

Nandini

ISSUE 1
APRIL 2011

Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

VOL XVII

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - Rs. 100/-

RS.10/-



**IS THIS AAM AADMI
IN THE MINDS OF MINISTERS
WHEN THEY LOOT
PUBLIC MONEY?**



Thoughts of Kanchi Paramacharya TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness means mind and speech being well integrated. The wise say that speech being at variance with the mind is untruthfulness.

The wise say: "May he speak the truth. May his speech be pleasing. May he not speak the truth that is unpleasing. And may he not speak an untruth that is pleasing."

God has given man the gift of speech, so that he may give expression to his thoughts and feelings. If what we speak is at variance with what we

think. God will take away the faculty of speech from us in our next birth- that is we will be born in the animal kingdom.

There are, as we have seen before, exceptions made in our sastras to the rule of absolute non-violence: in waging a war to preserve dharma, in offering animals in sacrifice. Are there similar exceptions to the rule of truthfulness? You will perhaps say none. But, as a matter of fact, there are.

In a locality, there must be a number of undesirable characters. Let us suppose that a certain citizen is annoyed with such characters and gives open expression to his anger. "He committed this outrage. That other man is guilty of such and such a crime," he keeps recounting the misdeeds of the bad elements. In doing so, he is being truthful, that is his speech and mind are in accord. But by giving expression to his feelings, no purpose is served for neither he nor the community is benefited. It is a futile kind of accord - that of his speech and mind - and it cannot be called truthfulness.

Take the example of another person. He is full of evil thoughts and, if he gives expression to them, can he be called truthful? No.

So truthfulness, now we see, is not merely accord between mind and speech. It means voicing good thoughts; thoughts that are beneficial and are liked by people: "Satyr bhua hitam priyam."

It is not enough that you speak to a man what is good for him. You must speak with affection and the one to whom your words are addressed must find them acceptable.

A mind that is subject to desire and anger will not give rise to words that bespeak affection and cause well-being. Truthful words that create good are the product of a mind free from desire and anger.

What is truth then? Thought and speech must be in accord; the mind must be serene; and the words spoken must do good to the speaker as well as the listener.

For a man rooted in truth, there is an *avantara prayojana*, an incidental benefit, gained from his speech.

Since such a person habitually speaks the truth, his words will become the truth. Such a man will never deliberately utter a lie. But, if unwittingly or out of ignorance, he commits an error while speaking, that error will turn out to be the truth. I will tell you a story to illustrate this.

In Tirukkadavur in Tanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, there was a great devotee of Amba called Abhiramibhatta. He would often go into an ecstasy of devotion to the goddess. During such times, he would speak like one mad. Someone poisoned the ears of the raja Sarabhoji against him. "Abhiramibhatta is a drunkard," he told the ruler. "His devotion is a mere pretence." Sarabhoji wanted to find out the truth. So he went to see Abhiramibhatta in Tirukkadavur and asked him: "What day of the moon is it today?" The Bhatta was then lost in devotional joy and, thinking only of the radiant face of Amba which was like the moon, said that it was a full moon day. Actually, it was the new moon. The raja concluded that what he had heard about the Bhatta must be true and said scornfully: "Is that so? Let us look up and see whether the full moon has risen."

At that very moment, the full moon did appear in the sky. Abhiramibhatta was steeped in truthfulness. By mistake, he had spoken an untruth but Amba made it the truth by hurling her ear stud into the sky causing it to shine like the full moon. The blessings as well as the curses of great men come true because of the force of their innate and habitual truthfulness. This is the "incidental benefit" they derive from their habit of truthfulness.

But truthfulness must not be practised with the deliberate intention that what one speaks must come true. Power such as this is earned unintentionally and unconsciously.

A man will purify himself completely if he adheres to principles like non-violence, truthfulness, non-covetousness, cleanliness and also controls his senses. He will then develop the maturity and wisdom to find out who in truth he is, who Isvara is and what the Ultimate Reality is.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SPEAKS

THOSE ALONE LIVE WHO LIVE FOR OTHERS



The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor.

The service to be done for our poor people is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes.

Up to now, little has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings.

They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them and then they will work out their own salvation.

Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time.

The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor is this. Supposing even if you open a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now, if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him.

There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyasins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organized as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also.

Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books.

This requires an organization, which again means money. There are enough people in India to work out this plan, but alas! they have no money. It is very difficult to set a wheel in motion; but when once set, it goes on with increasing velocity.

Our life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others. The rest are more dead than alive. Such high, noble-minded people with resources can do much towards raising India on her feet again and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped.

That the Lord may make heart of the rich people feel intensely for the suffering millions of India, is my prayer.

**READ NANDINI VOICE FOR THE DEPRIVED
AND SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF DEPRIVED PEOPLE**

Readers' forum

Readers' forum provides space for the enlightened readers to give expression to their views on a variety of socio economic issues that is of relevance to the society.

