

Nandini

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Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

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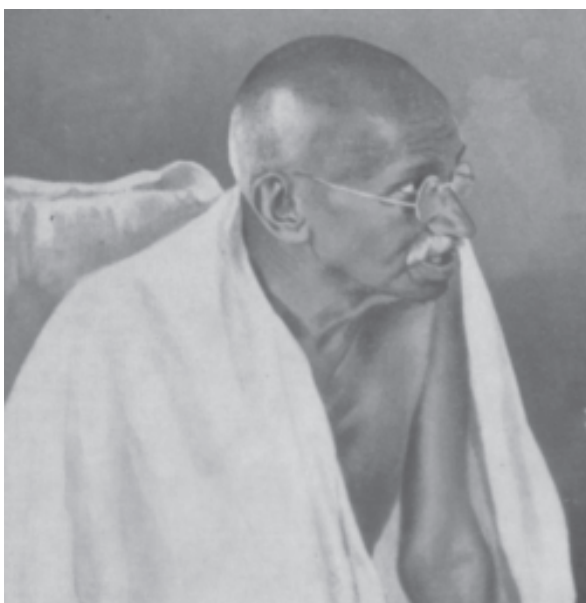
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**Be a friend of the poor
and
relentlessly fight
for their upliftment**

LET US GO BACK TO GANDHIAN WAYS

More than half a century have gone after the passing away of Mahatma Gandhi. The number of surviving people who have seen Gandhiji or who have worked with him are dwindling down rapidly.

For the present generation, Mahatma Gandhi has become part of history. The youth in the country who now remain confused without a role model and are frequently exposed to instances of corruption and unethical ways of living, may be wondering as to how a person of the caliber of Mahatma Gandhi could have lived at all in this country.



Though the country religiously pays homage to Gandhiji every year on his birthday on 2nd October and remembers him on the day he was cruelly shot down on 30th January, the fact remains that the philosophy of Gandhiji is not having any decisive impact on the nation today. This is amply evident from several aspects such as lifting of prohibition and the citizens taking to drinking habit in a big way.

Such conditions exist largely because of the fact that the rulers have not cared to imbibe Gandhian philosophy in working out the nation's policies and programmes. Obviously, they pay lip service to Gandhiji on 2nd October and 30th January as a matter of routine and as a part of strategy to create a good image for themselves in the eyes of the common men. The country is paying a heavy price, as Gandhiji's doctrines have not been made as part of measures in tackling the nation's numerous problems and difficulties.

The essence of Gandhiji's life is simple living and high thinking, characterized by his commitment to the cause of truth and compassion in every aspect of his life. For Gandhiji, means should justify ends. He never tolerated dishonesty or duplicity and minced no words in outlining his methods and approaches to the issues. For him, speeches and actions were not different and thoughts and deeds were the same. He preached what he practiced.

Today, the destiny of India is largely under the control of politicians some of whom are facing charges of corruption, dishonest dealings and even murders in some cases. Several ministers, members of Parliament and members of legislative assemblies are known to be involved in criminal offences. Unfortunately, the present democratic system in the country is unable to prevent such persons from occupying positions of power.

It is not as if the politicians alone are guilty. Several other functionaries like bureaucrats, businessmen and even media persons and members of judiciary have been accused of acting with dishonest intentions.

Gandhiji would not have approved the present policies of the Government which is looking at wealth generation as the goal in itself without appreciating the fact that wealth generation can be a desirable activity only if it would lead to fairness in distribution of income and alleviating the sufferings of the downtrodden.

It is extremely regrettable and shameful that farmers are forced to commit suicide due to poverty.

Now, even as grave a matter as the farmers committing suicide due to poverty has not stirred the conscience of the government. Neither the Prime Minister nor any other minister has owned the responsibility for such conditions and volunteered to quit the post. There were days in this country when instances like Lal Bahadur Shastri spontaneously resigning from the position of Minister of Railways took place, when a grave railway accident took place in Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu killing a few hundred persons. He resigned even before anyone asked him to do so. In the case of such disturbing events like farmers committing suicide due to poverty, Gandhiji perhaps, would have chosen to nearly starve himself, until the conditions of the farmers would improve.

The only way out is that India should go back to Gandhian ways, which was centred around unswerving commitment to the cause of truth and readiness to fight for probity in public and private life.

The citizens of India by emulating Gandhiji will discover the determination and courage in themselves to stand by truth at any cost including making personal sacrifices, that would defeat several ills facing the nation in one stroke.

Desperate Calls

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

Deprived persons need Sewing Machine

Sri.P.Damodharan is a poor disabled man.His daughter has undergone training in tailoring.

Sri.P.Damodharan requests for donation of sewing machine for his daughter, so that she can become self employed and look after the family .

Contact address:

Sri. P. Damodharan, M. M. Ramaswamy Nagar,
No.101, Thiruvalluvar Salai, Kodungaiyur, Chennai-118

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Ms.R. Mari and Ms Nagalakshmi are disabled girls and they hail from poor family. They have undergone training in tailoring. Ms. Mari and Ms Nagalakshmi request for donation of sewing machine to self employ themselves.

Contact address:

Miss.R.Mari, Miss Nagalakshmi
11/8, Venkateswara Nagar, 81/28,Venkateswara Nagar
1st Street, 1st Street,
Kodungaiyur,Chennai-118 Kodungaiyur,Chennai-118

Needs computer system

Ms. M. Jagathiswari, age 23 years is a disabled girl and hails from lower income group. She has obtained Ist Class in Bachelor of Business Administration (Computer Application) degree from Annamalai University. At present, she is working as computer operator in a xerox shop with meagre income.

