

BULLETIN

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MARTYRDOM OF THE MAHATMA

January 30, every year, brings back poignant memories of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. Even though fifty-five years have passed since the Mahatma left us, people in every part of the world continue to derive solace and inspiration from his life and work. The poor and the meek, in particular, have an affinity with the Mahatma because in him they found an expression of their aspirations. Leaders paying homage to Gandhiji's memory at Raj Ghat, official functions and academic discussions are all a part of the annual routine and familiar ritual. It is amusing, if not annoying, to hear some discussing the 'relevance of Gandhi' to contemporary world. Gandhiji found himself out of place when India, for whose freedom he devoted all his time and energy, was celebrating her Independence on the 15th of August 1947. He was away in Bengal mourning the tragic partition of India into two countries and saving the lives of thousands of innocent people. Let us recall what Lord Mountbatten wrote on that occasion:

"My dear Gandhiji,

In the Punjab we have 55000 soldiers and large scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our force consists of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One Man Boundary Force."

Gandhiji's first fast was for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. His last fast was also for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. A devout Hindu 'who sought spiritual communion with Christianity and Islam' Gandhiji was hailed as the greatest Indian since the Buddha and the greatest man since Jesus Christ. The British saw in him their truest friend. His religion was devoid of ritual and dogma. It was based on faith in God and trust in human goodness. There is nothing stronger than the human spirit. "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will", he explained.

Non-violence is the only panacea for a world dominated by greed, hatred, selfishness and violence. To quote Gandhiji: "Non violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed." He never claimed to have discovered a new religion or philosophy. He sought to synthesize the different and various streams of India's culture and heritage and present to the people

of India a practical approach to tackle their numerous problems. "I am not a visionary," he said, "I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well." That is why Jawaharlal Nehru saw in Gandhiji "the greatest symbol of India, of the past, of the present and of the future we could have." The revolution he launched was described as 'much more radical' than any of the revolutions ever suggested. Still, he knew better than anyone the difficulty of the task that lay before him. No one was more aware of his limitations than Gandhiji himself.

He was not opposed to either the machine or to modernization or to even large scale production provided they did not affect the people and the villages they live in. The benefits of the machine and of production must reach the people. The rich cannot prosper at the expense of the poor just as the cities cannot expand at the expense of the villages. Village development holds the key to national progress. His emphasis on discipline is no less relevant. Calling upon the youth to observe disciplined obedience he said: "I beseech you to realize the supreme importance of discipline. Let it not be said that we are a people incapable of maintaining discipline. Indiscipline will mean disaster."

His Satyagraha showed that there was 'a greater power in life than force and that power lay in truth, love and non-violence.' It is "not merely the negative virtue of abstaining from violence but the positive one of doing good." That is why Gandhiji's "sword of spirit pierces to the very heart of the moral problem with which modern civilization is confronted." The New York Times in its tribute to Gandhiji wrote that "He has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence."

When today's world is threatened by 'dark doctrines of violence' and horrendous deeds of terror, the hope for humankind lies in the spiritual force and power of love the Mahatma bequeathed to us. As the great seer Sri Aurobindo said in his tribute to the Mahatma "the light which led us to freedom, though not to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers."

- The Editor

"So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility." - Gandhiji

TRIBUTES TO GANDHIJI

Rt.Hon. Philip Noel-Baker

For half a century his inspiration has been unailing, and in the past year it perhaps attained its supreme expression.

His death must bring home to us all the peril in which we stand, from which the issue can only be won by following the precepts on which his whole life was founded.

No one in modern history has exercised such influence over the minds of men by his individual strength of character, his purity of motive and selfless devotion to the cause in which he believed.

I believe that like other prophets his greatest work is still to come.

New York Times (January 31, 1948)

A light has gone out. The rest remains for history's inexorable hand to write down.

A hush will go round the world to-day as Gandhi's frail body is borne to the banks of the sacred river Jumna, there to be turned to ashes.

Out of the ashes we do not know what flowers will spring. But this we do know: that saintly man, who preached non-violence, is dead by violence. Those who saw him cut down believe that with a last gesture of forgiveness he forgave his last enemy. His undying spirit speaks now to all India and the world.

He has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence.

Rt.Hon.Lord Mountbatten :

Gandhi, man of peace, apostle of ahimsa, died by violence as a martyr in the struggle against fanaticism - that deadly disease that has threatened to jeopardize India's new-found freedom. He saw that this cancer must be rooted out before India could embark on the great task of nation-building which lies ahead.