Further enrichment of the journal with your thoughtful inputs would certainly go a long way in promoting the cause that the journal seeks to espouse.



Rising health care cost and plight of the poor people

Dear Sir,

With the soaring inflation and increasing cost of living, the cost of health care has become unaffordable for most section of the people.

With the unsanitary living conditions in several places and the poor aesthetic sense of many people (example: urination in public places), the conditions are extremely receptive for the spreading of the contagious diseases and prevalence of various form of sickness. With the steady increase in the number of people taking to liquor habits in addicted manner, many people lose their vigour and strength at the age of forty and above, causing severe health care problems for them.

With the improvement in the medicinal technology and development of new drugs and diagnostic practices, the longevity of people have now certainly increased, with the average life span of around 65 years in India.

While this is praise worthy achievement that the country has gained in the last few decades, increasing life span do not mean that over all health conditions have improved. On the other hand, many people seem to be living on drugs to prolong their life.

In such circumstances, doctors and paramedical staff are in great demand in all parts of India. But the problem is that the cost of health care have shot up substantially, making health care unaffordable to large sections of the people.

While hospitals and medical treatment in private sector have expanded considerably in tune with the growth in demand, such hospitals and medical practitioners only cater to the needs of the people in the middle and upper income group. The cost of treatment in such hospitals and consultation fees by the medical professionals have become exorbitant and without logic and justification. Private hospitals and private medical practitioners have become greedy and money multiplying enterprises.

Apart from the high charges, many hospitals and doctors do not provide proper receipts for the payment received " generating huge black money" . Many poor people are forced to borrow heavily to meet their health care needs.

Undoubtedly, the government owned hospitals are inadequate in number and many of them are inefficient. Many people think that going to the government hospitals for treatment is a calculated risk.

Jaipur

K.A.Sinha

Doctors' Protest

Sir,

It is reported that doctors are protesting about the service tax levied on them in the recent budget. They say that such tax burden would be ultimately passed on to the aam aadmi.

While the doctors and hospitals would certainly do this, what about the tax evasion and money without proper receipts generated by them?.

I think that doctors and hospitals constitute one of the largest tax evaders in India.

Kolkatta

R.K.Sen



Dear Sir,

'Poor Parliamentarians'

The members of parliament in India are 'poor people' who need subsidized food. The only place in India where food is cheap is Indian Parliament Canteen, New Delhi. Tea Rs.1, Soup Rs.5.50, Dal Rs.1.50, Meals Rs.2, Chappathi Rs.1, Chicken Rs.24.50, Dosa Rs.4, Vegetable biriyani.Rs.8, Fish.Rs.13 These are actual price list.

The salary of these 'poor' people is only Rs.80,000/- per month, plus hefty perks. They find it difficult to meet both ends meet!

No wonder they do not understand what really is 'hunger'; they do not know the meaning of 'poverty', they are baffled about 'food inflation' !!!

Now, do you understand why many people want to be people's representatives? They want to save the country from 'hunger' !!!

Tirupati

V. Rajagopal

Life style of politicians / bureaucrats

Dear Sir,

The recent events in the country have proved the eloquent assertion in Nandini Voice For The Deprived Dec.2010 issue which reads as follows:

"Life style of most politicians and bureaucrats is now becoming an eye sore for the common man"

Chennai

K.N.Narayana Pillai

Educational institutions inviting politicians and actors

Sir,

It is unfortunate that many educational institutions frequently invite politicians and actors to address the students on various occasions including convocations.

With many educational institutions now going under the control of business houses and politicians, this is the regrettable fall out.

Students need guidance and scholarly lectures to mould their aspirations and ideas in a healthy way. With such decay in educational institutions, where is the hope?

Kochi

M.A. Sarala

Hope

Sir,

It is amazing that India is registering economic growth (GDP) of around 8% per annum inspite of so many corrupt and dishonest politicians and bureaucrats in power and crores of rupees of public money being swindled out, which are meant for welfare schemes.

Obviously, there are still many people in India who work hard with commitment and dedication that is leading to the economic growth inspite of the politicians and bureaucrats.

Such working people represent the hope for the country.

Mysore

K.G.Mahesh



FREE VACATION COMPUTER COURSE FOR POOR STUDENTS

Nandini Voice For The Deprived, is presently running free Computer School at Korattur, (Chennai.), Nagercoil, Dindigul and Perambalur in Tamil Nadu.

Nandini Computer School provides free computer education to the students belonging to lower income group. Placement services are also provided.

Nandini Computer School will conduct special vacation course of two months duration for the students who have appeared for +2 examinations. The course would commence in the 1st week of April 2011. Students do not have to pay any fees.

Boys and girls who have appeared for +2 examination in current year and whose family income is less than Rs.5,000/- per month are eligible for the above course.

For further details, please contact:
Editor, Nandini Voice For the Deprived,
Tel:- 24916037

Desperate Calls

You can enjoy your prosperity only if you share your income with the deprived and thus discover the satisfaction that it provides.



