

Nandini

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Voice For The Deprived

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

VOL XVI

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RS.10/-

**Filling Government Coffer
with liquor money
that destroy poor families
is anti national**

BHAJA GOVINDHAM



“Bhaja Govindham” highlights the importance of bhakti. It was one of the hymns composed by the great saint Adhi Sankara .

Rajaji in his perceptive introduction to the classic rendering of Bhaja Govindham by M.S.Subbalakshmi observed. “When knowledge matures it becomes wisdom – when wisdom ripens it becomes bhakti. Knowledge without bhakti is useless tinsel. Along with bhakti, Bhaja Govindham also conveys the message of renunciation or vairagya”.

Sri.S.Sanjivi and Srimathy Shyamala Sanjivi have brought out a publication containing the two great prayers – Bhaja Govindam of Sri Adhi Sankara and on Sri Guru Raghavendra of Manthralaya in poetical form in English.

Name of the publication: Bhaja Govindham
Bhaja Raghavendhram
(Holy Hymns in Lovely Rhymes)
Published by: Sri Veeravalli Trust, Sattva Group
11, 7th Cross Street, Lake Area
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034
Number of pages 118
Price: Rs.125/-

We have pleasure in publishing the selected verses from Bhaja Govindham contained in the above publication in this issue.

In the above publication, in addition to the verses being presented in poetical form in English, the authors have also presented the originals in Sanskrit, their transliterations in English and Tamil to enable persons who do not know Sanskrit to read the format.

This book should find a place in all the households and should be read repeatedly.

Sing in praise of Lord Govindha

Bhaja govindam bhaja govindam
Govindam bhaja moodhamatae |
Sampraaptae sannihitae kaalae
Nahi nahi rakshati `dukrun karanae' ||

Meaning:

Oh mindless man !
Sing in praise of the Lord Govindha
In thought, word as well as in deed !
Sink not in uttering empty words
Which will not come to rescue when in need !

Give up the greed of gold

moodha jaheehi dhanaagamatrushnaam
kuru sadbuddhim manasi vitrushnaam |
yallabhasae nijakarmopaattam
vittam taena vinodaya chittam ||

Meaning:

Oh mindless man !
Discard the greed to acquire riches
Reform yourself by casting off mundane wishes !
Be content with what you have earned
By virtue of your deeds in your previous sojourn !

Worldly life is unstable

nalinee-dala-gata-jala-matitaralam
tadvajjeevita-matishayachapalam |
viddhi vyaadhyabhimaanagrastam
lokam shokahatam cha samastam ||

Meaning:

Our life is unsteady as a water drop upon lotus leaf
Do realize that the world is beset with disease,
disappointment, pride and grief.

Relatives are really selfish

yaavadvittopaarjana saktaha
taavannija parivaaro raktaha |
pashchaat jeevati jarjara daehae
vaartaam ko (a) pi na pruchchati gaehae ||

Meaning:

As long as man is in a position to earn
So long only the affection of the kith and kind is hown!
The moment he becomes old and lives with debility
No one in the house even cares to enquire about his
identity.

Affection flows until life glows

yaavatpavano nivasati daehae
taavat pruchchati kushalam gaehae |
gatavati vaayow daehaapaayae
bhaaryaa bibhyati tasminkaayae ||

Meaning:

As long as life flows in the mortal frame
So long only glow the affection at home !
The moment life ebbs out and goes
Even the wife fears to see the corpse !

No one thinks of the Almighty

baalastaavat kreedaasaktaha
tarunastaavat taruneesaktaha |
vrudhastavaat chintaasaktaha
parae brahmani ko(a)pi na saktaha ||

Meaning:

Childhood takes interest in plays
Youth indulges in recreation with mates
Aged is worried about shortening days
But no one thinks about Divine grace !

Reflect as to who you are

kaatae kaantaa kastae putraha
samsaaro(a) yamateeva vichitraha |
kasya tvam kah kuta aayaata-
stattvam chintaya taditham braatha ||

Meaning:

Hay brother ! Who is your darling ?
Who is your dear off-spring?
Where from you are coming?
To whom you are clinging?
This worldly life is very confusing
Contemplate on this complicated calling !

Be close to the pious

satsangatvae nissangatvam
nissangatvae nirmohatvam |
nirmohatvae nishchalatattvam
nishchalatattvae jeevanmuktihi ||

Meaning:

Association of good people creates detachment
Detachment leads to dispassion
Dispassion gives place to Revelation
Revelation confers salvation !

Greed and wealth are perishable

vayasi gatae kaha kaamavikaaraha
shushkae neerae kaha kaasaaraha |
ksheenae vittae kaha parivaaro
gnyaatae tattvae kaha samsaaraha ||

Meaning:

Where is the carnal pleasure when age is advanced?
Where is the pond when water in it is dried?
Where is the kinship when wealth is exhausted?
Where is the worldly pleasure when realization is attained?

