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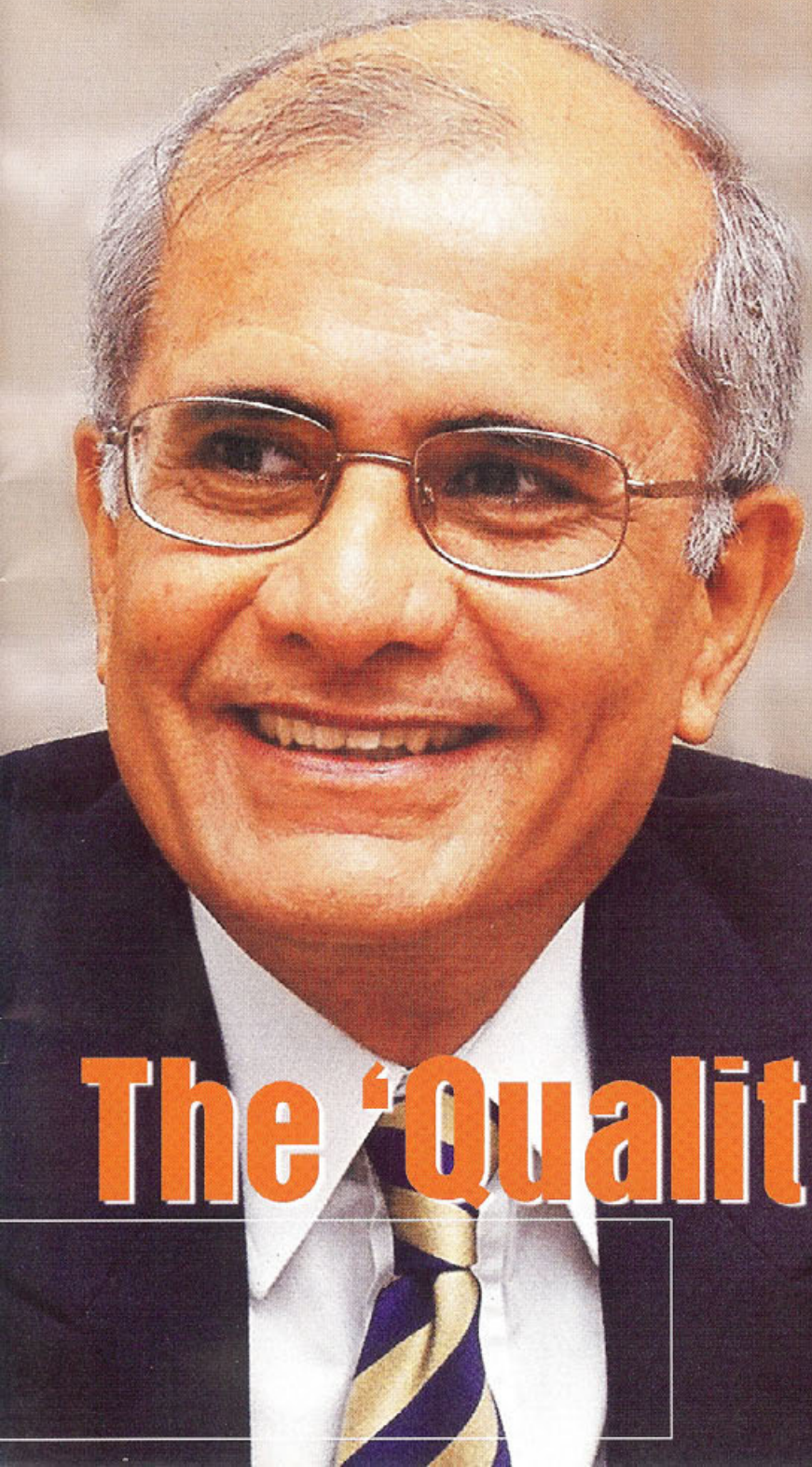
RUPEES 30