Ms. M. Jagathiswari's father is working as night watchman and she has five younger sisters.Ms.M.Jagathiswari requests kind hearted persons for donation of used computer to self employ herself.

Contact address: Ms. M. Jagathiswari,
D/o.Sri.J.Muthukrishnan, 31A/11, Selva Konar Store,
Kizhpathoor, Pallakarai,Tiruchi

Visually impaired person wants support for education

Sri.M. Azhagu Moorthi, age 23 years is a visually impaired man and he has obtained degree in Bachelor of Music.He has also undergone training in Call centre operation,computer application and telephone operator cum receptionist.

Sri.M. Azhagu Moorthi wants to undergo further computer education to improve his job prospects and requests kind hearted persons for financial help.

Contact address: Sri. M. Azhagu Moorthi,
10-1-3,Ramarkovil Street, Genguvarpatty P.O.and Village
Periyakulam Tk, Theni District, Pin:625203, Tamil Nadu

Poor lady needs support for surgery

Ms. Pushpa, care taker working in a creche, met with an accident and her leg was factured while retruning to

her house from her working place.The first surgery was performed on January 2007 but it was not successful. The doctor advised her to undergo another surgery.

Ms. Pushpa's husband is working as office peon. Her daughter too is suffering from chronic disease.

For further details, please contact:

Mr. Priyesh

E-mail:helptolive@yahoo.com www.helptolive.org

Disabled lady needs Sewing Machine

Ms.R.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.Mrs.Mariammal,
Karanai (Post), Mugaiyur (Via), Thirukoviloor (Tk),
Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu

Help needed for Eyes Transplantation

Sri. Devin Jebagar aged 14 years is studying 9th std in Corporation School, Washermanpet, Chennai. All of a sudden he lost his both eyes. He has undergone surgery, but the vision could not be restored.

Sri. Devin Jebagar's father is a mason and he is working on daily wage basis. He has the responsibility to look after wife and one more daughter.

For further details, please contact:

"E.K.Subramanian & S Johnson"
36, First Lane, Padmanaba Colony, Kaledpet, Thiruvottiyur,
Chennai-600 019 Cell No.94444 14995 & 98842 72688

Student needs support for Education

Sri. P. Rajesh is studying VIII std in Sri Ram Dayal Khemka Vivekananda Vidyalaya Junior College, Thiruvottiyur, Chennai.

His father Sri. S. Prabhakaran is unemployed and he is suffering from heart disease. His mother is working as teacher in a private nursery school. The family is running with her meagre income.

Sri.S. Prabhakaran requests kind hearted persons for financial help for his son's studies.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Sri Ram Dayal Khemka Vivekananda Vidyalaya Junior College, Thiruvottiyur, Chennai and sent to the following address:

Sri.P.Rajesh, S/o.Sri.S.Prabhakaran,
8/14, Subramaniyan Nagar, Mathura Nagar Extension
Near Sathiyamurthy Nagar, Thiruvottiyur, Chennai-600 019.

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.



A national daily needed for senior citizens

Dear Sir,

Senior citizens are called "silvers" possibly because of their grey hair. They constitute 14% of national population. Once they are deprived of physical and fiscal support, their cup of miseries become full. The excruciating pain they undergo seldom figures in media. The articles and letters compiled by them mirroring their miseries are often ignored by the media, largely dominated by young journalists.

It is ardently felt that the silvers need a media of their own to depict their agonies and to fight for their rights.

Chennai

K.N. Naryana Pillai

Plight of the poor

Dear Sir,

While speaking about poor, we seem to count only the people begging on the roads. Poverty has different dimensions. Begging on roads is the last stage of a person who needs to save himself from the starvation death.

But there are masses living in our country without single full meal a day inspite of their hard work. They work hard with many dreams and goals. They try their level best to provide the basic needs to their wards such as food, clothing, shelter, education and medical treatment.

Education too has become very costly and non affordable for the weaker section of the society. It has become financially difficult for a lower income group parent to provide quality education to their wards. The students from such poor families, due to their difficult economic and social conditions, have difficulties in scoring high grades in the exams. There are so many tuition masters who have their tuition centres everywhere. They charge Rs.5000/- per each subject. For the rich, this is no matter of worry. What can lower income parents do in such conditions?

Before 1947, a few whites ruled this country. Now, there is no visible change. The country's poor masses are being ruled by a few rich politicians.

History should repeat. We need revolution - we should not forget the French Revolution. Indeed poverty has come down but poor remain - "Nandini" well said it.

Chennai.

D.Vedamuthu

Politicians want committed judiciary

Dear Sir,

The approach of politicians towards judiciary appear to be suspicious and uncertain. This has been proved by

their recent agitation launched against the order of the Supreme Court to put a stay on 27% reservation for OBC in higher central educational institutions.

Similarly, hue and cry was raised by these elements against unprecedented verdict of single judge bench of Allahabad High Court regarding the minority status for Muslims in UP state. The court contended that the religious community which has 18% of state population can not be treated as minority.

Every Indian citizen has got right to go for appeal in Supreme Court if he is not satisfied with the verdict of lower court and high court. But criticising and condemning the court order certainly amounts to contempt of court and upsetting the delicate balance between executive and judiciary.