Play of the time

dinayaaminyow saayam praataha
shishira vasantow punaraayaataha |
kaalah kreedati gachchatyaayuhu
tadapi na munchatyaashaavaayuhu ||

Meaning:

Time is tantalizing hither and thither
Morn and eve, day and night, summer and winter !
But life flows on towards its end
Even then, the greed in man does not bend !

Seek the company of Samaritans

kaatae kanntaa dhanagatachintaa
vaatula kim tava naasti niyantaa |
trijagati sajjana sangatiraekaa
bhavati bhavaarna vataranae nowkaa ||

Meaning

Oh! Shaky man suffering from nervous disorder
Who is your life-partner?
You were hankering after riches;
Is that now coming to your rescue?
Is there nobody to help you to stand straight?
In all the three worlds association of good people alone
Serves as a boat to cross the ocean of earthly sojourn !

Áll acts only for filling up the belly

jatilo munde lunchitakaeshaha
kaashaayaambara bahukruta vaeshaha |
pashyannapi cha na pashyati moodho
hyudara nimittam bahukruta vaeshaha ||

Meaning

Man with locks of hair
Man with clean shaven head
Man with his hair differently cut
Man with mendicant's dress
All these acts are only for filling the belly !

Desire does not die even in old age

angam galitam palitam mundam
dashaaviheenam jaatam tundam |
vrudhho yaati gruheetvaa dandam
tadapi na munchati aashaapindam ||

Meaning

Human frame becomes frail and old
Hair becomes gray and the head bald
All the teeth in the mouth abscond
Aged man walks holding a stick
Even then the grasp of the greed sticks on !

Even in distress desire does not suppress

agrae vahnihi prushthae bhaanoo
raatrow chubuka samarpita jaanuhu |
karatala bhikshastarutalavaasaha
tadapi na munchatyaashaapaashaha ||

Meaning

Fire in the front, sun on his back
Sleeps with face resting on the knees at night
Begging bowl in hands holding tight
Lives under the tree throughout
Even then the grip on the greed does not give out!

No salvation without realization

Bkurutae gangaasaagara gamanam
Vrata paripaalanamathavaa daanam |
Gnyaanaviheenah sarvamataena
Muktim na bhajati janmashataena ||

Meaning

Vows and holy baths in the river Ganges and the ocean
Will not help you to attain salvation !
It can only be attained thru revelation
Without which even hundred births cannot bring
emancipation !

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SPEAKS

**IF YOU WANT TO FIND GOD,
SERVE MAN**

Practical patriotism means not a mere sentiment
or even emotion of love of the motherland but a
passion to serve our fellow countrymen.

I have gone all over India on foot and have seen
with my own eyes the ignorance, misery and
squalor of our people. My whole soul is afire and
I am burning with a fierce desire to change such
evil conditions.

Let no one talk of karma. If it was their karma to
suffer; it is our karma to relieve the suffering.
If you want to find God, serve man.

To reach Narayana you must serve the
daridranarayanans, the starving millions of India.

Desperate Calls

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



Heart patient needs support

Sri.S.Subramaniam, age 67 years is suffering from heart disease. As per the doctors advise at Neomed Hospital, Chennai, he has to undergo artery clearance therapy- 40 sittings and bio-oxidative therapy 5 sittings to restore blood flow in the coronary vessels. The total cost of the treatment is Rs. 68,000/-

Sri.S.Subramaniam is a goldsmith. His family consist of 6 daughters and 3 sons and his wife.

His unmarried two sons are working in a small private firm and one son is studying B.Com course.

The family members request kind hearted persons for financial help for medical treatment.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Neomed Hospital, Chennai and sent to the following address:

Sri.S.Subramaniam
F/o. Miss. S.Kasthuri, 17-A, Ellaikkal Street,
Madapuram, Tiruvarur-610 002, Tiruvarur District,
Tamil Nadu

Needs sewing machine



Ms.Uma is a poor lady. She was deserted by her husband.

She knows tailoring. Ms.Uma requests kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machine

Contact address:
Ms.Uma

2/1053, 16th Street, MGR Nagar, Kovilampakkam,
Chennai-117

Mrs. Radhika's husband is an unskilled labourer. She is having one school going daughter and one male baby.

Mrs. Radhika knows tailoring. She requests kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machine to earn for her family.

Contact address:
Mrs. Radhika

2/1051, 16th Street, MGR Nagar, Kovilampakkam,
Chennai-117

Mrs.U.Umamaheswari is a poor disabled lady. She is having two children.

Mrs.U.Umamaheswari knows tailoring. She requests kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machine to earn for her family.

