

Nandini

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Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

VOL XIII

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RS.10/-

**Criminalisation of politics
is the problem of the day.**

**Concerned citizens
should resist at
individual and group level
for the sake
of this great nation.**

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SPEAKS

SANNYASA: IT'S IDEAL AND PRACTICE

A parting address was given to Swami Vivekananda by the junior Sannyasis of the Math (Belur), on the eve of his departure to the West for the second time (19th June, 1899). The following is the substance of Swamiji's reply

I shall speak to you in brief about a few things which I should like you to carry into practice.

First, we have to understand the ideal and then the methods by which we can make it practical. Those of you who are Sannyasis must try to do good to others, for Sannyasa means that.

There is no time to deliver a long discourse on "Renunciation," but I shall very briefly characterise it as "*the love of death*," Worldly people love life. The Sannyasi is to love death.

Are we to commit suicide then? Far from those resorting to it.

For suicides are not lovers of death, as it is often seen that when a man trying to commit suicide fails, he never attempts it for a second time. What is the love of death then? 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 our self. 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 aggrandize 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.

Then as to the methods of carrying the ideals into practical life. First, we have to understand that we must not have any impossible ideal. An ideal which is too high makes a nation weak and degraded. This happened after the Buddhist and the Jain reforms. On the other hand, too much practicality is also wrong.

If you have not even a little imagination, if you have no ideal to guide you, you are simply a brute. So we must not lower our ideal, neither are we to lose sight of practicality. We must avoid the two extremes.

In our country, the old idea is to sit in a cave and meditate and die. To go ahead of others into salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brothers. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality.

You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate these fields (Swamiji said, pointing to the meadows of the Math). You must be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras now and the next moment to go and sell the produce of the fields in the market. You must be prepared for all menial services, not only here, but elsewhere also.

The next thing to remember is that the aim of Ramakrishna Math is to make men. You must not merely learn what the Rishis taught. Those Rishis are gone and their opinions are also gone with them. You must be Rishis yourselves.

You are also men as much as the greatest men that were ever born – even our Incarnations. What can mere book learning do? What can meditation do, even? What can the Mantras and Tantras do? You must stand on your own feet. You must have this new method – the method of man making.

The true *man* is he who is strong as strength itself and yet possesses a woman's heart. You must feel for the millions of beings around you and yet you must be strong and inflexible and you must also possess obedience; though it may seem a little paradoxical-you must possess these apparently conflicting virtues. If your superior orders you to throw yourself into a river and catch a crocodile, you must first obey and then reason with him. Even if the order be wrong, first obey and then contradict it.

You must be as free as the air and as obedient as the dog.





Desperate Calls

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

Disabled lady needs support for education

Ms.M.Andal, a poor disabled girl is studying Bachelor of Education course in Dr.Rajabather-Tagore Women Teachers' Training College, Tindivanam.

Ms.M.Andal is living with her aged parents.

Ms.M.Andal requests kind hearted persons for financial help for her studies for a sum of Rs.50,000/- towards college fees, books, record note books, uniform etc.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Dr.Rajabather-Tagore Women Teachers' Training College, Tindivanam and sent to the following address :

Ms.M.Andal D/o.Sri.Munusami
Anthoor Village, Brahmadesan Post,Tindivanam
Villupuram-604 301,Tamil Nadu

Poor girl student needs support for education

Ms.K.Kanaga is a poor girl and she is studying 1st year in Dr.Radhakrishnan Teacher Training Institute, Kallakurichi, Villupuram Dist.

Ms.K.Kanaga's father Sri.M.Karuppan is an unskilled labourer and the family is running with his meager income.

Sri.M.Karuppan requests kind hearted persons for financial help for his daughter's education for a sum of Rs.67,100/- towards 1st year fees, exam fees, text books and note books, project work, uniforms etc.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Dr.Radhakrishnan Teacher Training Institute, Kallakurichi, Villupuram Dist and sent to the following address:

Ms.K.Kanaga D/o Sri.M.Karuppan
Malaikottalam (Post), Kallakurichi,
Villupuram Dist. Tamil Nadu

Poor student needs support for education

Sri.N.Mohan is studying 1st year M.Sc Biochemistry in Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore.

Sri.N.Mohan's father Sri.Natarajan is a small level agriculturist. He is having four daughters and one son.

Sri.Natarajan requests kind hearted persons for financial help for a sum of Rs.25,000/- towards semester fees.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore and sent to the following address :

Sri.N.Mohan S/o. Sri.Natarajan
No.1/5 North Street, Chellapattu-PO.
Kallakurichi Tk. Pin:606 207

Disabled boy needs job

Sri.E.Balamurugan, age 23 years is a disabled boy and he has completed one year diploma course in Medical Laboratory Technology at Heart Medical Institute, Vellore.

Sri.E.Balamurugan requests for a suitable job.

Contact address:

Sri.E.Balamurugan S/o.Sri.V.Egambaram
No.398, Krishna Nagar, Kaniyambadi, Vellore-2

Disabled lady needs support

Mrs.K.Mangayarkarasi is a poor disabled lady and her husband is also a disabled man. They have three daughters.