School for poor children needs support

RBC School, Kandamangalam, Villupuram Dist in Tamil Nadu is founded by Annai Help Trust. 31 students are studying in this school under the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The school provides free food and shelter to the inmates.

Annai Help Trust requests financial support and encouragement to run the RBC School successfully.

Contact address:

Mr.S.Annamalai, Chairman, Annai Help Trust
Poongunam, Kundalapuliyur (P.O.) Villupuram Dist, Tamil Nadu.

Disabled lady needs sewing machine



Ms.D.Kasiammal is a poor physically challenged lady. She has studied upto 12th std. She has undergone tailoring course.

Ms.D.Kasiammal requests kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machine for her self employment.

Contact address:

Ms.D.Kasiammal, D/o.Mr.A.Duraikannu
Neelamangalam (Post), Niraimathi Village, Kallakurichi
Tk, Villupuram Dist, Tamil Nadu

Poor lady needs sewing machine

Mrs. V.Kalaivani is a poor lady and she is having two children. Her husband is working as watchman.

Her mother is visually impaired lady.

Mrs. V.Kalaivani knows tailoring work. She requests kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machine for self employment to support her family.

Contact address:Mrs. V.Kalaivani,

W/o.Mr.K.Viswanathan, 16, Bharathiar Street, MGR
Nagar, Pudhuvan Cherry, Tambaram, Chennai-73

Poor student suffering from cancer

Sri.Ranajit Tripathi, age 22 years is a poor college student and he is suffering from hodgkins lymphoma (cancer).



He is undergoing chemotherapy treatment at Apollo Gleneagles Cancer Hospital, Kolkata.

The total approximate cost of the treatment for a period of 6 months is Rs.8,00,000/-

At present, he is unable to continue his treatment due to financial problems.

Cheque may be drawn in favour of Apollo Gleneagles Cancer Hospital, Kolkata and sent to the following address

Sri.Ranajit Tripathi, S/o.Sri.Loknath Tripathi,
Vill. & P.O.Ramganga, P.S.: Patharpratima,
Dist.South 24 Parganas, Phone No.9474973230

Needs support for medical treatment



* Baby Manjamma, two months old, D/o Mr.Senthil, is suffering from IgG deficiency and is undergoing treatment at Kanchi Kamakoti Child Trust Hospital, Chennai. The cost of the treatment for three months Rs.15,000/-. She has to take treatment for atleast 2 years.

* Baby Gnana Sankari, 18 days old, D/o Mr. Muthukumaran, is suffering from pre term/NEC/RDS/shock and is undergoing treatment at Kanchi Kamakoti Child Trust Hospital Chennai. The estimated cost of the treatment is Rs.1,00,000/-.



* Master Haroon Asther, 6 years old, S/o Mr.Sathickbatcha, is suffering from bilateral severe to profound hearing loss and he requires cochlear implantation. The estimated cost of implantation at Madras ENT Research Foundation (P) Ltd Hospital, Chennai is Rs.6,79,000/-.

* Master Vishnu, 2 years old, S/o Mr. Asoka Kumar, is suffering from hurler syndrome and he requires enzyme replacement therapy. The estimated cost of the treatment at Apollo Speciality Hospital, Chennai is Rs.22,00,000/-.



Desperate Calls

The cheque may be drawn in favour of concerned hospital and sent to the following address:

The Secretary,
Women's Welfare Syndicate
8/2, Avenue Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034

Disabled Association needs sewing machines

An organization servicing the cause of differently abled persons in Perambalur district in Tamil Nadu is running a tailoring school for the benefit of poor women. The organization needs two sewing machines to increase the intake of students.

Contact address: Sri.M. Syed Mustafa, Secretary
Physically Handicapped Welfare Association
12/A, Indira Nagar, Perambalur-621 212, Tamil Nadu.

Disabled lady needs lamination machine

Mrs.S.Jayasudha a severely disabled lady and well trained in computer operation

Mrs.S.Jayasudha requests kind hearted persons for donation of lamination machine for self employment . She also requests for job work.

Contact address: Mrs.S.Jayasudha, 36/75, Paper Mills Road, Perambur, Chennai-600 011

ALL INDIA ESSAY COMPETITION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS ON "INDIA'S ENERGY NEEDS AND OPTIONS BY 2020"

Nandini Chemical Journal, renowned online monthly journal, edited by a team of chemical engineers and technologists based at Chennai, is conducting an All India essay competition for college students on "India's Energy Needs And Options By 2020"

The objective of the competition is to encourage the college students to think on the subject and provide them an opportunity to give their views and suggestions for the consideration of the government and industries.

