAY SCHOOL, KOLKATA	SILVER
	AASIF SHAHJAHAN	SDV HSS, ALAPPUZHA	BRONZE
U18B 1X	AKSHAY M	GVHSS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	SIVA SATHEESH	SDV HSS, ALAPPUZHA	SILVER
	TATHAGATA PAL	RAM MOHAN MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, KOLKATA	BRONZE
CM 1X	ABRAAR NAVAZ EBRAHIM	LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI	GOLD
	THAMIZHKANIYAN K	SRM UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI	SILVER
	RAJ AYYAPPA	LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI	BRONZE
U12B 2X	ARUSH MENON/ MITHIL VIDASH	PSBB, CHENNAI	GOLD
	HANA SARAVANAN/ KRITIN NARAYANAN	CHETTINAD HARI SHREE VIDYALAYAM	SILVER
U14B 2X	S. MAHINTH SIMMAA/ASHWIN RADHAKRISHNAN	CHETTINAD HARI SHREE VIDYALAYAM, CHENNAI	GOLD
	K VISHWANATHAN/ V NARESH	THE VELAMMAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, CHENNAI	SILVER
	ACYUTH/ SANJEETH	VIDYA MANDIR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, CHENNAI	BRONZE
U16B 2X	AASIF SHAHJAHAN/ ABIN SAJ	SDV BHS, ALAPPUZHA	GOLD
	SAYAN SARDAR/ SAGNIK BOSE	NHS, KOLKATA	SILVER
CM 2X	ABRAAR NAVAZ EBRAHIM/RAJ AYYAPPA	LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI	GOLD
	THAMIZHKANIYAN K / GOPALAKRISHNA M	SRM UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI	SILVER

MBC SCHOOLS & COLLEGES REGATTA 2018



DM REID – A PAST SECRETARY OF THE BOAT CLUB



While it is true that the Empire was built on a foundation of commerce, most of the books on it deal with the lives of civilians and army officers. The boxwallah or the businessman who continued focusing on private enterprise long after the East India Company was wound up received short shrift from biographers and historians, with Parry, Binny, and a few others being exceptions. And yet, men of commerce left behind their impress on various aspects of life in India. In Madras itself, some were pillars of the various clubs that are still

going strong, several were sheriffs, there was a mayor or two, quite a few made it to the Madras Legislative Council and the Madras Corporation. One such personality is Douglas Muir Reid, or DM Reid for short.

It is not clear as to when Reid arrived in Madras. But he was definitely here at least from 1925 onwards for that year he married Olive Ashley Biggs, daughter of Sir Ashley Biggs, the powerful agent (equivalent of General Manager) of the Madras and South Mahratta (M&SM) Railway Company. He also became the Secretary of the Madras Boat Club. Rowing appears to have been his passion and while he was part of winning teams at the club, he was also much in demand as a commentator during the regattas that took place on the Adyar. Reid was Secretary of the Boat Club till 1928.

Reid was employed with the firm of WA Beardsell & Co, at that time one of the big five of Madras, the others being Binny, Parry, Best &

Co, and Gordon Woodroffe. These firms virtually ran the Madras Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1836 and today as the Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the second oldest trade representative body in India. Reid, who became Director of Beardsell, was an important member of the Chamber. In 1938 he was decorated with an OBE and he also became the Chairman of the Madras Chamber of Commerce in which capacity he also became a member of the Madras Legislative Council. Throughout the 1930s he was also a member of a committee comprising several prominent citizens of Madras that worked to control strikes and labour issues, especially at Binny's and the M&SM Railways.

When the Second World War broke out, Reid joined the army – becoming a Lt. Col. in the Madras Guards, one of the oldest regiments in India and formed by Lord Harris for the protection of the city in 1857. Reid appears to have seen active service, for he became a full

Colonel and also received the Military Cross in 1945. He also served as honorary ADC to the Governor, Sir Arthur Hope and when the war ended was Officer in Charge of the Madras Guards garrison stationed in Fort St George.

Reid was a man who took keen interest in history and the fine arts. In 1944, it was he who suggested that the old Fort Exchange be converted into a museum “for the exhibition of antiquities illustrating the historical evolution of the Province since the days of the East India Company”. In 1946, he, according to a reference in the ASI’s Ancient India (1953), also sponsored the setting up of the museum, which was completed in 1948. By then Reid was probably back in England, having joined the vast contingent of European army officers, civilians and businessmen who opted to not stay on after Independence. In 1950, Reid unsuccessfully contested the British parliamentary elections as the Conservative and National Liberal candidate for North Norfolk. What happened to him after that is not known.

