

Nandini

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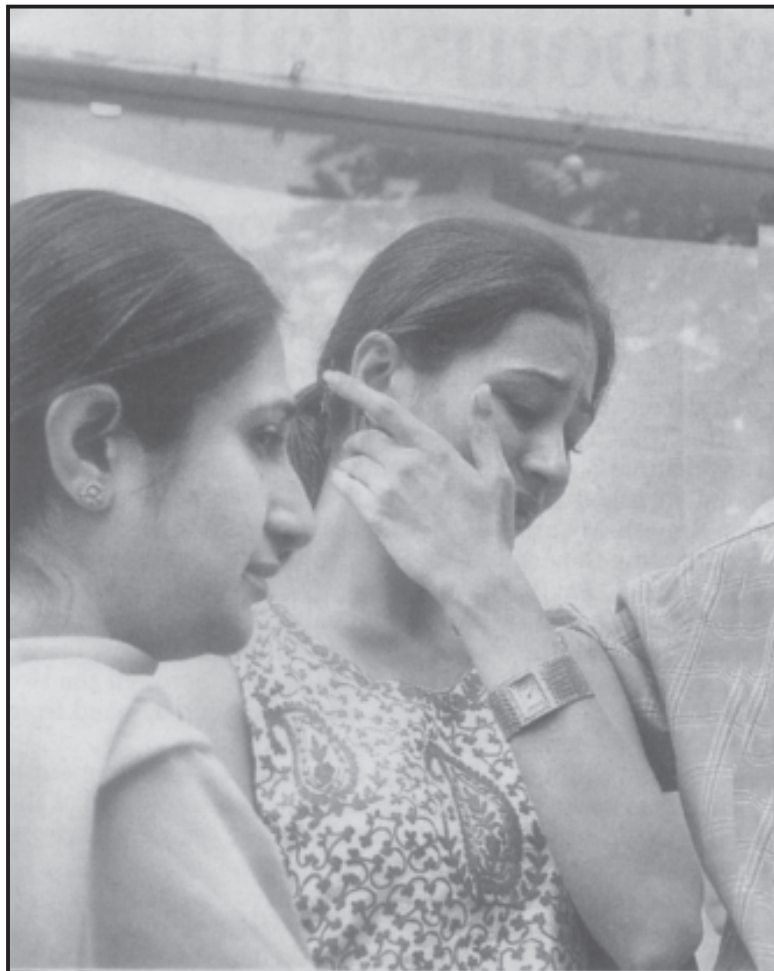
Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

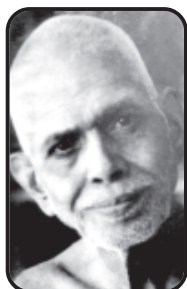
VOL XI

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RS.10/-



**Need for moral policing
To protect the dignity of Indian Womanhood**



Thoughts of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi

Note by the Recorder

A humble devotee sought the guidance of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi for his own peace of mind and lived in the Asramam in Thiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu.

The seeker took it upon himself to note down, as occasions arose, the sweet, refreshing and enlightening words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi. This self-imposed task was undertaken for the purification of his own mind and better understanding of the subtle and profound words of Sri Bhagavan.

These notes cover the period 1935-39.

The first, second, third, fourth part of this article was published in the August, September, October and November 2006 issues.

Courtesy : Recorder, Sri Ramanasramam 1st January, 1955

6th April, 1937

The sanyasi visitor, Swami Lokesananda, asked about Samadhi.

Maharishi. Explained as follows:

- ❖ Holding on to Reality is Samadhi.
- ❖ Holding on to Reality with effort is Savikalpa samadhi.
- ❖ Merging in Reality and remaining unaware of the world is Nirvikalpa samadhi.
- ❖ Merging in Ignorance and remaining unaware of the world is sleep (Head bends, but not in samadhi).
- ❖ Remaining in the primal, pure natural state without effort is Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi.

They can be further subdivided thus:

Savikalpa Samadhi

(Bahya) External

Drisyanuvidha: The mind jumps from one object to another. Keep it steady, fixed on the Reality behind them

Sabdanuvidha: There are the external phenomena which are said to have their origin from the Single Reality. Search for it and hold on to it

(Antar) Internal

The mind is afflicted by kama, krodha, etc. See where from they arise and how they have their being.

Hold on to their source

There are all manner of thoughts which rise up from the Reality within and manifest themselves. Hold on to that Reality.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi

(Bahya) External

Merging in the one Reality underlying all the phenomena and remaining un aware of the transitory manifestations

This state is compared to the waveless ocean whose waters are still and placid

(Antar) Internal

Merging in the Inmost Being which is the One Reality giving rise to all thoughts, etc., and remaining unaware of anything else

This state is compared to a flame unagitated by currents of air, but burning quite steady

All these four kinds of savikalpa samadhi are attended with effort

When these kinds of nirvikalpa samadhi are not attended with effort and it is realised that the waveless ocean of external samadhi and the steady flames of internal samadhi are identical, the state is said to be sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi

❖ ❖ ❖

15th October, 1938

Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, "Make me a bhakta. Give me moksha."

After they left, Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want bhakti and moksha. If I say to them, 'Give yourself to me' they will not. How then can they get what they want?

❖ ❖ ❖

10th June, 1936

Devotee.: What is Guru's Grace? How does it work?

Maharishi.: Guru is the Self.

Devotee.: How does it lead to realisation?

Maharishi.: Isvaro gururatmeti (God is the same as Guru and Self).

A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world, he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest.

God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee; teaches him the Truth; purifies the mind by his teachings and contact; the mind gains strength, is able to turn inward; with meditation it is purified yet further, and eventually remains still without the least ripple.

That stillness is the Self.

The Guru is both exterior and interior. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps the mind to achieve quietness. That is Grace.

Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.

Desperate Calls

Limitless is the scope offered by nature and conditions in an impoverished society to attain immortality by means of one's own philanthropic actions and charitable disposition .

In simple terms, to help those in distress is a glorious opportunity to make one's own existence meaningful.

Disabled lady sports person needs support

Ms.J.Deepa is a disabled athlete and has won silver and bronze medals in international meets in recent years.

Now Ms.J.Deepa has been selected to participate in the 9th FESPIC Games being held at Malaysia from 25th November to 1st December 2006.

For the participation of 9th FESPIC Games, she has to bear the expenses of Rs. 40,150/-

Ms.J. Deepa requests kind hearted persons for financial help to participate in the 9th FESPIC Games.

Contact address: Ms.J.Deepa, D/o.Sri.P.Jayaraman
1/38, Konar Compound, Indirani Nagar,
Mudaku Salai, Madurai-16

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Disabled persons need Sewing Machines

Sri.A.Siluvai Michael,Ms.M.Maria Selva Annal and Ms.H.Jhansi Nihara Banu are poor disabled persons. They have undergone training in tailoring course.

They request for donation of sewing machines.

Contact address: Mr.A.Siluvai Michael,
S/o.Sri.M.Arockyam (Late)
4/18, South Street, Valaithottam
Kumarapuram, Tisaiyanvillai (via) Pin:627657

◆ ◆ ◆

Ms.M.Maria Selva Annal
4/149, Valaithottam, Kumarapuram (P.O)
Tisaiyanvillai(Via) Pin:627657

Ms.H.Jhansi Nihara Banu, D/o.Mr.Hajha Mohideen
Pallivasal Street, Kumarapuram
Tisaiyanvillai (via) Pin:627657

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Request for Sewing Machine

Ms.B.Sulochana is a poor lady.She knows tailoring.

Ms.B.Sulochana requests for donation of sewing machine

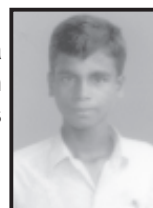
Contact address: Ms.B.Sulochana
No.5A,Anna Salai, Kodungaiyur, Chennai-600 118

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Needs Hearing Aid

Sri.A. Sivakumar, age 14, belongs to a poor family and is studying in X standard in a Government School. He urgently needs hearing aid.

Contact address : Sri. A. Sivakumar, C/o
Sri. Ezhumalai
Kundalipuliyur, Poogunam (P.o.)
Villuppuram Taluk, TamilNadu.



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Needs Tricycle

Sri Lakshmana Achari, age 66, is a disabled person and he needs a tricycle.

Contact address :
Sri. Lakshmana Achari
Kanjana (P.o.) Villuppuram Taluk,
Tamilnadu

Pray for this child suffering from Cancer

Baby S.Bharat is two years old and he is born in a poor family. His father is an unskilled worker. His grandmother is a visually impaired person. His grandfather is sick old man.

Baby Bharat was growing happily, when his parents found a swelling in his right leg and the baby exhibited signs of discomfort. The parents took the baby to a few government hospitals. Doctors gave some medicines and finally suggested that the swelling could be due to some type of cancer and referred to a cancer specialist.

The parents took the baby to a well known cancer hospital in Chennai where the doctors confirmed that the baby is suffering from cancer and suggested that the leg should be amputated. The parents agreed reluctantly and the baby was operated.

After a few weeks, the swelling further continued in the remaining portion of the leg and the cancer hospital told the parents that the cancer was spreading and the baby can not be treated any more.

Obviously, the two year old baby is now in terminal condition. The poor parents have no option other than praying to God for the recovery of their dear son. They do not have enough funds even to make the remaining life of the baby comfortable by providing a good bed and healthy food.

Let us pray for the recovery of the baby.

Contact address : Mrs.Gowri Arumugham,
105, Dharmaraja Koil Street, Thiruninravoor, Tiruvallur District. TamilNadu.

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.

Criminals in Politics

Dear Sir,

Eminent patriot and freedom fighter of old United Bengal C.R.Das wrote to Aurobind Ghose on 29th January 1939 as follows: "In my whole legal career, I have not met worse types of criminals than in politics".

It has become a nightmare and epidemic today. All the organisations are competing with each other in excelling in selfishness, pushing our nation to dogs despite 8% G.D.P.

Election has become a farce show mirroring unscrupulous crafty callous leaders letting loose tyranny and booth capturing. The bureaucrats share the spoils with them.

The innocent masses are reeling in miseries. The media too has to be blamed for the chaos and anarchy, devoid of playing a constructive role. Ministers floating huge advertisements are their heroes, while they are really zeros rolling in style and comforts in their A.C. Mansions. With publicity provided by helpful media, the politicians fool the electorate.

Vested interests of dynasties wish to change things as benefiting and befitting them.

K.N.Narayana Pillai, Chennai



Vandemataram-Unnecessary Controversy

Dear Sir,

Some people object to Vande mataram as a national song since it speaks of Hindu God offensive to Muslims. Some Congressmen support the removal of some parts of the song. As early as December 1939, such a climate existed. Sri Arabindo's stand then was as follows:

"But it is not a religious song. It is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why should not the Muslims accept it? It is an image used in poetry. In the Indian concept of nationality, The Hindu view would naturally be there. If it cannot find a place there, the Hindus may as well be asked to give up their culture. The Hindus do not object to "Allah-Ho-Akber".

K.N.Narayana Pillai, Chennai



Pitiable Plight of Depositors

Dear Sir,

In the early 1990s, there was a mushroom growth of financial companies which offered high rates of interests ranging from 24% to 36% per annum. They also gave attractive gifts at the time of opening of deposit accounts. Lured by these, the gullible section of people mostly from

middle and lower class of people fell to the prey. While some people invested a major portion of their savings, those retired from services invested the entire terminal benefits in fraudulent companies.

