



BULLETIN

OF THE

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

(SANKAR FOUNDATION)



HOW HUMAN ARE WE ?

The theme of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is 'All Human Rights for All'. The Declaration hailed as the Magna Carta for all humanity highlights the universality, the indivisibility and the interrelationship of all human rights emphasising the idea that human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social—cannot be dissociated from one another. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan proclaimed that the values of tolerance, democracy, human rights and good governance are universal. The supreme goal of the Human Rights Declaration, according to the United Nations, is 'respect for the dignity of all people' and Human Rights should become 'the common language of humanity'. A universal culture of human rights empowering people by building a global partnership for human rights is among the major goals of the United Nations. The agenda set by the UN and Human Rights Commission is laudable and the call for grass-roots participation in promoting human rights has not come a day too soon.

Yet how distant the goal is and how difficult it is to realise it can be understood when some of the disturbing facts are taken into account. The United Nations has recently called for urgent action to raise the living standards of the world's poor after disclosing that 1 billion people have been left out of the consumption boom for the past two decades. Gross inequalities between rich and poor countries are worsening with 20% of the global population accounting for 86% of consumption. Consumption has increased six-fold in the advanced countries where 37 billion dollars are spent annually on per food, perfumes and cosmetics. Compare this with the UN budget of less than \$ 3 billion for the maintenance of peace and security in the world! And the \$ 37 billion being spent on perfumes and cosmetics would be enough 'to provide basic education, water and sanitation, basic health and nutrition for all those now deprived of it and still leave \$ 9 billion over' according to UN figures.

225 richest people in the world, says the UN report, have a combined wealth of more than \$ 1 trillion—equal

to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the earth's population, around 2.5 billion people. The assets of the three richest persons of the world including Bill Gates exceed the combined GDP of 48 least developed countries. The cost of providing water, sanitation, basic health, enough food, etc., for all would cost \$ 40 billion which is less than 4% of the combined wealth of the 225 richest persons mentioned earlier. A child born in New York, Paris or London will consume, pollute and waste more in lifetime than 50 children born in a developing country. 2.7 million people die every year due to air pollution and 80% of these victims belong to the poor areas of developing countries.

In such a world of poverty and inequity mere celebration of the anniversary of Human Rights Declaration brings neither cheer nor hope to humankind. Nobody questions the importance of declarations and celebrations. Perhaps ceremony is to politics what ritual is to religion. But when it is performed in a routine manner without the necessary effort to realise at least a part of the agenda, its credibility is in serious doubt. Someone aptly said that the meek shall inherit the earth but not its mineral resources!

We celebrate Gandhi Jayanthi and pray at his samadhi on January 30 but practise the worst forms of violence. We honour Dr. Ambedkar's memory with pompous speeches from the pulpit but perpetrate heinous atrocities on hapless Dalits for whose emancipation he lived. In our great land where Christian pilgrims from Europe once saw Christ in Gandhi at Sewagram we burn to death a noble missionary and his two little sons who spent their lives in the service of poor lepers. And the noble martyr's wife, overcoming terrible grief with superhuman fortitude at the death of her husband and two dear sons, pleads for mercy for the perpetrators of the inhuman act. If she is not a Christ in human form in our midst where else can we see God? There are still such angels and Mahatmas in today's world of greed, hatred and violence. Let us try to walk in their footsteps. Time indeed to ask ourselves—How human are we?

—The Editor

NEUROSIS ON NUCLEAR POLICY

G.S. Bhargava (Exclusive to the CPS Bulletin)

Going by the domestic debate on India's nuclear policy, the 'almighty' atom has to be a veritable all-purpose panacea like a Hindu god. It has to provide drinking water to Rajasthan villages which have been without the 'luxury' for the last fifty years of independence, curb the price of onions irrespective of market forces and win elections for the ruling party, in this case the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which heads the federal coalition government. Following the drubbing the party received in the recent elections to the State legislatures in Delhi and Rajasthan where it has been voted out of office, pundits have been waxing eloquent on the singular failure of the Shakti (Pokhran-2) tests to serve electoral purpose. In the process, the security dimension has been eclipsed.