Mrs.K.Mangayarkarasi requests for financial help for her eldest daughter Ms.Sathiya, who requires spectacles urgently.

Contact address:

Mrs.K.Mangayarkarasi W/o.Sri.Krishnamurthi,
Main Road, T.Pudhupalayam & PO
Villupuram, Tamil Nadu

Disabled person needs tricycle

Sri.M.Murugan is a poor disabled person.

Sri.M.Murugan requests for donation of tricycle and financial help for setting up a petty shop.

Contact address:

Sri.M.Murugan S/o.Sri.Mari
Muthumariamam Koil Street, Thiruninravoor.

Needs support for medical treatment

Mrs.K.Sivagami, age 48 years is suffering from heart disease. The estimated cost of the bypass surgery is Rs.1,35,000/-.

Sri.S. Asokan, age 13 years is suffering from heart disease. The estimated cost of the open heart surgery is Rs.1,50,000/-.

For the above mentioned two persons, cheque may drawn in favour of Sri Ramachandra Hospital, Chennai.

Sri.Rahul,S.E, age 10 years is suffering from thalassaemia. He has to undergo bone marrow transplantation . The estimated cost of treatment is Rs.8,00,000/-.

Cheques may drawn in favour of Apollo Speciality Hospital, Chennai and sent to the following address :

Women's Welfare Syndicate,
8/2, Avenue Road, Numgambakkam, Chennai-600 034

Student needs support for education

Mr.M.Stephan Selvaraj is studying 1st Year diploma in computer engineering in Gomathi Ambal Polytechnic College,Malaiyadikurichi, Tirunelveli.

His father Mr.V.Manuvel is a weaver. The family is running with his meager income.

Mr.M.Stephan Selvaraj requests for financial help for his education.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Gomathi Ambal Polytechnic College,Malaiyadikurichi, Tirunelveli and sent to the following address:

Mr.M.Stephan Selvaraj S/o. Mr.V.Manuvel
4/322 ANew Subhulapuram PO, Sankarankoil Tk.
Tirunelveli Dist. Pin-627 753

Support for heart surgery

Sri.R.Gnanasigamani 33 years age is suffering from severe mitral regurgitation. He requires double valve replacement. The total expenditure of this operation in a general ward package will come to around Rs. 2,50,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh Fifty Thousand only) which includes all the hospital expenditure for 15 days.

Sri. Gnanasigamani has a wife and two children to support and is an unskilled worker. Please support him.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Miot Hospitals, Chennai and sent to the following address.

Sri. R. Gnanasigamani
Door No.4, 3rd Street, Kannan Nagar,
Maduravoil, Chennai - 600 095.

SECURITY ISSUES FACING SENIOR CITIZENS

Chennai police commissioner has said that a census of elderly couples living alone in Chennai would be taken, to ensure some sort of protection for them. While appreciating the laudable objective, one would wonder as to how the police department would keep information about the elderly couples living in vulnerable security conditions as confidential? How will the department ensure that the organised database would not be leaked out to the criminals ?

No doubt , the elderly couples living alone are having fear and apprehensions about their security. What is required is that the police department should

effectively put fear in the minds of the criminals and ensure that they would not take the society and the police for granted. Merely giving protection to the elderly couple is a defensive approach .

On the other hand, identifying and tackling the criminals should be the appropriate strategy. The criminals often approach by posing as politicians, social activists, and even as government officials. It is very important that the police department should give guidelines to the citizens, particularly the elderly ones as to how to tackle such elements.

NEED TO PUT DOWN POLITICAL TERRORISM

In recent times, it is increasingly seen that politicians operating at lower level enter residences and offices, demanding donations and money in the name of celebrating birthday or death anniversary of one political leader or the other or poor feeding programmes etc. Such people come from various political parties and they target independent residential houses and flats that do not have security personnel and small offices. They come in groups of five or six persons and often adopt aggressive postures.

In many cases, they seem to make adequate study about the background of the persons whom they visit and create scenes and make abuses if their demand for money would not be met. On many occasions, it is seen that such persons are also drunk.

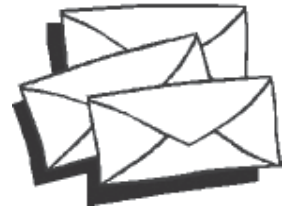
While the flats and house holds can atleast keep their doors locked, in the case of small offices, this would not be possible. Citizens live in mortal fear of such political intruders, particularly since they claim that they are part of political parties and can create problems.

This is a form of political terrorism which the government and law enforcing agency should immediately put down mercilessly. It is also the duty of the government and law enforcing agency to give some sort of guidelines to the citizens as to how to tackle such elements. Particularly since the parliamentary elections would be coming soon, this scenario has become all the more threatening and is causing concern.

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.



The wild tree and indifferent authorities

Dear Sir,

I am a octagenarian aged 83. I submitted a representation to the Local Administration Ministry of Government of Tamilnadu on 15.11.2008 to save me and my property from the threat of a Chennai Corporation's wild tree standing adjacent to my house, since my pleas to the Mayor and the Chennai Corporation Commissioner for long time fell on deaf ears. The media also highlighted the potential danger.