The politicians who refuse to accept the court verdict on reservation issues insist that Hindutva organisations should accept the verdict of judiciary in connection with litigation of disputed structure of Ayodhya.

I think that politicians want committed judiciary.

Thane, Mumbai

Sridhar V Kulkarani

Sex education in schools

Dear Sir,

A hundred years back, the pundits of India refused to accept the need for education of the girl child and child marriages were the policy given down by the learned people in India. All that has now changed. Women are becoming dynamic and educated. But, they still largely remain as second class citizens.

Banning sex education in schools is an issue which impacts everyone, particularly women.

Lack of knowledge and prevention of knowledge reaching the young population is, indeed, a dis service to them; and also to the nation. The example set by Boston Women's Health Collective which inspired several people to get their book 'Our bodies ourselves' published in 20 languages, covering 4 million copies, could, I believe, inspire woman's group to make such books made available in schools and colleges.

India is already in the midst of a population explosion.

It is therefore, important to empower women to protect themselves.

Chennai

KVS Krishna

VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSON RUNNING FROM PILLAR TO POST FOR SUPPORT

The government, both central and state, have announced number of schemes involving crores of rupees, to support the disabled and visually impaired persons. But, unfortunately large number of disabled persons continue to remain helpless without being able to avail the benefits extended by the government.

Obviously, the government machinery is not doing its job adequately and it lacks commitment and efficiency. Ofcourse, corruption is another big problem.

During the meetings and conferences, ministers and bureaucrats make tall claims about the benefits extended by the government and their commitment to the task. The disabled persons often believe such speeches at face value and aspire to get the benefits. But the benefits do not reach most of them.

Look at the case of Sri M. Muthu, a visually impaired person.

Sri M.Muthu, age 25 years is visually impaired person from birth and belongs to a poor family and he lives in a village. Nandini Voice For The Deprived provided him some amount earlier to enable him to set up a small business. He is making detergents at present and selling the same in his village to make his living . Since the income is insufficient, he still lives below poverty line. He wants to set up a petty shop. So he came all the way to Chennai to give petition to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Cell. He says that he has given petition three times so far . But nothing has happened.

He is also not receiving any allowance from the government for which he is entitled as per government scheme.

There are many persons like Sri.Muthu who are visually impaired and severely disabled, living largely in rural areas and who remain unsupported.

Kind hearted persons are requested to extend support to Sri. Muthu

Contact address: Sri.M. Muthu,

64/2, Murugan Koil Street, Anagaputhur Village, Omanthur PO,
Tindivanam Tk, Villupuram District, Pin:604102,
Tamil Nadu.

VISUALLY IMPAIRED LADY PROMOTING SALE OF PRODUCTS MADE BY DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS EXTRAORDINARY INITIATIVE



Ms. A. Meenakshi Sundari is a visually impaired lady and a graduate. She lives in economically difficult conditions.

Ms. Meenakshi Sundari is running a PCO in Venkatnarayana Road, T. Nagar (Opp.TT. Devasthanam),Chennai for the last

few years with meagre income.

Inspite of her difficult conditions, Ms. Meenakshi Sundari has now taken up the task of marketing the products made by the fellow disabled persons from all over Tamil Nadu.

There are reported to be 17 lakh disabled persons in Tamil Nadu alone including orthopaedically disabled, visually impaired, hearing/speech impaired and mentally ill persons.

95% of these disabled persons belong to lower income group and are living in extremely stressful and difficult conditions.

With poverty and lack of job opportunities confronting them, the only way out for disabled persons is to self employ themselves. Some of the disabled persons have acquired skill and make products such as batik paintings, wooden show pieces, plastic articles etc. For them, marketing the products have become an extremely difficult exercise due to their physical immobility.

Ms. Meenakshi Sundari in her small PCO booth in T'Nagar in Chennai keeps the products of the disabled persons and sells them on no profit basis. Nandini Voice For the Deprived is supporting her efforts.

Ms. Meenakshi Sundari deserves encouragement from the public by way of buying the products made by disabled persons.

WHY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS IN RESERVATION POLICY?

One of the most difficult forms of human disability is the visual impairment .

Most of the visually impaired persons belong to lower income group and have serious economic problems in making their living. With visual impairment and poverty on the one hand, if the individual also happens to be a woman, the condition is still worse. Why should the Government distinguish between them in reservation policy?

The government and the society should be highly concerned about the conditions of the helpless visually impaired persons, who are as much citizens of this country as anyone else. It would be immoral for anyone to be indifferent to the tremendous sense of frustration that prevails amongst the visually impaired persons

Still, the visually impaired persons try to find cheer in life and maintain an equanimity with the conditions around them in the best manner possible.

What is particularly gratifying about the visually impaired persons is the bonhomie they maintain between themselves and they do not distinguish between themselves in terms of caste and community. The unity amongst them is extraordinary which can be clearly seen and felt in any gathering of the visually impaired persons.

The visually impaired persons are confronted with lack of job opportunities and inadequate income for survival. The Government of India and several state governments have, no doubt initiated a number of schemes to help the visually impaired persons like facilities for special education, reservation in jobs as well as special life long maintenance allowance under certain stipulated conditions. Still, these measures help them only in a small way, leaving them largely vulnerable to the distress conditions economically and socially.