# DIGNITY

D I A L O G U E

THE MAGAZINE FOR PRODUCTIVE AGEING

NOVEMBER 2008



*'Eternal Space' in Her Heart*

Little known facet of veteran artist  
**Prafulla Dahanukar**

*Control Anger  
Before It Controls You*

*Mutual Funds –  
Concepts & Strategies*

*Glimpses of China : Beijing*  
A journey through  
the land of the dragon

*Moon: Myths,  
Madness and Much More...*

*The Eternal Mystery of Light*

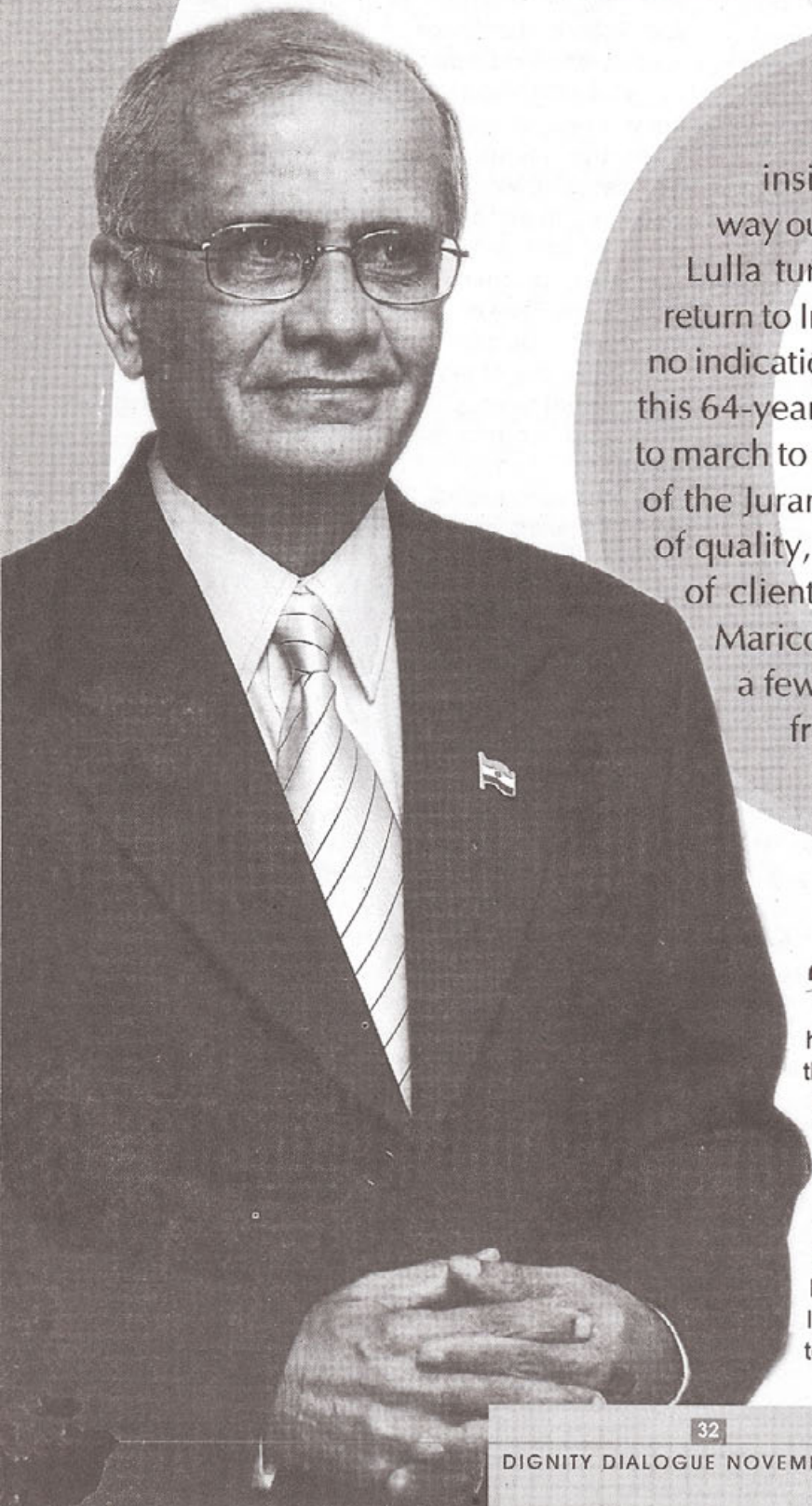
*A Writer without a Pause*  
**Prof Rup Devgun**