But to the disappointment of all depositors, several financial companies collapsed within a few years. Cases were filed and in many cases, the official liquidators took possession of the properties. But although a decade has elapsed since then, no worthwhile percentage of refunds have been made so far, leaving the affected persons in lurch. The wonder is that no government during the last 15 years has come to the rescue of depositors.

The owners of such companies are left scot-free and they move in society without any compunction.

M.R.Pillai, Korattur, Chennai



Any remedy in sight?

Dear Sir,

On the occasion of the conferment of the 'Mother Teresa Award for Excellence' on Dr S Krishnaswamy of Krishnaswamy Associates, he voiced words of sincere wisdom stressing that "Development will be real only if the entire population is taken forward pulling up people from below the poverty line. A lopsided development of only one section of the society is unacceptable in human terms because a revolution of rising expectations is already turning into a revolution of rising frustrations affecting the society and peace of the society as a whole."

His speech is entirely fair, reasonable and correct. The undemocratic, shortsighted approach of self-centred political parties and their so-called leaders is really destroying the political, social fabric of the nation.

Millions had sacrificed their all to get freedom and democracy. The country faces the risk of undoing the selfless work and achievements of patriots and great hearted men and women. One sees wolfs all around! The media is full of, not the music of solidarity, integrity and eternity, but the disaster-prone cries of wolfs.

Will the nation pull through this 'Ordeal of Poison' and save what it achieved after so much of struggle. Any remedy is in sight?

During Freedom Movement, it used to be repeated

'Heroes are inside jail;

Neros are in power;

Zeroes are outside.'

Is the Nation witnessing the like of that situation now?

N.Rajagopalan, I.A.S. Rtd, Chennai-20

INDIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AT THE CROSS ROADS

The recent one day bank strike was largely ignored by the public as a routine matter and the public perhaps viewed that it was another holiday for the bank. Many did not care to know the reason for the strike and perhaps, some of the striking bank employees themselves might not have cared to know the reason. Many of the employees whether they approved or disapproved the strike call, still joined the strike like a herd of cattle. Obviously, the trade union movement in the country is losing the sense of direction.

Today, most of those claiming the trade union rights are not really deprived people but those who are having a fat pay packet and leading a comfortable life style. A bank employee cannot be called as deprived person by any standard. Obviously, instead of being exploited, they are exploiting the trade union rights for their personal good.

The concept of trade union movement has become a mere tool in the hands of the organized class of employees to demonstrate their collective strength and protect their benefits and perks in employment. One gets an impression that Indian trade union movement is operating in vacuum and does not command the respect and credibility that it was once known for.

With the trade union movement no more being a class struggle, we find that the employers are becoming bolder, particularly in the medium and small scale organizations.

There are many instances of small companies not providing appointment orders while recruiting persons for jobs. Even worse are the organizations who insist that employees should submit a resignation letter along with the joining report at the time of taking up the job. There are cases, where part of the salary is kept back by the employer stating that it could be given only at the time of employees leaving the services. Many organizations pay the salary only during the second and even third week of the month.

While such is the conditions in several private sector organizations, even the educational institutions do not behave better. One of the institutions which offers para medical course in Chennai insist that the students should work in the institution for a specific period on a paltry salary after completion of the course and it withholds the certificates until the students would adhere to the conditions.

Obviously, all such violators of the concept of fairness to the employees know that their misdeeds will not be exposed, with the present style of trade union movement.

WHITHER TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN WEST BENGAL?

The number of mandays lost has actually shrunk by more than 20 percent over last year's level in West Bengal, a decline that is almost five times the national average.

The policy of the Marxist led Government in West Bengal towards industry and labour has undergone significant and basic changes in its 29 years of rule.

With the law breakers becoming the law makers, the interest in paralysing the work and "teaching the managements a lesson" has considerably come down

It is not as if the conditions of workers have improved phenomenally in West Bengal in recent years. The fact is that the politicians in the Trade Union Movement are no more interested in stopping the work, as such methods do not help them anymore. This shows the dwindling relevance of working class in West Bengal to the Leftists in power.

In several organisations in West Bengal, there have been substantial reduction in the manpower strength and the Marxist government is not protesting.

If the Hindustan Motors car factory once had to engage 30,000 workers, the new one on the horizon, Tata Motors, is planning to have just about 2,000 for its small-car plant in Singur. The Marxists who support this project do not care.

The Left's investor-friendly image, got it's biggest boost after Bhattacharjee took over in 2001. He has done more than vigorously pursuing the path shown by his predecessor. He clamped down on the CITU and simultaneously used funding from Britain's Department for International Development to shut down a host of government undertakings and pay off their workers. Nothing symbolised this new approach better than the smooth takeover of the government-owned Great Eastern Hotel by its new owners, despite serious challenges to the move.

The past still lingers by way of public rhetoric. Leaders still swear by the right of the worker to strike in their meetings. One general strike every year, however, remains a ritualistic tribute to the past. This year it falls on December 14, when Left Trade Unions will try to paralyse the country to protest the Centre's economic policy of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation.

But whether the conditions of the working class will improve remain a mute question. Perhaps, Trade Unions which will continue to shout for the working class may not anymore represent the cause of the downtrodden people in the changing circumstances!

INAUGURATION OF FREE COMPUTER SCHOOL AT KODUNGAIYUR, CHENNAI

Nandini Voice For The Deprived has started seventh free computer school at Kodungaiyur in Chennai on 12th November, 2006.

