



BULLETIN

Vol.9 No.5
June 2, 2005

OF THE
CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES
(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

DEBATES OR A 'PITIFUL CHARADE' ?

A leading British journal, writing not long ago on the decline of Parliament, described the debates in British Parliament as 'a pitiful charade.' Concepts such as the sovereignty of Parliament and accountability to the people through debate and discussion have regrettably lost their importance in public discourse, according to the journal. In theory Parliamentary debates are expected not only to mirror public opinion but also to help in resolving the contradictions that abound in the democratic system. Debate and discussion sustain the spirit of democracy. They help in reducing tension and conflict between groups and parties that compete for power. Consensus must replace conflict through creative activity and cooperation and that is facilitated by debate. That is where democracy scores over other forms of government. In the parliamentary system of government the legislature creates the executive and controls it through a system of checks and balances and the entire government is made responsible to the people at large. Parliament has other important functions too, besides supervising the work of the executive. Through debates and discussions it informs, educates and enlightens the public.

Literature on Parliamentary debates has been enriched by scholarly contributions that find a place in public libraries all over the world. They are consulted and quoted often in public discourse. The speeches of celebrities in British and Indian Parliaments and in American Congress are a source of inspiration to generations of leaders and members of legislatures. Their wit and humour have often enlivened the proceedings in the House and evoked the admiration of the public at large. Lady Astor the first woman member of the British House of Commons was a legend in her own lifetime. A back bencher once shouted in British Parliament when Lady Astor was speaking "Madam, forget about the subject on which you are speaking; please tell us as to how many toes a pig has." Lady Astor shot back "Honourable member, take out your socks and count them." Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic Party leader whose speeches were hailed in both the American Senate and at the United Nations, floored the Republicans once by saying that "If the Republicans stop telling lies about the Democrats, we will stop telling truth about them!" Indian Parliament too witnessed such brilliant display of wit, wisdom and repartee, especially during the first two decades.

But in the recent past such has been the decline in the quality of debates in Parliaments and legislatures that even when they are telecast live not many small screen viewers prefer to watch the proceedings. In India the situation seems to be really pitiful. The attendance in Lok Sabha and State legislatures is generally low. The quality of debates and discussions is poor. More so because of frequent walk-outs, boycotts, shouting and hurling verbal abuse at one another that are shown live on television. Precious public money is spent on the sessions of Parliament and state legislatures which hardly find time for constructive debate and dispassionate discussion of issues and public policy. The people may get the government they deserve, as the saying goes. But they don't have to pay so much for such unproductive and discouraging national activity for so long. Pity whom? The elected representatives for not being able to participate in meaningful debates and discussions? Or the people who elect them to legislatures where public interest is sacrificed for settling individual and group clashes and where vitriolic language and verbal abuse dominate the proceedings?

The world's largest democracy faces today a crisis of governance and decay in public life. Indian Parliament, once hailed as a role model for other democracies, presents a pathetic picture of the worsening situation. About the State legislatures in general the less said the better. The irony of it all is that the Lok Sabha is presided over by an outstanding Speaker who is straining every nerve of his to put the system back on rails as a Prime Minister of impeccable integrity and endearing grace and an opposition leader of high eminence and with nearly half a century of experience as member look on helplessly most of the time. Public confidence in the system can never be high when there are no checks on accumulation of power and abuse of office. If vigilance is the custodian of freedom, dissent is the antidote to authoritarianism. The great strength of democracy, it is rightly said, lies in its capacity for self-correction. Our Parliament, legislatures and the executive must show the way before it is too late. Allowing the collapse of the system will be an act of betrayal of the faith of one billion plus people of India in freedom and democracy.

- The Editor

Let the people know the facts and the country will be safe. -- ABRAHAM LINCOLN

URBAN RENEWAL THROUGH E-GOVERNANCE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THE BANGALORE EXPERIENCE

- SUNITA & SRIKANT NADHAMUNI

eGovernments

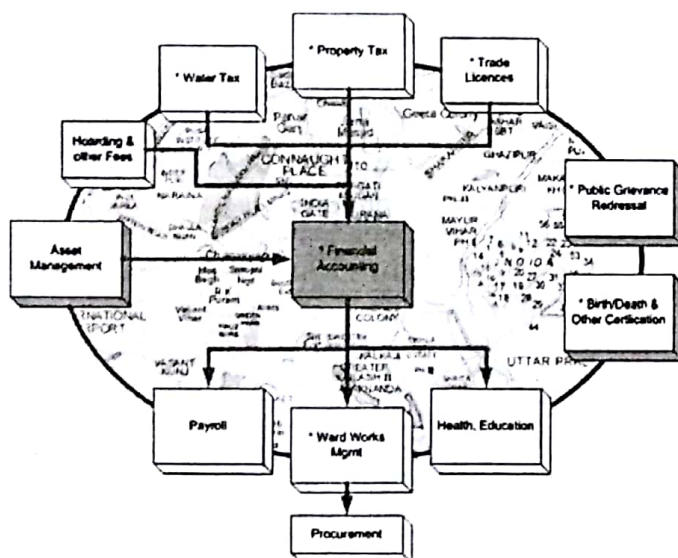
The eGovernments Foundation is a new breed IT Social Startup (a registered not-for-profit trust) whose mission is to provide an eGovernance Software System for use in Corporations and Municipalities all across India - for Free. The goal of the eGovernance system is to improve Governance in India, and bring about accountability and transparency through the effective use of IT and Government Process Reengineering. eGovernments Foundation's works on a PPP(public-private partnership) model to bring about reform from within the system.



eGovern

eGovernments Foundation was started in February 2003 by Nandan Nilekani CEO Infosys & Srikanth Nadhamuni a silicon valley, California technologist with a goal of creating an eGovernance system that would enable ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) to better deliver services to their citizens. The foundation has put together a group of experienced IT professionals and Urban Planners who have developed eGovernance Products aimed towards better governance of towns and cities.

Municipal eGovernance Systems



eGovernments Foundation's Municipal Applications consists of *Property Tax System*, *GIS application*, *Birth & Death Registration*, and *Public Grievances*, *Financial Accounting*, *Ward Works Mgmt*, *Water Tax and Trade Licenses*. This system has been deployed at the Bangalore

Mahanagara Palike (city corporation), and is currently being rolled out in 57 of the largest cities of Karnataka. The eGov modules are also being deployed in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi the second largest municipality in the world. Shortly eGovernments Foundation will start working in the state of Punjab.

