

8

out decision. "I was coerced into the career. However, I realised I cannot shift my field of work without planning," says Gaur. He had acted in various stage shows and TV productions and anchored a few shows for Doordarshan. Therefore, he had the requisite skills and experience. The only concern was money.

Though he initially planned to retire at 50, he waited for two more years till he had enough in his retirement fund. "When I had an adequate corpus, I deposited it in a bank and started looking for a job in the field of my interest. I was lucky to get a break within one week of retirement," says Gaur. Today, he multi-tasks—manages a public relations firm, PRA'You, is part of the governing and management board of an NGO, Open Forum, and teaches at media & communication colleges as a visiting faculty. His retirement savings are intact and growing.

Like Gaur, many would want to retire and pursue their dream careers. However, they should evaluate the financial feasibility of early retirement before taking the leap.

Remember, in this case, the years to provide for self, spouse and other dependents will be more. If you don't plan early enough, you may have to postpone the plunge. So, timing is crucial. "Signing up for the voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) gives a lot of immediate benefits like annuity and superannuity, gratuity, compensation, etc., from his organisation. This money can be invested. You can start using the systematic investment strategy once you start getting regular income," says Angrish.

Risk appetite is important too. "Before retirement, the portfolio should be gradually changed from aggressive to conservative. After VRS, the portfolio should meet all

three requirements, safety, liquidity and yield," says Rao. "If your risk profile does not permit you to invest in equities, one can invest in debt schemes through systematic investment plans. You can opt for a systematic transfer plan (STP) as well. A STP will enable you to shift from equity to debt as you get closer to retirement," says Angrish.

Soul-Searching and Job-Hunting

Once the finances are settled, it is time to find a suitable career. K Arunagam, 53, a former hydrologist, took early retirement after working in a government organisation for 22 years because he wanted to contribute to the development of our national sport, hockey.

His objective was clear—write and create awareness. He started by taking up assignments from news agencies and launched a website, www.still2hockey.com. These days, he also runs a programme, 'The One Thousand Hockey Legs', which aims to introduce school children to hockey.

Arunagam had a target. But not everybody is like him. You may want to work after retirement but are not clear what you want, the tricky question is, should you stick to your first profession, convert a hobby into a full-time career or take up a part-time job?

If you are in a senior position in a private company and want to extend your work life by a few more years, it may not be difficult. "Private companies try to hold on to their employees. However, it may be difficult to get an extension in a public sector undertaking. For a mid-level employee, too, finding a job after retirement can be a challenge," says F. Rajaji, CEO, Mahol India.

There is an organised hiring of the retired in India, a big constraint. Apart from making cold

calls on job portals, talking to staffing agencies and registering at professional networks, stay in touch with people in the profession. "Nothing works better than networking and the best way to find a job in the desired field is to know people in that field," says V. Suresh, executive vice-president and national head sales, Naukri.com.

To be in the career of your liking, start doing your homework at least 12 months before retiring. "Identify the location where you want to settle after retirement, talk to a few top head hunters, find the organisations you may like to work with and contact their HR departments," says Suresh.

However, what if you don't have

a clear-cut career in mind? Hemn Ravichander, strategic human resource advisor and co-founder of ExpertBase, a not-for-profit networking effort that connects senior professionals in India with organisations and NGOs, says, "Education, administration, human resources, public relations, hospitality, finance and consulting are some areas where we see recruitment of retired professionals."

"Also, they can explore opportunities in writing for magazines and websites. There's a very lucrative market for teaching international students. With a computer, a webcam and a Skype account, senior citizens can teach on the Internet and make good money," says Hemn.



Kothambaram Arunagam
Age: 53
Place: New Delhi

SELL-UPGRADE INVESTMENT
Undertook a 3-month training at IIT to learn the basics of running websites

Was a Hydrologist in a government organisation till 2006. Now, he is a Freelance Sports Journalist and runs a website to contribute towards development of our national sport, hockey.

HIS MANTRA Life is more beautiful and productive when you choose to do something fruitful in the second innings of your work-life.



R. D. Narang
age 66
From New Delhi

Was the **CEO** of Orissa Path of Governors in 2005
Now as a **Management Consultant**, helping companies to structure for exits around Rs 10 lakh a month

KEY MESSAGE *If someone has entrepreneurial capabilities, he should never sit at home. I feel I should create at least hundred jobs at the end.*

rich, one should not have more than 10% exposure to equities," says Ash Bhas, chief executive officer and founder, Right Returns, a personal wealth management firm.

Insurance plans should be an essential part of planning and start to budget for the long-term. It takes a number of years to build up a portfolio of investments, so it is important to start investing early, says Bhas.

"Invest in products where returns are high. Before then putting all your eggs in one basket, you may consider a mix of mutual funds, bonds, fixed deposits, term-insurance and real estate. The efficiency also needs to be taken care of. All this may get you returns that beat inflation," says Bhas.

At retirement, you may have to meet certain funds. Go for monthly withdrawals if the sum corpus doesn't provide steady cash flows. For those close to retirement, the path to building a retirement corpus is a bit steep as they have to make the required money in less time.

"Start from small options like post office deposits, water utilities and MFI funds. There are some mutual funds—fixed plan funds, fixed maturity plans and monthly income plans—which can be considered," says Prakash Jaiswal, founder, Money Investor, India.

There is also a need to reduce liabilities. The required monthly withdrawal has to be reduced to an additional benefit. "The insurance is required at this stage," says Jitendra A. Rao, chief planner, Prudential Financial Planners.

If you want to work after retirement, because you won't be able to save enough during the working life, the second career can be an opportunity to make wealth.

"Such individuals will have to be disciplined and use a major part of



Suresh Gaur
age 55
From New Delhi

Was a **Banker** as he took voluntary retirement in 2008, Now as a **Communication Specialist**, he earns around Rs 50,000 a month while pursuing his dreams.

their income to invest because they may not be able to work all their life," says Bhas. Hence, there is a need to plan for the later part of your post-retirement years as well.

"They need to be a bit conservative as the risk appetite diminishes in later years. If possible, consult a financial planner who can help you plan your investments so that your expenses match the returns. Try to keep the principal safe and get maximum benefits from tax-saving instruments," says Bhas.

When Opting for VRS
For Suresh Gaur, 55, a member of IAS, taking retirement from his post at 52 to work in the field of communication was a well thought

KEY MESSAGE *Don't wait for retirement to do what you love. Look for opportunities that suit you the best and success will be yours.*