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Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

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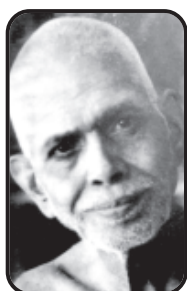
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Such honest and hardworking citizens
run this nation

And not the politicians and cinema stars
who occupy the centre stage



Thoughts of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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 Maharshi. 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 five parts of the article were published in the August, September, October, November and December 2006 issues.

Courtesy : Recorder, Sri Ramanasramam 1st January, 1955

5th February, 1936

A devotee asked about the nature of samadhi and the means to get samadhi.

Maharishi.: When the one who asks the nature of samadhi and the method of getting into it vanishes, samadhi will result.

Maj. Chadwick: It is said that one look of a Mahatma is enough; that idols, pilgrimages, etc, are not so effective. I have been here for three months, but I do not know how I have been benefited by the look of Maharshi.

Maharishi.: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualized. Just as a piece of coal takes long to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a short time and a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming in contact with Mahatmas.

Mr. Cohen: I get into meditation and reach a point which may be called peace and a contemplative mood. What should be the next step?

Maharishi.: Peace is Self-Realisation. Peace need not be disturbed. One should aim at Peace only.

Devotee.: But I do not have the satisfaction.

Maharishi.: Because your peace is temporary. If made permanent, it is called Realisation.

27th December, 1936

Mr. Shamanna from Mysore Kindly explain Aham Sphurana (the light of 'I' - 'I').

Maharishi.: 'I' is not known in sleep. On waking 'I' is perceived to be associated with the body, the world and the non-self in general. Such associated 'I' is aham vritti.

When Aham represents the Self only, it is Aham Sphurana. This is natural to the jnani and is itself called jnana by jnanis or bhakti by bhaktas. Though ever present, including in sleep, it is not perceived. It cannot be known in sleep all at once. It must first be realised in the waking state, for it is our true nature underlying all the three states. Efforts must be made only in the jagrat state and the Self realised here and now. It will afterwards be understood

and realised to be continuous Self, uninterrupted by jagrat and svapna .

Thus, it is akhandakara vritti (unbroken experience). Vritti is used for lack of a better expression. It should not be understood to be literally a vritti. In that case, vritti will resemble an 'ocean-like river', which is absurd.

Vritti is of short duration; it is qualified, directed consciousness; or absolute consciousness broken up by cognition of thoughts, senses, etc. Vritti is the function of the mind, whereas the continuous consciousness transcends the mind. This is the natural, primal state of the jnani or the liberated being. That is unbroken experience. It asserts itself when relative consciousness subsides.

Aham vritti ('I'-thought) is broken, Aham sphurana (the light of 'I'-'I') is unbroken, continuous. After the thoughts subside, the light shines forth.

6th July, 1935

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: What is sphurana (a kind of indescribable but palpable sensation in the heart centre)?

Maharishi.: Sphurana is felt on several occasions, such as in fear, excitement etc. Although it is always and all over, yet it is felt at a particular centre and on particular occasions. It is also associated with antecedent causes and confounded with the body. Whereas, it is all alone and pure; it is the Self. If the mind be fixed on the sphurana and one senses it continuously and automatically, it is liberation.

Again sphurana is the forestate of Realisation. It is pure. The subject and object proceed from it.

If the man mistakes himself for the subject, objects must necessarily appear different for him. They are periodically withdrawn and projected, creating the world and the subject's enjoyment of the same. If, on the other hand, the man feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected, there can be no confusion and he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self.

THOUGHTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Swami Vivekananda convened a meeting of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and decided to start Ramakrishna Mission in the year 1887. The speech of Swami Vivekananda on this auspicious occasion is provided in this article.

Swami Vivekananda has been at Baghbazar, Calcutta during the year 1887 staying for some days at the house of the late Balaram Bose. At his wish, a large number of devotees of Sri Ramakrishna assembled at the house at 3 p.m. Swami Yogananda was amongst those present here. The object of Swamiji was to form an association. When all present had taken their seats, Swamiji proceeded to speak as follows:

“The conviction has grown in my mind after all my travels in various lands that no great cause can succeed without an organisation. In a country like ours, however, it does not seem quite practicable to me to start an organisation at once with a democratic basis or work by general voting”.

“People in the West are more educated in this respect and less jealous of one another than ourselves. They have learnt to respect merit. Take for instance my case. I was just an insignificant man there and yet see how cordially they received and entertained me. When with the spread of education, the masses in our country grow more sympathetic and liberal, when they learn to have their thoughts expanded beyond the limits of sect or party, then it will be possible to work on the democratic basis of organisation. For this reason, it is necessary to have a dictator for this society. Everybody should obey him and then in time we may work on the principle of general voting.

“Let this association be named after him, in whose name, indeed, we have embraced the monastic life, with whom as your ideal in life you all toil on the field of work from your station in family-life, within twenty years of whose passing away a wonderful diffusion of his holy name and extraordinary life has taken place both in the East and the West. We are the servants of the Lord. Be you all helpers in this cause.”

When Sriji Girish Chandra Ghosh and all other disciples present had approved of the above proposal, the future programme of this Society of Sri Ramakrishna was taken up for discussion. The Society was named the Ramakrishna Mission.

Swamiji himself became the President of the Mission and other office-bearers also were elected. The rule was laid down that the association should hold meetings at the house of Balaram Baby every Sunday at 4 p.m. Needless to say that Swamiji used to attend these meetings whenever convenient.