Size of the essay : Maximum 2000 words
Language : English
Eligibility : College student studying at UG and PG level
Prize : Best five entries would be selected for award

Last date for submission of the essay: 30th March 2011

For further details, please contact: nandinichemical@airtelmail.in Tel:- 24916037

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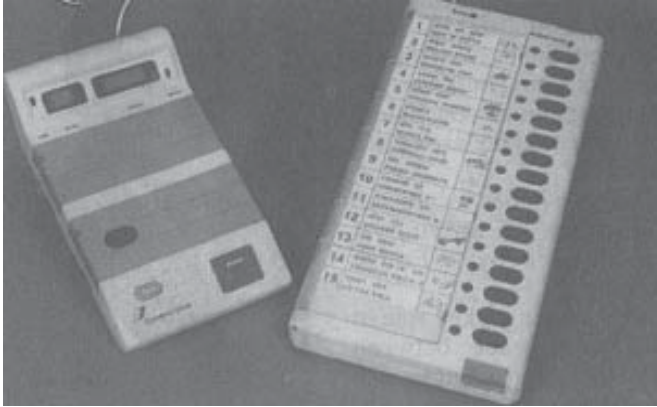
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OPPORTUNITY FOR TAMIL NADU VOTERS

Tamil Nadu was once considered as one of the most enlightened states in the country.

Unfortunately, in the last few years, Tamil Nadu has been steadily losing this reputation due to several reasons. While this is the condition, one would think that citizens of Tamil Nadu have been more sinned against than sinning.



There cannot be two opinions that the quality of politics in Tamil Nadu has gradually degenerated over a period of time, with the national parties steadily losing their base and Tamil Nadu based regional parties gaining ground.

With regional political parties now dominating the political scenario in the state, the family oriented and caste based issues have become the central theme of politics in Tamil Nadu. The members of different political parties have now largely become the sworn loyalists of families controlling the political parties, which are under the firm grip of family friends, sons and daughters and in laws, nieces and nephews.

The dravidian parties who have been ruling the states for more than three decades now have become virtually family centric parties, with vested interests setting guidelines for administrative decisions.

Now, the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that the politicians belonging to inner circle and closely associated business men who often lack character and principles have become very powerful. Police administration are often suspected to be dishonest and most of the bureaucrats toe the line of politicians in their methods and approach. As a result, the quality of administration has deteriorated and lawlessness, violence and corruption have become the order of the day.

Now, it is too alarming a situation for the common men to remain indifferent and not attempting to stem the rot. Obviously, the well meaning citizens have to assert themselves, play an active role and ensure that the place of probity and character in public life are restored and corruption and nepotism are put down heavily.

In such circumstances, the forthcoming election in Tamil Nadu is a great opportunity for the voters in Tamil Nadu to reverse the decline in the state and restore its original image of enlightened state with intelligent people.

Unfortunately, the Tamil Nadu voters are being given little choice in the state elections due to the opportunistic political alliance between various political parties, whose only aim is to win the elections by hook or crook and get into the government. No political party is talking about economic and technological issues with any seriousness.

In the past elections, the voters in Tamil Nadu made their choice largely based on the political parties and not based on the merits of the candidates contesting in the election. This approach of the voters is costing the state dearly and it should change and the voters should look for quality candidates irrespective of the political party that they belong to.

Ensuring the victory of honest and credible candidates in the elections, irrespective of the party that they belong to or credible independent candidate is the only way to ensure quality governance in the state.

The concerned citizens of Tamil Nadu, not affiliated to any political party, should come forward and ensure that credible independent candidates would contest in each of the 234 constituencies, which would provide a good choice to the voters while exercising their options amongst various candidates.

In today's conditions in Tamil Nadu, credible independent candidates can introduce an element of value based politics in the electoral contest

HUNGER CONTINUES TO STALK 300 MILLION IN INDIA

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Hunger continues to stalk over 300 million citizens of the country. India slipped to 67th place in the Global Hunger Index 2010 rankings of 122 countries, prepared by International Food Policy Research Institute.

An Oxford University report said that 410 million Indians live in poverty conditions. While there may be some deference of opinion over the actual numbers, one thing is clear — there is widespread hunger and malnutrition in the country despite a high growth trajectory.



The situation dramatically worsened in the past year in India with vegetable prices zooming up by over 24%. Since March last year, potato prices rose by over 75% and onion rocketed up by 300% for a few months, pushing these staple vegetables out of reach of large sections of people.

Inflation had become a vehicle for sustaining malnutrition and hunger in the country. Yet, the government continues to drag its feet on such crucial measures as providing low priced food grain to the people, according to a study by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), a Delhi based think tank.

The single biggest step that could reduce hunger and bring down price of essential food items - universalisation of the public distribution system - has been stuck in wrangling between policy planners.

CBGA's study points out that providing low priced wheat and rice to about 24 crore households in the country would cost the exchequer Rs.1,44,141 crore. The government is already spending Rs.55,578 crore on

providing food subsidies as per 2010-11 budget estimates. So, the net additional cost would be Rs.88,563 crore per year.

Many economists argue that India can ill afford spending such huge amount on food subsidies. But calling such arguments "unsubstantiated", CBGA said that food subsidies amount to less than 1% of India's GDP and less than 4% of the combined expenditure incurred by state governments and Union government annually.