The eGovernments Foundation is also working actively with the central government towards a "National Urban Renewal Mission" that will focus on making Indian cities vibrant and self sustaining. This holistic package of reforms and robust systems will improve the revenues of the ULB, bring about transparency through disclosure and people participation which will drive much needed accountability. This package includes 5 important elements:

- 1) Adoption of an accrual based financial accounting systems that track the municipal finances.
- 2) Proactive disclosure laws to publish financial and other public information to the people.
- 3) Strengthening people's participation in local city governance by creating ward sabhas and other participatory platforms.
- 4) Streamline institutional arrangement with City Municipality.
- 5) Use of technology, govt. process reengineering and information management to drive the above.

Volunteer Driven Technology for Social Change

Though eGovernments Foundation has a full time staff in Bangalore, its state-of-the-art technology skills comes from the more than 500 volunteers from around the world (200 from the US alone) who are contributing their expertise and experience in fields such as Java/XML, GIS, Networks, Security, Urban Planning, Traffic Modeling etc.

The Indian diaspora consists of highly skilled professionals in the IT industry. These high energy, creative and motivated people bring their immense skills to the table, We channel their desire to improve India by actively engaging them on the very real problems of urban India.

CLIENTS LIST

Bangalore Mahanagara Palike - BMP

(City Corporation) - on October 23, 2003, the eGov Property Tax System was launched in all 100 wards of the BMP, after installing the eGov Platform and eGov Property Tax Application servers in the city corporation head office. The eGov Property Tax system required the computerization of 5.24 lakh properties in the assessment books and about 12 lakh payment record. It is now flawlessly collecting property taxes. Above: Bangalore Map



Government of Karnataka - Nirmala Nagara Project The eGovernments Foundation is working with the Urban

Development Department to deploy eGov Municipal Applications and GIS for 57 cities (with greater than 1 lakh population) all across the state of Karnataka. For the first time accurate digital maps of each city are being prepared. About 60 lakh Property forms are being filled up to gather accurate property data from the ground. Soon robust computer based systems will be operational that will streamline the municipalities and deliver better services to its citizens



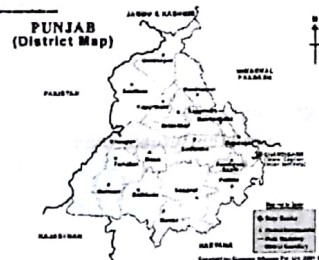
Municipal Corporation of Delhi - MCD



The eGovernments Foundation started working with the MCD after signing an MoU on July 21st 2004. We are actively working on 4 modules for MCD :

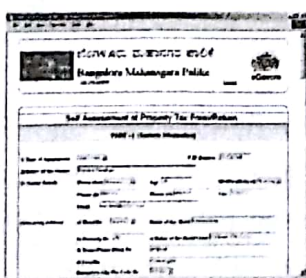
- eGov Property - Property Tax System
- eGov Grievance - Public Grievance & Redressal
- eGov Works - Ward Action Plan
- eGov Financials - Accounting System.

Government of Punjab - The eGovernments Foundation is shortly signing an MoU with the Govt. of Punjab to deploy its Municipal eGovernance Platform for the 6 largest cities of Punjab. They include Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patials, Bathinda and Mohali. This project has an estimated 18 month deployment period, with a state-of-the-art data center creation in Chandigarh.



eGovern Property Tax

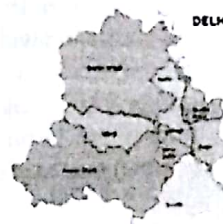
Property Tax is the principal source of revenue in urban local bodies in virtually every part of the world. In most cities in India the property tax base has been considerably eroded by administrative and procedural inadequacies. In many cities a significant number of properties are not included in the tax base, those that are included are inaccurately assessed and collection efficiency is very poor*. Based on thorough analysis of cities in Karnataka the eGovernments Foundation has developed the eGovern Property Tax system that addresses many of the inadequacies in the current system.



The eGovern Property Tax application computerizes the revenue department of a City Corporation or Municipality and provides an entire IT system that manages properties and their taxation. It calculates the property tax demand

automatically based on the "Annual Rental Value" or "Capital Value Systems". It is integrated with the FBAS - Financial Accounting System so upto date reporting of tax collections can be automatically computed. The tax collection application also generates the Bank Deposit Chals and the *Khirdi* reports. It can handle property registrations, transfers, bifurcations, amalgamations.

Under the Nirmala Nagara Programme in the State of Karnataka, 57 cities have undertaken the Street Naming and Property Numbering step in order to identify each property and CAD maps are being developed by every city as a tool for this step. All cities will integrate the GIS platform to provide map based 'visual querying' and for 'visual decision making' ability.

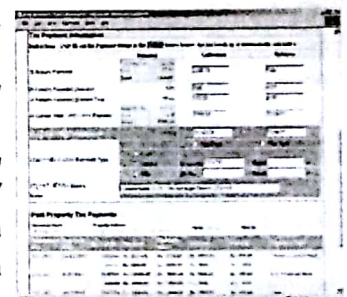


eGov Property Tax, eGov Financials and a Public Grievance & Redressal modules will be launched with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). A separate eGov team will be based in Delhi to customize the software to Delhi's needs. The Unit Area System of property tax evaluation will be developed for use in Delhi. Based on

GIS data availability the GIS integration with the property tax module will also be taken up at MCD.

Salient Features of eGovern Property

- Property Database & Management
- Citizen friendly, pay anywhere - system
- Supports Property Registration/Transfer/Bifurcations/Amalgamation
- Integration with GIS system - eGovern GIS
- Integration with FBAS - Financial Accounting system MIS Reports at City, Ward, Street levels
- Can handle Office, Bank and Field payments
- Improves tax compliance and hence the total collection

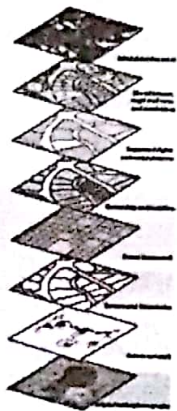


eGovern GIS

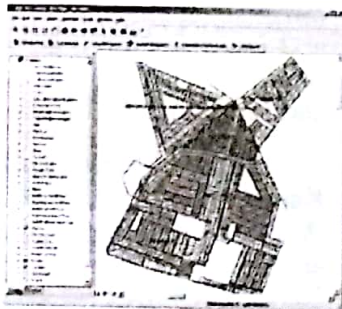
GIS - Geographic Information Systems are computer systems used for capturing, storing and analyzing Geographic data. Since the City's administration and planning is closely tied to its geography, GIS systems are a great tool for efficiently governing a city. As such the eGovernments Foundation tries to integrate all its application modules (such as the eGovern Property and eGovern Works) with a GIS system.

eGovern GIS is a GIS product that compliments the eGovern Applications on Property Tax and Ward Works.