Contact address:

Mrs.U.Umamaheswari, W/o C.Udayakumar,
Mariamman Koil Street,
V.Puthupalayam, Arpisampalayam (PO)
Villupuram(Tk), Tamil Nadu

Needs support for surgery



Mrs.M.Geetha, age 47 years is suffering from breast cancer.

She and her husband are running a small tiffin centre near their house.

Mrs.M.Geetha requests kind hearted persons for financial help for her surgery.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Global Hospitals & Healthy City, Chennai and sent to the following address:

Mrs.M.Geetha
1B, Queen Castle, 1st Floor, Lakshmi Nagar,
7th Street, Nanganallur, Chennai-61

Needs support for education

Mrs.S.Dhanalakshmi is a poor lady. Her son is studying 7th std. in matriculation school.

She and her husband are unskilled labourers.

Mrs.Dhanalakshmi is suffering from thyroid problem and her husband is suffering from diabetes. Their income is not sufficient for purchasing medicines.

Mrs.Dhanalakshmi requests kind hearted persons for financial help for her son's education.

For further details, please contact:
Mrs.S.Dhanalakshmi

W/o. Rajeshkumar, No.165, Priya Towers (Opp)
S.P.Puthoor Paramathi Main Road,
Namakkal-637002, Tamil Nadu

Desperate Calls

Child suffering from heart disease

Master Madankumar, age 5 years is suffering from heart disease

The child's father Mr.Samudra Pandey is a poor unskilled labourer.

Mr.Samudra Pandey requests kind hearted persons for financial help for his child's heart surgery and medicines.



For further details, please contact:
Mr.Samudra Pandey, 8/2, Keezhatheruvu,
Marunthangkinaru (PO),
Sankarankoil Tk, Tirunelveli, Pin:627 953

Needs support for medical treatment

* Mr.Chinnathambi, age 31 years is suffering from congenital heart disease. Cost of the open heart surgery is Rs.1,25,000/-

* Master Kiran Seth, age 11 years is suffering from rheumatic heart disease. Cost of the open heart surgery is Rs.1,64,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Needy Heart Foundation Wockhardt Hospital, Bangalore and sent to the following address:

The Secretary,
Save Poor Lives,
No.22, Perumal Koil Street, Aminjikarai, Chennai-600 029

Needs support for medical treatment

* Ms.Berseya, age 10 years is suffering from deep burns The cost of the treatment at Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital, Chennai is Rs.3,20,000/-

* Master Rahul, age 10 years is suffering from hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis. The cost of the treatment at Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital, Chennai is Rs.1,30,000/-

* Ms.Ahana, age 10 years is suffering from severe acute bilineage leukaemia. The cost of the chemotherapy treatment at Apollo Speciality Hospital Chennai is Rs.8,00,000/-

* Master Harish, age 7 years is suffering from severe acute bilineage leukaemia . The cost of the chemotherapy treatment at Apollo Speciality Hospital Chennai is Rs.8,00,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of the concerned hospital and sent to the following address:

The Secretary,
Women's Welfare Syndicate, 8/2, Avenue Road,
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034

Needs support for education:

Ms. H. Uma , a widow and belonging to lower income group appeals for financial support for the education of her son now entering ninth standard. The fees to be paid is around Rs. 10,000/-

The cheque should be drawn in favour of St. Joseph's Matriculation School, Chennai and sent to The Editor, Nandini Voice For The Deprived

Disabled person needs job:

Sri. M. Mannar is a severely disabled person and he has passed teacher training course. He belongs to a very poor family and needs job urgently. He is qualified to take classes in primary section.

Contact address: Sri. M. Mannar,
9, E.C.I. Church street, Uthukkottai Tk. Thiruvallur Dist.
602026, Tamil Nadu

Disabled person needs support for self employment:

Sri. A.Mani, age 45 is a severely disabled person and he cannot walk. He makes wooden show pieces and has two daughters and wife to support. Recently, he has undergone training to make show pieces in plastic material. He needs Rs.22000/- to enable him to buy the machineries for his self employment activity.

Contact address:

Sri. A. Mani, No.119, A/B, Melakkalunadi,
Thangammal compound, CBh. High road, Vadaseri,
Nagercoil, Kanyakumari dist. Tamil Nadu

Cancer patient needs support:-

Shri Tushar K. Joshi, husband of Ms. Chhaya Joshi, appeals for financial assistance for the treatment of his wife, who is suffering from breast cancer for the last few years. Mr Tushar K. Joshi is a resident of Umbergoan, Dist. Valsad, Gujarat.

Mr Joshi's family are from the lower middle class. He is a supervisor in a private factory.

Contact address:

Mr Tushar K. Joshi, First Floor,
377, GIDC Colony, Umbergoan-396171,
Dist. Valsad, Gujarat
Phone: 09724457110, 0260-2562759

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.



