

Nandini

ISSUE 5

JULY 2007

Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

VOL XII

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - Rs. 100/-

RS.10/-

**What can be a greater service
than providing educational support
to deprived children?**

THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

“I and `mine’ - that is ignorance.

True knowledge makes one feel: ‘O God, You alone do everything. You alone are my own. And to You alone belong houses, buildings, family, relatives, friends, the whole world. All is Yours.’

But ignorance makes one feel: ‘I am doing everything. I am the doer. House, buildings, family, children, friends and property are all mine.’

“Once a teacher was explaining all this to a disciple. He said, ‘God alone and no one else, is your own.’ The disciple said: ‘But, revered sir, my mother, my wife and my other relatives take very good care of me. They see nothing but darkness when I am not present. How much they love me!’ The teacher said: “There you are mistaken. I shall show you presently that nobody is your own. Take these few pills with you. When you go home swallow them and lie down in bed. People will think you are dead, but you will remain conscious of the outside world and will see and hear everything. Then I shall visit your home.’

“The disciple followed the instructions. He swallowed the pills and lay as if unconscious in his bed.

His mother, wife and other relatives began to cry. Just then the teacher arrived, in the guise of a physician and asked the cause of their grief. When they had told him everything, he said to them: ‘Here is a medicine for him. It will bring him back to life. But I must tell you something. This medicine must first be taken by one of his relatives and then given to him. But the relative who takes it first will die. I see his mother, his wife and others here. Certainly one of you will volunteer to take the medicine. Then the young man will come back to life.’

“The disciple heard all this. First the physician called his mother, who was weeping and rolling on the ground

in grief. He said to her: ‘Mother, you don’t need to weep any more. Take this medicine and your son will come to life. But you will die.’ The mother took the medicine in her hand and began to think. After much reflection she said to the physician, with tears in her eyes: ‘My son, I have a few more children. I have to think about them too. I am wondering what will happen to them if I die. Who will feed them and look after them?’

The physician next called the wife and handed the medicine to her. She had been weeping bitterly too. With the medicine in her hand she also began to reflect. She had heard that she would die from the effect of the medicine. At last, with tears in her eyes, she said: ‘He has met his fate, If I die, what will happen to my young children? Who will keep them alive? How can I take the medicine?’

In the mean time the disciple had got over the effect of the pills. He was now convinced that nobody was really his own. He jumped out of bed and left the place with his teacher. The guru said to him, ‘There is only one whom you may call your own and that is God.’

“Therefore a man should act in such a way that he may have bhakti at God’s Lotus Feet and love God as his very own. You see this world around you. It exists for you only for a couple of days. There is nothing to it.”

“Maya is nothing but the egotism of the embodied soul. This egotism has covered everything like a veil.

‘All troubles come to an end when the ego dies.’ If by God’s grace, a man but once realises that he is not the doer, then he at once becomes a jivanmukta: Though living in the body, he is liberated. He has nothing else to fear.

“This maya, that is to say, the ego, is like a cloud. The sun cannot be seen on account of a thin patch of cloud; when that disappears one sees the sun. If one’s ego vanishes, then one sees God.

A man can get rid of the ego after the attainment of Knowledge. On attaining Knowledge, he goes into samadhi and the ego disappears. But it is very difficult to obtain such Knowledge.

The intervention of the ego creates the difference between Jiva and Atman.”

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 Girl Needs Sewing Machine

Ms.Komala is a poor disabled girl and she has studied upto 10th std. She has also undergone six months training in tailoring course.

Ms.Komala requests for donation of sewing machine to self employ herself

Contact address:

Ms.R.Komala,
D/o. Smt.Mariammal,
Karanai (Post), Mugaiyur (Via), Thirukoviloor (Tk),
Villupuram

Hearing Impaired Child Needs Support

Kumari Harika, age 4 years is suffering from hearing loss in both ears.Sagar Apollo Hospital's doctors have advised her to undergo cochlear implant surgery. The cost of the surgery is Rs.11 lakhs.

The child's father Sri.M.A.Kanakaraja is a salesman of coffee powder door to door.He requests financial help for his child's surgery.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Sagar Apollo Hospital,Bangalore (A/C No.UHID NO.167090 to be mentioned behind the cheque) and sent to the following address:

Kumari Harika,
D/o.Sri.M.A.Kanakaraja,
#3, Opp.to B.D.A. ParkAvalahalli,
Bangalore-85
Phone: 9980984183, 9972279499

Poor Boy Suffering From Cancer

Master Saptarshi Biswas, age 7 years, is suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukemia (a type of blood cancer). The boy is admitted in Tata Memorial Hospital in November 2006. Presently he is undergoing chemotherapy treatment. The estimated cost of the treatment is Rs.3 lakhs.

The poor family is unable to meet this huge medical expenses.

The cheque (please mention the name of the boy behind the cheque) may be drawn in favour of Cancer Aid & Research Foundation,Bombay and send to the following address

Cancer Aid & Research Foundation,
Byculla Municipal School Building,
Ground Floor,
Room No.15-18, N.M.Joshi Marg,
Near 'S' Bridge,
Byculla (West), Mumbai -400 011

Poor Disabled Person Needs Support

Sri.M.Chenna Kesavan is a poor disabled man and he has studied upto 10th std.and he is having two children.He is running a mobile laundry shop.