When the meetings had broken up and the members departed, addressing Swami Yogananda, Swamiji said, “So the work is now begun this way; let us see how far it succeeds by the will of Sri Ramakrishna.”

Swami Yogananda: “You are doing these things with Western methods. Should you say Sri Ramakrishna left us any such instruction?”

Swamiji: “Well, how do you know that all this is not on Sri Ramakrishna’s lines? He had an infinite breadth of feeling and dare you shut him up within your own limited views of life?”

“I will break down these limits and scatter and broadcast over the earth his boundless inspiration. He never instructed me to introduce any rites of his own worship. We have to realise the teachings he has left us about religious practice and devotion, concentration and meditation and such higher ideas and truths and then preach these to all men. The infinite number of faiths are only so many paths. I have not been born to found one more sect in a world already teeming with sects. We have been blessed with obtaining refuge at the feet of the Master and we are born to carry his message to the dwellers of the three worlds”.

Swami Yogananda uttered no word of dissent and so Swamiji continued: “Time and again have I received in this life marks of his grace. He stands behind and gets all this work done by me. When lying helpless under a tree in an agony of hunger, when I had not even a scrap of cloth, when I was travelling penniless round the world, even then help came in all ways by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna. And again when crowds jostled with one another in the streets of Chicago to have a sight of this Vivekananda, then also I could digest without difficulty all that honour - a hundredth part of which would have been enough to turn mad any ordinary man - because I had his grace and by his will, victory followed everywhere”.

“Now I must conclude by doing something in this country. So casting all doubt away, please help my work; and you will find everything fulfilled by his will”.



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.

Needs support for Surgery

Mrs.Wiselet Jeya Christopher is suffering from neck pain for the past 3 years. The doctors advised her to undergo surgery. The estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.1,00,000/-

Mrs.Wiselet Jeya Christopher's husband is unskilled labourer and they have 3 children.

Mrs.Wiselet Jeya Christopher requests kind hearted persons for financial help for her medical treatment.

Contact address: Mrs.Wiselet Jeya Christopher,
112, Packiam Street, Henry Road,
Nagercoil-629 001, Tamil Nadu.

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Hearing impaired girl needs support

Ms.K.Subhashini is a speech and hearing impaired girl and she is now studying B.Com in Manonmaniyam Sundaranar University Directorate of Distance and Continuing Education.

Ms.K.Subhashini secured first rank in 10th and 12th std. examination conducted by the government for the deaf and dumb.

Ms.K.Subhashini requests financial help for her higher studies.

Contact address: Ms.K.Subhashini,
D/o. Sri.K.Gajendraperumal,
120, Fernandus Compound, Water Tank Road,
Nagercoil-629 001, Tamil Nadu.

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Needs support for Medical Treatment

Sri.Subhasis Chatterjee, age 40 years was discharged from the Christian Medical College, Vellore after the treatment for Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis -Progressive disease.But he was discharged with the advise for long term oxygen therapy and continued medication at home.

Mrs.Pratima Chatterjee, the wife of Sri. Subhasis Chaterjee is house wife. She requests kind hearted persons for financial help to look after her husband as per the doctor's advice.

Contact address: Mrs.Pratima Chatterjee
W/o.Sri.Subhasis Chatterjee
Sarat Bose Road, Krishanagar, Sakti Nagar, Nadia,
West Bengal, Pin:741102

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Poor man needs support for Heart Surgery

Sri.K.Baskaran, auto driver age 44 years is suffering from heart disease. He has been advised to undergo open heart surgery at International Centre for Cardio Thoracic

and Vascular Diseases (A Unit of Frontier Lifeline Pvt Ltd),Mogappair, Chennai. Estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.2,37,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of The Frontier Lifeline Hospital Pvt. Ltd payable at Chennai and sent to the following address

Mr.K.Baskaran, S/o.Sri,Kannivelu,L
No.39/1, Barraca Road,Main Street,
Namalwarpet, Chennai-600 012

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Poor widow needs support for her sick son

Mrs.Sushma Sarkar, age 46 years is a widow. She is a domestic maid living with her visually impaired daughter and a son.

Her son Sri.Anand Sarkar age 26 years, was working as unskilled labourer and he has undergone surgery for brain tumour at Sri Sathya Sai Institute, Bangalore. But the biopsy report revealed that it has formed cancer.

At present, he is undergoing treatment for cancer at N.R.S.Medical College & Hospital, Kolkata.

But poor Mrs.Sushma Sarkar,is unable to meet her son's medical expenses needing a sum of Rs.500/- per month.

Mrs.Sushma Sarkar,requests kind hearted persons for financial help for her son's medicines.

Contact address: Mrs.Sushma Sarkar,
Village: Subhash Nagar, P.O.Jhitkiputa
Dist: Nadia, Pin:741102, West Bengal

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Poor man needs support for Self-Empolyment

Sri.R.Sathiyaseelan, unskilled labourer lost his right leg due to cancer in the year 2005.

Sri.Sathiyaseelan requests kind hearted persons for financial help to set up a petty shop in his village.

Contact address: Sri.R.Sathiyaseelan,
S/o.Sri.Rajendran,
Nandamedu Pudoor, Kalpattu (Post)
Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu

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Gosala needs support

Ayarpadi Gokulam proposes to start a Gosala (Cattle Farm to look after cows) in Kanikillupai Village, Arni, Thiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu.



It needs infrastructure facilities like fence, bore well, cattle shed and resources for rearing around one hundred cows.