Journalist's deal with politicians

Dear Sir,

I am surprised that several senior journalists attended the book release function in connection with the birth day of the Dy.Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu recently and heaped praise on the Dy. Chief Minister.

While this is absolutely appropriate that one should praise another person, is it ethical journalistic practice for a journalist to heap praise on a political person in power and who is the Dy.Chief Minister of the state, on a public platform?

The public expectations about the standards of journalists are as high as the members of the judiciary. Should not the journalists who should be honest should also be careful about the company that they keep, without giving scope for doubts about their leanings? Mahatma Gandhi said that a man of truth should also be a man of care.

Perhaps, it is a good business strategy for a journalist to keep those in power in good humour!

Name withheld on request.

Kayamkulam Kochunni

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the views Sri.K.R.Krishnan on my article in Nandini Voice For The Deprived April 2010 issue.

The purpose of my article was to depict an event of centuries ago and not to justify the means resorted by Kayamkulam Kochunni to raise his resources. He was just an ordinary, illiterate poor muslim with secular outlook with a mission and vision to help the poor.

According to Koran, if a man of the faith offer SHAKKATH (charity) to the needy, his sins are washed off. Kayamkulam Kochunni might have been inspired by Koran.

Chennai

K.N.Narayana Pillai

Women's Reservation Bill

Dear Sir,

A system called MARUMAKKATHAYAM prevalent centuries ago in Kerala in the dominant Nair community is of interest.

In any Nair family, the mother was supreme. Her daughter and children were then supreme. Her son and his children were subservient to them. At the time of partition of property, the son would get a single share, whereas the daughter would get her share in addition to the share of each of her children. The system obviously was not healthy.

It was replaced by MAKKATHAYAM. Son and daughter were treated as equals. Their children also possessed equal status. At the time of partition, the son and daughter would get equal share.

In the light of the above system, let us analyse the current Women's Reservation Bill reserving 33% in Parliament and Assemblies seats to women. As it is, the population of women is almost equal to that of men.

Chennai

K.N.Narayana Pillai

Women's Reservation Bill

Dear Sir,

A bill for reservation of 33% seats for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies has seen the light of the day in Rajya Sabha only 60 years after independence. Better late than never. But whether this measure will alone raise the status of women and free them from all humiliation religious is a moot question

Now, the earmarking of reserved seats for women will pose problem and involve controversies. The religious and caste associations will demand quota within quota for their women.

The beneficiaries for obvious reasons will be aristocratic women and those from political dynastic families. Money and muscle power will continue to rule the roost in women's election also.

Coimbatore

M.R.Pillai

Poverty deaths

Dear Sir,

Mahakavi Bharathi, as early as in 1920 proclaimed that if we cannot provide food even for an individual, the whole universe should be destroyed.

A few weeks back in Erode, a young widow committed suicide after throwing her two children into a well due to poverty conditions and her poor mother-in-law also followed suit on seeing the tragedy. The society seem to be ignoring these sad incidents.

With the government indulging in massive freebies and lavish spending on huge unproductive projects, I just wonder whether government is taking any meaningful steps at all to improve the conditions of the poor and down trodden in a substantial way and in real terms.

It is time that concerned citizens should intervene and do something to avert any further such deaths due to poverty in the state.
Chennai

K.R.Krishnan

Deemed Universities - Now a family affair

Sir,

Large number of Deemed Universities have come up all over the country in recent years. Almost all of them have been set up by politicians, business houses and liquor merchants. Many of them squeeze money from students and are allowed to go scot free by the authorities due to corruption.

It is tragic to see that education in this country has come to this level, where the Chancellors, Vice Chancellors, Pro chancellors are appointed on the basis of blood relationship with the founder. It is a sign of decay that these Deemed Universities often invite Cinema stars, sports persons and business men to deliver convocation address, who are not known as scholars.

Kolkata

K.Thomas Mathew

MOVE TO FLEECE THE TIRUPATI PILGRIMS

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is reported to be seriously contemplating to hike the ticket prices of important sevas by five times to devotees thronging the famed Lord Venkateswara temple this holiday season.

The ticket rates of Arjitha sevas like Suprabhatam, Thomala and Archana where the devotees are allowed to worship Lord Balaji for over half-an-hour could see a spiraling rise. The Suprabhatam ticket could go up to Rs 500 from the present Rs 120, Thomala and Archana to Rs 1,250 from the existing Rs 220 and Sahasra Deepalankara Seva from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000. The ticket rates for important rituals like Nijapada Darshan, Arjitha Brahmotsavams and Unjal Seva are also being lined up for a steep hike by the TTD board.

One would not know as to what is the logic or compulsion for TTD to increase the ticket price at this juncture. This is not the first time that TTD is increasing the price without justification.