Sri.M.Chenna Kesavan requests for donation of tri cycle and he also requests financial help for the education of his children.

Contact address: Sri.M. Chenna Kesavan,
No.10/H, Earikkarai Street,
Taramani, Chennai-113

Poor Vegetable Vendor Needs Support

Sri.B.Arunachalam is a small vegetable vendor.His daughter Ms.Chenthamarai is studying X std and his son Sri.Suriya is studying IV std. in Bharatha Vidyalaya Matric.Hr.Sec.School, Chennai. The school fees and other related expenses for the two children comes to Rs.17.500/-

Sri.B.Arunachalam requests financial help for his children's education

Contact address:
Sri. B. Arunachalam,
P Block, No.4 Agathiyar Nagar, Villivakkam,
Chennai-600 049

Disabled Person Needs Job

Sri.N.Manikandan is a disabled boy and he is awaiting results for B.Com course .He has computer knowledge

Sri.Manikandan requests for a suitable job.

Contact address:
Sri.B.Arunachalam
C/o.Sri.N Palaniappan,
79/5A, Tamilkudil,
Southmada Street,
Villivakkam, Chennai-49



**Requests Support
For Medical
Treatment**

Sri.K.Ramachandran, age 33 years, when he was travelling in a car along with his two brothers at Karaikudi met with a serious car accident on 19.10.2005.

Sri Ramachandran was injured seriously.

He was admitted in Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Madurai. After the treatment now, he is able to sit in a chair, but not able to walk. The doctors advised him to undergo left side ball joint replacement. The estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.3 lakhs.

Sri.Ramachandran's father Sri.V.Krishnamurthy Ganapadigal is a veda teacher.

Sri.K.Ramachandran requests financial help for his medical treatment. The cheque may be drawn in favour of Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Madurai and sent to the following address:

Sri. K. Ramachandran,
S/o. Sri. Krishnamurthy Ganapadigal,
173, East Car Street,
Kundrakudi, Shivagangai District
Tamil Nadu, Pin: 630 206

Needs support for medical treatment

Sri.Shankara Subramaniam, age 28 years is suffering from end stage renal disease. He is undergoing hemodialysis thrice in a week at Kovai Medical Centre, Coimbatore. The doctors advised him to undergo kidney transplantation. His wife is willing to give her kidney to him.

Sri.Shankara Subramaniam requests financial help for kidney transplantation.

Arunodayam is a recognised government institution for deserted mentally challenged children. The monthly expenses towards medical treatment for the inmates are quiet high.

Arunodayam requests kind hearted persons for support and encouragement.

Ms. Bharati, was discarded by her husband. At present, she is staying with her aged father.

She is suffering from kidney problem. The doctors advised her to undergo dialysis twice in a week.

Ms. Bharati requests financial help for her medical treatment.

For further details on the above three appeals,

Please contact:

Sri. Priyesh

helptolive@yahoo.com, www.helptolive.org

**HOME FOR THE DISABLED WOMEN
PLEASE EXTEND YOUR SUPPORT**

Tamil Nadu Handicapped Welfare Federation Trust, an apex body the District Level Associations of the disabled persons in Tamil Nadu proposes to set up transit home in Chennai for disabled women .



The objective of setting up the transit home is to help the disabled women to stay for a few weeks while searching for job or educational opportunities in Chennai city. In case of those who have secured jobs, this transit home would facilitate their stay for short period until they would get suitable accommodation.

There are number of disabled women living in different parts of Tamil Nadu who are well qualified to take up jobs. However, suitable job opportunities are available mostly in Chennai city only. The poor disabled women lack resources to find a suitable place to stay in Chennai until they would settle themselves.

Tamil Nadu Handicapped Welfare Federation Trust requests for support from kind hearted persons for setting up the transit home for disabled women.

For further details, please contact:

Sri.G.Chidambaranathan,
President,
Tamil Nadu Handicapped Welfare Federation Trust,
21-A, Earikarai Salai, Kottur,
Chennai-600 085
Phone: 24405584, 32927664
FaxL 24405585
E-mail:handicappedtrust@yahoo.co.in

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.



How long should one be in power?

Dear Sir,

Once a person crosses the age of 80 years, he/she should pave way for the younger generation to take over. Even 70 is a ripe age.

But the seniled seniors, the 80+ do not permit youngsters to try their ideas and take over the administration.

Chennai

K.N.Narayana Pillai

Cancerous corruption in road contracts

Dear Sir,

At last, Prime Minister spoke out about the deadly cancerous corruption in road projects throughout India.

This was indeed a confession of the head of the country who is responsible for weeding out corruption.

While he was inaugurating a national conference on rural roads at New Delhi on 23.5.2007, the Prime Minister stated the shameful fact that crores of rupees were spent every year in road construction work and maintenance and yet the roads give way during every monsoon regularly. Corruption in road projects has spread like cancer to every corner of the country.

The reason for this is that road projects contracts, big or small, are taken away by the kith and kins of politicians and they loot public money by laying very inferior quality roads, using cheap materials etc; Such roads cannot withstand even single rain.

The PWD authorities get their shares and the quantum of shares are fixed well in advance even before the award of the contract.

