



Karmayogi: A Biography of E. Sreedharan

M.S. Ashokan , Rajesh Rajamohan (Translator)

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Karmayogi is the dramatic and inspiring story of E. Sreedharan, the much-admired engineer and technocrat who won accolades for finishing the Delhi Metro project within budget and on time, in the face of severe constraints. Known for his efficiency and discipline and regarded the world over for his productivity standards, Sreedharan has, surprisingly, never spent more than the eight-hour workday in office. This fascinating book looks back on an extraordinary career full of sterling achievements-Sreedharan's years with the Railways, the building of the Kolkata Metro and the Konkan Railway, followed by the Delhi Metro, and the many metro projects he is involved with now. Translated from a bestselling biography in Malayalam, this is the uplifting story of a very private person who has become an icon of modern India because of his uncompromising work ethic.

Karmayogi: A Biography of E. Sreedharan Details

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From Reader Review Karmayogi: A Biography of E. Sreedharan for online ebook

Ganesh Sanal says

An objective account that does justice to this legend of a man. A must read for all the young engineers.

Soham Chakraborty says

This is a concise summary of the career of E. Sreedharan - commonly known as Metro Man - who played an instrumental role in the development of Delhi Metro. It also includes Sreedharan's efforts to rebuild the Pampan bridge after a violent cyclone in 1964 washed it away. Along the way this book includes nuggets about how Sreedharan handled complex, bureaucratic processes and how he ensured that all of the projects under him go as smoothly as possible.

However while this book gives an overview of Sreedharan's career, it is written almost like a hagiography. I wish that if the author used an approach of not idolizing Sreedharan in every situation (maybe Sreedharan deserves accolade in every instance) and provided more details on his relationship with different governments as well as his insights into how/why transport system in India can be improved, it would have made this book far more balanced.

Ranjeeth Varma says

The story of an unsung hero not known by many. Book brilliantly captures both the life of Sreedharan and the evolution of metro lines in India and hence why he is aptly called as the metro man. A man with the highest level of integrity, grit and compassion fights all odds to execute the unthinkable. Konkan railways which is a beauty comes to life and so is the DMRC. It is a very good book with respect to project management too, wherein the author furnishes the key aspects of PM at DMRC and also throws some light on Indian railways way of managing projects. This can be used as an inspiration for many young people working for a company both private and govt to lead a fulfilling life. I would love to visit Sreedharan's home mentioned in the book somewhere in Palakkad , such is the description of the place given by the author. A fulfilling read

Parth Agrawal says

An exceptional account of a mortal man whose principles made him what he is and empowered him to create what we see today as physical structures and virtual work culture.

E. Sreedharan, a man of ideals and follower of Bhagwad Gita has led a lot of projects successfully, evidently when all odds were against him- restructuring of Pampan Bridge, The Konkan Railways and Delhi Metro to name a few. The author has shed light upon the exemplary work culture he brought in with him, how he circumvented various obstructions that came up his way but still succeeded and the chivalrous charity which anointed him as the king in public eye.

He established the organisation DMRC(Delhi Metro Rail Corporation) from the scratch and has fathered a Utopian work culture. To quote a few instances, the construction work of the Delhi metro led to discontentment among the population which was addressed by the organisation in an unprecedented manner-> After everyday of work, all the dust and dirt that came out during the construction was cleaned by the workers; if a religious complex was on way to the construction, it was relocated by the DMRC which bore the expense of the relocation itself ; planted 10 trees for every one they cut for construction- are some of the examples of exceptional commitment towards the society.

So, I would suggest that it's a must read for everyone as it is a perfect amalgamation of biography+motivational+self help book.

Nikhil Dwivedi says

Possibly, this is the last book that I am reading this year and I can only wish to have read it earlier in my life. I picked this book after a recommendation and cherished every page of it. Life of E. Sreedharan has been an inspiration and youngsters of India can learn a lot from him.

The writing style of the author has been good, a lot of facts and accounts of events. The writing style was pretty inventive and not at all conventional. Book sufficed for a biography.

Rohit Arondekar says

I wanted to like the book, but the writing did not fit my taste.

The book failed to evoke any emotions towards the man on whom it is based. Instead, it does a wonderful job of giving an overview of organizations and projects that Elattuvalapil Sreedharan, popularly known as *Metro Man*, ran or participated in. There are interesting historical tidbits and also engineering achievements. Honestly, you could just read his Wikipedia page and get most of what is in the book. It reads more like a fan gushing about his favourite rock star as opposed to a biography.

The book is not a complete waste and you do get a sense of his achievements, but only through a bird's eye view, which to some might be enough. I was expecting more.

Priya says

More a documentary of his projects and achievements than a biography. But what a daunting and inspired life.