While the government has extended reservation support for the visually impaired persons, it is strange that even amongst the visually impaired persons, reservation is provided to them in the educational institutions and for jobs on caste and community basis. The practice of distinguishing the visually impaired persons on the basis of caste and community for the purpose of extending reservation benefits is strange, as the visual impairment is such a grave disability that one visually impaired person should not be distinguished from the other.

Clarification was sought from the Government of Tamil Nadu under the Right to Information Act about the prevailing

practices in vogue on the reservation policy with regard to visually impaired persons.

Vide its Letter No.3976/SW-1V/2007-2 dated 20th March,2007, Social Welfare & NMP (SW-1V) Dept. of Government of Tamil Nadu provided the following clarifications

* As per G.O.Ms.No.99, Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department dated 26.2.1988, 1% of the seats in educational institutions under all kinds of managements (like Government, Local bodies and aided management including Universities) have been reserved for visually handicapped persons.

* As per G.O.Ms.No.105, P&AR Department dated 6.5.2000, visually impaired persons belonging to various communities (viz. scheduled caste/scheduled tribe/most backward class/ Backward/ other communities) are being absorbed as per communal rotation.

* As per communal rotation, the turn for visually handicapped belonging to a particular community will be decided. Each community will get their share reservation as per communal rotation.

Ms. Meenakshi Sundari is a visually impaired lady and a teacher trained graduate and is presently running a PCO in Venkatnarayana Road, T.Nagar in Chennai. She is in economically distress conditions and she is one of the many visually impaired persons belonging to the so called forward community, who has not been benefited by the reservation policy of the government towards the visually impaired persons. As it is, the quota allotted by the government for reservation for visually impaired persons is minimal and if there is still further division in the quota based on community and caste, the so called forward community amongst the visually impaired persons practically stand no chance in the competition.

The visually impaired persons do not understand any distinction between themselves on the basis of the caste, as they all belong to one single community which the society terms as "blind community". What can be more adverse ("backward") condition than visual impairment ?

THAYUMANAVAR

GREAT SAINT AND TAMIL POET

Thayumanavar was a distinguished Tamil poet-saint who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century, from 1705 to 1742 AD.

Thayumanavar was brought up in the Tanjavur District of Tamil Nadu in the coastal town of Vedaranyam. His father, Kediliappa was the palace manager and royal advisor to Vijayaranga Chokkalinga Naicker, the reigning Prince of Tiruchirapalli. When Thayumanavar was born, his father named him after Thayumaneswarar, the presiding deity in the temple of Siragiri, which is nowadays known as the Tiruchirapalli Fort Temple.

Thayumanavar received good education at court in which he ended up acquiring an outstanding knowledge of the Tamil language and literature. He must also have made a good impression on the royal family because, when his father passed away, Thayumanavar, who was still in his teens, was considered qualified to take over his job. He subsequently managed the financial affairs of the kingdom and apparently fulfilled his duties with some distinction.

However, while this was going on, his religious yearnings impelled him to look for a Guru who could help him to progress spiritually.

Thayumanavar's search for a teacher ultimately led him to a man known as Arul Nandi Sivachariar, who was also known as 'Mauna Guru'. This teacher could trace his lineage back to the famous saint Tirumular, whose book, Tirumantiram, written more than a thousand years ago, became one of the great works of Saivism.

When Thayumanavar approached him and asked if he could become his disciple, Mauna Guru nodded his head, thereby giving his consent. Thayumanavar then asked if he could follow him wherever he went. Mauna Guru responded by telling him 'Summa iru', which can mean 'Be still', 'Be quiet,' and also 'Remain as you are'.

This one phrase apparently brought about a major spiritual transformation in Thayumanavar. In later years, when he began to write ecstatic devotional poetry, he frequently mentioned this event, this phrase and the effect it had on him. He frequently called it 'the unique world' in his verse.

Having been refused permission to follow Mauna Guru wherever he went, Thayumanavar continued to serve at the royal court. After some time, though, the prince, who was a pious man himself, noticed the depth of

Thayumanavar's devotion and offered to release him from his service. When Thayumanavar told the prince that he just wanted to spend his life in meditation, the prince accepted his resignation and gave him a small house on the banks of the River Kaveri where he could meditate undisturbed. The prince, who had recognised his holiness, visited him regularly and often brought him gifts.

In 1731, the prince, who apparently was not a very able ruler, died soon after losing a major battle to an army that had attempted to invade part of his territory. His widow, Rani Meenakshi, took over the running of the kingdom. She came to Thayumanavar for advice on how to run the country's affairs and for some time, he had to go back to his former job as a royal advisor.

However, in an unexpected turn of event, Meenakshi fell in love with him and started to make amorous advances. Thayumanavar decided that the only way to escape her sexual demands would be to flee to a place that was beyond her jurisdiction. With the help of Arulayya, one of his devotees, he escaped, disguised as a soldier and eventually moved to Ramanathapuram, where the local Raja welcomed him and arranged for him to stay in a quiet place where his meditations would not be disturbed. For some time, he lived a very ascetic life there.

Rani Meenakshi ran her kingdom very badly. In 1736, her country was overrun by various invaders and she ended up committing suicide by drinking poison.

Siva Chidambaram, Thayumanavar's elder brother came in person to tell Thayumanavar that it was safe for him to return home, if he wanted to, since there was no longer any danger of royal revenge. He went back to his ancestral home where he was treated with great reverence by both his family and his community. However, a surprise was in store for him. His family wanted him to marry and they were backed up by Mauna Guru who told Thayumanavar that it was his destiny to get married and have a child.

