

# BULLETIN

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OF THE  
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(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

## WE MUST OVERCOME THE CRISIS

Indian democracy is confronted with a severe crisis, one of the hardest challenges facing the nation since independence. Not just loss of credibility for the government but a serious ailment like multiple sclerosis afflicting the body politic that calls for immediate remedial action. It is too alarming a crisis to be left entirely to those in power and those seeking power like political parties or coalition partners to resolve it.

Institutions have declined and professional autonomy has almost collapsed. Corruption is no longer the monopoly of the government. Corruption of private sector with corporate houses as the stakeholders has become as notorious as the incurable cancer of governmental corruption. Even the judiciary and the media, both print and electronic, have lost their credibility. The so called noble professions of teaching and medicine fare no better as the former is no longer the venerable moulder and the latter the caring healer.

“For ending bureaucratic oppression, technocratic tyranny, crass inefficiency, bribery, jobbery, nepotism, corruption and the millions of other malfeasances that afflict the poor of our villages, town and cities, for ending the reign of the power brokers, of the intermediaries whom Shakespeare called the ‘caterpillars of the commonwealth’ – such strong words bearing telling testimony to the nature of corruption and inefficiency of the Indian state came from the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, while introducing the Panchayati Raj and Nagarapalika Bills in Parliament twenty years ago.

“That the fourteenth Lok Sabha turned out quite differently is the source of my greatest dissatisfaction and disappointment. Out of 1738 hours and 45 minutes, the

fourteenth Lok Sabha wasted 423 hours because of disruptions and adjournments due to disorderly scenes. This amounted to 24 per cent of the time of the House, which constituted an all-time alarming record. I am sorry I have to say that you are all working overtime to finish democracy in this country. It is a matter of great sorrow for me. The whole country is ashamed of the parliamentarians. I think the Parliament of India is reaching its lowest position – Nadir” some of the comments and observations made with deep anguish in the Lok Sabha by Speaker Somnath Chatterjee. His book *Keeping the Faith – Memoirs of a Parliamentarian* contains alarming truths about the working of our Parliament, the nation’s highest body. The same Parliament which fifty years ago was hailed as the school of democracy and role model for Asia!

Corruption is not just abuse of public office for private gain. It has become an easy route to seats of power and positions of authority. Sarvepalli Gopal, author of the biography of India’s first Prime Minister, regretted that the great Jawaharlal Nehru failed to check “flamboyant buccaneers” aiming to perpetuate corruption in India. The buccaneers are on a rampage now threatening the stability of the democratic system and unity of the nation.

Fortunately for India the number of good people far exceeds that of the corrupt ‘caterpillars, hijackers and buccaneers’. WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA gave ‘to ourselves’ in November 1949, the Constitution which came into force on January 26, 1950. It is our duty to protect the Constitution and strive for the realisation of its objectives. The rot must be stemmed immediately. Failure to act now would lead to irreparable damage to India's future.

- The Editor

*“The future of India is taking shape in the present and the future is going to be what millions of young men and women want it to be.” - Jawaharlal Nehru*

## **FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY FUNCTION OF CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES**

The fifteenth anniversary function of Centre for Policy Studies was held on October 6, 2010 at the Visakhapatnam Public Library Conference Hall. Satguru K.Sivananda Murthy who was the Chief Guest at the first meeting of Centre for Policy Studies on October 26, 1995 gave the benedictory message on the occasion and expressed the hope that the 'voice and views of CPS' would be heard by the policy makers. The Satguru honoured the founder of CPS Shri A.Sankar Rao, and honoured guests of honour with shawls. He presented clothes to the CPS's office boy Mr Manga Raju for his services right from the inception of Centre for Policy Studies in 1995.

A report on the function published in The Hindu by its Chief of Bureau Shri B.Prabhakar Sarma is presented here.

### ***"Speakers commend work of CPS"***

#### ***It is a platform and forum for intellectual meetings'***

Speakers at the 15th anniversary of the Centre for Policy Studies (Gayatri Vidya Parishad) lauded the services rendered by CPS through its regular bulletins and seminars on education, policies and governance.

Delivering his benedictory message Satguru K.Sivananda Murthy said CPS had done quite a remarkable intellectual services to the citizens of Visakhapatnam. Referring to the remark by Prof.Prasanna Kumar in his welcome address that it was only a function and not celebration, he said the real celebrations would be on the day its voice was heard so loud that the men who matter did not miss it even deliberately.

President of Gayatri Vidya Parishad and former Mayor D.V.Subba Rao, who presided over the function, appreciated the untiring efforts of the Centre in bringing out 85 bulletins in the last 15 years making the CPS a platform and forum for the intellectual meetings. He also appreciated Sankar Foundation's founder A.Sankar Rao's initiative in establishing CPS, which was now being run by the Gayatri Vidya Parishad. Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command Vice-Admiral Anup

Singh commended the work of the CPS, which he felt should "age like wine and not like humans." International Chairman of World Teacher Trust K.Parvathi Kumar said CPS had a greater role to play in society and advised it to think of building a team with dynamic youngsters committed to social work.

### **'Two good things'**

Visakhapatnam Port Trust Chairman Ajeya Kallam observed that CPS has grown into an effective forum for debate on public policy. Former Chairman of AP State Council of Higher Education K.C. Reddy remarked that the two good things that had happened to Visakhapatnam were the CPS and the Visakha Public Library initiated by Varahalu Chetty.

### **Portrait unveiled**

Vice Admiral Anup Singh released the CPS 15th anniversary publication 'Dialogue and Democracy – Reflections on Ideas, Issues and Policies', Dr.Parvathi Kumar released Challa Sivasankaram's book 'Of India's Heritage' and CPS bulletin and Mr.Kallam released the second edition of the 'Footprints of Divinity – A Gandhi Reader' on the occasion.

Prof.K.C. Reddy unveiled a portrait of late Prof.B.Sarveswara Rao, founder-president of Gayatri Vidya Parishad.

( Courtesy : *The Hindu*, October 7, 2010 )

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### **'Two important works'**

Centre for Policy Studies organized a discussion on two recently released and widely discussed books-. Fali S.Nariman's *Before Memory Fades – An Autobiography* and Somnath Chatterjee's *KEEPING THE FAITH – Memoirs of a Parliamentarian* on November 12, 2010 at the Visakhapatnam Public Library with DVSS Somayajulu, President of the Visakhapatnam Bar Association speaking on the former and CPS Director A.Prasanna Kumar on the latter.

