

Interviewee: Devinder Mahajan
Interviewers: Xingyi Li, Tian-Tian He
Date/Time: March 12, 2018 at 2:00PM
Transcribed by: Xingyi Li, Tian-Tian He
Audio Track time: 1:58:30

Background:

Devinder Mahajan was born in Sialkot, Pakistan on March 15, 1936 (at the time, Sialkot was part of Indian territory). He worked as an engineer in India after graduating college. He immigrated to the United States in 1960 to pursue graduate education in engineering at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. He then moved to Houston with his family in 1975. He and his father co-founded the Arya Samaj Greater Houston and he co-founded the DAV Montessori school and a Sunday school. He is currently involved in building Houston's Gandhi Museum.

Setting:

The interview was conducted at Arya Samaj Greater Houston located in 14375 Schiller Road, Houston, Texas in the afternoon of March 12, 2018. Before the interview Mr. Mahajan gave us a tour around Arya Samaj. The location included the Arya Samaj temple, where the interview was conducted, and DAV Montessori school. The temple consists of prayer room, library, bookstore, kitchen, etc. The DAV Montessori school that was mentioned in the interview is located behind Arya Samaj temple.

Key:

DM: Devinder Mahajan
XL: Xingyi Li
TH: Tian-Tian He
—: speech cuts off; abrupt stop
...: speech trails off; pause
Italics: emphasis
(?): preceding word may not be accurate
[Brackets]: actions [laughs, sighs, etc.]

Interview transcript:

XL: Can you tell me more—tell me about your childhood? What was it like growing up in Sialkot?

DM: Uh, I was born in district Sialkot, uh, which is now in Pakistan. Uh,-er- was born in a small village. Uh, I don't remember too much about the village, but uh, uh, we had a - my father's father—grandfather--had a big house. There were 4 brothers, and there were uh. . . at 4 corners, there were big houses made. And their business was to lend money. And, but my father had a master in economics. And when, uh, he grew up, he didn't want to stick to the lending business.

So, he. . .went to another part of uh, India, which is again, that is also in Pakistan, where there were new irrigation canals. And his bu-business flourished like anything. Uh, they were. . .they had made. . .so many different companies, uh cotton was the. . .uh major crop in that area. So, uh we were. . .so doing well economically there, had there been not Pakistan, I don't think I would have come to United States. So, in 1947 when India got independence, unfortunately the riots broke between the. . .Muslims majority in Pakistan, and majority in India, Hindus. And that forced my father to drop everything and move to India. So, all of a sudden, from a big, big businessman, he became literally homeless. And he had to then start all over again when we moved to India. I still recollect how we were. . .uh put in a military truck to move from Pakistan to India. And uh, in between, we, at one place, we were in a military camp, this--I was only at 12 year old at that time. And my father had to stay back, my mother and my whole family were sent in this military truck, then one day we were waiting and waiting in a coal uh. . .this train and at the end of the day we came that this train is not going to go. And our faces were black with the coal, and so on. And somehow we made it to India, and my father joined later.

XL: Okay. So what were your father's profession again? After you left?

DM: My father was business - he started with uh, a different, uh uh, crops, but cotton was the major of them. And from cotton, he produced different products and so on, and uh and he developed some mills, some uh. . .uh other means to expand the business.

XL: Okay. So how long did you stay at the military camp?

DM: In the military camp we stayed only for 3, 4 days during transition. But we were, I was 12 years old, my mother and uh rest of my brother and sister, we were - we didn't know where we are going, what is happening, uh all we knew that we have to leave our home and go to a different place. And luckily my uh, what you call, my mother's sister, he, he welcomed us, we stayed with them for quite some time, they gave us their clothes and so on, because when we left, we could not bring anything with us.

XL: So uh, how many siblings do you have?

DM: We have - we are 8 brothers and 2 sisters.

XL: So you are the youngest?

DM: I'm among the- there was one brother older than me who is no more here, but otherwise I'm the older brother. My sisters- one is older than me and one is quite younger than me.

XL: Um, so what was your elementary school like? Do you have - took primary school in Pakistan?

DM: In - in [inaudible]. Yeah, I started elementary school in Pakistan. But [coughs] there, again, when we moved to Pakistan - I mean India - we had to switch the language, the language we were learning in uh Pakistan was Urdu, and here we are - learn Hindi, and uh English was taught after the 5th grade.

XL: Okay. So - so you started learning English after 5th grade?

DM: Yes.

XL: And before that, so you said on your form - that - you say you speak Punjab? [**DM:** uh..but..] Punjabi?

DM: I speak Punjabi, that's the - uh the - state where, where I belong to. And Hindi is the national language of India, and of course English everybody learns.

XL: Mhmm. Um, so do other extended family members live with you?

DM: Uh, when uh... in India?

XL: Uh, when - back like before you go to India.

DM: Yeah. Uh, there was my grandfather and uh grandmother and so on, they were also different part of Pakistan, because - because they were where I was born, where my father was born. So, after um independence, and the partition of India, they also moved and, of course, my father had to take care of my grandparents also.

XL: And after you moved to India you're staying with your uncles and aunts?

DM: For - for a while, we stayed with uncle and aunties, they helped us, then slowly we . . .uh, got into uh . . .some house which was left by the . . .Pakis - the people who moved to Pakistan. But ultimately my father started a new business in Chandigarh. Chandigarh is the new city which was built because during partition of Punjab, we lost the capital. So they thought we need to build a new capital, and that's where my business - my father started altogether new business, which was construction. Because he felt the new city is going to be built, so we have to build roads, all kinds of structures, every facility, so - and he had to start it from scratch and taking some loan and started a business.

XL: So was it hard for your family at that point?