On the night 25.11.2008, when there was heavy rain and tempest, the militant tree got uprooted and fell on my building, demolishing my compound wall, destroying my garden and resulting in a crack in my building. Had it been a straight fall, my building would have been shattered to pieces.

Had the Chennai Corporation acted swiftly and sympathetically, the disaster could have been averted.

The tragedy happened at a time, when my wife was in a critical condition.

Will the Government take action against the officials in the Chennai Corporation for the lapse and also compensate for the heavy losses inflicted on me?

Chennai

K.N.Naryana Pillai

Need firm action to curb terrorism

Dear Sir,

Indians appear to have got accustomed to terrorism, since it has become a matter of routine. Is there any guarantee that a next terror attack will not occur?

The Indian government has been sending protest notes to Pakistan and roaring hollow warnings despite the fact that India has clinching evidence of Pakistan's involvement.

Terrorism should be nipped in the bud. But unfortunately, Government of India does not want to take stern steps to crush terrorism, as it is preoccupied with vote bank politics.

Mumbai

Sridhar V. Kulkarni

Are we true followers of Gandhiji?

Dear Sir,

Prohibition and upliftment of the downtrodden were dear to Gandhiji's heart. Now, we see the immoral act of the government itself running liquor shops. 25% of the population still exists below poverty line, who have taken to liquor habit in a big way.

Non violence was Gandhiji's supreme ideal but terrorism has spread its wings all over the country.

Gandhiji was against immoral ways of amassing wealth. But corruption is seething at all levels among the politicians and bureaucrats in power. He was for full liberty for women but gender bias and atrocities still loom large. Women are looked upon as objects for satisfying sexual lust.

Gandhian philosophy does not prevail in the country any more.

Coimbatore

M.R.Pillai.

Victim of liquor habit

Dear Sir,

My daughter and I have been personally affected by the ignorance regarding social and excessive drinking / addiction and my entire family was affected by the misbehaviour.

Lack of real education about the evil of drinking , even among doctors and educated people is astounding. I feel education regarding the evil of liquor habit from school is key to changing the attitude of the mass.

I feel any external measure to introduce prohibition would be effective only with education becoming its foundation, just like family planning.

When such disastrous effects are seen in a high earning professional's life due to drinking habit, it is mind boggling what effect it could have on people of lower groups. This is the foundation for producing more than 80% of criminals.

Name withheld on request

FOREIGN FUNDS TO INDIAN NGOs

Non governmental organizations (NGOs) are springing up every day in many parts of the country. Is it that so many people are so kind hearted and so much concerned about the poor and downtrodden to start NGOs to serve the deprived? One wish it would be so.

NGOs seem to be everywhere asking for money to serve others. There are even many NGOs who are rich themselves but would still need donations to serve others. Recent news regarding the level of money collected by Indian NGOs from abroad by way of donation is surprising.

With so many NGOs already existing in the country, there should be much more improvements in social welfare conditions of the poor but this is not happening. Is it possible that several NGOs are coming up with the primary objective of collecting money and donation and then spending them for various programmes, in addition to spending the money on their comforts too?

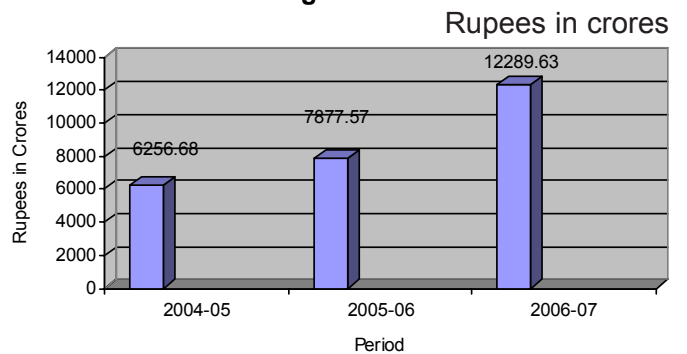
Who are the people giving so much of money? Where is this money going ? This calls for detailed investigation.

The following figures are revealing.