Nandini voice For the Deprived is presently running six free computer schools at the following centres in Tamil Nadu for the last several years

Perungudi, Chennai

Korattur, Chennai

Thiruvottiyur, Chennai

Nagercoil

Dindigul

Perambalur

In the free computer schools, free computer education in basic computer operations is provided for duration of six months. The training is provided in basic computer operations such as MS-Dos, Wordstar, Dbase, Foxpro25, MS-Office, (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), Pagemaker, Coral Draw, D.T.P. Tally etc. and the students are trained to take up jobs as data entry operators. Placement services are also provided.

Those who have passed plus two and whose family income is less than Rs.3000/- per month are eligible for admission in Nandini Computer schools.

The students do not have to pay any amount what soever.

In all the computer schools at different centres in Tamil Nadu, around 220 students are presently undergoing free computer education.

During the last few years, around 2400 students have successfully undergone the computer course and most of them have been placed in jobs.

Nandini Computer school at Kodungaiyur is located at the following address

31, Kamarajar Street,
(Opp. Ambedkar Statue)
Kodungaiyur, Chennai-600118

Those requiring admission are requested to contact

N.S.Venkataraman

Trustee

Nandini Voice for The Deprived

Tel:- 24916037 / 24961346

DISABLED ARTISTS AND THEIR ASPIRATIONS PROGRAMME IN DOORDARSHAN

Podigai Channel of Doordarshan will be carrying out a programme on disabled artists and their aspirations. Chief Editor of Nandini Voice for the Deprived would participate in the programme as panelist.

Around 20 disabled persons consisting of orthopaedically disabled and hearing and speech impaired artists from all over Tamil Nadu would participate in the programme and express their problems and aspirations.

The products made by the disabled persons would also be exhibited.

The programme would be telecast as per the following schedule :

Episode 1 - 18.11.2006 - 9.30 to 10.00 p.m.

Episode 2 25.11.2006 - 9.30 to 10.00 p.m.

Episode 3 2.12.2006 - 9.30 to 10.00 p.m.

WHAT THE DEPRIVED THINK ABOUT THIS COUNTRY?

Today, everything is done in this country by the Government in the name of poor and downtrodden. Every policy is being pronounced, relating it to the benefits that it would ultimately provide to the poor and weaker sections of society.

In such circumstances, the poverty stricken people in India should feel highly gratified about the attention that they get and the priority given to them. But, what does the poor man really think about these measures of the government and the "tears" that the politicians shed for

the downtrodden ?

Nandini Voice For the Deprived is speaking to number of deprived persons in different age groups who belong to the lower income group and live in below poverty line to ascertain their views. The highlights of the discussions about the views of the deprived persons on the state of the society and government and as to what extent they believe the pronouncements of the government and politicians would be published in the next issue.

BUILDING HOUSES FOR THE POOR LAUDABLE EFFORTS OF GRAM VIKAS

Gram Vikas is a rural development organisation working with poor and marginalised communities of Orissa since 1979 and towards sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural poor.

Gram Vikas leverages the inherent strength of communities to initiate, manage and sustain context-specific development processes. It currently reaches over 140,000 people in 400 villages across 15 districts of Orissa.

Building together, generating livelihoods

Gram Vikas looks at habitat development as a critical tool in poverty alleviation and bringing dignity into the lives of poor rural communities.

In Gram Vikas's approach, every family in a habitation must have a house of at least 45 sqm. with two rooms, a kitchen cum dining space, verandah, separate toilet and bathing room and supply of running water to all houses. Habitat also includes other infrastructure such as a multipurpose community hall, creche, a school, appropriate shelter for livestock, grain stores, roads and drains and appropriate sources of energy especially in places where there is no electricity.

Habitat development involves the entire community coming together, for both individual and collective gains.

Community effort is manifested in baking bricks for the houses, collecting sand, collecting and breaking stones, collecting wood for doors and windows and finally building together. All households share the workload, thus enabling each and every family to devote the requisite time to meet their other basic requirements.

Local youth (men and women) are trained on-the-job under expert guidance in construction skills, including masonry, bar-bending, stone dressing and related activities such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical fittings, painting, etc.

In addition to enhancing the skill base in villages, maximum resources are retained within the village economy, as the trained youth are able to undertake repairs and maintenance and the dependence on outsiders to provide services is minimised.

Rural Health and Environmental Programme

Gram Vikas launched the Rural Health and Environment Programme (RHEP) in 1992. The programme aims to provide uninterrupted water supply and sanitation facilities to households. Toilets and bathing rooms costing Rs.8,000 are jointly financed with Gram Vikas subsidy of Rs.3,000 and people raising the remaining amount by contributing labour and raising local resources. For water supply systems, the government finances 75% of the costs and people contribute the rest. A corpus fund is collected at the outset with an average contribution of around Rs.1000 per family, with the better-off paying more. The interest supports the social cost of future extension of the system to new households, ensuring all households are covered at all times. People also pay a monthly maintenance charge to cover all operational costs from the very first month, thus creating social infrastructure, which are sustainable, community-owned and self-managed.

As on 31 March 2005, this programme reached 16,124 households in 211 habitations.

Financing house construction

Loans accessed from Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Mumbai and Stitching DOEN Foundation, Netherlands have been provided by Gram Vikas to selected families for the construction of their houses. Housing finance activity has evolved over the past two decades from a full grant approach to a full loan approach.

Particulars	Cost/Unit (in Rs.)	Bank loan (in Rs.)	People's contribution	Government
Permanent disaster-proof house – not less than 45 sqm. In area with two rooms, kitchen, dining space, toilets and bath room	60,000 to 70,000	22,500 to 30,000	Balance amount	Attempting to access (Rs.12,500 per family)
Number of families supported for construction of disaster-proof houses				3,625
Loan disbursed				Rs.70 million
Interest rate				9%
Average repayment period				15 years
Repayment in 2005-06				Rs.2.2 million
Total repayment				Rs.25 million

People spend a considerable amount of time collecting materials and contributing labour towards construction of the house. During this period, the income of an entire household is barely enough for them to eke out a subsistence. Hence, they are unable to service the loan for the initial two to three years. This is where the 'credit-cum-subsidy' of the government fits in. Under this scheme, a subsidy of Rs.12,500 is available from the government for a Below Poverty Line family, which accesses a housing loan from formal financial institutions. The subsidy that the government proposes to give to the households can actually be used towards alleviating their burden of loan repayment for the first two to three years.