DM: It was *very* hard, because we had a big family, uh, of course some of the children wer born in - now in India, but uh... when - before uh, the partition, uh my father was - had a master degree in economics. At that time, there were only 20 people in the whole Punjab who graduate in economics. So he was uh, very very exceptional. And so much so that everybody used to call him [speaking Punjabi], which means "the master degree", because it was so rare. And uh, so that's why he was able to expand his business in Pakistan, which is now Pakistan. And later on, he started altogether new business, and it is - in fact this is a very good question you ask - during that early education when my father was establishing myself. He thought, I'm being older son, should take 2 year engineering education and start helping him. So, I took that two year engineering, uh, course and that. . .when I started working, after 2 years or so I was so disappointed, because in that business, in construction in India, used to be so many bribes and all this, and I was not raised like that. So, I was totally sort of depressed of this thing, and my father realized that, "he needs to get better education." He didn't tell me at that time, he thought he has enough money, don't worry. But he actually kept a secret, but he said, "You go back to uh, higher education in engineering." And what I found, the system in uh British system, is what...uh - is used in India. And in that system, you could not go back and take another 2 years and do with full engineering degree. You have to start from scratch. So, at that time I met some gentleman who had similar background and he had been United States. He told me, "Don't waste your time here. You get - uh, go to United States, you will get credit of uh 2 years whatever you have done, and whatever extra money you have to spend, that will be compensated because here you have to spend 4 years, plus you will be earning quite late." So that attracted me and I just - I was totally ignorant, there was no internet, no information. Totally [coughs] didn't know where I'm going and what I'm going to face. And somebody uh gave me some information about uh, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, that there, couple of people with my background have gone there, studied, and the university recognizes what we are capable of with 2 years of degree which I have. And that's what I applied, that's where I got admission, and then I - uh, in 1960, moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan.

XL: How old were you by that time?

DM: I was uh - uh a 25 year old.

XL: 25. So you worked uh, as an engineer for 2 years before that?

DM: Yes.

XL: Okay. Uh, so let's go back a little bit to like, when you fled to India. So how - was it difficult for your family to raise like 10 kids?

DM: Very much.

XL: So how do you - how did your parents...?

DM: Well, this is - this was in fact after my [coughs] 2, uh, 2 - I finished my - here, my education in almost year and a half. Was taking very high load, 18 hour, this thing. Our aim and objective was to finish in the minimum time so that we could start earning and hopefully send some money back home. And that's what we did, I did work for uh, I mean finished my bachelor's degree in a year and a half and another year I completed my master degree. Having good grades I was able to then get a job and uh, started helping my father. In fact, very little money I got from my parents once I came here, and came to know that uh my father financial situation is very very tight.

XL: So when did you get your first job?

DM: Oh, I got my first job in Cleveland, Ohio. And-

XL: Uh, I mean back to India.

DM: Pardon me?

XL: I mean back in India.

DM: In India, it was public works department. The - this was the uh division of the engineering, where you make two wells and help the irrigation. The places where there are no canals and so on. And uh, that's something I did not enjoy, I didn't like.

XL: Okay. So as a teenager have you ever dreamt of going to US?

DM: Uh, I did know nothing about United States! [**DM** and **XL** laugh] If somebody had asked me of this thing here, even when I came to this country, I was very, very ignorant about the United States. I didn't know uh how the system is - of education works, whether I would succeed or not. The person who helped me little bit there in India, he told me one thing. If you work hard, you would succeed. And that was the one - with that hope, I decided to come to United States. I knew I can work hard. And, and during that school, uh, when I was uh going through the uh master and even during the first 2 semester, I started working in a lab, in the library, I was so excited to have 80 cents an hour from the library, and dollar 25 cents from the uh lab job. And it was a big, uh... sort of surprise for me. Even after working those two jobs, I used to go home - some people's home to cut grass and wash the walls and- and clean, whatever is this thing here,

so that I could have enough money to pay for the next year and my education. So that I don't have to ask money from home.

XL: So why did you choose to study engineering?

DM: Uh, heh. This is something in India at that time, whatever your parents tell you, you just follow. And my father felt [laughs] engineering is a good field, and I would do well, so I took his instruction, and I have no regret, but it was not something I decided on my own.

XL: So did your siblings also study engineering?

DM: Uh, my - one brother studied engineering, one brother is a physician, one is a scientist, uh... one or two are in business, so all kind of uh - right now, in - in after I came here, my brother who is a physician, he came and uh, he did his uh internship, and right now there are two brothers who are in Los Angeles. One is a physician and one is a scientist. Uh, I, I along with my one brother who uh is in business, he is in Conroe. And there is another younger brother who is not married and so on and he works with the -with my brother who is in business.

XL: What about your sisters?

DM: My older sister is uh in India, and uh she was the one who uh was - became a teacher and a principal in a school. She married uh my brother-in-law who also is in education, and uh luckily my brother-in-law started this concept of school - private school, 'cause otherwise in India there were mostly government funded schools. And that became such a successful model, and that's where the DAV name come froms - comes from - and uh, he became well-respected, uh uh...erm...what you call, uh, educationist. And right now, he's the vice president of the DAV school system, which has 900 institutions. Including some medical, dentist, and one university.

XL: So what does the DAV stand for?

DM: It's uh the Dayanand Anglo Vedic school. Uh uh uh...that's - in India, the... after our uh Swami Dayanand who is the founder of Arya Samaj. Uh after his death, there were two segment. One felt that it should be stick to the old way of education, and one was the modern way of education that the children would learn English and all these things here. So, this uh...forward-looking school system, uh that is called DAV school system.

XL: Um, so were you on your own when you first arrived at US?

DM: Pardon me?

XL: Are you by yourself, like when you first arrived in the US?

DM: Yeah, when I arrived myself, I was lucky that there were 3, 4 other students, uh mostly engineering but not all, who were looking for a, uh one person to join because they had a home with 5 rooms and we had a common kitchen. And I joined them. It was a big help to me because I could communicate with them, I can uh, learn how things work here, how you prepare for your exam, and so on, and so that was a big help.

XL: So what was it like when you first arrived at the University of Michigan? Do you like it? Are you nervous?

DM: Yes, I was nervous [**XL:** laughs]. I can tell you that I didn't know at that time, I - because in India the, the mode of transportation is, if you take a bus it's always cheaper than flying, so from New York I took a bus to go to uh, Michigan. And to me all the buses look alike. And I didn't want to leave the bus because if the uh bus goes away [laughs] I won't know which bus to take! So I was sticking very close to the bus even where - wherever it stopped. That's how ignorant I was about United States. And all the buses looked blue and I didn't know where to look for the sign. [laughs]

XL: Um, so you arrived - you first arrived in New York -

DM: First arrived in New York, and then from there took a bus to go to Ann Arbor, Michigan.

XL: How long does it take to get there?

DM: Uh... I don't know, it almost took 12 hours or something like that. There were so many different stops. And every place, uh, when I was hungry, I went to the one little shop, and I asked for some uh, biscuits. Biscuit is not word used here for cookies, [laughs] so they didn't understand. Finally I could point to - "give me those!" [**DM** and **XL** laugh]

XL: So what difficulties or like interesting experience did you encounter like as a new immigrant?