The Property Tax with GIS application demonstrates the synergies that come about by integrating the eGovern



Property with eGovern GIS. The eGovernments Foundation has come up with detailed process and workflows that are necessary to do a thorough survey of Urban areas to create a MIS and GIS databases, as a result the "Property Tax with GIS



- Toolkit" - a set of documents has been created.



GeoDatabase Model for Urban GIS : To standardize how GIS data is stored the eGovernments Foundation has partnered with The Survey of India in coming up with a standard model for representing Urban GIS data. The **GeoDatabase Model for Urban**

GIS has been written so that even if the data were to be collected by various different vendors and agencies in different cities, as long as they are all represented in the standard format, the eGovern GIS application will work on that data.

Byatrayanapura Prototype -

The eGov Foundation came up with a design of a Property Tax with GIS system, that would integrate the eGovern Property Tax Application with the eGovern GIS application. The idea was to create a GIS basemap for city planning and administration and a specialized thematic layer for property taxation. In order to understand the nitty-gritty details of such a system for replication in 56 cities, the eGov Foundation decided to prototype this project in one city. Byatrayanapura CMC (a city due north of Bangalore) was chosen for this pilot. Since this involved highly specialized technologies and skillsets the eGov Foundation put together a set of implementation partners and asked them to provide their services for free for the Byatrayanapura Prototype. They were

- Survey of India
- KRSAC - Karnataka Remote Sensing and Application Center
- Secon Surveys - A private company
- ESRI - California based GIS software company

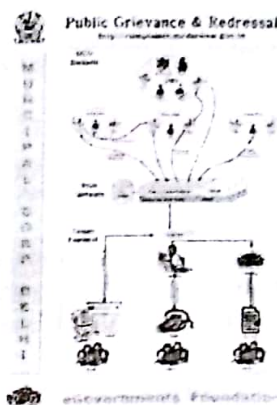
On completion of this project it was demonstrated to the then Honorable Chief Minister S.M. Krishna and other ministers and received a very positive endorsement to go ahead and implement this and other eGov modules 56 cities across Karnataka. Eighteen of those 56 cities would include GIS integrated with the MIS systems.

eGovern PGR - Public Grievances and Redressal

For our cities to improve we need the participation of its citizens. We need them to provide the feedback to the city

administration on the problems and issues. We need a process by which they can air their grievances and be able to track the progress of redressal.

The eGovernments Foundation has built a PGR - Public Grievance and Redressal application through which citizens can register their complaints with the corporation. The computer system assigns a 'Complaint Number' which they can use to track and monitor the progress on the complaint's redressal.



The Salient Features of eGovern PGR are:

- Easy to register complaints and track the redressal, The citizen is assigned a Complaint-ID and can track the complaint redressal.
- Complaints forms are structured to enable better problem analysis and assignment.
- Multiple of access channels - Internet, Phone, Email, Paper Form.
- Graphs/Reports: dynamic reports allow citizens and government officials to track Complaints by City, Dept, Ward etc. User friendly pie chart format supported.

eGovern Birth & Death Certification

The registration and certification of Births and Deaths constitutes an important function of the city corporation as well as the country at large. Our current registration systems leave much to be desired in the quality of data collected and the coverage obtained. India collects very poor data on the 'Cause of Death' which could be vitally important in medical research and other health and socio-economic studies. Although the 'Birth and Death Registration Act - 1969' states that a first copy of the Birth Certificate is to be issued free of cost - it is rarely implemented. The process of Birth/Death registration is still cumbersome and can be streamlined with use of IT technologies.



The eGovernments Foundation has partnered with the office of the Registrar General of India in coming up the IT Standards for Birth/Death registration and certification. This will include standardizing data fields, Databases Schema, XML DTD for data transfer and interfaces to the system. This is being published as "Birth and Death Registration and Certification IT Standard" document.

Salients Features of the eGovern Birth/Death :

- Easy Birth and Death Registration & Certification
- Online or offline registration through hospital or registered doctor

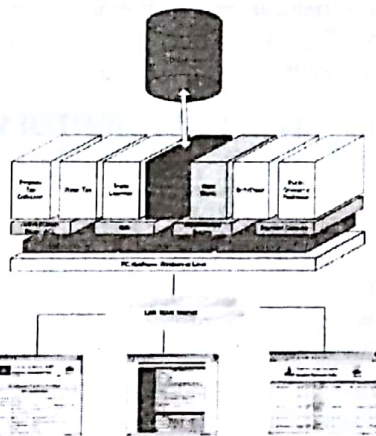
- Automated computer-generated Registration IDs will be issued for each registration
- Reports of Birth, Death, and Still Born registered and certificates can be generated.
- National and state registrars office can access local databases of new births/deaths, to analyze adjustments to population.
- Rich set of Reports on births, cause of death, still births, parents literacy/education and other demographic.



Unique Citizen Identification : Due to National Security, Voter registration and other reasons in the recent years the idea of issuing a Unique number and a National ID card has been proposed by various departments. The MNIC – Multi-purpose National ID Card and number is the project that has been taken up by the office of the RGI – Registrar General under Home Ministry. The eGovernments Foundation has suggested the integration of the MNIC number into the Birth Certificate so that for the case of new births (and parents of the new born) the Citizen Identification problem can be solved.

eGovern Platform

The **eGovern Platform** is the technology platform and the infrastructure components that provides a robust technology solution to manage the needs of a large city. It is an Enterprise class system based on a 3-tier web native architecture that has been designed for:



- Performance
- Scalability
- Local-language support
- Security/Authentication
- Electronic Payments

3-Tier Web Native Arch

The **eGovern Platform** and Applications are based on a 3-tier web native architecture that consists of:

- A Relational Database
- Middle Tier - Platform, Infrastructure, Application layers
- Browser front-end

Our platform and application modules are developed as

EJB components over a J2EE application server. We use XML for all data exchange. Client access is mainly through browser that enables network access through LAN/WAN/Internet.

We support Linux and the MS Windows operating systems on the server side and any operating system on the client side that runs a standard internet browser. Our relational database support is currently for Oracle and DB2, we plan to support the opensource POSTGRES database soon.

We endorse and support the use of local Indian languages for accessibility of the eGov system to all. Our Localization (local language support) is over OpenType/Unicode fonts.

This enterprise class architecture will be able to integrate all the Municipal Applications in a seamless manner so that data can move between systems. For example all property taxes collected needs to update the Financial Accounting system each day, or the expenditure on Ward Works needs to automatically update the backend Financial Accounting system.