Launching the Congress party's campaign for the elections, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the party president, said world opinion had turned against India as a result of the tests and 'several important projects in power and telecommunications have stopped.' It did not require extraordinary prescience to know that economic and other 'sanctions' were inevitable in the wake of the tests. The 1974 experience could not have been forgotten, especially by the Congress Party because its leadership flows from lineage from Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

As the architect of the 'peaceful explosion' twenty-four years ago, she had basked in the national pride unleashed by it. But Canada had suspended technical assistance to the second Rajasthan atomic reactor which took in all twelve years to complete at a whopping cost overrun. Our nuclear power generation programme had been set back at least by a decade. Further, the so-called international non-proliferation regime was tightened and the London Suppliers Club was born to deny dual use technology and equipment to pariah States like India.

In other words, the price had to be paid even if it was less stringent. Ever since the Chinese Lop Nor test of 1964 nuclear weapons have been central to India's threat perception as voiced by successive governments. It got aggravated during the 1965 India-Pakistan hostilities when China indulged in nuclear blackmail. The decision to go in for the first Pokhran test was taken following another similar attempt by the US dispatching warships into the Bay of Bengal during the Bangladesh war in 1971.

The resistance to the CTBT, eloquently voiced by Dr. Arundhati Ghose at the Geneva disarmament confer-

ence and later in the UN assembly, was again primarily security driven. The policy was seen to be widely popular, with over 80 percent support in opinion polls. But when it was pursued to its logical end there is a hue and cry about 'sanctions' and isolation. Verbal resistance to CTBT was popular because its cost was not visible but living up to it in practice entailing hardship for the elites was unwelcome.

This, incidentally, is a uniquely Indian phenomenon; armchair opposition to the treaties evokes enthusiastic consensus but follow-up action has few takers, a kind of neurosis. We would be happy with verbal opposition to the CTBT remaining the be-all and end-all of nuclear policy. At the same time, a vision of India armed with an arsenal of 350-400 thermonuclear warheads is fondly conjured up. Ironically, the very critics of the Shakti tests, some of whom claimed that they, too, would have carried them, are opposed to India subscribing to the CTBT even if its security concerns were taken care of.

When India refused to go along with the CTBT at the 1996 Geneva conference — and later at the U.N. General Assembly — the main reason was that the treaty as it was drafted was weighted in favour of those characterized as nuclear weapon States by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Especially, when China and France carried out a number of tests with a view to modernizing their arsenals and mastering the technology of sub-critical tests, it was clear that the five nuclear weapon States were not genuinely interested in eliminating nuclear tests but were using the treaty as a means to perpetuate their capability. The refusal to agree to an even formal commitment to ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons underscored the hidden purpose behind the treaty.

If India conducted the Shakti tests then — about two years earlier — we, too, could have joined the treaty avoiding the isolation caused by verbal rejection of the treaty. But even if the then Gujral Government had summoned up the will for such a demonstration of national purpose the Congress party which was sustaining it had other priorities like throwing the DMK out of the United Front Government with a view ultimately to inching its way into power.

In this context, it will be useful to recall how France has conducted its nuclear diplomacy to secure its national security interests. When it became the fourth country to test a nuclear device on 13 February 1960 President de Gaulle led the celebration saying: "Hurrah for France since this morning. She is stronger and prouder." The *Force de Frappe* (implying deterrent capability) has remained central to French security thinking for over thirty years with the Gaullists, centre-right UDF, the socialists and even the Greens subscribing to it. Even in Pakistan which has been relatively worse affected by the US sanctions than India there is neither disenchantment with the tests nor blaming them on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

"The saints die for their virtue; they are slain because of the light in them which the darkness cannot tolerate."

—Radhakrishnan

and his ruling Muslim League. In fact, they are identified with promotion of national security.

