Ship loses lethal cargo

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, Dec. 28: A tramp ship was towed into Mumbai harbour after six containers of explosives that were being sent to the Indian Border Roads Organisation (BRO) project in Afghanistan through Iran went missing from the vessel.

The incident has jolted Indian authorities, making US suspicions of piracy and terrorism in the high seas off the Indian coast appear very real.

A tramp ship is a vessel that does not ply regular routes but is available for hire.

The MV Eugenia had left Mumbai on December 22. In its cargo were six containers carrying about 100 tonnes of explosives the BRO, a wing of the Indian military, describes as "25 mm dia Cap non MG based emulsion".

This is probably ammonium nitrate, an explosive used by road builders. A BRO official confirmed that the consignment was ordered by the general manager of the Indian project to build the Zaranj-Delaram Road in Afghanistan.

In the wrong hands, ammonium nitrate can be used to devastating effect. A truckload of the explosive was used to blast a Federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995.

A Coast Guard officer said the account given by the captain of the Honduras-registered ship was not corroborated by the circumstances and records with the Mumbai Port Trust. Owned by a Greek, the ship's captain is a Russian, Khakhi Sergei.

The authorities are also surprised that the containers carrying the explosives were loosely lashed on the upper deck. This is usually done if the intention is to unload the consignment soon.

The officer said Sergei had said the Eugenia had encountered rough seas shortly after sailing from Mumbai. Meteorological reports do not bear this out and the Arabian Sea was said to be in one of its calmest phases.

To steady the ship, the captain is reported to have said, the crew dumped six containers into the water. The interrogators wondered why this had to be done. The ship was said to be within Indian waters.

The captain also said it took two days to steady the ship, which, too, is being doubted. The Eugenia is not a large vessel — only 700 tonnes — and had a crew of six, including the captain.

Defence ministry sources said investigators were not ruling out the possibility that the Eugenia offloaded its cargo to another ship. In other words, the suspicion of piracy is very strong.

This is just the kind of warning the US has been sounding to the Indian government. It has used suspicions of piracy in the busy sea-lanes off Indian coasts to urge India to join in the Proliferation Security Initiative and take on policing responsibility by boarding and searching vessels.

The ship's crew – four are believed to be Russians and two Myanmarese — has been detained for questioning.

■ **See Page 6**

THE TELEGRAPH

Jihad in global perspective

Analyses the jihad in the context of the globalised world in which U.S. hegemonism is the major factor

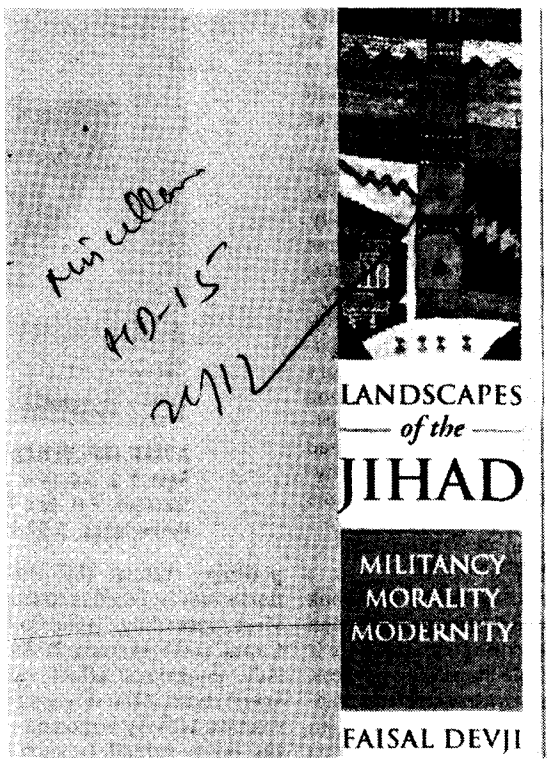
Kesava Menon

A statement that must be made before anything else is said about this book is that it is a very difficult read. It offers a perspective on the phenomenon it deals with that is very different from the analytical frameworks generally used in the study of this subject. Amateur reviewers as well as lay readers are also likely to be put out by some of the phraseology employed by the author. For all that, a reader who goes through the 164 pages can benefit from the insights the book offers on a phenomenon most of the world is trying to grapple with.

Conceptual framework

In the preface, Faisal Devji points out that he does not intend to provide a sociology of Al-Qaeda's jihad "but rather the reverse." It is when he goes on to describe what his aim actually is that the reader begins to fear he is in for a mental struggle. Devji says that his aim is "to encourage us to reflect on its (that is the jihad's) landscapes of global effects by a process of abstraction that is signalled by my profligate use of 'the jihad' as a term to describe the global nature of Al-Qaeda's militancy in a conceptual way." He also notes that the question he wishes to address is also a broadly conceptual one — "how does Islam become a global phenomenon in Al-Qaeda's jihad?"

To understand the above, the reader needs to know what the author means by the phrase 'landscapes of global effects'. Devji's contention is that the terror attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda in East Africa in 1998 and in the U.S. in 2001 converted the jihad into a global phenomenon. It was no longer confined territorially as was the jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. Such a globalisation of the jihad created new cultures of terror and security. The term 'landscape' is used to describe the patterns of belief and practice that is produced by the actions of Al-Qaeda.



LANDSCAPES OF THE JIHAD – Militancy, Morality, Modernity: Faisal Devji; Foundation Books, Cambridge House, 4381/4, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 395.

The author makes the pertinent point that Al-Qaeda did not spread spatially — in the sense of garnering recruits in different parts of the world — by propagating an ideology. It inspired Muslim youth in the United Kingdom, Spain and other places to carry out suicide bomb attacks on civilian targets by first undertaking such 'martyrdom operations' against U.S. embassies in East Africa, the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

The phenomenon

Devji seeks to go beyond the analytical frameworks that are generally applied to study the phenomenon of the jihad. He tries to prove that Al-Qaeda's beliefs and practices are not necessarily derived from the long-standing doctrines of Salafism and Wahabism. Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other theoreticians of today's jihad are quite eclectic in their choice of doctrines they invoke to justify their actions. The author also notes that many of those who participated in 'martyrdom operations' were hardly even observant Muslims let alone the exemplars of the puritanical code that Salafists and Wahabis seek to enforce.

In Devji's view, Al-Qaeda's jihad cannot be wholly attributed to political or economic causes either. While Osama has often spoken of the aggression committed by the West, especially the U.S., against the Muslim world, Devji argues that Al-Qaeda does not believe that its actions will lead to a redressal of these grievances. The author argues, quite convincingly, that the scholarly writing on the subject has missed much of the "invisible world of ethical, sexual, aesthetic and other forms of behaviour" that is linked to the jihad. This invisible world is what he tries to reveal in the book.

Globalising the struggle

To summarise Devji's argument, it is that the jihad has to be understood in the context of the globalised world in which U.S. hegemonism is the major factor. In such a situation, Al-Qaeda has understood it that the Muslims do not have the power to have particular grievances (such as occupation of the Palestinian territories) redressed by waging localised struggles. They can only take on a global power by globalising their own struggle. But, for the sake of globalising their struggle or during the process of so globalising it, the jihadists must give up the notion that they will achieve immediate results. They must instead carry out their missions as an act of devotion to their God.

While Devji does make a persuasive argument, he does run the risk of portraying Osama and Zawahiri as something larger than they actually are. After all, it is difficult to swallow the notion that Osama and Zawahiri seek to give a new, perhaps positive, orientation to the Muslim world.

This book does not do enough to erase the impression left on the minds of many who have followed Osama's career. Is he actually something more than a man ill-equipped to deal with the modern world who lucked into the jihad as an enterprise that gave his life meaning?

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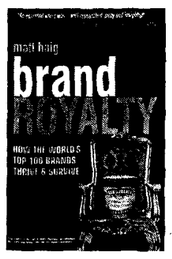
BOOK REVIEW

Announcement

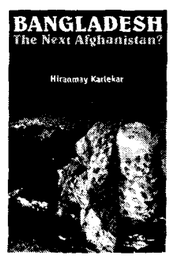
Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. *Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.*

NEW ARRIVALS



Brand Royalty – How the World's *Top 100 Brands* Thrive & Survive: Matt Haig; Kogan Page India, 2/13, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 395.

Five Centuries of Sikh Tradition – Ideology, Society, Politics and Culture: Reeta Grewal & Sheena Pall – Editors; Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 4753/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 975.



Bangladesh – The Next Afghanistan?: Hiranmay Karlekar; Sage Publications *India Pvt. Ltd.*, B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. Rs. 320.

★ **Midnight Biriyani:** Anil C.S. Rao; *FROG Books, an imprint of ZZEBRA*, 4A Diamond House, Linking Road, Parallel Road to National College, *Bandra (W), Mumbai-400050.* **Rs. 95.**

★ **Issues and Themes in Anthropology:** *Vinay Kumar Srivastava, Manoj* Kumar Singh; Palaka Prakashan, 3930/18, Kanhaiya Nagar, Tri Nagar, *Delhi-110035.* **Rs. 1800.**

★ **Essential Ayurveda – What it is & what it can do for you:** Shubhra *Krishan;* **Rs. 225.**

★ **For a Blissful Baby** _ Healthy and Happy Pregnancy with Vedic Medicine: *Kumuda* Reddy, *Linda Egenes,* **Rs. 295.**

★ **Conquering Chronic Disease through Vedic Medicine:** *Kumuda* Reddy, Linda Egenes; **Rs. 350.** The above books pub. by New Age Books, A-44, Naraina Phase I, New Delhi-110028.

★ **Socio-Economic and Political Problems of Tea Garden Workers** – A Study of Assam: S. N. Singh, Amarendra Narain, Purnendu Kumar; *Mittal Publications, A-110,* Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059. **Rs. 550.**

★ **Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy** – An Anthology of Recent Criticism: Murari Prasad; Pencraft International, 4262/3, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 400.**

★ **The India-Pakistan Air War of 1965:** PVS Jagan Mohan, Samir Chopra; *Manohar Publishers & Distributors,* 4753/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 895.**

★ **A Book on Frauds in Property Transactions:** Pavan Kumar; iTop Cosultants, 105/A Siddhartha Apartments, Road No. 2, Ganesh Nagar, Ramanthapur, Opp TV Studio, Hyderabad-500013. **Rs. 99.**

★ **The Lost Secrets of Ayurvedic Acupuncture** – An Ayurvedic Guide to Acupuncture: Frank Ross; Motilal Banarsidass, 41 UA Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110007. **Rs. 175.**

★ **Gita** – The Song Extraordinary: Damodar Thakur; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 350.**

★ **Olga's Story:** Stephanie Williams; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **£ 18.**

★ **The Dawn of Creation:** Sudha Subramaniam; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 150.**

★ **A Short History of Tractors in Ukranian:** Marina Lewycka; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **£ 9.**

★ **25 Eminent Indians 1947-2005:** H. N. Verma, Amrit Verma; Copies can be had from author, ED-49 Press Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 300.**

★ **Sikandar Chowk Park:** Neelum Saran Gour; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 295.**

★ **Facing Job Interviews:** Marry Stella; Lotus Press, 4263/3, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 125.**

★ **Land Laws:** N. Maheshwara Swamy; **Rs. 330.**

★ **Commentary on The Right to Information Act 2005:** N. K. Acharya; **Rs. 150.**

★ **Law of Insolvency (Bankruptcy):** Justice P. S. Narayana; **Rs. 595.**

★ **Law of Negotiable Instruments & Dishnour of Cheques:** P. S. Narayana, P. Jagadish Chandra Prasad; **Rs. 645.** The above books pub. by Asia Law House, Opp. High Court, Hyderabad-500002.

★ **Science Quiz:** Shabnam Gupta;

★ **Synonyms & Antonyms:** Shabnam Gupta;

★ **Idioms:** David Copper; The above books pub. by Lotus Press, 4263/3, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 95 each.**

★ **Encyclopaedia of Petroleum Laws:** Harbans Lal Sarin, Manmohan Lal Sarin; Universal Law Publishing Co Pvt. Ltd., C-FF-1A, Dilkhush Industrial Estate, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi-110033. **Rs. 1150.**

★ **On the Other Side of Midnight – A Fijian Journey:** Brij V. Lal; National Book Trust, A-5, Green Park, New Delhi-110016. **Rs. 60.**

★ **Our Future** – Consumerism or Humanism: J. C. Kapur; Kapur Surya Foundation, Bijwasan-Najafgarh Road, PO Kapas Hera, New Delhi-110037. **Rs. 395.**

★ **Poems of Pathos and and Stories of Surprise:** Pearl; K. S. Muthusamy, Ram's Ganga, 5th Cross Street, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 195.**

★ **Geology of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal:** Gopendra Kumar; The *Geological Society of India,* PB 1922, Gavipuram PO, Bangalore-560019.

★ **Sree Mahabharata** – Adiparva: STV *Raghavacharyulu – Tr. in English;* for copies Acharya Vasudev, Madhusudar Ojha Educational & Cultural *Society, Gayatri Nagar,* Hyderabad-70. **Rs. 60.**

★ **Majumdar's Laws Relating to Notices:** *Ajit K. Sengupta;* **Rs. 480.**

★ **Legal Aspects of Managing Employee Relations:** A.B. Chowdhury; **Rs. 550.**

★ **The Limitation Act 1963:** M. R. Mallick; **Rs. 975.** The above books pub. *by Eastern Law House Pvt. Ltd.,* 54, Ganesh Chunder Avenue, Kolkata-700013.

★ **The Sociology of Gender** – *An Introduction to Theory and Research:* Amy S. Wharton; Blackwell Publishing, *U.S., distributed by Kilaso* Books, 2/19, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 1190.**

★ **A Professional Text to Bakery and Confectionary:** John Kingslee; New Age International (P) Ltd., 4835/24, *Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.* **Rs. 145.**

★ **Developing Winning Research Proposals in Agricultural Research:** Jagannadham Challa, D. Rama Rao, S. M. Virmani; National Academy of *Agricultural Research Management,* Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030. **Rs. 200.**

TAMIL

★ **Pinkathai Churukkam:** Pa. Raghavan; Kizhakku Pathippagam, A division of New Horizon Media Pvt. Ltd., 16, Karpagambal Nagar, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 50.**

★ **Thanneer Kanneer Sindhugirathu:** Kavignar Suresh; Suri Literature Centre, 27A, Gangai Amman Koil Street, Jafferkhanpet, Chennai-600083. **Rs. 40.**

★ **Uyirae Uyirae...:** Rajashyamala Prakash; **Rs. 60.**

★ **Sundarakandam:** Lakshmi Rajarathnam; **Rs. 45.** Both the books pub. by Puthaga Poonga, 3/1 Sundareswarar Koil Street, Royapettah, Chennai-600014.

★ **Tamil Nattu Bharata Rathinangal:** Surya, Saisuriya Enterprise, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**

TELUGU

★ **Sunaami Naaneelu** – Epigrams of Tsunami: T. Sampath Kumar; Copies can be had from T. Madhavi Latha, Flat No. D-202, Shivam Apartments, (Vikram Nagar Housing Society), Plot No. 14, Sector 12, Dwarka, ND-110075. **Rs. 40.**

★ **Kommalu-Remmalu** – A Festschrift Collection for Yagalla Rama Krishna on his Diamond Jubilee Year: Mo & Smile; Mo, 303, Rise'n' View, 3, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-34. **Rs. 250.**

★ **Saalegoodu:** Chittarvu Madhu; Vahini Book Trust, 1-9-286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. **Rs. 50.**

★ **Rachana Anuvada Navalalu:** Rachana Sai – Compiler; Vahini Book Trust, 1-9-286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. **Rs. 150.**

★ **Srivaari Sannidhi** – A Handbook on Tirumala-Tirupathi-Tiruchanur Temples: Palakodety; PS Rao, 308, Taj Enclave Lakdikapool, Hyderabad-500004. **Rs. 75.**

KANNADA

★ **Manegara** – An Autobiography by Thumbadi Ramaiah: Thumbadi, 981 near HMS School, Tuda Extn., Siragate, Tumkur-572106. **Rs. 65.**

★ **Sri Mata:** K. O. Chennabasappa – Tr. in Kannada; Karnataka Nilayam Trust, 1, Montorsier Street, Pondicherry-605001. **Rs. 50.**

★ **Devasahitya** – Articles on the Writings of Ramachandra Deva: Krishnamurthy Hanur, K. N. Shivatirthan; Nairuthya Prakashana, 43, Mandaliru, 2nd Stage, M Block, Kuvempu Nagar, Mysore-570023. **Rs. 200.**

★ **Vidwan Ramachandra Uchil:** Amritha Someshwar – Editor; Vidwan Ramachandra Uchil Abhinandana Samiti, Kalagangothri Yakshagana Adhyayana Kendra, Someshwar-Uchil, Mangalore, DK-575023. **Rs. 200.**

★ **Nammellara Sri Rama:** Mathoor Krishnamurthi; M. P. Birla Foundation, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bangalore-560001. **Rs. 150.**

★ **Sooriya Sakhiya Okkalu:** Satyanarayana Raoanati; CVG Publications, 70, 2nd Main Road, Jabbar Block, Vyalikaval, Bangalore-560003. **Rs. 60.**

Looking beyond Hindutva

A probing look beyond Hindutva to get to the heart of Gujarat

Jyotirmaya Sharma

The Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski has said that the only available way to write about the Holocaust was as the guilty, and as the complicit and the implicated. That also is the only way to write about Gujarat. Any social and cultural history of the State written after 2002 has to contend with the saturnine shadow that Godhra and its bloody aftermath casts upon narrative requirements. Achyut Yagnik and Suchitra Sheth have written a masterly volume on Gujarat, whose self-description as a 'concerned citizen's understanding of the shaping of modern Gujarat' can be highly misleading in the first instance.

Three functions

This is a complex and sophisticated book, and not a well-intentioned pamphlet. It asks audacious questions and attempts to answer them. Most significantly, it is pegged on a political question, namely, the rise, success and flourishing of Hindutva in Gujarat, and the future of this ideology in the political, cultural and social landscape of this State. Yet, its strength lies in expending precisely 41 of 293 pages to the question of Hindutva and its contemporary politics. In doing so, it performs for the reader three important functions.

Firstly, it gets the question of the 'gaze' right. It remains part of reality while not necessarily participating in it. Just as Perseus cannot directly look at Medusa's face in order to cut it off, but must view it only indirectly, similarly, Yagnik and Sheth take on Hindutva and its red-in-the-tooth history by asking the right questions, clarifying the status of the inquiry and bringing a rare lucidity to the enterprise. While their enterprise is focussed and well directed, the 'gaze' partakes of the ineluctable weight of reality by not staring directly into its face.

The next important feature of the book is its tonality. It is written by two individuals who are activists but despite this inescapable fact of their chosen vocation the narrative never slides into shrillness, pomposity, self-righteousness or sanctimoniousness. Rather, there is a subtle subterranean tone of irony and wonderment about the history of a land and its people who claim to have produced Narsi Mehta and Gandhiji, and yet have in recent times, instead of empathising with the pain of others, have perfected the art of inflicting pain on each other.

Story of Gujarat

Lastly, this volume is rich in its use of original texts, and extensive use of literary material. Here too, there is an acute awareness on the part of the writers that answers — if at all there are answers to political questions — are usually to be found elsewhere. In this way, the book manages to escape a degree of reductionism that usually informs more academically oriented texts on similar subjects. Therefore, despite articulating a thesis about the making of modern Gujarat, the book is, in a certain sense, about wondering why 'the burnt fool's bandaged finger invariably goes wobbling back to the fire'. Despite a very large canvas, the book has details that betray the skilled hand of an expert miniaturist. The story of Gujarat begins with the Indus Valley Civilisation making inroads into Gujarat between 2400 B.C. and 1800 B.C. and ends with the lament that a bit of civilisation in Narendra Modi's Gujarat would not be such a bad idea.

While the writers account for changes in Gujarat brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation and tensions between various castes and communities for power and control, the larger question explored is one of the quest for 'more meaningful identities', without divorcing the problem of identity from the clamour for enhanced social status and political power.

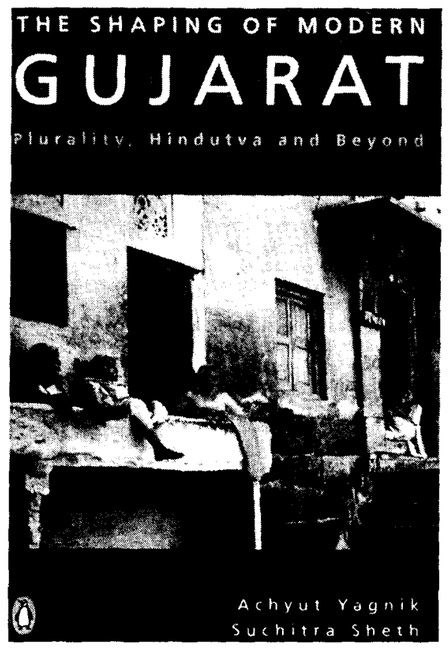
The paradox

What holds the book together as a narrative par excellence is its understanding of a paradox. After all, Gujarat is a society that is so diverse — it has, for instance, the largest number of Muslim communities in India than even Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir — and yet it has bred the most extreme forms of exclusivism and exclusion. Gujaratis who are enterprising and have travelled to every corner of the world have also, in recent times, turned insular and parochial.

A state that is extremely prosperous also has conspicuous poverty. In other words, the paradox is that diversity also produces tensions and reasons for conflict. In a tacit way, then, this volume is an admission of the failure of modern, free India to build viable political institutions and infuse legitimacy and emotion into their working.

My minor quibble with the text is its likening of Hindutva and other forms of Hindu sectarianism as 'new Hinduism'. Such a categorisation prevents us from asking whether Hinduism has ever had a politics, or is the political versions of the faith merely deviations, distortions and transgressions from something that was pristine and untainted by politics. While this is not the central element in the book, a degree of thought on this issue would go a long way.

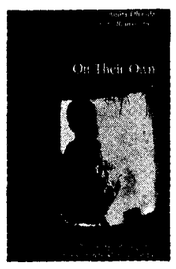
There are, however, weightier reasons why we must read this book. Since, as Indian citizens, what has happened in Gujarat since 2002 implicates us all, the first step towards expiation would be to know just a little more than we care to do.



THE SHAPING OF MODERN GUJARAT – Plurality, Hindutva and Beyond: Achyut Yagnik, Suchitra Sheth; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. Rs. 350.

Socio-legal perspectives of adoption

Ramya Kannan



ON THEIR OWN – A socio-legal investigation of inter-country adoption in India: Amita Dhanda, Gita Ramaswamy; Pub. by Otherwise Books, an imprint of Spark-India, 'Sudarshan', 3-5-819, Hyderguda, Hyderabad-500029. Rs. 75.

INVESTIGATION OF ADOPTION IN INDIA FROM A CHILD RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

This cross-country study on inter-country adoption has finally established what we have all had a sneaking suspicion of: that all is not well and legal safeguards are being constantly breached while trying to find homes for children.

While the authors begin wondering if they had found a breakdown of the legal mechanism as well as supervision by government and its agencies, by the end of the book, a reader is convinced that they have indeed.

Taking on the bugbear of inter-country adoption as part of a study for Save the Children, UK, might have meant a whole lot of hard work, encountering lies, several closed doors and persistence to carry on hunting for the truth.

The time too was ripe: in Tamil Nadu, the police had busted a kidnapping ring that had supplied children to an adoption agency for over seven years. Among their victims, who were sold for sums of money, were babies stolen from maternity homes in the State. It later emerged that this agency, Malaysian Social Service Society, had forged documents to facilitate foreign nationals to gain custody of these children.

Legal framework

The story of this book begins, as all books on adoption do, with the Laxmikant Pandey case in 1982, when the Supreme Court laid down procedures to guide inter-country adoption. It does manage to establish the legal framework that governs adoption in the country, studying inter-country adoption in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Despite facing several hurdles at every stage, investigators on the study pursued court records, interviewed adoption agencies and adoptees, and examined every possible lead using multiple sources, including newspaper reports, to corroborate the evidence they managed to unearth. Incorporating individual case studies and a section on the problems Indian children growing up in different ethnic societies adds a personal touch to the otherwise factual rendering of processes and events. The personal experience of one of the authors, Gita Ramaswamy, who has worked extensively in Andhra Pradesh, sits rather well on the composition of the book.

Commerce-driven

The leads, picked up from every State, present clear evidence of the commodification of children through the adoption process in the country.

Thanks to the financial gains involved in placing children abroad, the Central Adoption Resource Agency guidelines to go in for inter-country adoption only when local placement is not possible are flouted repeatedly.

The adoption dictum, 'in the best interests of the child', has been given a go by as commerce takes over and selling young children becomes a profitable occupation.

Following the set pattern of research, the book provides recommendations, calling for changes to the legal and social framework governing adoption, especially inter-country adoption, strict implementation and, efficient supervision and monitoring. It ends with a clearly expressed hope of provoking a foundational re-examination of the existing law on adoption.

Interpretation of the Gita

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE BHAGAVADGITA: S. M. Srinivasa Chari; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., P.B.No 5715, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi-110055. Rs. 575.

R. Gopalakrishnan

PRESENTS THE ENTIRE GAMUT OF THE VEDANTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GITA

The Bhagavad Gita, the Song Celestial, has been acclaimed as a major Hindu philosophical treatise as well as a religious scripture. It gives both a divine touch and a rational treatment of the human predicament.

