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(SANKAR FOUNDATION)



KEEPING THE 'TRYST'

As India moved from bondage to freedom at the historic midnight hour of August 15, 1947, our 'tryst with destiny' was made, heralding a new and glorious dawn for the 330 million people of the great country. As many people are today living below the poverty line, fifty years after we made a pledge 'to wipe every tear from every eye.' Every year 18 million new mouths are to be fed, a number equal to Canada's population. On January 26, 1950 India's Constitution, a product of unrelenting toil and luminous intellect, came into force, promising to provide free and compulsory education to every boy and girl under 14 years, within ten years of the making of the Constitution. Forty seven years and eight months after that there are 90 million children under 14 who have not stepped into a school. Worse still many of them have become homeless giving India the dubious distinction of having the largest number of street children in the world by the turn of the century.

Hundreds of women were in the forefront of the freedom struggle, themselves making personal sacrifices or inspiring their menfolk to make unparalleled deeds of service and sacrifice. Today India is on the verge of having the highest female illiteracy in the world. In the world's largest democracy the share of women in legislatures is a pitifully low 4.3%. Every six minutes a woman is dying in India for want of medical aid in pregnancy or child birth. India's Maternal Mortality Rate at 540 per 100,000 live births is higher than that of neighbouring Pakistan and Sri Lanka and Gender Development Index rank is a shameful 103 out of 137 countries. Only 2.3% of our officers, administrators and managers and less than 1/5 of the technical personnel of the country are women.

India is a land of paradoxes. It "alternately maddens and delights" wrote a foreigner baffled by the 'stunning opposites' found everywhere. Chilling poverty coexists

with vulgar opulence; tranquil meditation in the midst of mindless violence; soaring intellect versus fundamentalist bigotry; selfless purity of a few as against the shameless greed and lust for power of the numerous power-hungry politicians and corrupt officials; outstanding achievements of a few obscured by the routine failures of the many. India always promises but never performs! It is an overcrowded country; an 'overloaded state.' A country that has produced great leaders without herself becoming great! India is today "a land dimmed by a long litany of ills" shaken by assaults from outside and from within.

Still, fifty years of survival as a democracy is no ordinary achievement in a volatile region and troubled world. Four wars, caused by events beyond our control, have not broken our will. Nor has natural disaster dampened our spirit. The people of India have stoically put up with all these travails, retaining their faith in the democratic system. Their patience is admirable but certainly not inexhaustible. To the millions of such people goes the credit for making Indian democracy survive and succeed at least to some extent. It is the duty of those who have been chosen to seats of authority and positions of responsibility, as much as that of the better-off sections of the society whose number is burgeoning, to ensure that equality and justice do not remain mere Constitutional canons but become vibrant and effective instruments of progress and national reconstruction. Governance is too serious a matter to be left entirely to politicians and bureaucrats. Everyone of us owes it to the nation. In the year of the Golden Jubilee of India's independence let us rededicate ourselves to the 'pledge' India had made around this time fifty years ago. The dawn will arrive fulfilling 'substantially,' (as Nehru hoped) the dream of the architects of our freedom.

—The Editor

"India I Dare to be worthy of your Gandhi."

—Pearl S. Buck

'Be humble. Be forbearing.... Now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power, power corrupts.... Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember, you are in office to serve the poor in India's villages'.

—Mahatma Gandhi's

Independence Day advice to West Bengal's Ministers (August 15, 1947)

"A TRYST WITH DESTINY"

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.....

We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us.....

Freedom and power bring responsibility.....

The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over....

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams....

This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell...

—Jawaharlal Nehru

A Speech in the Constituent Assembly (14 August 1947)

"THE APPOINTED DAY"

The appointed day has come -the day appointed by destiny- and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent....

A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed !

Freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people...

On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the Father of our Nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest...

To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a

prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman....

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country, on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action....

—Jawaharlal Nehru

A Message to the Press, *The Statesman* (15 August 1947)

"WHAT AILS INDIAN SPORT ?"