In our country, on the other hand, in the name of safeguarding 'secularism' there has been a tendency to identify the Shakti tests with BJP "adventurism," to borrow Jyoti Basu's description. The result has been that US critics of the tests have begun to brand them as the exclusive handiwork of the BJP because of its 'Hindu Nationalist' orientation. The implicit suggestion is that if the BJP is dislodged from office, the other political parties would go along with the West even while mouthing radical slogans. Some of the statements of Sonia Gandhi and Jyoti Basu have reinforced such a conclusion. In other words, a veritable Saddam Hussain syndrome is sought to be developed here.

Finally, if, as stated earlier, the Shakti tests had been undertaken two years earlier in the run up to the finalisation of the CTBT the reaction of even the US would have been different. Rebecca Johnson, director of the Disarmament Intelligence Review (London) wrote in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that isolation of India was one of the 'major objectives' of China during the 1996 negotiations. So it joined forces with the US, particularly, to ensure that India did not get away with resisting the treaty in the prevailing form but would be bound by it. That, China, like France, had conducted a series of nuclear tests before joining the CTBT did not matter because that is the name of the game. After the endorsement of the treaty by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority of 158 to three (India, Bhutan and Libya) undertaking nuclear explosions has meant swimming against the tide. It would be more so day by day. So a moratorium on further tests is sensible policy. If we have to forego further testing—which is also regarded to be unnecessary in view of the Shakti tests—there is no purpose in staying out of the CTBT.

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS OF SANKAR FOUNDATION-VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr. G. Prabhakar

Jt. Director, Health & Projects

17-11-1998 : 2nd Anniversary of Indian Epilepsy Association, Vizag Chapter.

Indian Epilepsy Association, Vizag Chapter celebrated its 2nd Anniversary at Visakhapatnam Steel Plant Hospital. Dr. K. Venkateswarlu, Prof. of Neurology, Andhra Medical College and King George Hospital delivered a lecture on 'Epilepsy' at the function. Around 200 invitees including patients, parents, family members of Epilepsy patients, school children, and employees of Steel Plant attended the lecture meeting. Dr. K. Prabhakar Rao, Chief Medical Officer, Steel Plant presided over the meeting. Indian Epilepsy Association, (Vizag Chapter) and Sankar Foundation are running a Clinic for Epilepsy patients every Saturday and medicines are being provided at subsidised cost for poor patients.

"Abundance of consumption is no crime, but it is scandalous that the poor are unable to consume enough to meet even their basic needs."

—James Gustave Speth
UN Development Programme Administrator

21-11-1998 : Visit to Villages

Dr. G. Prabhakar, and Dr. M. Venkateswarlu visited Bhimannadorapalem and Ramavaram villages in Pendurthy Mandal along with Smt. Y.V. Anuradha, IAS, Project Director, DRDA to explore the possibility of adopting the villages for overall development with assistance from DRDA.

27-11-1998 : TB Camp

TB Camp was conducted at Narasannapeta nodal TB Centre. 5 patients received medicines.

30-11-1998 : Eye Camp

Rural Eye Camp was conducted at Anakapalle jointly with Anakapalle Community Welfare Association (ACWA). 113 patients were examined and 41 patients were selected for Microsurgery.

5-12-1998 : TB Camp

Monthly TB Camp was conducted at Anakapalle TB Nodal Centre. 14 patients received medicines.

Visit to Villages :

Dr. M. Venkateswarlu, Joint Director, Ms. V. Jyotishmati, Mr. G.L.N. Prasad from Environment Division visited Bhimannadorapalem and Ramavaram Villages for interaction with villagers to plan health and environment programmes in the villages.

8-12-1998 : Visit to Villages

Dr. G. Prabhakar and Dr. M. Venkateswarlu visited Thotada Village near Paravada for meeting with local NGO Sadhana and to visit the SC Colony which was destroyed by the recent cyclone.

TB Camp

Monthly TB Camp was conducted at Haripalem BCT Health Centre. 49 patients were examined and provided with medicines.