The Kurukshetra represents the phenomenal world where there are constant battles between good and evil; Arjuna represents the good and Duryodana, the evil. Lord Krishna patronises the good and punishes the wicked as He taught.

Commentaries

Several preceptors of Vedanta and modern scholars like Gandhiji, Sri Aurobindo and Tilak have commented on the philosophical concepts enunciated in this text. This shows that the Gita gives scope for divergent views according to the bent of mind of the interpreters. Though all of them are agreed on the fundamental theme that Lord Krishna is the Supreme Being (Paratattva), they differ with regard to the nature of the Supreme Being, the soul and their relationship in terms of difference and non-difference, as well as the nature of the ultimate goal and the means to attain it.

The author of the book under review endeavours to highlight the philosophical tenets of the Bhagavad Gita based on an evaluation of the three preceptors, Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva — absolutistic, theistic and dualistic perspectives respectively.

Part one of the book gives an expository elucidation of the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita wherein the doctrines of Vedanta like Brahman, Atman, kinds of Yoga, God, and nature of liberation are adequately explained. The second part in four chapters with 13 sub-topics deals extensively with the doctrinal exposition of the Bhagavad Gita.

The author acknowledges that while there are innumerable writings, scholarly presentations, and translations available both in India and abroad, his intention is to "present a consolidated and comprehensive exposition of the philosophy of the Gita" based on the teachings of the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras in the light of the commentaries by the three preceptors.

Ultimate Reality

The execution of this work proves beyond doubt that the hope of the author is fulfilled. His intention is to show that Lord Krishna is the ultimate metaphysical Reality.

All the essential characteristic features attributed to Brahman in the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras are attributed to Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. The cosmic form of the Lord, Visvarupa, reveals the most distinctive feature of Divine glory representing the infinite nature of Paramatman (Ananta).

The author has meticulously quoted several verses from various texts including the Gita to substantiate his understanding and presentation and he has carefully given the diacritical marks.

This book also contains a fine glossary, bibliography and index. More care should have been taken in checking the spelling. For instance, the Gita verse should be 'param brahma param dhaama'. But the author uses the expression 'parama' in both the places. Similarly, instead of using 'aahustvaam' the author uses 'ahustvam'.

Barring these mistakes the book on the whole will be worthwhile to read and reflect upon, since a reader can get the entire gamut of Vedantic interpretations of the Gita.

Testament of faith

LETTERS FROM MIRTOLA – Written by Sri Krishnaprem and Sri Madhava Ashish to Karan Singh: Jyotsna Singh – Editor; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. Rs. 150.

Prema Nandakumar

The editor, Jyotsna Singh, has done well to include the detailed memoirs on Sri Krishnaprem by Madhava Ashish and Gertrude Emerson Sen midway through the book. These two accurate portraits will help the reader understand how the Englishman, Ronald Nixon, a Professor of English at Lucknow University entered the Bhagavata world. Sri Krishnaprem Vairagi (1898-1965) was a product of Cambridge University and had spent sometime as a fighter pilot in the First World War.

The Buddha drew him to the mysterious East, and Monica Chakravarti (Sri Yasoda Mai), wife of his Vice-Chancellor initiated him in Vaishnav sannyas. They founded an Ashram in Mirtola near Almora and installed an image of Radha Krishna for ritual worship. After the passing away of his Guru, Sri Krishnaprem continued to stay there with his disciple Madhava Ashish, spending his time in regular worship of the deity, contemplation and writing.

As a young man, Dr. Karan Singh became a disciple of Sri Krishnaprem and his association with the Ashram has continued to this day.

Each of the letters printed here brings out the crystalline faith Sri Krishnaprem had in his deity and his guru, and his personality is literally robed in peace and calm. He was full of intense faith in his chosen path.

When Sri Krishnaprem was once asked by an Indian professor why he followed the purificatory and pooja rituals so thoroughly at great personal inconvenience though he was born an Englishman, the Yogi replied simply: "For one thing, I believe that any self-imposed discipline, external or internal, is rather a good thing in this present age, when every kind of social and individual restraint is in process of being hurled out of the window. Also, quite simply, this happens to be the path laid down by those who have gone before me and reached the goal."

So perfectly Vaishnavite an answer, like Andal's phrase, "melayaar seyvanagal" and the Mahabharata refrain: "esha dharma sanatanah"!

His faith in the power of love, capacity to interpret dreams and respect for mantra as an instrument to gain spiritual states of being are all here.

With Madhava Ashish the subjects are more external: the state of the nation, party politics, the communal problem. But all of *Letters from Mirtola* bears witness to the glory and good of India's universal Sanatana Dharma. No man is an island; no seeker is an alien. All of us are in Brindavan, holding hands in the eternal Ras.

TAMIL

Valmiki's epic

C.L.Ramakrishnan

VALAM TARUM VANMIKIYIN SUNDARA KANDAM: Pulavar A. Kalathi. Pub. by Killai Nilayam, 16/383, Arcot Road, Kodambakkam, Chennai-600024. Rs. 120.

THIS WORK describes the Sundara Kanda of the Valmiki Ramayana, chapter by chapter. Written in a simple style, with the language reflecting the sentiments of the original, it makes for absorbing reading.

Beginning with the dialogue between the Divine couple on the greatness of the Sundara Kanda, the work mentions the beneficial effects of each canto, for life here and the hereafter, and for those seeking liberation.

The scheme of reading the epic has also been given.

Though the title 'Sundara Kanda ' is translated as 'canto beautiful' by some, the invocatory verse of the epic mentions that whoever reverentially listens to the elixir known as Ramayana, which has issued forth from the lotus face of saint Valmiki, leaves this world beset with transmigratory existence and misfortunes, and attains the abode of the Lord.

Philosophically speaking, 'Sundara' means 'regaining what has been lost'. A devotee, who has lost the knowledge of the Self, gains it through this work and hence its importance.

Well-written, tastefully got-up and reasonably priced, this book is a welcome addition to the devotee and being in Tamil, it will have a wide reach.

TELUGU

Short stories in translation

Ambika Ananth

RACHANA ANUVAADA KATHALU – Anthology of Short Stories from Other Languages: 'Rachana' Sai – Compiler; pub. by Vahini Book Trust, 1-9-286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. Rs. 150.

IN THIS anthology there are 35 translated stories from languages like Bengali, Oriya, Konkani, Hindi, Urdu, French and English and one African story based on the author's own experience.

These stories, with their attention-retentive quality, seem as though 'Rachana' Sai has carefully compiled them from the repertoire of stories published in *Rachana* since 1991.

The stories bear testimony to the fact that short story is a genre which evokes interest and empathy in readers.

Though it is hard to comment on translations without reading the original, trusting the judgment and discretion of the publishers, one can buy the book and appreciate the significant contribution of various authors and understand the symbiotic relationship between languages.

According to one valid viewpoint, promoting translations among Indian languages helps in the nation-building process, and collections such as this vouch for that.

Rachana Intinti Patrika is rendering a useful service by publishing the translations of some important, well-acclaimed vernacular and foreign language stories, which otherwise may remain inaccessible to Telugu readers.

MALAYALAM

Labour and politics

K. Kunhikrishnan

THERANJEDUTHA KRITHIKAL – Political Thoughts: B.T. Ranadive; Chintha Publishers, Deshabhimani Road, P. B. No 172, Thiruvananthapuram-695001. Rs. 160.

THIS VOLUME is a compilation of 28 selected articles on issues related to trade union movement, labour and politics.

The author, a communist trade union leader who devoted his entire life to politics, advocates strong resistance to revisionist and dogmatic tendencies in revolutionary movement and consistently exhorts trade union unity.

He wants workers to unite and organise those who cannot organise and that the organised strength should work for all the downtrodden.

He wants government servants be permitted to undertake active political work, as they are considered as part of the working class, and he feels, "they are virtually reduced to second class citizens," by depriving them of the right to political expression and action.

The right to work is strongly pleaded by the author.

He was also seriously alarmed with the issues and problems of working women, of course from a Marxian angle, as with student problems.

His essay on Centre-state relations is erudite.

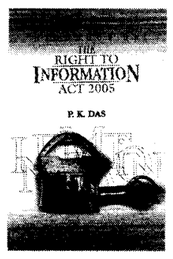
The translation is done fairly well, but the Marxian-Leninist angle is overemphasised affecting the readability for a layman.

Announcement Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

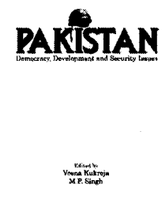
BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

Umrao Jan Ada – The Courtesan of Lucknow: Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa in Urdu; Translated in English by Kushwant Singh and M.A.Husaini, Orient Paperbacks, 5A/8, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 175.



The Right to Information Act 2005: P. K. Das; Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., C-FF-1A, Dilkhush Industrial Estate, G.T.Karnal Road, Delhi-110033. Rs. 325.



Pakistan – Democracy, Development and Security Issues: Veena Kukreja, M.P.Singh – Editors; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. Rs. 360.

- ★ **Water Needs in South Asia** – Sec 2: Closing the Demand-Supply Gap: Toufiq A. Siddiqi, Shirin Tahir-Kheli; Global Environment and Energy in the 21st Century, PO Box 25517, Honolulu, Hawaii-96825-0517. **$ 23.**
- ★ **Through the Eagle's Eye** – A Fairy Tale For Young and Old: M. B. Lal; Copies can be had from author, D-30, Press Enclave, Saket, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 100.**
- ★ **Reservation Policy** – Its Relevance in Modern India: Ram Samujh; Samrudh Bharat Publication, B-6, Shalimar Apt., WE Highway, Santacruz (E), Mumbai-400055. **Rs. 395.**
- ★ **The Will to Success My Memoirs:** D. Bhaskara Reddy; Copies can be had from author, 1-10-63/12, Begumpet, Hyderabad-500016. **Rs. 200.**
- ★ **A Sikh Boy:** Mohinder Singh; Harper Collins Publishers, 1A, Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 295.**
- ★ **Nepal Democracy in Transition:** Navin Mishra; **Rs. 650.**
- ★ **Restructuring the Foundations of Schools** – The Role of ICTs in Elementary & Secondary Education: R. C. Krishnamurthy; **Rs. 550.**
- ★ **Governance of Panchayati Raj:** Jasprit Kaur Soni; **Rs. 475.** The above books pub. by Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092.
- ★ **Asan Englishes Beyond the Canon:** Braj B. Kachru; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 695.**
- ★ **Population and Sustainable Development in India:** Ehsanul Haq, Sudhir Kumar Singh; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 750.**

  Discovery of North-East India: Vol. 3 – Assam-Geography and Ancient History: S. K. Sharma, Usha Sharma; **Rs. 1100.**

  Human Rights in a Developing Society: M. R. Biju; **Rs. 695.**

  Social Work Practices and Services – A Compendium: Raj Bhanti; **Rs. 450.**

  The Wild Beasts of India: G. P. Sanderson; **Rs. 895.** The above books pub. by Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059.

  Women in Politics Participation and Governance: R. Letha Kumari; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 575.**

  T.S. Eliot An Intensive Study of Selected Poems: Arun Kumar Sinha, Kumar Vikram; Spectrum Books Pvt. Ltd., A1 291, I Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. **Rs. 195.**

  Improve Your Health With Basil and Margosa:

  Improve Your Health With Wheatgrass & Grains:

  Improve Your Health With Vegetables:

  Improve Your Health With Turmeric and Alum: The above books are written by Rajeev Sharma and pub. by The Book Factory, X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **Rs. 40 each.**
- ★ **India's Only Communalist in Commemoration of Sita Ram Goel:** Koenraad Elst; Voice of India, 2/18, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 300.**
- ★ **Annual Horoscope 2006** – Monthly Forecast of all Zodiac Signs: Ma. Prem Usha, Ma. Prem Ritambhara; Fusion Books, X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **Rs. 195.**
- ★ **Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2005 Dealing with Shocks:** Academic Foundation, 4772/23, Bharat Ram Road (23 Ansari Road), Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 795.**
- ★ **Memory Techniques for Science Students:** Neerja Roy Chowdhury; Fusion Books, X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **Rs. 95.**
- ★ **Symbos for Worldlessness** – A Study of the Deep Structure of John Steinbeck's Early Novels: Periaswamy Balaswamy; Ramath Academic Publishers, D-13, Plaza Properties, 75 Church Road, Perungudi, Chennai-600096. **Rs. 450.**
- ★ **Sage of Love and Grace:** Bharanidharan; Homeopathic Medical Publishers, 201 Dinar, 20 Station Road, Santacruz (W), Mumbai-400054. **Rs. 150.**
- ★ **World Investment Report 2005 Transnational Corporations and the Internationalization of R&D:** Academic Foundation, 4772/23, Bharat Ram Road, (23 Ansari Road) Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 995.**
- ★ **World Economic and Social Survey 2005 Financing for Development:** Academic Foundation, 4772/23, Bharat Ram Road (23 Ansari Road) Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 895.**
- ★ **Imagined Manuvad** – The Dharmasastras and their Interpreters: Shashi S. Sharma; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 595.**
- ★ **Colonializing Agriculture** – The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism: Mridula Mukherjee; **Rs. 420.**
- ★ **Asian Irrigation in Transition** – Responding to Challenges: Ganesh P. Shivakoti, Douglas Vermillion; **Rs. 850.**
- ★ **Organizing for Social Change** – A Dialetic Journey of Theory and Praxis: Michael J. Papa, Arvind Singhal; **Rs. 360.** The above books pub. by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017.
- ★ **Annual Horoscope 2006:** P. Khuranna; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 150.**
- ★ **Atha Sringarashatakam** – Sanskrit Slokas on Sringara Rasa by Bhartrihari: Rajendra Tandon – Tr. in English; **Rs. 295.**
- ★ **Atha Vairagyashatakam** – by Bhartrihari: Rajendra Tandon – Tr. in English; **Rs. 295.**
- ★ **Atha Nitishatakam** – by Bhartrihari: Rajendra Tandon – Tr. in English; **Rs. 295.**
- ★ **Seven Pillars of Wisdom** – A Triumph: TE Lawrence; **Rs. 195.**
- ★ **Ardhakathanaka** – Half a Tale: Mukund Lath; The above books pub. by Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.

TAMIL

- ★ **Vidukathai Paaniyil 1000 I.Q. Pudhirgal:** M. Abbas Mandri; Sura Books Pvt. Ltd., 1620 'J' Block, 16th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai-600040. **Rs. 45.**
- ★ **Thulli Varukuthu Vel:** Indira Soundarrajan; Thiruvarasu Puthaka Nilayam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 60.**
- ★ **Eliya Thamizhil Aazhvargalin Varalaru:** R.V. Pathi; **Rs. 30.**
- ★ **Pulavarkalin Siledaiyum Nagaichuvaiyum:** Naagai Vijayabharathi; **Rs. 40.**
- ★ **Ariviyal Nokkil Siddha Maruthuthuvam:** P.S. Thottam; **Rs. 45.**
- ★ **Manitha Neyar Martin Luther King:** Aa.Sa.Gurusamy; **Rs. 35.** The above books pub. by Sura Books Pvt. Ltd., 1620 'J' Block, 16th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai-600040.
- ★ **Thaniyarmayam** – Tharalamayam – Ulagamayathal Valarchiya Veezhchiya?: New Democratic Labour Front, 110, Second Floor, 63 NSK Salai, Kodambakkam, Chennai-600024. **Rs. 60.**
- ★ **Payanaththisai:** Thamizhyalan; Thamizhyal Pathippagam, 36 B/21, Anna Nagar, Thangamapuripatnam, Mettur Dam-636402. **Rs. 70.**
- ★ **Hindu Cultural Heritage:** S. Balasubramanian; Samaveda Samrakshna Sabha, 9, Viswanathapuram, Tennur, Trichy-620017. **Rs. 100.**
- ★ **The General Clauses Act:** P.R. Jayarajan; **Rs. 55.**
- ★ **Law Relating to Court Commissioner and Receiver:** P. R. Jayarajan; **Rs. 65.**
- ★ **The Right to Information Act and The Official Secrets Act:** P.R. Jayarajan; **Rs. 85.** The above books pub. by Law Tamil Welfare Centre, F 53/105, Mahatma Gandhi Road, MMDA Colony, Arumbakkam, Chennai-600105.
- ★ **Manidha Neyabookkal:** P. Arangaswami; Valarmathi Pathippagam, Plot No. 12, Door No. 4/313 8th Cross, Bell Nagar, Medavakkam, Chennai-601302. **Rs. 30.**

KANNADA

- ★ **Vemana Padyagalu:** M. Devara Kondappa; Ballapalli Prakashana, 659, 11th Main Road, IV Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011. **Rs. 120.**
- ★ **Jain Kayide: H.S.Madanakesari;** Jina Jyothi Prakashana, 23, Ratnatraya, Model House IV Street, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 60.**
- ★ **Sri Krishnaleela Gaanam:** G. Vittala Rao; BM Sri Smaraka Prathishtana, BM Sri Kalabhavana, NR Colony, Bangalore-560019. **Rs. 100.**

HINDI

- ★ **A Poetic Tribute to HE Rashtrapathi Dr APJ Abdul Kalam President of India:** C. Ratanchand Savansukha; Sri Champalal Savansukha Public Charitable Trust, 26, North Cresent Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**

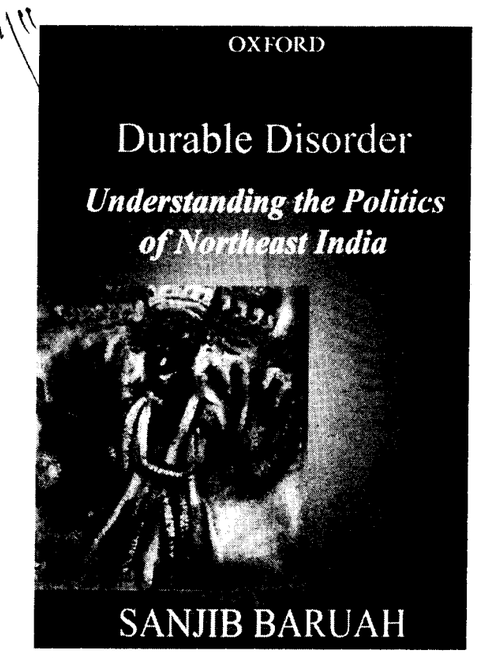
The Northeast exception

Argues for a policy reorientation towards the Northeast and linking it to a new 'Look East' policy

Sarmila Bose

In Meghalaya police shoot dead 12 students protesting the shifting of the secondary school board from their town. In Bangkok Indian officials claim progress in their negotiations with the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) (NSCN) even as anger erupts among Nagas over the alleged extra-judicial killing of an NSCN member by the Indian security forces.

In Assam the army is called out and shoot-at-sight orders given as ethnic rioting leaves dozens dead and thousands displaced. These stories of alienation and violence, which would be considered major crises in any normal area of the world, are all in a week's trickle of events reported from India's Northeast, illustrating what Sanjib Baruah calls "nearly four decades of failed policy." The best reason to start reading this book is the same as the author's motivation to write it, "a sense of puzzlement about how democratic India tolerates the Northeast Indian exception." The reason to keep reading it is the wide-ranging knowledge of the Northeast, combined with a skilled presentation of the perspective of the people of that region that Baruah offers to 'mainland' readers, the vast majority of whom are profoundly ignorant about the history, culture and the politics of the Northeast.



DURABLE DISORDER – Understanding the Politics of Northeast India: Sanjib Baruah; Oxford University Press, YMCA library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. Rs. 495.

Mainland perspective

The only perspective on the Northeast that 'mainland' Indians have got – that too sporadically – is New Delhi's project of 'India', which the Northeast seems endlessly, inexplicably and violently to resist. Baruah's earlier book, *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (OUP, 2001) offered something new to scholars and policy-makers alike – a Northeastern vision of itself where the region was the focal point rather than a distant borderland to somebody else's idea of 'India'.

Baruah's approach is well-grounded in colonial histories and refreshingly free from the vice-like grip of the concepts of 'nation-state', 'insurgency' and 'national security'. *Durable Disorder* is rather more disorderly in structure, which is both a weakness and a potential attraction of the book. This is a collection of essays previously published in various journals, and suffers from the inevitable 'disjointed' feel of disparate topics struggling to emerge as a single book.

Yet, the 'mainland' reader's need to get to know the Northeast outside the 'national security' paradigm is so great, that the broader territorial coverage and 'standalone' quality of the essays may actually be an advantage for many Indian readers.

Democracy deficit

Baruah spells out the 'democracy deficit' in the Northeast, in which the institutionalisation of authoritarian practices and suspension of the rule of law in the name of counterinsurgency coexists with the periodic ritual of elections.

The failed political engineering, in his view, via redrawing maps, counterinsurgency, cooptation or 'developmentalist' interventions has led to a proliferation of ethnic militia (some of them state-fomented) and deformity in democratic institutions that appear capable of enduring for a lengthy period in a poisonous clinch.

The recounting of the 'developmentalist' approach in 'Arunachal Pradesh' – the Sanskritic renaming itself a part of 'nation-alising space' in the process of creating a 'cosmetic federalism' – is a welcome antidote to the usual patronising narrative of the Northeast as a backward, wayward child to be brought into the fold through 'development'. The chapter 'Generals as Governors' is a mere level removed from generals as presidents.

A chapter on the Naga war and an entire section on the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) follow. The reason to read the book to the finish is that Baruah does not stop with historical analysis or policy critique. He dares to take the next logical leap – recommending bold changes in policy for the region. His imaginings of a different future for the Northeast may seem hopelessly idealistic given the 'nation-state' mindset of New Delhi, but are based on fundamental shifts in the concept of 'sovereignty' in recent years and comparative practice in other regions of the world.

Policy ideas

Two of his policy ideas are worth noting here. One is to give the Northeast a 'transnational' role in a reformulated 'Look East' policy to allow it to flourish by reviving its historical, cultural and commercial ties with Southeast Asia. Baruah points to other nationalities like the Basque, Catalonia, Ireland or Tyrol to whom the European Union allows a 'transnational politics of recognition' that compensates for their marginalisation within nation-states.

The other policy idea is to extend 'dual citizenship' to both India and a state – which would anchor citizenship to a 'civic principle' and get away from the politics of 'ethnic homelands', which leads to an endless spiral of exclusion and displacement. Given New Delhi's insecurities even with dual citizenship with other countries, this idea will be hard to sell, but is worth exploring to give meaning to the multinational state that is India.

There are two reasons why Baruah might win a hearing in the policy-making corridors of India. He is terribly polite, while pulling no punches. And he is generous. Unlike the votaries of the great Indian nationalistic project, he leaves some space for 'India' in his transnational, non-territorial imaginings.

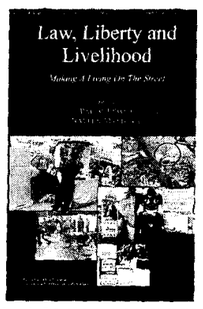
Livelihood and urban public space

G. Ananthakrishnan

If denial of opportunity has been perfected into an art, arguably the most talented practitioners must be those wielding the plethora of vintage regulatory laws that govern the use of urban public spaces in the country. The enforcers of these laws have ensured that the image of the street is epitomised by the greased palm, heavy boot, swinging lathi and 'raid raj', through successive generations.

The concerns of those who must make a living on the street drive Parth J. Shah and Naveen Mandava to explore the baffling contradictions of urban India; they study the phenomenon of thousands of street hawkers and traders providing a range of goods and services to the community and yet being treated as a negative offshoot of urbanisation.

The book that has resulted from their effort presents interesting vignettes of street life. It is a documentation of all too familiar petty corruption, excessive and archaic laws, indifference of governments to livelihood issues and the collective failure of class interests to bring about change.



LAW, LIBERTY AND LIVELIHOOD – Making a Living on the Street: Parth J. Shah, Naveen Mandava – *Editors; Pub. by Academic Foundation and Centre for Civil Society, 4772-73/23 Bharat Ram Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 595.*

EXPLORES THE BAFFLING CONTRADICTIONS OF URBAN INDIA THROUGH STREET LIVELIHOOD

The categories of the self-employed covered in the book range from hawkers and traders to cyclerickshaw and autorickshaw drivers, porters and others. It is no secret that all these activities involve the payment of bribes to authority. The book documents the bribe amounts paid to different wings of the government such as the police and the municipal authorities, the periodicity of payments and the underlying factors that promote 'speed money', not the least of which is the maze of documentation required for all licenses and permits. The regulations and document forms are reproduced liberally in the book to drive home the point.

Approach to livelihood

It is in the discussion and interpretation of the data recorded in different cities, notably Delhi, that the authors move into contentious ground. Regulation, in their perception, is at the root of all that has gone wrong and there should be a paradigm shift in the approach to livelihood options pursued in the public space.

The market approach is arguably the best to untangle the mess, the book contends, since it dynamically responds to demand by increasing or reducing supply; by removing the caps on rickshaw permits (which are not enforced even now in any case) there would be greater opportunity for all and only so many rickshaws would exist as the market can support them.

Similarly, placing the street space under the control of ward committees formed by local traders and elected representatives of residents' associations with powers to lease public space would lead to equitable apportioning of the hawking area. Lastly, the book says, the concept of centralised planning of urban development should yield place to a different vision, one that gives greater opportunity for local factors – and private capital – to set priorities.

