

## **Transparency International Sri Lanka**

### **National Integrity Award Winner 2009**

Joining the State organization Milco (Pvt) Ptd as its first Human Resources Manager, W M Chandana Jayatissa found the place fraught with corruption and malpractices. From the day he joined Milco in 2004, he fought a lone battle against corruption. Unmoved by pressure and intimidation, he continued his mission. His efforts paid dividends when he succeeded in transforming Milco into a profitable organization earning a monthly profit of around Rs 80 million.

His was a hard life when as an A level student he lost his father and had to look after his mother and three brothers and sisters. With his home in Menikhinna, he worked as a watcher in the night at Digana village and went for his studies during daytime. On a holiday he would earn a little extra as a labourer. Solely due to his determination, he got into the Peradeniya University and graduated, and later got a law degree from the Open University.

He joined Milco after serving in several other places looking after the personnel function.

Having come up the hard way, he knew what it meant to earn five rupees and what it meant when someone starts robbing his workplace. He knew from experience that malpractices which looked small would still have damaging consequences. He identified the weak areas and worked hard to remedy them even without much support from top management.

Mr Jayatissa took the initiative in forming the 'United Front to Protect Milco' bringing together trade unions belonging to the UNP, JVP and PA. This strengthened his hand and he succeeded in exposing the corrupt activities at top management level at Milco which included financial frauds, promotions, transfers and increments through sexual benefits and other pressures, and appointments for unqualified persons. He uncovered instances of wasting valuable assets on projects set up purely for political purposes. He succeeded in mobilizing the support of politicians, media persons, officials of the Presidential Investigation Unit and other high officials in his struggle to rid Milco of corruption.

Once he prepared an internal audit report exposing frauds and illegal transactions amounting to Rs 130 million and submitted it direct to the President. This led to a complete investigation by the Presidential Investigation Unit after which illegal payments were stopped and a few top officials were sent home.

Mr Jayatissa faced death threats and harassment at the hand of high officials who ultimately succeeded in removing him from office forcing him to seek justice through legal means. Amidst all this, he met with a serious train accident and narrowly escaped death. The father of two children, he is unemployed at present but is committed to his mission to contribute towards elimination of corruption in Sri Lanka.