(Keynote Address delivered by Mr. D.V. Subba Rao, Advocate, Ex-Mayor and Manager, Indian Cricket Team to the West Indies at the Seminar organised by the Centre on 26th June, 1997)

I am really happy that the subject which ought to engage the attention of every sportsman in India has been taken up by Sankar Foundation. 'What Ails Indian Sport ?' People often ask how is it that a country which has 900 million people which has produced nobel laureates and politicians of the calibre of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, spiritual leaders like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda confining ourselves to the recent past, writers of world repute and men who distinguished themselves in many walks of life and whose reputations had travelled far beyond the shores of this country, has not produced one Olympic gold medalist or has not carved out name for itself as an outstanding team in any team game. This calls for serious thinking. In every field of human achievement someone is a born genius or is accomplished right from his birth. Where games and sports are concerned, if talent is there, it requires constant sadhana, relentless pursuit of excellence, and dedication. What is needed to make a great sportsman out of a talented person is encouragement from the beginning, support from various quarters. In a nation like India which for centuries has been under the yoke of foreign rule, opportunities in sports and games were very limited. Encouragement from alien government was totally non-existent. It was the princely order that patronised cricket. It was the Maharaja of Gaikewad or Maharaja of Mysore that encouraged some talented sportsmen. After the country became independent our priorities were totally different, abject poverty, illiteracy, growing population were the immediate tasks that engaged the attention of the government. Harnessing natural resources, building dams, heavy industries, promotion of literacy were high on the agenda of the national government. Any developed nation trying to develop itself has to draw

out its own blue print of progress and in successive five year plans other priorities had primacy and sports occupied negligible importance. Even such a critical area like health and medicine was sidelined by meagre allotments in the plans and in the national and state budgets. If one complains that India has not produced world beaters either in team games or individual events one cannot lose sight of these facts. Apart from this the Indian attitude and outlook conditioned by centuries of acceptance of the theory of Karma that every thing is pre-ordained has never given us the instinct of fighting and the will to fight against odds. Climatic conditions and food habits have also their own contribution in inhibiting the emergence of world beaters. Though attempts have been made to give importance to the encouragement of sports and games since India became free, still lack of infrastructural facilities such as play fields, play equipments, trained coaches, etc., have also contributed to a level of stagnation in so far as progress in sports and games is concerned. "Catch them young" they say in India - with our poor facilities where can we get them. It is said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the play fields of Eton and Harrow. We have to ask ourselves the question where are the play-fields? Ramanathan Krishnan or a Ghaus Mohammed were men of individual brilliance. Dhyan Chand was a born genius. Often a question is put as to why when small nations can produce world-beaters how is it that a nation like India cannot produce world class players. In sports and games one has to accept the fact that Great Britain or Germany or for that matter any other developed nation stands distinctly apart from an underdeveloped nation which after 50 years of independence can now be called a developing nation. China and Russia do not afford a comparison. There every achievement is linked to efficacy of political ideology and in their attempt to establish that communist way of life is much superior to the decadent society created by capitalism every effort was made just to achieve results and sports and games were also treated as weapons of propaganda for establishing the superiority of a political ideology. It is no doubt true that national pride is an important factor and we lack this. The divisive forces and regional loyalties have never enabled us to realise pan-Indianism. Our lack of achievement or failure to make a mark in games and sports has to be considered against this background. It is only recently that the infrastructure is being built up. A game like cricket which is a money spinner has a large following in this country and because of the money that is available we have stadia, we have coaching programmes, we have exposure to the best talent in the world because of frequent tours to other cricket playing nations. In tennis also because of the availability of money there is high visibility, and today thanks to the emergence of a strong private sector sponsorship encouragement is available to cricket and to a lesser extent to tennis. Can we think of such financial support for other games? If we were once No.1 in Hockey where are we today? A common man's game like football does not

enjoy the support that cricket receives. The less we speak of track and field events the better. Therefore we are behind in all these games.

You may ask me how is it that with the kind of money that is available for the game of cricket in India we are unable to achieve consistency or perform well outside India. It is here that the Indian psyche, our lack of combativeness or sense of resignation that what is pre-ordained will happen, lack of national pride and sense of achievement and basic failure to realise the pride of Indianness, lack of self confidence are inhibiting the attainment of the potential we possess. What all I said till now is purely negative but then we find that we still continue to be a house divided ; we cannot share the river waters which are national wealth, we lock ourselves into regional cocoons. The pursuit of excellence is not a part of our attitude to life. Therefore it is time we thought of all this and put our house in order and with the infrastructure being built up and support being extended to other games, sports being made a compulsory item in the curriculum, physical fitness being made a national concern and the pride of achievements being instilled and with improved economic conditions we will slowly emerge and India will be a key player in the field of sports also.