Certainly, it is not appropriate for TTD to function as if it is a corporate body where profit making would be the be all and end all of the functions. TTD must ensure that the devotees are given best of service and also ensure that the earnings and income generation would not be the guidelines for it's function. The offerings of devotees to Tirupati temple are spontaneous and TTD has enough funds at it's disposal.

One would only pray that Lord Balaji would drive some sense into those in charge of the TTD administration.

Courtesy: Times Of India

PLIGHT OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE

While the improvement in medical science have facilitated longevity of life, this has also brought about many issues.

At the fag end of one's life, many of those who live beyond eighty years or so sometimes wonder as to whether such longevity is a blessing or curse.

In most cases, such longevity of life is accompanied by ailments, which cripple the active life and increase the dependence on sons or daughters or even grand children to a considerable extent. Particularly when medical expenses increase become inevitable, in most cases, the dependence is not only for moral support but also for material support.

With nuclear families becoming the order of the day and sons and daughters often going to distant places or abroad for employment, the elderly couple are forced to live alone in many cases. With materialistic pursuits becoming priority for the younger people, the sons and daughters also find on many instances that they cannot afford to make sacrifices in their professions or career interests for the sake of looking after their elderly parents.

There are also some cases where the elderly couple find it better to live alone, away from their sons and daughters even if they happen to be in the same city due to the incompatibility issue with son / daughter or son in law or daughter in law. With life becoming fast paced and marital disharmony amongst young people increasingly occurring, elderly persons often find that they are caught in this situation with helpless conditions.

However, it is not easy for elderly couple to live alone, particularly in present situation where the cost of living is spiraling up and security concerns create fear and anxiety. In the unfortunate cases, where the mobility of the elderly people make them disabled, living alone becomes tortuous for them. It is pathetic to see them struggling, with their children living away from them and just talking to them over telephone during week ends or visit them occasionally. The sense of loneliness and helplessness make them even more weak than what they actually would be.

While old age home are springing up all over the country both in big cities and small towns to cater to the needs of the elderly people, such old age homes facilities can be availed only by those who can afford to pay. Many elderly people find that the old age home is actually not a solution as what they need is some sort of emotional support which rarely happen in these paid homes. Even these old age homes can meet the needs only if the persons would be in reasonably good health.

The plight of the elderly citizens become even worse when one of the couple happen to pass away which deny the survivor the emotional needs that he/she would require and which can be provided with understanding only by the life partner.

In recent times, there is considerable awareness among every one that some forward planning is necessary to ensure an honourable living at old age. People conserve the resources to the extent possible to reduce their economic dependence on their children . But, what about those elders who are not affluent and who cannot afford to have any savings at all ?

It is absolutely necessary that some sort of counseling are required for the sons and daughters who should be encouraged or persuaded to develop an attitude of compassion and responsibility towards the parents and readjust their priorities to the extent possible to meet the requirements of the elderly parents. While earnings and jobs are important, they certainly can not be more important than keeping their parents comfortable and peaceful.

Several sons and daughters often feel frustrated after their parent pass away that they have not done enough for them, when they needed support due to their frail health. There can be no greater satisfaction for anyone more than the feeling that they have done their level best to keep their parents happy and comfortable when they were alive.

COUNTRY IS FLOATING ON LIQUOR AND PEOPLE ARE SINKING IN IT

In the last few years, the liquor habit is spreading alarmingly around the country. Even the boys in the teen age are becoming liquor addicts and women are also succumbing to this evil habit.

Primary culprit for spreading this liquor habit in the country are state governments, which want to boost the sale of liquor to generate income and revenue. Politicians behind the state governments are totally unconcerned about the harm that is being done to the life style of individuals and society due to the fast spreading liquor habit.

It is unfortunate that Gandhian views on prohibition receive no respect from the politicians and bureaucrats of present time.

Liquor sale in Tamil Nadu has now become one of the important sources of revenue for the state government and without liquor revenue, the economy of the state would collapse. Such conditions have been created by successive state governments in Tamil Nadu due to their lavish spending. Liquor sales would now touch Rs.14000 crores in Tamil Nadu and no one except the politicians and bureaucrats would be happy about this.

INVESTIGATION ON SPURIOUS DRUGS

There can not be a more grave crime than adulterating the medicines or selling the outdated medicines to the patients.

It appears that the sale of spurious drugs have been taking place in Tamil Nadu for quite some time. One would not know how many patients suffered and even how many people died due to use of such drugs. Should not some one in the government who are responsible for governing should be held responsible for such serious malpractice?.

The spurious drugs will not be available in the absence of the connivance of corrupt officials. Instead of removing the concerned minister and secretary , the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has ordered the concerned minister and secretary , who should be held responsible for this , to take stern action against the culprits.

Obviously, one would never know the truth as to how such distribution of spurious drugs have taken place when those responsible for maintaining the public health are themselves enquiring into the matter. They have not even been transferred.

