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(*GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD*)

GENDER INJUSTICE

The month of March, during which women's day is observed, has witnessed a plethora of conferences, seminars and meetings on women's empowerment which is both a process and a goal. Encouraging it is to hear that some headway has been made in the empowerment of women since the Beijing Declaration of 1995. In consonance with its action-plan the United Nations has, to some extent, been successful in giving direction to the goals it has set before itself such as promotion of legal cells, research and training to improve women's conditions, providing direct assistance to disadvantaged groups, mobilizing international opinion and creating awareness. There is no denying the fact that women, especially those belonging to the middle classes, have come to occupy important positions in public life, and a new generation of women are making their mark as engineers, doctors, administrators and managers in developing countries.

Still, women continue to be discriminated at all levels. At the global level women account for 66% of the work turned out though their share in income is only 10% and they enjoy only 1% of the property. 70% of world's 1.3 billion poor people are women. 2/3 of the 1 billion illiterate people are women and 75% of the world's refugees are women and children. Two million girls suffer every year genital mutilation. 20 to 50% of women are victims of domestic violence. Over 1600 women die every day from causes relating to pregnancy and childbirth. Over 15000 girls are annually sold in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh for kidney sale and flesh trade. The main obstacles to gender justice are identified as poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism, female foeticide, clitoridectomy and domestic violence. Asymmetries in work culture exist as men's work is more valued than women's while men enjoy higher social status. As former Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, said : "Woman you have brought with you a new song. But we did not let you speak out although yours is the voice of half the earth".

In India, as in the countries of South Asia, most women continue to be the victims of social injustice and political and economic exploitation. Article 15 (1) of India's Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender and Article 15(3) authorizes the State to make special provisions for women and children. But the contradiction between proclaimed public goals and principles and private lives is glaring and distressing. The manner in which the bill for 33% reservation for women is being dealt with shows the callousness of leaders and political parties towards an issue of utmost importance. Lack of political will and public support is among the factors responsible for the persisting backwardness of women.

The work of two great Andhras must be recalled when women's issues are discussed. Kandukuri Veeresalingam 1848- 1919 described as the 'greatest modern Andhra' fought till his last breath against the obstinacy of orthodoxy and social evils and performed widow remarriage in most adverse conditions. Andhra, thanks to Veeresalingam, was in the forefront of the movement for women's emancipation. He was aptly called the Raja Rammohan Roy of South India. Durgabai (later Mrs. Deshmukh) was a girl of 14 when she, in response to Gandhiji's call, made a bonfire of foreign clothes and donned khadi. She was just 22 when she launched destitute homes and institutions for women's care and welfare. A chain of institutions for poor girls and widows came into being in different parts of the country thanks to her boundless energy and tireless work. Neither Veeresalingam nor Durgabai had any advantage of wealth or position, nor received government grants or media support. Yet they achieved what no government could ever do. They had what we do not find today — courage and selflessness.

- The Editor

" If all men are born free, how is it all women are born slaves?" MARY ASTELL

KANDUKURI VEERESALINGAM

PROPHET OF A NEW DAWN

- A. Prasanna Kumar

“There are only two alternatives open to us. Either we must educate women and progress or else we must not educate them and decline. We must either advance or fall down.”

“The progress of a country is determined by two factors, by the form of its public institutions and by the character displayed by its leaders.” Kandukuri Veeresalingam

Around the time when the engineering genius of Arthur Cotton was transforming the Godavari district from a famine stricken area into a land of prosperity was born on April 16, 1848, on the banks of the Godavari in Rajahmundry, Kandukuri Veeresalingam. It was the people's good fortune that one emancipator, Cotton, was followed by another, in the form of Veeresalingam. Rarely would one find such a sequence of social reform following economic development. Rarer still it must be to come across in those hard times a person endowed with such qualities of head and heart, a combination of intellect, will power and character. He had the vision to look beyond his times and possessed strength of mind to pursue his ideal in the most adverse conditions. Broadly his goals were intellectual regeneration and social reconstruction. In pursuit of these ideals and women's emancipation in particular, he raised institutions, started journals, wrote books and fought battles against social and religious orthodoxy till his last breath.

April 16th is Veeresalingam's 158th Jayanti

Social reform was no ordinary task in those days when orthodoxy reigned supreme and social evils were numerous. One such was child marriage. The cruelty of it was accentuated by the fact that in many instances a girl of five or six years was married to an old man above sixty. Girls became widows first and women later. Such young widows were forced to live in obscurity and ignominy. Veeresalingam took upon himself the challenging task of getting widows remarried. His wife, Rajyalakshmi, was his partner in this crusade till her death in August 1910. A few friends lent him steadfast support. Some British officials and Christian missionaries also voiced their support, which made many upper caste Hindus, his own Brahmin community in particular, hostile to him. Veeresalingam chose to give up caste rather than the cause. Symbolically he snapped the sacred thread in February 1906 and declared his renunciation of the caste into which he was born. By then he was an acclaimed Brahmo having inspired many young men to accept the creed of Brahmasamaj. The influence of Raja Rammohun Roy and Iswara Chandra Vidya Sagar on Veeresalingam was deep. The Bible too influenced him.

His American biographer John Leonard Greenfield refers to two related ideas that were prominent in Veeresalingam's thinking: 1) the blending of the 'best' in Western culture with the 'best' in Indian culture and 2) the improvement of the Indian nation. These ideas, according to Leonard,

were attractive to wider audience than social reformers. He agrees with Gurunadham, Veeresalingam's disciple and close associate, that what distinguished Veeresalingam from other scholar cum social reformers was his 'enduring commitment to action.' But all action stemmed from thought and reflection just as every institution he founded and journal he launched were based on the bedrock of ideas and values. In thought, word and deed, to borrow the familiar adage, his commitment was total. His faith in God was unshakeable. Yet, he found no conflict between science and spirituality, between rational thinking and spiritual yearnings. Activities, he argued, 'required testing against practical conditions to establish their validity and social reform movement must be safeguarded against errors of judgement and the results of preconceived theories.'