The Hindu's news report on it is published here: ***"Nariman's autobiography, a book on Indian legal History"***

Packed with facts and anecdotes, 'Before memory

***Gandhi "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". - New York Times (Jan. 31, 1948)***

fades' is a unique autobiography by one of the renowned jurists of the country Fali S.Nariman and inadvertently describes the Indian legal history. Reviewing the book at a meeting organized by the Centre for Policy Studies here on Friday was another legal luminary D.V.Subba Rao's son D.V.S.S. Somayajulu, who touched upon reflections of Nariman's various aspects of life. "I have lived and flourished in secular India," is how the great lawyer of Parsi origin describes himself in the book reflecting his satisfaction of leading a satisfactory public life, Mr. Somayajulu said.

With a touch of humour in every chapter in the autobiography, he does not hesitate to register his failure to get any bill passed in Rajya Sabha where he has spent six years as MP, with subtle reminder of the brute force of majority that would not allow any kind of individual bill passed. Nariman touches upon all his failures and how he was corrected by his teacher in his student days then by his eminent seniors in the legal fraternity and as a Member of Parliament. He has high praise for Koka Subba Rao and V.R. Krishna Iyer, who according to Mr.Somayajulu, commanded the highest regard worldwide for their excellence in jurisprudence.

Director of the centre A.Prasanna Kumar, who introduced Mr.Somayajulu, president of Bar Association, was all praise for him for trying to emulate his father's qualities in the profession. He described Nariman as one of the soft spoken persons who never hurt others with his words, but always made his point firmly. Later, Prof.Prasanna Kumar, analyzing the former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee's book 'Keeping Faith', opined this was a bit too early from the Communist leader. "It looked more as giving a reply to all the political parties, who blamed him for his behaviour in Lok Sabha," he said.

"A man known for his discipline and compassion that he claims he had inherited from his parents, dedicated the book to his political guru Jyoti Basu," he added. Entire book has been divided into four sections – values (cultural), principles, political Ideology, and faith in Parliamentary system and has reference to some of the great leaders like Hiren Mukherjee.

Those who attended the meeting included Mr.D.V. Subba Rao.

( Courtesy: *The Hindu*, November 13, 2010 )

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## **The State of our democracy!**

**Speaker's comments and observations on the functioning of the Lok Sabha** (from Somnath Chatterjee's book)

We should, at every step, ask ourselves whether our conduct befits the stature of this great institution and as trustees of the people. p.151

Its greatness is determined by the progressive laws enacted purposeful discussions held on critical issues and how they are perceived in moulding the future of the nation, without at any time ignoring the citizen, who is at the centre of our polity. p.152

That the fourteenth Lok Sabha turned out quite differently is the source of my greatest dissatisfaction and disappointment. In moments of agony, I described it as the worst phase of my political career. My valedictory speech on 26 February 2009 mirrors the highs and lows of a tumultuous phase in our parliamentary history and seeks an honest introspection on the future of democracy in our country. p.152

Out of 1738 hours and 45 minutes, the fourteenth Lok Sabha wasted 423 hours because of disruptions and adjournments due to disorderly scenes. This amounted to 24 per cent of the time of the House, which constituted an all-time alarming record. p.160

28 February 2008

'I am sorry I have to say that you are all working overtime to finish democracy in this country. It is a matter of great sorrow for me.' p.171

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'I think the Parliament of India is reaching its lowest position – Nadir!' p.171

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"The whole country is ashamed of the parliamentarians.' p.171

(The Editor's column in Deccan Chronicle is published here)

**Book with a Difference :** The Library week celebrations organized by the Visakhapatnam Public Library began with a discussion on two recently published and widely reviewed books, in fact autobiographies of two eminent persons—Fali S.Nariman's *Before Memory Fades, An Autobiography* and Somnath Chatterjee's *Keeping Faith*, with DVSS Somayajulu, President of Visakhapatnam Bar Association as the main speaker. 10,000 copies of Nariman's book were sold in a month, rated as a best seller. In a book of 459 pages, divided into 18 chapters, Fali Nariman casts a spell over the reader with a narration of events, personal, professional and public, marked by charming wit and humour and endearing humility. Expressing his profound gratitude to his mentor and icon Sir Jamshedji B.Kanga, 'the doyen of the Bombay Bar' Nariman writes: "greatness and goodness invariably go together—a truly great persons of the law is also the most humble. " *I am still learning,*" JBK would say at 92—his bright eyes glistening!" Referring to his golden wedding celebration in October 2005 Nariman says " I am a long married man not to be confused with a much married" and recalls the words of C.K. Daphtary, another legal luminary, at his fiftieth marriage anniversary function. Said Daphtary " Cicily has been my wife for fifty long years. She has been a good wife but in a married life of this length I must frankly confess that the first 49 years have been the most difficult." Nariman has high praise for the judiciary and the profession of law and divides the history of the apex court into two eras—one headed by Koka Subba Rao and the other by V.R. Krishna Iyer.

**Public Duty and Patrotism :** The chapter titled *The Bhopal Case* brings out the qualities of Nariman's head and heart—his gentle but firm rebuttal of the harshly worded attack made by Upendra Baxi and a few others on Nariman's role as advocate for Union Carbide. Those were days when leaders and eminent persons who disagreed with one another on public issues seldom harboured personal animosities, upholding the high ideals of Indian democracy. Nariman who shunned publicity and even shied away from pomp and power says, "My humble plea to those in power, shed the VIP syndrome—

before the iron gets into your soul." The last two lines of the book touch a chord in every heart and extol the greatness of India: " I have lived and flourished in a secular India. In the fullness of time if God wills, I would also like to die in secular India."

(Courtesy : Deccan Chronicle, November 21, 2010)

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## WORLD DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS-17

- Prof.M.N.Sastri

### Consumerism

"He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have."

- Socrates (BC 469-399)

"He who buys what he does not need steals from himself."

- Anon

"He, who knows he has enough, is rich"

- Lao-tzu (6th Cent.B.C.)

"In a consumer society there are inevitably two kinds of slaves:

The prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy."