(Presentation made by Mrs. Sunita at CPS on April 23, 2005)

CONNECTING RULERS WITH THE RULED

NRI couple's experiment prompts speedy completion of civic works in Bangalore

- Shri R. Sampath

How a happy blend of e-governance and participatory democracy could yield rich dividends to citizens was expatiated here on Saturday by Sunita Nadhamuni, an NRI who is conducting this experiment along with her husband, Srikanth Nadhamuni, in Bangalore.

Making a power-point presentation on the experiment, christened 'Janaagraha', under the aegis of the Centre for Policy Studies, she said that by a constructive engagement of people with civic officials and corporators, utilising the advantage of information technology, Janaagraha had been able to build a bridge of understanding between the authorities and public in that city. "The aim is to arrive at a compromise by bringing together the demand side (people's expectations) and the supply side (official response)".

Ms. Nadhamuni was speaking on the theme, 'Urban renewal through e-governance and citizen participation - the Bangalore experience'. The Centre's director, A. Prasanna Kumar, presided.

Two hours for community

Describing the idea behind the experiment as "practical patriotism," she said Janaagraha had been successful in persuading a large body of citizens to devote atleast two hours a week for civic betterment.

"For the past couple of years, we have been conducting campaigns at the ward levels by erecting billboards indicating the requirements of localities and holding ward sabhas to sensitise people on their rights and responsibilities. About 65 percent of the citizens are participating in this effort," she said.

After making cost estimates for civic works like street lighting, sanitation, and water supply, "we sit with the corporators in ward sabhas and enable better execution of the works in total transparency," she said, adding that the response from the authorities was "very encouraging."

Another ongoing mission of Janaagraha, according to her, was developing good citizenship values through community action.

"We have also floated 'Bala Janaagraha' involving children by providing copies of 'Me and My City' prepared by Janaagraha, to educate the future citizens about their city." Ms. Nadhamuni said. By the end of last year, there were 4,000 volunteers from 70 schools, she said. "We have also trained 300 teachers to train these children," she said.

(Courtesy : The Hindu, April 24, 2005)

UNITED NATIONS PEACE KEEPING FORCES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

- Prof. R.Venkata Rao
Principal A.U. College of Law

In International Law, the sovereign states are the fullest International persons possessing all rights and capacities exercisable within the frame work of International Law. The converse is the case in respect of International Institutions. They have no power, except those expressly or impliedly conferred upon them by their constituent documents. To quote the International Court of Justice 'whereas a State possess the totality of rights and duties recognized by International law, the rights and duties of an entity such as the United Nations must depend upon its purposes and functions as specified or implied in its constituent document and developed by subsequent practice'.

An important question that has been engaging the minds of the jurists in recent times is whether the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces are bound by the principles of International Humanitarian Law. One argument is that the International Humanitarian Law which is primarily contained in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols of 1977 is not binding on the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces as the United Nations cannot become a party to the Geneva Conventions. In fact the final clauses of the Geneva Conventions preclude the participation of the International Organizations. It is also opined that International Humanitarian Law at best be applicable to peace enforcement operations and not peace keeping operations. This issue assumed greater significance in the light of the recent United Nations operations in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia (part of erstwhile Yugoslavia) and Iraq. Recent years have witnessed not only an unprecedented growth in terms of number and scale of United Nations peace keeping operations but also an unforced expansion of their mandates often going beyond peace keeping. The dividing line between the peace keeping operations and peace enforcing operations is becoming very thin. The traditional role of the peace keeping forces which

spoke about minimum use of force and self defence are no longer entirely valid.

The United Nations Peace keeping Forces would be having a role to play only in situations of armed conflict. Every situation of armed conflict results in human suffering. The unique growth of International Humanitarian Law is to alleviate the suffering caused among all sides. International Humanitarian Law applies equally to all parties independently of any other consideration including those relating to the legality of the use of forces. Therefore it is only logical that this law comes into play when the United Nations intervenes in conflictual situations.

Moreover the United Nations Charter itself states as a purpose the promotion and encouragement of respect for Human Rights (article. 1, para.3), which implies respect for International Humanitarian Law. Further, more respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law is an essential condition for the achievement of its peace and security. If the United Nations itself does not promote respect for the instruments of Humanitarian Law, who else should do it. It would be strange in the least were National contingents to be bound by the less stringent rules when operating under United Nations command than under National Command?

To be applicable Humanitarian Law requires the presence of an 'armed conflict'.

(Summary of the lecture delivered by Prof. Venkata Rao to the participants in Sixth Central Asian Competition in International Humanitarian Law in ALMATI, KAZAKHSTAN on 3rd May 2005 at the invitation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva)

THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

- Prof. M.N. Sastri

The dawn of the twenty first century saw the leaders of 191 nations gather at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000 and adopt the Millennium Declaration reaffirming their support for the principles of sustainable development. Eight major time-limited developmental goals were identified and quantified for reducing poverty, hunger and environmental degradation by 2015. The following goals were set and targets spelled out.

- * Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- * Achieve universal primary education
- * Promote gender equality and empower women
- * Reduce child mortality
- * Improve maternal health
- * Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- * Ensure environmental sustainability, and
- * Develop global partnership for trade and development

This Summit was followed by the United Nations Earth Summit at Johannesburg, South Africa in August-September 2002. An action plan aimed at achieving these goals was

adopted. Targets were set, among other things, in the areas of water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture, biodiversity and ecosystem management. Majority of the participants however felt that the quantum of aid announced by the developed nations for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals were well below the requirements.

As a part of the exercise, the United Nations commissioned in 2000, a study called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, involving 1,360 experts in 95 nations and costing \$24 million. The team recently presented its interim report giving its assessment of the degradation of the global ecosystem services such as water, land and biodiversity and climate due to human activities. It concluded that over 60 percent of the functions of the life-sustaining eco services are being degraded, both through direct actions like over-fishing and through indirect actions like deforestation at an unprecedented rate, causing risks of abrupt collapses in nature that could spur diseases. The team observed, "Human activity is putting such strain on the natural functions of the earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystem to sustain future generations cannot be taken for granted". Another noteworthy observation is that many of the systems where such natural assets are being most rapidly degraded are also the world's poorest. This is likely to hamper efforts to stem poverty, disease and hunger in the developing countries. The assessment highlighted the following facts and figures of the ecosystem changes.