As a scholar and writer he was imbued with the idea of reforming the Telugu language for the benefit of the common man. The language needed improvement. Both the written and spoken word should be simplified, he felt. As a pioneer of Telugu literature he had many 'firsts' to his credit. D. Anjaneyulu, another biographer, called him 'the prime architect of the Renaissance of Telugu literature in the latter half of the 19th century and a vital force in the rejuvenation of social life in Andhra.' In the words of Anjaneyulu: "He wrote the first burlesque, the first parody in verse, the first sustained satire in prose, the first social play, the first full-length novel, the first pieces in biography, the first detailed autobiography in prose." Literature for Veeresalingam was a potent weapon of social reform. Veeresalingam's own words explain his philosophy: "Mere publication of books is of no use. What is more important and essential is the courage and readiness to put into effect what we believe to be true." In pursuance of his goal of women's emancipation, he developed a sub-field of Telugu literature called "Women's literature."

A pioneer and trend-setter in Telugu journalism Veeresalingam was only twenty six when he launched his famous journal Vivekavardhani. His objectives in starting this and another journal, Satyasamvardhani later were to fight for the removal of pernicious customs and social evils, improve the Telugu language, promote Telugu literature and raise the moral standards of the society. He attacked social evils like child marriage, corruption in public institutions, and misdeeds of government officials. Such was Veeresalingam's fearlessness and courage of conviction that one of his disciples Dr V. Ramakrishna Rao who created history by establishing the first school for Harijans in this part of the country wrote thus about his master: "Veeresalingam had to fell down stifling trees, to burn up rank brushwood, to hunt down ravenous beasts, to destroy venomous reptiles, to bore impassable hills, to weed out pricking thorns." Strong words indeed used to indicate how Veeresalingam remained undaunted by the gigantic task undertaken.

In the field of education Veeresalingam advocated co-education and free education for Harijans. But emphasis was on women's education which he was convinced was essential for the intellectual regeneration of the country. "If education is for enlightenment and cultivation of the mind, as it should be, it is

essential for women as for men,” he asserted. John Leonard traces the origins of the feminist movement in coastal Andhra from the education of girls, the growth of literacy among older women and the founding of Telugu journals for women all initiated by Veeresalingam. He founded the Widow Remarriage Association which came to be called WRA. In all over 40 widows were remarried, thirty of them in his home town and some in his own house in the midst of severe and hostile opposition. In Madras he succeeded in performing ten such widow marriages.

The establishment of Hitakarni Samaj in 1906 was the fulfilment of his long cherished goal of institutionalising social reform. The Hitakarani Samaj set up a Theistic School for boys. It later became the Veeresalingam High School. The Widows’s Home for destitutes, Prarthana Samaj and lower secondary school for girls which later became a high school were also started and today the college named after his wife Rajyalakshmi College for Women is located in the heart of the town of Rajahmundry. Simultaneously he carried out such work in Madras too where he spent many years. A Trust was created in Rajahmundry for the maintenance of these institutions and the meagre earnings and savings of the reformer were always utilised for these institutions and the causes dear to him. In 1898 he presided over the Indian Social Conference whose session was held along with the Indian National Congress meeting in Madras. Mahadev Govind Ranade hailed Veeresalingam as the Vidyasagar of the South. Nominating him as the Chairman of the Conference Ranade referred to Veeresalingam’s valuable services to the cause of social reform. None, more fit and more worthy could be nominated to the Chair, said Ranade. Veeresalingam hailed such social conferences as they would “prepare the ground and fill the moral atmosphere of the country with ideas.”

In 1903 Veeresalingam was elected President of the Indian National Theistic Conference at Madras. His disciple Sir Raghupati Venkataratnam Nayudu launched the social purity campaign in Masulipatam and carried out reform activities there. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who in turn was influenced by Raghupati Venkataratnam Nayudu narrated how several Harijan girls were rescued from their exploiters in an act of exemplary courage at Ponneri near Madras. Towns like Masulipatam and Guntur emulated Rajahmundry in social reform activities under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj the moving spirit behind which was, of course, Veeresalingam. In 1893 the Government of India honoured ‘the public spirited citizen’ with the title Rao Bahadur, in recognition of his services for female education. Principal E.P.Metcalf of the Rajahmundry College wrote:” There is no one within my knowledge who has deserved it better.”

Andhra Prakasika, a Telugu journal issuing from Madras and hostile to Veeresalingam, acknowledged his services thus: “The manifold services he has rendered to the country speak for themselves...he has not merely enlightened many an ignorant man and woman by means of more than 100 of his literary, moral and social works, but also at his own expense relieved the distress of a number of virgin widows pining under the unreasonable and rigid hierarchy of the Hindu society by getting them duly married. He built a Town Hall and made a

gift of it to the town of Rajahmundry, he has established in Madras at his own cost a Widow’s Home.”

The social reformer of extraordinary courage and conviction was also endearingly humble. “I was not a wealthy individual. I was not physically strong. Nor did I have great authority. I was not even highly educated. Although I did not possess these qualities which are esteemed for success, I dared to engage in social reform work because I was patriotic,” he wrote. He was deeply religious and his religion taught him “to be truthful, to be virtuous, to be good and righteous.” Till his last he believed that neither God he adored nor religion he believed in ever approved of inequality and exploitation. C.R.Reddy called him ‘the greatest Andhra of modern times’ Sir K.V.Reddi Naidu said that Veeresalingam was entitled to a Prophet’s rank. “He is a beacon on the mountain top. This light of knowledge and of good principles of the great man will continue for ever spreading a vast effulgence all round,” wrote Reddi Naidu. Rajaji aptly summed up that “Andhra Pradesh and Andhra people could not be what they are, if Veeresalingam had not arrived to vitalise them.”

“I do not claim any personal credit for the social reform work being done here. Many great men before and around me are responsible for its success. The credit should also go to the entire Telugu land not just to the town of Rajahmundry,” wrote Veeresalingam.