# The 'Quality' Guru

*Suresh Lulla*

# The 'Quality' Guru

Suresh Lulla



"Quality begins on the inside... and then works its way out." A living example, Suresh Lulla turned in his US citizenship to return to India in the 80s, when there was no indication of an economic boom. Today, this 64-year-old is teaching companies how to march to a new tune: quality. An associate of the Juran Institute of the US, the Ka'aba of quality, Qimpro has a whole spectrum of clients, ranging from Tata Steel to Marico Industries. **Shobha Nair** gets a few crucial lessons in quality from the master.

"As a father, I'd pick him for every life I have. There's so much I appreciate about him that it's difficult to summarise it in a couple of lines. I must salute my mother's support too. As parents, I think they make a great team and complement each other's roles in our lives. It's almost 15 years since I started working for him. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor (or boss). Anyone working for him is part of his Qimpro Family, is treated like a family member and he always has time to listen, care, and guide..."

"I don't think I could ask more from Dad. He is a true family man and has always put everyone in the family before himself. Following his and mom's footsteps, I've learned the importance of being honest, a good human being and treating everyone with respect. There's no one in the world I can trust as much as Dad, and if I ever need advice on anything, be it personal or professional, his words always carry more weight than any other's. I hope some day I can be as good a father and husband as he is..."

These words from his daughter Jigisha, and son Jogesh, in short, sums up the man on our cover -- 'Quality missionary' Suresh Lulla. And my brief interaction with him confirms their views -- being in the company of a gracious, considerate, loving couple. "Quality comes in two *avatars* – managing for quality, quality of management," explains Lulla on my query to define quality in NGOs. In the context of the Dignity Foundation, "the services should be defect-free, highly operational, with all the features needed by the elderly. This is 'managing for quality'", explains Lulla. When it comes to 'quality of management', it defines "organisational excellence, defining the market segment – need of the customers translated into services that satisfy them. This covers the entire gamut of the role of leadership, values lived by and brought into the organisation by its core team and trustees, a collective vision and responsibility to make it happen with a built-in strategy to attract and excite people to be a part of this movement ('fire in their bellies' are his actual words)." "One bad apple can make you lose a few rungs in reputation; so be careful whom you recruit and associate with," warns Lulla. He expands further: "Managing an NGO is like running a primary school. Your customers come to you because they trust you. Hence your support systems, including the information and knowledge of society, demographics and culture have to be accurate. Identify your value creation processes – healthcare, day-to-day maintenance, well-being of employees, etc." "There cannot be improvement without new ideas, and there cannot be new ideas without the participation of all. Doing competitive comparisons may not make a leader, bringing innovative ideas does," he states. "Your value creation can be compared to the Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh – where you plan, control, and continually improve the processes, with the customer receiving a service of a certain ranking," he sums up. In short, keep

your customer happy, and keep measuring your customer's happiness.

## A Man of 'Quality'

Born in Karachi in the pre-partition era, Suresh Lulla is happily married to Dr Shakuntala, a medical practitioner. She is the mainstay in most of the Rotary's medical camps across Mumbai. Jigisha manages Qimpro Consultants which Lulla set up after moving to India, with Jogesh also joining in, following his dad's footsteps after a stint abroad, to take care of quality in healthcare. "He's combined our areas of strength by joining his father's quality management with his mother's healthcare," jokes the fond father. His pride in his daughter shines through when he talks of her shouldering the entire burden while he is laid up with a bad back (he was on bed-rest when I met him in his house, though conducting meetings in that horizontal position).

"Being proactive in understanding one another's needs within a family; and offering personal services that satisfy those needs... better than alternative channels, with love and compassion. In other words, being best-in-class," is how he defines and practises quality in a family system.

What is quality in a school, which comes next to the family base? "Being student-focused, parent-focused, and society-focused. Remember, each has a right to change their mind. Therefore be proactive in



## COVER FEATURE

academia, as a centre for developing a cadre of quality professionals in India. The College operates through a network of Master Trainers who specialise in either the operational or strategic dimensions of quality.