Ayarpadi Gokulam requests kind hearted persons and philanthropists for support in the efforts.

Contact address: Sri.G.Radhakrishnan,
Managing Trustee,
Ayarpadi Gokulam, "Gosala Trust",
AG36, Shanthi Colony, Annanagar, Chennai-600 040
Mobile:9283468723,9444820494,9360221229

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Disabled student needs support for education

Sri.K.Karthikeyan is a poor disabled boy and he is studying B.Com. I year in Tirukkoilur College of Arts and Science, Tirukkoilur.



Sri.Karthikeyan has already remitted part payment of sum of Rs.3,000/- towards college admission fees, tuition fees etc.

Sri.Karthikeyan requests kind hearted persons for a sum of Rs.4,000/- for the balance payment.

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

Sri.K.Karthikeyan, S/o.Sri.Kathirvel,
Kallipaddi (Village), Thiruvarangam (Post)
Sankarapuram, Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu

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Disabled boy needs help for Self-Employment



Sri.K.Velmurugan age 19 years is a disabled boy and his height is hardly 3 feet. He belongs to very poor family and could study only upto 3rd std.

Inspite of such conditions, the boy is enthusiastic. A casual discussion with him readily reveals his level of intelligence.

Unfortunately, his native intelligence has not been adequately developed and fine tuned by formal education. The boy has employed himself selling some materials and is earning Rs.10/- per day.

Sri.Velmurugan requests financial support to acquire skill and self-employ himself.

Contact address: Sri.K.Velmurugan,
S/o.Sri.Kubendran
Chenjee Main Road, Poondi Village,
Vembu Post, Villupuram Tk, Tamil Nadu

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Visually impaired girl needs educational support

Ms. Krishnaveni, student of I year commerce in Queen Mary's College, Chennai hails from a very poor family and she is a visually impaired girl.

She requires payment of tuition fee, audio cassettes and a tape recorder for her studies. Her sister is also visually impaired who has studied upto 10th standard and has been forced to stop her education very recently due to financial constraints.

Contact address: Ms. Krishnaveni
C/o. Ms. M. Velliammal
Thothanampatti P.o. Vendasandur T.K.
Dindigul Dist - 624 005.

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Poor family needs support

Mrs.Vasantha Iyer, wife of Mr.G.Bhaskaran has undergone surgery for TB in spinal chord at Shree Ashirwad Orthopaedic & General Surgical Hospital, Mumbai in Nov.'2006.Now she is advised to take complete rest for 6 months with medicines which cost Rs.3000/- per month.

Mr.Bhaskaran is a priest and requests financial help for his wife's medicines.

Mrs.Vasantha Iyer, W/o.Mr.G.Baskaran,
Anand Vaibhav Building, Navpada,
Dombivli (West) Dist.Maharashtra

SIVA SAKTHI HOMES PROVIDE TRICYCLES

Siva Sakthi Homes(Siva Sakthi Kaakkum Karangal) is a Chennai based organisation devoted to the service of mentally retarded children, destitute children and senior citizens

Siva Sakthi Homes responded to the desperate calls published in Nandini Voice For The Deprived and donated 7 tri cycles to the disabled persons at Villupuram District in Tamil Nadu on 8.12.2006.

A function was organised at Sri.Aadhi Sankara Kamatchi Temple in Villupuram in which Ms.Vijaya Kumari, Trustee distributed the tri cycles.

Mr.P.N.Devarajan, Chief Patron of the Home, Mr.S.Rajesh, Project Manager, Mr.K.S.Jayaraman, Rotary Club of K.K.Nagar and Office bearers of Villupuram District Handicapped Welfare Society participated in the function.

Siva Sakthi Homes also entertained the disabled persons by providing lunch and the kind hearted persons from Siva Sakthi Home interacted with the disabled persons.

Contact address: Siva Sakthi Homes (Siva Sakthi Kaakkum Karangal)
3/16, Ponniyamman Koil Street, Venkatachalapathy Nagar, Alapakkam, Porur, Chennai-600 116, Tamil Nadu
Phone: 044-24769848, 24769851 e-mail:kakkumkarangal@vsnl.net Website:www.sivasakthi.org

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.



Rajaji and Anna – Crusaders for Prohibition

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the article 'Crusaders for prohibition' in Nandini Voice For The Deprived (December 2006 issue).

I salute the great national and genuine leaders like Gandhiji and Rajaji who staunchly advocated prohibition.

When once total prohibition was lifted, the drink demon had established its strong foothold in the country. During his budget speech in the erstwhile composite Madras State, the then Finance Minister Gopala Reddy while introducing sales tax to bridge over the loss on account of prohibition said "sales tax is a veritable Kamadhenu but it is vulnerable in this constitution". But that Kamadhenu has not been injured, it is thriving along with scrapped prohibition.

Over indulgence in drinking causes ailments such as cirrhosis of the liver, tragic accidents, financial ruin, family abuse and harm to the unborn. Probably because of such terrible consequences, every religious denominations taught that drinking alcohol as immoral.

The Bible does warn about the bad consequences of over indulgence in alcohol. Ephesians 5:18 admonishes: "Do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery". Also proverbs 23:20,21 exhorts: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty".

G.E.M.Manoharan, Coimbatore



Reservation Policy

Dear Sir,

Please refer the write up 'Balancing merit with equity' (Nandini, Dec.'06).

