

At 66, he manages waste

Instead of retiring as a consultant, Ravinder Kumar Chabra is working as an administrator at an affluent treatment plant in Bhiwadi.



RAVINDER KUMAR CHABRA, 66 years | Bhiwadi

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When 66-year-old Ravinder Kumar Chabra moved to a retirement resort in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, about two years ago, he intended to do just that—retire. After all, he had led an active professional life, first in a job and then running his own consultancy, for nearly half a century. Now he wanted to soak in the slack pace of life at the resort. The resolve took just about a month to dissipate. For, when he was offered the job of an administrator at an affluent treatment plant in Bhiwadi, he accepted it. Today, he is back at the familiar office grind, working eight hours a day, and earning ₹30,000 a month.

However, affluent treatment technology had no role to play in the early part of his career. After acquiring a bachelor's degree in technology in 1965 from the National Dairy and Research Institute in Karnal, Haryana, he started work the same year as a shift manager at the Haryana Dairy Development Corporation (HDDC). He continued in the organisation for the next 23 years, and towards the later years, he was promoted to the post of a general manager

"In 1988, I got a good job offer from Hindustan Unilever Limited to work at their milk operation unit at Etah in Uttar Pradesh. I worked there as general manager till 1995, when I decided to quit and start my own consultancy called Quality Icon Consultancy Services in Chandigarh," says Chabra, who chose this city because his daughter was based there.

His years of experience and expertise came in handy. The company gauged the economic viability of various projects related to milk production and proved to be a success. "The job had me travelling to various states, such as Maharashtra, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. After my daughter Rachita (32) got married in 2000, my son-in-law Kunal Jhingan joined my company to assist me in 2001," he says.

Handing over his business to his son-in-law in 2009, Chabra decided to finally take a step towards retired life. "The travelling became very tedious after a point and I decided to take life easy," says Chabra justifying the move. He gave the house in Chandigarh to his daughter, who lives there with her husband

and is a faculty member in a city college. He bought the retirement house in Bhiwadi through his savings and retirement benefits. In 2009, he moved there with his wife Suresh (64). "My wife has been very supportive of all the ventures that I have been involved in over the years. She travelled with me and gave up a permanent job to work part-time, picking up teaching assignments wherever I went," he says.

For the first month, the couple relished the work-free routine and leisurely pace of life. "I never thought I would start working once I had shifted to the retirement resort. But when Ram Prakash offered me the position of an administrator, I agreed to take it up because I didn't want to be dependent on anyone after retirement. Also, this would be a productive way to spend time. Though the job profile was different from my previous assignments, the technology used was more or less the same," he points out.

Ram Prakash is the president of the Bhiwadi Manufacturers' Association and was involved with the NGO Bhiwadi Jal Pradushan Nivaran Trust in the town's industrial area. "There are more than 1,500 units, which

generate hazardous fluids. These need treatment for elimination of metallic discharge and impurities. When we are certain that the industrial waste is safe and will not affect the environment, we let it out of the treatment system," he explains.

Chabra's office is close to his residence and, hence, the commute is easy. He has also adapted well to the new work schedule. "I feel as if I'm back in college. Since the work timings are from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, I have a lot of spare time in the evenings. So, I have taken up table tennis, badminton and chess, which helps me keep myself in good shape," he says.

More importantly, he is free from all financial liabilities. His wife is a part-time English teacher at Goal Guru, which is an institute involved in consulting, education research, training and personal development, in Bhiwadi. This not only keeps her busy but also helps bring in extra income.

"I have found contentment in work at my age and don't plan to quit anytime soon," says Chabra.

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