NANDINI COMPUTER SCHOOLS

Nandini Computer Schools have been functioning at different centres in Tamil Nadu including Nagercoil, Dindigul, Perambalur and Chennai .

Nandini Computer Schools provide free computer education to the boys and girls belonging to lower income group who have passed plus two level education. Placement services are also provided. During the last few years, around 5000 students from lower income group have successfully undergone free computer education in Nandini Computer Schools and most of them have been placed in jobs.

During the summer vacation, Nandini Computer School is offering free course in spoken English to the plus two students belonging to lower income group at Chennai.

Nandini Computer School is also offering free higher education counseling programme to students belonging to lower income group who have appeared for plus two examination.

PEOPLE VERSUS POLITICIANS

India claims that it practices democratic governance. However, it is not uncommon to see the politicians all the time abusing one another, trying to undermine the opponents often by unethical methods and even coming to blows occasionally. The proceedings of the assemblies and parliament portray the quality of the prevailing politics and the caliber of the politicians.

Most section of the citizens in India are extremely disappointed and frustrated about the behaviour of the politicians and many think that they can better do without them. But, the situation appears to be such that they cannot get rid of these politicians, as they have become essential part of the process of present pattern of democracy and democracy still appears to be the only form of civilized governance, atleast from the point of view of its objectives and philosophy.

Somehow, the democracy has developed in such a way over a period of time in India that the people who are often not the best of citizens and who cannot think about the country beyond themselves have obtained stranglehold over the governance of the country. In the process, the well meaning citizens and people qualitatively superior to most of the present day politicians have been relegated to the background and are forced to watch helplessly the unfolding scenario, as the politicians corrupt the government machinery and the society and lead the country towards anarchy and instability.

Obviously, the time has come when some method must be found to preserve the process of democracy and at the same time ensure that the democratic governance would not go down under the control of the people who have made politics into a lucrative profession and not as the means of serving the society.

It is often said that good people committed to the cause of probity and uncompromising patriotism should step into the public life and political stream of the nation and displace the corrupt and dishonest people now holding control of the political system. But, this is easier said than done. In recent times, several educated persons and people committed to honest methods have tried to get into politics by contesting in the elections but have been hopelessly defeated. They do not get the support of the common men when they go to the polling booth against the

current breed of politicians, who play with money power and muscle power and bribe the voters and adopt any kind of dishonest methods to win the elections.

The problem is that India is still deep in poverty with large section of the population living below poverty line, without adequate opportunities for education, literacy and employment. Millions of people lead hand to mouth existence, have no personal savings and are in desperate need to meet even their minimum requirements. Their poverty conditions are such that they often fall to the temptation when politicians try to bribe them with their ill gotten money, free gifts like television sets etc.. With vast segment of the population living below poverty line and without adequate educational level, the knowledgeable, well meaning and concerned citizens who want to get into politics to cleanse the public life have no chance of success against the scheming and corrupt politicians.

One wonders as to whether such conditions can go on for ever and where it would ultimately lead to.

Someone will have to bell the cat and start the struggle in a peaceful and civilized manner, braving the extremely difficult conditions to restore the democracy and civilized governance.

Certainly, the current situation is ripe for confrontation between the committed and quality citizens and the corrupt politicians. The battle has to start which may look hopeless for the concerned citizens in the present conditions but the battle has to go on by the committed citizens to fulfill their duty to the nation and stand by their own conscience. They need to wage this struggle at every opportunity and at every level and rise themselves as role models, so that many in the country would get confidence to join the battle, that could be a silent battle but nevertheless a noble and purposeful one.

WHAT IS FIRST ABOUT THEM ?

The media is often eulogising the family members of Chief Minister / Prime Minister or the President as the first family of the state. Sometimes, the family members of Sonia are referred as first family. One wonders what is first about them? Obviously, the media is taking the country to the feudal age by making such references.

It is true that the family members of the politicians have already taken a vice like grip over the country's democratic system. The politicians and their families are increasingly being viewed as the cause for ruin of India.

It is necessary to put them in the appropriate place if the democracy in India were to be preserved and enabled to move forward.

But, large section of media in India which are no more guided by the editors but by the advertising / circulation executives, want to please and praise those in power and authority at every opportunity and one method of doing this is to call the members of the families of Chief Minister / Prime Minister and President as the first family of the state.

OUR POLITICIANS AND THEIR PROFILE

As many as 37 percent of Rajya Sabha members have criminal cases pending against them, said a study released recently.

The analysis was done by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW), a nationwide campaign comprising more than 1,200 NGOs.

The analysis was based on self-sworn affidavits giving details of criminal cases collected for 219 current Rajya Sabha members from various state assembly secretariats submitted at the time of their election.

"The Congress has the highest number with seven parliamentarians with criminal background in the Rajya Sabha followed by six from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and three from the Samajwadi Party," the report said.