In his last years in Madras,

Reid authored a book titled *The Story of Fort St George*, a slim and highly readable volume. Printed at the Diocesan Press, it had a foreword by Sir Arthur Hope and was released in 1945. There are two unique aspects to the book. The first is that the entire volume in embellished with a series of black and white sketches of the fort, all done by Ismena R Warren, a woman about whom very little is known beyond the facts that she had graduated from the School of Art, Dublin in 1938 and was from 1940 at least an ardent member of the Methodist Church in Madras. Reid was an accomplished painter himself and in 1945 he founded the South Indian Society of Painters, becoming the first President. DP Roy Chowdhury of the Madras School of Arts was a co-founder and succeeded Reid as President.

The second interesting aspect is the way the second half of the book is structured – as a heritage walk around Fort St George. In his foreword, Sir Arthur Hope had commended Reid for “making the streets, the walls and the buildings of the Fort themselves tell their enthralling tale” and he was not wrong. The author writes that his book “may

be taken for reference at each point of the tour, but as the enthusiasm of the writer may have caused him to expand unduly at times, it might be as well to read this through before setting out, instead of standing with the hot sun glaring on to the pages. And also, you may not wish your fancies to be disturbed as you go round”.

What is most fascinating is that through the pages of a book, Reid manages to extract as much drama as possible (“Where you stand, on these steps, Margaret Maskelyne and Robert Clive knelt to be married, for these were the original altar steps” is just one instance). This kind of passion for storytelling is something that most guides of today do not appear to have.



V Sriram is an Indian entrepreneur, columnist, music historian, and heritage activist who is known for his books on the history of Chennai, Carnatic music and Chennai theatre.

150TH YEAR SOUVENIR MUG

20TH APRIL 2018

DEAR MEMBER,

MEMBERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED FOR THE 150TH YEAR CELEBRATIONS MAY KINDLY COLLECT THE SOUVENIR MUG FROM THE RECEPTION AFTER SIGNING IN THE REGISTER.

MBC COMMITTEE



AN APPEAL

It is with profound grief that we inform the passing away of our bearer Mr. Francis on Sunday, 8th April 2018 who was valued employee of the club for 24 years since 10th March 1994. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Pushpam, daughters Miss. Priyanka Francis (B.Com) and Miss. Praveena Francis (B.Sc. 2nd year).

On behalf of the club and the employees we extend our deepest condolences to his family members.

He was the sole earner and with his demise, the family will be facing financial constraints. Both his daughters are yet to be married and settled.

The committee felt the need for sending an appeal to the members of the club to offer a generous contribution to help the bereaved family.

You may send in a cheque in favour of Mrs. F. Pushpam or a NEFT/RTGS transfer to her bank account no: 34496431348, State Bank of India, West Saidapet branch, Chennai - 600 015. IFSC no: sbin0011720

MBC COMMITTEE



MADRAS BOAT CLUB

CHENNAI – 600 028

Dear member,

Sub: use of gratuity box

We had informed you that in view of the judgement of the Supreme Court we were forced to withdraw the service charge effect from 1st May 2017 and collect 1% of the bill amount as staff benevolence fund and use it for the benefit of the staff as done in the past.

The committee strongly requests your cooperation to avoid direct tipping and use the gratuity box available in four locations at the club for making your voluntary contributions. Your attention is herewith drawn to clause “b” of rule “xxi: staff” of the articles of association which reads as under

“No member shall give to any staff of the club any sum of money or gratuity upon any pretexts whatever. Any staff that receives such money or gratuity shall be liable for punishment, which may extend to dismissal. Any member infringing this rule shall be warned and if the offence is repeated, may be suspended under rule xv”.

We have also noticed that a larger number of members are using the gratuity box to reward the staff instead of direct tipping. This is a welcome change and this is our opinion will be good for ensuring better discipline among the staff and also for bringing in better efficiency and uniform service to all members without favouritism. Still a few members are resorting to direct tipping which should be avoided.