Mr. K. Sridharan, former Deputy Chairman of the Port Trust and a leading sports patron said, "Sports is no more a pastime in this world. It has become fiercely competitive due to name, fame status and above all money that comes out of it. Parents have realised that along with education their wards have to pursue sports activities to develop a healthy mind in a healthy body. It is a common sight nowadays young hopefuls sweating out in cricket fields, tennis courts and other sports stadia in large numbers under the watchful eyes of the coaches.

It is generally opined that players who have played the game at the highest levels should take over the selection of team to represent levels should take over the selection of team to represent the country to bring the best out of the available talent and the same should not be left to administrators who have no credentials in this regard. We often hear complaints from the players over the selection policy.

Politics, regionalism and quota system are being quoted by the media and players for the poor selection of the team leading to performance below par in the international events.

The talent at grassroot levels especially in rural areas are not being tapped and only big cities turn out players regularly for selection trials. Rural youth with strong physique but without proper guidance by expert coaches do not have a chance to come into limelight. The Sports Authority of India has however succeeded in bringing out some talent from rural areas in the field of archery, hockey and football. Finally one has to admit that there is no use in blaming the system and sports bodies. But we have to look around for talent which is not visible at present. The cupboard appears to be bare."

Senior Journalist Mr R.S. Kesava Rao underscored the need for taking up sports promotion at the school level and grooming talent from the grass root level. Prof. H. Anjaneya Prasad and Mr P.R. Narayanaswami felt that sports and games must be made a part of the curriculum and their views received strong support from Dr K. Muralidhar and cricket test umpire Mr. K. Parthasarathi. Over-dependence on government funds and allowing non-professionals to head sports bodies and set the sports agenda were also resented at the seminar. The need for institutionalising sports facilities and involving experts and veteran sports persons in policy formulation and decision making at all levels from the local to the national was stressed. Constituting development committees at the local level to coordinate the activities of sports bodies was felt necessary. Mr. M.A. Alikhan, Proprietor, M.F. Khan & Co. announced cash prizes of Rs. 500/- each to five games as an incentive for sports promotion in the city.

ENVIRONMENTAL SELF-AUDIT

—Prof. M.V. Venkata Rao

Head, Environmental Division
Centre for Policy Studies

The need to conserve natural resources and protect the environment against pollutions and other man made degradations is voiced unanimously all over the world. While one can say a lot about who should do what, little attention is given to what one can do himself to ensure better environment. A conscious environmental self audit can help individuals to incorporate eco-friendly life styles in themselves, which alone can ensure a stable and long range solution to ecological crises, apprehended today.

Environmental audit, with a prescribed format, is a statutory requirement for industries. An annual report of the audit is expected to be submitted to the Pollution Control Boards, but the compliance has been rare today for various reasons. Pursuing the idea, an environmental self audit, submitted to one's own environmental conscience (if any) will go a long way in mitigating the ecological stresses of the day and the near future. The possible gains in physical and mental health through such a self appraisal could be the personal by product advantage. Self evaluation of ecograding may follow a questionnaire on the following lines, for convenience and a comprehensive coverage.

(1) Resource conservation :

- Do I weigh the relative happiness that accrues to me through material and mental acquisitions? Based on the evaluation do I optimise my efforts? (A blind possessive and acquisitive animal instinct can overtake, prompting the piling up of redundant goods, furni-

ture, gadgets, clothes, mementos, curios, and junk of the may-be-useful - someday type).

- While purchasing any object, do I care to know the ecoscore of alternatives, based on the resources and energy consumed in producing the object, the pollution released during production and the recycling or biodegradation potential after the useful life of the object is over? (All alternatives are not equal in these aspects. Consumers need enlightenment to make ecofriendly choices).
- What is the weightage of each of the following when I decide to purchase a thing?
 - I need it to boost up my social image.
 - My family members pester me for it.
 - It adds to my/our comfort and convenience.
 - It is really needed. (Advertisers' brain washing, pomp and glamour, fictitious self aggrandisement and surplus money often pamper the production of unwanted goods at the expense of natural resources, which are needed for more deserving situations, at present or in the future).