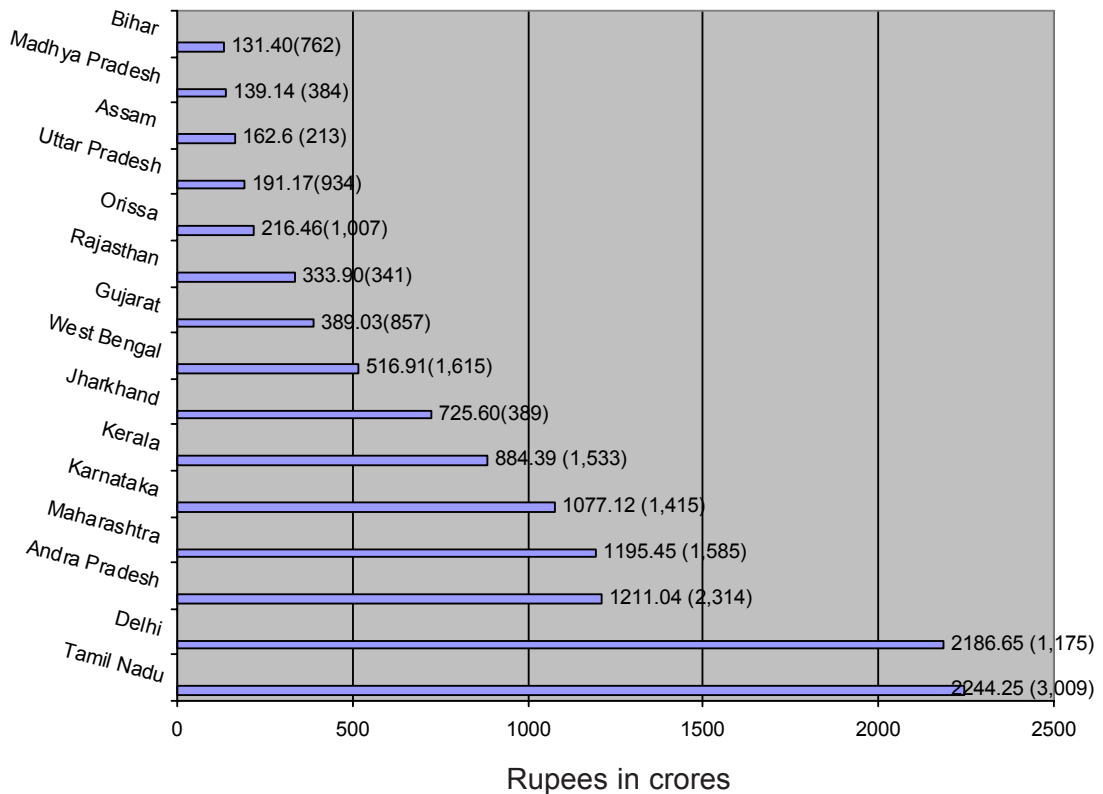
According to a home ministry reply to an unstarred question in Lok Sabha on December 23, a total of 34,800 NGOs were registered during 2006-07 to accept foreign contributions under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976.

Total contributions received during the year amounted to Rs.12,289.63 crore. Tamil Nadu received the maximum amount during the year while the maximum contributions to the country came from USA.

Total Foreign Contributors



TOP 15 RECIPIENT STATES



VOICE OF RAJAJI

ENCOURAGE COMMUNAL CHARITIES

Let us encourage and nurse the doctrine of trusteeship wherever it is in action. Let men found institutions for the benefit of other people, even if they are confined to a particular community or territorial area or a particular language section. They all deserve encouragement. Let us recognize the good in them and not worry at their limitations. Those who administer such foundations will in course of time expand the boundaries of the benefits, as we have seen in ever so many cases.

The attachment of men and women to their families, to their caste or their community, to their language or to their territorial slice of India cannot be ignored when any policy is conceived or put into action without incurring the danger of the policy being wrong, ineffective or oppressive. It is far too thoughtlessly decided that such attachments are unpatriotic or harmful to progress and general welfare.

While we may rightly aim at a more complete unification of the nation, it is neither useful nor logical to ignore facts and to frame attitudes and policies on the presumption that such attachments are always wrong and must be countered. We should discover the good in them and not antagonize them, so to say, by seeing nothing but evil in them. It is a fallacious approach to ignore men's attachments to their communal or territorial affiliations, however firmly we may hold that such attachments should ultimately disappear in favour of a wider patriotism.

There is no need to appeal to moral principles to get men to behave unselfishly in taking care of their near relatives and dependents. Natural affection takes care of this to a large extent. But natural affection does not end there. In our country, people's natural affection goes out to a larger circle called the caste or sub-community to which one belongs by birth. It extends further, though in a lesser degree, to the wider communal circle to which one belongs outside the small sub-community that claims the person's national affection.

Those who have fought for nationalist aims are prone to ignore these communal or parochial emotions and to oppose them as unadulterated evils.

We must remember that any extension of love beyond oneself is a good thing and should be welcomed and nursed. If a man looks upon his relatives as entitled to his affectionate care, we should encourage the feeling and not condemn it. Our desire to expand his affection is

good, but it cannot succeed by ignoring or opposing his limited unselfish growth outside his ego. On the contrary, we should deal with his limited unselfishness gently, so as to encourage it to extend as far out as possible so as to cover the whole community to which he belongs. This was the usual pattern of old fashioned charities and endowments. As culture progressed, benefactions extended to a larger and larger circle, sometimes reaching up to the borders of the religious denomination to which one belonged or to which one attached himself.

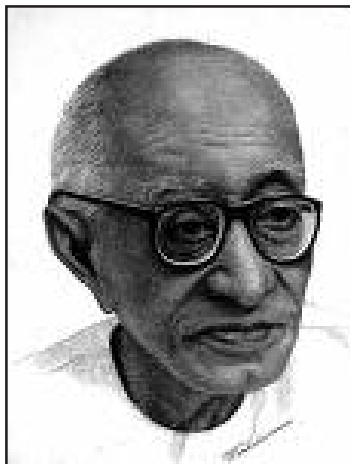
The tendency or fashion of the present times is to look on such benefactions from the outside and to condemn them as 'communal' or narrow-minded. By all means, let us extol benefactions to the nation as distinguished from caste or parish, but in our admiration of the larger, let us not discourage or extinguish the smaller.