The ticklish problem of reservation of seats in educational institutions and jobs in government service, public and private sectors has defied satisfactory solution till date. While meritorious candidates of forward communities especially the economically weaker section are deprived of chances thanks to the meagre number of seats available to them, there is a grouse that the creamy layer in backward communities secure more seats for obvious reason.

The point system is adopted in USA, where 50% marks are attributed for academic records and 50% for other factors like backwardness of community, education and economic consideration. This method provides fair opportunities for all communities.

The present faulty reservation policy can be modified with the above method and a new policy oriented to solve the tangle eternally

M.R.Pillai, Koratur, Chennai



Demand for Bullet Trains

Dear Sir,

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is reported to have submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister during his recent visit to Chennai.

This consists of a number of demands including running of bullet trains between Chennai to Madurai and Chennai to Coimbatore. This appears to be a specious plea.

The recent ghastly accident resulting in the death of 17 persons near Kanchipuram at a railway level crossing is still fresh in our memory. In Japan, which has pioneered the concept of bullet trains, the entire railway track is reported to be fenced. The railways and the state governments should improve the infrastructure before contemplating fancy schemes like bullet trains.

V.R.Sridharan, Coimbatore



The rice in ration shops of Tamil Nadu

Dear Sir,

In the olden days, the feudal lords owning paddy fields possessed oxen to help ploughing.

During farming, the peasants would be fed with liquid cooked rice in the morning and regular meal in the afternoon to get the best from them. There was no time limit. On seeing the Sun, the workers plunged into the fields and on seeing the moon they got out of them. Thus they shed their blood, sweat and tears for the prosperity of the feudal lord.

At the time of their leaving after Sunset, they were paid in cash or in kind. Thereafter, their thatched leaky huts gave them shelter.

At the bungalow of the Land Lord, the oxen enjoyed better treatment. They lived in tiled beautiful shed, fed by green grass, straw and liquid cooked rice called kanji.

The poor quality rice then served to the workers looks exactly like the Rs.2 per kg rice now emerging from the ration shops.

Has any minister inspected the quality of this rice that is often adulterated? It contains black elements, husks, decayed matter white ants etc. It takes hours to remove the adulteration.

However, it fills the belly of poverty stricken people to remove the wolf of hunger.

K.N.Narayana Pillai, Chennai

Whither trade Union movement?

Dear Sir,

Your comment that trade union movement is operating in a vacuum (Nandini Dec.'2006) is very apt as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned.

In neighbouring Kerala, a zealous trade union movement backed by all major political parties is safeguarding workers' rights in industries to a great extent. However in aided educational institutions in Kerala too, such malaise has crept in. There is another side to this coin. The Industrialisation of Kerala has been substantially affected by militant trade union movement.

The civil society has to strive for a golden mean between the worker's right and responsibilities.

V.R.Sridharan, Coimbatore

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TV Programme on Disabled Artists

Dear Sir,

I am extremely thankful to your good-self for informing me about the programme on disabled artists that was telecast in Podigai TV Channel of Doordharshan, in which Nandini Voice For The Deprived participated .

Myself and my wife watched the programme with deep interest and eagerness on all the three days (i.e) 18/11, 25/11 and 2/12. Mrs. Bharathi Basker's compering and introducing the disabled participants was extremely good. We were moved very much by the participant's self-confidence, courage and faith in spite of their physical disabilities.

Your service to them is marvelous.

Prof. S.Rangarajan, Chennai

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How can Prime Minister be not held responsible?

Dear Sir,

Shibu Soren who was included as cabinet minister by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been now declared as murderer by the judiciary and has been sent to jail. There are other persons such as Mohammed Taslimuddin accused of murder, robbery and extortion; Ali Ashraf Fatmi charged with kidnapping and extortion; Jaiprakash Narain Yadav, of fake duplicate certificate fame; and Laloo Prasad are in Manmohan Singh cabinet who are facing serious charges and staying as ministers at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. If they were to be found guilty by the court later on, Prime Minister will be considered guilty of selecting such tainted persons in the cabinet. He cannot escape from the responsibility.

Generally, the media while criticising the corrupt and dishonest ministers give the benefit of doubt to the Prime Minister, stating that he is a good man and has been forced to induct such tainted persons in the cabinet.

An able and confident Prime Minister will not allow himself to be forced to do wrong things. If he would do so, he can not be called as competent Prime Minister .

When Shibu Soren was declared by the court as murderer, Manmohan Singh who inducted him as minister and done great harm to the quality of governance should quit the job honourably.

Name withheld on request

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Thanks giving by an Octogenarian

Dear Sir,

My age which crossed 80, battered my features and memory power. I started forgetting to close front door, to switch off lights, to close water taps, to collect balance amount from shops and bus conductors. I lost three umbrellas in quick succession. Abuses were heaped on me for my unconscious failures on several occasions.

One day, I bought a pack of biscuits worth Rs.7. I gave a ten rupee note to the shop. Only when I reached home, I realised that the balance was not collected. I rushed to the shop and requested for the balance. But the owner lost his cool and shouted that I should have collected it then and there. When I clarified my sickness to him, he shouted that he was not responsible for it. With empty hands I returned home. I face such embarrassments often these days .

Luckily, I came across Dignity Dialogue wherein there was a caption that such persons should seek help of Novartis Mumbai. A postcard was dropped to Novartis seeking help. Soon came an invitation from Dementia Club, 127, Marshalls Road, Egmore, Chennai patronised by Novartis India Ltd inviting me to attend their Sunday session. On reaching there, promptly a warm welcome was extended to me by smiling Novartis team.