Water withdrawal and impoundment

- Water withdrawals from rivers and lakes for irrigation, household and industrial use doubled in the last forty years.
- Humans now use between 40% and 50% of the fresh water running off land to which the majority of the population has access.
- In some regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, humans use 120% of renewable supplies (due to the reliance on groundwater that is not recharged).
- Between 1960 and 2000, reservoir storage capacity quadrupled and as a result the amount of water stored behind large dams is estimated to be three to six times the amount held by natural river channels (this excludes natural lakes).

Conversion and degradation

- More land was converted to cropland since 1945 than in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries combined, and now approximately one quarter (24%) of Earth's terrestrial surface has been transformed to cultivated system.
- Since about 1980, approximately 35% of mangroves have been lost, while 20% of the world's coral reefs have been destroyed and a further 20% badly degraded or destroyed.

Nutrient use and levels

- Human activities now produce more biologically usable nitrogen than is produced by all natural processes

combined, and more than half of all manufactured nitrogen fertilizer (first produced in 1913 by Fritz Haber) ever used on the planet has been applied since 1985)

- The flow of nitrogen into the oceans has doubled since 1860.
- The use of phosphorus fertilizers and the rate of phosphorus accumulation in agriculture soils has increased nearly threefold between 1960 and 1990. Although the rate has declined somewhat since then, phosphorus can remain in soils for decades before entering the wider environment.

Fisheries

- ... At least one quarter marine fish stocks are over harvested.
- The quantity of fish caught by humans has increased until the 1980s but it is now declining because of the shortage of stocks.
- In some sea areas, the total weight of fish available to be captured is less than a hundredth of that caught before the onset of industrial fishing.
- Inland fisheries, especially important for providing high quality diets for the poor, have also declined due to over fishing, changes to habitats and withdrawal of freshwater.

Some episodes of degradation of the eco services by human activities will be highlighted in the articles that follow.

THE CORRUPTING VISUAL MEDIA

- Shri T. Hanumantha Rao

Retd. Head of the Dept. of Economics, A.M.A.L. College, Anakapalli.

Responding to a plethora of questions at a media conference recently at Srikakulam, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Sri S.Jaipal Reddy bemoaned the beaming of obscene films by the cinema and T.V. channels and said that a quasi-judicial autonomous body will be set up to regulate it. In this context he further observed that a cabinet sub-committee had also been set up to thoroughly review the Cinematography Act.

Few will disagree when it is said that the visual medium be it the screen or the stage - has the power to completely grip one's attention and the images invariably tend to remain in one's memory, long after the curtain has fallen. More than the drama, film provides a process of unconscious education without masters. Apart from being a potent organ of entertainment, the film is a double-edged weapon with immense potentialities for good or for evil. Rightly used, the film has an ennobling influence upon men and their manners, but a perverse picture corrodes human society by serving as an incentive to anti - social behaviour. For this reason, a movie - maker has to be particularly careful about what he shows. Unfortunately, some are careless to the point of being irresponsible.

Gone are the days of a classic and sensible cinema like "Pathar Panchali" of Satyajit Ray which exuded artistic realism at its best though it has portrayed poverty in West Bengal at its worst and brought Indian Cinema into international focus.

As against this, the contents of the present day cinema are appalling and what threatens to kill sensible cinema completely is the absence of such visionaries. What we are now left with is, an apology for such creations. The dose of "masala" with its unpalatable ingredients of vulgarity and violence has robbed the Indian Cinema of its tranquillity and beauty. Sadism and obscenity dominate almost every reel of many of the 800 to 900 films made year after year. Whatever be the language, whatever be the theme, brutality and lewd sex are given much prominence. It is a matter of disgrace and deep concern that an obnoxious film "Girl Friend" based on lesbianism is allowed to be screened in the country and it is strange that the Censor Board has become an insensitive body in this regard. If the current trend continues, the day is not far off when we forget our own culture.

The Division Bench of the Supreme Court came down heavily on the obscene films when it remarked on one occasion some time ago, "it was at a loss to know why it was compulsory for a heroine to invariably appear on the screen with accentuated angularities, deepened depressions and exaggerated protuberances of the body. Also, is it an irrevocable convention that violence must only be shown in such a cruel, gruesome and diabolical manner?"

More than the Cinema, the Television has of late become the villain of the piece in portraying the most pernicious and horrifying serials, corrupting the minds of the young and old. Instead of conveying a sane and sensible message to the individual and the society, the Indian television has been injecting an element of violence and immorality in its family soaps, conveying to its audience that the home is now a hot bed of intrigue and poison and the little men and women are led to believe that violence is an ideal way of resolving conflict. The crass portrayal of violence coupled with vulgar love scenes is having an undesirable effect on the mental health of the youngsters. The need of the hour is to prohibit extreme form of negative portrayal to save the younger generation from the chaos towards which it is being propelled.

Again, on the one hand, we shout from the housetops about the gender equality and on the other, the television soap operas portray women as slaves of men and objects of ridicule and abuse - both physical and mental. It is equally disheartening to note that all the serials justify the extra-marital relations and the very sacred institution of marriage is being abused. And, the funniest part is, that women villainy is being made prominent, much to the disgust of the viewers. Another painful feature of the serials is, that in the name of entertainment, the teachers and priests who are revered in the society are being denigrated. It is time that the television men realised the kind of Frankenstein emerging from the "Idiot Box".

I wonder how producers, directors and script writers conjure up such plots and instead they would do well to put their heads together to get a good story and to think of telecast of biographies of eminent women like Indira Gandhi, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Durgabai Deshmukh and Kiran Bedi, the

trendsetter in law enforcement in our contemporary society to inspire women and infuse confidence in them.

After all in post-independent India, we have no shortage of problems to focus. Problems such as the housing among the middle class and unemployment among the educated youth and social evils like the dowry and untouchability and a host of other ills afflicting the society can neatly be addressed in good stance.

It is often argued by the movie makers and television men that what they make is what the people want, such escapism does not hold good and they should do a bit of soul-searching and place their conscience before commerce.

It is true that the producers have travelled far from Puranic themes and their predilection at present is toward social themes. There is nothing wrong in that, but social themes require intellectual courage in the matter of presentation of character and situations in a decent way and a correct balance of the fundamental instincts is to be maintained. The observance of a "code of self-restraint", mutually agreed upon by the producers would go a long way in restoring sanity and decency to our films, at the same time lessen the work of the censor. One would appreciate if only the moral tone and content of our films are improved and the basic human values and culture are preserved intact.

It is encouraging to note that the Government is also seized of the matter to set things in order. Time alone will tell the outcome.