DM: Uh, when we - we - what happened is that there was a big help from the old students who were there, who had gone through that. And they told us you know how to prepare for the exam, how to balance the courses, some hard courses, some you know average courses. And that was a big help. And also uh we had no other business except to study, eat, and study. And go to school and study, come back and study. We didn't know anything what is happening outside. And only after the semester is over that we - so by God's grace, did good at school, I had a grade point average well - about 3.6 [**XL:** Wow.] and uh did well even in the master and so on, so.

XL: So you said you finished uh bachelor's degree in one and a half year?

DM: Yes.

XL: How did you manage to do that?

DM: This was - see, I - they gave literally 2 year credit, because I spent 2 year. And here it takes some people 2 years, some people take even uh, longer than that. But uh like average load was 12 hours, I was taking 16 hours, 17 hours on average, so that I could finish earlier. Because then I don't have to pay a fee for another semester.

XL: Were there - oh okay -

TH: How did you communicate with your uh, family in India?

DM: [laughs] Let me take a break, and then - then I will tell you.

TH and XL: Sure!

DM: Very good question.

[recording stops at 25:22, picks up at 25:23]

XL: Do you wanna state your question again?

TH: Oh yeah. Um, so how did you communicate with your family back in India?

DM: At that time, the only way to communicate was through letters. And it used to take at least 7, 8 days minimum when they would receive the letter or I would receive from them. The phone call was so expensive that it - if I remember correctly it was more than 3 dollars a minute. And then the connection was so poor that you could hardly talk. You keep on shouting and uh, so I don't think during the uh, all the school year, I...talked to my parents by phone. Maybe once if I remember correctly.

XL: Um, so who were your first friends in US?

DM: In the US the most - the first friends were luckily that these - I told you about 3, 4 uh another students who were from the uh same state where I come from. So it was very easy to communicate and uh, they were, I believe, our best friends to guide us, to help us.

XL: Okay. So it - was there a huge Indian community in the college?

DM: Mm, no, at that time, uh I don't know exactly how many total students were there but maybe uh...50 to 100, somewhere in that range. Nothing [coughs] even less, probably.

XL: Was there an Indian community, like student association?

DM: No, there was nothing of the sort.

XL: Uh so when did your parents move to the US?

DM: Uh [coughs] see what happened that uh, [coughs] after my... uh..., first job in Cleveland, Ohio, and later on we moved to in Houston, uh my father had a heart condition, and I felt he was not getting a good treatment there. So I asked my uh father and also one younger brother and his family to move to Houston and start a business. And uh [door opens] this is something uh, happened - this happened in 1979, when my father came to uh Houston. He had come earlier one time, but at that time he just visited and went back. So when he came s - uh, permanently, that's where he started working, uh, dealing with Hindu, uh Indian families about our values, about our culture, uh how we should uh teach our children and so on. And this - this is his picture [points to photograph out of frame]. And uh he - since he was very well-educated, and he was follower of Swami Dayanand Saraswati who's the founder of Arya Samaj. He uh, I felt that he would get bored here, but he found a niche, and he was going to different people's homes, doing various religious uh rituals and [inaudible], teaching the values and so on. In fact, he was a lot more popular than me or my wife because we both were working. She's a physician, I was at a full-time job, we had two children to take care, there was no help available. And - except mother was my - was a help when she came here. And uh, so uh he knew lot more people than I did [laughs] at that time. Was socializing and so on.

XL: So could you tell me more about your job in Ohio?

DM: Uh [laughs], it's very interesting. At that time when I graduated, uh, February '63, and uh right at that time, only way for foreign students to get a job was to go different places and knock at the door. By sending resume, you won't be able to. So I went, first went to Chicago. And it is month of February, I did not wait even one day. Right after my last exam finished, I remember very well I took the car and drove to Chicago. And uh [laughs] and the way when I got stuck, but luckily somebody pulled me over, so. But Chicago was so windy and cold, I said, "Even if I get a job here, [laughs] I'm not going to stay here." So, I did knock so many doors and so on. There was a, one little offer, but I decided in my mind, I have to try some other place, so I came back to Ann Arbor. Then I had a few a few interview in Detroit, Michigan. In between, I had a few days

- because I was so anxious that every day I'm not working, I'm losing money. And money was very, very important at that time. So [coughs] I came to Toledo, Ohio, to maybe look if there is something. And there I saw a newspaper, uh which had this advertisement from this company Arthur G. McKee. It was a international company uh mostly involved with the chemical plants and so on. And they advertised, "immediate opening for structural engineer". And I said, "My gosh, this is for me!" So I thought that I want to be the first person to go to that office and have an interview, so that nobody else takes that job. So I got off like 5 o'clock in the morning and arrived (?) there almost 8, 8:30. And even the uh human relation manager was not there when I got there. [laughs] So (laughs), and it is very interesting what happened there. As I walked in, he saw my face and he said, "Are you on student visa?" I said yes. And he said, "Sorry, we don't hire people on student visa." And I was really shook up, because I had come with lots of hope. So I said, "Sir," and I don't know how it came to my uh mouth, "Sir, if that was your policy, why did you put it in the newspaper? I got up 5 o'clock in the morning and came here so that -" [laughs] "I'm really anxious and qualified for the job." He said, "We asked for 2 year experience." I said, "You didn't give me a chance. Let me explain. But you asked for bachelor degree, and uh I have a master degree, so at least you can count one year experience. And then I have worked 2 year in India." So he didn't know what to say, and he said, "Okay, sit down." He said uh, he asked me some question that - "We have not hired anybody on student visa, so how does it work?" I said, "You have to uh, I can work year and a half and if you like my work, you can sponsor at that time for my uh, permanent residence, and uh if you don't like my work than uh... uh that's my - would be my first job."

So he said [inaudible]. So the - the other students, had taught that once you get a chance to talk, then you put your resume and the grades in front of the person, and that's the only way it might uh attract them. When he saw my grades and so on, he said okay, and he called the head of the department of structural engineering. And uh he saw my grades and so on and interview, and they changed their policy to hire students on student visa. And the other students had told that, "Don't tell how much money you [laughs] expect. Let them tell you, then you tell them." So this guy asked me - the human relation manager - "How much money you expect?" I said, "I don't know, you hire so many people, you can - whatever I deserve, you offer. If I don't like, then..." Because the other students had told, "Don't sell yourself short." [laughs] So, I was following their instructions. So, he said - and he insisted, "Oh, no you can.". So he said, "Okay, you write down on this piece of paper what you're expecting. I have made up my mind what I'm going to offer you. Let's see the difference." So his offer was \$25 per month [laughs] more than what I was expecting. So I was very happy. And this was the highest one- what I could even otherwise expect.

XL: Wow.