- Ivan Illich

Culture is defined in several ways. In its broadest sense, it represents a cultivated behaviour of a group of people accumulated through beliefs, customs, morals, conventions, language, habits and any other capabilities acquired by them as members of a society and transmitted from generation to generation. Most large groups have a set of cultural traits that meet the group's needs and ensure their survival. Every culture has its own methods of obtaining food and shelter, ways to protect itself from extraneous forces. Cultures also differ within a country with factors such as climate, land forms and natural resources having influence. Religious beliefs have always influenced cultural traditions based on sustainability and enjoining the human society to look upon nature as a source of nurture and not a force to be conquered, subdued or ravaged.

The world is currently getting into the stranglehold of a new type of culture, "the consumer culture" or simply "consumerism". It is defined as a culture in which "the

**"Greatness and humility invariably go together, a truly great person of the law is also the most humble." - F.S. Nariman**

majority of consumers avidly desire goods and services that are valued for non utilitarian reasons, such as status seeking, envy provocation and novelty seeking.”, or as a “social and economic order that is based on the systematic creation and fostering of desire to purchase goods or services in ever greater amounts.”

Consumer culture is nothing new. It dates back to early civilizations (Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Ancient Rome, Indus Valley). But it was confined to the elite which was a small part of the population. While satisfying more than their personal whims and personal greed, it underlined the exclusive status of the nobility and the professional status of the educated elite. Saving and being frugal was the norm for most of the human society, and spending on luxuries was frowned upon and seen as wasteful.

A great change in consumerism arrived in the western society with the Industrial Revolution in England and parts of Europe in the wake of the enormous wealth coming from the colonized countries. This had the impact of changing the meaning of wealth, and the wealth producing process. For the first time in history products were available in large quantities within the reach of virtually everyone at very low prices, ushering in an era of consumer culture or consumerism. Further boost to the consumer culture was provided by the US after the World War. The factories previously producing weapons lay idle, and the soldiers were returning with no jobs to take up. The US economists and the government decided to revive economic activity by creating the consumer culture in which people were encouraged to accumulate and show off material wealth, to the point where it defined their status in society and their self-image (William Rees). Growing alongside the corporations and advertising, the consumer culture became the tour de force. Labour saving appliances for an easier and happier life became part of people’s lives in the developed societies. Advertising expanded from print media to radio, television and internet with thousands of messages telling people to buy more and more. With globalization, the developing countries have also begun catching up, transforming the consumer culture into a global phenomenon. Over 1.75 billion people worldwide have

now come under the consumer class or a group of people pursuing lifestyles devoted to the accumulation of consumer goods. More and more people are hankering after bigger cars, bigger houses, highly processed foods and new lifestyles. Nearly half of global consumers belong to developing countries, including, 300 million in China, possibly doubling in ten years, and 125 million in India, also increasing equally rapidly.

Globalization has now made available the goods and services which were earlier considered luxuries and previously out of reach in developing countries. These include televisions, cell phones, computers, air conditioning, refrigerators, microwave ovens, automobiles, personal care products and processed foods. Governments tell their people that the economy is dependent on consumption and that the road to economic progress is for the people to become good consumers. The government also reinforce consumer culture by providing subsidies to consumer industries in the name of development. As a consequence, between 1950 and 2005, metal production grew six-fold, oil consumption eight-fold and natural gas consumption fourteen-fold. Experts say that many metals, especially the rare metals such as gallium, indium, platinum and hafnium that go into the consumer gadgets will run short within the next decade. In some cases there is more of the metal already in use than is left in the ground. Even the output of the abundant metals, such as aluminium, copper, iron, zinc and lead would have to increase three to nine times their current levels to meet the consumer needs of the world population. One ton of earth is dug for securing one carat (200 milligrams) of diamond. Vast swathes of land are cleared every day across the globe to source the minerals and other resources to accelerate production of the consumer goods. As a result, about 60 billion tons of earth resources are now extracted annually – about 30 per cent more than 30 years ago. Today the average European uses 43 kilograms of resources daily, while the average American uses 88 kilograms. All in all, the world extracts resources equivalent of 112 Empire State Buildings from the earth each single day. In 2008 alone, people around the world purchased 68 million vehicles, 85 million refrigerators,

***“Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.” - Bertrand Russell***

297 computers and 1.2 billion cell phones. Every material item we consume comes out of the earth. This has environmental implications in terms of global warming, landfills, pollution and depleting finite resources. Such explosion of consumerism is unsustainable and will lead to a major ecological disaster.

For a long time China was known as a country of bicycles. About 25 years ago there were barely any private cars in China. By 2000 there were 5 million cars and the number of all automobiles has increased to well over 150 million (including about 25 million private cars) by 2005. By 2040 this number is projected to surpass US. In India the number of automobiles in 1950 was 300,000. By 2006 the number rose to 89.6 million. The world automobile count now stands at over 750 million. There are 4.6 billion cell phones in the world. India has nearly 600 million cell phones (765 million in China and 285 million in US) and this number is expected to grow to 1 billion by 2015. Ironically, sanitation facilities are available to only 366 million or 31% of India's population. China has over 12 million computer users while India has about 5 million. There are 400 million TVs in China as compared to 63 million in India.

The advertising industry in all its multilayered sophistication is creating dissatisfaction with what people have and what they look like, what their life is about, turning them into ready consumers of produce, gadgets and lifestyle enhancement products. Before advertising, people never had the urge to go shopping and buy new cars, gadgets, clothes or trendy shoes. Their desires were more closely tied to their needs such as food, shelter, and basic transportation. Advertising in the media has magnified these desires among people especially among the growing urban middle class even at subconscious level through hundreds or even thousands of symbols of different consumer brands. The consumer industrial complex of designers, advertisers, event organizers, psychologists and retail experts send mixed signals to consumers by blurring the line between luxuries and necessities. Through indoctrination of the concept of obsolescence, consumers are encouraged to continuously purchase new appliances and clothes to replace outdated or out of style items. Confused by the plethora of half

truths and false claims in the advertisements, consumers are finding it increasingly difficult to separate fact from fantasy especially in food and personal care products. In the 1960s, typically only one family member needed to work in order to support the family. Today, most urban families need two wage earners to meet the family's consumer needs. Sociologists aver that this trend could have adverse impact on the upbringing of children. Worldwide the annual expenditure on cosmetics totals US \$18 billion. A report by the British Chamber of Commerce says that China is currently the fastest growing and second largest luxury goods market in the world, next only to Japan. It is expected to reach the top spot by as early as 2015. In 2009, Chinese consumers purchased 27.5% of the world's luxury goods worth US \$9.4 billion, in comparison to 2004 when the total was only US \$2 billion. Not only the womenfolk but men also are increasingly using cosmetics under the influence of advertising. Many of the religious holidays (e.g. Christmas, Diwali) have become more oriented towards gift exchange and socializing.