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR THE MULTI-FACETED GENIUS

- Prof. R. Venkat Rao
Principal, AU College of Law

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was an Educationist, Economist, Author, Professor, Lawyer, Leader, Fighter, Law giver and Law maker, Leveller and Liberator.

Several hundred volumes have been written on Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. His own writings and speeches run into thousands of printed pages. Almost every other page of the Constituent Assembly debates carries illuminating remarks from the distinguished Jurist projecting the man and his vision. The unqualified appreciation and worship by millions of persons across the country of his dedicated services to the poor and disadvantaged stand testimony to the character of the man and his leadership at a crucial phase in Indian democratic evolution.

April 14th is Ambedkar's 115th Jayanti

So long as the Indian Constitution lives and guides the destiny of nearly a fifth of the human race in this sub-continent, the name and fame of Dr.Ambedkar will continue to reverberate and inspire law makers towards structuring a social order committed to equality, dignity and social justice.

The following observations of T.T. Krishnamachari made in the Constituent Assembly clearly illustrate the role of

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in the making of the Indian Constitution:

"The House is perhaps aware that of the seven members nominated (by you), one has resigned and was replaced, one has died and was not replaced, one was away in America and his place was not filled up, and another person was engaged in State Affairs, and there was a void to that extent. One or two people were far away from Delhi and perhaps reasons of health did not permit them to attend. So it happened ultimately that burden of drafting this Constitution fell upon Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and I have no doubt that we are grateful to him for having achieved this task in a manner which in undoubtedly commendable."

The Indian Constitution is built on a solid edifice that has stood the stress and strains of our myriad and massive problems.

Education is a subject which was very dear to Ambedkar. With outstanding zeal Ambedkar argued for the advancement of education all through his public life in such a way that one is left to imagine that had he been the Education Minister instead of the Law Minister, Independent India would have had a proud record of accomplishments in the field of education for all its teeming millions.

In the year 1927 itself Dr.Ambedkar made the following observations which are of significance even today, nearly seventy eight years later: Education is the key for empowerment. It is through education alone, a society can move towards true equality. This link between education and equality is best understood by Dr.Ambedkar, who took care to introduce an activist policy on education for all in the Constitution itself. It is our misfortune that despite the Constitutional mandate "for providing within a period of ten years free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years", successive governments have failed to comply with its solemn obligation to any substantial degree.

Dr.Ambedkar was against the commercialization of education. Increasing demand for education has led to the starting of a large number of Colleges, Schools and training institutions many of them by private individuals. Some of these groups and individuals have found this educational market a rich source for generating money and have adopted variety of methods to squeeze the public and raise enormous funds oftentimes ousting the common man from higher education. Dr.Ambedkar's observations in this regard are pertinent:

"Education is something which need to be brought within the reach of every one. The Education Department is not a department which can be treated on the basis of *quid pro quo*. Education ought to be cheapened in all possible ways and to the greatest possible extent. I urge this plea because I feel that we are arriving at a stage when the lower orders of the society are just getting into the high

schools and colleges, and the policy of the department therefore ought to be to make higher education as cheap to the lower classes as it can possibly be made. We may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunity to reap the benefits of highest education to the fullest extent".

It is this conviction which persuaded the eminent scholar statesman to give the call to all downtrodden people "Educate, Organize and Agitate", the Constitutional path for social justice and an egalitarian social order. "Educate, Organize and Agitate" - mark the order.

Ambedkar raised himself from the lowest rung of the society to an enviable position in Indian political life by his in credible industry and noble self denial. His heroic struggle for the liberation of a suppressed people in bondage is without any parallel.

As Ambedkar has played the part of destiny in the liberation of suppressed humanity in India, we must learn to understand his life, character and mission and know him as he is. Ambedkar's life is highly instructive to everyone who yearns for human dignity and equality in human relations in society. Besides, it provides a most inspiring example of what man can achieve by his indomitable perseverance and great self denial, even under the most depressing and destitute circumstances. It provides also a lesson that one should rely upon one's efforts in life rather than depend upon the help and patronage of others. Ambedkar's eternal search for knowledge, his incredible industry and his unflinching aim with which he raised himself from dust to doyen, from the life of a social leper to the position of a Constitution maker and his heroic struggles for raising the downtrodden to human dignity will constitute a golden chapter in the history of the nation and in the history of human freedom as well.

Ambedkar, who was referred to as "JEWEL" in his cabinet by Prime Minister Nehru, relinquished his post as Law Minister in September, 1951 following differences with Pandit Nehru over the adoption of the HINDU CODE BILL.

The whole nation owes a debt to Ambedkar for the reform measures initiated by him for the liberation of Hindu Women from the shackles imposed on them by orthodox elements. Till today, he remains the only person to have resigned from Minister's post for the cause of Women.

Ambedkar, in one word, is the architect of Modern India.

ROLE OF GOVERNOR IN THE FORMATION OF A MINISTRY

(Summary of a Seminar)

The Centre for Policy Studies, (Gayatri Vidya Parishad) organized a discussion-meeting on March 10, 2005. Shri D.V.Subba Rao, former Chairman, Bar Council of India,

"The most vital need of the day is to create among the mass of the people the sense of a common nationality the feeling not that they are Indians first and Hindus, Mohamedans or Sindhis and Kanarese afterwards but that they are Indians first and Indians last." - DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

Prof.R.Venkata Rao, Principal, AU College of Law and Prof.Y.Satyanarayana, Dean, Faculty of Law, Andhra University were the discussants. Prof.A.Prasanna Kumar, Director, Centre for Policy Studies who presided over the meeting said in his opening remarks that Indian democracy was based on a value system. Governor is a constitutional umpire of the democratic process and politicians are not using this precious institution in a proper manner. Institutions are more important than individuals, he added. The post of the Governor is suffering from three malaises - Constitution and its articles, treatment given by Prime Ministers to this post since independence and the persons who are chosen as governors. He said that certain amount of vagueness surrounded the office of the Governor and that it should be cleared and concluded by saying that there is an urgent need for amendment of the Constitution in this regard.