In obedience to his Guru's wishes, he married a girl called Mattuvarkuzhali and they eventually had a son whom they named Kanakasabhpati. The marriage did not last long because Mattuvarkuzhali died soon afterwards, leaving Thayumanavar with the responsibility of bringing up a child.

Around this time, Mauna Guru visited him again to give him darshan and instructions, one of which was to make a pilgrimage to Chidambaram. During their meeting, Thayumanavar went into a deep samadhi that lasted for several days. When he returned to his normal consciousness, he realised that he could no longer fulfill his duties as a householder and a father. He handed over the care of his son to his older brother and left for Chidambaram.

Thayumanavar spent about two months in Chidambaram, mostly immersed in a deep samadhi state. He then embarked on a pilgrimage that took him to several of the sacred places in Tamil Nadu, including Tiruvannamalai, Kanchipuram, Tiruvarur, Madurai and Tiruvottiyur. His final destination was Rameswaram at the southern tip of India. Shortly after his arrival there, he made a very public appeal in the temple for God to intervene and end a drought that had severely afflicted that part of the country. An immediate and torrential downpour filled all the tanks and wells. Thayumanavar, who generally shunned publicity as much as possible, found himself being carried in triumph through the streets of Ramanathapuram on a palanquin. He was feted by the local king, the Raja of Ramnad and even offered a new job as a royal advisor.

Thayumanavar rejected all the royal honours and spent the remainder of his brief life in a small hut, meditating and composing the songs. His two principal disciples, Arulayya and Kodikkarai Jnani, wrote down the poems and began to sing them in public. The poems became immediately popular and spread widely even during Thayumanavar's lifetime.

In January 1742, he withdrew into his hut and left the following message pinned to the outside of the door:

"Dear friends, withdraw the mind from the senses and fix it in meditation. Control the thought current. Find out the thought centre and fix yourself there. Then you will be conscious of the divine Sense; you will see it dancing in ecstasy. Live in that delight. That delight consciousness is the God in you. He is in every heart. You need not go anywhere to find Him. Find your own core and feel Him there.

Peace, bliss, felicity, health - everything is in you. Trust in the divine in you. Entrust yourself to His Grace. Be as you are. Off with past impressions! He who lives from within an ingathered soul is a real sage, even though he may be a householder. He who allows his mind to wander with the senses is an ignorant person, though he is learned. See as a witness, without the burden of seeing.

See the world just as you see a drama. See without attachment Look within. Look at the inner light unshaken by mental impressions. Then, floods of conscious bliss shall come pouring in and around from all directions. This is the supreme Knowledge; realise! Aum! Aum!"

This was his final message. When Arulayya went in, he found that Thayumanavar had left his body. He was given a royal funeral by the local Raja and his songs were sung as his body was interred.

Courtesy: The Mountain Path, Deepam 2004

BHAGAVAN RAMANA MAHARISHI AND THAYUMANAVAR

The devotional poetry of Thayumanavar was frequently cited by Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi. Many Ramanasramam books record fragments of his poems that Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi either read out or quoted from memory.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi was sometimes so emotionally moved when he read out verses by Thayumanavar that he would be unable to continue. Devaraja Mudaliar, who was responsible for recording many of Ramana Maharishi's references to Thayumanavar, wrote about this on two occasions:

"I may here record that I have noticed on more than one occasion in the past how Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi could not proceed with the reading of any

deeply devotional poems of Tamil works such as Thevaram and Thayumanavar".

Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi said,

"The opportunity to be in the company of a Sadguru comes effortlessly to those who have performed worship of God, japa, tapas, pilgrimages etc. for long periods in their previous births. There is a verse by Thayumanavar that points out the same thing.

For those who, in the prescribed manner,
have embarked upon the path
of divine images, holy sites and holy tanks,
a Sadguru, too, will come
to speak one unique word,
O Supreme of Supremes!"

THE HELPLESS LAW ABIDING CITIZENS

The recent encounter murder in Gujarat involving senior police officials have not shocked this country. Over the last few years, the country men have been repeatedly hearing such news.

In Chennai city, police men are being repeatedly caught for attending duty in drunken state. Raping of women , including in the police station appear to have become a regular affair all over India. Collusion of the government officials with business houses, big and small, to make money for themselves is no more viewed as anything unusual. The common men have come to believe that a honest government official or a politician is an exception rather than a rule. Neither the bureaucrats nor the politicians appear to feel ashamed about such an image about themselves in the country.

The immediate result of such disturbing scenario is that the law abiding citizens live in fear and feel helpless. They are not sure as to where they should go for seeking support for their protection, as the police and the government machinery do not enjoy their confidence. Therefore, the common men seek to run away from disturbing conditions of insecurity and they suffer helplessly when they cannot escape from such incidents.

In the case of minor theft or incidents like eve teasing or similar harassment, many people choose to put up with the insults rather than protesting, as they are not sure that the government and law enforcing agencies would come to their rescue. This is the ground reality.

In rural areas, in particular, where the police and the government officials "enjoy" enormous powers, the people feel unsafe and think that they should attach themselves to one political party or the other or any group to get some sort of support in the event of any personal threat.

The senior officials and the ministers in charge of the government seem to be unconcerned, possibly thinking that the feelings of helpless law abiding citizens would not matter. In such circumstances, it is no surprise that many people do not go to vote in elections, that even provide greater courage to the criminals and thugs and uncaring bureaucrats and ministers.