Arun Divakar says

The word Karmayoga is the practice of achieving perfection through action and deeds. Ascribing the title of a Karmayogi (a person who puts this principle into practice in life) is perhaps the finest way to sum up the life of Elattuvalappil Sreedharan who the media has dubbed as India's Metro man. Sreedharan's is a name

that is highly quoted and popular among India's populace for all the right reasons. His is a fame and popularity that has been built on an impeccable track record of efficiency and effectiveness. Indians also have this fascination with degrees which means to say that not many people will accept you for an engineer if you do not have a degree from the reputed IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) or that you have a post-graduation in management unless you do it at the IIM's (Indian Institute of Management). Here too, Sreedharan does not fit into this mould as he has done his engineering from a non-IIT but what he has instead are a string of achievements which most engineers could not hope to accomplish in a lifetime. Here are three of the best :

- The Pamban railway bridge : In 1964 this was the largest sea bridge in India and was also the lifeline that connected the tiny town of Rameshwaram to mainland India. During a devastating cyclone, the entire bridge was washed out into the sea. The railways set a deadline of 6 months for the completion of the modified bridge and put Sreedharan in charge. In what sounds like a miracle of sorts, the team under Sreedharan's direction finished the job in 46 days. This sounds all the more fantastic as India is known to be a black hole when it comes to timely execution of infrastructure projects.
- The Konkan railway line : Before 1990, there was no direct railway route by which the southern state of Mangalore could connect with the bustling and important commercial capital of Mumbai (then Bombay). Both of these cities being important ports, this was quite the need of the hour and yet travel times were huge and delays were part of the game. There was a decision reached at the ministerial level to have a railway line which will prove to be an artery that connects these two in one shot. After quite a bit of deliberation, Sreedharan was called in to head this project. It was also a highly complicated one as there were four states involved – Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Goa all with differing political intentions and goals. To add to this was also the fact that the railway line had to run through some of the most treacherous terrain that India had to offer. Running through jungles, swamps, rivers and mountains was how it was envisioned. In 7 years, the project was completed against insurmountable odds and naysayers. Spanning a total of 736 km, 128 railway stations and 150 bridges (one of whose girders is only 4m lesser in height compared to the Qutub Minar) this was a mammoth project never before seen in India.
- The Delhi Metro : After being dubbed one of the most polluted cities in the world, the need for an MRTS (Mass Rapid Transit System) was paramount for the city of Delhi. Discussions dragged on and on the decision arrived at was to come up with a separate entity that would build and operate the metro for Delhi. And so was born the DMRC (Delhi Metro Rail Corporation) which was part owned by the Government of Delhi and partly by the Government of India) which was also entrusted to Sreedharan. The interesting part was also that Sreedharan was brought out of retirement to head this project. India has this curious habit : when there is a repair to be done on a road or a small alley, it is almost always done by causing the maximum discomfort to the people living there. The Delhi metro however nullified these theories as it was built by causing the minimum harm to the people, buildings and history of Delhi. Under Sreedharan's leadership, this project too was built and completed to specifications.

All these should not give you the impression that this man is superhuman. He is but an engineer who puts tremendous focus on efficiency and effectiveness at the workplace. Productivity is also the single buzz word that seems to keep him going even when he has reached the respectable old age of 83. Sreedharan is also a simple and dignified individual who talks and practices a Spartan life.

A word of caution before you approach the book. If you are looking for an easily digestible set of self-help notes from the life of this man then you will be disappointed. This is more of a superficial view of how to manage large and complex projects in the infrastructure space and also of an unassuming man who puts development of his nation on a much higher priority than himself. Recommended !

?????? says

We need no introduction to this great man of Indian History. He is Popularly known as the 'Metro Man' of India, by whose vision and under whose leadership the most advanced metro network system in India, i.e. the Delhi Metro was conceptualized. Also, we don't need any explanation of how successful of the Delhi Metro nowadays is.

But there are several things we didn't know about this man. We, the common people of India, most of us are not aware that the famous Pampan Bridge was created, rather I should say that it got it's life back under the leadership of this person. Also, the Konkan Railway, which is one of the brilliant engineering works in this country was also completed under his leadership.

A country, where corruption is everywhere. Where a small task like signing a simple certificate from a Govt. Official meant like a headache, this man proved that Govt. employees also can deliver works on time, sometimes before the deadline also, if governed by right leaders.

We also come to know from this book that this man is a devoted follower of the Bhagavat Geeta & other Indian Sacred Texts like Upanishad etc. At the age of eighties, his hunger for knowledge has not yet gone, as he is now learning advanced Sanskrit.

Truly speaking what I learned from reading this book, following the journey of this great man that "If your morale is high, if your devotion to your job is perfect, then there is nobody out to stop you to reach your destination." When controversies appeared, he dealt with them in a formidable way. When few people tried to stop him from reaching his destination, he blew them off in a hardened way.

The author, Mr. M.S.Ashokan clearly portrayed the life of E.Sreedharan in a brilliant way and for this My, Rating is: 4.5/5

Harish Challapalli says

A great man, Shri Sreedharan, he is next to only the greatest engineer of India Sir M Vishwesvarayya. This book gives a glimpse of his life from his childhood till his retirement from DMRC. I can say the book has missing something to be remembered as the best biography or a perfect tribute to the great man. Shri Sreedharan is a world renowned engineer/project manager and this book jus doesn't have that world class narrative. May be the translation was not that good or the basic layout of the narration itself is not so gripping (in the orginal).