Advertising is also spurring on people to compete with their neighbours in accumulating material goods, fostering what is known as the "*Keeping up with the Joneses*" syndrome. With credit liberalized through installment payments and credit access, people are becoming more and more debt-ridden and becoming addicted to the lifestyles of the rich and famous sometimes even at the cost of family and friends. Thanks to globalization, consumerism has become the biggest religion of the developed and rapidly developing economies. Rising global trotting through popular holiday travel and business travel involving flights and chain hotels, has become part of the cycle of consumerism and environmental degradation. In several situations this addiction has become the cause for *affluenza*, a concept described as painful, contagious, and socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from dogged pursuit of more.

Advertising media are also playing a profound role in bringing about fast changes in the world of fashions. Earlier, James Laver (1899-1975) propounded a time frame for fashions, known as Laver's Law on

Consumerism. According to this Law, a fashion is considered to be

Indecent 10 years before its time  
Shameless 5 years before its time  
Daring 1 year before its time

*Smart currently*

Dowdy 1 year after its time  
Hideous 10 years after its time  
Ridiculous 20 years after its time  
Amusing 30 years after its time  
Quaint 50 years after its time  
Charming 20 years after its time  
Romantic 20 years after its time  
Beautiful 150 years after its time.

With rapidly changing face of the fashion world, this time scale is now highly shortened. What was considered a fashion today becomes obsolete in a few weeks.

Children, more than adults, are impacted by a large number of TV commercials promoting processed foods, confectionaries, soft drinks with potential adverse health effects such as lethargy, obesity, diabetes, liver failure and poor concentration. According to one study, four Indian TV channels for children aired a total of 44,887 processed food advertisements in April 2010 alone. McDonalds, the fast foods chain, runs more than 30,000 local restaurants serving nearly 30 million people in 119 countries each day. The Internet domain is becoming an obsession for people, specially the tends for exchange of information on fashions, socializing etc. Several fashions have become a threat to animal species such as snakes, sharks, crocodiles, tigers, Tibetan antelopes, rhinoceros and plume birds, whose body parts have become the components of the fashion merchandise.

Consumerism has also some downside effects. Many young people are turning to crime as the easiest means to get hold of the goods they desire. Corrupt practices which were inconceivable earlier have been on the rise. The rise in consumerism is also tearing the social fabric of the society by weakening the traditional bonds of kinship. In traditional societies people relay on each other and one person's problems are shared among many as in a joint family or a rural environment. But with the

break-up of families in the consumer economy, the traditional bondages are coming under stress. The consumer society encourages unhealthy competition in lifestyles which often prove detrimental to well being of people through causing depression or depressive thoughts when they find themselves inadequately equipped with all the latest fashions and gadgets.

Pope Benedict XVI recently warned, "The present consumerist culture tends to flatten man to the present, to make him lose the sense of past, of history; but in this way it also deprives him of the capacity to understand himself, to perceive problems and to build tomorrow." About five centuries ago, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the Arab Historian and sociologist alerted ".....when prosperity and luxury come to a people, they are followed by excessive consumption and extravagance, with which human soul itself is undermined, both in its worldly well-being and its spiritual life,"

The answer to consumerism lies in India's religious traditions many of which emphasize harmony with nature and self denial. The Gita says, "That person who lives completely free from desires without longing, attains peace."(11.7).

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## **MEDICAL PROFESSION THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN**

**- Dr.A.Aswini Kumar, MD, FCCP(USA)**

Professor of Medicine, Asram Medical College, Eluru

There is a hue and cry from all quarters that Medical profession is no longer "The Noble Profession" it once was, has now become a business. People accuse doctors of malpractices, exaggerated expenses, unnecessary operations and even stealing of organs from patients for organ transplantation. The Supreme Court's decision to include DOCTORS under CPA (Consumers Protection Act) amply confirmed the general feeling.

Why is all this happening and what are the causes behind this change in the profession? Has it really become a business? Are there not still doctors practising the profession as it was in the past?

What are the factors that have brought about this change?

## **1. CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF PATIENTS**

Today, the expectations of the patients and their relatives are very high. People are in a hurry and want quick results. They do not wait and pressurise the doctor for quicker relief. They forget that diseases take time to get cured. The request is for powerful medicines quicker investigations, even surgery. Otherwise they would like to go away to another doctor. And after all this is over, they complain of the treatment cost, the cost of the investigations and blame doctors for the expenses. Instances are there when patients or relatives ask why not take X-ray for cough of short duration, ECG for any chest pain, CT for headache and press for Caesarian because they feel that their daughter cannot bear the labour pains. A disease like Infective (VIRAL) Hepatitis (Jaundice), whatever one may do, takes about 4-6 weeks for total recovery. Patients are so restless of the slow recovery, they change doctors, hospitals and go away to native medicine or even for branding with a hope of quick recovery, which will never come.

## **2. CHANGE IN DOCTORS ATTITUDE**

Today's doctor is in a predicament. On one side the pressure of patients and their relatives on the other side, specialists and super specialists vying with other with in competition to often consultation.

He has to get quick results to keep the patients with him and so uses powerful medicines which are costly, gets investigations done to help diagnosis, has to keep the patients and their relatives in good humour, take the opinion of specialists or the super specialists so that he is not accused of negligence. Added to this is his fear of CPA and the court asking him to pay a heavy compensation. Medicine is a science which has many probabilities and many possibilities. The human body is not a laboratory to produce the same result every time. The diseases also vary in their courses and complications.

A simple viral fever treated or untreated subsides in 3-4 days leaving the patient a little weak and tired. But the same viral fever can devastate the brain producing encephalitis which can cause death or leave the patient crippled. Who is responsible for this or who can predict the nature and course of a disease? If by chance there is

a claim for negligence and in the court the question asked is why no investigations were done, the poor doctor is in for trouble. If he investigates every case because of fear, unnecessary expenditure for a simple case of fever is incurred. Who can solve this riddle and how to tackle the problem?