Our great Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, has set us the high aim of a secular democratic State wherein all can lead useful, creative lives, and in which a genuinely progressive society can be developed, based on social and economic justice; and the best tribute we can pay to Gandhiji's memory is to turn our hearts and our minds and our hands to building such a society upon the foundations of freedom that he so firmly laid during his lifetime. Gandhiji will have rendered his last and greatest service of all to the people he loved so well if the tragic manner of his death has shocked and spurred us into sinking all differences and joining in a sustained united effort-beginning here and now. Only in this way can his ideal be realized and India enter into her full inheritance.

Madame Pearl S. Buck

India has become the symbol of a people freed from foreign rule, but in spite of continuing strife Mahatma Gandhi's recent fast won deep respect for India. Never had his spiritual prestige and India's risen so high in the U.S.A. as during the past month.

Mahatma Gandhi's death comes at a strategic moment, and respect is increased to reverence for a martyr. Everything now depends upon the people of India. The world watches and waits.

Dr. John Haynes Holmes :

The Mahatma's secret was the spirit. He believed that spirit is a reality. He trusted it as more potent than the sword. He lived in it as love in the midst of hate, as forgiveness in the midst of vengeance, as good in the midst of evil. The spirit which is God within the soul of man - this can overcome the world. Here was Gandhi's secret, which he called "truth". In his own faith and practice he proved it to be truth; and we must accept it if we would live. It is the atom bomb or Gandhi - choose ye this day which ye will serve!

Albert Einstein :

Gandhi is unique in political history. He has invented an entirely new and humane technique for the liberation struggle of an oppressed people and carried it out with the greatest energy and devotion. The moral influence which he has exercised upon thinking people through the civilized world may be far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggeration of brute force. For the work of statesmen is permanent only in so far as they arouse and consolidate the moral forces of their peoples through their personal example and educating influence.

We are fortunate and should be grateful that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary - a beacon to the generations to come.

Richard B. Gregg :

He is a social scientist because he follows social truth by the scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis, and experimental test.

He is not a mere scientist : he is a great scientist, in the realm of social truth. His greatness as a social inventor is shown by the close adaptation of his methods to the culture and modes of thought and feeling of the people and to their economic and technological resources.

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- The Editor

“Power Equation in South East Asia and Naval Operations”

Vice Admiral Raman Puri

(a lecture delivered at CPS on December 28, 2002)

Strengthen diplomatic bridges with littoral states

The naval scenario in south-eastern Bay of Bengal, particularly the Malacca Straits, is fast changing with the zone strategically located on the “oil expressway,” according to the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command, Raman Puri.

Speaking under the auspices of the Centre for Policy Studies here on Friday on the theme, “Power Equation in South East Asia and Naval operations,” he said that 95 per cent of the oil imports of Japan and 45 per cent that of China, constituting one-third of the world crude supplies, passed through this route.

By 2010, every second oil tanker would be taking this route. Naturally, China would be interested in having its “creeping jurisdiction” over this sea lane, Vice-Admiral Puri envisaged.

Stating that it was essential that “our strategic perceptions” needed to be modified to “road-block China,” he wanted India to strengthen its diplomatic bridges with the littoral states on the eastern sector, particularly Indonesia, “a moderate Islamic country,” and Myanmar.

Vietnam, according to him, was another important player with whom India should improve relations, as also with the ASEAN countries to establish “our presence in the South China Sea.”

Admiral Puri noted that Bangladesh was getting closer to China and said that this should be a matter of concern to Indian strategy planners.

He felt that China might be aiming at a “strategic encirclement of India” in this theatre by cultivating Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and, of course, Pakistan.

“Though the defence budget of China is not very high (24 per cent of the GDP), it is keeping us engaged, with its two aircraft-carrier navy.

Its exclusive economic zone spreads over 2.4 million square kilometres, while the Indian EEZ on the eastern sector is marginally less at 2 million sq.km,” he said.

(Courtesy : The Hindu, December 30, 2002)

India’s policy must be realistic :

India should follow a realistic policy. Appeasement of reluctant neighbours will not help. We may extend our friendship. But they will not reciprocate. Pakistan is the biggest problem.

These thoughts were shared by Flag officer, Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command,

Vice-Admiral Raman Puri at a lecture-session on ‘Power Equation in South East Asia and Naval Operations’, organized by the Centre for Policy Studies of Gayatri Vidya Parishad.

Vice-Admiral Puri seems to be a realist. He termed the Indian Ocean as the most happening region in the world. Most of India’s military manpower was tied up with Pakistan border. Unless these resources were freed to some extent, India cannot make any dent into South East Asia.

China has long-term strategy. Pakistan serves China’s purpose. China’s creeping jurisdiction over India’s northern region is a cause for concern. India too needs a long-term strategy and before that, it has to tackle Pakistan. ISI has made inroads into all important organizations.

The Vice-Admiral said we cannot be choosy in talking to our neighbours. We have to engage with Myanmar’s military regime. India cannot say we will talk only with democratic countries.