MUSIC THERAPY FOR CHILDREN

-Dr. T.V. Sairam

Chief Commissioner of Customs & Central Excise

Nada Yoga, the ancient science of sound, views intonation as the source of the universal manifestations. Application of sound vibrations to reach higher realms of consciousness is not new to the Indian system of yoga.

Today's modern science too endorses such a view. The prophylactic and therapeutic role of music on mind-body systems is gaining new grounds, thanks to the path-breaking findings in what-is-called neuro-musicology, a new branch of science.

Music Therapy: The Mechanism

Music therapy provides a unique variety of musical experiences in an intentional and developmentally appropriate manner to effect changes in a child's behaviour and facilitate development of his/her communication skills, social interactions, besides developing emotional, sensory-motor, and/or cognitive skills.

Music therapy, no doubt, enhances the quality of life in children as it makes them more cheerful and flexible to face the harshness of the current times and cultures.

The therapy involves close relationships between a qualified therapist and child; between one child and another, between child and mother; and between the music and the practitioners.

All such relationships build up a feeling of 'belongingness', which helps in creating a positive environment and set the occasion for successful results.

Music acts as a stimulant of the child's senses, and facilitates many developmental skills. Quality learning and maximum participation, besides the traits such as coordination, cooperation, team-spirit, friendly rivalry - as we find in musical genres such as jugalbandhi etc - occur when children are permitted to tamper with music naturally and frequently, without restraints on them.

While being highly motivating, music is also calming and relaxing.

Enjoyable beta-forms of music with active rhythms and quick tempo can activate towards success of the children by making them feel better and confident about themselves.

Music therapy can even help a child manage pain and stressful situations and even overcome complexes due to physical or mental disability, if any.

Music can encourage socialization, self-expression, communication, and motor development.

Because the brain processes music in both hemispheres, music can stimulate cognitive functioning and may be used for remediation of some speech/language skills.

Technique for Children

Children are normally involved in singing, listening, moving, playing, and in all creative activities associated with music, which can even include solving mathematical puzzles!

The idea is that a child should be made into a better learner.

Music therapists work on developing a child's self-awareness, confidence, readiness skills, coping skills, and social behavior and may also provide pain management techniques.

It is necessary that the therapists explore which styles of music, techniques and instruments are most effective or motivating for each individual child and thereafter, expand upon the child's natural, spontaneous play in order to address areas of need.

Music therapists may also help parents of children with suggestions and resources for using music with the child at home.

After developing realistic goals and target objectives, music therapists can plan and implement systematic music therapy treatment programs with procedures and techniques designed specifically for the individual child.

Music therapists should invariably document responses, conduct ongoing evaluations of progress, and often make recommendations to other team members and the family regarding progress.

(The author can be contacted at his
e mail: tvsaairam@rediffmail.com)

Remembering a Marxist Mahatma *an interview with P. Sundarayya*

- A. Prasanna Kumar

Leaders like Tanneti, Ranga, Sundarayya and Vavilala compel admiration though not necessarily agreement with their

views. They are stalwarts in public life. In their presence one inevitably feels small. That they have denied themselves opportunities to hold high office has enhanced their prestige and enriched public life. Of course, they too, like every other great man, have been wrong at times in their views and decisions. One is reminded here of Hangen's line about J.P. "Where others were mainly right J.P. was nobly wrong."

I must confess that when I met P. Sundarayya recently I went there with admiration for the man. The fact that he had made enormous personal sacrifice - giving up huge personal property, leaving college studies - for the sake of certain ideals naturally made a deep impression on me in my young days. When the Communists swept the polls in Andhra in the 1952 elections many predicted that Sundarayya would become the Chief Minister of Visalandhra. Well, all that is too old a story now.

Today Sundarayya is in his seventies and poor health has told on his age. "The fire is gone," said a friend pointing at the man in a white pyjama and crumpled white half sleeve shirt, "But the glow is still there," I replied.

"What have you to say about the growing corruption everywhere?" I asked Sundarayya.

"Everyone from top to bottom is corrupt; if he is not, at least his son or nephew is corrupt. That means everyone is a party to it. But the problem is that everyone only talks of it. For instance several times I asked people who complained about it to give me a specific written complaint, so that we can pursue the matter. But they do not follow that path. Obviously it is out of fear of harrassment or because silence may help them sometimes There are some honest officials in Government. But functioning honestly is difficult for them. They just survive in office," he replied.

I butted in with a supplementary that even the presence of honest and forthright leaders in the Opposition is not much of a deterrent to the Government. Sundarayya thought that I was too generous in my observation about the Opposition.

"What do you think about the debate on Prohibition?" I asked

"We are opposed to imposing it on the people. It must come through education and a proper awareness of one's priorities. Even in the socialist countries people do drink. But they know their limits. Our people must be educated about the evils of excessive alcoholism. Compulsion is no solution," he said.

"Don't you think that the spread of pornography is dangerous to our youth?" was my next question.

"Here again it is because of our backwardness. Our women do not enjoy equal status. They are treated as objects of pleasure. Unless our women are educated we cannot progress. You cannot stop the flow of information. People must be able to resist the evil," he said.

Every answer of his is punctuated by the pet-Leftist theme that the whole system must change. This with a radical is common in any conversation. Sundarayya points his finger

at the foundations which must be changed completely. Only that is the panacea for all ills, social political and economic.

(Courtesy Sunday Standard March 4, 1979)

(On May 19th Sundarayya's 20th Vardhanti was observed)

IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804) - I

- Sri C. Sivasankaram

"Germany is a country which has held a special place in the hearts of the Indian people. German orientalists have made the heritage of India accessible to the whole world and have helped to carry Indian thought into the stream of World Culture". Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

The otherworldly quest, which began in the West before Christ with Pythagoras in lead, followed in succession by ascetical Socrates, aristocratic philosopher Plato and philosopher scientist Aristotle continued its heyday without cease for near two and a half centuries. There after there was ominous lull. The lull lulled the thinking mind, the feeling heart and the speculative intellect of the Greek intelligentsia, to a Rip Van winkle type sleep. The slumber maintained its effects stupor and torpor, for a number of generations until Germany shed its slumber as a result of violent upheavals and rise of radical doctrines in neighbouring France. The state of affairs in France was breathtaking and hair-raising. In the conservative Great Britain too there were winds of change, and there was popular clamour for a radical change in the hackneyed set up. Equality, fraternity and freedom at any cost were peoples' slogans of the day. Conditions were so tumultuous that they no longer brooked delay. France, the country of mutinous trends, was in a ferment and ripe for a show down. France is known for forward politics. Britain the nation of shopkeepers is known for economics (Robert Owen, Adam Smith to mention among the stalwarts) and Germany known for philosophy. Germany it may sound paradoxical, was a country consisting of peace-loving people and peace promoting institutions. Almost all the universities of the country held chairs of philosophy. Kaiser of the First World War and Adolf Hitler of the Second World War belonged to Austria.