"Financial constraints can never be an excuse for denying the basic needs of the masses and even less so when the government is prepared to forego tax revenue (as exemptions and deductions in both direct and indirect taxes) to the extent of Rs.5,02,299 crore for a single fiscal year (2009-10)," says the CBGA study.

The argument that there are not enough foodgrain to distribute to all the people too comes in for criticism in the study.

As per the Second Advance Estimates released on 12 February 2010, the procurement of wheat and rice was 253.9 lakh tonnes and 236.9 lakh tonnes respectively last year, which accounted for only about 23 percent of the total food production. Universal public distribution would involve procurement of 1008 lakh tonnes of foodgrain. Enhancing the procurement levels can easily do this, the study says.

Last year in August, the Supreme Court had directed that 17.8 million tonnes of grain in danger of rotting in government godowns should be distributed to the people. This was after there were reports that 67,000 tonnes of wheat had been spoiled in the rainy season due to insufficient protection in godowns.

Such tragic waste could be avoided, if the government were to streamline the public distribution system, plug leakage and build infrastructure to deal with storage and transportation issues.

NEED TO PROMOTE GREATER AWARENESS ABOUT INSURANCE SCHEMES

R.S.Sri Ram

Fellow of Insurance Institute of India & Insurance Consultant



Why Insurance? What is its use? Is it not waste of money? What do I get out of it? These are some of the questions that immediately come up in the mind of common public when the subject of insurance is talked about.

We must understand why such questions arise with regard to insurance, in the first instance.

It is because the benefits of insurance are INTANGIBLE. That is the benefits can not be immediately seen or felt by the person taking insurance, in contrast with purchase of properties, clothing, food or paying money for entertainment like cinema etc., where the benefits enjoyed are tangible and immediately seen or felt.

That is why it is said, that in India where insurance literacy is very low, "Insurance is sold and not purchased".

Nobody on their own accord purchases life insurance in India.

Even in other types of insurance like building / property insurances, people do not take insurance policy unless there is some sort of compulsion as in the case of vehicle, wherein it is necessary for use of vehicle on the road and it is an offence as per law, if the vehicle is not insured against damages that it will create to other people called third parties.

The basic concept of insurance "Financial protection" against unexpected losses should be understood as the central benefit of insurance.

Now a days, awareness about Health insurance is slowly catching up in atleast major cities due to exorbitant cost of medical treatment in hospitals. But other categories of insurance are not known to many people.

Reasons for low awareness

Insurance business comprises of two major categories (i) Life Insurance (pp) General Insurance or Non-Life Insurance.

It is found that awareness about Life Insurance is more when compared to General Insurance.

The reason for low awareness about insurance in India is mainly due to the insurance business environment that prevailed till a decade ago; when the insurance was not opened up to private sector insurance companies.

Until the year 2000, the insurance business was the monopoly of Government / Public Sector companies for a long time.

Life Insurance business was nationalized in 1956 with the formation of LIC of India and General Insurance business in 1972 with the formation of GIC & 4 public

sector companies; Oriental, United India, National and New India.

Before 1956 and 1972 though many private companies operated in the respective categories, the population was not so high and the insurance needs were also limited. Therefore, awareness about insurance was minimal.

Since nationalization, the government companies dominated the market with no competition and it was sellers Market all through. So, the companies did not find any necessity to market the concept of insurance and no worthwhile efforts were made to create awareness about insurance among common people. This also is one of the reasons for low penetration of business of insurance in India.

The cost factors for the consumer

For an individual, the size of the risk in terms of the amount of loss is a vital factor in deciding whether to bear the risk or insure it.

Another factor is the chance of occurrence of the loss.

Both chance (probability) and size together will determine whether a risk is small, medium or large with regard to the financial capacity of the person in deciding the above question.

Based on the above two factors, all the risks can be assessed to decide on the following:

- Whether to insure the risk or bear it
Vis-à-vis the premium to be paid?
- Amount of insurance cover required

It should be ensured that the insurance policy taken is economical in comparison with the likely loss potential and the premium to be paid.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MORE ARTIFICIAL THAN REAL

International Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March 2011 with much fanfare by women activists and with the media highlighting the cause of women and praising the women achievers.

But, do the millions of women in the country, particularly in the lower income group, have any reasons to celebrate?



While the International Women's Day is celebrated once in a year, the news have been appearing throughout the year about the sufferings of women such as physical and mental abuse and torture, physical assaults, eve teasing etc. Careful analysis of the overall scenario would indicate that most of the oppression against women are carried out by men, though there are occasions when the women have been harassed by the women themselves.

It is said that the women are progressing in the country and the fact that President of India, Speaker of Lok Sabha, number of political leaders and ministers are women are cited as examples of progress of women in the society. While this is so, for every woman who is successful, there must be atleast one lakh women who are suffering on various accounts in helpless conditions.