Former Chairman of the Bar Council of India, Shri D.V.Subba Rao delivering the keynote address regretted that the recommendations of commissions had not seen the light of the day. The need to implement in toto the recommendations of the Justice Sarkaria and Justice Venkatachalaiah Commissions in respect of the appointment and functioning of Governors of States strictly as per the norms of the Constitution was underlined in his speech. He said that according to the Constitution no qualifications were required for the Governor's post except two general ones like citizen of India and above 35 years. So the Governors were chosen not on merit but by the political pressure. Sarkaria Commission's recommendations should be taken into consideration and should be implemented in this regard. He referred to the present situation and said that not a single Governor satisfied the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission. This institution was misused for political gains. If proper steps are taken this institution may regain its validity. Shri Subba Rao said that the jig-saw puzzle of ministry making that the governors of Goa, Jharkhand and Bihar tried to solve in the last ten days indicated that political expediency was given greater weight than Constitutional norms. He said that the gubernatorial post had been the most abused one for the past 50 years and that all Prime Ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru to Manmohan Singh were party to such a misuse of Governor's powers. While it would be difficult to set guidelines on the role a Governor should play in dealing with situations as obtained in Goa, Jharkhand and Bihar, the legal luminary felt that healthy conventions should guide the Governors on such occasions. Referring to the happenings in Goa, Jharkhand and Bihar D.V.Subba Rao called it a "crisis of character" and all three are classic examples of how institutions are allowed to function. The Governor is not an agent to carry out dictates. When the legislature and executive fail to discharge duty there is no choice but for the court to respond and so obliged to act. Jharkhand is a situation where the Constitution has to be protected and it is necessary and obligatory to preserve sanctity. He lamented that the Governors post has become political asylum for people who lose elections and they have no security as far as tenure is concerned. He suggested that the appointment of a Governor be made by a committee comprising the Vice-President, the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Chief Justice of India. To restore

democracy value based institutions should be improved. Shri Subba Rao mentioned the conditions laid down in the Sarkaria Commission that the governor should be an eminent person, person from outside the State, should be detached from politics and not holding a political office. It is desirable that the Governor is not installed. There is need for continuity and constitutional balance of federal structure when new party comes to power in the state.

Prof. R. Venkata Rao, the Principal of the Andhra University College of Law said Governor means continuous government and for the successful working of cooperative federalism, institutions should be strengthened. Constitutional values and conventions only can save democratic institutions in India. He likened the Governor's post to that of an appendix in human body "which is useless when inert and dangerous when active". Venkata Rao opined that the office of the Governor is vital and the linchpin and assures continuity in government. He said that there is need to focus on conventions and only conventions can save the Constitution.

The AU Dean of Faculty of Law, Prof. Y. Satyanarayana pointed out how Sarkaria Commission Report has tremendous value and that the office of Governor is not an individual but an institution by itself with Constitutional respect which needs integrity, honesty and knowledge of the Constitutional framework. The persons chosen for the post were not up to the mark. Two or more states having the same Governor is against the Constitution and needs serious consideration. Federal democracy will not flourish unless there is a change in culture and attitude. In any country law is supreme and all persons including the Governor are under the law but not above law, Satyanarayana said.

- Dr. Mrs. M.Vijayalakshmi
(Asst. Professor GIFT)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

- Prof. M.N. Sastri
(Retd. Principal AU College of Science of Technology)

The efforts of all nations are directed towards achieving economic growth through higher consumption rates through exploitation of natural resources with very little consideration for ecosystem services. It is estimated that, by the middle of this century, a five-to six-fold increase in energy and other resources are required to raise the living standards of the developing world to that of the industrialized world. At such levels of resource consumption the ecosystem services can neither be maintained nor the health and quality of life for the majority of the human society. The world is already having a foretaste of the catastrophes it has to face if the present rate of development continues.

The world economic institutions have realized that a true definition of growth should encompass the notion of sustainability, at the national and global levels, the health of life supporting systems and other environmental factors. In choosing growth-oriented activities, long-term benefits to the society, sustainability of resource base and ecosystem services as well as other social factors should be the basic criteria.

The United Nations has taken up the preparation of a *National Accounts System* of land, mineral resources, forest, water and other resources that represent economic assets, called

the *National Capital Stocks*. After allowing for the environmental damage to these assets from human activities, the *Net National Product* (NNP) is determined. The NNP represents the sustainability of the services that give the maximum consumption path that would not impair the well being of the future generation. The adverse effects of a country's growth profile when the sustainability factor is not taken into consideration are illustrated with two examples.

Costa Rica has suffered devastating deterioration of its natural resources over a period of two to three decades. About 30 percent of its forests have been burnt to clear the land for unproductive pastures and hill farming. Torrential rains led to soil erosion with the loss of about 2.2 billion tons of valuable soil between 1970 and 1989. Coral reefs and fisheries were destroyed due to water pollution and over-exploitation of marine resources. These adverse effects were estimated to result in a loss of US \$ 4.1 billion in terms of 1984 prices. These losses actually exceeded the annual growth rate of Costa Rica during the period. Indonesia officially claimed an annual growth rate of 7 percent between 1971 and 1984. But when depreciation of three major natural resources- oil, timber and top soil- were taken into consideration, the growth rate dropped to just 4 percent.

A group of experts from Yale and Columbia Universities presented to the World Economic Forum, recently held at Davos, a detailed report entitled "2005 Environmental Sustainability Index". The Index covers 146 nations showing who has outperformed whom on environmental issues. The group combined 21 indicators of environmental performance under five broad categories.

- * Environmental systems
- * Reducing environmental stress
- * Reducing human vulnerability to environmental stresses
- * Societal and institutional capacity to respond to environmental challenges
- * Global stewardship

Data collected for 76 variables of these indicators were integrated to provide the 2005 Environmental Sustainability Index that is claimed to provide I. A powerful tool for putting environmental decision-making on firmer analytical footing. II. An alternative to GDP and Human Development Index for gauging a country's progress, and III. A useful mechanism for benchmarking environmental performance. The rank of a country, given on the basis of a score arrived at, quantifies the likelihood that it will be able to preserve valuable environmental resources effectively over the period of several decades. The higher the country's ESI rank the better-positioned it is to maintain favourable environmental conditions into the future.