DM: So, and then he said uh, and meanwhile, whatever I told them about the student visa, you can work here and - he called the immigration office. And he had got the information which I had told them. So that got exactly verified, so that way uh he felt confident that I'm telling the truth.

TH: So why couldn't you send in just the resume first? Why did you have to go face to face?

DM: Because when they see a foreign student - and uh, at that time, uh this - lot of economy started doing better when uh President Kennedy made some changes in the uh... about the [coughs] business reduction and business level and so on. And during this, slowly the economy started picking up. Because like now lot of students get jobs, uh in the campus, there are so many opportunities. At that time the maximum I could get as a foreign student was to - in the lab, to clean the beakers and uh lab utensils. So [coughs] uh at that time it was very clear to most of the foreign students that you have to knock on the door. And somewhere, somebody would see your grades and so on, and right (?) offer you a job. And that's how it happened in a way. [coughs]

XL: So did they sponsor your uh -

DM: Yeah, they - they sponsored that so, I got the immigration. Although I did not stay very long with that company [laughs] because there were much better opportunities at another company and then I don't know exactly, I think I stayed with them about 2 year, 2 and a half year, that... [inaudible] and that was another engineering company.

XL: So after you leave your first job uh do you just move to US? Uh, to Houston, sorry.

DM: No. I worked in Cleveland from about 12 years, from '63 to '75. And in uh January '75, I moved to Houston.

XL: Is that because your father came here?

DM: No, father came much later.

XL: Okay.

DM: See, my uh wife is a physician. She had got training in pathology in the - Cleveland. And uh, another interesting thing we found at that time, which you can appreciate, that uh she was being a pathologist - she has to sort of work with the surgeons to diagnose and so on. And uh where she had done the uh... residency, the one of the doctor who was in charge really liked that work. And he wanted that she should be the [inaudible] pathologist in that hospital. And uh [coughs] she applied for that, and uh the human relations department said, "No, we don't have a

job." And my - this other doctor who liked my wife, says, "No, the job is open!" And slowly we realized - and he was very frank - told that the pathologists don't want to work with a woman - I mean the surgeons don't want to work with a woman pathologist. And that was very shocking experience. So the, for her, the limitations were that there is not too many job opportunities. And uh, we were then decided that we need to move to a place where there is equal opportunities for both in the medicine area as well as in the engineering area. And uh Houston fit in perfect for that. This uh medical center was growing like crazy, and engineering firms were doing great business with the oil industry and so on. And so much so that even when we moved to Houston, I had got a job in Dow Chemical Company. But she still didn't have a job. What - when she met some other Indian-American who have - were living here earlier, they told that this is the place to move. And we made a bold step, and then after, within few months of our moving to Houston, she got a job and started working.

XL: So, how did you know about Houston like in the first place? How did you know that?

DM: Oh, we hear that – we uh... there was 1 or 2 people who uh knew some friends in Cleveland, they introduced and we asked them, uh how is the job market there in engineering and they said this city is growing like crazy, this is the place to move. And uh, our whole-whole decision was nothing more than where will get both of us the job opportunity.

XL: Uh, so how does the Houston Indian community compare to Cleveland's?

DM: Oh, uh, it was relatively, at that time, I think still Houston community was a little bigger than the Cleveland community. But once we came here, uh, we got introduced to some other friends, she got uh... some friends who were previously graduated from the same school in India. So uh, very soon we felt at home. Uh I was doing - I had got a very good job at Dow Chemical. And uh she got a job at the University of Texas in pathology, and then everything started working and we both had the opportunity to flourish.

XL: Um, so let's go to your family. So how did you meet your wife?

DM: Uh...uh [laughs], uh after I uh, graduated and got a job, it took quite a bit time uh to get uh the immigration visa. And it was in fact changes made during the Kennedy administration where the uh, that helped us to uh uh - students from India get immigrant visa much faster than it used to be before. So, when I got the immigrant visa, uh - here, I did not date anybody, I had - my purpose was to go back to India and get married. And uh my younger brother who was engaged, he was waiting so... purpose was to go back and get married. And uh, in India at that time, mostly it was arranged marriage, family know both each other, and uh so happened that my... wife's uh.... grandfather and my father, they were good friends. So, her grandfather used to brag about her granddaughter and how good she is in medical school, she had got admission in the

top most uh school in uh De – uh very good medical school in Delhi. So [coughs] uh my father said that would be [laughs] a good match. And that's the only girl I met, we de - decided, uh one - uh, we met I think one or two times before marriage, and we get married, live happily ever after [laughs] .

XL: So you got married in India and then you -

DM: Yeah, we got married in India. And my brother, who was waiting, we both got married, very simple ceremony, because my father did not believe the dowry system and all those things because he was a sort of, fight against those old system of dowry and so on. So, it was very simple marriage. And those are the things, really, uh... made this marriage, to me and to the other family, much more... uh enjoyable for her, because she also did not believe in the dowry system. So, she really respected our family, that we are not looking for any money or clothes or any dowry and so on. All we are interested - because in the marriage system what they try to do is to match people with the similar education, cultural background and so on. When that happens, generally the marriages have been very, very successful. Can I take a break?

XL: Mhm, sure.

[recording stops and restarts 48:00]

XL: Uh, so did - so after you got married, both you and your wife moved back to US, is that correct?

DM: Well, yeah. Uh, we got - I leave end of December, 23rd or something. We got married in January 16, and at that time, we [coughs] uh did not uh know how much time it would take for her to get visa. So luckily the company I was working with, I asked them, is there a possibility to - I can work in uh...uh uh France, Paris, uh where they had an [inaudible] had another office, for the temporary few months, whatever it takes when she get the visa. So luckily my boss was very happy, she - he made a special arrangement that I should be able to work in uh Europe, and she joined me in Europe, and [inaudible] she got the visa, and then right after we - and it took only 3, 4 months, then we moved to Hous - ah, moved to Cleveland.

XL: So your wife has - have been practicing as a physician after she got to US? Does she go to a university?

DM: She had to go only to the residency program. [**XL:** Okay.] Uh, the rest of the way, she didn't have to go to the medical school or anything, she just had to go through the uh specialty of pathology, first you have to go one year other residency and then go to the pathology residency.

XL: So how - how many children do you have?

DM: We have 2 daughters, uh both are married. Uh, one daughter is in Jacksonville, Florida, younger one. Uh, the - she is an attorney. And uh, they have 2 children, one boy and one girl. And her husband is a physician, ophthalmologist. And uh the other daughter is in London, and her husband is a businessman. Uh, she herself was a physician, but she didn't practice, she took care of the children, they have 3 children and uh they live in London. We visit both places whenever we get opportunity or they visit us whenever. But here we are by ourselves.