Raman Puri also advocated indigenous development of military wherewithal. India cannot dream of becoming big power with imported military technology. The imported technology will have its own conditionalities, he added. To a query, Puri said that Japan was only a stooge of US. It has some leverage economically but not militarily.

(Courtesy: New Indian Express, December 30, 2002)

Power, Violence and Society

A Gandhian Approach

Shri B.P. Rath

(A Gandhian from Orissa)

Prof. S.N. Ray, the eminent editor of the highbrow Bengali magazine JIJNASA, confesses that a question haunts him throughout his life. This prominent question was put to him by the wife of a reputed communist leader of Germany. Her question runs like this:-

“Prof. Ray! My husband Mr. August, M.N. Ray, Rosa and many others were the cream of the world society of those days. They had plenty of knowledge, intelligence as well as dedication. They sacrificed their all for a dream of a new society. Why did their dream turn into a nightmare and how could a man like Stalin usurp power and a totalitarian society started crippling the soviet citizenry”?

Why does a revolution devour its children? Why does a revolutionary of today turn into a counter-revolutionary tomorrow?

Mao tried to answer the question and the thesis of permanent revolution came into being. When he tried to implement his theory in practice, by giving the call of the cultural revolution, there was havoc in society. Consequently China lost a decade.

Why does this anomaly occur? A revolutionary is a product of a unique individual's propensities and a particular historical change of situation brings about a sea - change in the character of the individuals who had fought earlier as revolutionaries.

In India, Gandhi led the struggle for independence. After we got independence, Gandhi did not want to wield state power. Gandhi gained greater stature after India became independent. So much so, that at the time of his death, he was recognized by some as the tallest man of the millennium. Like Gandhi, J.P. also shunned power. India's democracy owes not a little to him. M.N. Roy, though a member of a different camp gave up power politics though he never ceased to be active in the field of culture. Royists have always acted as the watch-dogs of democracy. During the different ages, the world's intellectuals stressed two types of paths for ushering in a better society. One was the path of violence and state power. European genius from Plato to Marx advocated the use of state power to usher in social changes. Even Confucian China believed in the redeeming authority of the state.

Indian intellectuals wanted to hold a balance between the state power and society. They wanted the best among them to become the leaders of society, a society which gave non-violence, followed by truth, the highest position among the coveted values for humanity.

In the field of religion, too these thoughts had their influence. Christ wanted to separate both. Neither should interfere in the domain of the other. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," said he. This idea later grew into that of secularism. Islam marched to glory by combining state power with religious power. When individuals heading the state lost their skill to manage, there was decline.

Ancient India wanted the society to have greater power than the state. No state can prosper without military power. So overt violence remains embedded in the structure of the state. Another danger today lurks in the wings. Checks and balances devised to curb state power are ceasing to wield their contrarian influences. Today in this consumerist society, the people manning these balancing organs have become members of the same clubs of haves, flaunting the same type of culture. Today corporations are ruling the world and neither the legislature nor the executive or judiciary remains untouched by corporate power. The media, too, lacks requisite independence of will. Gandhian culture of non-consumerism bordering on austerity, stresses on the leadership of the society rather than the state. It may provide a way of escape for the present world, where virtual democracy, supported by technocratic illusions, reigns even in the developed first world.

American hegemony, through world organizations, has resulted in states depriving wider populations of their legitimate rights to livelihoods and cleaner environments. The last half-a-century is witness to the greater and greater

concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. In these days states have lost their sovereignty because of this total domination of financial capital. When all the states of the world have become agents of global exploitation, who will bell the cat of corporate power?

Is the alternative not societal power built on the Gandhian principles of austerity? To have womenfolk as a major constituent of such social power is it not necessary to lay stress on the non-violent approach? There are many who expect NGOs to take the lead in the field of social power. But the NGOs have constraints in-built in their structures. There are questions of funding, the luxurious life style of the executives, and the lack of democratic principles in the day to day functioning of the NGOs.

There is the question of independent means of livelihood, what the Buddha out-lined as SADJIBJKA. How much scope is left for this? Already countries like Columbia and Afghanistan nurture large sections of populations living on the cultivation of poppy and cocoa. In the U.S, the income of some of its population is dependent on the mercy of corporations. It is a stressful and alienated society which can easily be turned into a Jingoist one. Gandhi, J.P., Lohia and M.N. Roy dreamt of decentralised societies. The Greens of Germany also advocated decentralization of political and economic power.

Is decentralisation of power a blessing for village society where inequality is embedded? How can the Dalits be accommodated with full dignity? Land reforms should be brought about followed by the nourishing village handicrafts. But these artisans must receive protection at the hands of society, if not governments, which are handicapped because of international pressure.