## **3. CORPORATE & SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITALS**

Corporate Hospitals and Super Speciality Hospitals are basically meant as tertiary care hospitals or for treatment in special situations. They have lots of investigatory facilities and unless the case is thoroughly investigated, treatment is not possible. Critically ill cases should go there. Necessarily, the cost of treatment is high and these hospitals are expensive. But today many patients go there with minor ailments and then complain of the high expenses of treatment. Today with so much advancement in knowledge and technical skills – it is not easy for a cardiologist or neurologist to give an opinion without doing many investigations. To assess and analyse a chest pain, a Cardiologist has to do an ECG, ECHO, Doppler treadmill, angiography, before an opinion is given. Once a patient goes for an expert's opinion, how can he bemoan the high expenses?

## **4. HIGH COST OF MEDICAL EDUCATION – CAPITATION FEES**

Today, Medical Education has become costly, more so with the capitation fees escalated every year. Even post-graduate seats are available at an exorbitant capitation fees. Any investment made by a person is done with a hope of a good return and necessarily this has an impact on the Medical Profession. It is true there is a change in the Medical Profession. The treatment cost has gone-up because of high cost of investigations and drugs. All this is happening because of the high expectations of the patients about a quick cure of the disease and a change in doctor's attitude. Beyond all this, there is a change in society where money is playing a big role in life. The need/greed for money is ever increasing.

“Today, if there is a decline in the compassion of physicians, its cause may be elsewhere. The fundamental problem lies outside the Medical establishment, within



the society as a whole. The physician is largely a reflection of the society – basic human character traits are well developed by the time a student enters the Medical School”.

- Prof.Glick

Whatever may be the changes there is a need for the doctors to have sympathy for the patients, take care of the sick and show concern for the suffering. Otherwise the profession loses its value, hurting the patient, the doctor and the society at large.

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## **'BABYLON IN ALL ITS GLORY' IN INDIA**

**- Prof. Manoj Das**

*(A seer among scholars the venerable Prof Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville and teaches at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book My Little India.)*

It was a dawn in the winter of 1966. As my train chugged into the station at Madurai, it was not easy to locate the man, expected to receive me, in the crowd on the platform. A towering figure among the mathematicians of India and the editor of their journal, Prof. Venkataraman, in his simple dhoti, his head half-shaved, could be mistaken for a poor rustic Brahmin from the Tamil interland.

He led me to what was then the best private guesthouse in Madurai, belonging to the TVS group. Its manager, his hands folded, greeted me, saying, "We have tidied for you our most valuable suite, rarely opened for anybody after its first occupant, Pundit Nehru!"

A few guests at the reception viewed me with awe and I, too, would have done the same had there been a mirror nearby – but for the manager's post-script quietly disenchanting all: "So great is our boss's respect for Prof.Venkataraman!"

Mathematicians, for me, belonged to a sub-species of man-eaters and I never suspected Prof.Venkataraman's presence in the large audience at Sir Srinivasa Shastri Hall in Chennai (then Madras) to celebrate Sri

Aurobindo's birth anniversary which I had addressed a few months earlier. It is not the speaker, that is, the author, who had any role in pulling the crowd, but, the importance of the event apart, it was the man who presided over it – Sir C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer, a great orator, a legend in his lifetime. It was he who had, as the *Sachivottama* (the Prime Minister) of Travancore, declared the state a sovereign kingdom on the eve of India's independence, and submerged in a surge of popular protest (culminating in an attempt on his life), led the ruler to be among the first ones in signing the Instrument of Accession.

People still quoted the statement he made when he was offered the position of a judge by the English Chief Justice of the Madras High Court who was deeply impressed by his role in the famous case of Annie Besant versus Krishnamurti's father: "My lord, I will prefer talking nonsense for an hour or so a day to hearing nonsense for several hours all the days!"

That was a time when one could afford to raise a laugh at the cost of a profession without hitting a hornet's nest.

Sir C.P.'s public appearance was growing rare. No wonder that the intelligentsia of the city would vie with one another for a prime seat in the hall. Alas, that was to be his last speech. Some days later he flew to London for a lecture assignment at London University and collapsed at Heathrow airport.

"Look here," said Prof.Venkataraman, emerging from the crowd after the meeting, "I want you at Madurai!"

"Surely, but after two or three months."

"Agreed, but the condition is, you must repeat this speech there!"

"With mathematical precision?" I laughed apologetically. "I wonder if I can repeat even a small part of my speech right now, not to speak of months later."

"Well, well, we may consider allowing you some deviation," he had said condescendingly.

I do not know how much impressed he was with my performance in his city, but at night, while taking me

***"Men of spiritual realization have experienced their complete separateness from the gross and subtle bodies which they treat not as their selves but as the instruments of their selves". - Swami Ranganathananda***

round the Meenakshi Temple, the hub of the city, he deeply impressed me with his melodious recitation of Sanskrit hymns for two hours at a stretch. In the incense-filled, dimly lighted world of the ancient shrines, for a while I felt like a pupil being guided by an Upanishadic sage.

In the South mathematicians and scientists did not find any contradiction between their faith in Divinity and their academic discipline.

Ramanujan, the astounding genius, spoke in unambiguous terms of receiving solutions to his mathematical problems in his dreams, revealed by the deity he worshipped, Goddess Namakkai.

Madurai, probably the oldest city in the South, was a forest once upon a time. A king who had some mystic inclinations, dreamed of nectar raining on the forest from clouds presided over by Lord Shiva. He cleared the forest and shifted his capital there and named it Madhurapura (the sweet or nectarian city) of which Madurai is a derivation.

But the city came to prominence only after it was ruled by Princess Meenakshi. Her father had prayed to the gods to be blessed with a son, but the moment his eyes fell on his female child, he realized that she was worthier than a thousand worthy sons.

The princess succeeded her father to the throne. She was a stunning beauty; now she proved herself a great ruler. But a young and beautiful damsel as a successful ruler was an unacceptable proposition for the neighbouring kings. Several of them were too willing to ease the bizarre situation by marrying the princess and taking over her kingdom. But Princess Meenakshi spurned their overtures in the manner of fanning away nasty flies. The aggrieved suitors united to avenge their humiliation. They attacked Madhurapura.