Every benefaction and extension of affection beyond the ego, every relatively unselfish act is good and must be valued as such. To the extent it goes, it is an act of social value and reduces the call on the State, which should supply to the wants of the general community by reliance on taxation. It every wealthy person is encouraged to look after the wants of his

own community, we shall be achieving a national purpose in the net result.

What we should object to is when a person in authority misuses his position for parochial or communal advantage and uses national resources or tax money for narrow ends.

There can be no objection where a man who is in a position to give, gives to men and women of his choice and does not always adopt the national formula. Every unselfish benefactor deserves encouragement. It would be a wise policy if we could exploit all non egoistic attachments and work out the doctrine of trusteeship and voluntary benefactions by utilizing the bonds of attachments that exist between men and the communities to which they belong.



HOPE AND DESPAIR

Contributed by: Prof.R.C.Narayanan, Chennai

There were two recent press reports that give despair and hope (Source - Deccan Chronicle)

The former is about a project being undertaken by the Atomic Energy Dept. of the Government of India which is a disaster in the making, for the environment. The report that gives hope is about a commendable enterprise by an ex IIT graduate that should be emulated by the intelligentsia in the country.

The hope

R. Madhavan, a resident of Padappai, 13 km from Tambaram in Chennai, graduated out of IIT-M in 1986. Now, Madhavan derives professional satisfaction in tilling his 9-acre plot in Chengalpattu. After working in the corporate environment for nearly a decade in ONGC, he thought about taking up a job that would help him serve society.

"We know that we cannot survive without food, so what stops us from taking up agriculture as a career? I have blended my technical knowledge with farming and guide my fellow farmers with latest mechanical tools," Madhavan says.

Madhavan cultivates rotational crops like paddy, pulses and vegetables and earns around Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 per acre per annum. "It is disheartening to know that around 65 million people around the globe cannot afford a square

meal and India tops the list. It is time for youngsters to look at cultivation as one of the lucrative options as we have sophisticated technology," he says.

The despair

The despair is about the Indian Neutrino Observatory Centre that is proposed to be set up at Singara Hill near Masinangudi in Nilgiris. This is a sure recipe for an environmental catastrophe in south India, warn top scientists and environmentalists. Why is the Atomic Energy Commission proceeding with such a project, unmindful of the genuine concern from many well meaning quarters?

The proposed 2.5 km tunnel which the Department of Atomic Energy proposes to dig through the Singara hill would destroy the entire biosphere of the three south Indian states. The scientists in Atomic Energy Commission do not seem to have addressed the environmental and ecological impact of the project.

A senior state wildlife officer pointed out that "heavy duty trucks would have to do at least one lakh trips up the ghat section to reach the building materials to the construction site. This would disturb the animals, even destroy their habitat permanently", he said and warned that the elephants and tigers would abandon the reserve for good.

INSENSITIVE PAY REVISION BY GOVERNMENT

In recent times, Government of India is announcing pay revision to government servants, MLAs and MPs at regular levels.

President Pratibha Patil has approved a law giving her a 300 percent hike in salary taking her monthly pay cheque to Rs 1.5 lakh from Rs 50,000 per month in the New Year. She also gave her assent to another law that will hike the monthly salary of vice-president M H Ansari from Rs 40,000 to Rs 1.25 lakh per month.

The hike comes close on the heels of the government announcing a bonanza for its employees by implementing the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission report.

Obviously, it is not in the thoughts of the Government of India that more than 300 million people constituting more than 30% of national population are living below poverty line. The Government of India should be conscious of the fact that it has great responsibility towards the

welfare of such suffering and deprived sections of the society.

One wonders at this stage as to what is the need to revise the salary of President and Vice President of India, as if their salary should be raised along with that of the other government employees. Those who occupy positions as President and Vice President and Governors really do not need salary at all, as all their requirements are taken care of by the government and they occupy the positions as a matter of public service. If at all any salary should be paid to them, it should be minimal.

Such salary hikes would inevitably give a feeling of frustration amongst those living below poverty line. They would think that President and Vice President who occupy high positions and enjoy all sorts of comforts have no concern about the plight of the poor and they do not share their feelings and disappointments. All this will send out wrong signals.

IF THE PEOPLE ARE INDIFFERENT, EVILS WOULD ONLY PREVAIL

Contributed by: R.Krishnan, Chennai

I have read with interest the article on "Chaotic Democracy" Dec.08 issue of Nandini Voice For The Deprived with the comments of a few out of the 120 persons who had responded to the request to provide their views on the subject.

Most of the respondents have expressed only their agony and anguish, without committing themselves to what they would do or would be prepared to do on the matter.

Most of the retired officials while in service were reluctant to take bold actions and now they lament about spilled milk.

The present day politicians just pay lip homage and floral tributes to the statues of departed leaders like Gandhiji and Rajaji and not to the values and principles for which they lived and sacrificed their lives.

The fact is that the TV media and more particularly the print media, which are supposed to be pillars of democracy are becoming enemies of democracy. On the pretext of investigative journalism and to give sensational news, they very often fail to discharge their duties, by giving more publicity and coverage for negative and unproductive matters of insignificance. In the process, they indirectly encourage criminals, corrupt and unscrupulous elements in the society.