The press and the media frequently raise the issues but the way in which they are presented looks more like a matter of sensation and publicity than to organize the public opinion and put fear in the minds of the offenders in the government and political parties.

Possibly, in some other society, people may have revolted in a big way but this does not happen in India, where even the helpless citizens appear to be more self centred and running for cover rather than being public spirited and to go forward to protest making personal sacrifices.

Is there a solution for such conditions ? The solution is only in the hands of the common men who should have the courage to protest at individual levels which inevitably call for sacrifices. The citizens get the type of government that they deserve.

WHAT A CRUEL SITUATION IS THIS?

Read the story of a severely disabled person who cannot walk and who is in extremely difficult economic conditions.

He shifted his residence to a nearby place in the same locality in Chennai recently and suddenly was told in the ration shop that he would not be supplied the ration, since he was not living in the premises which address is carried in the ration card.

The disabled person then was asked to go to a related government office nearby where he was asked to give a bribe of Rs.50/-. He did not have the money and pleaded about his inability to pay. The official mercilessly rejected his request and told him that he would have to come ten to fifteen times and even then he would not get his ration, if he would not pay Rs.50/-.

The disabled person had no alternative other than resorting to begging to collect the money, which was paid to the official on the same day and who then made the necessary entry in the ration card immediately so that he could get his ration.

What a cruel situation is this?

CONVERSION OF AGRI LAND FOR INDUSTRIAL USE

GROWING VEGETABLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRODUCING CARS

Chief Minister of West Bengal is reported to have said that around 63 percent of the land area in West Bengal is presently devoted to agriculture and therefore there was no way that industries could come up in West Bengal without converting the part of agricultural land to industry. Now, the question is whether there is any justification to convert agricultural land for industrial use at all. More important question is whether industries should grow at the cost of agricultural sector.

It would be prudent to consider both industry and agriculture as complementary activities, as both contribute to social and economic development of the country . It is unwise to facilitate the growth of one sector at the cost of the other.

Therefore, it is incorrect to have any dogmatic view that industries are more important than agriculture and the industries should grow even if it would be at the cost of agriculture. From this view point, the Chief Minister of West Bengal has to change his priorities to some extent.

In the case of Nandigram issue in West Bengal, the protest of local people against converting their agricultural land for setting up industrial project and they being asked to move away from their land are obviously genuine and justified.

In Nandigram, at the cost of agricultural operation, it is proposed to set up automobile factory for producing cars in the site. In the process, hundreds of poor agricultural labourers will lose the jobs and their only source of income will be lost , as they have to give up agricultural operation, the only skill that they possess. The government may give them some money by way of compensation but this would not undo the loss that would be suffered by these agricultural workers

The angry question of the locals, who have been living in the areas for the last several decades, as to why the agricultural land should be converted for producing cars at their expense, have not been answered convincingly by the government or project promoters The West Bengal government responded by sending police and opening fire on the protesters.

Certainly in India today, producing agricultural commodities is far more important than producing automobile cars .Already, we find that there are no adequate roads in the nation to run the cars. What is the

need for more two wheelers and four wheelers and how are they more important than rice, wheat and vegetables ?.

There is enormous scope for increasing the agricultural productivity and improving rate of returns from agricultural operations. If it would be done, it would be more relevant to the country's immediate requirement as that would enable feeding millions of hungry countrymen. It would also provide them several employment opportunities; much more than what the industries can offer.

The fact is that adequate land is not available in the country, for expanding agricultural operation as well as for industrial projects. The scarcity of water is also a very big issue. Therefore, well thought out policies have to be evolved to decide as to what should be the level of priority for agriculture as well as the industrial activities.

In working out such policy, it needs to be kept in mind that millions of Indians are poor and are living below the poverty line. Their interests have to be duly protected.

Apart from generation of wealth, equal distribution of wealth is also important, which can be ensured only by providing employment to large section of the countrymen in the lower income group at different skill levels.

This should be the central theme in working out the policies and programmes . No economic activities can be justified, where large sections of the countrymen would be left out.

The agricultural sector can alone ensure the adequate employment opportunities for all the countrymen.

While industrial growth is important and vital, it may not be more important than agricultural growth, atleast in the context of present Indian conditions. Certainly, growing vegetable is more important than producing Cars.

INTERNATIONAL COMPANY BRIBES INDIAN OFFICIALS TO SELL PESTICIDES INDIA SHOULD HANG ITS HEAD IN SHAME

Those who give bribe money and those who take bribe money are cruel and uncivilised people and they are destroying this country.

Such corrupt elements go to any extent and do not care about the adverse impact of their undesirable activities.

The politicians in power and government officials are entirely responsible for this disgusting scenario. What to do with these shameless corrupt people? The country must find some way to disown such corrupt elements and throw them out of the government departments.

We have seen that highly qualified and top government officials are corrupt and the chain extends to the lowest level. They take corrupt money even for allowing medicines to be sold beyond the expiry date which can kill the innocent people.

Read this story given below about a very well known international company bribing Indian officials to market the pesticides in India which has been banned in several parts of world . These corrupt people (both in India and USA) do not care about the harm that these pesticides would do to Indian agricultural crops and the innocent people who would consume the agro commodities grown using such pesticides.