Neuro surgeons and a general physician lectured to us about the implications of the disease dementia and the remedial measures to control it. The doctors gave the prescription and guided us on dietary habits, exercises meditation, prayers and all Dos and Dont's.

My spouse is completely confined to bed from an unknown disease, I have to boil the water for drinking and cook the rice. I used an aluminium vessel since it hastened the cooking processes. When the doctor happened to hear about it, he cautioned me to switch over to stainless steel or earthen vessel as aluminium could affect the brain . I complied with his advice and meticulously followed the instructions of all the doctors. Since i am a teetotaler, several Don'ts did not apply in my case.

This humble letter is to offer publicly my profound gratitude to Dignity Dialogue, Novartis Dementia Club and the doctors.

Had I gone for consultations else where, my medical bill would have been heavy. In Dementia Club, everything is free. I had to incur expenditure only for the cost of medicines.

K.N.Narayanapillai, Chennai.

BEAUTIFICATION OF THE LIQUOR SHOPS IS NOW PRIORITY FOR THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT

There is widespread concern amongst the responsible citizens about the rapid spread of liquor habit in the country, particularly amongst the youth. What is causing greater concern is the fact that even the women are taking to liquor habit though it is still at negligible level, when compared to the menfolk.

Great national leaders like Gandhiji and Rajaji advocated prohibition since they realised that liquor habit of citizens would directly lead to indiscipline in personal life style and perpetuate the poverty amongst the lower income group. Unfortunately, the governments today are more concerned about the income they get by way of sale of liquor and not the welfare of the citizens. The governments use the liquor money partly to provide freebies to the lower income group to “buy” their votes.

Many people seem to think that the cause of prohibition has already been lost in the country, as there is no indication that the government would reverse its liquor policy and reintroduce prohibition.

On the other hand, the Government of Tamil Nadu is now taking steps to make liquor consumption more popular by beautifying the liquor shops and expanding the facilities. Tamil Nadu Government seems to be in the forefront in the efforts to popularise the drinking habit in the country.

The Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC), the wholesale and retail agent of Indian-Made Foreign Spirits (IMFS) and belonging to Government of Tamil Nadu plans to give a face lift to liquor shops run by it.

TASMAC plans to spend Rs.2 lakh on each shop attached with bar facility beside providing good hygiene. A few shops in Chennai would be taken up on an experimental basis in the coming months followed by other shops across the state, TASMAC sources said.

TASMAC has decided to redo the liquor shops to give “a pleasant atmosphere” to the customers. It also plans to computerise retail outlets to ensure proper billing, enable the shops to maintain inventory of stock and facilitate the headquarters to monitor flow of items.

“The computerisation work would also begin by this financial year itself in Chennai and would be extended to other shops gradually,” sources said.

TASMAC also plans to procure foreign made wine and supply to star hotels in Chennai and other parts of the state. Currently, hotels import wine directly, with a waiting period of six months for relevant permission.

If this plan materialises, hotels can procure imported wine too from TASMAC, which in turn would maintain adequate stocks.

Referring to the complaint filed by the European Union before the World Trade Organisation that Tamil Nadu was not permitting import of foreign brand of liquors, officials said that TASMAC had sent a proposal to the State Government seeking permission to import foreign made liquor as early as in 2003.

CRIMINALS HAVE THE LAST LAUGH

The recent Corporation and Municipal Elections in Tamil Nadu have witnessed extensive violence, booth capturing and stuffing of ballot boxes. Many voters said that they were prevented from exercising their franchise and number of them found that their votes have been already cast when they reached the polling booth. After hearing about the violence indulged in by the politicians and criminals and the policemen not curbing violence, many persons refrained from going to the polling booth .

In such conditions, the Municipal and Corporation elections were completed, counting was made and the

winner were announced. A few of those who were not successful went to the court for justice. The judiciary ordered for re-polling at a few booths and then it was all over.

Now we have “properly elected representatives” sitting in the Municipalities and Corporations and running the administration.

Criminals who had field day on the polling date and the political parties who used the criminals and the policemen who ignored the criminals now have the last laugh. This is the type of democracy that we have.

RAJAJI SPEAKS ON DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM



Rajaji's 128th birth day anniversary falls in the month of December 2006.

Today, the relevance of Rajaji's ideas on secularism, national integration and probity in public life have been recognised as most important credentials of any progressive society.

Rajaji was a great thinker far beyond his time. Nandini Voice For The Deprived has pleasure in paying it's respect to the great statesman on 128th Birth Day Anniversary.

Thoughts of Rajaji on Democracy and Freedom are provided in this article.

In a socialist polity, the State claims all power and what remains may belong to the citizens. In a free polity, the citizens are free and just what power is needed for ordered co-operation is given to the State.

It is not a mere matter of words but one of very great significance whether, in fixing the limits between the State and its citizens, we go on the principle that the citizen is the primary and the State secondary, or whether we go on the reverse principle. We should have maximum freedom for the citizen and minimum power for the State under one principle. If we proceed on the opposite basis, we shall have minimum freedom for the citizen and maximum power for the officials of the State. The former is what Gandhiji wanted.

The angle of approach is important. It greatly affects the course of the necessary compromises between freedom and regulation when details are to be worked out. It is important to preserve the initiative and the incentive of the citizen; for the power and stamina and the progress of a people depend on this and not on the regulations that the State imposes. The individual's energy is at the base of all productive activity, while all that the State can claim is what it needs for maintaining order and effective co-operation.