10-12-98 : DRDA Programme

Dr. G. Prabhakar and Ms. Jyotishmati attended, as Resource Persons, the Training Programme for rural women conducted by DRDA at Chodavaram. Around 100 leaders of women's groups, DWCRA groups, Mahila Mandals attended the Training Programme.

12-12-1998 : TB Camp

Monthly TB Camp was conducted at Vaddadi Nodal Centre. 31 patients received medicines.

16-12-1998 :

Sankar Foundation hosted a meeting of Rotary Club, Visakhapatnam at the Eye Hospital. Rotary Club, Visakhapatnam is the Senior most Club in the RI District 3020 with membership of 96 members. The meeting was presided over by Cdr. V. Chandra Sekhar President of the Club. Shri A. Sankar Rao, Managing Trustee welcomed the gathering and Dr. Prabhakar presented a report on the various activities of the Foundation. The visiting Rotarians and their families were taken around the Eye Hospital, Hospital for Women and Child and the TB Hospital. The Foundation has conducted many Eye Camps with Rotary Clubs and the Rotarians evinced very keen interest in the Health Programmes of the Foundation.

18-12-1998 : Visit to SUSAG

Dr. G. Prabhakar, Dr. M. Venkateswarlu, Ms. Jyotishmati and Mr. G.L.N. Prasad visited SUSAG (Sustainable Agriculture Project of SVDS) near V-Madugula for the Joint programmes with Sharada Valley Development Samithi.

19-12-1998 : Rural Eye Camp

Sankar Foundation conducted a Rural Eye Camp jointly with Department of Social Work, Andhra University at Ramavaram Village in Pendurthy mandal. The camp was assisted by students of the Department of Social Work, attending their 10 day Rural camp at Ramavaram. 60 patients were examined and 11 patients were selected for Microsurgery.

22-12-1998 : Visit by Mahila Group

Health workers and leaders of Women's Group from VIKASA NGO at Chodavaram visited the Foundation's 3 Hospitals on observation visit to gain information about the Hospitals. These visits are strengthening the referral systems for the Foundation's 3 hospitals and are creating awareness in Rural areas about the free services available.

28th, 29th & 30th December 1998 :

The Silver Jubilee Anniversary of Andhra Pradesh Voluntary Health Association was held at Hyderabad followed by Annual General Body Meeting. APVHA is an Umbrella Organisation with a membership of around 100 NGOs working in Andhra Pradesh. Sankar Foundation is a Life member of APVHA at Visakhapatnam. Dr. Prabhakar attended the meeting on behalf of Sankar Foundation. The Silver Jubilee Celebrations were inaugurated by Dr. N. Janardhan Reddy, Hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh and was presided over by Dr. Stevenson, President of APVHA. Dr. Prabhakar presented a brief report on the various activities and programmes of Sankar Foundation in Vizag District and neighbouring districts and had good interaction with several NGOs.

31-12-1998 : Visit of Mahila Group

20 Leaders of the Women's group of SADHANA a leading NGO from Paravada visited Sankar Foundation Hospitals at Simhachalam on observation visit.

4-1-1999 : Rural Eye Camp

The Foundation conducted a major Eye Camp with Mahila Margadarshi local NGO at Anakapalle. The camp was inaugurated by Shri Dadi Veerabhadra Rao, local MLA. 145 patients were screened and 38 were selected for microsurgery.

5-1-1999 : Meeting on Environment

Mr. G.L.N. Prasad represented the Foundation at the Joint Forest Management meeting at SUSAG near V-Madugula. The meeting was conducted jointly by Dept. of Forests and Sharada Valley Development Samithi.

TB Camp

Monthly TB Camp was conducted at Yelamanchili, BCT Health Centre. 46 patients attended the Camp and 31 patients received medicines. The Camp was conducted by Dr. C.S.R.L. Narasimham, Joint Director, TB Projects and Dr. D. Venkatesam, Staff Officer, Medical and Camps Officer Medical.