(2) Pollution :

- Am I aware of the toxicity and hazard potentials of what I bring into my house? (Insecticides, cosmetics, tonics, medicines without competent medical prescription, instant foods, paints, varnishes, painted and coloured articles, substandard gadgets and appliances, sharp toys, pesticide - sprayed vegetables and fruits, detergents with strong chemical activity and several ill designed household utilities can cause accidents, and a slow poisoning of our body tissues. Consumer awareness on these aspects, can save our micro environment from sickening pollutions and hazards).
- Am I conscious of how much solid waste I generate and how I dispose off the same? (Solid waste management in society is possible only if people resolve to reduce its generation, segregate the wastes at the place of origin into biodegradable, non-degradable and hazardous wastes and cooperate with the civic bodies in their waste management efforts. To the extent possible, composting, burial, incineration, reuse and passing on to potential reusers like rag pickers should be taken seriously by civilized citizens themselves. Civic bodies can take up these disposal procedures only with heavy expenditures, which could be diverted to the improvement of other civic amenities with a better cooperation of the citizens in solid waste reduction at their end).

(3) Environmental Planning :

- Do I know how to ensure safe water supply to my family? (oblivious of sure, simple and cheaper techniques, families tend to waste money on unreliable

domestic water purifiers, misled by the seller's false claims).

- Am I aware of the lighting and ventilation requirements in my house?

(Due to improper lighting, work efficiency will decrease and eye sight deteriorates. Due to inadequate air exchanges indoors, air pollution levels are often found to be very high. Bacteria, Viruses, dusts, organic vapours, humidity, excreta of mites that inhabit carpets, upholstery and curtains, and cooking fuel combustion products can be diluted to safe levels only by allowing adequate fresh air from outside. Several A.C. rooms have foul air stagnating inside).

- Do I know how to avoid intruders into my home? (Ants, mosquitoes, termites, bed bugs, lice, spiders, rats, cats, scorpions, cockroaches, lizards, snakes, frogs, crows, sparrows and hundreds of other biotic intruders have specific tastes, which are catered to, though unintentionally, by the ill informed head of the house).
- Do I let off septic tank effluents into the open drain near my house?

(It is an offence as per municipal laws)

There is much more on the above lines. If the scores on the environmental self audit are suspected to be inconsistent with one's civilized dignity, it is worthwhile to get enlightened better on these issues in the interests of oneself as well as the world around.

SANKAR FOUNDATION'S HEALTH & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

—Dr. G. Prabhakar

Co-ordinator, Health & Projects
Sankar Foundation

Sankar Foundation is conducting TB detection and treatment Camps regularly in the rural areas and the patients are getting all services for their problems at the TB Clinics in rural areas and also in the City.

Sankar Foundation's Eye Hospital at Simhachalam started conducting surgeries for Cataract with IOL implantation and the surgeries are being conducted 3 days a week. Very soon the theatre will start functioning all days conducting more surgeries. The screening camps for selecting patients with cataract are being conducted with the help of local Voluntary Organisations in the rural areas. Around 25 patients are attending the Out-patient department daily at the Hospital.

5th July 1997 :

Foundation's TB clinic was conducted at the Gandhi TB Clinic at Anakapalle. 8 new cases were detected at the camp.

Eye camp was also conducted on the same day at Anakapalle. 29 patients with cataract were selected for surgery.

27th June 1997 : Eye camp at Somalingapalem :

Free Eye camp for cataract was conducted at Somalingapalem, an interior village near Yelamanchilli with the help of Mandala Yuva Sakthi' a local NGO. Out of 106 patients attended, 29 patients were selected for operations. Patients from Dimili, Regupalem, Kottur, Thimmapuram, Jengupalem, and Govindapuram attended the camp.

10th July 1997 : Eye camp at Thummapala :

Free Eye camp was conducted at Thummapala village with the help of Sarada Valley Development Samithi, local voluntary organisation. Patients from Dibbapalem, Bagulawada, Venkupalem Seethanagaram, Allikhanuidpalem, Jagannadhapuram, Mamidipalem Kothapeta villages attended the camp. 102 patients attended the camp and 30 patients were selected for surgery.

14th July 1997 :

At the request of the people and the local NGO, a second Eye Camp was conducted at Somalingapalem village. Patients from Katari, Ramarayudipalem, Kothapalem, Shekulapalem, Gokiwada Molkuthuru, Narasingapalli, Perugupalli and Ganaparthi villages attended the camp. 24 patients were selected for surgery from 85 patients screened.