The benefits to the rural poor

The intervention by Gram Vikas has had an impact on rural housing in the area, both self-financed and

government supported programs, as people are now more conscious about design, costs and quality of construction. Experiences have been varied in terms of people's involvement ability and attitude to repay. Establishing the loan-based approach has been slow as most government housing schemes operate on a full grant approach.

All members of the community benefit equally and there are no losers, only winners.

For further details, please contact
Gram Vikas,
Mohuda Village,
Berhampur-760 002
Ganjam District, Orissa
info@gramvikas.org

Courtesy:basin-South Asia News/2006

BALANCING MERIT WITH EQUITY

Contributed by: M.A.Rane -Courtesy: PUCL Bulletin, October 2006

The proposal of reservation of seats in higher educational institutions as well as in Government and private industries announced by the HRD Minister even without discussing the same in the Cabinet, is highly divisive like the Mandal proposal.

Instead it is far better to follow the point system of USA in the Universities and by Government and Private industries, in order to give weightage to the socially backwards like African-Americans as well as the poor people even from amongst the Americans.

According to the system, in the first 50 points academic qualification are considered. In this class, largely persons coming from higher class, advanced class and richer parents generally stand a better chance. Next 50

points are allotted on the basis of various factors such as backwardness, community, education level in the family, financial position of the family and other factors. In this system, the backward gets weightage and there is equitable balancing between merits and equity.

This was necessary in USA because US Supreme Court rejected the principle of reserved quotas. There is no reason why we should not follow this point system in India, which will create balance between merit and backwardness.

In an edit page article under the title "Quotas and beyond" in the Times of India of July 6,2006, Solil Paul, with the Institute of Conflict Management, New Delhi has pointed out that this point system is followed by the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

PREACHING PHILOSOPHY AND FLOATING IN POMP AND SHOW

One of the hall marks of genuine philosophers is that they remain detached and have no love for wealth, power or publicity. They are supposed to have overcome the egoistic mindset and conduct themselves with equanimity.

However, these days, we see "philosophers" talking about renunciation of worldly pleasures and themselves showing signs of being extremely attached to publicity and dramatic shows. They organize big events which look like star nights and ensure that the shows are telecast in prime TV channels. Perhaps, they manage to buy space in media also with the help of huge resources that they command.

"The shows of philosophy" that they organize are visited by prominent film personalities, politicians, top bureaucrats and wealthy business men, who inevitably get priority in the gathering. It is common to see that the film stars, politicians and business men are encouraged

to speak on such occasions eulogising "the philosopher" managing the show. They have mansion like ashrams and retreat centers where everything is about comforts.

What is funny is that these "philosophers" have distinct dress code for themselves and hair style and beard style, which distinguish one from the other. The "success" of these persons is often judged by the media and their own admirers by the number of foreign disciples they have and the number of invitations that they get to lecture abroad. The latest fancy for them is to get invitations to speak in management institutes.

They are excellent mind readers and they mesmerize their admirers in their own peculiar ways, which again appears to be a branded technique for each person.

What is conspicuous is that the poorest of the poor persons rarely have access to these "philosophers".

Poongavanam

The Disabled Woman with a Fine Mind

Ms. S.Poongavanam age 30 years is a severely disabled woman who cannot walk and can only move in a sitting posture. In spite of severe physical deformity and poverty conditions confronting her, she is still cheerful and bears no ill will towards the society, that is reluctant to come to her aid. Read the story of this determined lady.



Poongavanam was not born with disability though she was born in a very poor family.

Poongavanam was affected by polio when she was hardly ten years and her desperate father took her from one hospital to other hoping that some doctor would treat her adequately to enable her to recover. But, it was not to

be and Poongavanam became a permanently crippled girl.

She was brought up by her devoted parents who lacked resources but not love for the daughter. She lost her mother a few years back.

In spite of her physical suffering, she continued her education in a government school and studied upto twelfth standard and passed the examination.

The anxious father could do only so much for her and Poongavanam could not study further due to her physical constraints and lack of resources of the family. Still, she studied typewriting both in Tamil and English language and passed the higher level examination creditably. She has also passed tailoring course.

She has also undergone computer education with specialisation in office automation.

But, it appears that such attainments are not enough for any employer to recognise her and give her a job, who should have the magnanimity to ignore the fact that Poongavanam cannot walk and has to be lifted from one place to the other. What is the way out for such person and particularly a woman?

Poongavanam then set up a PCO near her residence in Tambaram, a suburb of Chennai to self employ herself

and find a way to live with dignity. Nandini Voice For the Deprived helped her by providing her a motorised tricycle

Poongavanam says that even running a PCO is not easy for a disabled woman., particularly as she has to put up with the sarcastic remarks of the visitors and passers by. The weak body has to be supported by a very strong mind to survive in the harsh conditions around her.

With the cell phones becoming more popular, running a PCO booth is no more remunerative but she has no alternative.

She learnt to operate computer and has big dreams. With some resources, perhaps, Poongavanam can convert her dreams into a reality by setting up some computer related business activity. Unfortunately, in most cases, the disability and poverty go together. While the government claims that there are number of schemes that it offers to the disabled persons to improve their living conditions, most of them do not reach the disabled persons adequately and Poongavanam is a standing example.