Her sword swirling like strings of lightning, Princess Meenakshi, riding her wondrous horse, stormed through the swarm of invaders cutting and scattering scores of heads including those adorned with bejewelled crowns. The enemy melted away in no time. Even then, in her uncheckable fury, the princess galloped on. But suddenly her horse stopped and she grew conscious of an unusual

figure – the very embodiment of Bliss and Grace – standing before her. Instantly, not only the stranger's identity but also her own was revealed to her. He was Shiva; she was a human incarnation of his eternal consort, Parvati. The date for the wedding of the celestial couple, once again according to the earthly calendar, was fixed. Unknown to Parvati, her elder brother, Vishnu, living atop a hill, Alagar, on the outskirts of the city, began walking to the palace to participate in the ceremony. A bit late for the auspicious moment, he went back to his hill top abode. The chief annual even at Madurai still celebrates the Alagar deity's visit to the city and his return journey. However, one of the finest sculptures anywhere in the world, to be found in the Meenakshi temple, shows a loving Vishnu joining the blushing Parvati's hand with that of a gentle Shiva. It indicates that even though the Divine wedding technically took place at an auspicious moment, Vishnu authenticated it subsequently, personally giving away the bride to the bridegroom.

'Do you know what Bhaigai, the name of the river, means?' Prof. Venkataraman asked me the next day as we passed by it.

'No!'

'Hands down!'

I blinked at him, looking at my hands, which in any case were not up.

'Bhaigai means hands down. It refers to the genesis of the river.'

The bridegroom Shiva's large party included an enthusiastic goblin named Candodara. He went on eating, his eyes devoutly concentrated on his plate, sackfuls of cakes – varieties of them – poured on it and tumblerfuls of *Payasam*. Everything would disappear in a trice. The servers were tired; the kitchen was about to be empty. The panicky cooks reported the matter to Meenakshi. She came out holding a few sweets, gave them to Gandodara and asked, 'Do you need more, my son?'

Gandodara gobbled up the sweets and stood up. 'Mother, the trouble with me is, I'm not a very great eater!' All I need now is a little quantity of water to drink.'

The amount of food he had dispatched into his tummy was indication enough for defining his little quantity of water. The princess showed him a place away from the palace and asked him to throw his hands down – *Bhaiga!* Gandodara did so. Instantly flowered a lake – which later flowed as a river.

‘Every marital party accompanying the bridegroom even to this day includes a mini-Gandodara or two!’ I observed.

The grandeur of the temple of Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareswar – as Siva is known here – with some of the Gopurams dating back to the 1st century, looked magnificent in daylight. The wonder expressed by W.S. Blunt more than a century ago, in *Ideas About India* (1885) was indeed significant: ‘When I had seen Madurai I felt that I had at least seen a temple of Babylon in all its glory, and understood what the worship of Apis might have been in Egypt’.

★ ★ ★

## **Jawaharlal Nehru’s literary flair**

- A. Prasanna Kumar

(Lecture delivered at Visakhapatnam Public Library on November 15, 2010)

Jawaharlal Nehru worked at a furious pace right from the beginning when he jumped into politics till his last in May 1964. Probably very few in history worked for so long with such varied interests. He was a leader, an organiser, a tireless public speaker and writer of great ability and charm. His father Motilal Nehru expressed concern when he said in 1928 : “ If Jawahar lives for ten years he will change the face of India. But such men do not usually live long; they are consumed by the fire within them.” That was the time when young Nehru was the rising star on the Indian political firmament. Jawaharlal Nehru exhorted the youth of India to first serve the country in famous words: “ What shall it profit you to get you;’ empty degrees and your mess of postage if the” millions starve and your motherland continues in bondage? Who lives if India dies? Who dies if India lives?”

For one born with the proverbial silver spoon in the

mouth getting educated abroad was never difficult, even those days. Sent to England for higher studies, young Jawaharlal showed keener interest in the higher things of life. As Shashi Tharoor wrote in his biography published recently Jawaharlal Nehru secured a second class degree but first class English education. In 1912 before leaving England Jawahar wrote to his father thus: “ To my mind education does not consist of passing examinations or knowing English or mathematics. It is a mental state.” That meant in his case the mental state of an educated Englishman of culture, adds his biographer.

It is quite a daunting task to speak -on the literary flair of Jawaharlal Nehru whose writings spanned over four decades, from early twenties to early sixties and who addressed hundreds of meetings including centres of learning and national and international for a. His major works began in 1928 with his book on Soviet Russia in 1928, followed by *Letters from a Father to His Daughter in 1930*, *Glimpses of World History* 1934, *An Autobiography* in 1936, *The Discovery of India* 1946 and *Bunch of Old Letters* 1958. Just before his death in 1964 he wrote a Foreword to Shriman Narayan’s book in which he reflected on democracy and the pace of development. Scores of articles, messages and forewords during forty five years of active public life always had a literary touch and philosophical overtones. An interesting comment on Nehru’s Autobiography was received from the famous young artist Amrita Sher Gil who passed away prematurely, Amrita said she liked Nehru’s work even though she was averse to reading autobiographies because “where others would say when the sea saw me you would write when I saw the sea.” A fitting tribute to Nehru’s humility as a writer.

Great men can be imprisoned but not great minds. Nehru was both a great man and a great mind. In prison where he spent years he read voraciously and wrote prolifically. Jails in India became hallowed because the noblest men and women were thrown into them by the colonial power. Nehru’s letters from prison constitute a literary wealth. He wrote on a variety of subjects with an

amazing objectivity, philosophical insights and literary flair. His style of writing was straight and simple, never ornate or tiring to the reader. He instilled courage through his letters in his young daughter's mind exhorting her to grow up into a brave girl with books as her constant companions. Her best friends, he assured young Indira Priyadarshini, were her books and it did not matter if she had no friends in the lonely house with father being in prison and mother in far away hospital. He quotes a poem from Yeats on the meaning of life and death and explains how beautifully Virginia Woolf wrote. "The more I read her the more I like her. There is a magic about her writing, something ethereal, limpid like running water and deep like a clear mountain lake." Conceding that it was unfair to keep his only child alone Nehru explains to daughter Indira the meaning of true happiness. Happiness he writes is more often negative than positive, an absence of pain and suffering. "And how is one to be happy if he knows and sees another in pain? A sensitive person will suffer continually on behalf of others" he writes. Nehru exhorts his daughter to overcome loneliness and depression. "If you feel depressed at any time think that the next day you are sure to get over this.—it is just a passing mood." He gives her the example of Beethoven the great musician who was stricken with deafness but who boldly declared : " I shall seize fate by the throat. It shall never overcome me."