17th July 1997 : Valedictory function of Training programme on Water and Sanitation :

Viswasamakhyia, the federation of voluntary organisations in Vizag district, conducted a mass training programme on 'Water and Sanitation' through its member organisations. 14 NGOs working in Vizag district conducted the programme very successfully benefiting thousands of people in the rural areas. The Valedictory function was held on 17th July at Anakapalle and was attended by around 1200 women. Sri Paramasivan, Country Representative of Water Aid (U.K), Sri Narasimhaiah Chief functionary, Training and Development Centre, Hyderabad and Dr. Prabhakar from Sankar Foundation were the special invitees at the function and Sri Dadi Veerabhadra Rao, local MLA and former minister of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh was the Chief Guest. Youth groups from various voluntary organisations presented a colourful cultural programme on Water and Sanitation with songs and dances.

22nd July 1997

Dr. Prabhakar from the Foundation conducted a free Health & STD clinic at Chilakapeta slum at the request of Mahila Vikasa Samstha.

25th July 1997 :

Prof. A. Prasanna Kumar, Executive Trustee was the Chief Guest at the 10th Anniversary celebrations of Sarada Valley Development Samithi at Anakapalle. Around 1500 people from various villages attended the function along with several dignitaries from voluntary organisations. Prof. Prasanna Kumar handed over the first cheque for Rs. 3000/- as seed money for construction of a house, under the Housing programme of the Foundation, to a poor beneficiary.

28th July 1997 : Eye camp at Cheedikada village :

Free eye camp for Cataract was conducted at Cheedikada village, Cheedikada mandal with the help of local voluntary organisation Integrated Rural Development Society (IRDS). 210 patients were screened at the camp and 54 were selected for the surgery.

Sankar Foundation's Housing Project :

Sankar Foundation contributed an amount of Rs. 42,000/- as seed money for construction of 14 houses for girijans, at Ramachandrapuram village, near V. Madugula. The beneficiaries are very poor girijans and were identified for help by SVDS. SVDS will supervise the construction of the houses which will be completed with the help of Government's Housing programme for the weaker sections.

Help for Education :

The Foundation is providing assistance to Ramakrishna Mission to meet the additional expenses for the salaries of the teachers working at the Mission's school in Visakhapatnam.

Sponsorship for 10 students :

Sankar Foundation is sponsoring 10 poor students from slums providing financial assistance for their education

and overall development. The children were selected and are being provided with all help for their education and development by committed and devoted teachers from Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Visakhapatnam.

Sankar Foundation is also sponsoring 4 awards for Best Audit performance annually which will be presented to 4 Best students.

Rural Sanitation Programme :

For the rural sanitation programme, the programme is aimed at construction of individual latrines in village households each unit comprising of two pits, would cost Rs. 3000/- out of which the Government will pay Rs. 2000/-. Sankar Foundation plans to contribute Rs. 400/- as seed money for each latrine, and the remaining Rs. 500/- will be contributed by the beneficiary. A pit would last for two years, by which time the organic waste would turn into manure. Sankar Foundation is contributing Rs. 10,000/- for construction of 25 latrines in Dibbapalem village as a pilot project.

Clinic for Epilepsy :

The Indian Epilepsy Association, Vizag Chapter under the dynamic leadership of Prof. K. Venkateswari, is running its service centre at Krishna nagar with the help of Sankar Foundation, to improve acceptability, service and prevention of epilepsy with regular treatment.

Around 108 cases of epilepsy were treated at the Service Centre during the month of June 1997. Although awareness about Epilepsy is satisfactory in urban areas, as a brain disorder that can be easily treated, myths still persist about Epilepsy in rural areas. The IEA Vizag chapter will be conducting Awareness programmes about Epilepsy in rural areas shortly, with Sankar Foundation and Viswasamakhyas, the Federation of Voluntary organisation.

"I entertain no fears in this regard. All that I desire is that every citizen of India who is willing to work should be provided with employment to earn his livelihood. If electricity or even atomic energy could be used without ousting human labour and creating unemployment I will not raise my little finger against it. I am, however, still to be convinced that this could be possible in a country like ours where population is large and capital scarce."

— Mahatma Gandhi

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