The Prime Minister should take serious action to book all the corrupt people, instead of simply lecturing about corruption and he should recover the amount spent from the corrupt officials and contractors .

The new roads laid should be in a good condition atleast for 5 years. Till such time, the contractors should be held responsible. No road project contracts should be given to the kith and kin of politicians and the PWD officials.

Can the Prime Minister do this?

Chennai

Daniel Vedamuthu

Consanguineous marriages cause of disability

Dear Sir,

258 people out of 14000 in Alipar Village, Kolar district in Karnataka suffer from hearing impairment (1.84%). Another survey of 2550 households were reported to have found 500 households having hearing, physical handicaps and low vision (19.6%).

The survey suggests that consanguineous marriages (marriage among close relatives) may be the cause of the high incidence of hearing disability.

Marriages within blood lines may be tantamount to inbreeding, causing genetical defects among the offsprings.

This subject should be scientifically studied and due recommendations should be given for the benefit of the citizens.

Chennai

K V S Krishna

Where is happiness?

Dear Sir,

The ways of the modern world are such that the answer to any pain or ailment is popping of pills.

But how do you cure your soul? The soul needs no medicine. It needs nurturing; food for soul is not similar to the needs of the body. As an emotional entity, soul has no shape. Her hunger is different. You have to feed it through meditation Dhyana, Samadhi... Silence. These help you unleash the inner in you.

In these days of hustle-bustle, just remain still for a few moments; You will feel your inner self just like you feel your heartbeat when you care to listen.

Mumbai

Brijmohan Goel

Bande Mataram

Dear Sir,

The "Bande Mataram" is national song of freedom movement that stirred up and carried dormant souls to the arena of non violent struggle for freedom.

It is a disgrace that singing of that matchless national song of undiluted patriotism, the singing of which brings to mind the immense sacrifice, sufferings and loss of thousands of genuine patriots, should be opposed now strangely by some persons.

It is shocking that such persons are encouraged and supported by governments of these days.

Chennai

'Garland' B. Rajagopalan

SCHOLARSHIP FOR POOR STUDENTS

SWEET EXPERIENCE AND MATTERS OF CONCERN

Nandini Voice For The Deprived is in the process of distributing scholarships to poor school students in Tamil Nadu.

The objective of extending the scholarships is to reassure the poor students that the society would care for them and encourage them to pursue education with sustained interest and without economic anxiety.

Further objective is to encourage the parents to send their children to schools instead of sending them for jobs at the formative age of life .

Even with limited publicity, there was overwhelming response from poor families from all over Tamil Nadu to avail the scholarships. While the original proposal was to provide 200 scholarships, the number of applications received were many times over this level. In order to ensure that nobody would be disappointed, the total scholarship amount have been marginally increased and also the amount paid to the individual students have been reduced to meet everybody's requirement atleast partly.

What is most gratifying is the enormous interest and enthusiasm shown by the poor families to provide education to their children to the extent of their capabilities. It is very clear that the lower income group families think that the best wealth that they can provide to their children is education. They would leave no stone unturned in their efforts to provide education for their children. This is a positive development and very gratifying .

While the enthusiasm of the deprived families to educate their children provides great hope and confidence about the future, one aspect that cannot be missed is that 90 percent of the children are only accompanied by the mother not by the father while seeking scholarship for their children . It is also disturbing to know in many cases that the husband does not live with wife any more, discarding her to live with the children and bear the burden of bringing up the children.

Another disturbing aspect is the heavy drinking habit among many of the men folk, squandering away their hard earned money in the liquor shops . In the process, men lose their sense of balance and sensitivity and do not care for their wife and children anymore. The beating taken by the mother from the father and witnessing the tragic scenario of mother being beaten by the father leave the children emotionally disturbed , particularly the girl child. This can be clearly seen in their eyes, when they approach seeking help for education.

The curious aspect is that several of these deprived families make their living largely by their mother's earnings,

who employ herself as house maid or domestic servant . They do not read any newspapers and have no knowledge of what is happening around and what sort of opportunities that they can get for their children. Most of them have received the news about the scholarship for school children from the households where they work as domestic servants. Many of their employers who are in the middle and upper class readily recommend such families and their children for scholarship . Often the employers have sent drivers in the car to collect the application form to help their domestic maid. One is curious to know as to why such affluent people who take pains to recommend scholarship for such children would not extend help themselves.

They can certainly help the poor children since the sum of Rs.5,000/- or so is no big amount for these affluent families possessing cars. Doing charity at other's cost is a disturbing aspect.

T N Government should exercise control over the schools

Nandini Voice For The Deprived is highly concerned about the plight of the poor students who are driven from pillar to post to find money to pay the fees demanded by the government aided and government owned schools, including corporation schools.

The fees are fixed by the individual schools in a totally arbitrary manner and there is no uniformity at all. Fees are demanded under several pretext such as parent teacher association, building fund, school upgradation fees, computer fees, uniform , notebooks etc. The amount demanded under such heads also varies considerably. One wonders as to whether there is any government norms at all about collection of fees by these government owned and government aided schools in Tamil Nadu.

Government owned schools are fully funded by the government and substantial amount is provided by the government to the government aided schools by way of

salaries etc. to the teachers as per the government pay structures. When the government extends so much of funds to these institutions, it should not allow them to collect fees from the students in an arbitrary manner. The objective of the government in providing huge fund support to these schools is to provide free or low cost education to the children from the lower income group.