Shift in governance

The call for a shift in governance models is largely based on the venality of officialdom and its failure to recognise that restrictive legislation is shackling enterprise and opportunity. There are no doubt major challenges that are universally acknowledged. What the authors seem to miss in their anxiety to see change is the protective function of regulation, where it is adopted through democratic and transparent processes.

Enabling laws, consistent with globally acknowledged rights-based governance approaches, aid rather than retard growth since they make it possible for the weakest individual participant to approach legal and other forums and obtain redress regardless of his position within a particular group or class; such rights are not in conflict with the rights of others and can be asserted by all members of the class, such as hawkers, collectively.

The authors are on solid ground when they discuss the travails of the weaker sections that must contend with the unsympathetic attitude of authority. Their logic falters when they advocate an extraordinarily high dependence on market-based solutions for fundamental problems that concern the economically weaker sections and legitimately lie in the overall context of citizen welfare issues.

The imperatives of offshore outsourcing

M.S.S. Varadan

Outsourcing is a much-debated topic these days with the atmosphere getting charged with political overtones, particularly in the West. This book sets out clearly the compelling imperatives of offshore outsourcing in terms of the need for cost reduction, increased focus on core operations, improvements in process quality, more rapid processes and product development, and access to a deep talent pool.

However, it has been pointed out that there are costs to offshoring in terms of vendor appraisal and selection, and process transition. Also managing the media and employee goodwill requires the use of professional public relations (PR) firms, a cost that companies have to reckon with. Also, lobbying to prevent changes in the laws that create hurdles in offshore outsourcing has a cost component to it. An interesting part of the book is the two tales of four companies by drawing a comparison to bring out sharply the short-sighted strategy of not offshoring.

A COUNTRY ANALYSIS SHOWS INDIA A CLEAR WINNER FOR NOW IN OUTSOURCING

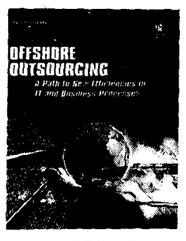
The offshore progression has been traced starting from outsourcing information technology arising from the need to start using enterprise resource planning (ERP) software packages to e-commerce and then on to application maintenance outsourcing which has three basic business models: product outsourcing, product re-engineering and production support.

Developments

Another development has been in the realm of business process outsourcing (BPO) and contact services like the call centres. Offshoring is rapidly moving up the value chain like GE's technology centre providing research and development (R&D) services in the areas of aircraft engines and power systems. The multiple delivery channels namely, on-site delivery; mixed mode delivery and partnership models have been outlined. The offshore delivery is the most favoured with its cost scale and speed advantages.

A very valuable part of the book has been the drawing up of the profile of market players including TCS, Infosys, Wipro, iGATE, Mascon, Mphasis, V6 Technologies and Software Ventures International. These profile summaries provide at a very quick glance their strengths, areas of engagement and experiences. Outline of independent multinational service providers like EDS and IBM, and captive service providers like Microsoft and GE have also been given.

A country analysis has been given comparing India, Russia, China, the Philippines and Ireland, with India a clear winner for now. The key to offshoring success has been analysed and the importance of intercultural management in the service delivery issues has been brought out.



Nandu Thondavadi
George Albert

OFFSHORE OUTSOURCING – A Path to New Efficiencies in IT and Business Processes: Nandu Thondavadi & George Albert; Published by Thomson & Co-published by Vijay Nicole Imprints Pvt. Ltd., C-7, Nelson Chambers, 115, Nelson Manickam Road, Chennai-600029.

An interesting discussion has been presented on shifting of jobs and changing economies. While stating that the issue of job losses in the West is expected to become a major concern in politics, the other side of regaining equilibrium in the market has also been cogently presented.

Salaries are getting pushed up in India and this gives greater purchasing power due to which foreign companies like GM, Ford, Reebok, Motorola and Nokia have started growing successfully in India.

Case studies

The final part of the book is very illustrative. Case studies have been presented of ABN Amro Bank, Citi Bank, Infosys Progeon, Mascon, General Electric Company and North Western Mutual. The ABN Amro case study is a very insightful one. Among the talent access in India, it has been mentioned that several experienced bankers who have opted for voluntary retirement schemes of various public sector banks have been identified for quality assurance on banking operations.

It is this combination of IT and domain expertise which India has from hidden corners that is helping it to be a winner. These are vital new insights, which have been unearthed by the authors who must be complimented on producing an excellent book that is very up-to-date and practical. The book is racy to read and the titles and sub-titles are apt. It is a handy volume for practising managers, teachers and students alike.

TAMIL

Of love and betrayal

Neela Padmanabhan

APPAVIN KAADALI – Tamil Translation of Paarappurathu's Malayalam Novel: Translated by Sura; Saaru Prabha Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. Rs. 25.

PARAPPURATHU IS one of the famous Malayalam novelists of yesteryears whose masterpieces *Ara Naazhika Neram* and *Pani Theeratha Veedu* were successfully made into movies. One can note his keen power of observation and effortless narrating power even in this short novel under review. Although *Appavin Kaadhali* (Lover of Father) is short, it mirrors the life of the farmers of a village in central Travancore of Kerala. Not only the major characters like Appa (Kaleekal Koon Kurup) and his Kaadali (lover-Gauri) but also Sumathi, her husband Daamu, milkmaid Naaniyamma, Achutha Kurup and other characters are well pictured. Manikuttan alias Raghavan Nair, son of Kaleekal Kurup is a caring family man who has a loving wife and two children and financially well off. The whole story unfolds through him. Their family life was not happy and peaceful.

At the same time their neighbour and relative Sumathi and her husband Daamu have a pleasant and peaceful family life though their income is poor. Manikuttan learns the lesson about happiness and prosperity from them. Parappurathu records in this novel the disintegration of one man's life after he becomes the unwilling recipient of rejection of love from his long-term mistress, though he has a wife and children. It is the outcome of betrayal leading to debts, disease, distress and finally to death. The simplicity of the narration is what makes the novel compelling. Sura's Tamil translation is satisfactory and readable.

TELUGU

Poetry anthology

B. S. R. Krishna

KONAGOTE MEEDA JEEVITHAM – Anthology of Poetry: C. Narayana Reddy; Varenya Creations, Hyderabad. Copies can be had from Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500003. Rs. 100.

THIS ANTHOLOGY of 45 modern Telugu poetry is the latest from C. Narayana Reddy (Cennare), a veteran poet, lyricist, philosopher, parliamentarian and eloquent orator. Reddy has traversed a long path in his six-decade long literary journey starting as a 15-year-old tender, youthful, emotion-charged romanticist to the 75-year-old mature poet. Mellowed by experience, he has evolved into an exponent of truth about life and nature, and their inter-relationship in a philosophical vein. Almost each and every one of the stanzas in this volume sounds like a saint's saying, Cenaare, as he is popularly known, is one of the most eminent contemporary Telugu litterateurs. In one of the mini poems in the volume, he thus proclaims his philosophy of life as a litterateur:

Relish not routine writings
cherish ever changing chapters
nourish newest ideas
fresh day by day and ever after...

Countless are his compositions. Yet, they retain their literary flourish, flavour and freshness. Whether in traditional metre, ghazal or a movie lyric they always carry his stamp. His proficiency in the Urdu language is an additional asset in his literary pursuit.

HINDI

Encyclopaedia of Indian philosophy

Bibhuti Mishra

BHARATIYA-DARSHAN-BUHATKOSHA – Part-I: Acharya Bachhulal Awasthi; 'Gyan' Sharada Publishing House, 40, Anand Nagar, Inderlok, Delhi-110035. Rs. 1500.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY is vast and varied. Even when philosophers professed allegiance to the Vedas, it did not fetter the freedom of their speculative ventures. The Vedas could be cited to corroborate a wide diversity of views. Many epistemological, logical and even metaphysical doctrines have been debated. Indian philosophers do not seek to justify religious faith; philosophical wisdom itself is accorded the dignity of religious truth. Theory is not subordinated to practice; but theory itself is regarded as being supremely worthy.

In this context the present encyclopaedia assumes immense significance. The compiler is a well-known Sanskrit scholar with in-depth knowledge of various philosophical systems. So the encyclopaedia has been prepared with insight into the various philosophical terms.

It is not meaning alone but complete elaboration of the terms complete with comparisons and relevant excerpts that make the book unique for scholars.

An exhaustive bibliography and a list of terms associated with various philosophical thoughts make the book an invaluable reference source.

China confirms human cases of bird flu

BEIJING: China's Ministry of Health on Wednesday confirmed two human cases and one suspected case of H5N1bird flu.

The two confirmed cases involve a nine-year-old boy in Xiangtan County of Hunan Province, central China, and a 24-year-old woman farmer in Zongyang County of Anhui Province in the east.

The boy had fever and showed pneumonia-like symptoms on October 10. There was an outbreak of H5N1 bird flu in his village. Lab tests showed the boy's H5 antibodies had risen by more than four times, which indicates that he was infected by the H5N1 bird flu virus.

Based on clinical and lab tests, experts from the Ministry and the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed the case. He was discharged from hospital on November 12 after recovery.

The woman farmer in Anhui developed the symptoms on November 1 and died of breathing problems on November 10. Chicken and ducks at her home died one to two weeks before she fell ill and she had contact with them, the Ministry said. The boy's 12-year-old sister, who had similar symptoms as her brother and died on October 17, was reported as a suspected human case according to WHO standards, it said.– Xinhua

THE HINDU

Tamiflu side-effects linked to boys' deaths: Japan

Fatal twist to flu drug

Tokyo, Nov. 14 (Reuters): Japan's Chugai Pharmaceutical Company said today it has told the government that two teenage boys exhibited abnormal behaviour that led to their deaths after taking the anti-flu drug Tamiflu, made by Chugai's Swiss parent Roche Holding AG.

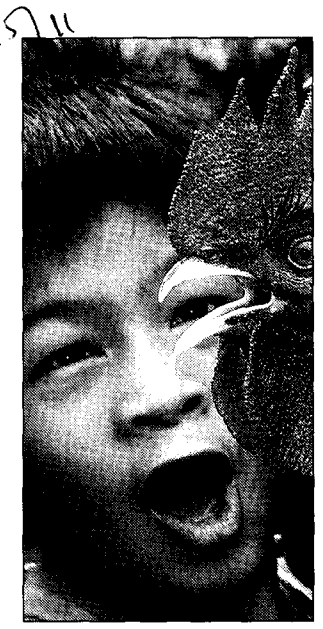
Tamiflu is considered one of the best defences against bird flu in humans and is in great demand as fears grow about the spread of the deadly virus.

The comments from Chugai come in response to weekend news reports that Japan's health ministry is investigating the deaths of two teenage boys who died in accidents linked to odd behaviour shortly after taking the drug.

In Zurich, Roche said today there was no greater incidence of abnormal behaviour associated with taking Tamiflu than was generally seen in untreated flu patients.

"We do not see an imbalance in these types of neuropsychiatric events for Tamiflu versus the background associated with influenza," Roche's head of pandemic sales of the drug, David Reddy, said.

The Japanese health ministry said it had instructed the drug maker last year to alert doctors to possible side effects such as abnormal behaviour and that it had no plans to issue a fresh warning.



A child mimics a rooster in Manila. (AFP)

Shares of Chugai lost 2.6 per cent to 2,640 yen today, underperforming the Tokyo Stock Exchange's pharmaceutical sector sub-index which fell 1.3 per cent.

Roche said it continued to monitor the safety of the drug and reported any adverse events to regulatory authorities.

"Tamiflu has been shown in clinical studies and in routine clinical use to have a good safety profile. Tamiflu has been used by over 30 million people worldwide," Roche said.

Analysts played down the concerns.

"We have not seen these side effects before," LODH analyst Karl-Heinz Koch said. "Any kind of treatment could lead to mood disorders and therefore be linked to suicidal thoughts. But this is very difficult to establish."

"This appears to be a panic reaction by Chugai investors where no direct link has been associated with Tamiflu," Pictet analyst Andrew Fellows wrote in a research note.

The *Mainichi* newspaper and Kyodo News agency reported on Saturday that a 17-year-old high school student jumped in front of a truck in February last year shortly after taking the medicine, while a junior high school student is believed to have fallen from the ninth floor of his apartment building this February.

"We reported these cases to the health ministry as a link between the deaths and the drug could not be ruled out," a Chugai spokesman said.

The reports were made separately after each incident, he said.

'Tamiflu has shown in clinical studies and in routine use to have a good safety profile... it has been used by over 30 million people worldwide'

THE TELEGRAPH

15 NOV 2005

Stolen laptop is Iran's smoking gun, claims US

But Doubts Cast Over Data On 'Teheran's N-Weapons Ambitions'

By William J Broad & David E Sanger

In mid-July, senior US intelligence officials called the leaders of the international atomic inspection agency to the top of a skyscraper overlooking the Danube in Vienna and unveiled the contents of what they said was a stolen Iranian laptop computer.

The Americans flashed on a screen and spread over a conference table selections from more than a thousand pages of Iranian computer simulations and accounts of experiments, saying they showed a long effort to design a nuclear warhead, according to a half-dozen European and American participants in the meeting.

The documents, the Americans acknowledged, do not prove that Iran has an atomic bomb. They presented them as the strongest evidence yet that, despite Iran's insistence that its nuclear program is peaceful, the country is trying to develop a compact warhead to fit atop its Shahab missile, which can reach Israel and other countries in the Middle East.

The briefing for the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, including its director Mohamed ElBaradei, was a secret part of an American campaign to increase international pressure on Iran. But while the intelligence has sold well among countries like Britain, France and Germany, which reviewed the documents as long as a year ago, it has been a tougher sell outside the US's inner circle.

An Iranian protestor calls for the peaceful use of N-energy outside the former US embassy in Teheran

The computer contained studies for crucial features of a nuclear warhead, said European and US officials, including a tell-tale sphere of detonators to trigger an atomic explosion. The documents specified a blast roughly 2,000 feet above a target—considered a prime altitude for an N-detonation.

Nonetheless, doubts about the intelligence persist among some foreign analysts. In part because American officials, citing the need to protect their source, have largely refused to provide details of the origins of the laptop computer beyond saying that they obtained it in mid-2004 from a longtime contact in Iran. Moreover, this chapter is infused with the memory of the faulty intelligence on Iraq's unconventional arms. In this atmosphere, though few countries are willing to believe Iran's denials about nuclear arms, few are willing to accept the US's weapons intelligence without question. "I can fabricate that data," a senior European diplomat said of the documents. "It looks beautiful, but is open to doubt."

Even if the documents accurately reflect Iran's advances in designing a nuclear warhead, Western arms experts say that Iran is still far away from producing the radioactive bomb fuel that would form the warhead's heart. American intelligence agencies recently estimated that Iran would have a working nuclear weapon no sooner than the early years of the next decade.

Still, nuclear analysts at the international atomic agency studied the laptop documents and found them to be credible evidence of Iranian strides, European diplomats said. Officials and N-weapons experts in Europe and the US said in interviews that they believed it reflected a concerted effort to develop a warhead. "They've worked problems that you don't do unless you're very serious," said a European arms official. "This stuff is deadly serious."

In fact, some nations that were sceptical of the intelligence on Iraq—including France and Germany—are deeply concerned about what the warhead discovery could portend, according to several officials. NYT News Service

LOOKING AHEAD: *Responding to the Volcker report will legitimise US imperialism*

A guilt-edged sword

BY PREM SHANKAR JHA

EIGHTEEN YEARS ago, a report in a Swedish newspaper, which made a glancing reference to India in an exposé of the corrupt practices indulged in by Swedish arms manufacturer Bofors, set off a bloodbath within the Indian political establishment that put the Rajiv Gandhi government on the defensive, triggered expulsions and desertions from the party, and spawned allegations of personal corruption against Rajiv that took 16 years to clear.

The Congress should have learnt a lesson from that tragic episode, but it does not seem to have done so, for the Volcker report has once again thrown it on the defensive to the point where it seems to be preparing to sacrifice Foreign Minister K. Natwar Singh in an attempt to show how 'clean' it has become in its new avatar.

It is not clear at the moment whom the Congress wishes to impress. Is it simply intent upon getting the BJP off its back or is it also keen to impress the US? Whatever the reason may be, a moment's reflection will show that asking Natwar Singh to resign, or 'accepting' his resignation, will have implications that go far, far beyond the incestuous confines of Indian politics. It will, in fact, be a tacit acceptance by India of the US's moral right to rule the world as its empire.

Legitimisation of the 'Empire project' by a country as large and influential as India will isolate Russia and China, and further weaken France and Germany's flickering resolve to confront the US on this issue. India's decision could therefore bolster or destroy the attempt, spearheaded by Kofi Annan under a mandate from the United Nations General Assembly, to build a rational, rule-based international order to replace the one that the US destroyed when it invaded Iraq.

If Manmohan Singh does not want to do this, then he must, under no circumstances, take the slightest cognisance of any conclusion that Volcker has arrived at that is based upon information obtained in and from Iraq. It does not matter whether any of it is true or not, and it does not matter whom the material indicts. For it is a cardinal principle of jurisprudence that information obtained through an unlawful search of any premises cannot, under any circumstances, be admitted as evidence in a court of law. Irrespective of its intrinsic value, the evidence gathered in Iraq by Volcker must be ignored because it has been obtained through an invasion which had no UN or international sanction.

WE'RE AGAINST THE IRAQI INVASION, RIGHT?: Natwar Singh & Kofi Annan

In the last two years, an abundance of evidence has emerged which shows that both Colin Powell at the State Department and, more unambiguously, the British Foreign Office and Lord Butler, the British Attorney General, believed that invasion without a second UN resolution would be illegal. Butler had to be browbeaten by Blair to fall in line. The Bush and Blair administrations tacitly admitted as much by trying each and every stratagem, including bugging Annan's offices at the UN, to round up at least nine votes to record a 'moral' sanction, but failed to get more than four, including their own.

In his report, Volcker has candidly admitted that he and his colleagues did not visit Iraq. All the information on the way in which Baghdad administered the oil-for-food programme was furnished to him by the two Iraqi governments formed under the occupation and the US government whom he thanked in the report for its 'significant assistance'. Thus any action Manmohan Singh takes upon this information will legitimise the invasion itself.

Had the Natwar affair only have international ramifications, nothing more need have been said. But the BJP has turned it into a domestic issue as well. So a few words also need to be said about the supposed case against him. First, his name surfaced in electronic, not printed, records kept by the Saddam government of its oil for food transactions. This means that there is no document with either Natwar Singh's signature or handwriting, and so far at least, no money trail that leads to him. Does one have to tell an IT savvy world how easy it is to add or subtract a name in a so-called electronic record?

This warning has to be given because when an earlier attempt was made to discredit and ruin George Galloway, a British Labour MP who resigned from his party and became the most trenchant opponent of Blair and the Iraq war in Britain, all the documents that were given by the occupying powers in Baghdad to the *Daily Telegraph* (London), the *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston) and the *Daily Mail* (London) turned out to be forged. In one, Gallagher's name had been entered between two lines in a different font of a smaller size, to make it fit. Presenting 'electronic records' eliminates the possibility of being found out.

Natwar Singh must, therefore, be presumed innocent till much more evidence is found to sustain his 'guilt'. But guilt of what? A Swiss company called Masefield bought Iraqi oil from an Indian company called Hamdan exports, which was owned by one Andleeb Saigal, a friend of Natwar's son Jagat Singh. The fact that Jagat Singh visited Jordan and Iraq several times makes it possible that he was Saigal's partner. But so what? Jagat Singh may have been trading in Iraqi oil, and to do so his company, or its Swiss principal, may have paid transport and after sales service charges in Iraq which the UN oil for food scheme had not sanctioned. But so were 2,200 of the most reputed firms in the world.

And where does Natwar fit into this? The obvious answer was given by Arun Jaitley: he took money through his son to become a lobbyist for Saddam Hussein and to oppose and eventually stop the NDA government from sending troops to Iraq. This is pure conjecture, for Jagat Singh is an adult, and in Indian politics if the sins of the sons were to be visited on the fathers, there would be no one left who could even stand for an election.

Assuming for the moment that Jagat Singh was trading in Iraqi oil, just how serious was his 'crime' of making payments to Iraq? The sheer number of reputed firms involved, and the fact that a very large number were American and British, and not just French or Russian, suggests that the fault lay not with the traders but with the way in which the oil for food scheme had been framed. The omission in the scheme that turned virtually every trader into a criminal was that it did not include any provision for a routine item in all profit and loss accounts, the 'cost of sales'.

In Iraq, where infrastructure services and most international trade was a monopoly of the State, the money went to the government. This may have been 'illegal' but was it immoral? For someone had to meet the in-country transport, storage and distribution costs. That could only be the State, but Iraq had been deliberately bankrupted by international sanctions that, as we now know, lacked even a shred of justification after 1994. Saddam had a government to run, and had in the past financed Iraq's free schooling, free health and world-class shelter, water and sanitation facilities from the sale of oil. Indeed, the *raison d'etre* of the sanctions had been to starve his government and bring him to his knees.

One cannot, therefore, dismiss the suspicion that the omission of cost of sales and purchase from the oil-for-food programme could have been deliberate. The US and its allies may have agreed to it because it made them look human. But their intention could have been to prevent it from working.

Saddam Hussein found a way around it, in part at least to keep his State running. And he ran it far better under these inhuman circumstances than the Americans and British have been able to. Extracting money to keep the State viable was not, therefore, a crime. It may even have been the most human thing he ever did.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 07 NOV 2005

The doctrine of "national interest"

The current turmoil reflects a real divide within the country on core issues of national interest. It needs to be addressed.

Hamid Ansari

IN A perceptive essay written some years ago, Joseph Nye had observed that "national interest is a slippery concept used to describe as well as prescribe policy." Decades earlier, the philosopher Gilbert Ryle had cautioned against "systematically misleading expressions" couched in a syntactical form improper to the facts recorded.

Away from, or despite, the din of the current debate on the direction of certain aspects of foreign policy, conceptual analysis necessitates dissection. What is national interest? How is it determined? By whom? How is the validity of such determination assessed?

Ours is a world of nation-states, sanctified by the United Nations Charter. In law, they interact on the principle of equal rights; in reality, they concede disparities of power. In law they determine their own destiny; in fact, their self-determination is circumscribed by distortions induced by domestic or external impulses. Despite intense debate, the central question in the theory of state remains unresolved: is the state reflective of the "mind objective," or is it the product of a contractual arrangement of the citizen-body?

Practical implications

The debate goes to the heart of the matter and has practical implications. Rousseau's doctrine of the "general will" has been used by democrats and autocrats alike to build the edifice of the modern of the state. This has thrown up dilemmas: of perceived gaps between the "general will" and the "will of all," and of the disjuncture between the state as a determining authority nationally and various forums at international levels that circumscribe national decision-making.

These dilemmas are central to the doctrine of national interest. Is national interest a monolith? Can it be understood better in terms of the plural — of sectional, subnational, and transnational interests? Should they not cover matters sociological and environmental, besides political-strategic, economic, and technological interests? Can it be defined at one point or does it need a wider framework of consensus-building?

Some years ago, Peter Trubowitz analysed the sectional and regional dynamics at different points of time in American decision-making and concluded that there is no singular national interest when it comes to foreign policy. A similar study in terms of Indian interests may yield interesting results.

Thucydides recorded for posterity Pericles' remark that citizens are fair judges of public matters; "instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action," he said, "we think it is an indispensable preliminary to any wise action." This, surely, is a dictum for democratic functioning. Its observance, regrettably, leaves something to be desired. Citation of "national interest" often becomes a closure clause. Need it be so?

Focus on independence of approach

The Common Minimum Programme of the United Progressive Alliance outlines the foreign and defence policy of the Government.

In conceptual terms its focus is on independence of approach on all regional and global issues "keeping in mind past traditions," promotion of multi-polarity and opposition to unilateralism, protection of national interest in World Trade Organisation negotiations, modernisation of armed forces, and maintenance of a credible nuclear weapons programme. Most, if not all, sections of opinion are supportive of this approach.

The devil, however, lies in the details of implementation. Here the institutional arrangement — Parliament and its Standing and Consultative Committees — only addresses the matter sporadically and inadequately. A comparison with the committees in other parliamentary systems — British, Canadian, and Australian — reveals the difference.

The blame would seem to lie with political parties and their representatives in Parliament. The executive is let off with little more than a drafting exercise on questions that are inadequately researched. The President's Address to Parliament on February 25, 2005 spoke of "the centrality of national interests" in the conduct of foreign policy and of "retaining our freedom of options." Did this lead to a serious debate on interests and options, on situations of divergence between the two, on congruence or otherwise of policy and actions with electoral commitments?

The current turmoil highlights the absence of debate on options and their implications. It profiles a genuine concern about the methodology of decision-making. It reflects a real divide within the country on core issues of national interest. It needs to be addressed. The Indian state, presumably, is not an embodiment of Hegel's "hieroglyph of reason."

Some years ago an Indian analyst with decades of experience of statecraft reflected with some unease on "the continuing contradictions between the amoral ground realities of world politics and the moral norms" to which India and others should subscribe. He felt an interim remedy may lie in "the creation of a national consensus based on enlightened public opinion responsive to our changing national interests in a continuously changing world."