XL: Um, so what were the biggest challenges and rewards in raising child?

DM: Uh... I think uh, we didn't face, really, challenges raising the children. I think we were lucky. Uh, they were both very good students. Uh they took their studies very seriously, and uh having my father and mother also living with us at the same time, I think it added very positive impact on their life. In that we respect our parents, we take care of them, and I think they got good values uh by going through that exercise. Plus, my father being uh... sort of a preacher, well-educated, helped them to understand our values and so on. And uh we - both of them did excellent, uh my father - my mother - uh, my wife [laughs] my wife was very strong opinion - of this opinion that children should go to public school so that they don't feel that uh they are special or something. And both went to Memorial High School, and both did very well. Younger one even had a national scholarship. And both went to Duke to do their uh... undergraduate work, and and uh one who's in - became an attorney, she went to law school at UT and other one who's a physician, she did 2 years in Baylor College here and 2 years after marriage in New York.

XL: Wow. So did your - you and your wife have like high expectations to your kids? Do you like, do you have like, oh you have to be a physician or you have to be...?

DM: Uh, it is from our culture that uh uh we want our children to get the best possible education, and we are - most of the Indian-Americans would sacrifice, give any sacrifice to give their children the best possible education. And so much so that my older daughter, when uh, she got uh - she got admission in Rice, as well as in Duke, and when I asked her, she says, "Well, financially, it would be good I should stay in Rice, but I'd like to go to Duke." So I did not come in her way, I said, "Okay, you go to Duke." Because education is very, very important in our culture in every way, you will see even my experience working with DAV Montessori School, that children - parents are willing to sacrifice their convenience, comfort, for the children to get the best possible education.

XL: Um, so do you see any conflicts between your Indian uh identity and your American identity, like culture?

DM: Uh uh... the, what happened is that [laughs] the older one, while she was in college, uh, some boy uh fell in love with her and they started dating there. And uh uh, it worked out that both were happy so we didn't have to say anything. That our preference was naturally that if it works out, that they should marry another Indian [coughs] and uh, younger one in the beginning had some issue on this. But nothing more than just uh, she was little more, give us challenge [laughs] question this thing here. But uh she also married uh on their own dating [inaudible] a physician you know, in Dallas even, working in Dallas uh and then she met this - her future husband.

XL: So are the- their husbands also Indian?

DM: Pardon me? - Yeah, both of them.

XL: Um, so does Arya Samaj mesh easily with the typical American lifestyle, do you think?

DM: Say it again please?

XL: Does Arya Samaj mesh easily with the typical American lifestyle?

DM: Yeah. There is absolutely no conflict, what Arya Samaj teachings are. Uh, it is very very consistent to any democratic society, uh because even within Arya Samaj everything is based on democracy, not on basis of some false (?) teaching or anything.

XL: Uh, so since Arya Samaj is a relatively new movement, uh would you - how did you discover it?

DM: Arya Samaj is a much - much progressive, forward-looking, uh... way of life. And that was to not believe in old uh uh... rituals, and whatever it scientifically makes sense, that's what you believe. This is the basis of Arya Samaj teaching. You don't blindly follow something, unless [inaudible] you know that it makes sense, it is scientifically proven, uh so that way, in a - for educated people, it makes lot more sense. They don't have to question any uh teachings which are contrary to what you understand, that uh scientifically it makes sense.

XL: Um, so were your parents also Arya Samaj?

DM: My father was, coming from very Arya Samaj family. And so was my wife's grandfather. So that really helped us, that when I worked for this project, she is a hundred percent believe in

this. So in that way there was no conflict because right from when this building was built, I was still working. But I had to spend lot of time when the construction was going on, plus at that time we had very limited fund, I was responsible for raising funds and so on. And uh what - I could do it because of her support. And uh that I think in the long run proved to be very very beneficial; otherwise, I know some places where husband and wife don't believe in the same uh religious concept, there could be some issues.

XL: Um, so what roles has it played in your life, do you think?

DM: Pardon me?

XL: So what kind of role does Arya Samaj play in your life? How does it affect your life?

DM: Yes, very much so. This uh see, so it happened that I retired at the end of 99 and same year my wife retired. So that mean we had uh this thing coming into our lives about the same time. And this building was the first part (?) built in 1970s. So he was happy that I am working on a project are a temple where she also believes. In fact, she worked side by side with me. I have been in charge of this uh. Many things that temple, building fast the temple from this building to the second building the (?), the third building (?) all to these I was responsible and I am the, you can call but we don't use the terminology the president, but I am the overcharges once in (?) And she also played equal responsibility, he's in charge of the reception of the people welcome there and so on. And she has other ladies who also volunteer with her to take care of that reception part. And since, uh, in some respects, she knows more rituals about uh, more than me, in (?) and some of the other rituals of that.

XL: So why did your family decided to build this Arya Samaj greater Houston and the Sunday school?

DM: Right. [cough] See, um, there was my father started with the temple which was going to be a start of Arya Samaj and some commercial temple but it did not work out. And there were a lot of people who believed in this, they were asking my father that he should start this Arya Samaj. And so one of the person who was, uh, his follower, he offered a building which was available to all the Sunday obligations. And that's how that started and [cough] it became automatically that I should get involved and I found out that a person who had given this facility and he equally was interested to build out this thing here, but he didn't have the interest and desire to lead. Uh Also being an Indian, I can relate to the construction much more than anybody else. So, weight fell on me. So, my heart will that after a few years, I would be doing real estate business and play tennis, that was my retirement plan. And my wife and I both used to play tennis. What happened that neither I did the real estate business and nor I play tennis because I had a knee problem. So once I got into this, it is maybe my uh in the deem of my habit that when I get involved in any

project I gave 100%. So once I got involved, things were starting doing well. We never had to borrow money. We were able to with the help of some other, able to raise funds when we were short of friends, we were able to loan the money without any interest. So all through the 27,000 square feet facility, we never borrowed the thing in a penny. And also, I mean that the DAV Montessori school first few years were a struggle because we didn't have enough student and we had to spend money on teachers and investment but after a while it helped us to bring some positive cash flow which could well invest to operate other facility.

XL: Ok. So before you retired, do you already involve in the building of the structure so how do you balance job career with your involvement in the community?

DM: To be honest, those two years three years was quite tough because I had full-time job and here I have to run after-work they used to run here. But once I retired, then things became much easier. And during those early year, at that time that you don't have the stuff on your own so that responsibility was not there. So that's why I got to spend time [laugh], there was time I used to come here to watch construction happening. And I had to tell my wife that I am still working in the office. [laugh]

XL: Oh, so when was the temple founded?