Nandini Voice for the Deprived wrote letters to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and various concerned authorities in Tamil Nadu Government, seeking to know as to whether it would be in order for the government owned and government aided schools to collect fees from the students in an arbitrary manner. As there was no acknowledgement or reply, a letter was sent under the Right to Information Act to the Ministry of School Education in Tamil Nadu. After three weeks of submitting the request, a reply was received stating that the letter has been

forwarded to another department for necessary action. Till now, no reply has been received and no one seems to be clear as to what is the governmental norms and regulations in the matter.

In any case, it is crystal clear that the Tamil Nadu Government does not exercise any visible control over the schools. The school authorities are charging fees as per the whims and fancies. In the process, the poor families are put to enormous sufferings. They are forced to take debt at heavy interest, as the poor parents realise that they have to educate their children at any cost.

On the whole, the government's objective of providing free or low cost school education to the poor children have been defeated and the damage has already been done to a considerable extent in this new academic year. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister should look into the matter with the urgency that it deserves.

Will the Chief Minister find time to look into this issue?

DOMESTIC MAID - AN EXPLOITED CLASS

The domestic maids are certainly the most exploited section of the Indian society. They belong to unorganised work force, unrepresented in any forum and they enjoy no protection from the government and they do not have any service rules. They do not even have a holiday and have to work 365 days in a year. There are ruthless employers who object even if they take leave for a few days in a year and would go to the extent of cutting their wages for the days that they have not worked.

With frail health and in many instances confronted by a husband who has taken to drinking, they are often beaten up by the drunkard husband. In many cases, they live alone with their children as the husband may have left them and gone away to live with some other women or may have passed away. In such conditions, with their meagre income, they have to look after the children and find money to provide them education. It is an uphill task and it is pathetic to see such women running from pillar to post to make both the ends meet.

They often work in the same households for several years but do not get any benefit other than meagre salary. They are forced to work in several households to make enough money even for their frugal living and therefore they work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. everyday and throughout



the year. When they fall sick or any calamity happens in the household, they have often nothing to fall back upon.

Unfortunately, the government has done little to protect the interests of this huge unorganised working class. The employers treat them worse than casual labourers and do not provide them any long term benefits. It is high time that these domestic maids organise themselves effectively and demand fair wages and working conditions from their employers. The employers should provide atleast some sort of educational support for the children of domestic maids and pay for their medical insurance and should be compelled by law to deposit some money in public provident fund account for the domestic maid.

In today's conditions where the organised class particularly working in the government, software companies and many industrial and commercial establishments enjoy huge pay and benefits, it is irresponsible and cruel on the part of such persons to deny fair wages to the domestic maids.

The government should do something urgently in the matter and should fix minimum wage for different kinds of work that the domestic maids do and protect their long term interests.

Perhaps, the government can learn from the prevailing regulations in Singapore, where definite guidelines for hiring and employing domestic servants exist.

EVERY THING IN THIS COUNTRY HAPPENING ONLY FOR AFFLUENT CITIZENS

NEED FOR EFFECTIVE PROTEST

The Government of India claims that there is spectacular performance by the manufacturing and certain services sectors in the period of 2006-07 and the economy ended during the period with the growth of 9.4 percent. This figure is said to be exceeding earlier projection of 9.2 percent. Enthused by the above figures of growth revealed by the Central Statistical Organisation data, Union Finance Minister said that the Indian economy had clearly shifted to a higher growth trajectory and a high 9 percent growth would be possible in the current year also.

The Union Finance Minister further said that aided by the high growth along with a strengthening rupee in the foreign exchange market, the Indian economy has graduated to trillion dollar one, making the nation to be 12th such nation globally to reach this milestone.

The above statistical data would be impressive for the statisticians in the country and perhaps for arm chair economists and the affluent section of the society . But this has no relevance to the millions of people living below the poverty line. Such poor people continue to live in desperate conditions inspite of the so called growth of the economy.

The deprived persons still do not know as to where the next meal would come from. They have no savings and they are unable to send their children to good schools even for basic education. Everything in this country appears to be happening for the betterment of affluent section of population who live in high style and exhibiting their wealth at every opportunity. The poor and downtrodden find themselves living in the island of poverty in the nation, that is said to be a trillion dollar economy.

It is obvious that there is no worthwhile attempt to distribute the prosperity and income of the country to all section of the countrymen. There is high dishonesty amongst the politicians and government employees at every level. The All India service officers belonging to IAS & IPS have failed the country and disappointed the poor citizens by their conduct and life style. There is tremendous level of corruption in implementing whatever the schemes that the

government have putforth for the benefit of downtrodden The politicians, bureaucracy and the government employees siphon away substantial funds allotted for the welfare measures. In the process, the nexus of politicians, government employees, businessmen at different levels are emerging stronger and they are becoming richer and richer and leaving the poor people high and dry.

Apart from the economic disparities, habits and value system among the people particularly among the youth have worsened due to the influence of western life style, media influence and vulgar exhibition of wealth by the affluent individuals. Such conditions are also causing havoc amongst the poor families, which are already in deep despair.

It is a tragic situation that cinema stars have become role models for this country!