Recently, there was a meeting conducted in Chennai by an organization known as Campaign for Custodial Justice and Abolition of Torture, when women narrated about the rampant sexual abuse in women's prisons in Tamil Nadu. Those women on bail alleged that women prisoners have to undergo traumatic experiences inside the four walls of the prisons, with convict warders subjecting them to sexual exploits.

A woman who had spent 55 days at the women's central prison in Trichy said that convict warders who take control of the new prisoners, in the name of body check, indulge in sexual exploits and physical torture. These disgusting stories and several other similar ones that appear in the newspapers almost every day go to prove the extent of sufferings of poor women.

We often hear about women, particularly in the lower income group terminating the pregnancies, if they would come to know that the child would be baby girl. There have been number of instances, when the poor families leave the baby daughters in the orphanage or discard them due to fear about their future. As a matter of fact, the Government of Tamil Nadu introduced a scheme called Cradle Baby Scheme to save the baby girls, which only highlight the extent of prevalence of such practices and the seriousness of the issues.

Apart from several other issues, one of the glaring examples of women exploitation in India are engaging them for work as domestic maids. Most of the domestic maids work without holidays and throughout the year without fixed working hours. Many of them face extremely tough conditions, with drunken husbands on one side and exploitation by employers on the other side.

It should be kept in mind that probably only one in thousand cases of atrocities against women are reported in the press. Hundreds of eve teasing instances take place all over India and several form of subtle teasing in offices take place but most of the sufferers choose to remain silent and suppress their problems instead of making it an issue.

Most of the women lack confidence that the police would take action against the offenders, if the cases were to be taken to them. There have been number of instances of women being harassed and raped in the police stations itself. While exclusive police stations for women have been created in the states like Tamil Nadu, still it has not solved the problems.

The celebration of the women's day in India, in spite of such conditions, is only be an occasion for celebration for women in upper income group or social activists. But as far as women in the lower income are concerned, the International Women's Day have no relevance for them. Perhaps, they are not even aware of such celebration.

Corruption - Is it in our genes?

Corruption in Mughal India

Dr. D. M. Mohunta E.mail: dmm@ccdcindia.com

(Continued from previous issue)

It would be interesting to look at how deep and wide is corruption in our society and what are its origins.

One can go back in to history and what it reveals is that corruption was as deep and wide as it is today, from the time written historical accounts are available.

It is almost as though corruption is a genetic trait of the Indian sub-continent, Pakistan, Bangladesh, included.

"In the Patna-Sarkar Saran area, the Faujdari was constantly exposed to intrigues and payoffs from merchants.

In the contest between Amirchand and other smaller merchants, the latter armed with money from the Dutch bought out the faujdar (*district law and order administrator*) by paying him Rs 20,000 and created difficulties in collection of saltpetre by Amirchand. In retaliation, he penetrated the area's revenue-collecting machinery and mustered up enough influence to actually "turn out" this faujdar who had accepted payoffs against him."

Another European traveller of these times who travelled from Surat down to Kochi and up the Coromandel coast to Calcutta and then back to Surat over three years, remarks "There is scarcely a crime in Hindostan that the Kotwal does not know".

Gift giving

"Thus for the European companies, the presentations they made were no different from bribes and their records reveal the bitterness and unwillingness with which such gifts and payments were often made."

"The Patna merchants also often used gift-giving as a practical and potent means to secure privileges and concessions in business and above all to hold their own, vis-a-vis the European companies in the fiercely competitive conditions of the saltpetre market."

Today, many a civil servant will make an adverse comment if the gift at Diwali was not commensurate with his status or not commensurate with favour to be bestowed upon the giver.

A la Radia

"During the Governorship of Ali Vardi Khan (1740-56), his son-in-law and nephew Zainudin Ahmed Khan (1740-48), and their successors in Patna, these men and their senior most officials like Dewan Keerutchand routinely engaged in what might almost be called a "game" of resolving deadlocks and disputes in the saltpetre business in return for payoffs.

The power of non-official but otherwise politically influential persons was also regularly exerted in this "game".

The few examples show that all pervasive corruption has been a tradition in the history of India, the entire methodology and structure passing down from one generation to another.

And Now

It has to be recognized that the British rule had low levels of corruption, although corruption remained at the lower levels of government.

I remember a conversation in fifties between my father and Secretary of the Central govt. about corruption. The Secretary recognized that corruption existed when he remembered that his father, a leader of his community while approving an alliance would assess the government employee groom's income as salary plus other income.

In the last 4 or 5 decades, India has rapidly regressed back to the Mughal era. What has been described as historical becomes the current scenario by merely substituting the older set with the present civil servants and the political masters.

One does not have to point fingers at Bihar or UP, closer home, a law such as The Tamilnadu Apartment Act, 1997, has never been implemented by the Administration in letter or spirit. Why? The answer stares in the face.

Take the recent High Court Judgement on Pollution of the Noyyal river. The pollution norms could not or would not be implemented and enforced even after a decade or more.