While the media is prepared to spare a full page or a cover page for pictures and stories of cine actors and politicians, they do not care to report about honest persons in public life. They attribute this to lack of interest of the public and their taste. Same is the case with TV and films.

Why do they not send their reporters to various government and public institutions to investigate and report about at least a few honest persons and thus highlight the number of honest persons in public life. We can then expect the younger generation to know about the past and present citizens of integrity and imbibe and emulate their sterling qualities.

Then, in our schools and colleges everything is taught except discipline, moral and ethical values. Parents and teachers are only concerned about the grades and degrees and do not bother about their conduct, character and behaviour.

The people of India alone are responsible for these calamities, commotions and chaotic conditions. We get a government that we deserve!

Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam has already launched a scheme to motivate the student community (the future leaders) and he should be supported to take up the task of inspiring the public, young and old alike to be active and alert. If the wise and old are indifferent, evils would only prevail.

SATYAM TAKE OVER BY GOVERNMENT

The Government of India has seriously erred by disbanding the Board of Satyam computer Services and appointing its own Directors. This amounts to virtual nationalisation.

The government has no particular expertise in managing IT business, particularly in the overseas sector. The government would respond by appointing a few retired or serving IAS officers in the Board, who are jack of all trades and master of none. It may also appoint some politically influential technocrats and there would be considerable political interference which would not do good to the revival of the company.

The government should have left the market forces to play their role and financial institutions who have stake in Satyam Computers to handle the issues.

Possibly, some other company in India or abroad with professional expertise in IT field would have taken over Satyam Computers and revived the company competently. With the government move, the possibility of the company being taken over by other corporate body has become remote.

By taking over Satyam Computers, Government has taken over its problem, without any particular capability to manage. It is a reversal of government's privatisation philosophy.

It can be reasonably suspected that the monumental scandal in Satyam Computers cannot have taken place without some politicians being involved. By showing undue haste to take over Satyam Computers, government exposes itself to suspicion that it wants to cover some murky political deals.

HOW TO SET RIGHT THE CHAOTIC DEMOCRACY IN INDIA?

All India essay competition for college students

Highlights of the views of the students

Nandini Voice For The Deprived organized an all India essay competition for college students on "How To Set Right the Chaotic Democracy In India"?

Indian democracy is at the cross roads. Many people think that Indian democracy has become a free for all and democratic system practiced in the country is not able to prevent dishonest and corrupt elements from climbing to power.

Today, persons accused of corruption and scandals amounting to crores of rupees and people facing charges of murders and nepotism remain as ministers, parliamentarians and MLAs.

At the same time, there are many people in the country, who love to be honest and responsible and they feel disgusted about the state of Indian democracy. The whole scenario is hazy, with the youth constituting a large percentage of the national population, remaining without a role model and guidelines at various levels.

In this context, Nandini Voice For The Deprived wanted to provide an opportunity to college students from all over India to think on the subject and provide their views for the consideration of the countrymen. A number of college students from all over India participated in the essay competition and 10 of them have been selected for cash awards.

It is gratifying to note that students have struggled hard to suggest solutions for the problems facing the country. In the process, many of them seem to have felt frustrated and disillusioned. Many seem to feel helpless, with no solutions in sight in the near future.

Nevertheless, with characteristic courage and optimism associated with the youth, quite a few have come out with diagnosis and prescriptions.

The very fact that there are so many young students thinking positively give hope about the future.

Excerpt from the views of a few students are provided in this issue. Views of more students would be published in the next issue.

OUR DEMOCRACY

In spite of many drawbacks, democracy is still the best form of governance. Democracy upholds certain values, which put it on a plane superior to that of other forms of government. It may not be an ideal government. But still it is superior to other forms of government. It is the only form of government which values the dignity of the individual and provides ample opportunities for the development of humanity.

Ms Janaki Karadi III year B.Com
A.S.Patil College of Commerce, Bijapur, Karnataka

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Indian democracy may be slow and inefficient as it is still in its infancy but surely it will gain momentum as time

elapses and decades roll. So the paramount responsibility lies in not losing hope in the democracy but instead uprooting the causes that corrode the essence of democracy and without diluting or nullifying the concept of democracy.

Mr.Bryan Francis Rego I Year B.Com
A.S.Patil College of Commerce, Bijapur, Karnataka

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Our political set up! We call ourselves the biggest democracy in the world. But are we really so?

Ms.K.V.Navithaa,II year B.Com 'A'
Cauvery College For Women. Trichy

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Democracy provides an outlet and a safety valve for people's anger and frustration and this outlet is through

open criticism of the government whenever and wherever it does something wrong or fails to adopt the right course as demanded by the public interest.

But for democracy, the condition in the country would be even more chaotic.

Ms.S.Bhavani, Chennai

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EVERYONE HAS TO BECOME PART OF CHANGE

Our patriotism is reflected only in the stadium of cricket events during cricket matches or in films specially made to arouse feelings and thus feel patriotic. Patriotism has lost its substance, something inherently attached to your inner mental constitution and it has assumed a totally different garb today.