When nobody would protect them, where will the poor go? They do not have faith anymore in the politicians and bureaucracy, who promise a lot but do very little and are self centered.

Media is also no longer playing its intended role. It is no longer under the control of social activists or committed journalists. But it has gone under the control of business houses, who want to make money at any cost. Media are now run by MBAs and professionals, who have the sole objective of expanding the business by whatever strategies that would suit the need to multiply the income.

In such conditions, the poor in the country have no alternative other than protesting and registering their resentment in a telling way. At the same time, such protest should not lead to violence, though this is the only language that the politicians and bureaucrats in the country seem to understand.

Unless the poor would protest strongly and effectively there is no immediate likelihood of their conditions improving. To what extent they can assert themselves would decide not only the future of the deprived citizens but that of the entire Indian society.

SKY ROCKETING SALARIES NOW REACHING ABSURD LEVEL

While addressing the meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industry on 24.5.2007, the Prime Minister of India asked the industries to reduce the excessive remuneration levels to senior executives. While one can only guess as to what is the immediate provocation for the Prime Minister to make these remarks about excessive salary levels and greed of the industries, there is genuine concern amongst the industries itself about the sky rocketing salary levels, which has now reached a level of absurdity.

It is said that software companies started this trend of paying huge salaries to its employees, which have led to chain effect and have forced other industries and the government to hike the salary levels for its employees.

There is no systematic analysis amongst the software companies to evaluate the performance of the individuals vis a vis their salary levels, in tune with the cost of living index in the country and the requirement of the employees. Obviously, the software companies make huge projects and therefore, they find it possible to pay huge salaries.

But, the software companies also do not appear to have any tangible long term investment plans and therefore perhaps think that they would pay so long as the going would be good, based on the overseas order scenario and the outsourcing business.

The difference of the software companies from other industries like chemical, automobile, steel and others is that the major investments in software companies are only in the construction of the buildings and creating communication facilities and the systems. On the other hand, the industries are set up at huge investment cost which they do so by raising large loans involving heavy long term interest commitments etc. Industries cannot operate on the basis of "open and shut approach", which the software companies can do.

The software and outsourcing companies are sitting on very fragile ground and their future appears to be uncertain. With the excessive dependence on overseas orders, the falling value of dollar against rupee are already showing signs of eroding their income. With the professionals in China rapidly familiarizing themselves with English language and international communication, China would be a potential threat and a competitor for Indian software and outsourcing companies in the international market. With the well known capability of the industries in China to aggressively compete in the world market and offering goods and services at surprisingly low level, one is not sure as to what extent the Indian software companies are preparing themselves for the possible difficult days ahead of them.

There are organizations these days, both in the software and other industries who go to the ridiculous extent of offering Rupees one lakh and more salary per month to boys and girls who are just in the twenties. Obviously, there is no logic or rhythm in such salary offers, which would do enormous harm in the long run both to the industry as well as the person who receive such fabulous pay packet at very young age. Obviously, such trend can not last long.

The young people themselves are often surprised to see the type of salary offers made to them and wonder about the basis on which such offers are made and what would be expected of them in return.

Given such huge salary possibilities, many young persons themselves have now started expecting big pay packet, imagining that this would be the market rate and therefore, they should be paid. Industries including the software companies find that such young people switch over from one job to other based only on salary offers and make the jobs as a short term affair. The attrition in the industry has now reached an alarming level.

At the same time, the industries have drastically reduced the manpower requirement, since the overall salary outflow have to be kept within affordable limits. This is leading to loss of employment opportunities and jobs.

There are also huge complaints from the industries that the standards and quality level of even technologists and engineers seeking jobs are often below the requirements, particularly considering the salary expected and provided.

There appears to be a manpower crisis in the industries with no concerted action from any quarters to tackle the issue and find a solution with the urgency that it deserves.

The government should be highly concerned about this situation and should think as to what would happen in the unfortunate event of the software companies, now on fragile grounds, losing their way in the global market.

One hopes that when Prime minister said that the salary level must be brought down, he has thought about all these aspects and has not said it as a mere political talk to please the aam aadmi.

STRENGTHENING RUPEE MAY FORCE FALL IN WAGES

There is much talk about the booming Indian economy and high salary level and increasing standard of living in the country.

However, it appears that economic progress due to growth of manufacturing and services sector are not based on strong fundamentals.

This would become amply clear by the present scenario where strengthening of Indian rupee against US dollar is threatening survival of several sectors in the country. In case of continued strengthening of rupee, the software companies would be forced to reduce the salary level for the employees. This would burst the bubble because this would result in fall in consumer spending and lead to drop in the real estate prices.

The apex body of Indian ready made garments manufacturers expressed their fear due to the strengthening of Indian rupee and their apprehensions make alarming reading.

The continuing appreciation of rupee may lead to closure of small and medium size spinning mills in the near future, causing lakhs of people to lose their jobs in textile and allied industries, says the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI), apex body of the Indian readymade garment manufacturers and retailers.

Currently, the textile and clothing industry provides direct employment to about 3.5 crore people while engaging another 5 crore people in allied activities. In fact, the Union textile ministry forecast that the textile sector can attract an investment of Rs 1.51 lakh crore by the end of 11th plan and generate employment opportunities to around 1.7 crore people, of which 50 lakh would be skilled employees, if the recent trend would continue.