The Securities and the Exchange Commission (SEC) in USA found that the multinational company Dow Chemical improperly paid an estimated \$200,000 to government officials in India for registration of some of its pesticide products in the period 1996 to 2001. The SEC noted that the payments were not adequately reflected in Dow Chemical's books and records and the company's internal control failed to prevent the payments.

The SEC in the US slapped a civil penalty of \$325,000 on Dow Chemical in an effort to settle the charge that the company's subsidiary, DE-Nocil Crop Protection Ltd, operating in India made improper payments to Indian government officials. Dow Chemicals agreed to settle the matter without admitting or denying wrong-doings and to desist from future violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The Government of India has ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into a report by the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) about the confession of Dow Chemicals that it bribed Indian Government officials for getting their pesticides approved for sale in the country.

A preliminary enquiry established that a senior official of the Central Insecticide Board (CIB), apart from several

State-level inspectors, were bribed. Based on the findings of the preliminary enquiry, the Ministry has decided to refer the case to the CBI for further action.

The three pesticides made by Dow and cleared by these officials would also be examined to ascertain whether they met Indian standards and if culpability was established, action would also be taken against the U.S. multinational company.

It was alleged in Parliament that officials were paid bribes totalling \$ 87,400 (Rs. 38 lakhs) between 1996 and 2001 to facilitate the sale of their pesticides. This disclosure forced the company to pay a fine of \$ 3.25 lakhs (Rs. 1.43 crores) to the U.S. authorities.

The Dow company admitted to paying a senior Indian CIB officer \$ 20,000 in bribes, which led to the approval of a category-I pesticide monocrotophos in India, although it had been banned in several countries several years ago.

Another chemical that was approved by these officials in India had been banned in the company's home country, the U.S., because of its harmful effect on children.

Murder of the trees on the roads and now Elliots beach in Chennai

The recent decision of the authorities in the Tamil Nadu Government and Chennai Corporation to chop avenue trees on Sardar Patel Road in Chennai and resort to beautification of the Elliots beach in Chennai are causing concern to those who understand the importance of preserving nature.

Several avenue trees on Sardar Patel Road in Chennai, (which are almost one hundred year old) have been chopped down, for the sake of widening the road for high vehicular traffic. As if this is not enough, now steps have been initiated "to beautify" the Elliots beach in Besant Nagar in Chennai. Both the steps have been initiated, as if these are mere technical subjects to be decided by a few officials and engineers. The authorities should realise that they have no authority to tamper with nature.

The chopping of the trees amounts to murder of the trees, as trees are also the creation of God as much as the human beings are. These lovely trees have been doing great service to Chennai city and have been there for around 100 years and several generations of men and women have been benefited by them. They would have served several decades more if only would be allowed to do so.

Obviously, these great and giant trees have lived longer than the human beings (authorities), who think that they have the power to cut any tree. Possibly, the officials and the Government machinery have resorted to such steps since the trees are silent species and cannot protest and can only helplessly fall down when hit and cut mercilessly.

There are many buildings, road side shops that can be demolished to widen the roads but the authorities would not do this since they possibly think that the concrete structures are more important than mere "wooden tress". There could be so many other methods of widening the roads or facilitating better traffic flow but the helpless trees is the easy prey and therefore an option. It is sad that those in the government do not realise that cutting and removing such magnificent trees can be viewed as an uncivilised act and which could be taken as a reflection on their mindset and priorities.

Several scientific reasons can be said as to why the trees should not be removed but the authorities seem to be obsessed with the idea of cutting trees to widen the road. What can one do if the "all powerful authorities" would not have the patience and desire to listen to such scientific explanations?

Even as the chopping of the trees continue, it is shocking that Chennai Corporation has initiated steps "to beautify"

the Elliots beach in Chennai that would cost several lakhs of rupees. The immediate question that would come to one's mind is as to how can any one beautify nature. How can anybody make beach more beautiful than what it is naturally?

The problem with Elliots beach in Besant Nagar is not due to the beach and the waves that are tirelessly visiting the beach but the humans who have made it dirty by their indisciplined methods and acts. The authorities have permitted or kept their eyes closed to the large number of vendors who have fixed their shops permanently on the beach and sell the product and make the whole area strewn with wastes and used packaging. One can even see visitors and hawkers easing themselves on the beach shamelessly.

The beach can be restored to its original glory, if the authorities would ensure that it would be kept clean and neat. Instead of doing this basic function, they want to "beauty the beach".

Now, what do they want to do? Perhaps, they would put more lights, cement the area with more roads, build some concrete structures and try to plant some trees. They may also try to add more entertainment elements by creating facilities for some sort of exhibitions. The schemes that have been announced would only add to disturbing the natural beach with unnatural introductions. Further, the capability of the authorities to maintain the so called beautifying conditions on the beach in the long run are extremely doubtful.

Any regular visitor to the Elliots beach would have seen the planting of trees every year before monsoon at huge cost which could not be maintained and watered and therefore, have withered away within a few weeks.

Already, the Elliots beach is crowded with unwanted things such as the building for a police outpost, a parallel pavement walking facility and a lawn, which are all nothing but anachronistic elements in a natural beach.

There are a large number of two wheelers and four wheelers parked on the beach every evening, which prevent the movement of the people, apart from causing pollution and noise. Why not the authorities impose a ban on the

movement of two wheelers and four wheelers on the beach and encourage visitors to come on foot. Perhaps, the authorities can organize mass transportation luxury buses for the benefit of the owners of two wheelers and four wheelers who can be dropped on the Besant nagar bus terminus and they can walk the small distance to the beach enjoying the free air.