Five countries, Finland, Norway, Uruguay, Sweden and Ireland are at the top of the list in that order with scores of 75.1, 73.4, 71.8, 71.7, and 70.8 respectively. North Korea is at the bottom with a score of 29.2. Other countries at that level are Iraq, Taiwan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These countries face numerous

issues, both natural and manmade, and have not managed their policy choices well. India ranks 101 with a score of 45.2. Some other rankings are Argentina (9), Russia (33), USA (45), Myanmar (46), Senegal (59), UK (65), Thailand (73), Indonesia (75), Sri Lanka (79), Nepal (85), Nigeria (98), Bangladesh (114), and Pakistan (131).

There are some interesting conclusions from this study, Japan (30) and Germany (31), though highly crowded and industrialized, show a better performance than UK (65). Surprisingly, USA occupies a high rank (45) in the table in spite of industrialization and poor record in pollution. This is attributed to its large natural resource base relative to its population.

Several countries in South America are in the top 20. Although some of these countries have acquired negative reputation for abuse of natural resources (for example rapid deforestation in the Amazon), most of the area remains rich in wilderness and natural resources.

It is hoped that such an Index and its elements prepared with improved data provide the foundation for more data-driven environmental analysis and decision-making. A number of important issues such as quality of waste management, wetland destruction, and exposure to toxic metals are to be included. Exercises of this nature are expected to help nations achieve the large-scale environmental aims of the UN Declaration of Millennium Developmental Goals endorsed by the Johannesburg Earth Summit 2002. A full text of the report is available at <http://www.yale.edu/ESI2005>.

Congratulations to Prof. Sastri

Prof. M.N. Sastri has received the Dr M.V. Ramanaiah Memorial Award for 2004 for his valuable contribution to the field of Radiochemistry and Indian Association of Nuclear Chemists and Allied Scientists (IANCAS). The award was presented to him at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar on March 16. CPS offers its congratulations to Prof. Sastri on receiving the award.

DEMOCRACY IN DANGER

- **Dr. R. Gangadhara Sastry, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,**
Reader in Political Science, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning
(Deemed University) Prasanthinilayam,

The Constitution of India is known as a "unique" document for various reasons. In fact, the Constituent Assembly of India exhibited an exemplary sense of understanding of the "unique" needs of the nation during the time of drafting the document. Some of the decisions of the Assembly stand out to be so very fascinating that even today it is very difficult to bring out the nature of the Indian Constitution in clear terms. The ingenuity of the Founding Fathers in their commitment to the cause of Indian unity, integrity and sovereignty can neither be estimated nor realised in real terms as they drafted a Constitution which has been described as possessing features that are parliamentary, presidential, unitary and federal at once. Even as the Indian National Congress committed itself to the drafting of a federal Constitution before independence, partition of the country, especially on religious grounds, - and the emergence of Pakistan, - being closely followed by unprecedented violence, - as well the frightening world political situation with the emergence of cold war, - that had pulverised the nation into a state of unbelievable

shock and fear of disintegration, - compelled the Constituent Assembly dominated by the Congress members, - to draft a Constitution that happened to be unitary and federal at the same time.

As pointed out by Granville Austin, an authority on the Indian Constitution, - the governmental mechanism as worked out by the Founding Fathers was aimed to work as a federal system during normal times and convert itself into a unitary scheme at once as and when required without any delay of any sort. The collective genius of the Constituent Assembly in bringing out such a highly commendable document as the Indian Constitution which could alone cater to the peculiar political, economic, and social needs, fascinated the whole world indeed. The Assembly's constitutional design of a Westminster model with certain fundamental principles of a cabinet system, coupled with some of those highly significant basic federal characteristics of the American model, aimed at protecting the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country, - was regarded as a panacea for the serious ills from which the nation was suffering. But, sadly it was not to be so. It was not to be so, not because the Founding Fathers were wrong in their prescriptions, but because those who worked the Constitution have belied the high expectations of the Founding Fathers. As we go to analyse the reasons for such a failure on the part of those who worked it, - evidently the blame to a large extent rests with the political parties.

Ever since the Constitution went into force, parliamentary democracy has become a serious casualty, at the hands of self seeking politicians trying to glorify themselves by seeking more to serve their own personal and party ends than the national interest. Constitutional arrangements as worked out by the Assembly, - specially designed to accomplish results exclusively for India, - which are certainly unattainable by any normal standards of governance, - were thought of by the Assembly. Going by the standards the Assembly had set for itself, the democratic style in which it functioned, - the nature of its composition and the deep sense of commitment and the high degree of collective wisdom which it had exhibited, the Constitution can never be faulted for the present pitiable position in which the polity is found. However, there need be no second thought about the view that, the spirit and dedication to the cause of the Constitution rendered by the Founding Fathers appears to have been short lived.

Anyway, as of now those forces which are supposed to be sustaining the working of parliamentary democracy, - like the political parties, legislative assemblies, executive authorities, judicial establishments and a host of other constitutional arrangements appear to be the ones which are wrecking the polity from within. For example, political parties which are considered to be indispensable for the working of democracy are regarded by many scholars as the ones which are mainly responsible for the fast deteriorating situation in the country, - which might ultimately result in a break-down of the constitutional scheme itself.