The ready-made garment exports from India increased to \$10.8 billion in the fiscal 2006-07 from \$8 billion in the previous year.

However, due to strengthening of the rupee, the readymade garment industry is expected to witness a negative impact during the current financial year. The garment exports are expected to decline to \$9 billion in the current fiscal 2007-08.

Around 15 to 20 lakh people in the textile sector across the country may lose their jobs, if the rupee rally continues in the same manner.

The appreciation of the rupee has dragged down the export orders, slowing down demand for cotton yarn used in the garment industries in the domestic market.

The current prices of 30-combed yarn, the variety that is widely used in the cotton garment industry, declined to Rs 110 per kg from Rs 122 a kg a year ago.

As the demand for yarn slowed down following decline in export orders, yarn stocks have accumulated in the spinning mills in the country, primarily in Tamil Nadu.

In fact several small and medium scale spinning mills in the state increased their production capacity last year following a sudden spurt in yarn demand on the back of a widening export market for Indian cloths, industry sources said.

Now the sudden appreciation of the rupee has come as a blow to these spinning mills and many of them may down their shutters in the near future if the rupee rally continues.

HOW LONG WILL THE FARMERS COMMIT SUICIDE?

Can there be more tragic event in any country than that of agricultural farmers committing suicide due to debt and poverty?.

This is happening in this country repeatedly and several hundreds of farmers have already committed suicide in the last few months.

Still, such disturbing conditions have not made the politicians and bureaucrats feel ashamed of their administration.

No civilised country will accept such conditions. Perhaps, the most appropriate response would have been for the Prime Minister and Chief Minister of the particular state where such suicides have taken place to resign their jobs and move away from politics. Instead of doing this, they are trying to position themselves more comfortably.

Most unfortunate aspect is that the country has an agricultural minister who is pre occupied with cricket. The fact is that even the media is not questioning the agricultural minister cum cricket administrator.

CORRUPTION IN JUDICIARY

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Indian constitution has created a number of defensive systems to correct and check the wrong and unfair administrative decisions. The role of judiciary is very important in this corrective mechanism.

There are other agencies such as media that can form strong public opinion and keep the country men informed about developments.

Over and above this, constitution has also created Indian service officers (such as IAS, IPS) who are given special training and considerable security of service so that they can stand by the rule of law.

In spite of so much defensive mechanism, corruption and nepotism has become the order of the day. Such conditions, affecting the social and economic progress of the country in variety of ways is preventing good measures of the government from reaching the citizens, particularly the deprived persons.

While the judiciary has been making lot of noise in recent years and several people want to support the judiciary at any cost, it is disturbing to know that judiciary also suffers from corrupt climate.

Transparency International has revealed that an estimated amount of Rs. 2,630 crore was paid in bribes to the lower judiciary in India during 2006.

The Global Corruption Report 2007 released deals with corruption in judiciary in 32 countries.

"Although provisions for the independence and accountability of the judiciary exist in India's Constitution, corruption is increasingly apparent. Two decisions provide evidence for this. One, a Supreme Court decision in the 2002 Gujarat communal riots exposed the system's failure to prevent miscarriage of justice by acquitting persons close to the party in power.

The second involved the acquittal in 2006 of nine people allegedly involved in the murder in 1999 of a young woman, Jessica Lal, even though the incident took place in the presence of a number of witnesses. One of the accused was the son of a politician."

Two manifestations

The report says, "Corruption has two manifestations: one is the corruption of judicial officers and the other is corruption in the broader justice system. In India, the upper judiciary is relatively clean, though there are obviously exceptions.

"Proceedings are in open court and documents are available for a nominal payment. There is an effective system of correction in the form of reviews and appeals.

In the broader justice institutions, corruption is systemic. There is high level of discretion in the processing of paperwork during a trial. At multiple points, court clerks,

prosecutors and police investigators can misuse their power without discovery."

The report points out that the Centre for Media Studies, which conducted a countrywide survey in 2005 on public perceptions and experiences of corruption in the lower judiciary, found that bribes seemed to be solicited as the price for getting things done.

"The estimated amount paid in bribes in the 12-month period [in 2006] is around Rs. 2,630 crore. Money was paid to the officials in the following proportions: 61 per cent to lawyers; 29 per cent to court officials; 5 per cent to judges; and 5 per cent to middlemen. The primary causes of corruption are delays in the disposal of cases, shortage of judges and complex procedures, all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws."

The ratio of judges is abysmally low at 12 to 13 per one million persons compared to 107 in the United States, 75 in Canada and 51 in the United Kingdom.

The degree of delays and corruption has led to cynicism about the justice system. This erosion of confidence has deleterious consequences that neutralise the deterrent impact of law. People seek shortcuts through bribery, favours, hospitality or gifts, leading to further unlawful behaviour, says the report.

DEATH FOR CORRUPT CHINESE OFFICIAL SHOULD THIS NOT HAPPEN IN INDIA ALSO !

A Chinese court sentenced the former head of the food and drug agency, Zheng Xiaoyu, to death, a move that comes at a time when Beijing is struggling to quell a wave of scandals pertaining to fake and adulterated medicines and food.