Today many states in India are going alcoholic, thus endangering the dignity and well-being of particularly women and children. There are states encouraging the opening of casinos. Tomorrow states may run brothels as it is in Amsterdam. What will be the impact of such measures on the institution of family?

Castro's Cuba probably is the only country successfully resisting American hegemony. Under the pressure of circumstances Cuba has accepted the Gandhian principles. "There is enough for human need but not enough for human greed". Cuba's doctors, scientists, and sportsmen are truly acting as trustees of their talents. Castro has introduced organic agriculture. Tractors lie idle because of lack of petrol while horses cultivate fields.

Cuba has become a walking or bicycling society. Castro frankly confesses that revolution can only come through culture and ideas. This land of eleven million people has solved the problem of unemployment. Cuba lacks resources, but has made it up through human ingenuity. Add genuine democratic principles and we have a good Gandhian country in Cuba.

The question of culture gains importance in a logocentric advertisement – driven society. Religious fundamentalism is be devilling the lives of minorities in many parts of the world. How can we change the faith – based religions to value – based ones is the question that haunts us. Gandhi took a major step in this direction when he declared “Truth is God”. Gandhian truth is a composite of truth and nonviolence. Jainism, Buddhism and the Mahabharata or Tirukural-based. “Hindusim in India are our rich legacies. The world will profit much if the legacies are vitalized through communicative action.

While communities are disappearing because of the onslaught of individualism, the institution of family is under strain. We have to preserve communities without endangering individualism by giving the individual the right to exist under trying situations. The two institutions, family and community, where they are forces, have not eschewed covert violence and exploitation. These can be saved only if status and selfsacrifice are made inseparable twins as exemplified in the writings and life of Gandhi.

As far as the place of technology in the life of society is concerned, we Gandhians, have only one desire we do not want any human being to be deprived of his right to livelihood. If 20% of workers can provide enough for the whole world, how will the 80% of unemployed get their livelihood? If the problems of the world are to be tackled in right earnest, we must have a group of leaders of different societies fired by the vision of the unity of mankind. Gandhi and Tagore were such leaders. J.P. and Lohia were also dreamers of world fraternities. The world has experimented with the two universal ideas of liberty and equality and failed. Never was there greater danger to human liberty and equality. Technology and religion have each contributed to such a sorry state of affairs. Why cannot we in the 21st century experiment with the great ideas of fraternity and make it the guiding star of the human beings. India experimented with it and produced the Rishi culture. Buddha and Gandhi were both in that line. Christ, too was a leader in the same grain. In the field of philosophy, India’s great contribution to the 21st century is ANEKANTAVAD. Gandhi and Buddha were true votaries of this great philosophy leavening Jainism.

When we are thinking of world leaders of different societies, problems of modern psychology confront us. How can we expect these leaders to remain stead-fast to their cause, when undreamt-of wealth, power and status are available to them. Indian Rishi culture provides an answer. These leaders should shun wealth, power and status. They should risk their all in the cause of the whole of humanity, Gandhi, when he wanted Pakistan to be given its share of Indian treasury Jaya-Prakash when he wanted justice to be given to the Nagas and to Sheikh Abdullah, rose to great-heights.

Gandhi paid dearly with his life for the cause of the whole of humanity. J.P. was condemned as a leader

devoid of patriotic sentiments. That this type of behaviour is not exceptional, can be proved by what Manusmriti prescribes for the elite (ii-162). Unless the world nurtures a culture that produces such world leaders, the future is bleak indeed, with the present enslaved states and criminalized or alienated individuals and societies and the proliferation of jails and the murderous mobs. We will have much wealth but the three great values of the French Revolution will languish to the point of extinction.

Decentralised societies will be the nurseries of such leaders. Hope rises in our breasts when we hear about leaders like Fidel Castro, who could bring about the fusion of many Marxist and Gandhian principles in the tiny state of Cuba. There lives a Gandhian in Castro when he pardons the enemy soldiers at great risk, in the teeth of contrary views expressed by most of his confighters, in a crucial phase of Cuba’s history when a single error might have jeopardized the entire venture.

Gandhi was a product of the East and West. So also were Nelson Mandela, Lohia, M.N. Ray and Tagore. We often hear about Nelson Mandela. There was Julius Niyerere of Tanganiaka, All of them have or had world vision. What we need today is a churning of ideas, milking all cultures, the linking of dreams with reality by taking up radical stands by the activist-intellectuals among the toiling deprived sections of fighting humanity. That there are such young people working at the local level is a heartening sign. Grassroot activists are working amongst the Adivasis of Kasipur in Orissa fighting against the mining TNCS. Devranjan, Saroj and Ravi are the leading intellectual – activists in Kasipur area. India has a wonderful tradition of producing a galaxy of global-level society – centric leaders. With the states of the world increasingly acting against the interests of large sections of humanity to serve corporate interests, it is society-centric leaders alone on whom lies the burden of redeeming oppressed mankind.