10-1-1999 : Visit of Members of World Teachers Trust

Members of World Teachers Trust and disciples of Master EK and Shri K. Parvalhi Kumar visited Sankar Foundation's Eye Hospital, Hospital for Women and Child and TB Hospital. The members from South America and European countries are on their annual visit to India to attend the 'Gurupuja Mahotsavam' held at Simhachalam. The members were taken around the 3 Hospitals and they were very keen to know about the functioning of the hospitals and the services being provided at the hospitals. The members were explained in detail about the various medical services being provided at the hospitals by Dr. C.S.R.L. Narasimham, Dr. N.V. Ramana Murthy, Dr. N. Rukmini, Dr. S. Krishna Murthy, Dr. R. Suryanarayana Raju, Dr. Yellaji Rao, Dr. Anjaneyulu, Dr. M. Venkateswarlu and Dr. Prabhakar. The guests were impressed by the free services being rendered by the hospitals and expressed their happiness about visiting the hospitals.

Mr. Jesus, leader of the team planted a Mango sapling in memory of their visit to Sankar Foundation Projects.

Felicitations to Smt. Dwivedula Visalakshi

Sankar Foundation had the privilege of presenting a memento to Smt. Dwivedula Visalakshi at the felicitation function arranged for receiving an honorary doctorate degree recently. The function was jointly hosted by Centre for Policy Studies and Gandhi Centre at Babapu Bhawan. Smt. A. Yesodha Sankar Rao, Trustee of the Foundation presented a memento to Smt. Dwivedula Visalakshi.

12-1-1999 : TB Camp

Monthly TB Camp was conducted at the TB Nodal Centre at Vaddadi. 46 patients attended the Camp and 33 patients received medicines.

18-1-1999 : Eye Camp

Rural Eye Camp was conducted at Bhimannadrapalem. 99 patients were examined and 7 were selected for Microsurgery.

19-1-1999 : Visit of Guest

Dr. Sarvalakshmi, eminent Chest Physician from California, USA visited Foundation's 3 Hospitals at Simhachalam.

20-1-1999 : Visit of Guest

Dr. Prayaga M. Krishna, eminent Anaesthetist and Vice-President, European Andhra Association from Norway visited Sankar Foundation's 3 Hospitals.

22-1-1999 : Inauguration of Water and Sanitation Programme

Dr. Prabhakar and Dr. M. Venkateswarlu attended the inauguration of Water and Sanitation Project being launched by Sarada Valley Development Samithi with assistance from "Water Aid" U.K. and "Oxfam Trust". The programme was presided over by Prof. K.V. Ramana, former Chairman of Sarada Valley Development Samithi. SVDS will be taking up Rural Sanitation Programme and Water Projects in a big way in Anakapalle District and Sankar Foundation will be associating with the construction of toilets in the rural areas. Dr. Alan Cork from Natural Resource Institute, Kent, U.K. attended the programme as resource person.

24-1-1999 : Inauguration of Housing Project

Sankar Foundation's first Housing Project was completed at Ramachandrapuram, a remote village near V-Madugula. 16 houses were constructed under the Govt. Housing Schemes with financial assistance of Rs. 3,000/- for each house from Sankar Foundation. The Sankar Housing Colony was inaugurated by Shri Reddy Satyanarayana, MLA, who lauded the services of Sankar Foundation for the poor and the down trodden especially in rural areas, and sought the help and involvement of Sankar Foundation in many more similar projects. Shri P. Appala Raju, President, MPP, Madugula presided over the function. Shri Challa Sivasankaram, Trustee, Sankar Foundation was the Chief Guest. The function was well attended by the local villagers, tribals from nearby tribal villages and staff of SVDS and Sankar Foundation.