DM: It was well completed in 1997.

XL: Ok, so who did you work with to develop the temple?

DM: There is an architect we couldn't afford at that time. Real high name architect who would charge us money. So I found a person who was employed by some company but on aside he would do some building. And you may not believe it that only we paid him 36,000 dollar to get all the architecture concept work done. And then another friend helped to do the detailed drawing. So our money spent on engineering and all the way [inaudible] was only 36,000 dollar because the detailed drawing was prepared by another friend and he didn't charge us any money.

XL: So how big the Arya Samaj community by that time?

DM: It started very small but there were some people who would come my father over the year when he was going to their homes and so on. So they had planned that they would have to build the temple and that was a big help to start with and then what happen is that in our temple right from the beginning until now, there is absolutely no politics. Nothing. We all are volunteers, everybody was working together. I have a very strong conviction that when you do work with your heart, do it open and transparent, people give donations without asking, and it has happened so many time. People just saw that this temple need nice landscape, you know this thing here.

Once they [inaudible]. That's how people got our back. And the same way when we started building school, people felt we are doing for our community. A lot of people support it that we need to keep our children involved with our values. They should learn what we believe and so on. So they give donation for just what we were trying to do.

XL: So what are your current duties?

DM: Right now, right now we have in this temple that are 19, you can say, we call it standing committee members. These are board of directors and I am one of them. My job is to coordinate the work and practically [inaudible] like, if you take a library, there is one people who is responsible of that. There is one person who is in charge of the bookstore. There are two, three people who are in charge of the Sunday school. There are two, three people who are in charge of the Montessori school. Besides, in Montessori school, we would pay the staff and pay the director and so on. And then we have a person who takes care of the communication part. My job is more towards the proper maintenance of the temple, hiring. We are very proud to have three priests, all of them are with their doctoral degree. They are very very well educated. And any time outside when we have to represent Hindu faith, our priests would go because they are very well educated. There are a lot of other temples which have priests. They know how to do rituals but they cannot explain really to the mainstream Americans what our values are. So one priest whom you just met, he takes care of the Sunday congregation here. He also goes to perform wedding ceremony, funeral services, home warming services. All these kind of [inaudible] we call it to help the community. One priest we have, she is the wife of the other priest who has a doctorate in Hindi literature. She is in charge of the school, Sunday school. So it is her job to manage volunteers to teach because Sunday school is totally volunteer based. Only she is paid, the rest of them are volunteers. And the other priest, her husband, he was actually a PhD from Princeton in Mechanical Engineering. He decided to live there and uh follow the principle of uh the uh [inaudible]. So he generally takes care of outside temple. He teaches meditation. Meditation is very essential. He goes to community centers to be with a lot of Americans where you need to present the Hindu faith, he would go there. So my job is to hire the proper people because that's very very critical for a temple like this, that there are right people to properly teach and educate people and all of them are with the doctor degree.

XL: Um, what drove you to start the Sunday School and Montessori school?

DM: Oh that's another interesting one. A friend, a colleague of mine who is also one of the board member and very much involved. He talked about that we should think about the having a Montessori school. And uh I knew a friend who was uh... already running a Montessori school and he was doing financially quite well. So I thought it would be good for us if we are successful. Then my friend asked, my colleague asked that discuss with my brother in law who is an educationist. And everybody said "yes, go for it". We had absolutely no idea what we are

getting into it. And that's the honest truth. In the beginning, we took a survey and we thought there would be 20 parents who are ready to send the children. When the real time came, only six people showed up because other said "Oh it's so difficult to drive from this place to that place." Plus they were not sure if this school is going to survive or not. But with our persistence and good teachers, luckily we got a dedicated teacher and over the time, this school became one of the big school in the whole United States. Right now, a lot of Muslims had their high school and so one. Hindu faith doesn't have a high school or middle school or anything. This is the only school up to the fifth grade. Other people are looking into it and considering but it hasn't happened yet.

[recording stops at 01:17:28, picks up at 01:17:47]

XL: So, how does your school differs from other Montessori schools?

DM: Quite a bit uh. This Montessori school, beside the normal education besides any other school offers, teaches children at a very young age, the values. Like a [inaudible] goes in each class and taught them the basic things, respect the elders and respect your teachers. Telling them stories about different aspects uh where they learned good things and not. And they uh learned a lot of our values and to the celebration, our festival. Like we had a Holi, then the teacher will explain to the children why do we celebrate, what is significant. So, when they uh celebrate these festivals, both American and Indian. They get best of both [inaudible]. So they get real spiritual education. Any outside institution, public school even in India. There is a one hour less per week to teach them the morals which is equally important. I mean that education from schools and colleges teaches you how to make money. But how to live your life? That is unfortunately not discussed in any institutions. What these children are not learning is something they would have because an early impression in education, six seven years old children. Whatever they are going to learn, it's going to stay for the rest of their lives. And uh whenever some time I meet with some of the parents, they really bragged about these values the children are learning from the school and they are so thankful that they are lucky enough parents to send their children to this school.

XL: How many students are there?

DM: About a hundred and twenty at present.

XL: Up to fifth grade?

DM: Up to fifth grade.

XL: Why did you choose a Montessori curriculum?

DM: Well this is [cough] uh, like I told you, whatever we have heard or in our own experience that the Montessori teaching is the best way to teach younger children of early ages. And uh, that's the only reason we adopted that system.

XL: Uh what classes do you offer?

DM: We offer, like I told you, up to first grade they are totally in the Montessori school system, at second grade there are combination of regular school and as well as some of the Montessori concepts. Give you some ideas that last year, I told you there were four students graduating and there were five teachers who were teaching them. So you can well imagine what kind of attention they got and these children excel, they excel in every way. Whether it's public speaking, self-confidence beside the normal education. Those are the kind of things which any public or even private school don't offer. They come on the stage every month for one thing or the other. Whether they are celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, Holi, Lohri. They are doing some kind of skits. Parents and everybody are participating. When they have this celebration, parents, grandparents, the hall is filled up with these parents and grandparents to see their children. How lovely they are. And it is the most enjoyable experience personally I feel. Seeing those children doing well and seeing a smile on the faces of their parents and grandparents.

XL: So what were the challenges when you were building the school?