Our country lacks a spirit of participative politics; we conveniently sit in the couches watching polls, cribbing about the big 'Indian Tamasha' and yet do not budge from our seats to go and cast our votes. Secondly, people have to be the change that they want to see. This comes along with a greater degree of involvement in the change movement itself. Note how change has come in America. They wanted change and became participants in bringing about it in the form of the new President.

Our expectation from democracy in the light of present situation are very unrealistic and unattainable.

Non political forms of voluntary groups, having aims other than seizure of political power and monetary benefit, must be encouraged. A direct involvement of the people in the political space will help in the conception of grass root politics. An apt example is the citizens' organized movements for the rights of the Bhopal gas tragedy victims where ironically democratic structures washed their hands off their moral duty, the unforgettable Chipko movement etc.

To conclude, it would be sacrilegious on our part to think about doing away with an ideology which was envisioned by the founders of our country. Democracy will not lose its credentials, if we, the people of India choose to become a part of the change movement.

Ms.Soumya George Kuriyan,
Jansons School of Business, Coimbatore

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WE BEHAVE BETTER ABROAD – WHY?

Democracy is more a dream residing in the minds of philosophers and visionaries, not so much practiced by those in charge of the affairs of society.

We are rich enough to afford to import gold worth \$10 million annually, but we have no resource to invest in irrigation. Why can't government see these kinds of problems?

Take a person on his way to Singapore, Give him a name - 'Yours'. Give him a face 'Yours'. You walk out of the airport and you are at your international best. In Singapore you do not throw cigarette butts on the roads or eat in the stores. You pay five Singapore dollar to drive through Orchard Road (equivalent of Mahim Causeway or Pedder Road in Mumbai) between 5 pm and 8 pm. You come back to the parking lot to punch your parking ticket if you have over stayed in a restaurant or a shopping mall irrespective of your status. In Singapore, you don't say anything. Do you? You would not dare to eat in public during Ramadan in Dubai. You would not dare to go out without your head covered in Jeddah.

You are following rules in other country, why are we not following this in our own country. This is because of democracy in India

Mr.R.Karthick, Ist year M.B.A
Jansons School of Business, Coimbatore

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CITIZENS HAVE FAILED

As citizens, by and large, we have not responded to our country's call of a progressive society.

Ms.G.Gayathri, 4th Year (ECE)
Easwari Engineering College, Chennai

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NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Politicians have become so closely identified with corruption in the public eye that a Times of India poll of 1,554 adults in six metropolitan cities found that 98 percent of the public is convinced that politicians and ministers are corrupt.

There are serious shortcoming in our electoral system. These shortcomings are not confined to the time and process of elections alone. They have a direct bearing on governance and on the functioning of the elected bodies. If we take the accumulated experience of governance at various levels and of the functioning of our elected bodies in the past few decades, we see how the infirmities in our electoral system have greatly weakened Indian democracy.

Law and order have become increasingly tenuous because of the growing inability of the police to curb criminal

activities and quell communal disturbances. Indeed, many observers bemoan the "criminalisation" of Indian politics at a time when politicians routinely hire "muscle power" to improve their electoral prospects and criminals themselves successfully run for public office. These circumstances have led some observers to conclude that India has entered into a growing crisis of governability.

There is no understanding of issues of substance among the people who vote. Put up a name which is recognizable and they would vote for or against that name. Promise enough freebies (free electricity, for instance) and they will vote for you, never mind that it may bankrupt the state and that eventually it will impoverish the same voting public. For democracy to work, you need accountability – both among those who vote and those who are elected.

The quality of the candidate is also important. Just because a person has been elected according to India's flawed electoral process should not give him/her the legitimacy to become a parliamentarian.

Mr.Bhadra Bharadwaj,Ist Year
Dr.Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University,
Lucknow

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INDIAN DEMOCRACY IS A PARTIAL SUCCESS

What India proved to the world was that poverty, massive illiteracy and diversity on a sub continental scale were not arguments against democracy.

But today, Indian democracy is only a partial success. India is democratic when it comes to holding elections and ensuring the rights of the citizens. But when it comes to functioning of politicians and political institutions, it is mostly a failure.

So far, India has been able to keep the diversity of the subcontinent afloat in a democratic arc. But, as of late, political parties are tearing apart communities on caste or religious basis for vote politics.

The only thing that will make people open their eyes to an India with so many cultures and respect this diversity is a healthy interaction between communities.

What goes unnoticed is how much we have already progressed given the amazing list of constraints we have to deal with ranging from population to diversity.

Then what use is this freedom if a huge section of the Indian population is not able to exercise it's due to lack of means, in other words poverty.

To conclude, people forget how ordinary Indians have helped sustain our extraordinary democracy. This is one of the key reasons why we as a country have traveled so far in our aim to strike a balance in development. The role of ordinary Indians is what should carry India forward.

Mr.Anil Rajan Jacob,II Year Mechanical Engg
NITK, Surathkal, Karnataka

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CURB IRRESPONSIBLE FREEDOM

This culture of chaotic freedom has evolved because the Indian democracy encourages the right to express one's thoughts and this right is being misused to pronounce highly inappropriate and detrimental proclamations. This should be curbed. This culture has another subordinate clause of 'caste culture' that rules the Indian politics. This culture persuades the people to "caste their votes rather than cast their votes".