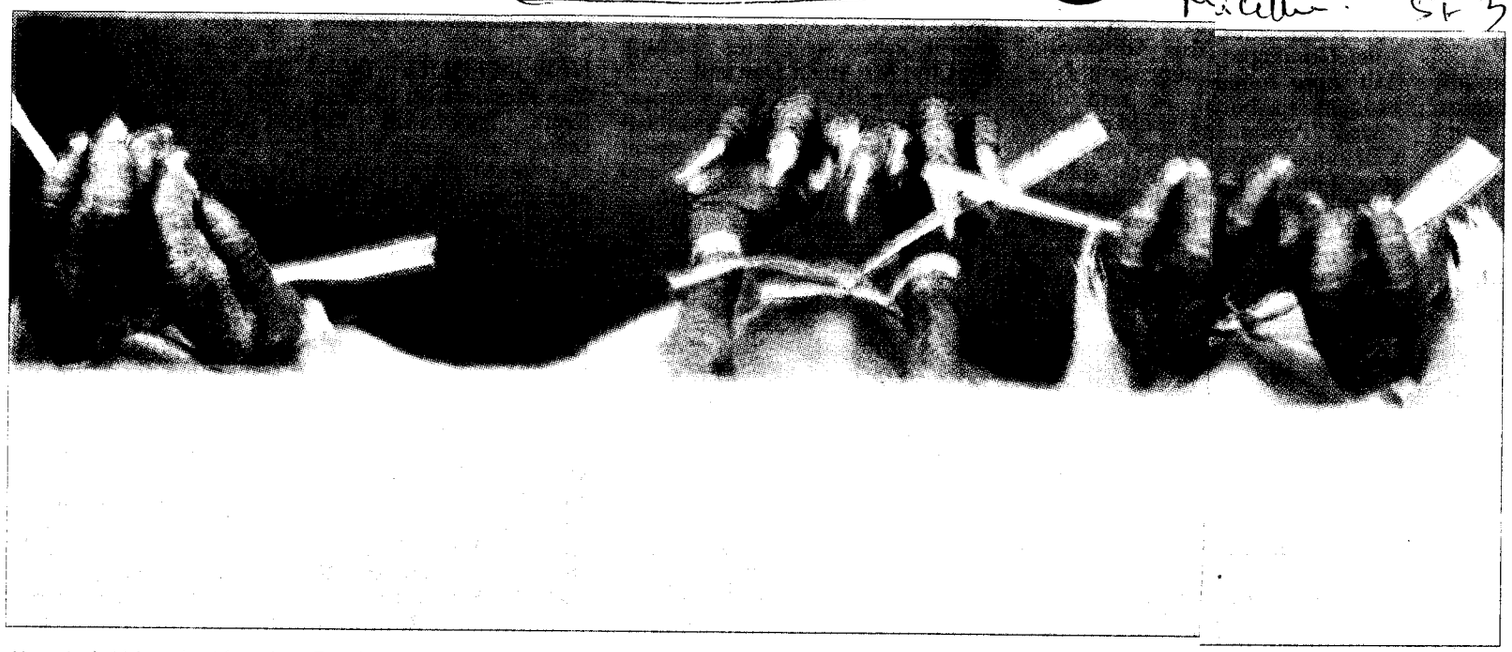
A prerequisite to such an endeavour would be a candid examination of the objectives and their underlying assumptions. Above all, the pitfall of prescription should be eschewed.

(The writer is a Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi.)

BLOC MINISTERS PLEAD FOR CONCERTED FIGHT ■ 'WESTERN EUROPE ILL-PREPARED'

EU declares bird flu a global threat

Stephen Castle & Steve O'Connor



Unpacked chickens kept for sale at Rungis international market, near Paris, on Tuesday. Chicken and other poultry are slipping off the menu in a number of European countries as consumers lose their taste for the meat after the discovery of the deadly bird flu virus in Turkey and Romania. — AFP

LUXEMBOURG/LONDON, Oct. 18. — The EU declared bird flu and the risk of a human pandemic to be "global threats" today, but urged governments to step up preparations without provoking undue panic.

At an emergency meeting EU foreign ministers called for global co-operation, following the discovery of a potentially fatal strain of the disease in Turkey and Romania, and of a suspected case in Greece, the British foreign secretary, Mr Jack Straw, said there was "bound to be concern" among EU citizens.

The European Health Commissioner, Mr Markos Kyprianou, conceded that most of the 25 EU governments lack sufficient stocks of anti-viral drugs, which could be used to boost resistance in the event of a pandemic.

The H5N1 virus has infected at least 120 people and killed 60 in south-east Asia. The virus has also been detected in Turkey and Romania. The fear is that if it mutates into a form that can spread easily between humans, it will quickly infect millions worldwide. Mr Kyprianou said tests are still underway to identify whether a virus detected in a bird on the Aegean island of Chios is of the deadly strain. Greece has already taken precautionary measures, banning exports of living poultry, meat and other poultry products from the island to EU member states and third countries.

Today, the authorities in Macedonia quarantined a small southern village and sent a suspect chicken sample to England for flu testing following the suspicious death of the bird.

Romania said it had detected new cases of suspected bird flu in the Danube delta. Tests were being carried out to see whether it was the H5 virus. Turkish authorities are examining the remains of some 500 quails found in a field in the west of the country.

However ministers believe that the main threat is that the virus will mutate in the Far East, and will then spread rapidly among humans worldwide. Mr Kyprianou said: "The fact we have avian flu in Europe does not affect the possibility of a human influenza pandemic."

In a statement the foreign ministers said the EU could not tackle the threat alone, arguing that "avian and pandemic influenza are global threats and called for an international co-ordinated response". The WHO has expressed fears that alarm in Europe could distract attention from what is the real seat of the danger in Southeast Asia.

— The Independent

Swan with anti-bodies found

BUCHAREST, Oct. 18. — A swan has been discovered with bird flu anti-bodies near the Ukrainian border, Romanian agriculture minister said today. Mr Gheorghe Flutur said the bird from the village of CA Rosetti, in the Danube Delta some 10 km from Ukraine, had tested positive at a laboratory in Bucharest. He did not specify whether the bird had been found dead or had been culled by authorities.

Mr Flutur also said several swans and a wild duck had also been discovered with antibodies in the villages of Ceamurlia de Jos and Maliuc, two localities where the bird flu has already been detected. Officials confirmed on Saturday that the deadly H5N1 bird flu strain had been detected in Ceamurlia de Jos, as well as in Turkey and Russia. The new cases in Romania will subjected to further tests to determine whether the birds carry the bird flu virus, Mr Flutur said. — AP

Indian firm eyes Swiss drug licence

Associated Press

NEW DELHI, Oct. 18. — A major Indian pharmaceutical company today said it would seek a licence from Roche of Switzerland to manufacture a generic version of the anti-influenza drug Tamiflu, a move that could increase availability of the drug in the event of a major bird flu outbreak in the country.

Cipla Ltd., which said last week that it has developed a generic copy of the flu drug, plans to approach Roche Holding AG for a licence shortly, joint managing director Mr Amar Lulla said. He added that any possible agreement with Roche would likely set limits to where the generic version could be sold, implying the Indian company could be allowed to sell in mostly developing nations in Asia and Africa.

Roche has been under growing pressure from governments and UN chief Mr Kofi Annan to license generic versions of Tamiflu, the only available drug that is effective in treating people infected with bird flu.

ome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be
he books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper.
ot be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

BOOK RE

Contemporary Islamic law

Fyzee's contribution by way of consolidation and restatement of the law through cases is a major step forward in an otherwise dicey situation of orthodoxy, prejudice, inequality and fear

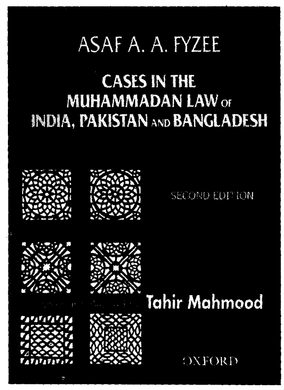
N.R. Madhava Menon

Fyzee's *Outlines of Muhammadan Law (1949)*, of which several editions are now available, is an authoritative book on the subject widely used by the academic world even today. The author intended this book under review as its 'companion volume'. First published in 1964 it has undergone a thorough revision in this second edition by Tahir Mahmood, who is an Islamic law scholar of international repute and long-term colleague of the reviewer at Aligarh and Delhi Universities.

Challenges

Muslim law, like 'personal laws' of other religious groups, is today facing several challenges from within the community as well as from outside. This is but natural in an era of unprecedented changes in societies everywhere. As Fyzee himself conceded in his preface to the first edition of *Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, the influence of English Common Law and Equity had forced changes in the rules applicable in order to "satisfy modern concepts of social justice." Another reason according to him for unique changes in Islamic law in India is the articulation of rules by the legislatures in specific areas and their interpretation by courts mainly through the English language and jurisprudential traditions. Finally, social history shaped by interaction of different religions as well as developments in international (treaty) law also had the effect of modifying Islamic law as practised in the sub-continent. Fyzee himself being a product of Cambridge naturally had a reformist approach in his analysis of Muslim Personal Law.

Study of law through cases has profound significance in a precedent bound legal system and the present volume is perhaps the first of its kind in analysing personal law through analysis of judicial decisions.



Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh: Asaf A.A. Fyzee; edited and revised by Tahir Mahmood, Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Rd., New Delhi-110001. Rs. 595.

Law through cases

In about 19 chapters the author has discussed as many topics entirely through cases decided by superior courts in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. They cover a range of subjects including marriage, dower, divorce, guardianship, gifts, wakfs, inheritance and legitimacy. Along with them the author has looked at the role of custom and customary law, the approach to interpretation of the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet (the scope for logical inferences) and identified the trends in judicial evolution of Islamic law in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. No doubt the book is an excellent tool for teaching the subject in law schools and for research.

However, there are differences of opinion among Islamic scholars themselves about the degree of authority they give to interpretations given by modern secular courts. According to the author though courts in India often made elaborate references to Quranic verses in support of its viewpoint (Anwara Begum (1981 GLR 358); Shah Bano (AIR 1985 SC 985), "no Court has specifically claimed an authority to re-interpret the Quranic verses or the Prophets' Traditions on law."

While Fyzee found Indian courts having given "utmost sanctity to the Holy Quran as the only revealed book of Islam" and dismissed petitions attacking the Quran (Chopra, AIR 1986 Cal.104), he has stated that the trends in Pakistan and Bangladesh have been different despite their officially owing allegiance to Islam. In Pakistan (Rashida Begum, Din PLD 1960 Lah.1142) the Lahore High Court observed, "If the interpretation of the Holy Quran by the commentators who lived thirteen or twelve hundred years ago is considered as the last word on the subject then the whole Islamic society will be shut up in an iron cage and not allowed to develop along with the time."

Imrana case

One wonders whether the caution and restraint which Fyzee found on the part of Indian courts are being misunderstood by a section of the Islamic clergy in recent times to assume jurisdiction for running a parallel system of adjudication. The case of Imrana (*The Hindu* dt. June 29, 2005), allegedly raped by her father-in-law being adjudged by the Muslim Personal Law Board resulting in a Fatwa of termination of marriage is illustrative of this trend. The editor of the volume under review, Tahir Mahmood, reportedly came to the defence of the Muslim Personal Law Board by saying that "in a country like India where Islamic law was only selectively applicable under the authority of its own law, the fatwa or the rule of Islamic law underlying the decision need not be strictly imposed on an innocent and unwilling couple desirous of continuing in marriage." He found the principle of Islamic law on which the fatwa was given pro-women as it enabled "the wives outraged by sexual misbehaviour of their male in-laws to walk out of their marital bond and seek a new life elsewhere!"

There is an interesting chapter in the book titled 'Who is a Muslim?'. With the help of two old cases (Abraham v. Abraham (1863) 9MIA 195; Narantakath v. Parakkal (1922) 45 Mad.986) the author attempts to answer this question giving his own interpretations and inferences. The law applicable to converts is now settled through judicial intervention (Sarla Mudgal, AIR 1995 SC 1531).

Conversion to Islam will not attract instant application of Muslim law. The 'update' in each chapter is indeed a valuable addition to give the latest position of decisional law on the subject.

The book under review is essential reading for both academics and practitioners on Islamic law and comparative law. The index of cases at the end of the book is drawn from a number of countries and is in addition to those referred in the running text.

Need for reform

Islamic law like any other law is in need of reform. The urgency lies in application of contemporary standards of equality, dignity and individual rights in matters relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship and maintenance. The need is clearly for a uniform civil code as mandated by the Constitution.

Today, more than anything else, women's rights are in jeopardy because of attitudes and practices developed over the years through religion-based personal laws.

Unfortunately, the issue got involved in communal politics to such an extent that even public discourse on the subject is suspect and inhibited. In such a context, incremental reform through the judicial process, though slow and uncertain, is still welcome.

In this perspective, Fyzee's contribution by way of consolidation and restatement of the law through cases is a major step forward in an otherwise dicey situation of orthodoxy, prejudice, inequality and fear.

The killer wave and its aftermath

Suresh Nambath

The magnitude and spread of the 2004 tsunami overwhelmed governments and relief workers. No other disaster in recorded history took so many lives in so many countries in so short a time. For news networks too, the tsunami provided a unique challenge: to get the big picture from the small stories, and to flesh the headline out with individual sufferings.

Tsunami: 7 Hours That Shook the World is the first person account of Satinder Bindra, CNN's New Delhi Bureau chief, from the time he was shocked out of his holiday in Sri Lanka through his reporting of the destruction left behind by the tsunami.

Active agent

This is no first-to-hit-the-shelves book on the tsunami. Bindra offers, not a retelling of the tsunami events, but a narrative of his reporting. The reporter in the book is not the typical omnipresent, but passive, storyteller. Bindra is an active agent

TSUNAMI – 7 Hours That Shook the World: Satinder Bindra; HarperCollins Publishers, 1A, Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. Rs. 395.

in his story. The entry-point to the biggest story of his career is a text message on the cell phone —'Please call me it's urgent' — from the CNN's representative in Sri Lanka, Iqbal Athas. From then on, he lets the reader into every detail of his life as a reporter: from his tying up with his New Delhi bureau on logistics, to

FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT OF THE TSUNAMI FROM THE TIME THIS JOURNALIST WAS SHOCKED OUT OF HIS HOLIDAY IN SRI LANKA

his going through a 'laminated checklist' attached to the outside of his bag before packing.

Unlike the usual scenario of the reporter landing safely at the scene of the disaster, Bindra was already in the thick of things. When a wave came up to the wall of his hotel, he confesses, "Journalism wasn't the priority any more."

Although the book gains immensely from the first person story-telling format, he also allows his characters to tell their story. Father Dayalan Sanders, who saved 26 children in his orphanage by cramming them into a boat and asking the boatman to turn the boat into the tsunami rather than outrun the wave, Tharesh Liyanage, who saw his mother being swept away, but managed to cling on to a metal grill in a warehouse, Gamini Sumitanayakar, whose hotel built with the money he saved as a waiter in the Gulf was destroyed by the tsunami, and Chandrasiri, who managed to get out of a train caught in the tsunami, all bring drama and emotion to the narrative.

The human angle

He also manages to convey the pressures of journalists always on the look out for a compelling story.

There is an interesting story of the excitement generated by an old man Sirisena, who was found in the debris of a neighbourhood destroyed by the tsunami. Reporters and cameramen crowded around Sirisena in the hospital waiting for him to tell his story of survival. However, when the police started speculating that he might have been a looter who got trapped inside the building he set out to rob, and some people recalled seeing him walk around after the tsunami, the news hounds quickly dropped Sirisena from their list of tsunami heroes.

Bindra also records how Peraliya in Sri Lanka became a big draw for journalists, most of who went about 'stomping around' in utter disregard of the feelings of the grieving locals.

The author also makes good use of material from other CNN reporters covering Andaman and Nicobar Islands and south India to give the book a rounded look. In the final chapter, the author tries to argue that the tsunami had changed the concept of broadcasting disasters.

Journalism was no longer removed and distant, but immediate and human. The journalists were part of the story, equally vulnerable, and moved by what they were reporting.

Road map for effective strategy execution

A. V. Vedpuriswar

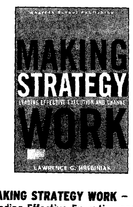
This book focusses on executing strategy effectively. The author, Lawrence Hrebiniak, a professor at Wharton School, Pennsylvania, starts off by pointing out that most managers are trained to make plans, not execute them. Though he does not say so in as many words, he seems to imply that for many senior managers, planning is a cerebral exercise, whereas implementation is perceived as something more mundane and operational. This is probably why senior managers often do not get fully involved in strategy implementation, preferring to delegate it to junior managers.

Strategy execution usually takes longer than the formulation of strategy. Plans can be prepared in a few weeks but implementation may take years. So managers find it difficult to focus on and control the execution process. Strategy implementation also involves more people across the organisation at various levels. So there are communication challenges. Execution also demands a culture of achievement, discipline and ownership. If these elements are lacking in the organisation, a major change management process must be undertaken.

Execution

To facilitate execution, strategic plans and objectives must be translated into short-term operating objectives whose fulfilment must be tracked using suitable matrices. Incentives and controls play an important role in the execution of strategy. While incentives motivate people to achieve targets, controls provide feedback about whether the desired outcomes are being achieved.

The author, however, makes it clear that execution is not a substitute for planning.



MAKING STRATEGY WORK – Leading Effective Execution and Change: Lawrence. G. Hrebiniak; Wharton School Publishing, Pearson Education (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Indian Branch, 482, Fie Patparganj, Delhi-110092. Rs. 499.

Indeed, the starting point of execution is good strategy. Bad strategy will only create frustration, as managers will work hard in a futile attempt to execute what is not executable.

At the same time, a good strategy by itself will not deliver results. Execution is of paramount importance.

The book covers in detail the various facets of strategy execution. These include strategy formulation, organisational structure, effective coordination and information sharing, incentives and controls, managing change, power, influence and execution.

A separate chapter has been devoted to each of these topics. The author illustrates the various concepts covered in the book with live examples, covering well- known companies such as AT&T, General Motors, Johnson & Johnson, Citibank, General Electric and Daimler-Chrysler.

A full chapter is devoted to explain strategy execution in the case of a merger.

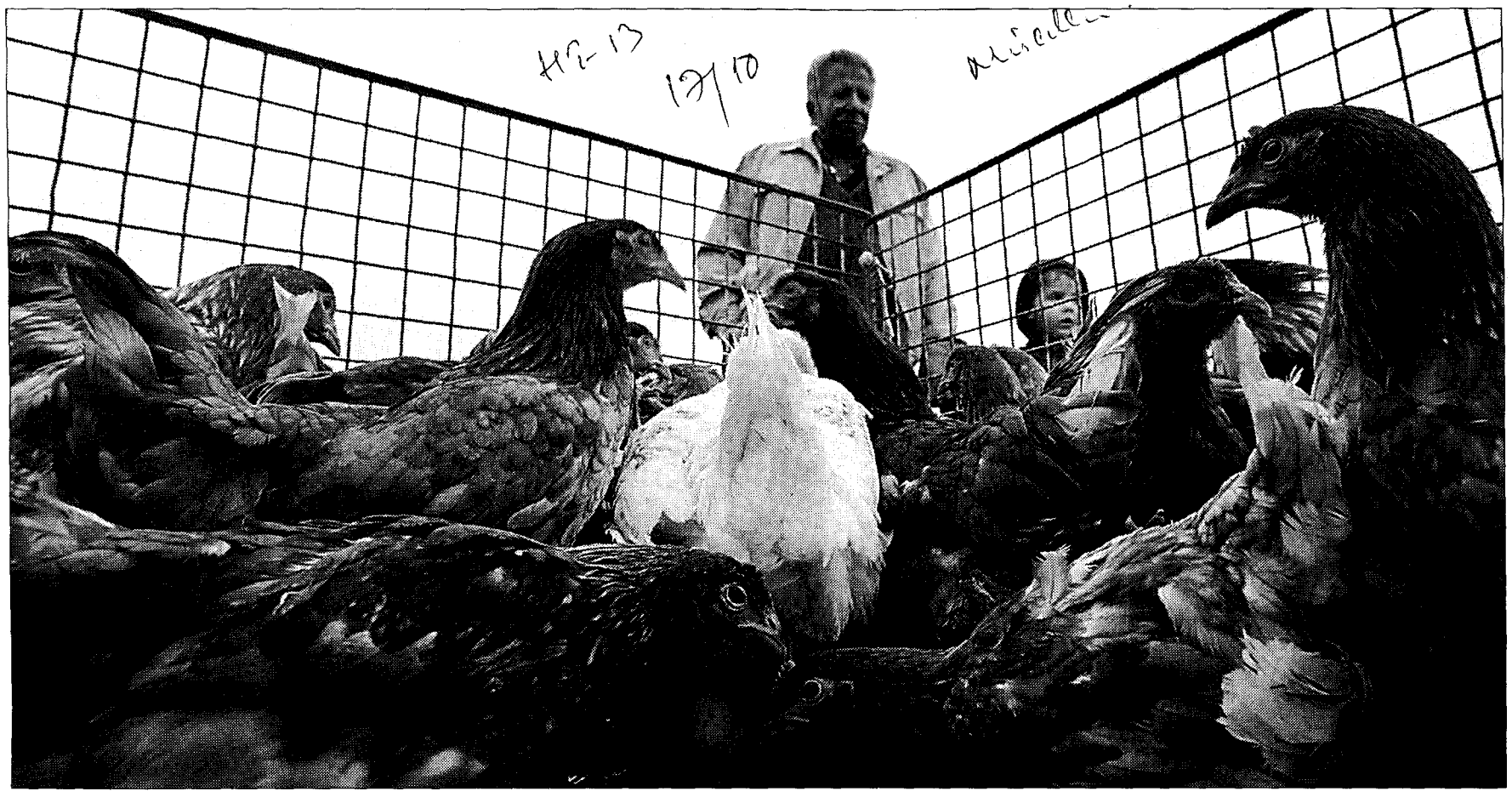
The big disappointment with the book is that there are few new insights. Much of what the writer mentions is covered in standard textbooks on strategic management.

The importance of linking long term objectives with operational strategies, the need for the right structure, strong leadership, effective communication and change management in implementing strategy are too well known.

The examples given have also been discussed widely in management literature.

To that extent, the book does not evoke the level of interest, books on the same theme by other authors have done. But the author deserves credit for trying to put together a body of knowledge in an area, which has not received adequate attention.

Europe braces for bird flu



REUTERS

A chicken flock sits in an open-air market in Dolni Bogrov, east of Sofia, as medical experts ran blood tests on hundreds of birds to screen them for the bird flu virus.

Thousands of birds killed in Romania

AGENCIES
Bucharest, October 16

EUROPE BRACED for a possible pandemic Sunday, getting ready with control measures and earmarking funds for purchase of vaccines, while Romanian authorities slaughtered thousands of domestic birds in the Danube delta and sent in doctors to prevent the spread of a deadly strain of bird flu that has decimated flocks and killed dozens of people in Asia.

Britain was the first to press the panic button with the nation's chief medical officer saying such a pandemic could well be "inevitable" and could end up killing more than 50,000 people in Britain.

Laboratory tests showed on Saturday that the H5N1 strain of the disease had reached mainland Europe for the first time, identifying it in three ducks found dead in the Romanian village of Ceamurlia de Jos.

Experts fear the H5N1 virus, which has killed more than 60 people and caused the death of millions of birds in Asia since 2003, could mutate and spread easily among humans, creating a pandemic that might kill tens of millions of people.

Romanian Agriculture Minister Gheorghe Flutur said even though the outbreak was limited to Ceamurlia and Maliuc, all 18,000 domestic birds in Ceamurlia were killed and culling of Maliuc's less than 3,000 poultry was under way.

Officials have stepped up public health precautions even though no human cases of bird flu have so far been reported from Romania or from Turkey, which also confirmed H5N1 among domestic fowl last week.

"We have sent more doctors to the contaminated areas, and they will go from house to house to see how many people face the risk of being infected with the virus," Health Minister Eugen Nicolaescu told a news conference.

The Danube delta, Europe's largest wetlands near the Black Sea, is a major station for migratory wild birds heading from Russia, Scandinavia, Poland and Germany towards warmer winter climes in North Africa.

Despite Romania's assurances, Britain's chief medical officer said on Sunday his country was bracing for a pandemic of bird flu. Liam Donaldson said, "if we had a (bird flu) pandemic the problem would be the existing vaccines don't work, we would need a new vaccine. So the estimate we are working towards is around 50,000 excess deaths from flu, but it could be a lot higher."

Area cordoned off

There was no immediate sign of Turkey's outbreak spreading. Officials said that nine people under observation in hospital for possible bird flu had been allowed to go home as tests showed they were not infected.

In Romania, six southeastern counties have been cordoned off and vehicles leaving them are being disinfected at checkpoints. Poultry and pigs have been put indoors, transport of live animals from the counties banned and fairs selling animals closed across the country, officials said.

Bulgaria, wedged between Romania and Turkey, said it would set up a bird flu crisis headquarters on Monday. It has already stepped up border controls and increased surveillance over poultry farms along the Danube and Black Sea. Blood tests were being run on farm birds, but have not turned up any strain of the virus.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 17 OCT 2005

India on alert after bird flu hits Europe

G.S. MUDUR

New Delhi, Oct. 14: With the lethal bird flu slipping into the fringes of Europe, India is keeping its eyes peeled on its poultry and wild birds.

Forest staff will scan sanctuaries and national parks while farmers and state animal inspectors will closely watch poultry on farms to detect the avian influenza virus before it gets a chance to spread in India, officials and wildlife biologists said.