Not only was Gandhiji interested in minimum government, but the Constitution-makers who gave us the

law in 1950 laid down the frontiers very clearly when they wrote down the chapter on Fundamental Rights. These rights include the economic freedom of the citizen which are now the subject matter of a severe attack on the part of the forces of the State.

The substance of freedom is for this reason in great jeopardy. Those who realise the importance of winning this battle must see that all available courage is summoned and the battle fought with heroic determination.

Nothing fails so despicably as fear and nothing so succeeds as courage. Tyranny cannot be overcome by fear but only by courage, the courage to give a straight battle. To flee in terror or hide oneself away from the straight fight and hope to succeed in compromises on details will end in a rout. At best, such tactics will only result in getting the better of your fellowmen which is a miserable game.

The call of freedom is loud and insistent. The future depends on the response. When the battle for freedom was fought against Britain, we called for courage and the taking of risk and the response was such as brought success.

In the battle for the freedom of the citizen, which is the true substance of national freedom, there is the same need for courage now and the taking of all the risks involved and may it be that the response will be equally good.

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JOURNALISTS ARE HARASSED AND ARRESTED ACROSS THE WORLD

The media and journalists are the pillars of democracy all over the world.

The job of the journalists involve constant investigation of various aspects of public life, highlight the positive developments as well as expose the corrupt and criminals and safeguard the freedom and lives of the commonmen.

In recent times, like other professions, journalists are also often accused of partisan reporting and accepting bribes from individuals, companies and organisations for publishing favourable reports.

While a few of the journalists may be responsible for such dubious acts, it is gratifying that large number of journalists still do their jobs in fair manner. Such journalists represent the hope for the future, particularly amongst the deprived and downtrodden people who have no voice of their own.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is a New York based independent non profit organisation working to safeguard the press freedom worldwide. On the basis of the investigative study, CPJ brought out a report on the extent to which journalists are harassed and arrested across the world. The highlights of the report is provided in this article.

The number of journalists jailed worldwide for their work increased for the second consecutive year, and one in three is now an Internet blogger, online editor, or Web-based reporter, according to a new analysis by the Committee to Protect Journalists. (CPJ)

CPJ's annual worldwide census found 134 journalists imprisoned on December 1, an increase of nine from the 2005 tally. China, Cuba, Eritrea and Ethiopia are the top four jailers among the 24 nations who imprison journalists.

Print reporters, editors and photographers continue to make up the largest professional category, with 67 cases in 2006, but Internet journalists now constitute the second largest category, with 49 cases.

"We are at a crucial juncture in the fight for press freedom because authoritarian states have made the Internet a major front in their effort to control information, CPJ said. "China is challenging the notion that the Internet is impossible to control or censor, and if it succeeds there will be far-ranging implications, for press freedom all over the world."

Over all, "antistate" allegations such as subversion, divulging state secrets and acting against the interests of the state are the most common charges used to imprison journalists worldwide.

But CPJ also found an increasing number of journalists held without any charge or trial at all.

The United States has imprisoned two journalists without charge or trial: Associated Press photographer Bilal Hussein is now held for eight months in Iraq without due process and Al-Jazeera cameraman Sami al-Haj, jailed for five years and is now held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Here are other trends and details that emerged in CPJ's analysis:

* In about 10 percent of cases, governments used a variety of charges unrelated to journalism to retaliate

against critical writers, editors, and photojournalists. Such charges ranged from property damage and regulatory violations to drug possession and association with extremists. In the cases included in this census, CPJ has determined that the charges were most likely lodged in reprisal for the journalist's work.

* Spreading ethnic or religious "hatred" was the next most common charge used to imprison journalists worldwide. Such charges were lodged in about four percent of cases.

* Criminal defamation charges were filed in about three percent of cases, a slight decline from the rate recorded in recent years. A growing number of nations, particularly in Western Europe, have moved to decriminalize defamation and insult.

* Violations of censorship rules account for another three percent of cases. Burma, for example, jailed two journalists in March for violating prohibitions on photographing or filming the country's new capital, Pyinmana.

* The longest-serving journalists in CPJ's census were Chen Renjie and Lin Youping, who were jailed in China in July 1983 for publishing a pamphlet titled Ziyou Bao (Freedom Report). Codefendant Chen Biling was later executed.

CPJ's list is a snapshot of those incarcerated at midnight on December 1, 2006. It does not include the many journalists imprisoned and released throughout the year; Accounts of those cases can be found at www.cpj.org. Journalists remain on CPJ's list until the organization determines with reasonable certainty that they have been released or have died in custody.

Journalists who either disappear or are abducted by nonstate entities, including criminal gangs, rebels or militant groups, are not included on the imprisoned list. Their cases are classified as "missing" or "abducted."

THE DISABLED WOMAN WITH GREAT TALENT

Ms. K. Prabha is a severely disabled woman who cannot walk and can only move in a sitting posture. In spite of severe physical deformity 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.

Ms. K. Prabha is a woman with extraordinary talent. She is a severely disabled person, age 25 years and with height hardly 3 feet. She cannot move from one place to another and has to be physically lifted.

She suffers from a peculiar disability from her childhood days with very weak bones which can get fractured under pressure. This has happened several times in the past and she has been operated many times to set right the fractured bone .

She could study upto 10th standard inspite of her physical deformity. Her source of strength is her parents who take care of her to their best of ability and make life as comfortable as possible for Prabha. The photograph published in this page would give an idea to the readers about the severity of her disability.