DM: Like I told you, the first time when we took a survey and 20 students respond but only 6 children committed. But there were some parents who were, what I call is became the role model. There was one parent who used to send her daughter by taxi to school and the taxi would pick up. We reduced their fee so that it would help her but that is the type of commitment those parents have because they felt that this is the right education they want their children to have. The first six children we followed through them and see how they are doing. And they are doing fantastic. One child, who is also from our DAV, he is now the University of Houston student leader. So because besides the normal education, the self-confidence, the interaction with other children. It is hard to explain what value that they are really getting.

XL: What are the changes over the past decades in Arya Samaj temple and schools?

DM: The changes what we have done is that if you go to every classroom, every classroom has a projector. We are using the uh present media communication to the hilt. For example, when our [inaudible] is giving his lecture, it's all projected on the screen. He talks in Hindi but all the translation of presentation is in English. So that people who learn Hindi as well as English all could follow. And we have two projectors, so that if one projector doesn't work, the second

projector is there. [inaudible] Early on we did not have these facilities but in the last ten years or so, once we get more positive cash flow from the school, we don't have to make money out of this, we have to reinvest. And we invested in all the modern technology. Right now, this Sunday, we are going to upgrade the audio system in both the school where the director would talk to the teacher at the same time. And since Sunday, the Sunday school children cannot do any skit yet. So they do little skits and those kind of things and we now provided uh...microphone and all those kind of facility so that both children could have the same opportunity as the DAV Montessori School.

[01:27:43]

XL: So what are your hopes for the school and temple?

DM: I'm looking forward...I have been working with some of the members to take over the responsibility. My father had a big dream about this [Inaudible]—he wanted to do comparative study. He believed in his heart which is true because our values came from all humanity. We don't distinguish between this religion or that religion or this background or anything. Every talk [inaudible] talks about every human being. And he wanted that there should be an opportunity to- for people...he wanted the scholars to come and make a comparative study so that people value...that you don't just stick into your own room, you are looking at a bigger picture. Hopefully, the next generation would take the responsibility. They would do it. Plus, one time we had a dream of building houses for the senior citizens. But when we realized that education is more important, we switched our plan from building those senior houses to educational institution because we feel education takes tops everything.

TH: Do you plan to expand or convince more people of...?

DM: If if if... the need arises that like the Sunday school, we are already close to capacity and it's going to grow. If it grows, like we added four classroom. We might be adding another four classrooms. But if that need still grows, we definitely considering adding another school building. But we are running out of land, when we build this temple we thought we have plenty of land for everything. But now we realized after building two schools and the [inaudible] that maybe if we can find more land. There's one land behind it we are working on it so we can buy it because now financially we can invest in an additional land.

XL: In HAAA's interview with Mr. Atul Kothari, uh he said that Arya Samaj Greater Houston has been a great supporter to Gandhi Museum. Could you tell me more about Arya Samaj's collaboration with it?

DM: Yes. It so happened that there was one Indian festival. He had set up to build Mahatma Gandhi Library and you know what Mahatma Gandhi's values—non-violent, speak the truth and so on. And we had in our temple decided that time that during this month of October, his birthday, that we would celebrate non-violence day. So it happened when I saw Mahatma Gandhi Library. I said when did you start and he said well, this year. I said we are going to celebrate non-violence day in Arya Samaj, why don't you come and put your book there. He said sure. They were happy because somebody has invited them to a temple. And I said what you are trying to do. He said we give them the Gandhi autobiography, we tell them "take it, if they want to pay something, great; if they don't want to...". Somebody paid twenty dollars. Somebody does not pay. So uh I said okay. So that's how we made the connection. And slowly and slowly he saw what values we have. As an Arya Samaj, we are doing basically in some ways the same, the basic human values. And uh he asked me how I can help because whenever they needed meeting, they need...every year Mahatma Gandhi after couple of years of their inception. They wanted to have child at speak. Young people speak about Mahatma Gandhi's life and his different values. They had multi-media, essay writing and so many activities where our focus is on the children. We have the children and they have the activities. And it became a very happy marriage. All the speech contests except the last two years were held in Arya Samaj. They had the stage, the podium, the speaker and all this here. All the Mahatma Gandhi meetings were held in this library. After Sunday, after people eat food, these people would go in the library. So I became the trustee from the very beginning of Mahatma Gandhi Library. And he became a part of the management committee and then we [laugh] group together because every- every, all of our children were participating in [inaudible] every year. They were winning the award and so on. When the opportunity came, and that's a long story. Uh I don't know how he discussed with you. He went to India, he used to go every year, and buy these Eternal Gandhi Museum gift items which were given to us students rather than the money award. And uh... a few years back, this manager there asked him "if we offered you the Eternal Gandhi Museum..." and he said "What?!". And they said uh well we have, if you have already built the facilities, we can provide the Eternal Gandhi Museum... uh items which are very... uh only focused with the children that they can work with them, play with them and learn what the uh teachings of Mahatma Gandhi's, non-violence, truth, service and so on. And uh when he came, he came to my office and said "Dev, I have good news for you?" And he said "No no no. I will come to your house and then tell you." And then uh I said, "Okay, come to my house". And out of excitement I said, "Okay, if w-we are going change the land, there is another land on a smaller scale. If we are going to build Eternal Gandhi Museum, I will take the responsibility of raising funds because he knew that over the past twenty years or so I have been raising fund for this temple so I would be helpful raising the funds and that's what we are doing right now. And uh in that respect, now that you know, we are going to celebrate 105th year, a celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's life from October 18 to October 19. In that respect, we were to see Anne Chao and that's where the whole connection starts.

XL: Could you tell me more about how you do the fundraising?

DM: Uh [coughs] The way... I raised the fund for this temple along with some other people was that uh... not having big galas or something to do some culture items, and invite people and sell the tables, nothing. We would go and talk to the people individually that this is our plan and this is what we are going to do. And once we did the first building, which was to build this temple. And they saw the end results: how it is being kept, how is the meeting, how is delivering the value what we have promised everybody. It became much easier to raise the fund for the school and the second school. The second school like I told you, I took the responsibility of- I became the general contractor and saved half a million dollars. Plus the positive cash flow coming from the Montessori school, not a single penny was borrowed. We did not pay any interest. Yes, we borrowed some money at times, but without any interest. So that's our [inaudible] that we don't have any financial burden that give us pressure to raise more money. And being having the positive cash flows from the temple helped us to by these two houses for our priests. We want to provide them the best facility and so on so they do the best possible job if we take care of their living and uh other necessities and they are free to do their jobs.

XL: Kay. So what impact do you think have been made by the Gandhi Museum?