"We're asking farms to keep a watch for any sign of unusual mortality among their poultry," said Dr Shantanu Bandopadhyay, animal husbandry commissioner. The animal husbandry department has told all states to start surveillance at the district and block levels.

Scientists' biggest worry is that the steadily-mutating virus — which has killed at least 60 people in Southeast Asia in the past two years — will exchange genes with human influenza viruses and gain the ability to spread from person to person through coughs and sneezes.

If that happens, scientists say, it could sweep across the globe, killing millions. The 20th century witnessed three influenza pandemics, the worst in 1918-19 killing 40-50 million people.

Currently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says, the virus "does not spread easily" either from birds to humans or from person to person. But a reassortment of viral genes can lead to a novel subtype against which humans will have little immunity.

Last week, officials from 80 countries gathered in Washington to come up with plans to fight the next flu pandemic, with US President George W. Bush urging pharmaceutical executives to focus on influenza vaccines.

Migratory waterfowl — mainly wild ducks — are the natural reservoirs of avian influenza, but domestic poultry, such as chickens, are particularly susceptible to epidemics.

Direct contact with infected poultry or surfaces contaminated by their droppings are believed to be the main route of human infection. Exposure risk is considered highest during de-feathering and butchering and preparation of poultry for cooking. There is no evidence that cooked poultry products can infect, the WHO said.

Since January 2004, the virus, labelled H5N1, has caused unprecedented outbreaks of influenza in poultry and humans in several Southeast Asian countries. Millions of birds have been infected — and killed or destroyed — in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

The WHO announced on Thursday that H5N1 has been detected in domestic birds in Turkey. Recent poultry deaths in Romania have been attributed to the H5 subtype, though further tests to detect the exact strain are under way. Experts suspect the virus moved to Europe through migratory birds.

The national action plan in India will also aim at mapping the migratory routes of wild birds that fly in from China and other parts of central Asia, said wildlife biologist Taej Mundkur.

He said amateur bird-watchers may help forest department staff look for sick or dying wild and migratory birds in sanctuaries. But with migratory wild birds spotted at nearly 90 sites across India, the surveillance poses enormous logistical challenges.

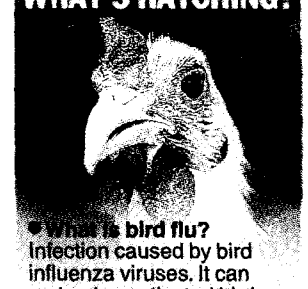
"I wouldn't say we have enough people going out often enough looking for birds," Mundkur said.

The High Security Animal Disease Laboratory in Bhopal — the only Indian laboratory ready for rapid diagnosis of H5N1 — has been screening blood and faecal samples from poultry from different states. Between July and September, it examined 3,207 samples.

"We haven't found any sample infected with H5N1 so far," laboratory director Hare Krishna Pradhan said.

■ See Page 3

WHAT'S HATCHING?



● What is bird flu?
Infection caused by bird influenza viruses. It can make domesticated birds like chickens, ducks and turkeys very sick and kill them

● Do bird flu viruses infect humans?
Usually not, but several cases have occurred since 1997

● What are the symptoms of bird flu in humans?
Fever, cough, soar throat and muscle aches to eye infection, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases and other life-threatening complications

THE TELEGRAPH

Bird flu alarm strikes Europe

EU veterinary experts to endorse measures for flu

Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Oct. 14. — European Union veterinary experts were expected to endorse new measures today aimed at preventing the deadly bird flu virus strain H5N1 from spreading westward into the EU.

The European Commission will send EU veterinary and laboratory experts to Bulgaria and Turkey, after both requested help yesterday, EU spokesman Mr Philip Tod said. Turkey and Romania this week both announced it had discovered bird flu in the country, though only Turkey confirmed H5N1. Bulgaria, which neighbours Romania and Turkey, has increased customs checks, banned wild bird hunting and boosted monitoring of wild migratory birds to prevent an outbreak there.

"In the case of Bulgaria, we will be sending some laboratory and veterinary experts, who will likely leave this weekend," Mr Tod said. "For Turkey, the experts we will send are likely to be specialists in epidemiology." The veterinary experts were drawn from across the 25-nation bloc, Turkey and Romania. It was still unclear if the samples taken from Romanian birds would prove to be H5N1, highly contagious among birds but difficult for humans to contract. So far, tests in Romania identified only the H5 subtype, and further tests in Britain would not give results until tomorrow, Mr Tod said.

"We are working on the assumption that it is also the H5N1 virus, and all measures have now been adopted with that in mind," Mr Tod said. "Animal restrictions on Romania are now in force." EU foreign ministers planned emergency talks for Tuesday in Luxembourg to assess how to further coordinate measures within the EU and with other international organisations and countries.

A girl watches over pet rooster perched on a shanty rooftop in Manila on Friday. — AFP

Nine cases in Turkey

Turkish officials put nine people under medical observation after reports that 40 pigeons in theirneighborhood mysteriously died, authorities said today. In Kiziksa, where the earlier deaths occurred, veterinary officials were culling the few remaining birds.

Existing vaccines ineffective against flu

Jeremy Laurance in London

Oct. 14. — There is no vaccine available against bird flu. Existing flu vaccines are unlikely to be effective against the new strain. Researc' is under way to develop a vaccine targeted at the H5N1 strain but even if it is successful, it will take years to manufacture sufficient quantities to protect the world's population from a human pandemic. A generic H5N1 vaccine would not prevent infection but it might lessen its severity, thereby saving lives. In the absence of a vaccine, countries are relying on the anti-viral drug Tamiflu. Anti-flu drugs work in a different way from vaccines and can be used against any strain of flu. However, they have a limited effect, shortening the course of the illness by a day or two, provided they are taken within 48 hours of infection. In outbreaks of ordinary human flu, they have been shown to prevent secondary complications such as pneumonia and reduce infectivity, cutting the rate of spread. It is hoped that they would be similarly effective against bird flu in humans, saving lives by reducing the severity of the illness. But it is not certain.

— The Independent

Bush, Blair's critic bags Nobel

SARAH Crown
Stockholm, October 13

THIS HAS been quite a week for literary coups. In an unexpected move, the Swedish Academy on Thursday announced its decision to award this year's Nobel prize for Literature to British playwright and author Harold Pinter and not, as was widely anticipated, to Turkish author Orhan Pamuk or the Syrian poet Adonis.

The Academy described Pinter, whose works include *The Birthday Party*, *The Dumb Waiter* and his breakthrough *The Caretaker*, as someone who restored the art form of theatre. In its citation, the Academy said Pinter was "generally seen as the foremost representative of British drama in the second half of the 20th century," and "who in his plays uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."

Until Thursday's announcement, Pinter was barely thought to be in the running for the prize. After Pamuk and Adonis (whose real name is Ali Ahmad Said), the writers believed to be under consideration by the Academy included Americans Joyce Carol Oates and Philip Roth, and the Swedish poet Thomas Transtromer, with Margaret Atwood, Milan Kundera and the South Korean poet Ko Un as long-range possibilities.

REUTERS

Harold Pinter: *Surprise choice*

Pinter's victory means that the prize has been given to a British writer for the second time in under five years; it was awarded to V.S. Naipaul in 2001. European writers have won the prize in nine out of the last 10 years so it was assumed that this year it would go to someone from a different continent.

The son of immigrant Jewish parents, Pinter was born in Hackney, London, on October 10, 1930. He himself has said that his youthful encounters with anti-Semitism led him to become a dramatist. Without doubt one of Britain's greatest post-war playwrights, his long association with the theatre began when he worked as an actor, under the stage name David Baron. His first play, *The Room*, was performed at Bristol University in 1957; but it was in 1960 with his second full-length play, *The Caretaker*, the absurdist masterpiece, that his reputation was established. Known for their menacing pauses, his dark, claustrophobic plays are notorious for their mesmerising ability to strip back the layers of the often banal lives of their characters to reveal the guilt and horror that lie beneath.

Pinter's authorial stance, always radical, has become more and more political in recent years. An outspoken critic of the war in Iraq (he famously called President Bush a "mass murderer" and dubbed Tony Blair a "deluded idiot"), in 2003 he turned to poetry to castigate the leaders of the US and the UK for their decision to go to war.

The Guardian

Pinter wins Nobel prize in literature

Stockholm: British playwright and poet Harold Pinter, whose juxtaposition of the brutal and the banal resulted in an adjective that bears his name, won the 2005 Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday.

The Swedish Academy, awarding the prize, said he was an author "who in his plays uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."

In its citation, the academy said the 75-year-old playwright— whose works include "The Room," "The Birthday Party" and "The Dumb Waiter" and his breakthrough work, "The Caretaker"— was one who restored the art form of writing plays.

"Pinter restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue where people are at the mercy of each other and pretense crumbles," the academy said.

Pinter is the first Briton to win the literature award since V S Naipaul won it in 2001. Agencies

THE TIMES OF INDIA

TWO AMERICANS AND A FRENCHMAN TAKE THE NOBEL

Green chemistry honoured

NOBLE INTENTIONS: Recipients of the 2005 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. (From left) Dr Robert H Grubbs, Dr Yves Chauvin and Dr Richard R Schrock. — AFP

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM, Oct. 5. — France's Dr Yves Chauvin and Americans Dr Robert H Grubbs and Dr Richard R Schrock won the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry today, for discoveries that let industry produce drugs and plastics more efficiently and with less hazardous waste.

The trio won the award for their development of the metathesis method in organic synthesis, a way to rearrange groups of atoms within molecules that the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences likened to a dance in which couples change partners. The process is used in the chemical and biotechnology industries to develop stronger plastics and drugs to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's disease and arthritis, the academy said.

By reducing the number of hazardous byproducts in a chemical reaction, metathesis also leads to cleaner and more environmentally friendly production. "This represents a great step forward for green chemistry, reducing potentially hazardous waste through smarter production. Metathesis is an example of how important basic science has been applied for the benefit of man, society and the environment," the prize committee said. Dr Chauvin (74), is the honorary director of research at the Institut Francais du Petrole in Rueil-Malmaison, near Paris.

"I knew that my research was important. I opened the way but it is my American colleagues who also worked on my research who are enabling me to get this prize today," Dr Chauvin told from his home in Tours, France.

'Embarrassed'

Retired chemist Dr Yves Chauvin expressed "embarrassment, not joy" and fretted that his quiet life may be over after he won the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry today. "I was told 'good luck with the Press' and am starting to see what they meant," he added. — AP

Strange, but science too

Agence France Presse

NEW YORK, Oct. 5. — It is difficult to judge exactly where the scientific world would be without Professor Bernard Vonnegut's seminal 1975 study on "Chicken Plucking as a Measure of Tornado Wind Speed". What is clear is that Vonnegut's research may have languished in undeserved obscurity but for Marc Abrahams, founder of the annual Ig Nobel Prizes for scientific achievement that "cannot or should not be reproduced".

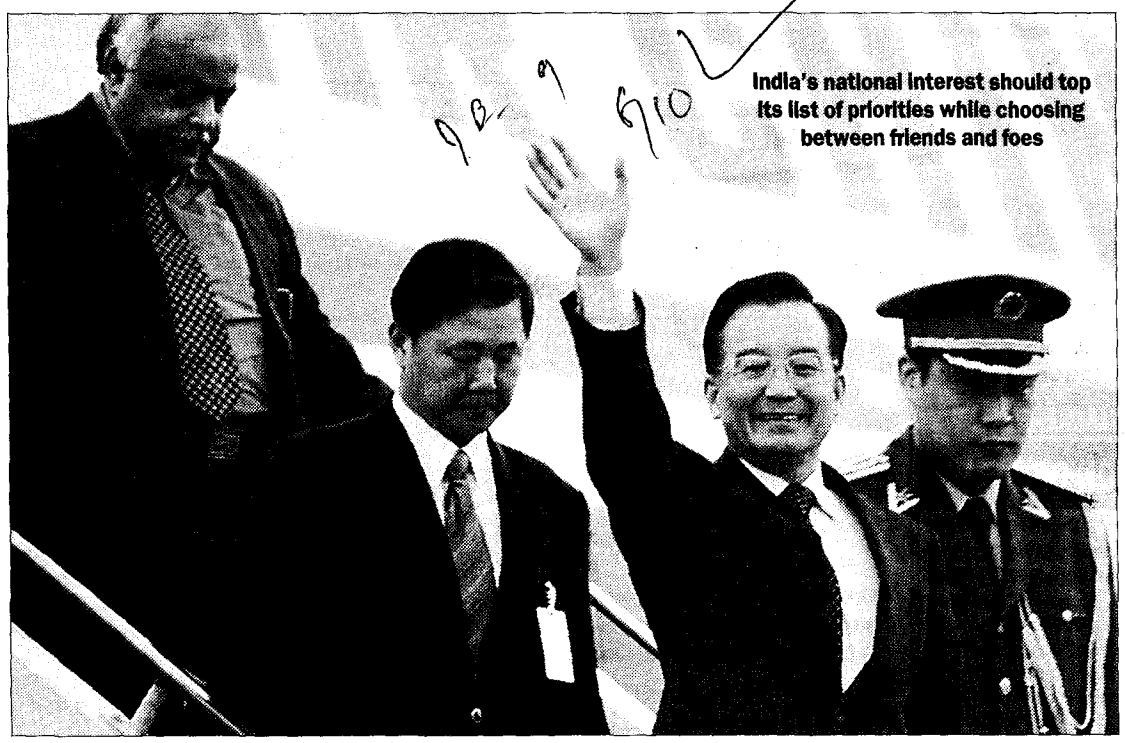
Nobel laureates will present the awards at the 15th Ig Nobel ceremony to be held tomorrow at Harvard University.

Previous winners include authors of landmark reports on the impact of country music on suicide, the use of magnets to levitate frogs, and the effect of beer, garlic and soured cream on the appetite of leeches.

THE STATESMAN

In an effort to be 'nice' to China, let India not repeat historic blunders

THE ROAD TO VIETNAM



India's national interest should top its list of priorities while choosing between friends and foes

RAJA MENON

THE Indian vote at the IAEA is a watershed of sorts. It marks the first major unpleasant decision taken on the basis of national interests. Could this become a habit? Could it give courage to the national security establishment to see why we need to send the Vietnamese delegation, currently in India, back to Hanoi loaded with presents?

Well for a start consider this. All of us in Delhi are really targeted for oblivion only by one weapon system, and that is the Pakistani Shaheen I, otherwise known as the Chinese M 9. Atop this rocket is a Pakistani-Chinese bomb currently integrated in a superior manner from anything we possess.

Of course, one day Indian science will outflank Pakistani technology, but it is well to know that Beijing had India tied down south of the Himalayas for over two decades, using Pakistan as a cat's paw. If this was history, it wouldn't make sense to put ourselves out over Vietnam.

But long after the bilateral discussions began with our national security advisor and the Chinese vice-defence minister to settle the outstanding Sino-Indian boundary dispute, the Pakistanis fired the Shaheen II, a missile that is the exact image of the Chinese M 18, a two-stage missile.

They then received a supply of frontline Chinese fighter aircraft, signed a deal for Chinese naval ships, and, a month ago, fired a cruise missile that has a Chinese history.

Most Indian security analysts and practically all of India's diplomatic corps are unaware that the much publicised transfer of the Chinese M 11 missiles to Pakistan (currently at Sargodha) was only a smokescreen behind which the M 9 factory was transferred to Pakistan (currently set up at Tarwanah).

The M 11 has a range of less than 300 km, is not violative of the MTCR and acted as a red herring to facilitate the transfer of the M 9 to Pakistan, which is today the backbone of Pakistan's nuclear threat to India. The M 9 transfer violates the MTCR. In the field of foreign policy, no country has stabbed India so effectively as China did with this transfer.

SO imagine Beijing's surprise when the Indian reaction to all this was to suggest negotiations on the border, and expansion of economic links. Now everyone in Delhi is aware that foreign policy in Beijing is made not at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but by a select body of the politburo.

These old men, the inheritors of 3,000 years of Imperium, can't help but conclude that Delhi can be kept in line with some soft words and a resounding slap or two. They must feel that Delhi is unable to run foreign policy on two channels like they can.

For example: increase supplies to Wal Mart after shooting down an American spy plane, cooperate in keeping the yuan stable while sending a nuclear submarine into Japanese waters, talk peace with India while arming Pakistan, increase cross-straits air links with Taiwan while acquiring SU 30s for maritime interdiction.

Can we not have a discussion in Delhi about whether success in bilateral negotiations comes from holding strong cards, or being "nice"; and how we acquire strong cards against China?

China's GDP is almost double ours, and growing faster. Its poor strategic location is sought to be overcome by access to the Persian Gulf through Gwadar and to the Gulf of Thailand through Laos and Cambodia. To negotiate, we need allies to compensate for our weakness, and the Vietnamese are here in India.

With a population of 90 million disciplined people, 95 per cent literacy, high social indicators, no fundamentalism and superbly trained armed forces, we would have to be entirely brainless not to hug them to our bosom.

THE Vietnamese have their national interests too. They need the Smersh multi-barrel rocket launchers for their army, APCs and light tanks for their waterlogged countryside. The navy needs submarines to play a rightful role in the South China Sea, and their Soviet origin equipment means that we could help them start and run a submarine service.

After all they have the biggest coastline in the South China Sea, so why should they not aspire to control it?

Their ships need surface-to-surface missiles, but first of all they need a few destroyers and our shipyards have spare capacity. We have agreed to make our export laws NSG and MTCR compatible but the latter applies only to missiles of less than 300 kms range, as we well know.

Surely, having supported Vietnam's long struggle for self-determination over 25 years, we are not going to leave them defenceless in a nasty neighbourhood?

If we really want to see Vietnam progress, as a friend, we need our highway to Myanmar to go beyond, into Laos and Vietnam, to Cam Ranh Bay — for commercial reasons, purely, to further our Look East policy, and trade with China.

If all these steps are perceived as inimical by someone else, we have a diplomatic service that can set the record straight. We want to strengthen ASEAN, by helping its newest member. We need another access into the South China Sea, because the Malacca Straits are far too crowded and the traffic is getting worse every year.

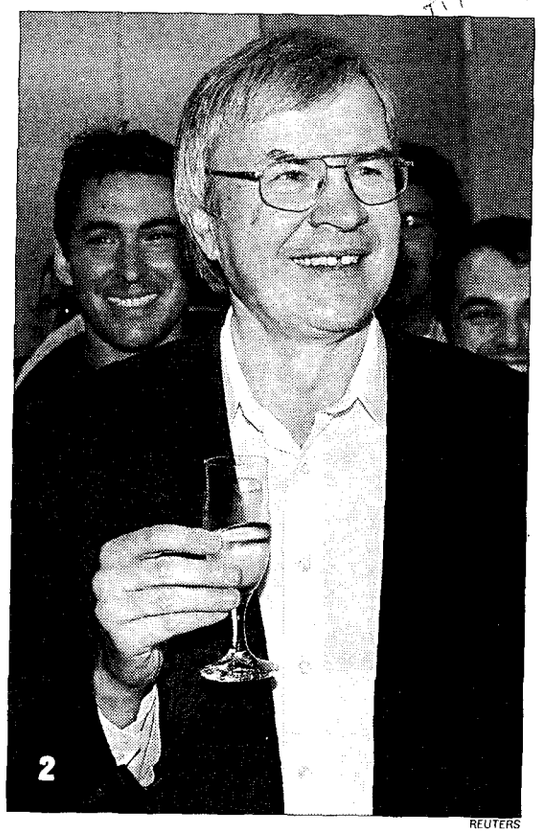
Most of all we cannot repeat our historical blunders. When Tungku Abdul Rehman, the founder of Malaysia, suggested strong defence links with India in 1962 — and publicly donated blood for India — we rebuffed him. Thirty years later, we were desperate to get into ASEAN.

We should sign a strategic relationship with Vietnam and offer them more than what they seek. This will lead to a stronger peace with China, because it will be in China's interest to be friends with a stronger power and not because that power is trying to be nice.

China's poor strategic location is sought to be overcome by access to the Persian Gulf through Gwadar and to the Gulf of Thailand through Laos and Cambodia. To negotiate, we need allies to compensate for our weakness ... With 90 million disciplined people, 95 per cent literacy, no fundamentalism and a superbly trained army forces, we would have to be brainless not to hug the Vietnamese

INDIAN EXPRESS

Nobel glitter for optics light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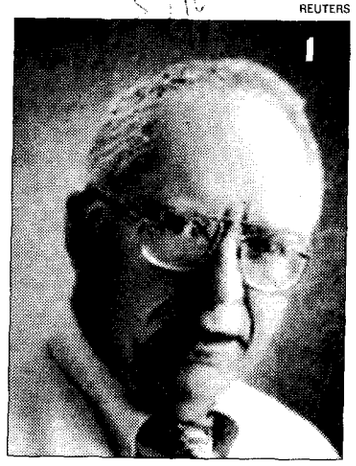
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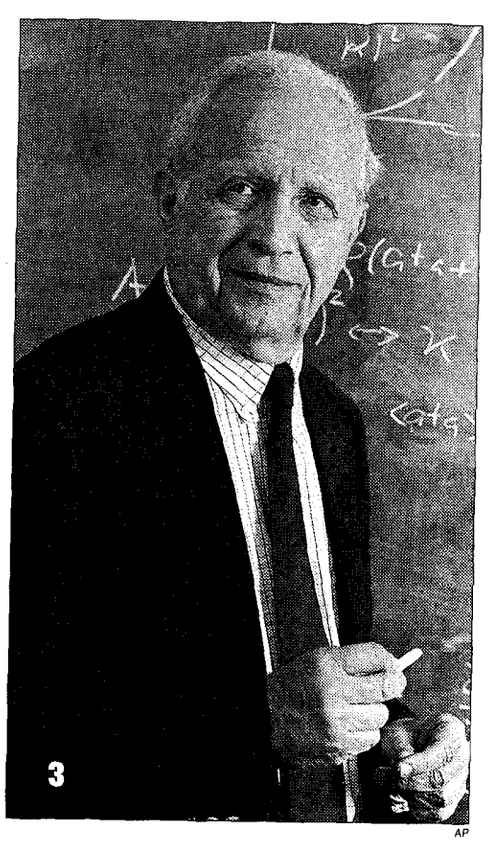
REUTERS

1 **John L. Hall**
University of Colorado and National Institute of Standards and Technology

2 **Theodor W. Hänsch**
Max-Planck Institut für Quantenoptik, Garching and Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich

3 **Roy J. Glauber**
Harvard University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AP

DONALD MacLeod
Oslo, October 4

THREE SCIENTISTS — two Americans and one German — who shed light on the nature of optics claimed the Nobel prize for physics.

Roy J. Glauber, of Harvard University, receives half of the prize judged by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences "for his contribution to the quantum theory of optical coherence".

The other half goes jointly to John L. Hall, of the University of Colorado and National Institute of Standards and Technology, Boulder, and Theodor W. Hänsch, of the Max-Planck Institut für Quantenoptik, Garching and Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich, "for their contributions to the development of laser-based precision spectroscopy, including the optical frequency comb technique".

Professor Glauber is honoured for his theoretical description of the behaviour of light particles while his co-laureates developed laser-based precision spectroscopy — the determination of the colour of the light of atoms and molecules with extreme precision.

The Scottish scientist James Clerk Maxwell described light in the 1850s as a form of electromagnetic radiation, like radio waves, explains the Nobel prizes website. His theory has been utilised in modern communication technology based on transmitters and receivers: mobile telephones, television and radio.

If a receiver or a detector is to register light, it must be able to absorb the radiation energy and forward the signal.

This energy occurs in packets called quanta and a hundred years ago Einstein was able to show how the absorption of a quantum (a photon) leads to the release of a photoelectron. It is these indirect photoelectrons that are registered in the apparatuses when photons are absorbed.

Thus light exhibits a double nature — it can be considered both as waves and as a stream of particles, continues the website. Professor Glauber has established the basis of Quantum Optics, in which quantum theory encompasses the field of optics.

He could explain the fundamental differences between hot sources of light such as light bulbs, with a mixture of frequencies and phases, and lasers which give a specific frequency and phase.

The important contributions by Professor Hall and Professor Hänsch have made it possible to measure frequencies with an accuracy of 15 digits. Lasers with extremely sharp colours can now be constructed and with the frequency comb technique precise readings can be made of light of all colours.

This technique makes it possible to carry out studies of, for example, the stability of the constants of nature over time and to develop extremely accurate clocks and improved Global Positioning System technology, adds the Nobel website.

The Guardian

Had to give myself an ulcer: Aussie doctor

REUTERS
Canberra, October 4

BARRY MARSHALL, this year's joint Nobel winner for medicine, on Tuesday recalled how he had become a human guinea pig and drunk a cocktail of bacteria to prove his theory that ulcers were not caused by stress.

Marshall and fellow-Australian Robin Warren were awarded the prize on Monday, for their 1982 discovery that the *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium, rather than stress, caused stomach ulcers and inflammation.

Marshall said he had become a human laboratory rat to convince sceptics that ulcers and stomach inflammation were caused by bacteria. He said he had no choice but to give himself the condition. "Somebody had to do it, somebody had to swallow those bacteria and develop the disease. It was the only way you could convince the sceptics," Marshall said.

"I didn't think about it very much and probably I wouldn't have done it if I had really thought it through," he said. After drinking the bacteria, Marshall suffered nausea, vomiting and stomach pain, but overcame the condition with treatment similar to the regimen of antibiotics and acid secretion inhibitors now commonly prescribed to sufferers.