21st century states are going to become more and more repressive. With states, digital surveillance becoming almost all pervasive, the elite may become more and more alienated and parasitical, the media may become more & more manipulative. Real social activism may become more and more prohibitive as the perks and privileges enjoyed by the elite become more money – centric and corporate – employment based. The pressure of family may become so great on conscious intellectuals, that their guilty consciences may be satisfied with mere sops available through high-level discussions in luxurious surroundings while an activist’s role in poverty-stricken areas may remain forbidden regions for them. Prof. Galbraith in his book “Culture of Contentment” shows his disappointment with the privileged intellectuals. Gandhians have not lost hope in them. They can inspire local-level activists through their writings and provide financial help. The affected people of the whole world together may lay the foundations of a better global society by rescuing the different social institutions from the slave

status or oblivion or by building new decentralized institutions.

DANGERS OF MERITOCRACY

Shri K.V.V. Subrahmanyam (I.P.S)
Retd. Home Secretary, Govt. of A.P.,

There is a news item which says that one of the outstanding students of the International Business School, Hyderabad has been offered a job at the breathtaking figure of Nineteen Lakhs per month by an M.N.C. This should make all Indians proud. Students and the younger generation should treat this as an incentive, a role model. Right now not a day passes without Mega Ads about coaching centres that have turned out large number of successful candidates in the EAMCET etc. So, the competition is getting stiffer, expectations higher, students tense, parents more anxious that their wards should do not do just well but outstandingly. Quality of the products turned out should obviously be very high. Welcome development in the first decade of the new millennium. Students should be encouraged to be better and better in every field. Mark the word, every field, every includes the micro chip, the football, the sprint events etc. Alas! We are thrilled at Viswanathan Anand and Pullela Gopichand blazing a trail. But consider our size, our population, with that of Senegal or South Korea and where are we?

Churning out the ivy league from I.B.S. is okay. But okay from whom? The most meritorious and diligent youngsters. At the end of it, we, the members of society that is the country, have to reckon with the stark fact that these egg heads will be heading towards the software giants not exactly within the country, but mostly outside the country. So, let us not delude ourselves into thinking that they will make singular and signal contribution to the progress of the country. It is possible, that at a later point of time, they may repay the debt of gratitude by hefty remittances to their motherland, to the development of their native village etc. etc., What happens to those who toiled and did not reach the top? Those falling by the way side should have place in the sun, should not feel slighted or humiliated by their kith and kin.

Depression and despondency should not over take them. Even those who are below par need not and should not feel despondent nor should they be denigrated. It is Ruskin who said "What do you think fools are made for, not to be trodden underfoot, fools were there for wise men to take care of them."

The message should be loud and clear. So long as the shapers of public policy, do not bend their energies for a blue-print for a stable and sustained and sustainable course of development, we will be merely following the will or the wisp that eludes the grasp and merely chasing vapourous, distant visions. Mahatmaji always told his listeners to think of the small man, his myriad problems and work for the alleviation of the distresses of Daridra

Narayan was his call. We harp of 'Daridra Rekha' poverty line. The primary task on us on the State and framers of public policy should be on this and this alone. I.B.S., I.I.Ms and I.I.Ts are welcome but they are for the elite, the intellectual elite.

Swami Vivekananda said 'you are nearer to God through football than through the study of the Gita,' Not that he wanted us to eschew study of the Gita. But where are the playing fields, more importantly the motivators? All round development of personality is neglected. The studious youngsters with thick glasses lead a cocoon like existence, with heads perpetually bend towards the mouse and eyes riveted on the display. What spondilitis, what migraines, what other concomitant maladies of the eyes, the brain and the nervous system, are in store for the young and the futurologists, only futurologists can predict.

Probably, Korea is doing well in not only in Football but in overall development, because its society, its leaders and its people have harnessed their resources in a meaningful way. It is not only a question of human resources in meaningful way. It is not only a question of human resources, (for which we have a full fledged Ministry) but it is a question of human values. One day it may become necessary to set up an Institute of Human Values. These should include, instilling in young minds permanent human values, such as integrity, mutual respect, a negation of get rich quick recipes, like the ones we see in the media etc. Today, it is no exaggeration to say we know the price of every thing but the value of nothing to help the other person in trouble to shun exploitative practices in all walks of life. Many of these concepts are embedded in our religious lore, but need to be salvaged and brought into focus. This can happen only if there is sustained and assertive disdain of the social, political, bureaucratic lepers, grossly violating code of conduct. This should be part and parcel of our educational system. From primary to the apex level, wealth is, said Ruskin, that which promotes common weal, is real wealth not that which promotes common evil. Will our leading lights, emerging from the Everestian heights of the International Business Schools, I.I.T.s reflect on this?