26-1-1999 : Mega Camp

A Mega Camp was conducted by Sankar Foundation's 3 medical units at Kodavatipudi. The Eye Camp was headed by Dr. YRP. Yellaji Rao along with his technical team, the Gynaec Camp was headed by Dr. S. Krishna Murthy

along with his team and the TB Camp was headed by Dr. C.S.R.L. Narasimham. The camp was organised by the local MLA of Narasipatnam. Dr. M. Venkateswarlu, Joint Director, Resources Management, explained to the gathering, the services being rendered by the Sankar Foundation for the poor and needy people in and around Visakhapatnam. A draft for Rs. 8,000/- was presented to Secretary, Gram Swarajya Samithi, Kodavatipudi for using it as seed money for the construction of individual latrines in the village. Dr. M. Venkateswarlu explained the importance of personal hygiene and keeping the surroundings clean for a healthy family and also requested the Gram Swarajya Samithi to undertake awareness programmes for the following areas, i.e., personal hygiene, safe drinking water, keeping the surroundings clean and deaddiction of tobacco, smoking and panchewing. More than 450 patients were screened by the combined camp and the camp was a success, particularly the Gynaec camp which was held for the first time by the Sankar Foundation.

HUMAN RIGHTS

United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

On 12 December 1997, the General Assembly urged Governments to contribute further to implementing the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, in particular by establishing broadly representative national committees and training centres for human rights education (resolution 52/127).

The General Assembly proclaimed the Decade on 23 December 1994, to begin on 1 January 1995, and welcomed the Plan of Action for the Decade submitted by the Secretary-General (resolution 49/184). The Assembly stated that human rights education should be a life-long process, by which people learn respect for the dignity of others. Governments were called upon to direct education towards the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Governmental and non-governmental educational agencies were urged to establish programmes of human rights education. The coordinator for the implementation of the Plan of Action is the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1998)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December

"Gandhi has renewed, for all the peoples of the West, the message of their Christ, forgotten or betrayed. He has inscribed his name among the sages and saints of humanity; and the radiance of his figure has penetrated into all the regions of the earth."

—Romain Rolland

1948. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration, the Assembly has urged Governments to implement national programmes and to ensure participation by all strata of civil society, including public administrations, national institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic circles, thereby bringing the letter and spirit of the Declaration to the awareness of all. Governments and other actors have been encouraged to develop education and information programmes, in particular grass-roots initiatives promoting, through education and the media, a culture of human rights (resolution 52/117 of 12 December 1997). On 10 December 1998, the Assembly will convene a one-day ceremonial meeting to celebrate the anniversary (resolution 51/88 of 12 December 1996).

Human Rights Day (10 December)

All States and interested organizations were invited by the General Assembly in 1950 to observe 10 December as Human Rights Day (resolution 423 (V)). The Day marks the anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

—Courtesy : UN Information Centre

(A Function was held at the Centre for Policy Studies on December 10, 1998 to mark the Human Rights Day)

GUIDING IDEAS

1. RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE - THE SUPREME GOAL - all people have the same universal rights - freedom, equality, non-discrimination - the fundamental rights of vulnerable groups: children, minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, displaced persons, disabled persons and migrant workers.
2. HUMAN RIGHTS - THE COMMON LANGUAGE OF HUMANITY - building a universal culture of human rights and empowering people - human rights education at all levels and for all people - building a global partnership for human rights - promoting tolerance in the spirit of human rights worldwide.
3. WOMEN'S RIGHTS - THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL - WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS - combating all forms of violence against women - full participation of women in development - promotion of gender equality - support to NGOs and grass-roots initiatives for the advancement of women's rights.

Italy's three cancers !

"Universities are one of Italy's three biggest cancers; bureaucracy is another. The third I won't mention in order not to offend religious people."

—Federico Zeri

(The greatest living historian of Italian art)

(Courtesy : Guardian Weekly)

4. HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT - SIGNPOSTS TO THE FUTURE - the right to development - the human person is the central subject of development - elimination of poverty - institutions of democracy and the rule of law - pluralistic society - grass-roots participation.
5. CIVIL SOCIETY - THE DRIVING FORCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS - individual and collective responsibility for human rights - contribution by NGOs to the promotion and protection of all human rights - grass-roots human rights activities - human rights defenders.
6. HUMAN RIGHTS - ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES - decolonization - end of apartheid - strengthening of national human rights capacities - national human rights institutions - elimination of all human rights violations - combating all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia - universal ratification of human rights instruments.
7. THE UNITED NATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION - human rights in the field - technical cooperation and advisory services - human rights treaty bodies and thematic and country mechanisms - assistance to victims of human rights violations.