Warren said the pair were initially reluctant to publish their findings because of the way Marshall had given himself the condition and because their findings were so radical.

"At the time, everyone thought we were a bit crazy because the whole thing was so way out in terms of normal medical teaching in those days. For me, the Nobel prize means that they are putting the official stamp of approval on all the work that I did and all the trouble that I had and all the disbelief," Warren said.

Barry Marshall

Australian Prime Minister John Howard congratulated the pair on Tuesday, and said their work had bought relief to millions of people around the world. "The research destroyed a myth, very widely held. The prize is richly deserved," Howard said.

Marshall and Warren, who were working at the Royal Perth Hospital at the time of their breakthrough, are the first all-Australian team to win the Nobel for medicine.

Warren is now retired, but Marshall continues to study the effects of the bacterium on humans and animals.

"I've got no imagination. I'm still in the *Helicobacter* business. But these days we're doing molecular studies, cloning, vaccines and all that kind of stuff."

velcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be
t of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper.
will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

BOOK REVIEW

AD-15 4/10

The global economy today

This U.N. publication covers the performance and prospects of the global economy during the first few years of this century

C. T. Kurien

The global economy is no longer an abstract academic concept. It impacts national economies, large and small, and even economies like ours which for long were rather immune to external influences.

More important, it now shapes the lives and livelihoods of millions of ordinary people all over the world. It is the performance and prospects of the global economy during the first few years of the present century that this publication of the United Nations deals with.

From an economic point of view the dawn of the century was rather cloudy. *The Economist* in one of its early issues of 2001 had noted that the U.S. and Japan, together accounting for close to half of world output were both "teetering on the brink of recession", pointing out too that the two biggest economies simultaneously coming under recession was a rare phenomenon.

Recovery

The first thing that the U.N. publication points out is that by 2004 the world economy had recovered from that gloomy scenario. The world output that had grown by four per cent in 2000 had plunged to a low of 1.3 per cent in 2001, but had regained four per cent in 2004.

The economic growth of 2004 was not only high, but "unusually widespread and well balanced." The GDP in Africa grew by 4.5 per cent, the largest in a decade. Almost half of the developing countries accounting for over 80 per cent of the developing world's population increased per capita output by more than three per cent.

These included five out of six countries in South Asia, among them India, 10 out of 13 countries in East Asia and even 21 out of 51 in Africa. Of the 107 developing countries included in the analysis per capita output fell only in 13 cases.

The international trade also had good performance in 2004, merchandise trade growing at about 10.5 per cent in volume terms as against 6.5 per cent of 2003. Much of trade growth in 2004 originated in developing countries with China alone accounting for 20 per cent of the growth. Japan too started out well, but its performance declined rapidly in the third quarter. Indian performance was also good, showing merchandise trade deficit offset by strong services exports and remittances, producing a marginally positive current account balance.

Trade

Oil prices increased and remained extremely volatile throughout 2004. The prices of many non-oil commodities also increased in 2003 and 2004, but the increases were not adequate to compensate for the big fall between 1995 and 2002, particularly of agricultural commodities. Hence developing countries exporting such commodities were still faced with prices that were low by historical standards.

Trade negotiations continued under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation wherein the developing countries demonstrated enhanced negotiating capabilities. The Doha Round and the 'July package' resulted in the developed countries expressing a commitment to reduce production-linked farm supports and to eliminate agricultural export subsidies.

However, under the concept of 'sensitive products' these countries can still maintain a high level of tariff protection on specific products provided they expand the tariff rate quotas. The possibility of protectionist backlash on information technology-enabled services trade also continues.

Another trade area where ambiguities continue is in relation to textiles. Since trade in textiles and clothing had been historically governed by a separate Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, integrating it into the general pattern of multilateral trade has been a slow process. Developed countries claim credit for opening up textile trade, but trade in many textiles and clothing items of particular interest to them still remain restricted. They also make clever use of anti-dumping clause and the infamous 'voluntary' export restraint schemes.

Financial flows

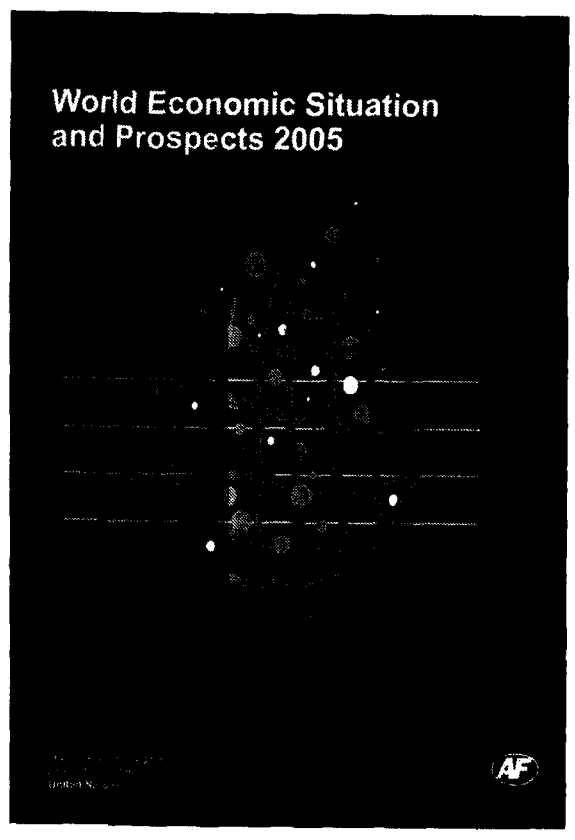
The most important feature of the contemporary global economy, of course, is financial flows and these have continued to increase.

Global foreign direct investments (FDI) inflows rose by six per cent in 2004 to $ 612 billion ending the downturn started in 2002 and the FDI stock reached $ 7 trillion.

As in the past, the major share of FDI inflows ($ 321 billion) was into developed countries, but an important feature was that all developing regions, including Africa saw an increase in inflow. Among the individual developing countries China maintained the lead receiving $ 62 billion ($ 95 billion if the inflow into Honk Kong Special Administrative Region of China is added) while India's share was $ 6 billion, a 50 per cent increase from the $ 4 billion in 2003.

It is worth noting that the bulk of FDI inflows, two thirds, in fact, in recent years have gone into the services sector, and 30 per cent into manufacturing and only a meagre four per cent into the primary sector. This is because most services are not tradable so the principal way for firms to bring services to foreign markets is through FDI.

There are financial flows from developing countries to developed countries as well, in the form of interest paid on loans taken, repayment of loans, profits on capital repatriated to investing countries and so on. Such outflows continued to increase in 2004, as has been the case for the past few years.



WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS 2005 – United Nations: Published by Academic Foundation, 4772/23, Bharat Ram Road, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 495.

Growth rate

Indeed, a glaring aspect of the global economy of the recent past has been that with financial outflows from developing countries exceeding inflows, there is a net transfer of resources from the developing economies to developed ones. It amounted to over $ 300 billion in 2004, up from $ 35 billion in 1998, about $ 200 billion in 2000 and around $ 270 billion in 2003.

With tsunami bringing death and destruction in several Asian countries during the last few days of 2004, the global mood at the beginning of 2005 was gloomy. In the second half of the year nature's fury has been felt in the U.S. in the form of Katrina and Rita.

These unprecedented natural calamities will have their bearing on the global economy in 2005. Oil prices have continued to shoot up. The real estate boom in the U.S. is practically over.

The global growth rate in 2005 is expected to be only 3.25 per cent. And in most parts of the world, the economic growth that is taking place has been jobless growth.

Countries that ardently championed free trade and opening up of economies are beginning to be apprehensive about intense competition in a 'flat world'. Surely, the world economic situation in 2005 is not going to be as promising as it was in 2004.

Documenting the saffron journey

Harish Khare

Because the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) emergence as one of the principal political parties has been such a divisive affair, it is only natural that there is virtually no objective study of the saffron outfit. Either one is for the party or against it, or that predisposition influences the historian's craft. Geeta Puri has done a rather unique thing; she has chronicled the BJP's rise, without getting emotionally involved. The tone is neutral, balanced and detached.

Documentation

This detachment apart, she bases her judgments and assessments on party documents – the oldest and the most reliable tool in a scholar's bag of tricks. Students of Indian politics would find this a very useful source book, as she has reproduced extensively almost all the major documents, which have defined the party's politics and posturing since 1980.

HINDUTVA POLITICS IN INDIA – Genesis, Political Strategies and Growth of Bharatiya Janta Party: Geeta Puri; UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd., 5, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 595.

Puri's catalogue of the party's ideological and intellectual journey becomes critically useful when juxtaposed with the BJP's record in power during the six years of the National Democratic Alliance rule.

With deadly detachment she lets the BJP's own words and formulations, invariably hyperbolic and overstated, speak for themselves. These claims and promises turned out to be dramatically at variance with the BJP leaders' record of performance, competence and imagination.

ANALYSIS OF THE BJP AS THE NAJOR ARCHITECT OF HINDUTVA POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY SINCE ITS FOUNDING N 1980

She quotes Advani explaining to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad hotheads, "a blend of pragmatism and ideology was necessary to govern the country. Our associates in the Sangh Parivar should understand that to run a government a certain amount of pragmatism is necessary. We are not abandoning our ideology." The line of reason that was never heard.

Having chronicled the ups and downs in the BJP's history – including its massive growth, social and geographical expansion – the author draws attention to 'an acute and constant identity crisis, whether in opposition or in government'.

Identity crisis

The party has had to deal with different demands made on it, in terms of ideological posturing and policy space, by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS) and its frontal organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch.

This, Puri sees as an arrangement not without its political use, because while the VHP-Bajrang Dal "plays the role of right-wing opposition to the secular Indian State, the [Swadeshi Jagran Manch] performs the role of a radical opponent to the BJP's economic policy reforms." Keeping the opposition in-house is often a recommended strategy.

The importance of this study is that it anticipates the current turmoil in the BJP-RSS relationship. While Puri is considerably off the mark in suggesting that L.K.Advani was ideally cut out to carry out the RSS designs (but, then, no one has been able to understand why Advani allowed his relationship with the RSS to degenerate to the point of no return), she is almost prescient in analysing the RSS's proprietary role of wanting to have policy and personnel control over the BJP.

She concludes: "The BJP's existential dilemma between identity and power is, therefore, implicit in its being an integral, inseparable and unbreakable part and parcel of the RSS." This is what was witnessed – and questioned – recently at Chennai.

Tenets of Advaita Vedanta

INSIGHTS INTO VEDANTA (Tattvabodha): Transliteration, word-for-word meaning, translation and commentary by Swami Sunirmalananda; Pub. by Sri Ramakrishna Math, R.K. Math Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. Rs. 80.

S. Revathy

The Vedanta with the Upanishads serving as its basis is a living faith. However, as is well known, it does not signify one doctrine but several, the only bond that unites them being the common source from which they are all derived.

The reason for this diversity is the richness and variety of Indian thought. The several streams of Vedanta can be classified as philosophical and religious. Of those that form the first group, Advaita is universal in appeal.

Swami Sunirmalananda has aptly described the present publication as 'insights into Vedanta'. He has chosen the title dexterously to invite the reader to take a serious look at the subject and adds that the real title is *Tattvabodha*.

The text comprises 53 paragraphs and each one of them forms a chapter and has been relevantly titled. The treatise as a whole covers every aspect of Advaita philosophy. The continuity and connection among the chapters are well knit.

The author's acquaintance with the literature on the subject, both ancient and modern, is remarkable and his intimate knowledge of it makes the exposition one of unexceptionable accuracy.

The author submits that as per the tradition of the Ramakrishna Mission the book gives the interpretations as found in the works of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda; he quotes, of course, Sankara's works like the Viveka Choodamani and the Upadesa Sahasri, which highlight the sole means of knowledge – the Upanishads – for Advaita. By way of contrast he refers to the other systems of Vedanta and orthodox systems then and there. The narrative is elegant with a logical link.

This book can be recommended to all students of Vedanta. It is another star in the firmament of the Ramakrishna Mission's service to humanity. The addition of a general index in the next edition will greatly enhance the value of the book for reference.

A TREATISE OFFERING INSIGHT INTO EVERY ASPECT OF ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY

'Crossroads' literature

MUCHANDI ILAKKIYAM: (Tamil) A.R.Venkatachalapathy; Kalachuvadu Pathipppagam; 669, K.P. Road, Nagercoil-629001. Rs. 140.

V.Gopalakrishna

A form of literature mostly in songs, different from folk or traditional style emerged during the pre-Independence years. After choosing a curious news, the composers of these songs used to put it instantaneously into a mould of a popular folksong or in a classical tune. Arrests of freedom fighters, outbreak of plague and murder in train are some examples.

Printed as petty books, priced as low as quarter or half 'anna', this kind of literature was sold by the authors themselves by singing them to the crowds and at busy crossroads; hence the names: crossroads literature, street songs and 'gujali' books. Realising the importance of this neglected branch, the noted researcher A.R.Venkatachalapathy has collected the scattered material and undertaken an extensive research on the different facets of this treasure house.

A NEGLECTED FORM OF LITERATURE MOSTLY IN SONGS

The first part of this book is devoted to an in-depth analysis of the information about the authors, contents, readers, the method of reading and publicity, and confidential reports about the banned books with copious references. The texts of songs and sample facsimile of an entire songbook are given in the second half of the book.

A valuable contribution to the history of Tamil literature, this work will remain a model for researchers of literature and social historians.

TAMIL

History of Tiruvavaduthurai

T. N. Ganapathy

THIRUVAVADUTHURAI-P-PURANAM: V. R. Madhavan – Editor; pub. by the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Taramani, Chennai-600113. Rs. 250.

THIS WORK, of which only a single copy was available in palm-leaf manuscript form in Tamil, has been brought out in print due to the tireless effort of V.R. Madhavan of Tamil University, Thanjavur.

It is a 'Sthala Varalaru' (history of a religious place) of Tiruvavaduthurai, comprising 2560 verses in 68 chapters with descriptive and explanatory notes.

Saattiram Saminatha Munivar wrote the work about 300 years ago. It also contains details about Tirumular and Konganar.

The editor's introduction, running to nearly 50 pages, is informative and instructive. The difficulties involved in transcribing Tamil palm-leaf manuscripts are many.

He is to be congratulated for successfully overcoming the difficulties and bringing out the book, which is illuminating and informative.

The index of verses and terms at the end of the work will be useful to researchers.

The work which is the 50th one brought out by Madhavan in his 50th year is itself a fitting tribute to him as an editor and scholar of Tamil manuscripts.

The text also known as 'Turaicai-p-puranam' is a welcome addition to the 'Sthala Purana' literature in Tamil.

TELUGU

Inspiring biography of a scientist

Ambika Ananth

YELLAPRAGADA SUBBAROW: Puranapanda Ranganath – Tr. in Telugu; Pub. by Alakananda Prachuranalu, publication wing of Ashok Book Centre, Opp. Maria Stella College, Vijayawada-520008. Rs. 60.

THIS BOOK is a lucid translation of the English original, *In Quest of Panacea*, which records the life of Dr.Yellapragada Subbarow, who went to the U.S. in the 1920s.

With deep inner aspiration to help humanity, this Indian- born biochemist carved a niche for himself in the field of biochemistry by finding the drugs Aureomycin, a broad spectrum antibiotic, synthesis of folic acid, which can fight anemia, Hetrazan to eliminate dreadful Filariasis, and Methotrexate to alleviate several types of cancer including childhood leukaemia. Hailed as a 'wizard of wonder drugs' Row contributed more than 100 significant scientific papers, on various aspects of medicine.

The book describes in detail his work at Harvard, and how his contribution was hailed as a landmark in the history of muscle biochemistry and so on.

It pays a glowing tribute to this very worthy human being, who placed work above his life to discover these miracle drugs, which can be termed as 'panacea' to suffering humanity. A must read book.

KANNADA

Philosophy of Ramanuja

G.D.

SRI RAMANUJA DARSANA AND SRINIVASA'S YATINDRA MATHA DEEPIKA: With Kannada translation by N. S. Anantharangacharya, copies can be had from author, 780, V Main Road, Vijayanagar, Bangalore-560040. Rs. 111.

RAMANUJA WAS unhappy with the interpretations given to the Vedic texts by the Advaita scholars like Yadavaprakasa, his first guru.

He became a follower of the Sri Vaishnava Acharya, Alavandar, and succeeded him as the head of the Sri Vaishnava sect.

He wrote a commentary on the Brahmasutras called the Sri Bhashya.

His elucidations are based on the philosophy contained in the 4000 verses of the Azhwars, the bedrock of whose philosophy is the 'Sarira-Sariri Bhava' postulated in the Vedas. The Tamil verses are said to be the translations of the Vedas.

Anantharangacharya has given in Kannada a detailed account of Ramanuja's treatise that will enable those ignorant of Sanskrit to get a good idea of the Acharya's system.

Added to this exposition is a very good Kannada translation of Yatindra Matha Deepika by Srinivasa, a disciple of Doddayacharya. This work explains Ramanuja's philosophy in simple terms.

The author has reprinted this volume which was published nearly 30 years ago. It is a very useful book.

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Singh borrows a leaf from Advani's book

PM reads Gita to comrades

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Oct. 1: When in trouble, quote the Gita.

Politically they are poles apart, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani seem to have a common strategy when the going gets tough.

When Advani was under fire from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh for praising Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah, he quoted the Gita. Singh, who is pitted against the Left — more specifically, CPM general secretary Prakash Karat — for India's vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency, did what the BJP chief had done a few months ago.

"Nothing surprises me," he told reporters, asked about Karat's direct attack on him in an article in *People's Democracy*, the CPM mouthpiece. "The Gita says one must do one's duty, unmindful of the consequences."

Karat's article, which will appear in the forthcoming issue of *People's Democracy*, holds the Prime Minister "directly responsible" for the vote with the European Union and the US on the resolution by the atomic watchdog.

The vote, Karat said, was a "major step" that "adversely affects India's independent foreign policy and its status in the non-aligned movement".

The CPM leader, who was in Calcutta today for a convention, warned that Left parties would not tolerate "this new direction of foreign policy" and urged the government to "undo the damage done" by the time the IAEA board meets again in November.

"India should state clearly that the Iranian nuclear issue is not a fit case for referring to the UN Security Council. Iran has the right to develop its nuclear technology within the framework of the NPT (Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty) and IAEA safeguards," Karat said.

Singh, who got a phone call from the US President yesterday assuring him that the nuclear deal the two countries signed recently was on track, is, however, believed to have indicated to his colleagues and aides that India will not reverse its stand.

The Prime Minister has defended his government's IAEA decision as one not against Tehran's interests. "What we have done is not against Iran," he has stressed. "Give diplomacy time to find a via media which is mutually acceptable."

When Advani was pressured by the Sangh to quit as BJP chief soon after his Pakistan trip, he had turned to the Gita twice: once on June 15 while releasing a book and again on July 3 at a religious function.

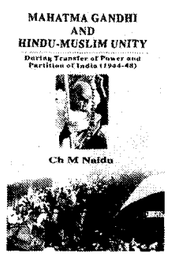
On the first occasion, he compared himself to Arjuna and said he drew strength from Krishna's words to soldier ahead and "protect and adhere" to the principles he believed in.

On July 3, the BJP chief described the Gita as a "guide for everyone".

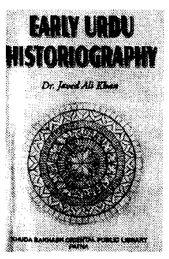
Announcement Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

BOOK REVIEW

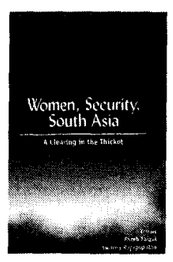
NEW ARRIVALS



Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu-Muslim Unity – During Transfer of Power and Partition of India (1944-48): Ch M. Naidu; Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd., B-7, Saraswati Complex, Subhash Chowk, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. Rs. 500.



Early Urdu Historiography: Javed Ali Khan; Pub. by Khuda Bakhash Oriental Public Library, Patna-4. Rs. 300.



Women, Security, South Asia – A Clearing in the Thicket: Farah Faizal, Swarna Rajagopalan – Editors; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. Rs. 295.

★ **Conflict Over Fisheries in the Palk Bay Region:** V. Suryanarayan; Lancer Publishers & Distributors, K-36A (FF), Green Park Main, New Delhi-110016.

★ **Charitable Trusts & Religious Institutions 2002-2003:** S. Rajaratnam; M. Natarajan, C.P. Thangaraj; Snow White Publications Pvt. Ltd., Jer Mahal, 532, Kalbadevi Road, Mumbai-400002. **Rs. 795.**

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Image: Jonathan Kellerman; **£ 18.**
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Human Rights Council – Illusions, Realities and Kofi Annan's Search for Legacy; Asian Centre for Human Rights, C-3/44-C, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. **Rs. 200.**
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TAMIL

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TELUGU

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MALAYALAM

★ **Rajatha Smruthi** – Silver Jubilee Publication: M.A. Karim; Director, State Resource Centre, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala-695004. **Rs. 175.**

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★ **Indiayile Pathra Viplavam, Muthalalitham, Rashtreeyam, Bharatheeyabashapathrangal, 1977-99:** P. K. Shivadas; State Institute of Languages, Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram-695003. **Rs. 115.**

★ **Amruthasmaranakal:** M. K. Panikkotty; Poorna Publications, TBS Building, GH Road, Kozhikode-1. **Rs. 140.**

★ **Magic Lantern:** K.P.A. Samad – Tr. in Malayalam; **Rs. 150.**

★ **PM Taj Ormayum Thiricharivum;** Bhanuprakash – Editor; **Rs. 150.**

★ **Vibhajanakalathe Kadhakal:** Alok Bhalla – Editor; **Rs. 120.** The above books pub by Olive Publications Pvt. Ltd., Noor Complex, Mavoor Road, Kozhikode-673004.

Advocate of human dignity

A tireless propagandist imbued with an extraordinary zeal for social transformation

R. Vijayasankar

He was a nationalist who carried khaddar from village to village for sale and cut down hundreds of coconut trees in his farm as part of Mahatma Gandhi's temperance campaign. He was a separatist, who called upon his followers to observe August 15 as a day of mourning.

He was ushered into the Congress by a Brahmin (C. Rajagopalachari) and rose to become the president of its unit in the Madras Presidency. He saw salvation for the country in the destruction of Brahmins, Hinduism and the Congress.

Political shades

He was a socialist who carried the message of Marxism to every nook and corner of the Presidency. He chose to be on the side of feudal lords and the urban elite of the Justice Party at a crucial juncture in history.

From nationalism to social reform to socialism and back to social reform, it was a political trajectory that abounded in contradictions. Yet, it is impossible to dismiss E.V. Ramasamy Periyar as a rebel without a cause. It was his constant search for a vision that would liberate Shudras and 'untouchables' from the shackles of casteism and blind religious beliefs that took him through various political shades.

The search began in early 20th Century when various political streams and philosophies that were to dominate the rest of the century were emerging, with all their conservative worldviews and infantile shortcomings.

What was lacking was a comprehensive political vision that would help people defy a political order that was headed by the most powerful and exploitative colonial power in the world, change an economic condition that saw the deadly sweep of famines crush lakhs of lives and challenge a socio-cultural tradition that degrades human beings on the basis of their birth.

Influences

Many leading nationalists of the Tamil country who fought the British rule chose to be rank conservatives in the social realm, encouraging child marriage and the Devadasi system, perpetuating caste-based discrimination in public places and opposing widow remarriage, and so on.

Those advocating social reform reduced it to anti-Brahminism, refusing to countenance the harsh realities of caste and class oppression in the backyards of their own colleagues. And socialism was only a nascent radical idea that had gripped the minds of sections of the Indian middle class in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution and which was only waiting to be implemented and experimented by Lenin and his comrades in an extremely hostile international environment.

Periyar came under the influence of all these ideals and their upholders and went through several rounds of enlightenment and disillusionment. However, even the worst critic of Periyar's shifting political stances and soul-shocking agitational methods would not doubt the values of self-respect, rationalism and humanism that underscored his style.

As the publisher, K. Veeramani, the general secretary of the Periyar-founded Dravidar Kazhagam, points out in the preface to this volume, Periyar "used all his resources — material, mental and moral — in the service of the people, particularly the underprivileged like the socially and educationally deprived sections and women."

Farsighted activist

The *Collected Works of Periyar* gives more than a glimpse of the kaleidoscopic trajectory that Periyar traversed in the 94 years he has lived (thanks to science and despite his atheism, he said a few days before his death on December 24, 1973). In these pages he comes across as a tireless propagandist imbued with an extraordinary zeal for social transformation.

His theories and interpretations of the world are not those of a trained scholar with logical precision and intellectual rigour but the expressions of an irrepressible activist's anger against a system that enslaves man and woman in the name of caste and religion, and suppresses their ability to explore their human potentials.

The words are thus simple and eloquent when he explains his worldview to the masses; and defiant, irreverent and sacrilegious (even obscene when he describes mythical characters and narrates Puranic tales) when he attacks the ideological foundations of the exploitative feudal order.

It was the image created by his iconoclastic words and deeds that lasted till the end of his life making Periyar a much misunderstood and despised personality and mostly hid from public view the modernist and humanist in him.