In 2005, Lulla launched the **BestPrax Club** for sharing and growing 'generic' business practices, as an objective continual process for surveying, identifying, selecting and recognising 'best practices' in Indian industry. It gives an opportunity for people to benchmark and innovate, with a 'knowledge base' of over one million practices culled from the world over.

Then comes **QualTech** as an objective process for the Indian industry and academia to share, collaborate on, showcase and recognise 'continual quality improvement' projects and practices.

### Recognising Quality

Suresh Lulla's pioneering efforts initiated the quality revolution in India. His contribution in this revolution has gone a long way towards his mission, 'Made in India: A world-class marketing asset'. In 1994, as Chairman of the IMC Quality Awards Committee, Lulla instituted the IMC Ramkrishna Bajaj National Quality Award for business excellence, education and healthcare; and the IMC Juran Quality Medal for a role model quality evangelist.

"In 1996, Dr Juran gave me permission to use his name for a Juran Medal, awarded to a role model statesman for quality in India. His key condition: his name could only be associated with a non-profit organisation. The selection process is managed by the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) and the award is named, IMC Juran Medal. This recognition has become a benchmark for quality leaders in India," informs Lulla. Its past winners include stalwarts like Dr F C Kohli, Dr R A Mashelkar, Dr Verghese Kurien, Dr J J Irani, Ratan Tata, Rahul Bajaj, Dr S S Badrinath of Shankara Netralaya, and E Sreedharan of Metro Rails last year.

"Such recognitions from institutions like yours spur me to continue to perform better and better," admits N R Narayana Murthy, Chairman of the Board, Infosys, on winning the Qimpro Platinum Standard for Infosys in 2003. "I'm truly beholden to the panel, which thought I was worthy of the honour and also to Qimpro Foundation, which set the stage for recognising the 'quality evangelists' as you call them," says Dr R A Mashelkar, Director General, CSIR. "I feel privileged to be considered for the Qimpro Platinum Standard 2006," was the acceptance speech of Ratan Tata, Chairman, Tata Sons.

In 1991, Lulla established Qimpro Standards Organisation for conducting assessments and audits of organisations against business excellence models as well as world-class quality systems criteria. Several client organisations have won the IMC Ramkrishna Bajaj National Quality Award, Deming Application Prize, and Asia Pacific Quality Award. Today, recognised as one of the most stringent and prestigious corporate awards in India and abroad, "our selection processes are validated by the fact that for three years in a row, our award winners have gone to win the Asia Pacific Region Quality Award, which encompasses the entire region from USA's west coast, Australia, Japan, and South-East Asia till India," informs Lulla.

In 1992, Lulla initiated an improvement-team competition for the QualTech Prize. This competition currently extends to innovation. Effective 2008, the IMC will host an annual series of seminars on the teachings of Dr Josph M Juran, under Lulla's guidance. In the words of Dr Juran, 'Long live the quality revolution!'



Mr Lulla with Khun Nataya Chungcham,  
Director of Momentum Consultant, in Thailand

## Writer to Boot

Suresh Lulla is an author with over 100 pioneering articles in high profile publications such as *Business India*, *The Economic Times*, *Business Standard*. His article on 'India Awards Itself for Excellence' was published by the Institute of Quality Assurance, UK, in their journal *Quality World*. He has a dedicated column in *Indian Management*, the journal of the All India Management Association.