—Courtesy : UN Information Centre

'WINGS OF FIRE'

(An autobiography by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam with Arun Tewari-Universities Press, Hyderabad 1999
(Distributed by Orient Longman)

(Summary of book discussion held at the Centre for Policy Studies on January 17, 1999 with Cdr. T. Rajaram (Indian Navy) Retd. as the main speaker)

Cdr. Rajaram :

This book published after the controversial Pokhran II tests sheds light on the sequence of events leading to India joining the exclusive club of nuclear powers with satellite and ballistic missile launching capabilities. There are many interesting and adequate insights into the personal beliefs and convictions of the man who played a crucial role in the wholly indigenous technological achievement of great significance. However, the book is silent on the efforts involved in the successful conduct of Nuclear Tests in May 1998. There is no disputing the fact that the award of 'Bharat Ratna', so well deserved by the author, is a fitting recognition of Kalam's personal contribution in earning for India the status of a Nuclear Power. Reference to activities since his taking over as Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence in 1991 has been omitted, perhaps, due to the classified nature of information affecting national security and defence preparedness.

Starting his career as a senior scientific assistant in 1958 in the Directorate of Technical Development and Planning (Air) Abdul Kalam rose to occupy many impor-

tant positions winning the trust of famous scientists and administrators like Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan and Brahm Prakash and leaders like Indira Gandhi and Venkataraman. Kalam's outstanding contribution to the rapid growth of indigenous technology is borne out by the successful test firing of rockets and missiles. Induction into the armed forces of five categories of missiles Prithvi, Akash, Agni, Trishul and Nag was largely due to the vision and planning of Dr. Abdul Kalam. His deep involvement initially with the SLV programme and the IGMDP thereafter gives the narrative an insight into his managerial style and philosophy. Among the numerous admirable qualities of his head and heart are his ability to get along well with all types of persons including political leaders, bureaucrats and scientists and affection and regard for his colleagues and juniors.

The book is certainly a window on Dr. Kalam's character, convictions and personal philosophy of life. His religious bent of mind, respect for elders, teachers and peers, his transparent sincerity and inborn humility enabled him to successfully handle the professional assignments and carry lightly the burden of name and fame that followed. His suggestion to the youth of today to 'de-learn the self defeating way of life' is apt and timely. This book should be read, especially by the younger generation, as it may help them to imbibe appropriate values of life at a crucial phase of their lives.

GEMS FROM A.P.J. KALAM'S BOOK

Problems are a part of life. Suffering is the essence of success. As someone said:

*God has not promised
Skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
All our life through;
God has not promised
Sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow,
Peace without pain.
But God has promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the labour
Light for the way.*

I will not be presumptuous enough to say that my life can be a role model for anybody; but some poor child living in an obscure place, in an underprivileged social setting, may find a little solace in the way my destiny has been shaped. It could perhaps help such children liberate themselves from the bondage of their illusory backwardness and hopelessness? Irrespective of where they are right now, they should be aware that God is with them and when He is with them, who can be against them?

It has been my observation that most Indians suffer unnecessary miseries all their lives because they do not know how to manage their emotions.

The culture of working for material possessions and rewards must be discarded. When I see wealthy, powerful, learned people struggling to be at peace with themselves, I remember people like Ahmed Jallaluddin and Iyadurai Solomon. How happy they were with virtually no possessions!

*On the coast of Coromandel
Where the earthy shells blow,
In the middle of the sands
Lived some really rich souls.
One cotton lungi and half a candle
One old jug without a handle
These were all the worldly possessions
Of these kings in the middle of the sands.*

How did they feel so secure without anything to fall back upon? I believe they drew sustenance from within.

SMT. VISALAKSHI HONOURED.....

