

N.V.S. Reddy

MD, Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited

N.V.S. Reddy's college days were coloured red. He believed in the socialist principles popular at that time but the 1990s proved to be a watershed for him. The Indian economy was on the brink of collapse. Post 1993, the economic reforms were under way. As someone who worked for the government, he witnessed all these changes at close quarters. "In the end, I concluded



that what India needs is prosperity, which trickles down to every section of society and this is true for every nation," he says..

He also realised that private sector culture would form the backbone of economic development in India. In 2005-06, after having worked in the Indian Railways for over 20 years, he conceived the 71 km Hyderabad metro rail project as a PPP. He was inspired to take up this project when he was on deputation to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation between 2003 and 2006.

During this tenure, he pioneered a new scheme, "Fund Your City", in the PPP mode. Several skywalks and other public amenities were built without any funds from the government in return for advertising rights which were given to different companies. "The money that we generated for the development of various infrastructure projects gave me the confidence to build a metro in the city," he says. This mass transit project is due for financial closure in March.

Reddy is very enthusiastic about the project because he is sure it will change the social fabric of the city. The core areas which have decayed over the years will see a revival. It will also take the cause of women's emancipation forward because they will be able to travel freely and on their own in the metro.

On completing the metro project, Reddy would like to take this public-private initiative to the rural areas. He knows that much of a farmer's produce goes waste because there is a lack of storage facilities. So he would like to start a supply chain in the next few years.

Reddy's great strength is that he looks at everything with an open mind. He is also a strong believer in cross-cultural influences. He admires, for instance, what Enrique Penalosa did in Bogota, the capital of Columbia. His term as mayor changed the face of the city.

Penalosa worked on the principle of equal rights for all people and soon the cars were out and cycle tracks and pedestrians were in. Reddy believes that such measures have the potential to transform India too but they need to be carried out on a much larger scale. ■