DM: It is amazing that what children are learning being participating in the speech contests and multi-media contests because some of the children are students also of our DAV Montessori school and this give them the opportunity to participate in the competition and probably more than half of the awards were won by the children here. And whenever they needed like on [inaudible] they do this Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary celebration in uh... uh Unity Church and all of our DAV Montessori school students. Children go and uh provide the cultural programs and so on. It is the children following those values with Mahatma Gandhi's. When children do write essay, do go to speech contest, studying this thing on the internet especially when they are doing this multi-media project. This thing gets engraved in their minds. Because now they are personally experiencing it, not just somebody giving you lectures, they are first hand and digging in that information, going back to his life and so on how he wonderfully [inaudible] of India without any violence. Unfortunately, the partition created a lot of violence but otherwise from the British, winning the freedom from the British at that time, there was not a single drop of blood. It was all one hundred percent peaceful.

XL: So what impact- so what is the relation between Gandhi Museum and Houston's Indian population?

DM: That is something like when we have Thousand [inaudible]. There are a lot of volunteer who had been here year out and helped to propagate the value what the Gandhi had. And uh.. uh the same way with the Unity Church. In the thousand [inaudible], I am sure Atul Kothari must

have discussed, we invite in every section of the community, whether they are black from South Africa, uh or Muslims, you name it. Every community have participated, there were, last year for example, there were the big Montessori school, uh most of them uh, you know, the children from here, who participated in that activity. So, the purpose of this to expose the values to basically to the children and the museum itself is also totally focused on the children. And this Museum itself is also totally focused on the children. That all these Eternal Gandhi Museum items are what children can play with them. Once they play with them, they would understand a lot more if somebody just walk through any museum or somebody gives them lecture. And uh the plan through the Mahatma Gandhi Museum, Eternal Gandhi Museum is to, district by district, go and ask the children what we have been told [inaudible], and uh all this is at early age, if these children pick up the right value rather than joining some gangs or some other things here. They would be much better citizens in every respect. That's our hope and dream uh that in a way, I feel as a Indian American as people like me who came to this country. And uh whatever we are today, it is because of the opportunity this country provided to me and to my family and to my children so I owe to this country to... whichever way, small or big way, give back to the- this country. And I feel to that for Eternal Gandhi Museum, this would be great opportunity to give back the value which we feel very strongly needs to be in every human being. That is been my dream since I had the experience with the construction or building this. So, with Atul, I am taking the leading role how this museum should be like. Luckily, we have very good architect who are equally excited and we are spending a lot of time back and force so that whenever we come of it, it is something with every community member, not only in Houston, those who visit from outside, they can visit the museum and learn something about Mahatma Gandhi's value.

XL: Okay so speaking of identity, how do you identify yourself? Do you think you are an Indian or an Indian American or...?

DM: I identify my life and everything is to United States. That's where I made a living, study and raise my children and family. Also I owed to my country, back home where I was born. So this is something we continuously try to do that some way we can help giving scholarship to underprivileged children through Arya Samaj, and that's something I haven't mentioned, there's a [inaudible] that we built in 2005 after tsunami. And that is something. Uh we built a totally new residential quarter and my wife and I used to visit every year except this year we were not able to go. How do children, underprivileged children are doing, and now we are thinking to change the facility to a uh full-fledged school, which will be managed by the DAV Institution in India and one of the management people who we are working, we have made a condition that all the underprivileged children will be given extra opportunity to use this school and give them the donation along with the other regular children who can pay that fee for the school. So that's what right now I am working on to convert that facility to a full-fledged DEV school.

XL: When did you build the facility?

DM: That was...it started...what happened is that in 2005 with the earthquake. See, Arya Samaj did not spend money on very elaborate temples, you see some of the other temples, how elaborate they are. Our temples are more practical which you can use. So our focuses, whatever money people donate, it helps the underprivileged, for example, when earthquake came, Gandhidham, Gujurat, Arya Samaj and Gandhidham took the responsibility to build a facility for the orphan children. There were a 162 children whom they built this facility for. We had [inaudible] part of the farm when we did farm. Uh... there was another organization in another farm [inaudible]. [inaudible] so that means bring down to the life because these children have no parents. So when tsunami hit in 2005, Arya Samaj- when I was president [inaudible]. So we decided to build some facility for the children affected by tsunami. Unfortunately, there were very few children we could have but when we built it by that time, we built it for the underprivileged children. So, there- there there was a boy section and a girl section and at one time we used to have over 40 children whose parents cannot afford to send them to school. Hardly can they feed them. So we took there. So the purpose was for them to become good citizen. Then the poverty which the whole family had would be eliminated. It did not come out to our expectation. We wanted all these children to become physicians, engineers. But we found out we need a bigger role model for them to make that happened. But one is going to college to teach, others were learning some trade and so on. Uh, can we take break?

XL: So uh where is the residential facility?

DM: It is in Pondicherry. This is a small state which was occupied by the French. And then they left, that portion is separate.... Uh you can get small stage which is [inaudible] by central government. by...-[inaudible]

XL: Do you still go back to India?

DM: Yeah. After retirement...before when we were students first time we went uh after five or six years. Now after retirement, we started going almost every year. Now because of uh age and all this little bit we have to be careful while travelling there but because of the [inaudible] about Pondicherry both my wife and I used to go every year and one year have been twice so that we could interact with the underprivileged children. We have tried our best to give them the best possible education and so on. But they come from poor family that requires more than providing facility like food and all this and some role models and so on so that they get inspired. For example, now one children is going to college, now everybody says we want to go to college but previously one guy was not good at studying and he learned this air conditioning so that everybody wanted to do air conditioning. So that is our learning experience that we need to make the best school and enough children are there to be the role models.

XL: Do you have any more question to ask?

TH: So, finally what advice would you give to young people or what advice would you give to your younger self?

DM: What advice I would do? [**TH:** yeah] To young people?

DM: Basically, get very good education. Work hard during your school year or college year. Once you start working, always think that there are a lot of children who does not have that privilege and in what way I can do my little part to change the life of person. If you think that way and one thing- you would come to realize the human needs that whatever for example most of the American kids have. A lot of other countries which are still under development, they don't have but I don't think these kids really understand. And that's why our children would go there, they get better values and appreciation of what they have. And I wish all the children would have the opportunity to see whatever they have, they should appreciate and enjoy. Show respect to the parents for giving that education. When we grow up, we would try to help somebody. That's how my wife and I model our life and hopefully we want that if everybody contribute. The world would be a much better place to live.

XL: Do you have any material to provide us?

DM: Yeah. I want to give you uh a couple of books. Uh it's- done?

XL and TH: Yeah its-

[Interview ends at 01:58:30]