Many persons would have broken down in the light of such problems but not Prabha. She has acquired computer qualification and also trained herself in making Tanjore paintings. She finds meaning for her life through this artistic talent and makes it possible to remain cheerful by immersing herself in making the paintings with great devotion and concentration. Making the paintings is not easy, as her fragile hands will give her pain when she would work for long hours.

What is particularly striking about Prabha is that she never talks about her problems to anyone until specifically asked. She speaks with enthusiasm and interest and gives an impression that she is not really concerned about her severe disability. There are many persons who possess good look, good job, money and all comforts in life but still feel discontented and frustrated. Such persons have a lot to learn from Prabha.

Her father Sri. Krishnamurthy carefully takes her from one place to another by seating her in his two wheeler with some special arrangement. The father and the daughter cheerfully go on the street, attend meetings and discusses various issues with anyone who come across her way.



Prabha participated in the recent programme of three episodes that was telecast by the Podigai channel of Doordarshan and showed her paintings and spoke with clarity and confidence. Many persons who saw her in the television and heard her were highly impressed. Many people wondered as to how someone could be so cheerful inspite of such conditions. This speaks a lot about the maturity and quality of mind of this disabled person whose philosophic outlook to life and events is extraordinary.

Her paintings are of very good quality in the price range of Rs.200 and above and consist of many images including Lord Krihna , Lord Ganesha in different postures. Perhaps, the best way of recognizing and rewarding Prabha is by buying her paintings which can adorn the walls very pleasantly in houses and commercial establishments all over the world..

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POLITICIANS ARE NO MORE RESPECTED IN THIS COUNTRY

“A GOOD POLITICIAN IS AS UNTHINKABLE AS A HONEST BURGLAR”

The news item that Shibu Soran, former union minister has been convicted on murder charges has not surprised the country. Many people already think that the politicians in the country have degenerated to substantial extent causing immense harm to the national welfare.

There is no doubt that the present form of electoral system has enabled all sorts of people to enter into politics and get into positions of power and administering the country. Instance of Shibu Soran being held on murder charges is only tip of the iceberg.

One need to think and introspect as to why such situation is existing in the country, which is supposed to be a vibrant democracy

The obvious reason is that most of the countrymen do not care about the over all national scenario or they do care only to the extent of commenting about the scenario

sitting in armchairs or in club meetings. Very few people are willing to take up the cause and fight for the issues. Most people simply accept the situation and submit themselves and try to protect their personal interests at any cost.

The worst scenario and behaviour of politicians is evident from the recent developments in Uttar Pradesh where the Vice Chancellor of an University banned the criminal elements in student community from contesting election. However, the state government has gone to the extent of providing police protection to such criminal elements in the student community.

What to say about such scenario, except that the country has to fight against the politicians and criminals together, if it were to fight successfully against corruption and dishonesty.

RICHEST ONE PERCENT OWNS 40 PERCENT OF WORLD'S WEALTH FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Report by U.N.Institute finds the richest 10 percent of population account for 85 percent of global assets. Half the world's population, however, owns barely one percent of global wealth.

The richest one percent of population in the world owns 40 percent of the planet's wealth.The report also finds that those in financial services and the internet sectors predominate among the super rich.

Europe, the United States and some Asia Pacific nations account for most of the extremely wealthy. More than a third of these individuals live in the U.S. Japan accounts for 27 percent of the total, the United Kingdom for 6 percent and France for 5 percent.

The global study - from the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations - is the first to chart wealth distribution in every country as opposed to just income. It included all the most significant components of household wealth, including financial assets and debts, land, buildings and other tangible property. Together these total \$125 trillion globally.

Near the bottom of the list were India, with per capita wealth of \$1,100 and Indonesia with assets per head of \$1,400.

Many African nations as well as North Korea and the poorer Asia Pacific nations are places where the worst of live.



“These levels of inequality are grotesque,” said Duncan Green, head of research at Oxfam. “It is impossible to justify such vast wealth when 800 million people go to bed hungry every night. The good news is that redistribution would only have to be relatively small. Such are the vast assets of the rich that giving up a small part of their wealth could transform the lives of millions.”

UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

In recent times, a number of organisations and even qualified doctors claim that they have developed cure for several ailments such as arthritis, AIDS, cancer, asthma etc. Often, such claims are given undue publicity in the media and television and they do not appear as advertisement but as news items. Several members of the public often believe such claims as they are very well publicised and appear as news in media, without any warning to the readers as to whether the media have checked the veracity of their claims.

There was recently news item in a section of the press about the Osteo arthritis camp in Chennai being conducted by an organisation that is said to be serving the rehabilitation of disabled.

It has been said in the news that the treatment is provided for those suffering from osteo arthritis by way of providing knee braces etc. and indicating cost of Rs.1000 for each brace. This has not come as an advertisement but as a news item in the media, perhaps giving an impression of recommending the treatment procedures.

Such claims for treatment have not been proved by any organised and recognised scientific body and at best can be called as unsubstantiated claims for treatment. There was one lady of 83 years who underwent the same treatment by the above team and paid money to get the brace fitted. She had enormous pain and swelling in the next two days and had to remove the braces to get relief.

In the modern medical practices, clinical trials and certification by accredited agencies are absolutely necessary before permitting such treatments and claims. No developed and advanced country would permit such treatments and claims not approved by government agencies which have not been proved in clinical trials as per the approved methods, which involve four phases of trials extending over several years.