There was a touch of poignancy in Nehru's letters to his noble wife Kamala ailing in a hospital but unwilling to let her husband compromise on his stand with the British government. Wrote Nehru in his prison diary: " I was taken to her today again for 3 hours... How much weaker she looked—a shadow. Gone down hill since I saw her ten days ago. Will I see her again? Brave little girl. She smiled at me as I was coming away though her temperature was 103.4 and she was in a daze. And even in this condition she said : do not give an assurance to govt! How she longs to have me out and by her but not at the price of undertakings to the government. I feel both heavy and empty since my return to my barrack, so

lonely and weary. I gave Kamala today Edgar Allan Poe's lines:

Thou wast all that to me, love  
For which my soul did pine  
A green isle in the sea, love  
A fountain and a shrine,  
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,  
And all the flowers were mine.  
And all my days are trances  
And all my nightly dreams  
And where thy grey eye glances, And where thy  
footstep gleams  
In what ethereal dances,  
By what eternal streams.  
They seemed to represent my feelings

Nehru's love of poetry made him quote one poet or the other as the occasion demanded. He was well known as a great writer of prose and as a historian. In 1935 he wrote : " I am greedy about books and I buy them rather extravagantly and many friends pamper me by sending them." His writings are marked by lucidity and objectivity. One finds flashes of literary brilliance and lively sense of humour in his numerous writings. On India he wrote that the country " has always seemed to me to have broadly more the feminine qualities than the masculine." He meant feminine gentleness and grace. On Ganga he said that she is linked up with tradition, mythology, art, culture and history. He said he disliked the use of Ganges for Ganga. Ganga sounds infinitely better. A friend suggested an explanation which sounds feasible. Ganges, he says, is a corruption of Gangaji" he adds with a touch of humour.

Who else but Jawaharlal Nehru could write such a critical article on himself, about his ego and vanity! That too anonymously which created quite a stir in the political circles in the thirties when he became the Congress President. Nehru was amused to hear wild gossip circulating about the identity of the author of that 'derogatory piece' on Congress President Jawaharlal

***"I think the Parliament of India is reaching  
its lowest position - Nadir" - Somnath Chatterjee***

Nehru under the title *The Rashtrapati*. In it Nehru was called a fascist and his very face and voice tell us that private faces in public places are better and nicer than public faces in private places.” Devastating indeed. And with a hearty laugh he eventually revealed the identity to the relief of some and surprise of all.

India’s two literary stalwarts Rabindranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu, lavished praise on Nehru. Tagore likened him to *rituraj* the spirit of spring and Sarojini Naidu poetically greeted Nehru on becoming the Congress president in 1928. Said Sarojini the Nightingale of India to Nehru: “I wonder if in the whole of India there is a prouder heart than your father’s or a heavier heart than yours.” Hailing Tagore’s universal outlook Nehru wrote that Tagore “showed how India might be intensely national yet at the same time international with her thought and sympathy embracing the world. In the midst of our national struggle, he created that symbol of internationalism that is *Visva Bharati*.” Poets must look and act as poets, he says referring to Mohammed Iqbal a real poet and extraordinarily communal and narrow-minded.

Among the many subjects he wrote on are Sin and Punishment, Flying During the Monsoon, Honey, Horse Breeding, Birth and Death, Indian Marriages Examinations, The politician, Shirshasana, and on several personalities. Commonsense he once said common nonsense. Admiring Rajaji’s intellectual sharpness he called him one of the finest minds in India. Rajaji, he wrote, looked upon a cottage as a palace and a palace as a cottage. Yet CR is not attractive at first sight, especially with his dark glasses which make his face look harder than it is.

A touch of humour and sense of detachment always made him a different person. On his first visit to the United States of America in 1949 Nehru realised the hostility towards India and him in many circles and the comments made by the press. “One must never visit America for the first time,” he quipped. On his second visit seven

years later when things did not much improve an anecdote was in circulation. When the famous cold warrior and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles asked Nehru “Are you for or against us?” Nehru coolly replied “Yes” Years later his daughter Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister did give back at the American Press Club: A reporter tried to provoke her by asking Madam prime Minister “Are you tilting to the left or to the right.” To which she replied “we are not tilting either to the left or to the right but standing straight.”

Examinations came in for sharp comment. Nehru felt that they always added to tension. In his words: “Examinations as they are conducted today are no real test of anything worthwhile. Often those who do well in examinations are failures subsequently in life and vice versa. So it is absurd to take them too seriously or to grow enthusiastic or depressed over them.

Literature, the love of it at least, lightens one’s burden. Jawaharlal Nehru was a remarkable person. Statesman, philosopher, scholar and above all a humanist with extraordinary courage. His literary works like his life are a source of inspiration to people all over the world. They have a permanent place in history and literature.

## **SRI SUBRAMANIA BHARATI – IV**

(Dec 11th 1882 – Sept. 12th 1921)

**- Sri C.Sivasankaram**

Prior to his surrender to *parasakti Bharati* was profoundly drawn towards Sri Krishna-consciousness. His Sri Krishna consciousness evolved to such an extent that he experienced Sri Krishna manifesting now as a Gopika then a Gopala and above all a lone principle within which the visible and invisible are existing in indefinable delightful comradeship. This was the logical culmination of his arduous inward *Tapasya* which was palpably revealed in his socio-political awakening around 1905 before his escapade in 3 years of tumultuous circumstances to the French pocket of Pondicherry. Bharati was inspired perfectly by Sri Krishna’s exhortation

*Thyagaraja's "music is a way to peace. His krithis are wonders, Goddesses of enchanting beauty". - William L. Jackson*

to Arjuna to rise and wield Gandiva to quell evil, to crush cruelty and uphold Dharma. It was not violence that Sri Krishna taught the human world from the view point of Bharati. It was Dharma of man unto Dharma Eternal – from his stand point Bharati deduced from the teachings of Krishna that there exists a higher Dharma transcending the grasp of mundane mind although it is for man to endeavour for realization and absorption.