In view of the withdrawal of the service charge and the ban on direct tipping, we request members to generously contribute to the staff by depositing in the gratuity box, kept at various locations for your convenience.

MBC COMMITTEE

CHENNAI - MADRAS

Imagine a city that falls asleep before midnight. A city where everyone smiles but no one tells you what they're smiling about, where men frequently walk the streets holding hands but aren't necessarily gay, and where regardless of the season, a bit of on the spot jogging can engulf you in sweat. Then imagine the second longest coastline in the world – thirteen kilometres of biscuit coloured sand, which runs like a dream along the city. And beside this dream of sand there is an ocean that gleams and patiently breathes, but in whose waters, hardly anyone ever swims.

This is Chennai née Madras, the slow, unfashionable seaside city where I was born and came of age. In her many shaded and shady corners I discovered love and fear and contradiction. I learned to not always say what I was thinking, to be kind to strangers, to regard boasting with disapproval, and to stare openly if I found something curious. I also learned to be restless.

It wasn't always so. My childhood was absurdly halcyon. I went to an avant-garde school, which eventually turned orthodox, but in those years there were no uniforms, the classrooms were made of thatch and bamboo, and everyone shared their tiffin boxes under tamarind trees. Other people called us snobs (the ultimate condemnation in this city), but we were happy, likeable children. Our pleasures were innocent: buns from Adyar Bakery, softies from Aavin, sleepovers and the occasional movie at Blue Diamond. My girlfriends and I lied only once to our parents, to say we were going to study maths, when in fact, we were meeting the boys from our class at Elliot's Beach in the middle of the afternoon. We sat there, boys and girls both, burning our backsides on the sand, saying little to each other, but feeling a quiet pride of rebellion. Had the city not begun her

own quiet rebellion I probably never would have left.

I often envy people who have spent their youth in great cities at great moments. Paris 1968, New York in the decadent 90s, Bombay's poetry scene in the 60s. When these people meet a fellow member of their tribe they talk about where they lived and hung out, who they knew and the crowd they moved with. They become young and indestructible again because their mythologies are forever linked to others of their clan and to the city itself. Not all cities can have great mythologies. If Chennai had such a moment it certainly wasn't in the late 80s, where the only place for young, hip people to go was the basement of the Sindoori Hotel, a grimy discotheque called Down Under, where everyone drank beer or rum & coke, and the induction into lust happened under smoky lights to the tune of Roxette's She's Got the Look. We still experienced the full scale of young adult trauma, it was just less heroic because the options were so few and there was so little to pin it against. Our lives, our complications carried on in this sleepy town where everyone was encouraged to know everyone else's business, and ambition in anything except excellence in studies was considered vulgar. Twenty years later I still bump into those skinny boys from the Sindoori, transformed now, into gouty uncles, and those once pretty girls struggling with new fangled fashions and I know they are judging me as surely as I'm judging them. That's the law of this town. Quick to condemn, slow to forget.

Still, I miss it. I find myself yearning for that old city with the old name, which I had to abandon because I was struck as most people are, at some point, by what Baudelaire called the *horreur du domicile*. I had to get the

hell out of Dodge, but all the time I was away I dreamed about it – soft, unabashed dreams where the sepia lanes of childhood pressed up against the tangled, technicoloured roads of adulthood. The dreams were always noisy, orchestrated upon the calls of housewives and vendors, cat brawls and crows. And of course, they reeked of jasmine and bidis, of a fine, heady slick of coconut oil, and the sea.

Why'd you come back? people asked when I returned, as if to escape Chennai meant never returning. As if to live here meant to relinquish the world. I tried explaining how the wonder of this port city of two names and multiple personalities was that it allowed you to be a stranger here even though it was home. I told them I'd seen so much of the world, travelled to all seven continents and been enamoured by countless elsewhere, but in truth I had found my most significant romances here, in the streets of this weird and middling city.

I discovered my great love and mentor, Chandralekha, in a house ten minutes away from mine, and even though there was half a century between us we could still talk about everything under the moon on her parapet. I met the man I'm going to marry here, swept in from a faraway country when I wasn't even looking. I have my family here, my oldest and newest friends, who are all beset with the most ardent faithfulness. And no matter how much I complain about how this city closes in on me with her salty fingers, or how many of the luminous paddy fields have been turned into cemeteries for plastic bags; no matter how many years of yoga will not keep me calm in a traffic jam, there are still so many remarkable people quietly doing remarkable things in this city's hidden corners. You just have to seek them out.