The undemocratic and totally unethical functioning of

the political parties in the country, - both national and regional, - resulting in a thorough criminalisation of politics and politicisation of all crime, - as evident on an unprecedented scale ever since independence in Bihar today, - and the most unethical means adopted by parties to gain access to power, - does not require any elaboration as to the damage being caused to the Indian democracy. The fact that even after fifty five years of independence, we could not develop the mechanism and tradition of "participatory democracy" is very much evident and the most commonly held view that the Indian electorate has shown great maturity and political wisdom at the time of elections certainly cannot be sustained as the masses never reflected their understanding of the "performance" of any given government or party, - except alternating between the parties or coalitions. It was always the "hawa" or the "wave" (especially sympathy wave) that was prevalent at the time of elections that mattered more with the masses than any definite and precise understanding of either the successes or the failures of the working mechanisms of the democratic/parliamentary traditions, processes and governmental programmes of various hues. Is it not common knowledge in the country that during elections, all electoral behaviour is more influenced by such factors as, "the party symbols", "muscle power", "liquor power", "caste", "community", "religion", "money" etc., (which are totally extraneous to democratic philosophy) that govern the prospects of candidates in elections than their academic accomplishments, record of service to the people and abilities to represent?.

Conducting elections in a routine manner at regular intervals as prescribed by the provisions of the Constitution, - without taking a serious note of ever increasing number of military, para-military and police forces in countless number of contingents for conducting elections, -coupled with the ever growing role of "money", "liquor", "rigging", "booth-capturing", "impersonation", and "scaring-away citizens from voting"- cannot certainly be considered as democracy gaining wider acceptance and getting stabilised. Above all, the ever growing role of criminals, hooligans, mafia dons in the electioneering processes, -willingly allowed and sometimes even purposefully adopted by the political class of the country,- evidently strike at the very roots of the parliamentary democratic system. Unless the democratic system is put on the right track through the adoption of required remedial measures so as to strengthen parliamentary system,-the Constitution might break down and collapse leading to chaos and disorder of unprecedented dimension.

Political parties have always been vying with one another ruthlessly on gaining access to portals of power through adopting any and every possible means,-that too at any cost. Taking advantage of the defective provisions of the Anti-Defection Act, the "art" of pulling down governments by encouraging defections has been practised and perfected by all political parties almost on professional lines without any exception, -to the utter disadvantage of parliamentary democracy,- for example,-refer to the very recent case of dismissal of the state government in Goa,-wherein the Governor and the Speaker were understood to have played highly controversial and undemocratic roles,- with no respect

for democratic norms at all. In fact, all political parties with no exception, - in a systematic manner, -have contributed to the worsening political situation in the country and the degeneration of vital constitutional offices such as the President, the Governor, Speakers of the Union and State Legislatures, Judicial authorities at various levels, and various other governmental authorities to the detriment of parliamentary democracy in the country. Taking into account what has been happening in the country ever since the Constitution came into force, and periods during which emergency was clamped with the clearance granted by a President who chose to be a rubber-stamp, -not caring to protect democracy, -Union Governments working for the dismissal of state governments by invoking Article 356 which was supposed to remain more a dead letter, -in connivance with pliable Governors, -always to gain political ends, -entering into political formations conveniently to be named as "manches", "morchas", "fronts", "alliances of convenience", and various other types of "novel formations" that defy all parliamentary democratic logic, - political parties have already destroyed democracy in the country. As we find Indian democracy in danger, - mainly due to the destructive role of the political parties, - conducted and maintained by political leaders who are known to be hand in glove with criminal gangs, hooligans, mafia dons and many other anti-social elements, (see, - Vohra Committee report)- it is high time that the recommendations on vital matters relating to strengthening of various parliamentary democratic institutions, - of various commissions and committees appointed over decades by the Government are implemented with immediate effect.

ALTERNATIVE HEALING: NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTATION

- Dr. T.V. Sairam

Chief Commissioner of Customs & Central Excise

"The art of medicine consists of amusing the patients, while nature cures the disease." - VOLTAIRE

Various systems and practices of traditional medicine have existed in all human societies around the world throughout the human society.

While some cultures had taken special care to preserve them, though at times without proper documentation, others had to succumb to vagaries of Nature and ravages of Time and became extinct.

The medicinal heritage of a community, as handed down from one generation to another is based on a broad understanding of the biological processes that operate not only within the human organism, but also outside. The Nature's laws are intuitively recognized and followed in all these systems, as they determine the health and well-being of not only the individual concerned but also the entire network or the ecosystem that supports him or her.

All healing systems of yester years are based on a holistic approach - an approach to address not only the body, but also the mind and consciousness.

Any such intervention has to take note of a wider canvas, which not only includes the health and welfare of an individual, but also that of a family or a society, that supports him or her.

Long regarded as a "quack medicine", these systems made use of often, apparently irrational and "exotic" practices and methods, ingredients and formulations, which would hardly appeal to Mr. Reason.

Apart from their appealing to reason, these practices also suffer from a changed scenario, to which we are getting accustomed to in the nascent 21st century.

We no longer live nearer to Nature, say in a hunter-gatherer community. Nor are we agrarians or 'sons of the soil' as our forefathers used to be. In this fast shrinking world, which have fused the cultures and standardized the behaviour patterns, we hardly have a home of our own, and even if there's one, we feel that we are total strangers there!

Thanks to the phenomena like urbanization, globalization and standardization of life-styles, we are receding back from our natural goals and instincts, getting often uprooted, becoming unstable with our own self, losing our identity.

The root-cause for many a modern-day ailments in man can be attributed to his milieu. While his physical environment is slowly getting toxic with industrial chemicals and nuclear fall-out, his mental environment is slowly polluted with the debris of information explosion, which seems to substitute all traces of love and affection, good will and human value, which formed the very foundation of every human society.

The clear emphasis on the concepts such as compassion, healthy routine, moderation, simple living and high thinking etc., as a healthy way of living, as celebrated in the archaic social and cultural systems, appear to be no longer valid in a materialistic, consumerist, "hi-tech" global village.

The "healthy" routine, propagated by the ancient traditions, was the first victim to be targeted, with the onslaught of industrialization necessitating movement of cargo-both human and material.

Industrial policies favoured migration resulting in the loss of identity of individuals interacting with an equally "faceless" community.

The rapidly growing globalization mauled the peaceful life style pattern of people, making them to run so as to remain in the same place from where they started their relay if not reaching backwards. Time gained its importance and became synonymous with money. The lifestyle had to be fast, and so the food and reproductive habits. One cannot afford to wait for a drug or medicine to have its response time for its reaction in the body. Where's the question of waiting for Nature to heal or cure??