The study also analysed assets as declared by the members in their affidavits and found that 98 of them are millionaires. About 65 percent of Congress MPs are millionaires followed by 53 percent from the BJP.

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CAN A CORRUPTION RIDDEN GOVERNMENT DEFEAT THE MAOISTS ?

The ruthless killing of the CRPF jawans by the Maoists in Jharkand have caused great sorrow in the country. While the Union Home Minister says that the Maoists will be wiped out in three years and media is clamouring for strong action to defeat the Maoists, there is also widespread apprehension amongst the people as to whether the government can do this.

The fact that cannot be ignored is that the Maoists have some sort of support amongst the local population in the areas where they have entrenched themselves.

The local population in these regions are impoverished lot and have been taken for granted by the politicians , government machinery and the business houses. These poor people have been exploited in variety of ways and feel helpless and angry. Their mood is such that they would support anyone who would promise to improve their living conditions by whatever means.

Perhaps, most of these people think that the government is the villain and the politicians and police men and bureaucrats are seen as representatives of the government and therefore are equally hated. Under the circumstances, it would not be possible for the government to defeat the Maoists without the government getting closer to the local population and winning their trust and confidence.

The government has, no doubt announced number of well meaning welfare schemes to improve the living conditions of the poor people including educational and medical facilities etc.

However, the ground reality is that while such schemes are discussed with great fanfare in the media and the conference halls in star hotels, little benefits really reach the poor people. Most of the funds allotted for the welfare schemes are siphoned away by the politicians, bureaucrats and the government officials at various levels as well as the contractors. The level of corruption amongst these sections including the contractors is so high that with every governmental welfare schemes and fund

allotment, the politicians and government officials at various levels become richer with the poor people remaining without any change in their conditions.

With such prevalence of corruption, the Home Minister of Government of India sitting in Delhi and the Chief Ministers in the affected states are only talking in vacuum, when they lecture about solving the Maoist problem. It is high time that we should recognize that the corrupt politicians and government officials are the cause for rising of the Maoist movement and the Maoists cannot be defeated without eliminating this cause. Obviously, these corrupt elements should be defeated and thrown away which is a pre condition for throwing out the Maoists.

The media , which is increasingly coming under the control of the business houses and are no more representative of the people's thoughts and preferences particularly that of the poor people, is criticizing the NGOs for asking the government to speak to the Maoists and convince them about the well meaning attitude of the government , instead of approaching them with a war like attitude.

The NGOs who understand that the Maoists have gained strength only due to the frustration of the poor people and characterlessness of the governmental agencies and the politicians, are being painted by the media and the government as sympathizers of Maoists which is not true.

The government should improve its image , get rid of corrupt elements and identify people who are honest and who can win the confidence of the poor people for dealing with the issue. The bullet cannot be the answer for the problems caused due to disparity in the national income and denial of opportunities to the poor and downtrodden.

Will the Democracies go the same way as Communist Countries?

The communist governments in many countries failed due to their inner contradictions and because they went under the control of the coterie of communist leaders who themselves became the power mongers and exploiters, in the garb of representing the working class.

In the course of time, the communist governments inevitably collapsed as people rose against the oppressive communist leaders.

China, which claims that it has Communist Government is really no more a communist country now and it remains communist only in name, as it has adopted capitalist methods for all practical purposes. It is actually evolving some sort of system where the free economy is allowed to be practiced with all its faults and at the same time restricting the political freedom of the citizens to a large extent. It appears to be a case of communist methods being adopted to facilitate capitalistic goals!

The system in China is still evolving and perhaps this too may collapse in due course, as people would start revolting, demanding greater freedom and protesting against the style of functioning of the 'comrades' controlling the show. Those who now control the government in China do not even have the claims of those in power in erstwhile communist countries who claimed that they represented proletariat.

The proponents of communist philosophy still argue that there is nothing wrong with the philosophy but only with the comrades, who happened to control the communist governments. While one can say without fear of contradiction that communist philosophy espoused by Marx, Lenin and Mao have failed when put to test, the

question is whether the other philosophy of "free world" has succeeded.

A careful consideration of the recent developments in the so called democratic countries, particularly in Asia, Latin America and Africa clearly signal that the democratic system has also not met the expectations. It is showing signs of failure and it could be a question of time when the people would revolt against it, in the same way as they revolted against the communist countries.

Virtually, the democracies have gone under the control of the ambitious and self centered politicians and the democratic scene is now one of unending conflict between various politicians

representing different political groups. These political groups seem to have no objectives other than capturing power and holding on to the captured power at any cost and as long as possible, which is sought to be done under the

camouflage of serving the people.