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - HURDLES AND OBSTACLES - I

Dr. P.V.L.RAMANA
Research Fellow, CPS.

Empowerment, a recently coined term is a derivative word from 'power'. The meanings given 'to empower' in the Oxford Dictionary are 'to authorize' or 'to give power'. But empowerment as seen in the articles published and discussions held in recent times does not reflect this meaning, but something superior to it. Taking clues from the dictionary meaning empowerment many a time is misrepresented as 'giving people power', but it is more appropriate to call it as 'making people powerful'.

Andre Beteille (1999) analyses empowerment from the sociological point of view. He says the scholarly discussions of empowerment have been context driven rather than theory driven and the context is the contradiction between a hierarchical social order and a democratic political system. According to him, empowerment is about radical social transformation and can be virtually invoked in any context-in speaking about human rights, about basic needs, about economic security, about capacity building and skill formation or about the conditions of a dignified social existence. The idea of empowerment is a certain theory of social change, in particular a change from a hierarchical to an egalitarian type of society and from an aristocratic to a democratic type of society. Beteille further says, in the idea of empowerment, the hope remains that power, which is a source of so much evil, can be made into a source of everything that is good by being transferred from the wrong to the rightful hands, from the capitalists to the workers, from the landlords to the peasants, from the upper to lower castes and now from men to women. While Beteille talks about transfer of power by 'rearrangement of power', in this article the emphasis is more on 'sharing of power' and its universality.

The myth is that equality of sexes is guaranteed by the state, but the reality is that inequalities and gender injustice is rampant in Indian society. Writing a foreword to RGICS Paper No 40 'Emerging Gender Inequalities in Asia and Pacific', authored by Krishna Ahooja Patel, Dr. Abid Hussain says "it is time for governments to give more support to women's causes and this should be reflected in gender sensitive legislation and their proper implementation".

One of the primary objectives of the Ninth Five Year plan (1997-2002) is to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home as equal partners along with men. Najama Heputullah in the recently held All India Women's Conference at Pune said the year 2002 passed silently and we entered the year 2003 silently without much being done on women empowerment (Star News 6/1/03). She reiterated that the much talked reservation bill is not even tabled in Parliament for discussion.

What is Women Empowerment?

The year 2001 was declared as the year of women empowerment in order to secure a rightful place for the women in the society in all spheres of life. Stormquist argues that the dimensions of empowerment must include cognitive, psychological, political and economic components.

Women empowerment though a newly used term, has its roots in the Indian tradition. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi's call for transformation of 'abala' into 'sabala' is nothing but women empowerment. He said, "When woman whom we call 'abala' becomes 'sabala', all those who are helpless will become powerful". Neoleen Heyzer says "empowerment does not necessarily mean getting elected to public offices, but essentially it would have to be empowerment of women beginning at the family level so that women are able to take their lives in their own

hands and take decisions for themselves and their families".

The Need For Women Empowerment

The low status accorded to women in the society as reflected in their unfavourable sex ratio, lower literacy levels, lower work participation rates, lower wages, high economic dependence, lower political participation, increasing dowry harassments and deaths, adverse cultural and religious practices, inadequate health facilities etc. calls for a global movement for their empowerment. Though there is no need to highlight the abundantly reviewed, undisputed topic on the low status of women, some references are made here to highlight the point of discussion. Maithreyi Krishnaraj (1989) says the key areas where women lack autonomy are matters relating to choices in marriage, marriage dissolution, choice of career, choice of education, life styles, freedom of movement, expression of sexuality etc. Coser and Coser (1976) describe the modern family as a greedy institution headed by a fully employed male, expecting his wife to devote most of her time as well as her emotional energies towards the family. They are the untiring and unquestioning housewives. According to them the death of the greedy family will take place only when both the husband and wife are the family providers, co-managers of the household and true partners in the care of children so that their respective resources of power are more nearly equal.

Batliwala (1997) says that women empowerment includes:

- 1) Challenging the ideology of male domination and women subordination,
- 2) Enabling women to gain equal access to and control over resources (material, human, intellectual), and
- 3) Transforming the institutions (family, education, religion, media and so on) and structures (legal, political, social and economic)

Realizing the need for women empowerment, the Government of Andhra Pradesh (The Hindu, March 13, 2001) has committed itself to help make empowerment a reality of women's lives through the 'self-help' route. DWACRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) is one humble experiment, which seeks to bring the deprived women of a developing country into the mainstream of life. The five components of women empowerment according to the Government are:

- 1) Women's sense of self-worth,
- 2) Their right to have and determine choices,
- 3) Their right to have access to opportunities and resources,
- 4) Their right to have the power to control their own lives both within and outside the home, and
- 5) Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

(To be continued)

RENOVATION AND PRESERVATION OF OLD TEMPLES

Prof. N. Krishna Murthy

The various master pieces of art and the monuments of architecture speak history and culture of the country. This rich and versatile collection of art has to be preserved for posterity. There are number of natural factors which make these objects of art and culture to deteriorate through factors like frequent climatic changes, biological growth on objects due to excessive humidity fungus and atmospheric pollution, constant exposure to natural or artificial light besides the physical damages.