As a result one's own comfort-levels and well-being has taken a backseat at the cost of one earning and spending capacity. As money and its accompanying goodies increased, time-availability for one's own well-being had shrunk.

While the system of allopathy colonized for almost four centuries, sometimes even uprooting the tradition-based

holistic domestic medicinal practices prevalent in many parts of the globe. In recent years there has been some change of heart. Increasing side-effects, and the unaffordable costs involved, have woken up people to have a second look at their medical needs.

In 1993 the *New English Journal of Medicine* reported that one in three Americans, usually college-educated and relatively well-to-do - uses unconventional medical treatments such as relaxation, chiropractic, therapeutic massage, special diets, music and megavitamins. A survey indicated that many had felt let down by physicians in the past, and that had made them to switch over to an approach, which was more humane, less judgmental and which induced them becoming responsible for their health habits. Such an approach made them feel more participative in every step of procedure they had to undertake and further, they never felt either like over-grown babies, before an interrogating panel of strange specialists or like guinea pigs before a multitude of instrument-wielding laboratory technicians.

In recent years, the various practices which can be categorized under "alternative medicine" are drawing attention of people across the derived from the time-tested methods evolved over millennia by the Eastern seers, sages and medicinal men, quite a few of them are the brain-children of the modern intuitive thinking and which are yet to be tested for their worth.

It is felt that all such medical concepts and practices, which originate both from well-respected traditions as well as the fad and fancy of a dispassionate documentation so that the posterity can judge their merits for themselves.

EMPOWERING VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS - THEORETICAL ASPECT (PART-I)

- Dr. C.V. Krishna Rao
Retd. Director of Medical Education Govt. of AP

The world is filled with people who have suffered from one misfortune or the other. The only thing that sets one apart from the rest is the desire and the attempt to help others. People who reach out beyond their pain out into the world in a transiting way - they are the ones who make a difference. Nietzsche said "He who has a why to live for, can bear with almost any how". Sometimes God gives us obstacles in life to overcome to make us strong.

Blindness or visual impairment is certainly a major sensory impairment. In spite of this handicap, blind children gain knowledge by making use of their non-visual senses, eg. hearing and touching i.e. verbal and tactile communication. Although visual impairment is a condition of the visual system, its effects may extend far beyond the visual system itself. Yet there are a number of cognitive lags in the development of a blind child, modes of learning are different, Blindness can be by birth (congenital) or may manifest in later years (acquired due to various causes like Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), cataract, aftermath of injuries, infections, to mention few. Some of these acquired conditions are insidious in onset, gradual in progress, ultimately leading to total darkness, may be out of negligence. Sudden onset of blindness is a well-known entity. Luckily many of the above are preventable and curable too, like corneal ulcers, cataract and so on. Presently there is a silver lining for those who suffer from R.P. but the helping

hands are in very few countries at enormous cost. Limitations as a result of impairment are: 1) limitations of range and variety of experience, 2) limitation vulnerability 3) lack of control of environment and 4) lack of incidental and emulative learning. A blind person gains knowledge of the spatial qualities of objects only by tactual observation in which kinesthetic experience plays an important role. Fortunately, the power of imagination has little to do with vision. The effects of blindness may extend far beyond the visual system. For both sighted and blind, modes of learning are different.

Parents and professionals are the best teachers for visually blind. They should be child's lifelong advocates, instilling confidence in them and passing on the confidence to unfortunate children. This is the parent/professional task. This is the task that requires, in addition to confidence, courage, all that the above can muster in good measure.. The two put together are their friends, philosophers, guides and so on and on. Individuals, associates, organizations, local bodies for disabled are nothing but conglomeration of parents, professionals, public and philanthropists. Instead of individual effort to reach goal, collective effort is highly desirable and invariably successful.

Conclusion : (My Operator's Manual - Kirk Douglas)

- 1) When things go bad, always remember it could be worse.
- 2) Never, never give up, keep working on your speech (vision) and on your life.
- 3) Never lose your sense of humour-laugh at yourself, laugh with others.
- 4) Stem depression by thinking of, reaching out to and helping others.
- 5) Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- 6) Pray not for God to cure you, but to help you help yourself.

Helen Keller, blind and deaf from birth, said "when we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is brought in our life, or the life of another".

We all have handicaps- big or small. But we must overcome our hardships to become better people. We must try, we must try- whisper today into the ears of the blind.

(To be continued)

HUMAN EXCELLENCE

- Dr. A. Aswini Kumar, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
ASRAM Medical College, Eluru

Human excellence is what we try to achieve and how do we achieve it and sustain it. Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba says in his discourses, to achieve human excellence, we need a harmonious blend of head, heart and hands. Head represents gnana (knowledge), heart represents compassion and the hands represent the skill one develops or learns. It is not sufficient if

one has skills and knowledge, but needs compassion to achieve human excellence. Any work that is to be done successfully depends on thought process or what we call as planning or thinking. The thinking process contains five essential components. which are :

1. Dedication :

What is to be dedicated and to whom it should be dedicated. We need to dedicate to the almighty and what we need to dedicate is the ego.

What is ego? Every human being has three characters in him.

1. The Id - the animal Instinct
2. The Ego - I am so and so and that is what we feel we are.
3. The super Ego - is what we cultivate Ex: A smile, keeping ourselves under control from anger.

If one one has ego, the work he does is hampered and one cannot discharge his duties well. That is why our scriptures say "Vidya Vadathi Vinayam", "Vidya Vinayathe Bhushanam". Education should confer humility that is why we say "Wisdom is arrogant because it is wise" and knowledge is humble because it knows so little." Every activity we do should be offered to God. Selfless service transforms work into worship.

2. Devotion :

Devotion means essentially love. Love should be inspiring force for every activity.

Swamy says

- Duty without love is deplorable
- Duty with love is desirable
- Love without duty is divine
- Love without duty means love manifesting as duty.

Ex : Is it not mother's love for the child make her sacrifice her pleasures, her comforts. Soldiers fighting war for the country - a Kargil war sacrifice their pleasures, joy and comforts for fighting for the nation.