Smt. Dwivedula Visalakshi was conferred an honorary D.Litt. degree by the Potti Srimulu Telugu University at its sixth convocation on December 15, 1998. The eminent writer and novelist has to her credit 13 novels and 3 books of short stories besides essays and articles in several journals and magazines. Since 1966 when her work 'Gruhalakshmi' earned for her a Gold Medal. Smt. Visalakshi has received many honours and awards. The National Book Trust selected her novel 'Varadhi' in 1973 for translation into all Indian languages. Conducting research on her novels many postgraduate students obtained the M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees. Born on August 15, 1929 Smt. Visalakshi continues to evince a keen interest in literary and cultural activities. Her husband Dr. D.N. Rao is a former Professor of National Administrative Academy, Mussorie and a well known social scientist who held high positions in India and abroad.

[Gandhi Centre and Centre for Policy Studies jointly organised a felicitation function in honour of Smt. Visalakshi on January 10, 1999]

On mathematical economics....

"Too large a proportion of recent 'mathematical' economics are merely concoctions, as imprecise as the initial assumptions they rest on, which allow the author to lose sight of the complexities and interdependencies of the real world in a maze of pretentious and unhelpful symbols."

— John Maynard Keynes

(Courtesy : Guardian Weekly — 22-11-1998)

SMT. VISALAKSHI..... A DIFFERENT TYPE OF WRITER.....

R.V. Rama Rao
Editor, Andhra Bhoomi

In the mid-sixties, when Dwivedula Visalakshi took to writing, the Telugu literary field, particularly the segment which was propped up by journals was dominated by women writers. In the literary field to discriminate women from men may look uncharitable. But men always considered themselves as know-all creatures. Women writers were considered to be lacking in political, economic, philosophical understanding. Women were also accused of not possessing necessary scholarship and a comprehensive worldview. Perhaps this was the reason why women in the literary field produced non-serious stuff of the pulp variety lacking in literary values, however pleasurable reading it may be. Telugu journals captured the advantage of a rise in social literacy by supplying this stuff. To meet this demand women writers came in handy for journals. They took to romanticism, though the plots were realistic. This tendency carried literature a good distance away from the realm of plausibility and jeopardised literary values. Quite reasonably, this was branded as escapist literature. But a handful of women novelists like Visalakshi tried to depict the society which they knew. This invariably forced them to take to realism. Visalakshi may not possess high academic qualifications, may even lack scholarship of a high standard, but she has had a chance not only to travel but to dwell in the U.S.A., Canada, England, Malaysia and

Singapore for over eight years. This opportunity has widened her horizon. Spending time in several countries has enhanced the level of her understanding and given her a worldview. She could decipher the conflicts in life of people around and share the gloom and bliss with them.

She never tried to overstep her arena, but instead confined to things known. Visalakshi's knowledge of English and Hindi has tempered her style. No wonder she won the acclaim of serious writers like Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao. Her novels like *Varadhi*, *Gomathi*, *Vaikunthapali*, *Jarudumettu*, *Grahamam Vidichindi* portrayed middle-class life faithfully and realistically. She could show a way out for the conflicts in life, sympathise with the sorrowful lives of people and capture the beautiful moments. Keeping away from sheer romanticism has made her a different writer. Thirteen novels and three short story anthologies prove that the pursuit of literature was constant. She may not be considered a critic but has certainly tried her hand at criticism also, of course with a pen name, 'Sumana'.

Her labour for over three decades did not go in vain. The recognition was ample, the latest being a D.Litt. from the Telugu University. Before that she bagged *Grihalakshmi Swarna Kankanam* (1966), *A.P. Sahitya Akademi Award* (1982), *Adavi Bapiraju literary award* (1977), *Jyestha literary award* (1966). Her novel *Varadhi* has been translated in all Indian languages. Visalakshi's works have become material for several M.Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations.

Immortal Mahatma....

"His death is not a passing away, but a passing forward. he is treading out the path that the saints have all trod to make our travelling more sure, and lead us to a better state. Those who were his friends still reflect in their lives something of his goodness and help us, sinners and strugglers, by their example and their shining light."

—Sybil Thorndike on Gandhiji's assassination

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