According to the official Chinese news agency Xinhua, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court sentenced Zheng to death after convicting him of taking bribes in cash and gifts worth more than 6.5 million yuan (\$832,000) between 1998 and 2005, when he was director of the State Food and Drug Administration. Zheng's sentence is open to appeal.

Xinhua said that in exchange for the bribes, Zheng turned a blind eye to malpractices by relatives and

subordinate officials, approving the production of untested drugs and lowering the quality standards that pharmaceutical companies needed to meet in order to obtain relevant approvals.

China suffered some of its worst food and drug related scandals during Zheng's tenure. The most notorious amongst these was a case in 2004, in which at least 13 babies died of malnutrition in Anhui province after they were given fake milk powder.

Earlier this year, wheat gluten and rice protein exported from China to the United States and then mixed into pet food were found to contain the chemical melamine, which allegedly caused widespread deaths among cats and dogs, leading to pet food recalls.

WILL THE COUNTRY MISS DR. ABDUL KALAM?

One is not sure at this stage whether Dr. Abdul Kalam desired for second term as President of India. In any case, the ruling political coalition parties have decided that Dr. Kalam would not be given second term. Several TV media carried out survey amongst countrymen and many persons appear to prefer Dr. Kalam for being given second term. But, the political parties have their own parameters for taking decisions.

After Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Radha Krishnan, most of the presidents in this country have not been towering personalities. They were mere politicians. In such scenario, Dr. Kalam certainly provided refreshing change.

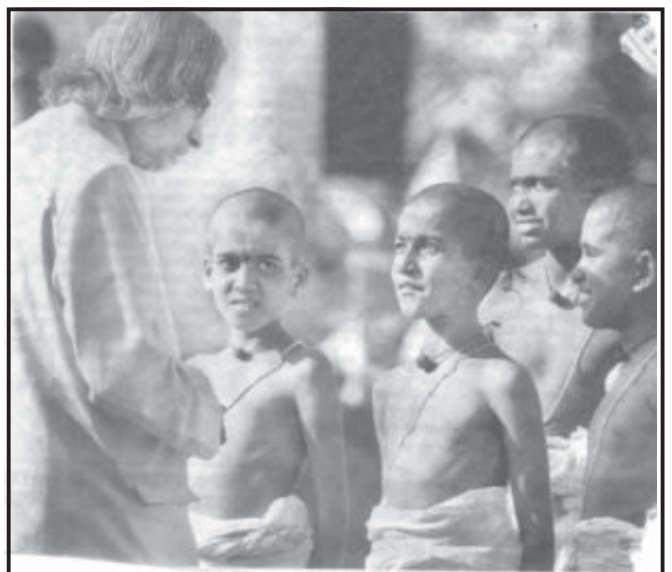
Dr. Kalam spoke a lot about the technology and its advantages which atleast educated class in the country understood. He also took earnest interest in the problems of the deprived and mingled with the children in the formative age group; Perhaps, he thought that the best way of moulding the strong and vibrant India would be to motivate the children and the youth.

While Dr. Kalam got public appreciation for his efforts, one is not sure whether his efforts made any dent in the conditions. Perhaps, Dr. Kalam could have visited many more panchayat and municipality schools in rural areas, instead of talking to the students in public schools where the teachers carefully prepared the students to "question the president".

In the political context, Dr. Kalam remained mostly as harmless president and did not go to any extra distance to assert his view points.

History would remember Dr. Kalam's term as a scientist President of India who could not do much.

However, considering the next person for President's job, countrymen would miss Dr. Kalam and see the difference.



WOMEN IN SUDAN RECOUNT THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH HELL

The seven women pooled money to rent a donkey and cart, then ventured out of the refugee camp to gather firewood, hoping to sell it for cash to feed their families. Instead, they say, in a wooded area just a few hours walk away, they were gang-raped, beaten and robbed.

Naked and devastated, they fled back to the Kalma city in Sudan.

All the time it lasted, I kept thinking: They are killing my baby, they are killing my baby, wailed Aisha, who was seven months pregnant at the time.

Their story, told to an Associated Press reporter and confirmed by other women and aid workers in the camp, provides a glimpse into the hell that Darfur in Sudan has become as the Arab-dominated government battles a rebellion stoked by a history of discrimination and neglect.

The women have no doubt who attacked them. They say the men's camels and their uniforms marked them as janjaweed - the Arab militiamen accused of terrorizing the mostly black African villagers of Sudan's Darfur region.

Now in its fourth year, the conflict has become the world's worst humanitarian crisis and rape is its regular byproduct, U.N. and other human rights activists say.

Sudan's government denies arming and unleashing the janjaweed and bristles at the charges of rape, saying its conservative Islamic society would never tolerate it.

It has agreed to let in 3,000 U.N. peacekeepers, but not the 22,000 mandated by the U.N. Security Council. It claims the force would be a spearhead for anti-Arab powers bent on plundering Sudan's oil.

Meanwhile, more than 200,000 civilians have died and 2.5 million are homeless out of Darfur's population of 6 million, the U.N. says, and a February report by the International Criminal Court alleges mass rape of civilians who were known not to be participants in any armed conflict.

Kalma in Sudan is a microcosm of the misery - a sprawling camp of mud huts and scrap plastic tents where 100,00 people have taken refuge. It is so full of guns that overwhelmed African Union peacekeepers long ago fled, unable to protect it.