The world's thunder and lightning was the great French revolution and its consequent maddening rise of hopes in the neighbouring nations. The people of other countries, encouraged by the triumph of the Revolution began to ventilate their pent up urge for a drastic change to be abreast of times. No oral panacea seemed efficacious to quell the clamour, and suppress the voice of freedom. True, violence is the midwife of a nation pregnant with a new one. Despotic rule followed the revolution. The puzzled world went mad. The cry of liberty and equality was throttled. Napoleon Bonaparte whom Emerson styled as man of the world was looked upon as the Saviour of mankind that was denied even the rudimentary freedom. The common men were trampled underfoot. The

warlords behaved in such a way that feeling and freewill exiled themselves; the law of the jungle was ushered in. Political revolutions, if unsupported by a philosophy of life that guarantees dignity of man, freedom of speech and movement are liable to end in mass oppression and highhanded totalitarian dictatorship. Poor Napoleon fell victim of his own ambitious dream of world conquest and enthroning himself as the unquestioned leader of the 'Free' world (East and West).

France and Germany are neighbouring nations not always having cordial relations. Germany was not aggressive or expansionist. It was the City of Konigsberg in Germany stricken with plague, ridden with internecine conflicts and torn by wars where in the year of 1724 Immanuel Kant was born, twelve years after the birth of the Swissborn French philosopher Rousseau. Famine and disease were stalking the country and their concert of infernal death-dealing dance was going on unarrested. The country was resembling the 1942-43 Bengal. Poverty the severest of the eight fold difficulties held sway as the unrivalled queen over the city along with her other neighbouring towns.

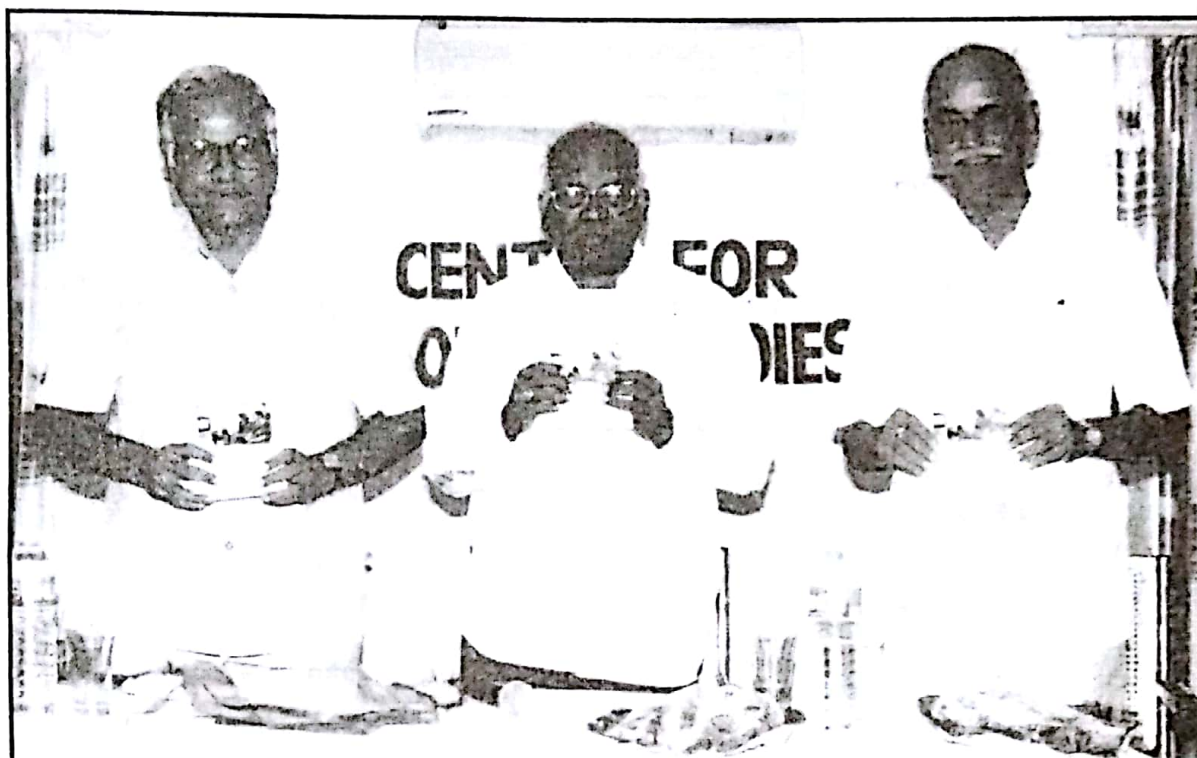
The Kants emigrated from Scotland over a hundred years before the birth of Immanuel. The parent Kant unperturbed by the famine at large and privation at home could sustain himself and his family of eleven children. He could face the adversity valiantly. His innate Scotch tenacity of purpose and German thoroughness could stand him in good stead and the two came to his rescue to take adversity with stoic equanimity.

Immanuel was born with "queer features broad browed, high cheek-boned with large piercing eyes, a ruddy complexion and an eloquent mouth out of which flowed the profoundest language, to quote Herder, that ever came from the lips of man". The stouthearted and brave parent Kant could know how to raise good men on small means. We could know now how penury, unceasing privation and deprivation of good things of life carve the mettle and character of men suffering from them. The parent Kant was a leather strapper. Failed to supply his Children with sufficient physical fare, he brought them up on rich diet of mental food, moral inspiration and ethical education. They were brought up in a practical religion based upon the teachings of the Bible. For Kants belong to the pietist sect branched off the German puritans who called themselves as soldiers of peace.

Young Kant joined the school where moral tuition was imparted. It was a lopsided teaching neglecting the natural development of mind. Too much emphasis on moral in preference to blossoming of other faculties of the brain was resented by him Dawn less night of straightened circumstances and nightmarish loneliness were deepening within him. Immanuel's tender heart was prevented from wreckage by the power of continued teaching of puritanical Bible and pietist exhortations.

(to be continued)

Book Release Function



Impact of Electronic Media on Women : Visakhapatnam A Case Study -
- the latest publication of Centre for Policy Studies was released on May 10, 2005 by Shri C.S. Rao, I.A.S., Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India. Shri Rao is seen holding a copy of the book, along with Dr. B. Swami, Chairman, Centre for Policy Studies and Dr. M. Gopala Krishna Reddy, President, Gandhi Centre and former Vice Chancellor of Andhra University.