His views on women ("our males and females should wear 'lungi' and 'jibba' uniformly"; "ladies should crop their hairs as gents"; "girl herself should be permitted to choose her life partner"; "pregnancy is the enemy of women for leading an independent life") science and technology, education, rural development, family planning were far-sighted and revolutionary, considering the social milieu from which he expressed them. The book under review throws light on the lesser-known side of Periyar.

Ideological limitations

Periyar's refusal to see religion as "the sigh of the oppressed" living in a socially and economically unequal system alienated large sections of people from his reformist movement — a reality that made even his staunch followers like C.N. Annadurai distance themselves from his atheism and embracing monotheism.

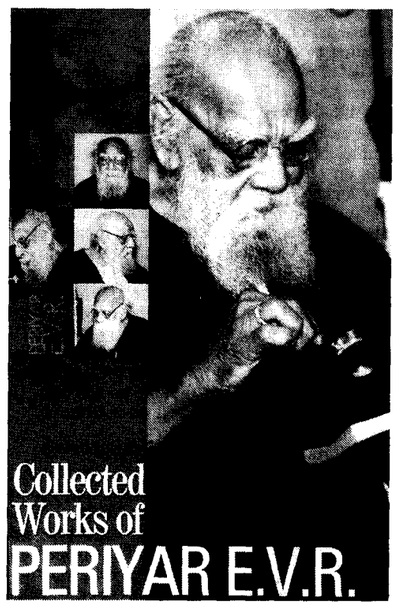
His unwillingness to continue with his Erode programme (socialist in nature), take his struggle to the political and economic realms, and attack the material base of casteist and religious ideas made his revolution incomplete.

British oppression and the fear of losing the gains made by his reformist movement owing to the political ascendancy of the Congress (read Brahmins) in the Madras Presidency made Periyar prefer the company of the non-Brahmin elite and desert his socialist comrades like P. Jeevanandam and Singaravelar.

It is the same unwillingness to enter the political realm that made him overlook the reality of imperialism, the fountainhead of international exploitation and inequality, which was eulogised by the Justice Party's Non-Brahmin Manifesto as a power capable of holding the scales even between castes and classes.

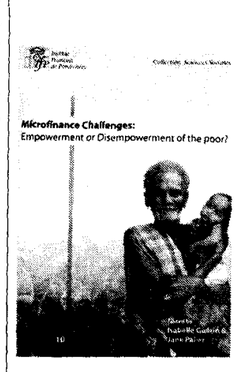
Such ideological limitations and the compromises and deviations of his successors who have been alternately ruling Tamil Nadu for nearly four decades now have severely limited the transformatory potential of Periyar's ideas — a reason for the road he chose remaining half-travelled even about 100 years after he set out on it.

(This review is based on research under the Appan Menon Memorial Award.)



COLLECTED WORKS OF PERIYAR E.V.R.: K. Veeramani – Compiler; Pub. by The Periyar Self-Respect Propaganda Institution, Periya Thidal, 50, E.V.K. Sampath Salai, Vepery, Chennai-600007. Donation Rs. 200.

Instrument for poverty alleviation



MICROFINANCE CHALLENGES – Empowerment Or Disempowerment Of The Poor?: Isabelle Guerin, Jane Palier – Editors; Pub. by French Institute of Pondicherry, 11, St. Louis Street, PO Box 33, Pondicherry-605001. Rs. 450.

Sridhar Seetharaman

This book is the outcome of the international conference 'Microfinance and Empowerment' held in January 2004 at the French Institute of Pondicherry. in partnership with the Laboratoire Population – Environnement – Developpement (IRD – Universite de Provence) and supported by the Institut de Recherché pour le Developpement and Centre National de la Recherché Scientifique.

Organised into three parts — Definitions (seven papers), Environment (five) and Evaluation (11) — the book by combining theoretical reflections and case studies on microfinance, attempts to present to some extent, the state of knowledge centred on the Indian context, and more particularly on South India, besides contributions from Bangladesh, Indonesia and The Philippines.

COMBINES THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS AND CASE STUDIES ON MICROFINANCE

Solidarity-based economy

Microfinance is a potential instrument for poverty alleviation and empowerment, and involves provision of small loans, savings and insurance to the poor, especially women. Recognising that microfinance projects occur endogenously, the authors have attempted to think of empowerment using the French concept of 'solidarity-based economy' which is reflected in the authors not speaking about 'empowerment', but of 'disempowerment' or even 'overempowerment', so vividly portrayed in the front cover.

A wide range of institutions like the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), commercial banks, cooperatives, donor/apex agencies and third sector organisations involved in the promotion and/or delivery of microfinance confront enormous and varied challenges.

For those at the nascent stage, the challenge is one of getting a clear understanding about microfinance and poverty alleviation. For institutions, which have been working for sometime, the major challenge is one of streamlining and scaling up their operation for a larger impact.

An effective scaling-up, would itself address, several crucial issues. Further structural constraints (in terms of reach and sustaining quality), and legal and regulatory framework are other critical issues needing urgent attention. Being so, expecting the poor to pull themselves out of poverty through entrepreneurship only leaves the systemic inequalities and factors that create poverty unchallenged.

Issues to be addressed

In retrospect, we need to ask ourselves, "Is microfinance just another hapless victim of the voracious Scylla and Charybdis of the oceanic expanse of rural India or can it actually manage to provide timely credit to the rural poor in a sustained manner that benefits the poor as much as the providers? Will microfinance prove in time to be an Odysseus? Or an interloper that will end up three decades later in the usual way: another wave of dud institutions that neither dies nor heals?" These aspects could have been addressed in the contributions to the book.

Sustainable market-based microfinance initiatives form a key component in creating sound financial market structures; but in a country as large and heterogeneous as ours, it would make sense to keep expectations modest, monitor alertly and adapt as needed, and on the legal and regulatory front stay flexible but make haste slowly instead of allowing the juggernaut of 'targets' to stream roll quality, generate compromises and myopic behaviour on the part of the stakeholders.

Notwithstanding the above observations, this book is a useful addition to this emerging area. Pioneering work done by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) at the international level, the Planning Commission, the NABARD and the RBI at the national level and by the Tamil Nadu Corporation for the Development of Women through its 'Mahalir Thittam' programme at the state level, if included, would have provided insightful observations into the latest thinking on this aspect besides adding more value to the book.

Academicians and practitioners of rural development and more particularly those involved in understanding the critical issues related to microfinance should find the book useful.

Overview of Dalit literary writing in Tamil

DALIT ILAKKIYAM – Enathu Anubavam (Dalit Literature: My Experience) (Tamil): M. Kannan – Editor; Published by the French Institute of Pondicherry and Vitiyal Pathippagam, Coimbatore. Rs. 100.

A. R.Venkatachalapathy

An important development in the contemporary Tamil literary scene was the emergence of the Dalit literary movement at the turn of the 1990s. Its genesis coincided with the birth centenary of Dr. Ambedkar and the anti-Mandal agitation.

Dalit literary writing in Tamil, despite its delayed emergence when compared to Marathi and Kannada, flourished through the 1990s and challenged many of the pieties of Tamil literary culture dominated for long by the upper castes. Though initially literary criticism provided the cutting edge to the Dalit literary movement, Dalit creative writers have since asserted themselves.

Autobiographical papers

This volume is the outcome of the seminar 'Tamil Dalit Literature: The Challenge and the Response' conducted by the French Institute of Pondicherry in 2004. Ten Dalit writers (one of whom is a Kannada writer, Thumbadi Ramaiah) have contributed autobiographical papers in which they reflect on their writing in the context of the discriminatory practices they have encountered in the course of their emergence as writers. Except for Bama, now internationally known through the translations of her 'Karukku' and 'Sangati', all the other eight Tamil writers were born in the 1960s — a fact that attests to the newness of the phenomenon of Dalit writing in Tamil. Most of these essays are followed by an excerpt from their creative writing which seeks to be representative.

The essays reveal the growing self-confidence of these writers in that they not only challenge dominant norms of Tamil writings but also are not afraid to be self-critical. Their ability to talk about the rut in which Dalit writing could fall and the desire to rise above agitprop is also evident in the essays by Alakiya Periyavan and Sudhakar Ghatak.

THE ESSAYS REVEAL THE GROWING SELF-CONFIDENCE OF DALIT WRITERS

Diversity

Punita Pantiyan's essay starkly reveals the casteism and anti-Dalit sentiment prevalent in the world of Tamil journalism. Imayam, the author of the classic Koveru Kazhuthaigal (Beasts of Burden), asserts his creative freedom over the choice of theme and subject matter undeterred by passing political fads. N.T. Raj Kumar's account of his bohemian lifestyle in a non-linear narrative form shows the diversity of Tamil Dalit writing.

The excerpts provided give an overview of contemporary Tamil Dalit writing. The fictional writings do not stop with laying bare the day-to-day oppression, for long the staple of much of Dalit writing, but also depict the increasing assertion of Dalits against it as well as their defiance in asserting their self. Though Dalit poetry is yet to flourish, N.T. Raj Kumar's is undoubtedly a new voice in Tamil poetry.

The editor needs to be commended for putting together a volume that provides a critical overview of the Dalit writing in Tamil. One also hopes that Tamil readers, who largely come from upper caste backgrounds, will suffer a sense of guilt on reading this book. The publisher needs to be commended for producing this book at a reasonable price and making it widely available unlike the other publications of the French Institute of Pondicherry. The book carries two introductions in English (with Tamil translation) apart from being prefaced by brief summaries of the essays in somewhat infelicitous English. Further, the notes on contributors are provided only in English. These appear unseemly in a Tamil book and detract from its focus.

TAMIL

Muruga in Tamil tradition

V. Gnanasundaram

SENTAMIZH MURUGAN: P. Muthu Kumaraswamy. Pub. by Palaniyappa Brothers, 'Konarmalikai', 25, Peters Road, Chennai-600014. Rs. 200.
THIS BOOK is an encyclopaedic work on Muruga (*Murugan in Tamil*) from the mythological, philosophical, religious and the literary perspectives. Muruga is much associated with 'Sentamizh' (standard Tamil) and Saiva religion. As per Sangam literary convention He is the deity of the mountainous region, Kurinji, and also important in literature.
According to research sources Muruga worship was prevalent during the Harappa period.
According to the author, Muruga is denoted by the names Skanda, Karthikeya, and Subramanya, and Skanda worship was in vogue during the Vedic period. The two streams of Indian culture getting reflected as Muruga and Subramanya are well accounted in the book.
Muruga worship from the Sangam to the modern period has been presented well with ample references. The views of scholars like Thiru vi. Ka. and Kamil-Zvelebil are presented in detail.
There is a reference in the Natrinai (dates back to first to 3rd century A.D) where the hero wants his ladylove to elope with him, following the example of Valli who accompanied Lord Muruga. Valli represents 'Kalavu' – premarital life – and Deivayanai represents arranged marriage – 'Karpu' life of the Tamils. In a philosophical sense, the consorts of Muruga,Valli and Deivayanai, represent respectively the power of will and creativity.
The book also accounts in detail the six shrines of Muruga known as 'Aaru padai veedu' and the other places where Muruga's temples are found in Tamil Nadu and in other parts of India, and abroad. His various forms and the different icons associated with this deity are also accounted with philosophical explanation. The significance of number six in Muruga worship is well explained.
An added attraction of the book is that different forms of Muruga and icons of the deity are presented respectively in colour photographs and drawings.

TELUGU

Quest for emancipation

Sarojini Premchand

HIMAJWALA: Vaddera Chandidaas; Pub. by Alakananda Prachuranalu, Opp. Maris Stella College, Vijayawada-520008. Rs. 200.
KRISHNA CHAITANYA, the hero of this novel is a non-conformist trying to experience life from the conscious and the subconscious levels of his being. Geetha, the heroine, is a self-asserting modern young woman.
Though Geetha and Krishna love each other passionately, Geetha leaves him to escape a life of dependence. Both meet with several varied experiences. They realise the truth of their need for each other. But finally when they are to unite tragedy strikes. Chandidaas (Cherukuri Subrahmaniyeswara Rao (1937-2005) has dedicated this first novel which means 'A flame of snow' to Buchibabu (author of 'Chivaraku Migiledi') who introduced existentialism with great élan to Telugu readers.
His later work 'Anukshanikam' created heated debates in literary circles. Taking Hyderabad city of those frustrating 1970s as background, he painted the lives of a young 'lonely crowd' with a sadly cynical brush. A philosopher-writer rarely garners such critical acclaim and popular appeal. Chandidaas has that exceptional brilliance.

KANNADA

Philosophy of Ramanuja

G. D.

BHAGAVADVISHAYA DARSANA KAIPIDI: T. K. Iyengar; Copies from author No. 2013, South End 'E' Cross, 9th Block, Jayanagar East, Bangalore-560089. Rs. 200.
IN THIS handbook, the author has tried to give a comprehensive idea of the Sri Vaishnava system as propounded by Ramanujacharya. The three aspects, Tattva, Hita and Purushartha, have been explained as also the Dvaya mantra and the meaning of Nammazhwar's Tiruvaimozhi. The book also includes the Kannada meanings of the four Thiruvandadis of Peyazhwar, Poigai Azhwar, Boothatthazhwar and Tirumazhisai Azhwar. These verses to an extent form a complete elucidation of the system. The author has also given the inner meanings of the individual verses of the four Thiruvandadis.
The book should encourage beginners to undertake a deeper study of the 4000 verses and their commentaries. Some great scholars of yore have also prepared lists of Vedic mantras that are the equivalent of the Tamil verses. A study of these larger works would be useful in realising the greatness of the Ramanuja system.

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Rediscovering the art of sensitive governance

Harish Khare

The political, intellectual and policy pendulum must swing back to a sensitive, morally defensible centre. This is the least we can learn from the American tragedy in New Orleans.

STATECRAFT

QUITE UNWITTINGLY the Americans have once again helped us revisit our collective moral centre. Let us take note of two recent developments. First, Bill Clinton allowed himself to be persuaded to make an all too brief sojourn in Lucknow as a guest of the Uttar Pradesh Government. One of India's most backward and poorest States has demonstrated how easy it is to procure the presence of a former President of the United States. Whatever Mulayam Singh Yadav's calculations in getting Mr. Clinton to put in an appearance in Lucknow, this single transaction should help to dissolve areas of our national self-doubt over our ability to negotiate the demands of globalisation.

When in 1991, we first found ourselves having to undertake a paradigm shift in favour of "economic reforms," the country was not confident enough of its political and bureaucratic leadership's ability and integrity to withstand the foreign businessman's allurement. The mishandled and misconceived Enron/Dabhol venture only confirmed those doubts. The unstated fear was that if our *desi* businessman could have the political leadership on the take, it would be that much easier for the foreign investor to purchase his way into policymaking. Now the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister has kind of demonstrated that the foreign leaders too are not all that beyond the ambit of a bargain. No longer do we need to get overawed by foreign leaders or diplomats, pressing the demands of this or that corporation. And, by now we also know that these envoys invariably come back as lobbyists.

This Clintonseque reassurance is a minor affair compared to the second American development: the unfortunate Hurricane Katrina. Of course, there can be little satisfaction in any corner of the world that the United States too witnessed a total breakdown of its administrative machinery in Louisiana. Tragic as are the televised images of violence, mayhem, destruction and bloated corpses on the streets of New Orleans, there are instructive lessons for us in India, especially those who this last decade have been haranguing the country for not following completely the "American model" of letting the market take care of pain and pleasure in society. The intellectual and policy prescription is that if the market is allowed to let the rich take care of their pleasure, the pain of the underclass would *ipso facto* disappear. All this market triumphalism has come in for a rude shock.

Understandably the Americans themselves are furiously debating why the world's richest and most powerful state failed to deliver effectively in the wake of the massive destruction wreaked by Hurricane Katrina. In their own peculiar manner the Americans have already reduced the debate to a slanging match between the Democrats/liberals and the neo-conservatives/Republicans. The balance of opportunities would continue to disfavour the coloured minorities and the poor in the U.S. That is the American cross. For us in this part of the world it is imperative to note the consequences of institutionalised insensitivity in the American state structure. Since the Reagan era began in 1980, the American system has systematically turned its back on the underprivileged, the minorities and the poor. This ideological hostility to the idea of a caring state was translated into global policy prescriptions, inviting the governments in the developing world to abandon the helpless to their fate and instead concentrate on letting the market play its magical tricks. A section of the Indian political and policymaking elite bought into these American mantras. The "socialist state" was denounced as a predator and purveyor of all that was wrong with us. That the state must retreat and our business community's animal spirits must be unleashed became the battle cry. The best of our bureaucrats craved for appointments in "economic Ministries," which were deemed exciting arenas of "action," where they could bond with the sharpest and slickest of entrepreneurs. This conversion to the market theology morphed into a religious fervour during the six years of National Democratic Alliance rule. Only two years ago, did we witness a New Orleans-type of insensitivity in Andhra Pradesh where a Chief Minister was serenaded for having reinvented himself as the "Chief Executive Officer;" the result was the CEO's administration simply failed to understand why farmers were committing suicide. The voters took care of the CEO and his pretensions.

The new regime in New Delhi has given the impression that it has heard the message of the voters in Andhra Pradesh and beyond. It committed itself to ensuring that India shone for all. It was entirely natural that the United Progressive Alliance Government acted with extraordinary sensitivity when drought hit parts of the country soon after it took office in 2004, and later when the tsunami wreaked havoc on Tamil Nadu and the Andaman Islands. This was not a one-off essay in contrived sensitivity. Sonia Gandhi's National Advisory Council is a modest institutional mechanism to ensure that voices other than those of corporate interests are heard in the policymaking corridors.

For almost a decade now, successive Prime Ministers have taken the government to the chambers of commerce for advice and mandate. If the National Advisory Council does not exactly reverse this trend, at least it is an acknowledgement that other voices also need to be heard. The National Employment Guarantee Act is the first consequential suggestion to emerge out of the NAC arrangement and it reflects the new realism. But it is no surprise that the employment guarantee proposal has come under attack, most vociferously from the market ideologues. The scheme is being debunked as an indefensible foray into welfare statism, which would mean robbing a section of taxpayers to pay for the shirker and the wastrel. Rather than coming up with suggestions on how the scheme can be saved from familiar pitfalls, the opponents are happy parroting ideological dogma. Only a few weeks ago did we witness live from Gurgaon what this dogmatic insistence on "reforms" could beget. These market fundamentalists do not want to factor in the social and political cost of factoring out people.

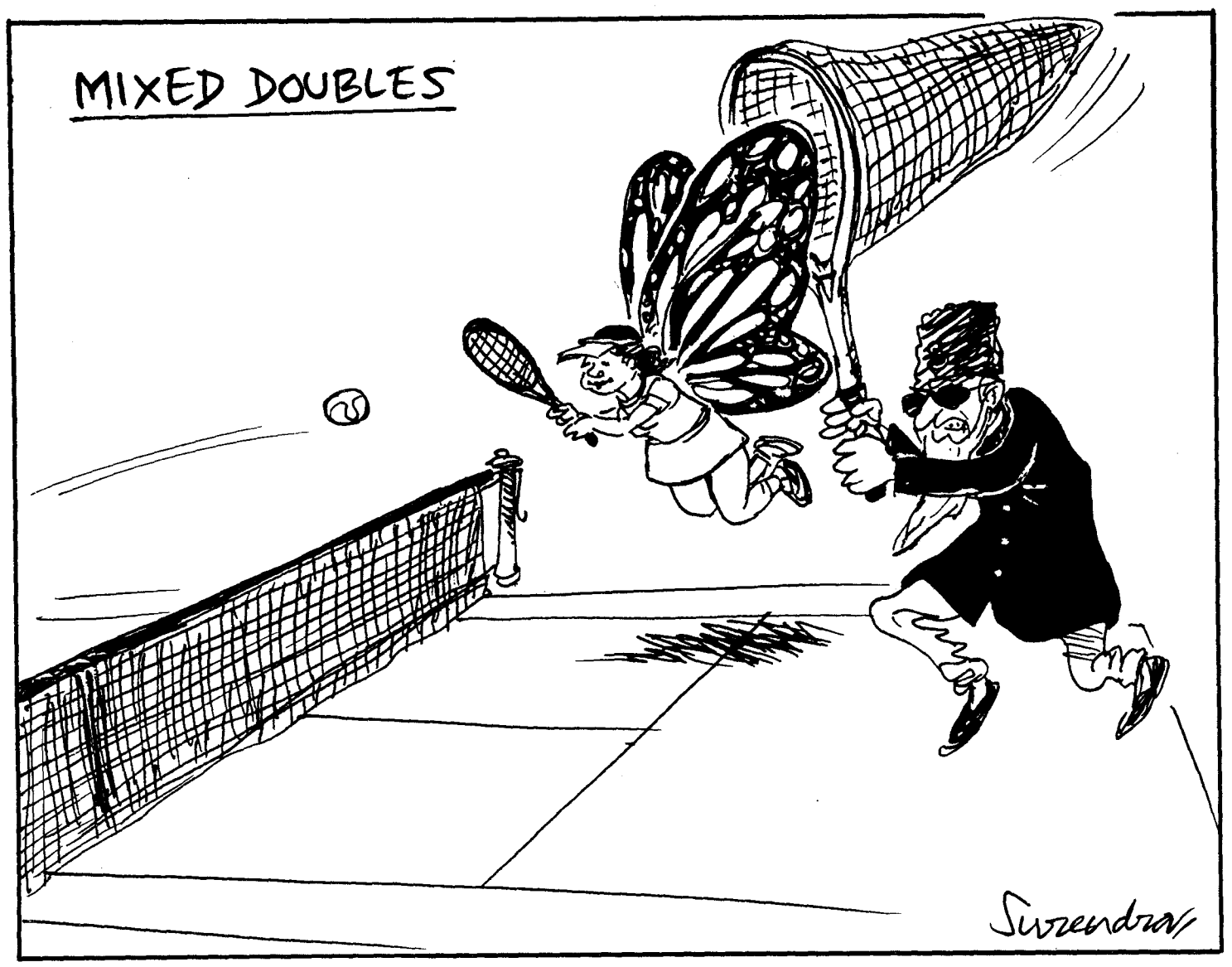
Let Hurricane Katrina remind one and all that the Manmohan Singh regime's political mandate is firmly predicated on its promise to pursue equitable, socially just and humane growth. This promise cannot be made good by relying exclusively on the market or by conceding reasonable (and often not so reasonable) demands made in the name of market. The Chief Minister of Delhi has just discovered what it takes to balance the consumers' anger against concessions made to greedy entrepreneurs. A leader who till the other day was the darling of Delhi's middle classes is being taken to task by the same people, unwilling to be short-changed in the name of "economic reforms."

Political leaders of all hues can no longer shirk their obligation to ask tough questions of the private businessman and his calculations, projections, and promises. We also need to note the social breakdowns induced by the ideological and intellectual chanting of the market mantra. Much before Hurricane Katrina brought home the message of widening social distances, America's most influential political scientist, Robert Putnam, had been warning of depleting "social capital" in the U.S. Values such as social concern and public care stand devalued as the American dream plays itself out in the market arena. We need not blindly reinvent American failure. Whereas the market forces have already corroded our public values considerably, our collective impulses remain ethical and cooperative. This asset needs to be safeguarded against the new morality of indifference instigated in the name of "reforms."

This is not a plea for a return to the bad old days of "free lunch" economy. Nor do we need to give in to unbridled populism. We are much wiser about what went wrong and we are realistic enough not to repeat the mistakes. Just as every claim made in the name of market needs to be subjected to scrutiny, we need not fall for every demand made in the name of the "poor farmer" or this or that "backward" region. Nor do we need to return to the ways of overbearing bureaucracy. Yet we do need to rediscover and reinforce the state as a caring institution.

That means our political and bureaucratic leadership will need to exorcise itself of the notion that the Indian state must be content with being a facilitator or mediator. The political, intellectual and policy pendulum must swing back to a sensitive, morally defensible centre. This is the least we can learn from the American tragedy in New Orleans.

CARTOONSCAPE

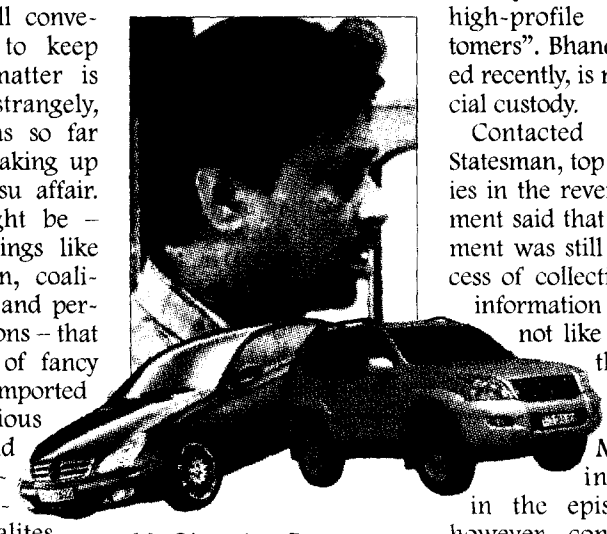


Silence on vehicles of deceit

NEW DELHI, Sept. 10. — The controversy over the "dubiously imported" luxury cars of the Marxist stalwart, Mr Jyoti Basu's industrialist son, Mr Chandan Basu, might be raging, but the political class cutting across party lines has continued to maintain a studied silence on the issue.