What is remarkable about this lady is that she is very matured in her outlook and bears no ill will towards anyone or the society at large. She takes things at her stride and looks at the world around her with complete understanding and detachment. Such qualities enable this disabled lady to find peace within herself and pull on, unmindful of the adversaries.

After talking to this lady, one inevitably gets an impression that the persons better placed in life have a lot to learn from her.

Contact details

Ms. S. Poongavanam,
3, Pillaiyar Koil Street, Kannadarpalayam,
West Tambaram, Chennai - 600 045.
Tel:- 22266335

MORAL POLICING-WHAT IS IMMORAL ABOUT IT ?

The English media has invented the term “moral policing”, to decry the actions initiated by the police against the prostitutes and immoral activities of people in general.

Recently, the Chennai police raided a few hotels at midnight hours and questioned the men ,women and the hotel authorities about the violation of orders regarding serving of liquor . The police were reported to have caught young women who were said to be students and BPO employees and who were found scantily dressed and drunk and were dancing in midnight hours in the hotel. When the police took them to the police station for questioning, the media pounced on the police and condemned it calling it as the “moral policing”.

Unfortunately, the large section of media whether journals, newspapers or television are nowadays excessively dependent on sex related stories and scenes to promote their readership/viewership and business interests. They seem to be losing ideas and think that publishing compromising photographs of young men and women and juicy news about models and film stars are the best way to sell their product.

In such conditions, when the police try to enforce some sort of order and prevent this kind of liquor shows, perhaps the media thinks that the action of the police would affect its business interest!

Today, the rapid spreading of liquor habit particularly amongst the young persons and the negative aspects of the western influence are leading to permissive life styles. Such development cause havoc in the mindset of young boys and girls about the value systems in personal life and relationships.

There is certainly a strong need to stem the rot and enforce some discipline. Young girls and boys taking liquor in midnight hours and going astray will not only affect their health and mental state but will lead to several other obvious and undesirable developments.

The media obviously is not concerned but the responsible individuals cannot but feel concerned about such matters.

Police is certainly doing its duty in this matter and should be encouraged. The moral policing whatever the term may mean, is nothing to be ashamed of by the police.

SEXUAL ABUSE RAMPANT IN HOSPITALS FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In a shocking study carried out by international NGO Population Council, 77 of the 135 women doctors and nurses working in four hospitals in Kolkata, admitted sexual harassment. However, over 50 of them did not complain.

As many as 45 reported psychological harassment, 41 verbal harassment, 27 unwanted touch and 16 sexual gestures and exhibitionism.

The study also revealed that just 20 of the 135 women interviewed over a period of 11 months by Population Council researcher Paramita Chaudhuri were aware of the Supreme Court guidelines on sexual harassment. What's worse, none of them had heard of a complaints committee for redressal of their grievances.

Several of the respondents also expressed their scepticism about the grievances committee's effectiveness.

The study “Sexual harassment in work place - experiences of women in the health sector”, says that victims were sexually harassed by not only their co-workers but also by patients and their relatives.

Doctors and nurses alike agree that sexual harassment is an occupational hazard for working women.

A 35-year old nurse added, “saying bad things when they see a woman is natural, It does not matter if the man is a doctor or a non-medical staffer.”

The study said, “by and large, doctors and nurses in government hospitals are permanent employees and those in private hospitals tend to work as consultants. Nurses in private hospitals, although confirmed after 3 months of employment, can be dismissed at any time and therefore have less job security than those in government hospitals. Reluctant to discuss sexual harassment stems from the fear of those on daily wage employment or on contracts that they will lose their job if they go public”.

Shockingly, the biggest perpetrators of abuse were patients and their families followed by doctors and non-medical staff. Nurses are the only group harassed by everyone - doctors, non-medical staff patients and their relatives and outsiders - the study said

Moral Policing - Is it necessary ?

All India essay competition for women college students

In recent times, police in several states have been conducting raids on night clubs and are arresting the revelers, which has been dubbed by section of the media and a few organizations as moral policing.

While police have been criticized for such acts , there are also opinion that with the permissive life style increasingly gaining ground amongst the youth, tough police action is necessary as part of the responsibility of the police to maintain law and order in the society. Concern have been expressed that women increasingly participate in such night club activities, which expose them to physical threats and other forms of abuse. Murders of women have taken place in recent times as a result of such permissive life styles.

While section of the media is very critical of the moral policing terming it as intrusion in the liberty of the individuals, it is necessary to know as to what the young women think on the subject, as the women are the stake holders

Nandini Voice For The Deprived wants to ascertain the views of the women college students all over India and give them an opportunity to express their views , which can be well considered both by the media and the police.

With this objective , Nandini Voice for the Deprived is conducting an essay competition for women college students on the subject " Moral Policing - Is it Necessary"?

The essay should be of maximum 1500 words and can be written in English, Tamil or Hindi. The essay should reach Nandini Voice For The Deprived on or before 31st December,2006.

Five of the best essays would be selected for cash awards

Essay can be sent to the following address either by post or e mail

N.S.Venkataraman
Trustee
Nandini Voice For The Deprived
M 60/1, 4th Cross Street,
Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090
Tel:- 24916037 / 24961346
E mail:- nsvenkat@md4.vsnl.net.in
Website : www.nandinivoice.org

PROGRESS TOWARDS GRADUAL DEATH

We must die, that is certain; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions - eating, drinking and everything that we do - tend towards the sacrifice of ourself.

You nourish your body by eating. What good is there in doing that if you do not hold it as a sacrifice to the well-being of others? You nourish your minds by reading books. There is no good in doing that unless you hold it also as a sacrifice to the whole world. It is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandise this little self.

Thus you must die a gradual death. In such a death is heaven, all good is stored therein - and in its opposite is all that is diabolical and evil.