Cities can overcome us or overwhelm us, but Chennai is that rare entity that can do both simultaneously. Her whimsical imagination flits continuously in and out of her horizon, and much of the reason why I continue to live and work here is because she always leaves her doors half open. She may impose her judgement, but never her pace. She still surprises, and very simply, she let's me be.



Tishani Doshi publishes poetry, fiction and essays. Her most recent book is a collection of poems, Girls are Coming out of the Woods(HarperCollins). She lives on a beach in Tamil Nadu.
www.tishanidoshi.com

A DAILY PRAYER FOR THE MOM OF A TEEN, GOD BLESS!

JUST FOR TODAY, LET ME NOT NAG OR BE TEMPTED TO CONFRONT.

JUST FOR TODAY, HELP ME ENJOY THE TASK OF PICKING UP AFTER MY TEEN.

JUST FOR TODAY, HELP ME TO EXPLAIN WHY NORMAL IS NOT BORING.

JUST FOR TODAY, HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT STUDYING MEANS AN ACTION BY WHICH ONE OPENS AND SHUTS A BOOK.

JUST FOR TODAY, I WILL REMEMBER THAT THERE IS NO RULE BOOK ON “HOW TO CONVERSE WITH A TEEN”.

JUST FOR TODAY, I’LL KNOW THAT COMMUNICATION WAS ESTABLISHED IF I GET A CHEEKY REPLY.

JUST FOR TODAY, I WILL NOT FOCUS ON THE GRADES AND WILL BE GRATEFUL THAT YOU PASSED.

JUST FOR TODAY, LET THE INTERNET NOT BE SLOW.

OH LORD! PLEASE GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO GET THROUGH TODAY.



- DEEPA MAHADEVAN

DEEPA IS A CREATIVE PROFESSION WHO BELIEVES IN LIVING IN THE MOMENT. SHE WILL OFTEN BE SEEN DOODLING AWAY IN SOME CORNER.



‘HEADS’-UP ON BALANCE

Maintaining balance and stability is important to all of us. It is a skill that should be a part of every fitness program. A visit to a physiotherapist is enough to validate this point. Twisted ankles and hips after slippery falls in the bathroom or when taking the staircase are but some of the common complaints and they all arise from the inability to recover from imbalance.

The importance of balance is particularly important in water sports like rowing or swimming. In water, we work with a medium that does not offer the kind of resistance that is seen on land-based sports. Neither of these sports allows the novice to get feedback and take the time to consciously take corrective action. Very often, the correct form is achieved by doing an action that is counter-intuitive. The thought that humans were not designed to be on water often comes to mind. But yet here we are...

Rowing is a comprehensive workout for every muscle of the body and that's not even scratching the surface of the content that the sport offers. It is a way of thinking that necessarily forces you to engage your brain to enable muscle movement. The mind comes into play almost from the first day that you step into a scull. Being all alone on a delicately balanced boat makes one think about almost

everything in the world except rowing technique. We have to first go past the fear of first falling into the Adyar river. The Adyar offers several distracting views of the kind of trash that the residents of this city throw. The first thing you learn is to shut your mind from the distractions that the eyes perceive and focus on the most important task – to move the boat with grace and style. The words of our senior rowers keep ringing in my head: Head up, Chin up, Look straight. Interestingly, they did not stress about the shoulders or legs, and for a good reason.

Rowing is more of a mind game. Suddenly your strength in the gym or your endurance in running, or cardiovascular capability is no longer relevant. Strangely enough, good form arises from how you hold your head or more specifically how you hold your gaze. I recall seeing a National Geographic film footage of a cheetah chasing a deer. While every muscle in its body was engaged in the chase and moving to its maximum extent, the gaze was unshifting throughout and was transfixed on its target till the very end.

The importance of balance, while swimming, has been directly linked to the position of the head. The five kg head (more or less) plays an important role in keeping the body horizontal in water. The situation in swimming is made worse by the fact that our weight

is concentrated waist below. Lifting the head to breathe ruins any chance of leveling the body in water. The ‘Total Immersion’ coach Terry Laughlin held the view that position of the head was so important that one could navigate in water without the active use of limbs, if only we know how to keep your head aligned to the rest of the body.

