

# When calamity strikes, he's the help at hand

## ANGEL INVESTORS

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Cycling around Ulsoor Lake, strolling through the accident and trauma care units of hospitals and visiting places hit by calamities comes naturally to him.

Ram Sundar, a volunteer with Helping Hands and a coordinator with Bangalore Care has been doing these things for more than a couple of decades.

It was losing a close friend to a road accident that triggered the volunteering spirit in Ram.

"I still remember as a school boy I had lost a very dear classmate to a road accident, in fact, I had seen his body too. That really shattered me and I could not sleep for days together, and it was from then that I developed this habit of always stopping by any accident site I came across on the road," said Ram. He was 12 years old when his friend met with the tragedy and since then Ram has always lent a helping hand and been the Good Samaritan for numerous needing help.

"There was something in me that made me want to help people, it was as if I was born to volunteer. Since my school days I remember I used to try and help people who met with an accident on the road, or in some way try and save their lives," said Ram.

There was time in the 80s when Ram was often spotted cycling around Ulsoor Lake, not to enjoy the scenic beauty but to prevent people from jumping into the lake to end their lives.

"I remember I used to visit a friend's place in Ulsoor, when I often saw bodies floating by the bank of the lake. I myself have called the cops numerous times to inform them about it," said Ram.

That was when he realised that there was a need for patrols around that area, so he himself took up the task.

"I used to cycle around that place and whenever I saw a loner looking depressed, I approached them and started talking to them. It is essential to break their thought



Ram Sundar, the saviour on cycle

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process to check the suicidal tendency, otherwise they end up committing suicide," said Ram.

This 57-year-old in fact enrolled himself into a course for counseling so that he could counsel people at the right time and with the right approach. He continued this practice for decades and in the process he also learnt how to fish out bodies from water. "I have been keenly watching all this and have learnt the tactic of fishing out bodies by now," said Ram.

His reputation as a volunteer has grown to such an extent that in case of any natural calamity at any part of the country Ram was always the first name that surfaced in the NGO network.

"I was involved in the relief and rescue operations after the Bhuji earthquake, Orissa floods and

even the Tsunami," said Ram.

Though he is an electrical engineer by profession, there came a time when he gave up on work completely and was totally into volunteering.

"Those were the times when I used to get up in the morning and just go to Nimhans and help relatives of patients at the trauma care centre. Be it by assisting them in directing where to go for blood, or for breaking the news of the death of their loved ones," said Ram. That was in the 90s when he just visited different hospitals in the city to help relatives of patients in whatever way he could.

His dedication towards social service has won him several accolades, but the most recent one was the 'Volunteer of the Year award

organised by the Apeejay Surrendra Group.

"This was the first time I got a cash award, and my wife was surprised because I always brought in shawls which were awarded to me, but never really brought home money. It was my wife who consistently supported the family, and supported me even when I was into pure volunteering," said Ram. Though he initially worked, along with his volunteering, later he started a business venture of his own, but gave up on it after a while and immersed himself wholeheartedly into social service.

And now his vision is only to ensure that anyone in need of help in Bengaluru should not feel alone, at least those in need of emergency medical services.