With such details often published in the media, many people will rush for treatment because the general perception is that the media will not publish any details without verification and ascertaining the authenticity.

STATUE CULTURE- PRE OCCUPATION WITH NON ISSUE

The country appears to be pre-occupied with non issues.

This is obviously due to the fact that there is no strong and positive leadership in the country, commanding the confidence of the countrymen about their capability to steer the country in the right path towards progress and prosperity. The persons occupying crucial positions in power and authority appear to have more faith in political gimmicks and compromise methods rather than on their capability to provide positive leadership. Such conditions are creating uncertainty and confusion, where even issues relating to erection and demolition of statues look like subjects of national priorities.

Sometime back, the statue of Ambedkar was disfigured in Maharashtra, as a result of which there were violent agitation and consequent police firing and death .

In Tamil Nadu, statue of Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy was broken leading to retaliation against Hindu temples and idols.

There is also another story of Kannagi statue in Chennai which was installed by one Chief Minister and subsequently removed by the next Chief Minister. Later on, Kannagi statue was brought back by the earlier Chief Minister who once again came to power.

Not to be out done, statues of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran and former Union Minister Murosoli Maran have been unveiled in the Parliament House one after other in the period of 2 days. The function for opening one of the statues was ignored by the Prime Minister and the other statue was unveiled by the Prime Minister himself. This obviously indicates the political undertone behind such events.

All these stories only make one to suspect about the quality and level of thinking of the political leaders in the country.

ESSAY COMPETITION FOR STUDENTS ON MORAL POLICING

There is considerable national concern about the influence of the "BPO Culture" and Cinema on the mindset of the youth in the country who seem to be taking to liquor habits and liberal life style. The police have been forced to raid several hotels and night clubs in recent times, to curb

down indiscipline which has been criticised as "moral policing" by the media. To give an opportunity to the students to express their views on the subject, Nandini Voice For The Deprived is conducting an All India Essay Competition for Women College students on the subject.

Last date for receipt of the entries : - 31st December, '06.

TALK ABOUT THE UNEMPLOYABLE ENGINEERS

In recent times, we have been repeatedly hearing views from the senior educationists and HR Executives that considerable percentage of students passing out from the engineering colleges are unemployable. While such highly publicised opinion could cause anguish to the young engineers who have passed out recently, no worthwhile solution have been offered by these “opinion makers”, who lament about the unemployable engineers.

It would be unfair to brand any passed out engineer as unemployable engineer when the person has successfully passed engineering course after long period of study, duly writing the examinations and undergoing the stipulated tests.

The scenario is that the number of engineers passing out from the colleges are far higher than the job avenues available, leading to surplus engineers situation. In such condition of “buyers market”, the best of engineers get preference in employment and they get plum jobs. Those of the second class type, who are also qualified engineers, are denied job opportunities and are branded as unemployable, which is only due to the fact that the market is unable to absorb them due to the surplus supply scenario.

If the number of engineers passing out are equal to or less than the job vacancies available, the educationists and HR executives may not be talking about the unemployable engineers but would have absorbed everyone of them including the second class type.

This is a very challenging situation not only for the students passing out of the engineering colleges but also for the educationists who are responsible for admitting the students and providing them credits and giving them pass certificates. It is the job of Principals and Professors in the engineering colleges, who should have made these fresh engineers, who are now unfortunately branded as unemployable, to become employable.

Obviously, in view of the surplus engineers situation, those incharge of engineering education have to invent new courses and programmes of education that would expand the area of scope of employment for the engineers and make the freshly passed out engineers more versatile, that would enable them to take up number of jobs in the peripheral areas of engineering also such as marketing, purchase, export promotion, customer study and analysis etc.

The biggest problem today is that the focus of education in the universities is only to make the students pass the examination. Adequate efforts are not being putforth in the educational system and by the professors in command to prepare the students for the long professional career ahead of them, so that they would not become “unemployable”.

It should be a matter of priority that much more intensive contact programmes are fostered between the employing

organisations and the students by way of interactive programmes and generating greater awareness amongst the students about the requirement of employers and the scenario that they have to face once they pass out of the colleges, whether with first class or second class.

The ground reality has to be seen and understood. Unfortunately, huge capacity creation has been permitted in the intake of the engineering colleges. While large concrete structures have been constructed and equipment have been obtained by the engineering colleges built in recent times, the problem is in getting the quality teachers with adequate qualification and experience.

The excellent teachers are not made but are born and therefore the high quality teachers always remain in short supply at all times. With so many engineering colleges coming up in short time, the newly built engineering colleges face serious problems in getting the qualified and experienced faculty at adequate level. The inadequate teaching faculty standard inevitably reflect on the quality of engineering students passing out of the colleges. There appears to be no immediate solution for this problem .

In any case, the so called unemployability of fresh engineers can be a subjective matter. Let us take the case of the writer of this article. He has passed chemical engineering degree course in 1968 (around 38 years back) securing second class from a wellknown engineering college in Tamil Nadu. In the five years course he studied, he failed in one subject every year and wrote the examination second time for getting the pass mark. In spite of this “second class type”, he got the job in the year 1968 within 15 days of passing out from the college in a reputed organisation as trainee engineer. In the period of 38 years of working experience, the “second class type” has not affected him in any way and he now presides over fairly well known chemical engineering consultancy organisation which is operating at international level and he is also Chief Editor of a reputed technology journal.

Fresh engineers being branded as unemployable should feel better after seeing the engineering life of the writer of this article.

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