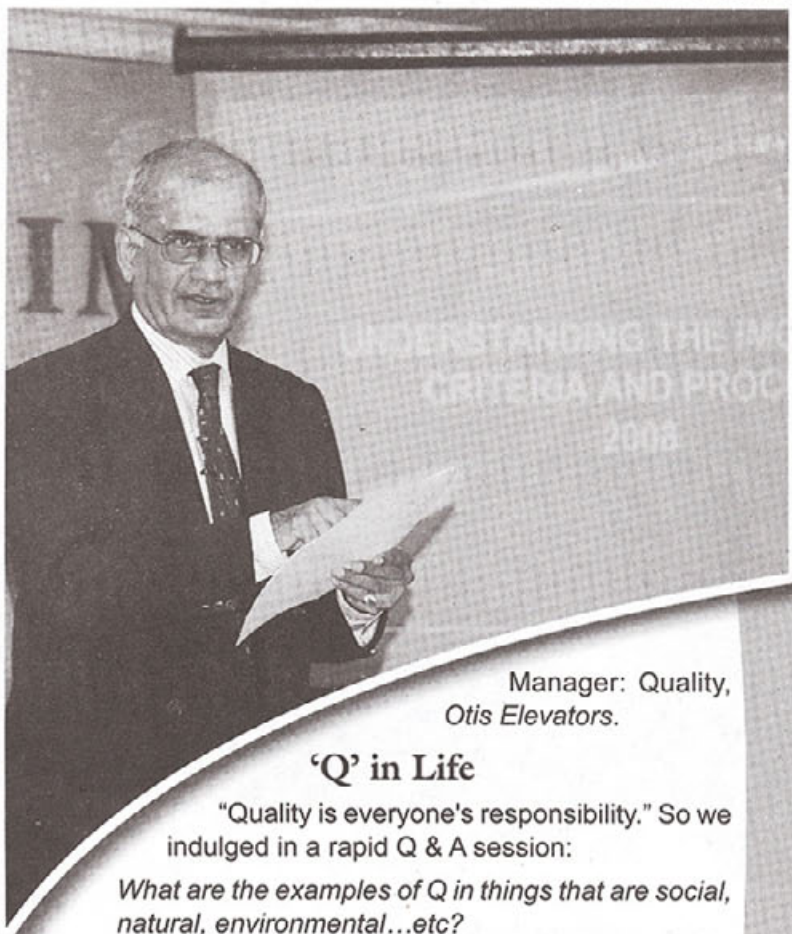
For his quality knowledge and editorial skills, Lulla was invited as Consultant for an anniversary issue of *Business Today*, dedicated to 'The Quality Revolution'. Thereafter, he was also Consultant to *The Week*, for their lead story 'A Passion for Excellence'. Dr J M Juran invited Lulla on the Board of Editors, for his book, *A History of Managing for Quality*. In 2000, Bill Wortman, Founder, Quality Council of Indiana, invited Lulla to provide technical content for the Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA) Primer.

He has authored *World-Class Quality: An Executive Handbook*, published by Tata McGraw-Hill (2003). Since 2004, he has a dedicated management-column in *Electrical & Electronics*, as well as *Chemical World*. Commencing 2008, he authors a blog on business excellence for [www.domain-b.com](http://www.domain-b.com).

## His Share of Awards

Naturally, good work is followed by awards and recognition in its wake. In 2004, Lulla was awarded the IMC Juran Centennial Medal for his pioneering contribution to quality practices in India. In 2005, he won the Distinguished Alumnus Award by the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, in recognition of his outstanding achievements in Quality Management Consultancy. In 2006, the Institute of Management Consultants of India conferred on him the award of Fellow Member.

"I feel Qimpro has contributed a lot in bringing importance to 'Quality' as a strategic initiative for Indian companies. Today 'quality' is no longer one of the jobs which every manager has to do, it is THE job. The change in my perception has led me to take it as my career. And I owe this change to my Quality Gurus like Lulla," says Sudheer Soman, General



Manager: Quality,  
Otis Elevators.

## 'Q' in Life

"Quality is everyone's responsibility." So we indulged in a rapid Q & A session:

*What are the examples of Q in things that are social, natural, environmental...etc?*

**Social:** Dabbawala services in Mumbai, Shankara Netralya in Chennai, Delhi Metro in Delhi, Amul milk cooperative model of production and distribution, Lijjat papad.

**Natural:** The birth of a child in all creation; the miracle of life in a seed.

**Environmental:** Management of chemical plants in the Aditya Birla Group, in India, Thailand, Indonesia, Egypt, etc.

*On a final analysis, what's happening in our country?*

Globalisation and survival in a competitive market are catalysing organisations to understand and satisfy the demanding needs of customers in Japan, Europe, America, etc. The resultant change is good for domestic customers too.

*Can senior citizens play a role in your vision?*

Yes, in training and facilitating the implementation of basic housekeeping practices in all walks of private and public life. Good housekeeping practices are a pre-requisite for creating a quality culture.