It is a popular notion that a sports person often spends time on muscle-building in order to build more power in the activity. This I learnt is only half the story. Elite athletes also train for developing an innate skill called proprioception. I had never heard the word proprioception till the day I read a blog on rowing by an experienced guru of rowing, Carlos Dinares. He was recommending a drill in rowing with “Eyes Closed”. It is a rather foolhardy drill to do on the Adyar and I absolve myself of all repercussions. It is bad enough to maintain course with your eyes open. Pick a time when you can be confident that there would be no harm done to fellow rowers by straying off course. Also make sure that a rescue boat is not too far ! Very quickly one realizes the importance of keeping your eyes open. Proprioception is the ability of the brain to realize the position of a limb without the assistance of sensory (visual) information. A case of a failure of proprioceptive ability in everyday life is when we are

climbing steps in the dark. Even if one step were slightly shorter than the other or when we come to the last step, our brain reels to recover. The wiring between the legs and the brain takes place within the first few steps. The brain learns to anticipate the height of the step and works the muscles accordingly. Now imagine we have to row or dance or swim. This involves every muscle of the upper and lower body to work in a coordinated way without having a chance to take a visual assessment of every move. Everything happens so quickly. While we are glad that we completed the race, the grace factor is often forgotten. Grace is perceived only when the flow of muscle movement looks seamlessly easy to the observer. Grace is not achieved by accident but requires proper proprioceptive training.

The internet is full of great exercises that develop proprioceptive ability—enhancing balance and equilibrium. These exercises allow us to sense where our limbs are in space without looking at them. One simple exercise (at least to describe) is to stand on one leg bent at the knee, eyes closed, with hands outstretched to the side.

Proprioceptive exercises are also useful in exposing asymmetry in the body's muscular function. A drill that is recommended in swimming is to swim with eyes closed. Within 10 metres of 'blind' swimming, one realizes the differential power that the hands exert on the water, as you

find yourself straying into the neighbouring lane!

I would like to add a proprioceptive exercise that can be done anywhere.

■ Stand on a flat surface with your arms stretched out to your sides like you are making the letter "T."

■ Then lift one leg off the floor, bending it at the knee. If you are not steady on your feet, use one hand to hold on to a chair, counter, or wall.

■ Standing on the leg, keep that knee straight. Try to balance on that leg for up to 30 seconds. Then rest for up to 10 seconds.

■ When you can balance on one leg for 30 seconds with your eyes open, try to balance on it with your eyes closed.

■ When you can do this exercise with your eyes closed for 30 seconds and with ease and no pain, try standing on a pillow or piece of foam to increase the level of difficulty. A Bosu ball is often used in gyms to try out balance exercises.

Engineers are now forced to learn about proprioceptive abilities when trying to design more human-like robots. The future

of rowing machines will not be simple flywheel loading devices as they are today but instead will be able to do visual tracking of our limbs to quantify the extent of coordination, relative forces, and heading. Flight simulators look at response time of muscles to changing situations. Advanced visual graphics, thanks to high-speed computing, have made it possible to simulate every possible situation and prepare the pilot to act with a cool 'head'. There is no reason why these technological marvels should not get applied to sports such as rowing or swimming. Anyone interested in developing the next generation of the Ergometer ?