But it must definitely be given a chance. Must read for biography enthusiasts. A very inspirational tale of one of the most celebrated common man.

Siddhartha says

Having read the reviews down below I got a sense that people were disappointed due to too many facts and technical information. I do agree that the above is true.

However, being an engineer I found this book to be a good read. The book does capture the grandeur of Mr.

Sreedharan. The technicalities were well explained without going in great detail, thus ensuring that the regular reader does not lose interest and at the same time gets to increase his technical knowledge. Mr. Sreedharan's engineering and personal achievements seem to be far too many to be captured in a book. It is only when you begin to connect at a mental level on a daily basis with this character will you be able to experience of what he truly personifies and stands for.

The only fault in the book are a few typo errors and in a few places where the grammar language goes for a twist.

However, overall it is a good read to understand the "Metro Man" and a truly deserving Bharat Ratna of our country!

Rajesh CNB says

A life lived legendary, captured poorly

I was really excited when I picked up this book for two reasons. One, this year I am meticulously following my to be read list, and though I have a bit of lag on it, I am still reading what I want to read. This means that books that have been long in my to be read list are going to be read without fail. Two, today this world needs role models, especially those who can show that strong ethical foundations and their imbibal into ones life is not against progress and success. E Sreedharan, also known as Metro Man, is a living example of this. I was excited to know about this aspect of Sreedharan's life.

My strongest impression of the book is that it was put together in a hurry. If that is not the case then M S Ashokan has a long long way to go in honing his narrative style. People like E Sreedharan live simple lives but the turn out of events is quite complex. Often the ethical underpinnings for their actions are left unsaid and remain invisible. In books like these that aspect has to be somehow brought out. It is here that M S Ashokan has not fully succeeded. Perhaps it required a more in depth interaction with Sreedharan, more interviews from his colleagues, more interactions with his family, his wife and his children.

The second biggest setback of the book is the jumping of time lines. One would be reading about Sreedharan's beginning of career and suddenly we would be talking about Kochi Metro which was perhaps Sreedharan's latest assignment and then suddenly talk about Konakan Project which was close to his retirement from Railways. This did not confuse me, but it cooked the broth a little early. The recipe was edible, but it was missing that taste which comes with impeccable timing.

Having said that, I still liked the book because of the man behind it. E Sreedharan, the flawless protagonist of the narrative, looms large and remains the icon because of his endeavors. I began the book wondering how the deep rooted corruption in our country can be dealt with. I emerged with a clear answer. If we are masters of our trade, when we focus on doing what we do with extraordinary diligence, knowledge and resourcefulness, then corruption cannot touch us. Personal Integrity and sticking our neck out for the sake of the larger good of the community, are the ones that keep one untouched even by the worst scheming minds. It would have been good, if this message was subtly highlighted throughout the book.

If you have the diligence, passion and patience to put up with the narrative, then this biography is recommended. Read about the ingenuity of Sreedharan while executing the Pamban Bridge as well as the Konkan Line. Read about his ability to lead the Metro projects to flawless completion. And they will inspire you to do better in life. Keep reading!

Shubham Girdhar says

Not exactly what I was looking for , it contained overview of his various projects ;The problems he faced, how he overcome them , It got tedious after a while as it seemed like a written documentary while I was looking about his philosophical views, his views about his work, about his life, maybe a better writer is what sreedharan's life needs. Compared to APJ abdul kalam's memoir , this is way less inspirational.

However I enjoyed reading the intricate details of konkan railways, how much of a herculean task it was, had no idea about the international recognition it received , same with delhi metro. The inner details of a mammoth organization known as "Indian Railways".

Read on to find out how this extremely simple south indian engineer had an affect on your Indian railways and youre probably unaware about it.

Prateek Dwivedi says

Halfway through the book and I was already impressed with what I was reading. How many of us knew that E. Shreedharan was behind delivering marvelous projects like Rani Padmavati ship and Konkan Railways, before Delhi Metro? The book for me was an eye-opener.

I'm glad that this book presented all the facts just the way it is. I'm sincerely interested in knowing more about his views on the decisions he took to deliver projects of huge national importance so efficiently. But I would never want to read or hear that from someone other than E. Shreedharan himself. Of course, just like anyone else, I had my own expectation with a biography of E. Shreedharan. However, learning that there were so many more things he did before becoming Metro Man of the nation, I was more interested in facts. One might argue that we could have found facts on the Internet. But a good biography binds together the bittersweet incidents of a person's life in a story. And this book has done it quite well.

Few bits in the book that made it even more fascinating were the discussion on the life of GP Warriar and other famous engineers. These were the parts which made me realize that little do we know about the magnificent infrastructure in our country and the people who gave their sweat and blood to build it.

This is surely a book that will be close to my heart for all the coming years of my life.

Vishnu Narayanan says

a glimpse into the life of a brilliant engineer and an amazing human. Looking forward to read a deeper autobiography.