The protection and preservation of such cultural heritage is equally important and worthier in addition to the newly produced cultural pieces in modern times. Fresco paintings in various temples, churches and the various pieces of the sculpture existing in the form of the stone, marble, wood etc, needs a scientific protection.

Restoration of these materials is a very crucial problem and has to be dealt with care. It not only needs the technical skill but also needs a careful study of the application of these techniques on a scientific basis. As the saying 'prevention is better than cure' it is of vital importance to take precautionary measures to safeguard these treasures. In order to save great works from decay a two fold approach is being followed (1) by curing a decayed object and (2) by undertaking preventive measures to stop or slow down the process through a technical and scientific examination of the object which is then treated accordingly.

After a thorough perusal of the various temples in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts, the conservation of these great monuments can be planned as follows:

1. Restoration of sculpture.
2. Renovation of paintings or Frescos.
3. Preservative methods of these sculptural pieces and paintings.
4. Protective and control measures for future longevity.
5. Restructuring of the foundations of the temples, compound walls, interior and exterior structures of the temples etc.,
6. Study of the soil nature of the surroundings, erosion and correction possibilities through natures fury.
7. Preventing exposure to pollution, namely the industrial gases, effluents, routine sentimental hazards etc, and finally.
8. The upkeep, management and discipline to be observed for future safety of these treasures.

The above factors are to be taken in consideration

and in general it is advisable that

- (1) The temples and its contents are to be kept free from dust and the interiors free from the exposure to the direct sun light and rain.
- (2) In certain instances the articles may be coated with linseed anthracene, creasote oils, or 0.6% mercuric chloride or with 5% zink chloride or zinc meta arsenite which will be helpful for stone and wooden sculptures for preservation. With all said and done these treasures and gigantic structures will slowly weaken and fades down at last. All the temples need flooring which may be done with marble or stone. This is necessary where there is no flooring done with cut stone.

Time has its own display to digest matter into it as such a perienal protection may not be possible always, so all the valuable treasures, their plans are to be photographed in detail through different angles narrating comprehensively and to be drawn in the farm of books which can be renewed with time. In a similar manner they may be video-graphed.

Another important method which will preserve the heritage is to cast all the sculptural pieces through good technical procedures in the form of the bronze during which process there will not be any least inconvenience to the safety of the sculpture of the temples. They may be cast in paper pulp, plaster of paris and may be allowed to go in circulation into the public so that their existence will be permanent.

Some of the technical aspects of the construction of the temples are discussed in the books of Vastu Madhunamrutham, Gruhavastu Ratnavali, Silpa Madhuramrutham etc., The consultation of these books may help the protection of the technical parts of vajam, vajrapattam, kostam, panjaram, sikharam, kumbham, karnam etc.

It is very necessary not to forget that the main objective is to protect our heritage to the future generations during which process some new alternations, new materials, new techniques are to be included where a little constraint may arise as the Archeology department which pleads that antiques should not be touched for any alternation. Although it is true they are not to be allowed to perish. The Garbhalayams are worthy to be lined with detachable white porcelein which can be washed even with solvents.

This lining gives good light and a good background to deities.

This happens to be the crystallized thought of my past fifty years of experience as a chemist, as an artist and as a sculptor which adds a feather of information to the upkeep of the great treasure which we have inherited as temple architecture.

