



# DEMPO - CSR LIVED, NOT JUST PRACTISED!

## The Dempo Group of Companies

The seventy-five year-old Goa-based Dempo corporate group (www.demos.com) employing around a thousand human resources is the modern face of a family trading-and-underwriting business that goes back nearly half a millennium. The Dempos had through the ages internalised the truth that a social licence to operate commercially is best earned by forging bonds with communities local to them. The ties went on deepening from the mid-twentieth century onwards which saw the family venture successively into iron ore mining and export, shipbuilding, trading, the media and travel businesses, petroleum coke manufacture, food processing, and sports promotion. Not unnaturally, CSR is embedded into the Dempo strategy and its operations.

## CSR Focus and CSR Record

The key focus areas of Dempo CSR are education, sport promotion, environmental conservation, affirmative action, cultural enrichment and health & sanitation. With the footprint of most of the businesses being Goa, it is natural for the state and its people to figure largely in the social responsibility endeavour of the conglomerate. No surprise that group chairman Shrinivas V. Dempo was recognised for outstanding entrepreneurship in 2014 by Enterprise Asia, the pan-Asian organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management, in respect of his stewardship of the group's petroleum coke major, Goa Carbon Ltd (www.goacarbon.com).

## What We Did, What We Do

Running five institutions of pre-university and university learning, schemes of underprivileged student scholarships, research grants and fellowships constitute the Dempo engagement with education. As one-time miners and exporters of iron ore, the group afforested mined-out areas by planting over 2 million saplings in two and a half decades, and sank an artificial lake in the vicinity of mining operations for farmers. Dempo also combine education with environmental consciousness in their previous and ongoing collaborations with renowned NGO, The Energy & Research Institute (TERI) for Goan schoolchildren in projects to deepen environmental awareness and build capacity in facing climate change. As for sport promotion, the group is famed for operating 50 year-old one of the major football teams of the country and five-time winner of the I-League, besides which it promotes Dempo Cricket Club, younger in years but successful in the state cricket circuit in its own right.

**But there is a special programme that DEMPO run, aimed at Indian sport, a rather neglected corner of Indian CSR, in particular, the mission to raise the bar of sport in India...**

## The Dempo Goodwill Ambassadors - Spurring Indian Sport to Global Excellence

Of all the initiatives to take Indian sport to the next level, the scheme entitled 'The Dempo Goodwill Ambassadors' is perhaps unique in the corporate world. Its genesis lies in the despondency felt by Shrinivas V. Dempo, sometime in the latter half of the first decade of the new millennium, over the paucity of Olympic gold medals or world-beating sporting feats in a nation of over a billion citizens. To provide a fillip to deserving Goan youths benchmarking themselves globally in sporting disciplines other than football or cricket, Carnegie Mellon- educated management graduate, Dempo formulated in the year 2007 the Dempo Sports Policy, to be administered by a Sports Committee composed of the group's senior managerial figures and outside experts in sports and allied disciplines. Among the objectives of the policy are

- > the identification of specific sporting disciplines that the group would associate with;
- > the identification of skilled, talented and upcoming sports persons;
- > the promotion of the 'Dempo' Brand through association with the identified sports persons;
- > the creation of a culture of sport by facilitating the imbibing of high moral and ethical values, fostering of camaraderie and the desire to excel;
- > channelising vibrant youth energy for sports activities and physical fitness;

- > providing the nation with sports persons of international standards.

The scheme sets aside Rupees Fifty Lakhs every year for the promotion of the skills and pursuits of three to four sporting talents of Goan origin or domicile and global promise, not over sixteen years of age, in the disciplines of athletics, aquatics, badminton, lawn-tennis, table-tennis, skating, volley ball, basket ball, weight-lifting, wrestling, archery, boxing, hockey and any other specific sport as identified by the Sports Committee, with a practical focus on Olympic sports.

## The Ambassadors

1. Twenty-one year old Lawn Tennis ace, **Natasha Marie-Anne Palha**, who plays right-handed with a double-handed back-hand, is India's No. 2 Singles Player in the AITA Women's rankings and No. 7 in its Doubles rankings. She is DEMPO's first and longest running goodwill ambassador (since Year 2008), proving versatile on a number of surfaces - grass, hard-court and clay. Her current standing in the ITF World Singles rankings is 556 (with a recent career-high of 492), and 491 in the Doubles (with a recent career high of 471). She was part of the national team representing India at the Asian Games at Incheon, South Korea in Year 2014, besides being the nationals grass court champion that year.

2. Twenty -year old Chess wizard **Anurag Arvind Mhamal**, currently titled International Master, is not just Goa's highest ranked chess player, but also figures among India's top seventy active players and among the top 250 active players of Asia, with a creditable rating of 2393 in standard chess. Four years with Dempo, and the only male among the ambassadors, he has beaten several grandmasters (one super grandmaster, too!) in the course of his competitive career so far in his quest to become Goa's first grandmaster, with one of three norms already under his belt. Among his notable achievements was winning gold at the Asian Junior Blitz Chess Championship in Sharjah, UAE, in Year 2013.

3. Twelve year-old Table Tennis girl-wonder **Tanisi Vaikunth Shenvi Kirtani** in her second year as DEMPO ambassador is already India No. 2 in the Sub-junior (U15) category and No. 12 among the Juniors (U18). Tiny Tanisi is Goa's No. 1 Table Tennis female player, having swept all categories - Sub-juniors, Juniors, Seniors, and Ladies in Year 2014. She won gold at the All India School Nationals (U14) that year held at Tadepalligudem, Andhra Pradesh, a first for Goa. Internationally, she took a bronze each in the Team Event and the Individual Doubles at the ITTF World Junior Circuit at Goa the same year, while also taking a prestigious silver at the Thailand Open World Circuit.

## The GCL Brand Ambassador

In the spirit of the policy of boosting local sporting talent to levels of international mastery, Dempo group major, Goa Carbon Ltd (GCL), lost no time in following the parent company in part-promoting its own sporting ambassador.

4. Twenty-three year old Chess sensation, **Bhakti Pradip Kulkarni**, currently titled (and Goa's only) Woman Grand Master, is in the fifth year of association with Dempo, with a rating of 2257 in standard chess. She is ranked 14th in India and 54th in Asia among female active players and features in the top 275 female active players in the world. Bhakti's FIDE titles of Candidate Master, Woman International Master and Woman Grand Master were achieved in rapid and spectacular fashion between Years 2009 and 2012 mostly as the GCL Brand Ambassador. Bhakti is now poised at a turning point that takes her straight on to the highest Grand Master title in the discipline.

This, then, is the Dempo Sports CSR story. But new chapters are unfolding in the tale. In a sign that right-thinking Indians do the right thing, corporates and not-for-profits both in Goa and across the country have all embraced the 'Promote Young Achievers' concept pioneered by DEMPO. CSR is nothing if it is not lived, not nurtured to grow, spread and multiply - the DEMPO way!



Chess Sensation Bhakti Kulkarni



Lawn Tennis Ace Natasha Palha



Chess Wizard Anurag Mhamal



Chairman Shrinivas V Dempo

# The Dempo Sports Ambassadors



Table Tennis Girl Wonder Tanisi Kirtani