I can vouchsafe that technology exists for cleanup of effluents as has been done for the Rhine river (the case of Thames is slightly different) on whose banks chemical industries many hundred times the size of Tirupur exists and thrives.

The difference between the earlier era and now is that we have created certain institutions that did not exist then and laws such as RTI.

If these laws are strengthened, then perhaps, we can hope to see the light at end of the tunnel. What the administrator and politician is attempting to be doing is to dilute them, if news reports are to be believed.

GLOBAL OIL PRICE INCREASE - WHY & HOW ?

Chemical Industries Association, a Chennai based apex body of chemical industries all over India organised a brain storming session on Crude oil price fluctuation and its implication at Chennai on 2nd March 2011.

Mr.Swaminathan Venkataraman, Director, Nandini Consultancy (S) Pte. Ltd., Singapore and Dr.D.M.Mohunta, Consultant Technologist, presented papers on global crude oil price fluctuation and its implication. The presentations were aided with tables, charts and indepth analysis of the scenario.

The highlights of proceedings of the brain storming session are provided in this article

Price increase

The crude oil price increase in global market have not been due to any significant increase in cost of production of crude but the price has been dictated by the demand supply trends, regional unrest and related political developments.

Therefore, the oil price is largely speculative and the trend would continue.

Increase in demand

During the last few years, the demand for crude oil has substantially increased in countries like China and India, which resulted in increase in global demand at the rate of around one million barrel per day.

This steep increase has resulted in high capacity utilization of the crude oil industry with the demand level almost reaching the capacity level.

Tight supply scenario

There is not much scope for further increase in crude oil production capacity immediately, until major exploration efforts or new discoveries such as the recent discovery in Brazil would materialise and commence commercial operation.

Under the circumstances, there is bound to be tight supply situation for crude oil in the global market, which is likely to continue, until the production would increase by renewed exploration efforts and new discoveries of oil fields.

The politically sensitive OPEC countries such as Egypt, Venezuela, Libya, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, produce substantial percentage of the world total crude oil requirements.

In the situation of tight supply, even any marginal short fall in production in the above regions would lead to huge increase in price of the crude. This appears to be an inevitable condition.

Falling confidence in US dollar

Apart from the demand supply scenario, the debt ridden conditions of the US economy and fall in the value

of US dollar have resulted in loss of confidence in the stability of US dollar around the world. Therefore, the buyers and speculators are resorting to forward trading in a big way to protect the value of their money and investments and as a result of the huge forward trading not only the price of crude but also other products such as copper, platinum, gold, etc. are increasingly steeply.

Futuristic price scenario

Under the circumstances, the price of crude oil would go up in the near future. It is likely that the price would largely remain at around US\$100 to US\$120 per barrel, as any price above this level, would lead to severe economic recession once again, that will affect the global economy and the economy of OPEC countries as well.

Historical oil price fluctuation in recent times indicate that global economic recession has always been preceded by steep increase in crude oil price. In the past, when the crude oil price increased beyond the affordable level, consumers resisted the higher price, resulting in slowing down of global economy and consequent recession.

India's predicament

At present, import of crude oil in India contributes to around 90% of the Indian requirement. With the near static production level of crude oil in India and increasing demand, Indian imports of crude oil would increase to around 95% of its Indian requirement by 2016.

In such circumstances, India is facing vulnerable and explosive crude oil scenario.

Indian options

The only option for India is to urgently develop an alternate energy model and reduce its dependence on import of crude oil as much as possible.

This would be possible only by developing alternate fuels such as algae based fuel and jatropha based biofuel, that are appropriate to the Indian conditions.

Unfortunately, Indian jatropha oil industry is in doldrums today.

GLOBAL OIL PRICE INCREASE - WHY & HOW ?

While several multinational companies are investing millions of US dollars in developing technology for algae based fuel in advanced countries, little efforts have been initiated in India so far. Countries like Denmark are working towards achieving "a state of non oil dependent economy".

The concern

The brain storming session expressed concern about the Indian crude oil scenario and expressed anxiety about the Government of India not paying adequate attention to research and development efforts for developing technology, that would pave way for

commercial exploitation of algae based fuel and jatropha based biofuel which are appropriate to the country.

The brain storming session also expressed concern that in the budget for the year 2011-2012, even Rs.1000 crores have not been allotted for carrying out time bound research and development efforts on algae and jatropha biofuel, in dedicated R & D centres created for the purpose. It was pointed out that the Indian scientists and technologists have the knowledge level and capability to develop algae based and jatropha based biofuel appropriate to the need, if they would be given the opportunity and encouragement by Government of India.

* * * *

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Invitation to the higher secondary school students to share their views

School students face variety of problems and issues and they rarely get an opportunity to reveal their mind.

The poor students mostly studying in government owned and government aided schools sometimes suffer from inadequate quality of teaching and poor atmosphere. Many of them face problems in their household due to drunken father, poor economic conditions and even variety of exploitation due to social disparities and lack of protection.