3. Discipline :

Bhagawad Gita says "na sreya niyamam vine" - nothing good ever results from indiscipline. Let us take an example from our own body. If heart beats regularly 72 times per minute it is good health. If it beats 200 times irregularly - it is bad and dangerous. If we breathe 16 times in a minute it is good. Oxygenation is good and it is good health. If we breathe 30 times per minute oxygenation is poor, it is dangerous and death may occur.

In short if there is discipline results are good and indiscipline results in bad. We need to be disciplined to do good and be good.

4. Discrimination/Discernment :

Some times we will be in difficulty to discriminate, what to do and what not to do, which way to go. In such situations often we take decisions emotionally, some times by our likes and dislikes, prejudices and preferences. It should not be so. The decision should be towards our set goal and the decision should be not only useful to us but to the society as a whole.

5. Determination :

This is an equally important component as others. Determination to complete a job - come what ever may be the obstacles. Obstacles should be taken as a challenge. Bhagavan Sri Satya Sai Baba says when the going gets tough, the tough gets going.

There is a nice English saying "The winner never quits and the quitter never wins." If we can develop ourselves on the five cardinal principles of life like -

1. Dharma - Right Conduct
2. Prema - Love
3. Shanthi - Peace
4. Ahimsa - Non violence
5. Sathya - Truth

and practice them along with harmonious blend of head, heart and hands utilizing a thinking process of devotion, dedication, discipline, discrimination and determination sure we are to achieve human excellence.

(This article is based on some of the discourses given by Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba.)

HERACLITUS - II (6th TO 5th CENTURY B.C)

- Sri Challa Sivasankaram

It is astounding to see that Heraclitus who lived 2600 years ago could attract the amiable attention of three intellectual colossuses of India such as Prof. R.D. Ranade, Aurobindo and Dr. S.Radhakrishnan of twentieth century C.E. All the three were comparatively young in terms of age at the time of dwelling on the works of Heraclitus. Prof R.D. Ranade submitted a treatise on the philosopher in 1916. Sri Aurobindo who was by then a recluse having his tryst with destiny in the colonial French pocket of Pondicherry was allured by the treatise thought it fit to write a positive critique on the treatise. It was serially contributed to the Arya of Calcutta and which was compiled later and came into light as a brochure. Heraclitus was an Ionian who flourished between 6th and 5th Century B.C. It was well-nigh at the same time the Sakya muni Buddha flourished in the Himalayan region of India. The priceless theories, systems of spiritual persuasions and religious doctrines emanated as they were from the hoary heads of both East and West unwittingly converge at a single point where apparent and absolute truths mingle with hardly any trace of divergence in reality. For instance, the words of Buddha culled and brought out in the majestic form and name of Dammapada and fragments, a collection of aphorisms and epigrams of Heraclitus have got some meeting ground in essence. There are not only some seeming similarities and parallels but also filiations between the two philosophies leaving ground for the faultfinders to attribute to the great souls the prosaic and ill-conceived taunt of atheists. Buddha replaced God by Dharma. Rebirth he ruled out. With regard to God Heraclitus had no two opinions. He believed in the one and one in all. Heraclitus was no lesser luminary seeking limelight from outside luminous philosophers. In fact there is enough data to establish him as an original thinker, foremost philosopher and consummate

mystic equal in nobility and far reaching erudition to Plato and Aristotle. It was a platinum age in Greece which gave the western world that there was another world above and beyond the temporal, and an infinite soul that never meets with extinction. There is no annihilation of anything either mundane or supramundane. Greek philosophers proved that their country like the sages and saints of India as the mother of conclusive truths, science, mathematics, astronomy and aesthetics so on and so forth.

The life of Heraclitus was not melodramatic like that of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. He led a life of total serenity, unencumbered peace nay he lived the pure life of a perfect philosopher. Wisdom wore light, on him. Like Gautama Buddha Heraclitus concluded the world was ever in a state of perpetual flux, perennial change, motion and mutation; and never is the same for even a few seconds. Buddha was branded as a Sunyavadin (Atheist) even so Heraclitus was called an Atheist taking some isolated and out of context observations of the philosopher. Likewise Adi Sanakara was characterized as concealed Buddhist. The doctrine of Heraclitus laid down with indubitable authority that Fire was the primordial element out of which everything else arose.

Some other Greek thinkers like Thales thought that everything was made up of water. Anaximenes thought that air was the primitive element. The Greek did not go farther in this regard. The Indian Taittiriya Upanishad Anandavalli gave the lineage and the way the five elements came to prevail. The order is "out of Atman ether arose, out of ether air arose, out of air fire arose, out of fire water arose and out of water arose the earth". The Upanishads enlighten on certain scientific and nonscientific questions which baffle the man in quest and in search of solutions.

Heraclitus was one with the Sankhya system whose founder was Kapila the son of Devahuti. Kapila was a Siddhapurusha. Siddhapurusha is one who by devout abstraction and severe mortification acquires spiritual perfection and superhuman powers. By this Supreme virtue Kapila was identified by Sri Krishna as his own self. Heraclitus and Kapila believed that world was neither made by God nor by man. But it is ever now and ever shall be an everliving Fire, with measures kindling and measures going out. Heraclitus's another theory, apart from the doctrine of world's perpetual flux, was the doctrine of mingling of opposites. There is clear proof of his belief in strife when opposites combine to produce a motion which is a harmony. Sometimes he spoke as if unity were more fundamental than diversity. The one is made up of all things and all things issue

from the one. His expressions are wisdom's blossoms and repositories of knowledge that eternally light the path of the spiritual roamer roaming hither and thither to gather fruits heaven showered to feed the spiritual seeker. Heraclitus and his subsequent mystic Socrates seem to have the same idea about seeking God who manifests in various ways, called by various names in the various religions. God is one, forms are many. In this connection it is not out of place to recall Rigveda that gave the portentous adage 'Ekam sat, Viprah Bahudha Vadanti'.
(Concluded)

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