Oppression by politicians

While periodical elections do take place in these democracies, the elections have become very deceptive and are no more held under acceptable conditions. The politicians create obnoxious conditions during the elections by entering into fraudulent deals, by bribing the voters, indulging in violence and even rigging the polls. As a result, free and unprejudiced will of the electorate could not be registered during the polls.

By indulging in malpractices and unethical ways, the most corrupt people and even murderers have managed to get elected and even become ministers. In these conditions, the democracies have become coloured and are increasingly being viewed as one of oppression by politicians.

There was a time when there was sort of cold war in the world between two blocks, with one representing the so called free world and the other representing the communist countries, which were supposed to be serving the cause of the downtrodden and protecting them from the so called oppression of the capitalists. The cold war has gone but the conditions have not improved.

Will the Democracies go the same way as Communist Countries?

In these developing countries, where the democratic system are supposed to be prevailing, large segment of the population are illiterate or semi literate and they are steeped in poverty and they are desperately looking for aids and support from any quarter. The politicians exploit the vulnerable conditions and the plight of the poor population by extending them freebies (free gifts, subsidies and concessions) and exploiting their religious and caste differences, not only at the time of elections but even during other times to buy peace with them and ensure that they would not become restive.

The freebies are being extended by the government, which are controlled by the self centered politicians, diverting the government funds which should normally go for implementing development projects that would contribute to the growth of the economy and ultimately alleviation of poverty. In this scenario, the economy is left to suffer with no hopes for the poor people to improve their living conditions in their life time.

After deceiving such poor people with false promises of hope and extending freebies, the politicians manage to remain in power, rich and comfortable, leaving the poor people high and dry.

The ruling politicians in democratic countries including even the developed countries seem to strongly believe that extending concessions, gifts and other benefits in one form or the other can always tempt the people and it would enable them to buy the loyalty of the people so that they can continue to stay on in power .

Such conditions in developing countries will only ultimately lead to more sufferings for poor people and leading to unrest, similar to what happened in the erstwhile communist countries, which resulted in the collapse of communist movement in Eastern Europe.

It is unfortunate that the politicians in these countries have failed to learn right lessons from the collapse of the communist governments.

FUNDS FOR RURAL JOB SCHEME NOT REACHING REAL BENEFICIARIES, SAYS APEX COURT

Government's ambitious rural employment project MGNREGA has come under the scrutiny of the Supreme Court which said that money was not reaching real beneficiaries and in many cases going to wrong hands.

Funds under CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority) is given to villages for their development

The Bench, which expressed concern over implementation of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), said several projects under the scheme are failing as the funds allocated for them either remain unutilised or in many cases money lands up in wrong hands.

"There should be some real development at the ground level," the Bench said while highlighting the purpose of MGNREGA.

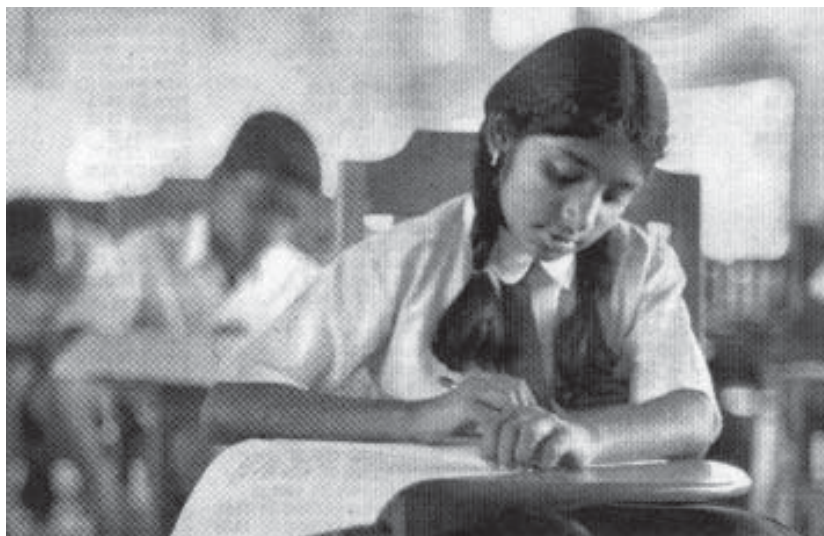
The Bench, which was hearing the petition filed by an NGO Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS), seeking proper utilisation of the funds allocated under the Act, appreciated the efforts of the NGO, who placed before it some suggestions for effective utilisation of funds for the projects.

PENNAGARAM - ONE MORE STEP BACKWARD

With bribing of voters and muscle power becoming the order of the day in Tamil Nadu elections, Pennagaram by election was one more defeat for Election Commission and would make common man lose confidence that electoral process can be carried out in fair manner at all in Tamil Nadu.

The election commissioner in Tamil Nadu who obviously feels helpless and is reluctant to exercise his powers to ensure corruption free poll, could have atleast refrained from expressing his satisfaction about the Pennagaram by election.

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