—Swami Vivekananda

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SUGGESTIONS ON SOCIAL SERVICE METHODOLOGIES

Innovative Net Work For Social Evolution [Inforce] a Chennai based NGO has putforth some suggestions for rendering services in appropriate areas by NGOs in the country.

The suggestions should be studied carefully not only by the NGOs but also by the socially conscious persons.

Views and suggestions may be sent to

Mr.A.Narayanan,

e-mail: teaminforce@yahoo.com, Tele :-

CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Identify and form a small team of totally committed volunteers in a given locality.

Choose an ANGANVADI (ICDS) of that locality, improve the infrastructure of that centre like provision of lights, fans, drinking water, educational gadgets, toys and a small Library.

Enroll children of poor and underprivileged families like domestic maids, daily wage earners of that locality for evening tuitions, educational and recreational activities. .

Enlist the support of local middle class families and other service minded citizens for resources (e.g.,old newspapers,) to run the centre successfully on a sustainable basis.

The above projects will be run with the permission, support, guidance and within the rules and regulations of the Government and ICDS.

Inforce is already running one such project at AVM Avenue, Virugambakkam successfully for the past ten months.

The quality and efficiency and benefit to the children are directly proportional to the commitment of volunteers. The happiness in the face of children and the joy, we derive in seeing the improvement in the children is the MOTIVATING FACTOR.

ICDS Anganwadi centres are most ideal because the buildings already exist and Government is conducting Midday Nutritious Meal Scheme and a creche for Pre-school Children during the day time

The poor families around the centre easily identify themselves with the centre and will send their children without any hesitation.

The Government also encourages NGO participation through citizens' involvement in such development activity, provided the project is managed well.

EMPOWERMENT OF POOR AND UNDERPRIVILEGED MOTHERS

Create a corpus of Rs 1 Lakh.

Identify mothers of school going children who are supporting their families by selling flowers / vegetables. Quite a few of them are widows or deserted by husbands for various reasons.

Many such women take loans amounting to Rs 500/- to Rs2000/- from money lenders at exorbitantly high interest due to their ignorance or without any option and end up paying a disproportionately high cost for the working capital.

These women may not also get adequate support from their husbands for the children's education due to liquor drinking habits of the men.

Often , the education of these children gets interrupted due to poverty and inability of the mothers to sustain their education.

After screening them for proof of residence, commitment and family situation, enroll the mothers for a counseling and motivation session.

Extend micro credit for very small sums at 'bank or less than bank' interest.

Innovate on Grammin bank of Bangladesh and similar models for operational efficiency.

Ensure compliance of repayment on a daily basis.

Health and life insurance should be built in the repayment schedule with the guidance of National Insurance companies.

Provide regular medical screening of the beneficiary families for any ailment.

Conduct counseling for drug/liquor de-addiction for the fathers and encourage the family to focus on the children's education.

◆ ◆ ◆

ADVOCACY FOR ADOPTION, FOSTER PARENTING OR MENTORSHIP OF GROWNUP CHILDREN.

Being a Parent is pure joy. But, becoming an Adoptive Parent is unexplainable sublime joy.

SUGGESTIONS ON SOCIAL SERVICE METHODOLOGIES

To beget a Child is a Natural phenomenon. To adopt a Child is a Honour of receiving God's Special Gift.

While the concept of adoption is quite old and made much progress, in real terms, many reforms in law as well as change in the mindset of all concerned and informed discussion and visionary approach to the issue of child adoption is the need of the hour.

In legal framework and in paper, the adoption process may appear to be favouring the child, but in practice, in actual implementation, it is not child centric but parent centric and institution centric. These orphanages and homes are products of mixed up value systems of societies and unreformed legal framework not in tune with the changing modern outlook and they are becoming an outlet for the charitable feeling of indifferent and passive donors and institutions.

Despite these, adoption has helped change the fortunes of many very young children and their parents.

Parents, very few by their informed choice and some, due to biological/medical reasons, go for adoption of orphaned few months old babies and invariably get a child under three years old.

But, many children in the age group of 4 to 14 years get ignored by everyone else except the institutions where they are forced to live.

These children who may come to an institution due to loosing both parents or single parent or poverty or due to

juvenile reasons end up spending rest of their lives in these institutions without any insight into family systems and family values. This may do immense harm to their mental, psychological and emotional well being and they may not be able to relate to a family life in their adulthood.

The children are forced to live in dormitory like conditions during their entire childhood and without mental and physical space. This is a disservice and no advancement in Science and Technology can bring in a solution unless there is a change in the mindset of all the stakeholders of the society and refreshing thinking.

It is necessary to promote the concept of adoption of grownup children by parents and also mentoring or foster parenting of children in situations where adoption is not possible.

It is essential to counsel, encourage and guide prospective adoptive parents to opt for adoption of grown up children.

It is appropriate to encourage elderly couples who become ineligible to adopt very young children. Single child parents as well as couples in their fifties who would have married off their only son/daughter should be encouraged to opt for foster parenting and mentoring as a lively option both to secure the future of the child and to develop an emotional bondage and during their advanced age, to have some one to take care of their wellbeing.

DEMOCRACY DEFEATED IN CHENNAI

In a democratic society, it appears that the politicians reign supreme at all levels and not the common men. This appears to be the experience in India. Befitting example is the recent local body polls in the state of TamilNadu, where politicians had taken the rule of law into their own hands.

Politicians appear to think that power is the most important thing to attain and with the power in their hands, the official machinery can be brow beaten and be made to act at their will. A large number of citizens who are law abiding and who are not involved in public life were goaded by several NGOs that they exercise their franchise and cannot complain if they would not vote.

When common men receiving such sermons visited the polling booths, quite a number of them found that their votes have already been cast. Many were witness to violent scenes and received threats from the hooligans with the

police men standing as mere spectator . Quite a number of citizens had to come back without exercising their franchise. The matter was taken to judiciary but the judiciary has largely allowed poll process to be vindicated only insisting on a few re polls.