The best thing that the authorities can do to benefit Chennai city is to refrain from trying their ideas on natural settings like beach and hundred year old avenue trees which have added beauty and glory to the city.

The officials should keep off from such "strategies".

SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN

Many citizens think that beautification scheme of the Elliots Beach in Chennai is unwarranted. Under the circumstances, the one option open for the concerned citizens is to express their opposition to the beautification scheme by participating in a signature campaign.

Nandini Voice for The Deprived, has now organised a signature campaign against the beautification project of Elliots beach. It is proposed to collect signature of 10,000 citizens of Chennai and submit it to the Chennai Corporation, voicing the opposition of the concerned citizens to the scheme

The concerned citizens are requested to write the following matter in a postcard and send it to Nandini Voice for The Deprived

WE WANT ONLY CLEANLINESS IN ELLIOTS BEACH
AND THIS GLORIOUS NATURAL BEACH SHOULD BE
PRESERVED WITHOUT ANY ARTIFICIAL BEAUTIFICATION
PROJECT

The signed post card may be sent to the following address.

Nandini Voice For The Deprived
M 60/1, 4th Cross Street, Besant Nagar,
Chennai-600090

Shameful revenue from liquor sale for Tamil Nadu Government - Women left to suffer

The Tamil Nadu government has garnered Rs.7441.44 crore from the sale of Indian Made Foreign Spirit (IMFS) and Beer in 2006-07, compared to Rs.6030.77 crores in 2005-06.

In fact, ever since the government took over the retail liquor trade, it has recorded a steep increase in revenue each year, says the policy note on Prohibition and Excise presented to the Tamil Nadu Assembly .

The total number of cases of IMFS sold had grown from 19.86 crore litres in 2005-06 to 23.87 crore litres in 2006-07. There are six IMFS manufacturing units and three Beer manufacturing units in the State. They supply to the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation, which operates the retail liquor trade in the State.

Revenue from IMFS & beer 2001-02 to 2006-07

Year	(Rs. in crores)
2001-02	3694.29
2002-03	3807.45
2003-04	3639.93
2004-05	4872.03
2005-06	6030.77
2006-07	7441.44

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi defended his liquor policy saying that experience in the past had shown that the liquor menace could not be eliminated.

Replying to a discussion on the demands for grants for the Police Department in the Assembly, he said that there were talks about 'Kamaraj rule'in Tamil Nadu and even during the late leader's regime, illicit liquor could not be rooted out.

With such attitude from Tamil Nadu Government and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, liquor sale will only further increase in the state in future, causing suffering to the poor families, particularly women, who are often beaten mercilessly by the drunken husbands.



UPLIFT THE WOMEN

Contributed by: K. N. Naryana Pillai, Chennai

Swami Vivekananda the patriot saint of India, worked for the cause of the masses of India and women in particular and of the universe in general during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

To him, Rama and Sita were the role models of the Indian nation. Our women aspire for the divinity of Sita. Sita is the name in India for everything good, pure and holy. She was unique. For thousands of years, she is adored by everyman, women and child in India. Swami Vivekananda exhorted the women to emulate her.

Savitri was another woman that Swami Vivekananda focussed and praised. She conquered death and through tremendous love snatched back Sathyavan, her husband back from even Yama. True love has conquered death.

To all women, every man save her husband shall be a son. To all men, every woman save the wife should be his mother. The ideal woman in India is the mother, the mother first and the mother last.

On this land of Sita and Savitri, among women are found such character, such spirit of service, such affection, compassion, contentment and reverence.

We should infuse the light of knowledge in them. For if the women get the right sort of education and support, they can turn out the country to be one of character.

It is only in homes of educated and pious mothers that great children are born.

The upliftment of the women must come first and then only can any real good come in the country.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEPRIVED SCHOOL STUDENTS

Nandini Voice For The Deprived is offering 200 scholarships to school students from lower income group in Tamil Nadu for the academic year 2007-2008.

The objective of extending the scholarship is to encourage the students from the lower income group families to go for studies and discourage the parents from sending the children for jobs.

The scholarships would be given under the following conditions.

1. The income of the parents (both mother and father together) should not exceed Rs.4000/- per month.
2. The student should be studying in government owned or government aided institutions.
3. The upper age limit is 18 years
4. The scholarship amount would be provided only in the form of cheque in the name of the educational institution. Alternately, it would be provided in the form of text books/note books/instruments, uniforms etc. as desired by the student.
5. In addition to the above, the scholarship would also be provided towards any extra curricular activities that would benefit the student like training in typewriting, language etc.
6. The scholarship would be extended only after getting adequate proof of the requirement by way of a letter from the head of the educational institution.

7. Nandini Voice for The Deprived would decide the value of scholarship based on its own judgement of the student's requirement and at its discretion.

8. More than one child can apply from the same family for the scholarship.

9. 60% of the scholarships are reserved for students from rural areas, that fall under Panchayat administration.

10. Last date for submission of application is 15th June, 2007.

11. The students desiring to avail the scholarships should send a post card to the following address, requesting for application form.



TRUSTEE
NANDINI VOICE FOR THE DEPRIVED
M60/1, 4TH CROSS STREET, BESANT NAGAR,
CHENNAI-600090.

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