Mr.Bryan Francis Rego, Ist Year B.Com
A.S.Patil College of Commerce, Bijapur, Karnataka

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PEOPLE'S AWARENESS IS THE HOPE

The key to the change is awareness. Most of the people are interested in the news and they discuss political issues constantly. Such trends give hope about the future.

Ms.M.Tamil Selvi,II year B.Sc. (Computer Science)

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THE COSTLY ELECTIONS

Are elections necessary at all, especially if they are so expensive? In India today, some citizens are posing this question, impugning the very basis of democracy.

Ms.D.Bhuvaneswari,II year B.Sc (Computer Science)
Guru Shree Shantivijai Jain College For Women,
Chennai

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CULTURED PEOPLE MUST ENTER POLITICS

The only way to solve this problem of chaotic democracy is that highly educated and cultured people must come to politics. They should stand in elections and govern the country.

Ms.P.Padmavathi,II year BSc, (Computer Science)
Guru Shree Shantivijai Jain College For Women,
Chennai

PROVIDE COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING TO YOUTH

Every citizen in a democracy should skillfully serve the national interests. This can be achieved only by providing compulsory military training to youth. A compulsory military training at the age of 18 for one year and compulsory service of one year will make the citizens law abiding and patriotic.

Ms.C.Revathy, III Year B.Sc. (Computer Science)
Dr.Umayal Ramanathan College for Women,Karaikudi-630 003

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NEED FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY

Democratic institutions cannot function adequately if political leaders, judges, civil servants and others could be induced to act on private and special interests.

We should also try to bring in more transparency and accountability at all levels.

Ms.S.Abirmani, I year B.Com (CA)
Dr.Umayal Ramanathan College For Women,
Karaikudi-630 003

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SOVEREIGNTY IMPLIES SUBJUGATION TO LAW

It is not merely a form of government, but a method of organizing life and economy for the benefit of all.

The extent to which corruption has flourished in India now is quite alarming but it seems that it has achieved an unconscious sanction from the public at large. Corruption has virtually become as much part of our life as the whiteness of the milk.

Unless justice and fair play are allowed to prevail in this country and people with honest credential reach on the helm, the situation is not expected to improve for the benefit of commonman.

Ms.K.Krishnapriya.II year B.Sc. (Advanced Zoology and Biotechnology)
P.S.G.R. Krishnammal College For Women,
Coimbatore

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NEED FOR ROLE MODELS

Our democratic values cannot be implanted in the minds of students in abstract terms. It is necessary to illustrate them, by role models.

Ms.B.Cathrin Silvyia,II Year B.Sc.,(AZBT)
P.S.G.R. Krishnammal College For Women.
Coimbatore

CURB CRIMINALS IN POLITICS

A large number of criminals are entering the parliament and legislative assemblies. According to the election commission, about 700 MLAs and 40 MPs were involved in criminal cases. Out of the 13,952 candidates, nearly 1500 had cases of murder.

"I do believe that where there is only one choice between cowardice and violence, I would advice violence" said Mahatma Gandhi.

Political parties need to take the initiative by not giving tickets to tainted persons, and debar the criminals from contesting.

For making a nation disciplined, discipline has to become a part of our thinking.

Ms.S.Soundarya,Ist Year (Civil Engineering)
Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering,
Sriperumbudur

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CORRUPT POLITICIANS MAKE THE DEMOCRACY CHAOTIC

All these corrupt practices can come to an end only through value based education. The urgent need of the hour is quality education. Nelson Mondela says that "Everything is possible through education"

Ms.Mohana Priya,B.Ed. Student
Star College of Education,Namakkal

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EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO THE SOLUTION

How did India change its face from one of the most traditional and diversified country to a nation full of corruption and terrorism? Who is responsible?

The answers to most of the questions lie within ourselves. We, the people are the root cause for most of the problems. The mistake starts from electing the wrong persons.

If somebody asks for money, does it mean we need to bribe them? We must fight for our rights.!

On analyzing the problem deeply, I come across a very possible solution. "Education" is the key to the solution. As Swami Vivekananda says, "Education is the manifestation of the personality within a man"

Ms.Sreya Raghavan,IVth year B.E. (Computer Science)
St.Peters Engineering College, Chennai

List of prize winners in the All India Essay Competition For College Students

**The following prize winning college students
have been awarded cash prize of Rs.1,000/- each.**

1. **Ms. Esther Jacob Mathews** PSGR Krishnammal College,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
2. **Mr. R. Karthick** Jansons School of Business,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
3. **Ms. Sowmya George Kurien** Jansons School of Business,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
4. **Ms. S. Preethi,** Dr. M G R Janaki College of Arts & Science for Women,
Chennai
5. **Ms. S. Renuka,** Sri Sarada College of Education,
Salem, Tamil Nadu
6. **Mr. Anil Rajan Jacob,** NITK, Suratkal, Karnataka
7. **Ms. Badra Bharadwaj,** Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National University,
Lucknow
8. **Ms. A. Saranya,** Madurai Sivakasi Nadar Pioneer Meenakshi
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Poovanthi, Tamil Nadu
9. **Mr. V. Arun Kumar,** P.R. Government College,
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