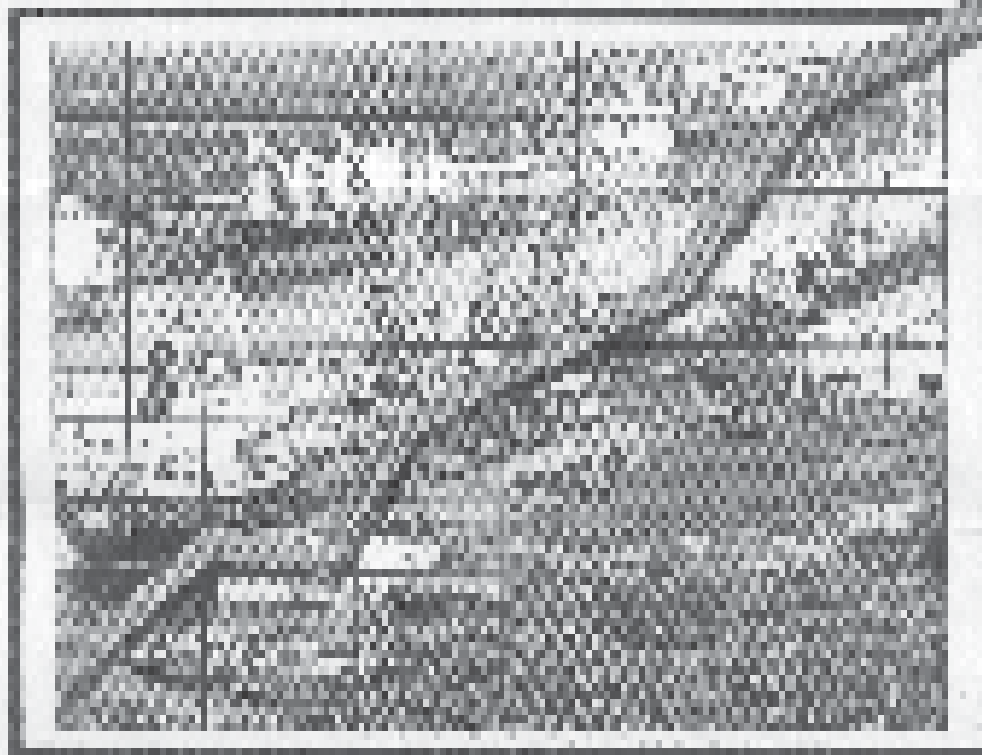
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SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMA HAMSA – I

Sri Challa Sivasankaram

Nineteenth century excelled in possessing the unique significance of producing persons of eminence, enduring and edifying character in all branches of human excellence - spiritual – religious and rational. No other century before or after from the inception of Christian Era stands parallel to it. Both the Eastern and the Western hemispheres could well nigh lay equal claim to this remarkable feature of the century. The impact and influence of the philosophies schools of thought and persuasion that emerged in the said century were destined to be lasting, ageless and eternal. Harmony in human activity, religious faiths, national beliefs gained the required degree to maintain its place and position unmolested and untouched. The rise of rational humanism and religious liberalism seemed to pave the way for the rise of a new class of intelligentsia bristling with the ferment thoroughly bent on crucial change in certain walks of life to be abreast of times.

It was Bengal of such a colourful 19th Century. There had been a popular talk rampant in those days that what Bengal did today the rest of the country followed suit the next day. Such conspicuous position Bengal enjoyed on the national forum.

Rajaram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the father of Gurudev Tagore, Keshub Chandra Sen and Dayananda Saraswathi were the noble stalwarts strutting the cultural and religious arena of Bengal. They seemed resolved to keep India's image as the spiritual home of the civilized world undisturbed by an honest attempt – at reformation of the tottering religion to one Universal in appeal and basically human in attitude. They were not oblivious to the truth that vivisection of the society into spiritual and secular was fallacious.

At this juncture on February 18, 1836 two years

before the descent of Saibaba of Shiridi and 22 years before the proclamation of Magnacarta by Her Majesty Queen Victoria following the quelling of India's First War of Independence there had been born a charming boy in an orthodox Brahmin Family settled in a village called 'Kamarpukur' in Bengal. The parents of the lad Kshudiram and Chandramani Devi were deeply religious in deed and profoundly Brahmanical in thought wedded to live in conformity with the highest tenets and injunctions laid by the scripture to be followed by a true Brahmin. Truthfulness, poverty, austerity and benevolence were the cardinal principles of a Brahmin worth the calling. The parents of the boy were reputed as living and practical examples of the four principles earmarked for adoption by the Brahmana.

As with all the series of previous advent of Avatars including Jesus, of the orient the mother of the boy conceived him in a dream wherein she experienced the mysterious entrance of a dazzling light in her womb. Likewise, Eswamma the chosen mother of Sri Satya Sai Baba conceived and gave birth to the man of miracles, ninety years after at Puttaparty. Kamarpukur was reputed as the Kaladi of Bengal. Kaladi of Kerala is the birthplace of Adi Sankara.

At the auspicious hour of christening ceremony of the boy the parents christened him, as Gadadhara the name of the presiding deity of Gaya, one of the three principal and indispensable sacred spots of obligatory pilgrimage by the Hindu. Gadadhara is one of the multitudinous names of Mahavishnu. History failed to record the date when the transfer of name from Gadadhara to Ramakrishna occurred. The household god of the family was Raghuvira. Virtually there was never an instance of partisan bias on the part of the family between Rama and Siva. Born in a twice born Brahmin Clan, raised from finite human being to infinite Divine being the boy rightly befitted the sacred name of Sri Ramakrishna.

(To be continued)

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