His Sakti tattva attained to its acme in his poetic fantasy Panchali Sapatham. Sakti is absolute, indivisible and ultimate. He experienced in it that which can never be apprehended in spirit by mundane means. He felt it, delighted in it. To that impalpable force he gave himself up abandoning all. He rendered to it whatever was her due. Bharati was a proud contemporary of some of the greatest stalwarts of 20th century. Mother India apportioned not an insignificant niche to grace the golden pages of India's chequered annals to Sister Nivedita. She was like Annie Besant of Irish origin who made India her Home. Mrs. Besant was an ex-president of Indian National Congress and one of the founding personalities of Theosophical Society of India. If I am not incorrect it was she who gave initiation to Jawaharlal Nehru into Theosophy, an eclectic hotchpotch of Brahmanical vedanta. Ireland presented to the world of literature, economics and political science personalities of such infinite stature as G.B. Shaw, Webbs, H.G. Wells, Oscar Wilde de Valera who played an unforgettable part in providing succour of robust ideal for Indian leaders in times of doubt, vacillation, dismay and despair.

Like India Ireland waded through the murky soil of British imperialism. The Irish are proud and fertile race. World history would be all the poorer if Irish tale of generations of suffering at the hands of Imperial hegemony was not allotted its due place. Sister Nivedita the adoptive daughter of Mother India by her zeal and fervour enriched Kolkatta with brilliant educations, institutions, impeccable social upliftment guilds and unostentations movement for emancipation and empowerment of women and amelioration of street

children and pavement dwellers. Her activities duly drew the attention of Gurudev Tagore. She enjoyed parental and patriarchal affection and indulgence of Tagore besides monks of Ramakrishna order. She was one of the confidants of Aurobindo. She had to her proud credit the distinct repute as one of those who secretly eased him out on that fateful night to Chandernagore. She was on records later as one of the active and at the same time silent supporters of Bharati as exile in Pondicherry. She was an unassuming angel in the execution of plan divine of God to convince Aurobindo to flee to French pocket Chandernagore, in 1910.

To come to Bharati. Bharati as his devotion and dedication to Sakti tattva were robust he became mellowed. Transition in his practical form of life was peeping. He was dissatisfied with the state of things at Pondicherry. Life was insipid as much insipid as life without Brahmacharya for Gandhiji. He was impatient of going back to his mother state Tamilnadu. His love of Tamil as Mother's tongue was tantamount to love between God and devotee. Madras was his Kasi, the land powerful enough to transform chaff into grain and the weak to be valiant. He was sure that Madras would catapult him to the blessed planes to harangue his people in the same fashion as Mark Antony guided his countrymen through an extraordinary oration from the capital. He must return to Madras. He was impatient with the nauseating existence of an exile, a refugee. Poverty his life long associate, could not hunch his back and could not bend his head. The fire of sacrifice, the resolve for self - effacement and robust dedication to Sakti were at their blazing best. So he returned under the duress of an ill-conceived impulse to Tamilnadu. The powers that be were quick to silence and imprison him unilaterally. No reprisal was deemed too much to weaken him.

The fastidious Bharati on his return to Motherland felt immensely happy to be in apposition to pursue the course as to the way to fight out death. He had before him certain Siddhapurusas who vanquished death and extended the span of longevity. Anger was diagnosed as

***"The cause of Civil Liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one, or even hundred defeats." - Abraham Lincoln***

the preliminary cause of death. So the one who is keen on attaining to Siddhahood should begin to neutralize the ingredients that effect the sequel of death and defertilize the seed itself to banish death and its nefarious cause. The eternal Brahman dwelling within him rose to educate him thoroughly in the field of knowledge that prohibits death never to enter human habitation. Before him a few acknowledged Siddhapurusas were seen flourishing in his own sweet Tamilnadu. So the inner voice faintly articulated that fortitude and unshaken faith in the supreme would lay the way to deathless state. Now he settled on the fact that God was the way and the sole way to Godhead. He leads the kindly light. As Bharati was engaged with the idea or mission of transcending death the government framed a strong case for his imprisonment as soon as he crossed the border. On November 20, 1918 he was promptly imprisoned stalwarts and venerables of the kind of C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar, A.Rangaswami Iyengar and Annie Besant of Home Rule movement intervened on his behalf. Within less than two months of incarceration Bharati was set free.

Vedanta had been Bharati's predominant preoccupation eclipsing all other questions that were hitherto his pets and fads. Family was robbed of the minimal requirements to lead even an average family life; wife was suffering from life on the ebb. The nationalist movement looked like the boat bereft of oars. Atmosphere unveiled bleak future. The citadels built on blood and sweat were on the road to ruin. Every thing looked untoward and staring in the face. Himself enlightened and courageous little could these adverse conditions shake him to be heartbroken. He brushed them aside as things ephemeral. Fate was taking its own course. The moving finger writes having writ it moves on. One would hardly know what was in store for him. He conquered ego, fear, itch for recognition and power etc. calmly as a man innured to life's ups and down, ebb and flow. He allowed life to take its course in consonance with the secret working of fate. There was no crisis of any sort in his pretty chequered existence.

Having become religious and otherworldly his gaze now was heavenward. (Concluded)

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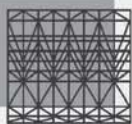
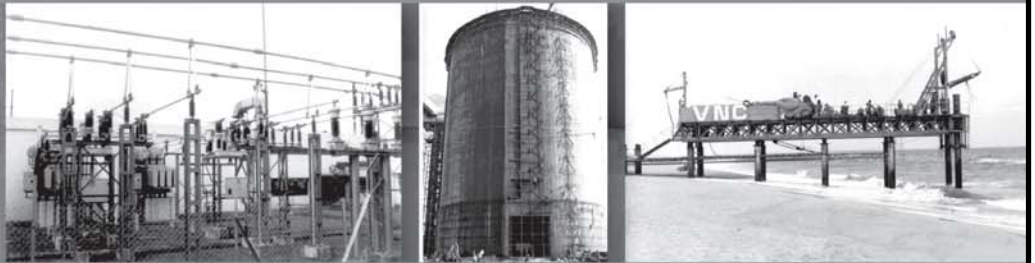
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