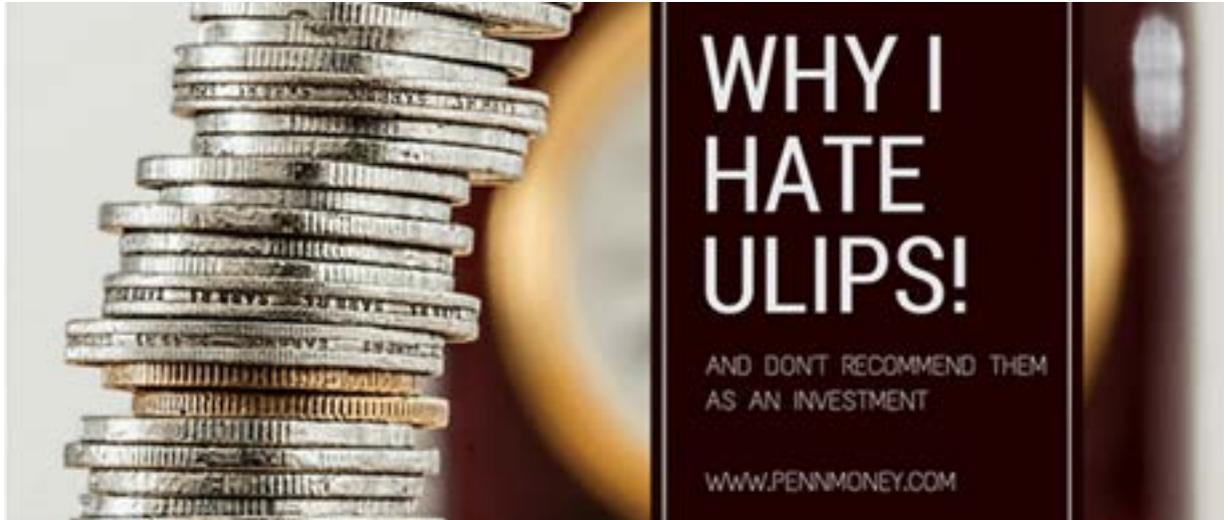
Dr. Arvind Parthasarathy - LA043

Arvind runs a company in Chennai that designs and makes specialty defence hardware. He is passionate about science and technology, driving in strange lands, swimming, rowing, and retro music.

THE MBC PHOTO COMPETITION (THEME: WATER) HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN THE LAST ISSUE OF OARSPEAK. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO MAY 31, 2018.

Oarspeak Team

WHY I ABSOLUTELY LOATHE ULIPS AND INSURANCE INVESTMENT SCHEMES



ULIPs or Unit Linked Insurance Plans combine insurance with investment. Basically, insurance companies collect money from you to invest on your behalf while they also give you life insurance cover. So, it's like a *Mutual Fund* in a way, with an amount of money that is promised to your family in case you die (how cheerful!). I was made to invest in one back in 2012 because of my incredibly pushy bank branch manager and my inability to say no back then. I've only regretted it since. For starters, **the money doesn't come back to you until the policy period matures** and retrieving it before it does is an incredible pain in the ass. So I'm stuck paying premiums until 2019 and will only receive the returns in 2022.

The second reason is something that I realized more recently. It is the amount of money that you will have to pay in "Charges" for your ULIP and make no mistake that these charges are the Insurance company's expenses which are not invested on your behalf. They are exorbitant and more importantly, how insurance companies are incredibly sneaky in the way that they portray them to be minor.

HOW TO CALCULATE CHARGES ON ULIPS

One way to find out how much you're

paying in charges is by reverse working the GST that you pay on your premium. This is because GST is levied only on charges in a ULIP, and not the investment component. So, let me give you the example of my own ULIP. My policy's premium payments are for 7 years and I pay roughly ₹5112 every month towards my policy. So,

One Month Instalment: ₹5112

One Month GST at 18% : ₹112

One Year's worth of GST paid: ₹112 x 12 = ₹1,344

7 Year's Worth of GST Paid: ₹1,344 x 7 = ₹9,408

If 18% is 9,408, what is 100%?:

9,408/18% = ₹52,267

Total money that goes down the toilet because of this: ₹52,267 + ₹9,408 = ₹61,746

MY GOD CAN YOU THINK OF THE THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO WITH THAT MONEY?

You can invest it in other funds, you can put it in an FD, you can buy plane tickets to Europe, you can buy these *gorgeous Valentino Rockstuds*, you can basically do anything other than spending it on a ULIP.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE INSURANCE?

Let's talk about the insurance cover.

The sum assured for a policy that costs

₹4,20,000/- (without GST) in premiums is ₹3,50,000/-. A regular insurance policy (without the investment) will give me a cover of ₹1 Crore at a premium of approximately ₹10,000/- ANNUALLY for someone my age. That is literally 1/6th of my present cost!

LONG STORY SHORT

Don't be fooled by ULIPs, friends. Insurance uncles will now talk about how Mutual Funds are taxed in the long-term and how insurance proceeds are tax free (which is true), but trust me when I tell you that your tax outgo from Mutual Funds will be lesser than paying for these nonsense charges. It's also important to remember that ULIPs are a lot more opaque in terms of where they invest in comparison to Mutual Funds. If you're young, earning good money and looking for ways to invest – just don't put your money in a ULIP.



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