Congratulations to Prof. Balamohan Das

Prof V. Balamohan Das, Member, Board of Governors of Centre for Policy Studies and former Dean, Management Studies, Andhra University has assumed charge as Vice Chancellor of Acharya Nagarjuna University. CPS offers its congratulations and best wishes to Prof Das for a successful tenure as Vice Chancellor.

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES

(GAYATRI VIDYA PARISHAD)

47-7-23, Ba-Bapu Bhavan, 4th Lane, Dwarakanagar, Visakhapatnam-530 016. Tel.No.:0891 - 2531727.

Chairman :

Dr. B. Swamy

Patrons :

Prof. B. Sarveswara Rao

Shri Abid Hussain

Shri K. Sivananda Murty

Dr. M. Gopalakrishna Reddy

Prof. R.V.R.Chandrasekhara Rao

Shri A. Sankar Rao

Director :

Prof. A. Prasanna Kumar

Board of Governors :

Shri V.Seetaramaiah

Shri D.V. Subba Rao

Prof. P. Somaraju

Prof. K.C. Reddy

Prof. V. Balamohan Das

Shri V.R.K.S. Siva Prasad

Shri A.S.N. Prasad

Shri M. Varahalu Chetty

Shri P.V. Ramanaiah Raja

Ms. P. Jaganmohini

Prof. P. Srinivasa Rao

Shri D. Dakshinamurty

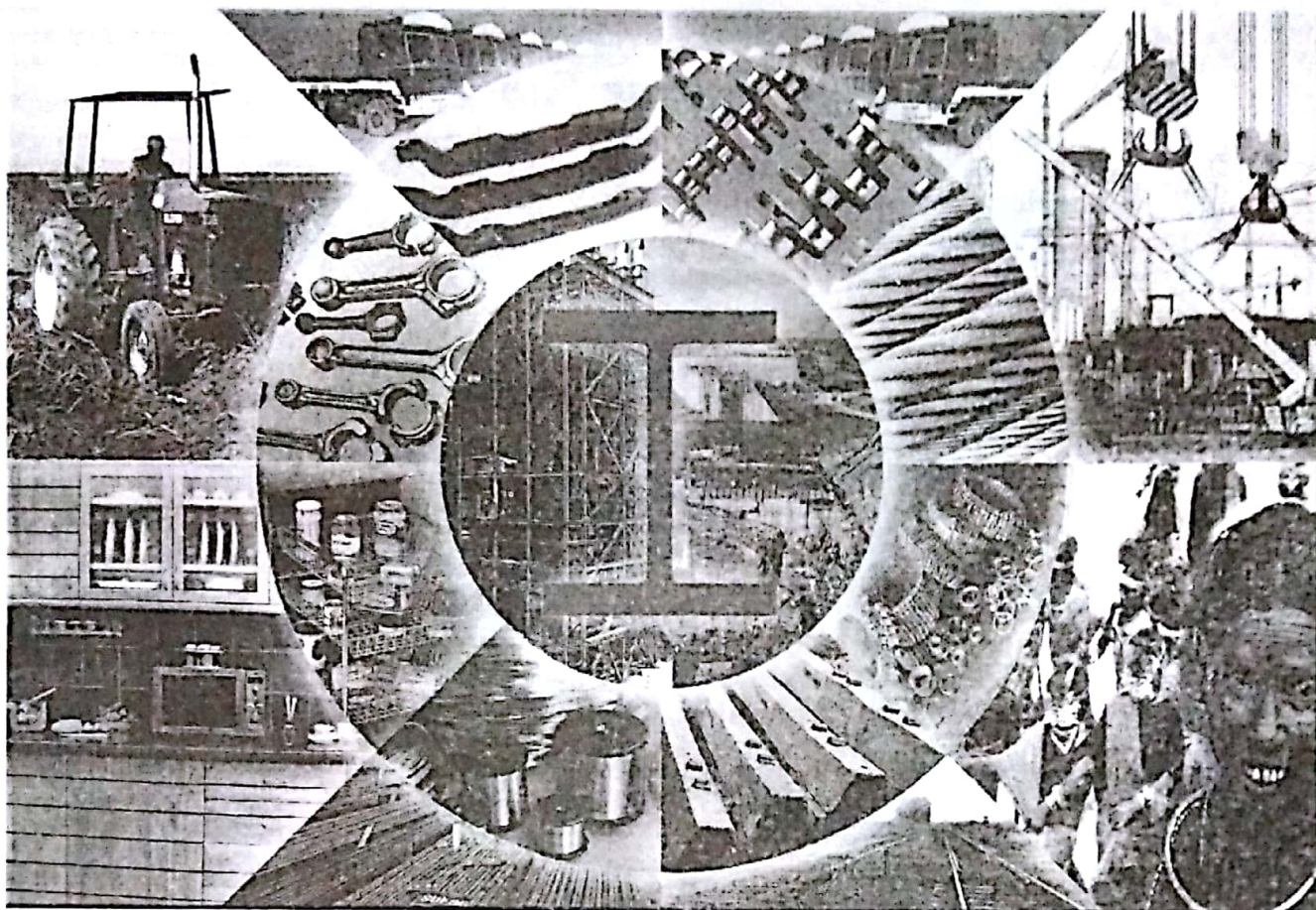
Prof. I.H. Nagaraja Rao

Prof. P.V. Sarma

Prof. V.S.R.K. Prasad

Dr. P. Raja Ganapathi

Sri D.V.S. Kameswara Rao



TOUCHING OUR LIVES EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE - VIZAG STEEL

VIZAG STEEL special steels are the most sought over choice of Automobile, Forging, Engineering Industries and Railways

Kyonki. RINL's most state-of-the-art technological plant at Vizag produces high quality steel.

Say High Carbon, Medium Carbon or Low Carbon, High Manganese, Chromium based as per International Standards are all made at Vizag Steel.

We have expertise to produce steel to meet the needs of various industries.

Deliver Steel with compact tying in bundles in time every time.

TRUST US.

ORDER OUR VALUE ADDED STEEL

FEEL THE ADDED VALUE

**VIZAG
STEEL**

Infrastructuring India and Beyond

BILLETS | TMT RE-BARS | WIRE RODS | ROUNDS | SQUARES | FLATS | ANGLES | CHANNELS | BEAMS

For details, please contact : GM (Mktg), Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd., Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Visakhapatnam - 530 031. Fax : 0891 - 2518316