The school students studying in private schools face different kinds of problems due to the pressure exerted on them by their parents and elders to show academic excellence. Further, such students also often receive good amount of pocket money from their parents which result in indiscipline and wayward behaviour.

We often hear about misbehaviour of teaching and non teaching staff, causing hardships and mental stress to the students in both private, and government schools.

There is considerable confusion amongst the students about dividing their time and attention between curricular and extra curricular activities and many students do not get any opportunities to widen their vision and get broader perspectives in life.

School students are in the formative age group and the parents and the teachers have to play a big role in moulding their mind set and encouraging their creative instincts. In the case of most students , these are not

happening, possibly since both the parents are employed with little time to spend with their children and the teachers only focus on enabling the students to get high scores in the examination.

Nandini Voice For The Deprived would organize a discussion forum for school students studying in the 11th & 12th standards in the last week of April 2011 at Chennai. Each student would be given six minutes to speak on the subject either in Tamil or in English.

Ten students making the best of observations would be presented awards in a separate meeting.

The interested students are requested to contact Editor, Nandini Voice For The Deprived at Tele No. 24916037 or email nsvenkatchennai@gmail.com to register their names on or before 30th March,2011.



MAJOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ACCIDENTS

Dr. D.M.Mohunta E.mail:-dmm@ccdcindia.com

The recent earthquake and safety issues in nuclear power plants in Japan should cause great concern in India, as Dr. Manmohan Singh has pledged his commitment to nuclear power.

The details of major nuclear power plant accidents in the past in the world should be read with care

October 1957

Fire destroyed the core of a plutonium-producing reactor at Britain's Windscale nuclear complex - since renamed Sellafield - sending clouds of radioactivity into the atmosphere. An official report said the leaked radiation could have caused dozens of cancer deaths in the vicinity of Liverpool.

Winter 1957-'58

A serious accident occurred during the winter of 1957-58 near the town of Kyshtym in the Urals. A Russian scientist who first reported the disaster estimated that hundreds died from radiation sickness.

January 3, 1961

Three technicians died at a U.S. plant in Idaho Falls in an accident at an experimental reactor.

January 21, 1969

A coolant malfunction from an experimental underground reactor at Lucens Vad, Switzerland, releases a large amount of radiation into a cave, which was then sealed.

March 28, 1979

Near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, America's worst nuclear accident occurred. A partial meltdown of one of the reactors forced the evacuation of the residents after radioactive gas escaped into the atmosphere.

February 11, 1981

Eight workers were contaminated when more than 100,000 gallons of radioactive coolant fluid leaked into the contaminant building of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Sequoyah 1 plant in Tennessee.

April 26, 1986

The world's worst nuclear accident occurred after an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power

plant. It released radiation over much of Europe. Thirty-one people died in the immediate aftermath of the explosion. Hundreds of thousands of residents were moved from the area and a similar number were believed to have suffered from the effects of radiation exposure. SCALE 7

March 24, 1992

At the Sosnovy Bor station near St. Petersburg, Russia, radioactive iodine escaped into the atmosphere. A loss of pressure in a reactor channel was the source of the accident.

November 1992

In France's most serious nuclear accident, three workers were contaminated after entering a nuclear particle accelerator in Forbach without protective clothing. Executives were jailed in 1993 for failing to take proper safety measures.

November 1995

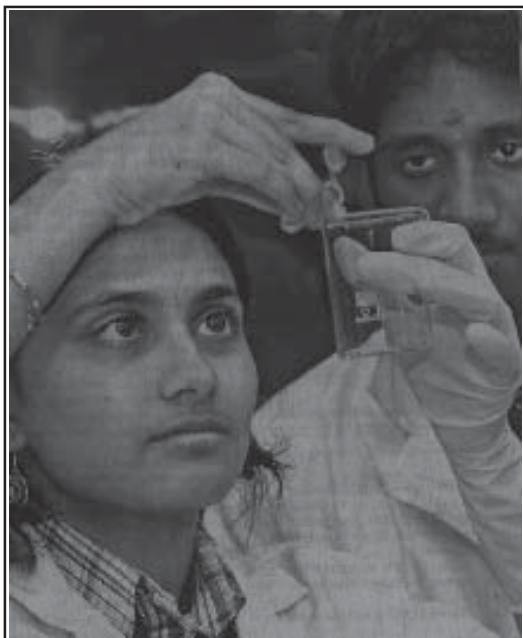
Japan's Monju prototype fast-breeder nuclear reactor leaked two to three tons of sodium from the reactor's secondary cooling system.

March 1997

The state-run Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation reprocessing plant at Tokaimura, Japan, contaminated at least 35 workers with minor radiation after a fire and explosion occurred.

September 30, 1999

Another accident at the uranium processing plant at Tokaimura, Japan, plant exposed fifty-five workers to radiation. More than 300,000 people living near the plant were ordered to stay indoors. Workers had been mixing uranium with nitric acid to make nuclear fuel, but had used too much uranium and set off the accidental uncontrolled reaction.



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