It is so crowded that the government has tried to limit newcomers forbidding the building of new latrines, so a stench pervades the air.

Anyone venturing outside must reckon with the janjaweed, as Aisha and her friends found out.

In Sudan, as in many Islamic countries, society views a sexual assault as a dishonor upon the woman's entire family. Victims can face terrible ostracism, says Maha Muna, the U.N. coordinator on this issue in Sudan.

Some aid workers believe that janjaweed use rape to intimidate the rebels, and their supporters and families. It is a strategy of war, Muna said earlier this year in Khartoum, the capital.

Sudan's government is especially sensitive about such accusations and denies rape is widespread.

Sudanese public opinion would view mass rape much more severely than other crimes alleged in Darfur, said a senior Sudanese government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation from his superiors.

He accepted that janjaweed had initially received weapons from the government - something the government officially denies - and said authorities now are struggling to rein in the militias.

Nasser Kambal, a prominent human rights activist and co-founder of the Amel center, a Sudanese group helping victims of rape and other abuse, offers a similar view.

"I don't think raping was planned by the government. Killing and looting and torture, yes, but not rape", he said.

Kalma is not the only place where multiple accounts of rape have surfaced. Some 190 kilometres away, in the town of Mukjar, two men separately described women being brought into a prison where the men were being held and raped for hours by janjaweed.

None of the women has any faith that Sudanese or international courts will ever give them justice. All that the women ask is that one day they can return to their village.

If people could at least help end the fighting, that would be enough, say the women.

APPLICATIONS INVITED FROM DEPRIVED STUDENTS FOR FREE COMPUTER EDUCATION

Nandini Voice For the Deprived, is presently running 7 free Computer Schools at following centres in Tamil Nadu.

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- * Kodungaiyur, Chennai
- * Nagar Coil, Tamil Nadu
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- * Perambalur, Tamil Nadu

Boys and girls belonging to lower income group whose family income is less than Rs.4,000/- per month and who have passed +2 examination are admitted in the computer schools. The course is of 6 months duration and computer education and training are provided in the following subjects.

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- * Adobe Pagemaker 6.5
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- * DTP
- * Tally

The- entire course is provided absolutely free. Placement services also provided .

At any time, around 280 boys and girls undergo the computer education in Nandini Computer Schools at different centres in Tamil Nadu.

In the last few years, around 3000 boys and girls from poor families have completed the course and most of them have been placed in jobs.

The admission for next batch in new academic year are now taking place. Boys and girls belonging to lower income group with family income less than Rs.4,000/- per month and who have passed +2 examination can send their application for admission.

For further details, please contact:

Editor

Nandini Voice For The Deprived,

LET NOT THE POOR CHILDREN BE DEPRIVED OF EDUCATION

The poor families increasingly realise that the best that they can do for their children is to provide them adequate educational opportunities. While the Government has taken steps to provide free education to poor students, the managements of educational institutions are defeating the purpose by charging fees from the poor students, which the poor families can not afford.

Caught between poverty and demanding educational institutions, the poor families are driven to despair

No responsible person, particularly with good income and opportunities in life, can shirk his responsibilities towards the under privileged brothers and sisters.

Nandini Voice for the Deprived appeals to every reader to take responsibility for providing education to atleast one deprived child every year. Actually, many persons have so much of income that they can afford to provide education to several children.

Due to its recent efforts to provide scholarships to poor children, Nandini Voice for the deprived is flooded with

requests for educational support. Nandini Voice is doing it's level best to meet the aspiration of the poor children. Why not every one join this nation building efforts?

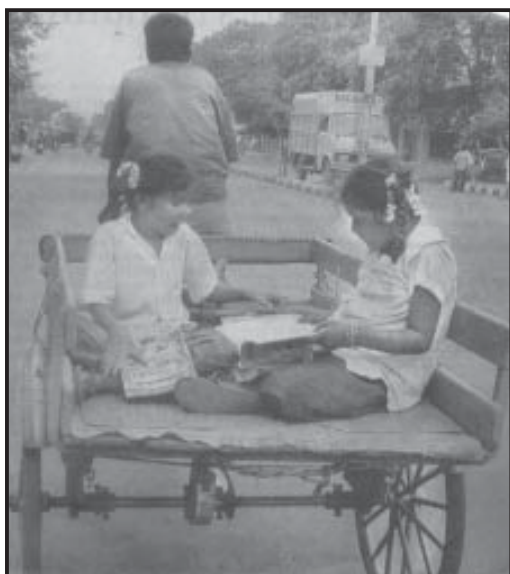
If any kind person would send donation to Nandini Voice for the deprived towards the cause , the amount would be utilized for the education of the deprived children and the name/address and receipt from the recipient deprived child would be sent to the donor.

Please do not let go this opportunity to help the cause of the poor children and move nearer to God.



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PUBLISHERS

Nandini Institute of Chemical Industries

M-60/1, 4th Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090.

PERIODICALS

Edited and Published by N.S. Venkataraman on behalf of **Nandini Institute of Chemical Industries**, M60/1, IV Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090.
Phone : 24916037 and Printed by Mervena Printers, (Old 21/B), 18, T.M.M. Street, Thiruvanniyur, Chennai - 600 041. Editor : **N.S. Venkataraman**