The politicians who have successfully indulged in such acts have the last laugh. While politicians of various parties are trading allegations among themselves, the public would not be impressed by such mutual abuses, since one does not look better than the other.

With politicians believing in violent methods to win elections remaining unchallenged, perhaps, the revolutionaries calling for violent methods to avoid exploitation in society would feel emboldened and may even get some sort of acceptance from the law abiding citizens, now feeling helpless.

RAJAJI & ANNA - CRUSADERS FOR PROHIBITION

Most of the undesirable aspects in national life can be attributed directly or indirectly to the fast spreading liquor habit in the country. The nauseating national corruption at all levels, increasing permissive life style and violence are largely due to the liquor habit that are spreading far and wide. Recently in Mumbai, six drunken youth drove the car on the pavement dwellers and killed six of them.

The great national and genuine leaders like Gandhiji and Rajaji advocated prohibition. Unfortunately, the today's politicians think that they are wiser than such great leaders and ignore their campaign for prohibition.

This article written by Late Dr.Sushila Nayar, the freedom fighter and former Chairman of All India Prohibition Council described about Rajaji's Crusade for Prohibition, while paying tribute to the great statesman on his 93rd birth day.

The story of Prohibition in India is interwoven with our freedom struggle right from the days of A.O.Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress. I cannot do better than quote a few sentences from his impassioned denunciations of Akbari-the revenue derived from the liquor traffic which he called "The wages of sin."

Said Hume:

"I protest against the present iniquitous system which produced and now supports a large class whose sole interest is to seduce their fellows into drunkenness and it's necessary concomitants, debauchery and crime. We debauch our subjects, Of this revenue, the wages of sin, it may be truly said that illgotten wealth never thrives and for every rupee additional that the Akbari yields, two at least are lost to the public by crime and spent by the Government in suppressing it. I have no doubt whatsoever that if I be spared a few years longer I shall live to see effaced, one of the greatest existing blots on our Government of India."

Rajaji, as the Chairman of Salem Municipality in 1917, asked for the closure of liquor shops in Salem because the people did not want them. The British Government obliged him and closed the liquor shops under the local option clause.

Gandhiji made picketing of liquor shops an important part of the Satyagraha movement. Our mothers and sisters braved insults by the hooligans, went to prison and faced many hardships to save their men from the drink demon. The Congress adopted the policy of Prohibition and wrote it into the Congress constitution.

To Gandhiji, Prohibition was symbolic of the nation's mood of harnessing all its energies to the bettering of the life of the Indian people, a determination to face the problems and overcome them instead of running away from them under the effect of alcoholic beverages and last but not the least, the will to use our resources judiciously to meet the basic needs of life and to build and augment those resources, human as well as economic and social, as rapidly as possible.

In 1937, Rajaji as the Premier or Prime Minister (as the Chief Minister was then designated) of Madras, took

up Prohibition in this Province in all earnestness. Many other Congress Governments did the same. Rajaji was vigilant like Pussyfoot Johnson who brought about Prohibition in the US and saw to it that saboteurs of Prohibition did not get a chance. One of his first acts was to transfer all police officers who drank themselves, from the dry districts. The Governor warned him that Prohibition would lead to loss of revenue and create serious financial difficulties to the Province. Rajaji was not deterred. He thought out a way for the Government to share the prosperity which Prohibition would bring. The money saved from drink, he averred, would be spent on thousand goods. The Sales Tax which Rajaji introduced has proved a veritable Kamadhenu.

It is obvious that the founding fathers of our Constitution were convinced that Prohibition was necessary for raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of our people and improvement of public health and it was the primary duty of the State to bring about these improvements.

Rajaji's Tamil Nadu, stood like a beacon light and the State remained dry under successive Chief Ministers, such as Rajaji, Mr.Kamaraj, Mr.Bhaktavatsalam and Mr.Annadurai, (Anna) the first DMK Chief Ministers.

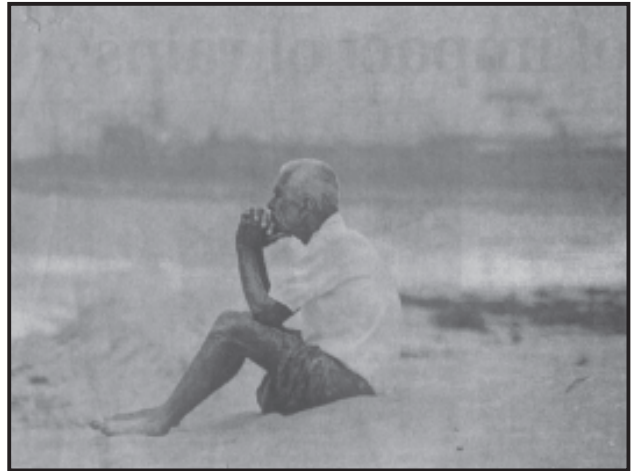
Mr.Annadurai (Anna) as Chief Minister, in 1968, offered to go round to other States along with Mr.Kamaraj and offer satyagraha, if necessary, to have the programme of Prohibition implemented in the interests of the younger generation. "I do not want my son to see the ugly scenes of drunken street brawls which were so frequent in my youth," he said. Mr.Annadurai was the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the All-India Prohibition Conference at Madras in 1968 and Rajaji came to the Conference on the last day. We had arranged for him to speak sitting, but he walked up to the microphone and spoke standing for full 15 minutes. Mr.Annadurai's staunch adherence to Prohibition had bucked him up as it were.

The undoing of Prohibition in Tamil Nadu now has therefore come to Rajaji as the big shock.

Rajaji was in favour of intensive public education and organised public opinion demanding undoing of the retrograde step of scrapping Prohibition.

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