That the Left parties and the Congress will conveniently choose to keep mum on the matter is obvious. But, strangely, even the BJP has so far refrained from raking up the Chandan Basu affair. The reason might be – among other things like political equation, coalition compulsion and personal considerations – that the "end users" of fancy cars and SUVs, imported through dubious means, could include top politicians, businessmen and socialites affiliated to all shades of the political spectrum.

Mr Chandan Basu purchased (or took on lease) his Toyota Landcruiser Amazon and Mercedes Benz, which have been seized by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), at a cheap price from a Delhi-based operator, Sanjay Bhandari, who imported these vehicles without paying the mandatory 105 per cent customs duty. By allegedly showing a number of non-existent hotels and resorts and fake tour agencies, Bhandari took license from the Directorate General of



Mr Chandan Basu and models of the vehicles that were imported

Foreign Trade (DGFT) for importing luxury cars to cater to the needs of his "foreign clients" and earn foreign exchange. In the name of promoting foreign tourism, he availed of 100 per cent import duty exemption on all imported cars under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme.

Bhandari is the kingpin of this countrywide, multi-crore duty-evasion racket busted recently by the DRI. Mr Chandan Basu is only one of his many high-profile "VIP customers". Bhandari, arrested recently, is now in judicial custody.

Contacted by The Statesman, top functionaries in the revenue department said that the department was still in the process of collecting relevant information and would not like to say anything about the exact nature of Mr Basu's involvement in the episode. They, however, conceded that the issue is "sensitive" as "the son of a veteran political heavyweight is involved."

Mr Chandan Basu was reported to be livid while denying the allegations of illegality and wrongdoing against him in the matter. Following a complex paper trail, the DRI officials have, however, come across Mr Basu's e-mails to Bhandari's front company, VK Tours and Transport, which allegedly related to cash payments and delivery schedules for the vehicles. Mr Basu was also accused of using the imported vehicles without insurance papers.

The Congress, like the Left, would not react to the controversy. The Congress spokesman, Mr Anand Sharma, declined to make a comment, saying: "We don't have information about the case, government agencies must be seized of the matter."

The Left might grandstand about the need for "the conduct of politicians and their kin being above the board", but obviously such moral principles are not valid when the issue is related to the son of the Marxist patriarch. Mr Chandan Basu is also said to have a good equation with some top people in BJP circles. That might explain the BJP's curious silence in the entire episode. **SNS**

THE STATESMAN

Post-7/7, terror fails to bridge Europe-US gap

London: The moments are carved in collective memory: Smoke billowing from the Twin Towers. The charred husk of a London double-decker bus. But if the language and iconography of terror haunt us in our shared fears, it does not necessarily follow that the carnage has forged a common front.

If Europeans were separated from 9/11 by the Atlantic Ocean, Madrid (3/11), Amsterdam (11/2) and London (7/7) have awakened them to the reality of 21st century terrorism. The question most people are asking is not "will there be another one?"—but "who's next?"

Yet the London attacks do not appear to have pushed Europeans closer to the US or its government's view of the world. Many are, if anything, inclined to deride the Bush Administration's attitude as simplistic and belligerent, and to argue that the US-led war in Iraq has provoked the Muslim world against the West. And among themselves, Europeans are divided over how to proceed.

"I have the feeling that Europeans will never, ever manage to unite," said Carlos Sosa, a 51-year-old mechanical engineer in Madrid. For some on this side of the Atlantic, the London attacks created a certain affinity between Europe and the US that was briefly reminiscent of the atmosphere immediately after 9/11, when the world's heart went out to wounded New York and Washington.

Few here have forgotten the ash-caked, traumatised faces emerging from the stricken Twin Towers, just as few will forget the London woman clutching a burn mask to her face in a chilling evocation of Edvard Munch's painting, The Scream. But rifts remain. "The public feels closer to the United States because of what it suffered on 9/11, but there are important distinctions, like the war in Iraq," said Enzo de Martino, a civil servant in Rome.

Perhaps most keenly, terrorism has brought urgency to an internal debate in Europe about how to handle the continent's Muslim communities. The two main approaches have been France's activist secularism, which demands that newcomers assimilate to the French way of life, and the liberal multiculturalism of Britain and the Netherlands, which teaches that society is enriched when immigrants preserve their traditions. Reuters

The UN top job is an Indian's for the asking

A pot of Indian crabs

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

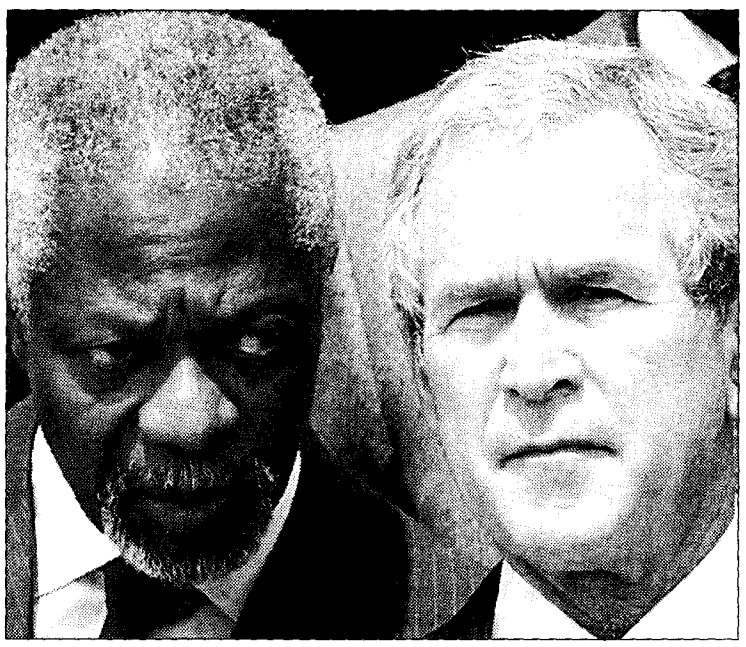
Romesh Bhandari — the former foreign secretary and former governor of Tripura, Goa and Uttar Pradesh, who nearly became governor of West Bengal last year with the blessings of the leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in New Delhi — was fond of telling a story in the Eighties. Those were the years when he was in tight competition with K. Natwar Singh and a couple of his peers in the Indian foreign service for the foreign secretary's job, fretting and plotting daily because he had no idea whom Indira Gandhi would finally pick for the top diplomatic job open to civil servants.

The hero of Bhandari's favourite story was the Indian entrant to an international competition, the theme of which was the strength and character of each participating nation. The Indian participant was travelling half-way round the globe with his entry, which was an open pot with highly poisonous crabs. The competitor, blessed with a gift of the gab, persuaded Air India's check-in staff to let him carry his entry into the aircraft's cabin, but passengers were horrified when they found that the pot without any lid contained poisonous — and hyperactive — crabs. But our hero quickly pacified his irate co-passengers. "This pot contains only Indian crabs," he assured the other passengers. "You know very well that every time one crab tries to get out of the pot, the others will pull him down. So you have nothing to worry about."

This columnist recalled Bhandari's story a few days ago after an evening with several United Nations diplomats in New York: a subject of discussion was the choice of the next secretary-general of the UN. Kofi Annan, who has had two five-year terms as the world body's chief executive, will demit office on December 31, 2006. Unless Asian countries fail to collectively throw up a candidate who is acceptable to the rest of the world, Annan's successor will be from Asia by both consent and convention. The candidates put forward so far by Asians are pushovers, and Asia is in danger of losing the job by default.

An obvious choice for the job is India's former external affairs minister, Jaswant Singh, but this is where Bhandari takes over. The truism of Bhandari's favourite story is evident from the sad reality that no one in India is putting forward Singh's name. It is worth taking a million-dollar bet that the United Progressive Alliance government will not endorse Singh's candidature even if it had a good chance of success at the UN: the crab mentality will certainly come to play in the current political leadership of South Block, should Singh emerge as a viable candidate.

That Singh is a viable — indeed, ideal — candidate as an Asian to succeed Annan became obvious during his visit to the United States of America a few months ago, his first after the change in government in New Delhi. Washington has a surfeit of foreign-policy think-tanks and New York has a smattering of them. Together, these think-tanks provide for a shadow practice of diplomacy with the opposition in the US running them and hosting both the opposition and rulers from abroad.



Men of the world

The US foreign-policy scene is now highly fractious, thanks to Iraq and the fight against terrorism, which is increasingly perceived as a campaign against Islam in the 57 countries that make up the Organization of Islamic Conference. Jaswant Singh was one of the few who appeared at these think-tanks in the last two years and drew bipartisan endorsement — and intellectual curiosity — in equal measure in America.

The drive by India, Japan, Germany and Brazil — known at the UN now as the Group of Four or G-4 — for permanent seats for all the four countries in the Security Council started well and appeared to have a fair chance of success until the Africans decided that they would adopt Bhandari's crab strategy and not let any African state scale the walls of the General Assembly Hall at the UN and get into the security council chamber. With elections to be held shortly in Germany and Japan, the G-4 initiative is most likely to be put on the backburner for some time to come.

Among the G-4, India is the only country whose specific candidature faces no opposition, except from Pakistan. That being the case, the international community would be willing to accept an Indian candidate for the job of UN secretary-general to compensate for the loss — at least for the time being — of India's permanent seat in the security council.

No candidate from India, other than Jaswant Singh, has the stature, the profile or the experience to step into the shoes of a Perez de Cuellar, a Kurt Waldheim or a Boutros Boutros Ghali at a time when the UN's top job is an Indian's for the asking if only New Delhi would put petty considerations aside and get its act together in nominating a candidate who has a chance of being accepted by the rest of the world.

The way things are historically and traditionally decided at the UN, an Indian candidate would have no chance of becoming secretary-general. Candidates from countries which have disputes with other member countries of the UN are usually excluded from consideration. So are candidates from big countries as are nationals of permanent members of the security council. But Boutros Boutros Ghali's tenure buried some of those conventions. In any case, these are unusual times for diplomacy and the UN is not immune from the unprecedented challenges that the world is facing. These call for new precedents and new conventions. That may explain the *People's Daily's* assertion, more than once, that Shashi Tharoor, the under-secretary-general for communications and public information, may emerge as a compromise candidate at the end of the search for Annan's successor.

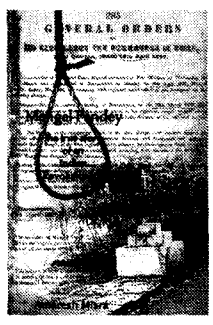
Such is America's unpopularity at the UN that the fate of any candidate sponsored by Washington is as good as doomed. If anyone doubts this, just look back and recall what happened to the Washington-backed efforts, more than 10 years ago, to put Germany and Japan into permanent seats in the security council. Those efforts died even before they could gather any steam in the general assembly, only because the majority of UN members saw the bid by Japan and Germany as having been sponsored by the US. At the same time, no candidate can get the secretary-general's $250,000-a-year job unless he or she has the explicit backing of the White House. Jaswant Singh is an Indian who has a fair chance of getting such backing from Washington because the Americans have worked with Singh and know where they stand with him.

The hitherto leading Asian candidate, Thailand's deputy prime minister Surakiart Sathirathai, has spent the last few days at the UN headquarters meeting UN ambassadors on what has been dubbed as his "listening tour", and discussing UN management reforms with senior aides to Annan. Sathirathai has taken care to call on the new US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, who has a reputation for being unpredictable and abrasive. Sathirathai's only asset is that Thailand's fellow members of the Association of South East Nations have endorsed him. If there is a strong Asian candidate such as Jaswant Singh, the ASEAN can be persuaded to change its mind about the Thai minister. Already, they have changed their minds once: the original Thai candidate was Surin Pitsuwan, a former foreign minister.

There are a number of other aspirants, but no one's campaign has really taken off. These include the Sri Lankan Jayanta Dhanapala, whose main claim to fame is that he perpetuated the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; the Canadian Maurice Strong who set up the UN environment programme; Norway's former prime minister and former head of the World Health Organization, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who is supported by those who are calling for a woman secretary-general; and the Polish president, Aleksander Kwasniewsky, by those who want an east European to get the job for the first time.

Jaswant Singh, it is clear, can leave any of these candidates way behind. But New Delhi will have to make up its mind, create a consensus in favour of an Indian bid and start any such campaign quickly if the effort is to bear fruit by the end of next year.

NEW ARRIVALS



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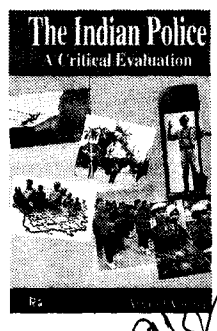

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★ **Making Strategy Work Leading Effective Execution and Change:** Lawrence K. Hrebiniak; Pearson Education (Singapore) Pte Ltd., Indian Branch, 482, FIE, Patparganj, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 499.**

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TAMIL

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★ **Illakiyangalil Kalappu Thirumanangal: Rs. 40.**

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★ **Srimad Bhagavad Gita Padmapuradhana Kadhaigal:** Srivatsa V. Somadeva Sarma; Sri Surabhi Jagadguru Sadhapthi Publications, New No. 84/2, (158/12), Lake View Road, West Mambalam, Chennai-600033. **Rs. 35.**

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[illegible]et, [illegible]licherry-605001. **Rs. 40.**

MALAYALAM

★ **Kristhumatham:** Joseph Edamarukul; Indian Atheist Publishers, 779, Pocket 5, Mayur Vihar I, New Delhi-110091. **Rs. 50.**

★ **Oru Lymgikathozhilaliyude Atmakadha:** Nalini Jameela; **Rs. 70.**

★ **Zahir:** M.P. Sadasivan – Tr. in Malayalam; **Rs. 140.**

★ **American Amarakosam:** Madhu S. Nair; **Rs. 70.**

★ **Jalakappakshi:** V. D. Krishnan Nambiar – Tr. in Malayalam; **Rs. 100.** The above books published by DC Books, DC Kizhakemuri Edam, Good Shepherd Street, Kottayam-686001.

★ **Indian Nadodikkanthakal:** K.N. Kutty; Sura Books (P) Ltd., 1620, 'J' Block, 16th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai-600040. **Rs. 50.**

★ **Kerala Charithram Sthalapuranangaliloode:** Joseph Edamaruku; Indian Atheist Publishers, 779, Pocket 5, Mayur Vihar I, New Delhi-110091. **Rs. 50.**

Race, Islam, ana terrorism

Most African-Caribbean men who become Muslims do so because it gives their lives hope and meaning.

Robert Beckford

I MET a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo at a university function at the end of the summer term. A well-educated academic, he had escaped the civil war engulfing his country. In the middle of our conversation on the state of Africa, he reminded me that there were "many well-educated white men engaged in acts of terror" in his country.

He was not referring to suicide bombers but to middle-class corporate executives who fund warlords and low-rank politicians in exchange for access to diamonds and other precious minerals. Their act of terror was to be party to the ethnic cleansing, rape, child abduction, and murder conducted by the renegades they financed. Conscious of the dangers of stereotyping, I replied: "Surely not all white men involved in business in Africa are bad? I'm certain many get involved in business with the best of intentions but are seduced by the lure of profits."

Introducing the subject of "race" into the analysis of any area of social conflict can enlighten or obscure the real causes of distress. And this perilous pathway has been followed in some of the news coverage of young black men and domestic terrorism.

The Jamaican origins of Jermaine Lindsay, one of the July 7 suicide bombers, has prompted some to ask why a disproportionate number of black men are attracted to extremism. Lindsay, 19, had spent the vast proportion of his life in England, which made tenuous the tabloid obsession with his place of birth. Intriguingly there was less of a clamour over the ethnicity of Richard Reid, the notorious "shoe bomber," who had a white mother and a black father. In the case of David Copeland, the white, racist, homophobic nail-bomber, there was no analysis of a potential relationship between ethnicity, extremism, and terror.

Black men converting to Islam should be placed within the religious context of their communities, where religion still matters.

African-Caribbean men and women continue to turn out in large numbers for religious activities. But Islam is able to do what the black church cannot — attract black men.

I have spent most of my working life in conversation with African-Caribbean converts to Islam. Two relationships stand out. I have an ongoing dialogue with an artist who converted in the mid-1990s. His journey began when he listened to tapes of African-American Muslim preachers while at graduate school in America.

The tapes made a clear-cut link between a commitment to Allah and black liberation from poverty, drugs, gangs, and meaninglessness. His first visit to a predominantly African-American mosque was life-changing. Hundreds of smartly dressed black men full of self-belief, black pride, purpose, and respect immediately became role models.

This is still the case today. Many black men, including Reid and Lindsay, were impressed by Islam's Africa-centred preaching and positive association with blackness. After all, one of the most powerful icons of the 20th century, Malcolm X, made the journey from Christianity to Islam in search of black redemption. My artist friend says mainstream Islam provides him with a social awareness and commitment to justice that is mostly ignored in black churches.

I have a nephew who recently converted while serving a prison sentence. Spending an inordinate amount of time alone in his cell, he took to reading the *Bible* and the *Qur'an* to pass the time. Intrigued by the notion that Islam was the last testament, God's final revelation, he pursued his interest by attending lessons with the imam assigned to the prison chaplaincy. Convinced, he became a devotee.

It was clear to me that the daily regime of Islam provided him with the tools for personal discipline and an interest in intellectual thought. He gained qualifications while inside and, most importantly, became completely dissociated from criminal activity. Having left prison, he continues to live devoutly, and is employed in a management position.

Most African-Caribbean men converting to Islam do so because it is a religion with a capacity to give their lives hope and meaning. This is not a new idea.

As long ago as 1888, the Caribbean educator Edward Wilmot Blyden argued that Islam was more respectful of black culture and easier to translate into Caribbean culture than Christianity.

There will always be a few captivated by extremist versions of Islam that exploit the continued disaffection and marginalisation of working-class black youth. After all, with as little potential for social mobility as their migrant grandparents, it is difficult to sell them Tony Blair's New Labour dream of living in a meritocratic "stakeholder" British society.

As is the case with the white middle-class corporate executives who see no ethical boundaries preventing them from working for exploitative multinationals in Africa, which displace and destroy the lives of tens of thousands, there will always be a small number of impressionable converts, from the poorest communities, who are lured on to the paths of unrighteousness. — **©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005**

(Robert Beckford is a lecturer in African diasporan religions and cultures at the University of Birmingham, U.K.)

Blind can sit for bank exam

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Aug. 16: The Supreme Court today came to the help of a visually handicapped woman when it directed the banking service recruitment board to allow her to sit for a probationary officers' exam.

Four years ago, Amita had challenged the recruitment board's decision to reject her application for the exam for Indian Overseas Bank on the ground that she was visually impaired.

Justices Y.K. Sabharwal, D.M. Dharmadhikari and Tarun Chatterjee today upheld her claim, saying: "It cannot be doubted that a visually impaired candidate is entitled to sit and write the P.O. examination along with other general candidates, where any post is not earmarked for handicapped persons, as a general candidate."

The bench said rejection of her application on the ground that she was visually impaired amounted to "violation of her fundamental right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution". This provision guarantees "equality before law and equal application of law" for all citizens.

The bench also said "if selected", Amita "could be appointed as a probationary officer subject to satisfying other terms and conditions attached to the post".

"If the writ petitioner wrote the examination as a reserved candidate competing for a seat reserved for visually impaired, and if she succeeds, she could be appointed to the post reserved for such handicapped category," it said.

Forthcoming reviews

Global Crises, Global Solutions: Bjorn Lomborg — Editor; Pub. by Cambridge University Press, London.

The Hindu World: Sushil Mittal & Gene Thursby — Editors; Pub. by Routledge, distributed by Foundations Books, New Delhi.

BOOK REVIEW

Frozen moments

It is not the curatorial intent as much as the curatorial eye that is responsible for the success of this extraordinary collection of pictures shot by 11 photographers

MIDDLEAGESPREAD — Imaging India 1947-2004: Curated by Gayatri Sinha; Presented by Anant Art Gallery, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts & National Musuem, Janpath, New Delhi-110011.

Mukund Padmanabhan

If every picture tells a story, then perhaps every picture-book must have a theme.

This book curiously titled *middleagespread* suggests that the collection of black and white photographs, which were taken between 1947 and 2004, "visualises the spread of the aging body politic of India." Is a country less than 60 years old really aging? Do the varied and often very personalised images really reflect the country's body politic?

However, it is not the curatorial intent as much as the curatorial eye that is responsible for the success of this extraordinary collection of pictures, shot by 11 photographers — Henri Cartier-Bresson, R.D. Chopra, S. Paul, Kishor Parekh, Raghu Rai, Ram Rahman, Sheba Chhachhi, Dayanita Singh, Rajesh Vora, Ketaki Sheth and Swapan Parekh. Many of the photographs are familiar but virtually every one of them is arresting, chosen in a thematic manner, one that lends each photographer's work the character of a short pictorial essay.

The fleeting instant

Cartier-Bresson's darkly evocative picture of Nehru announcing Mahatma Gandhi's death at the gates of Birla House, one that this newspaper used prominently on the front page on the day after his death was announced, is the opening frame. The pioneer of photojournalism, whose genius lay in his uncanny ability to freeze-frame the decisive moment, that fleeting instant which offers the opportunity for a great photograph as opposed to a mere jumble of images.

The master of the moment made six extended visits to India, but all except one of the pictures — a stark but faintly comical frame of a rocket tip being borne on the back of a bicycle at the Thumpa launching station — dates back to 1948, when Cartier-Bresson covered Gandhiji's funeral.

Arresting piece

Romesh Dutt Chopra may have been the equivalent of the court photographer in the years after Independence but his frames, despite their apparent official character, manage to peel away the layers of his subjects in a manner that renders them more honest and less like government-issues.

The striking compositional symmetry is present in all of S. Paul's pictures, but the one of the broad facade of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, from which patients and staff peep out to catch a glimpse of

Jawaharlal Nehru announcing the news of Gandhiji's death at the gates of Birla House. — PHOTO: HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

Indira Gandhi's assassinated body, stands out as the most unorthodox and arresting piece of photojournalism.

Kishor Parekh's brutally honest pictures of the 1971 war in East Pakistan speak to you more directly, and include the outstanding one of a young girl staring, in a mixture of horror and bafflement, at a man who has been dismembered and left lying on the streets.

Engagement with life

There is the genius of Raghu Rai, whose photographs need no introduction; the refreshingly quirky eye of Ram Rahman; the melancholic women who seem to tell stories and make quiet statements in the studied portraits by Sheba Chhachhi; the work of Dayanita Singh, her subjects arranged in a tidy and determined manner, her pictures frozen in a manner that suggests photography can be a form of still life; and Ketaki Sheth's take on Bollywood that seems to gently explore its fallibilities, its aspirations and its greed.

As Gayatri Sinha suggests in her interesting essay that prefaces the pictures, the nature of photography in India changed along with Independence — a change, noticeable in Cartier-Bresson's pictures, in which "colonial critique and cultural difference are replaced by an overriding engagement." It is an engagement, Sinha suggests elsewhere, that stems from the "immense power of the photograph to move." Those in this remarkable collection do just that.

A pioneer industrialist with a vision

CASTING A DESTINY — The Biography of Chandran Menon: Savita Bhave in Marathi, Nandu Dange — Tr. in English; Pub. by Ameya Prakashan, 207, Business Guild, Law College Road, Pune-411004. Rs. 375.

M. S. S. Varadan

This book is an English translation of the Marathi original written by Savita Bhave, a leading biographer.

It depicts the life and work of Chandran Menon, who started out from a small village in Kerala with humble beginnings to become a leading industrialist and a pioneer in automotive castings in India at the industrial hub of Kolhapur in Maharashtra.

Multifaceted personality

He was a multi-dimensional personality: a struggler, a hands-on technocrat, a dreamer, a visionary, a compassionate soul and a fighter to the very end.

Neelkanth A. Kalyani, head of the vast Kalyani Group, in the preface states: "I can confidently say that Chandran Menon was one of the greatest industrialists that the country has seen. It was unfortunate that the relative obscurity of Kolhapur provided him with a rather limited theatre of operations and he did not get the public recognition that he deserved."

Menon landed in Kolhapur just after Independence and promptly went "native". He founded Menon & Menon making automotive castings for leading firms like Mahindra's, who highly appreciated the way Menon rose to meet the challenging situation and helped them out during the difficult period and this has led to an enduring relationship lasting even to this day.

Menon had the courage to overcome the ups and downs of the market with innovations. He had a tough time with the divisive unions in his plant, but always kept the workers' welfare before him.

He also turned around the loss making Kolhapur Steel into a profitable company, when he took over as its chairman and managing director. All the struggles he had to face took a toll on his health and life ultimately when he was just 69.

Translation has its own problems and this book is no exception to it. Lots of details are woven into the narrative, which at times tends to distract from the main story.

However, the book, aptly titled, has its own merit of depicting the trials and tribulations of a visionary, who could be a source of inspiration for many, just when India is emerging as the sixth largest producer of castings in the world, and foundries which have not been a fancied ground for entrepreneurs is beckoning talents to its fold.

DEPICTS THE LIFE OF CHANDRAN MENON, WHO ROSE FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO BECOME A LEADING INDUSTRIALIST

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

"You are late again! Didn't you promise to be...."

"....I am sorry. I know I was supposed to come at 11o'clock, but I...."

"....it's one o'clock now."

"I know. I have a question. Why do we say o'clock? Where does the 'o' come from?"

"The 'o' I understand is actually a contraction of 'of'. You see in the old days when someone asked an individual for the time, he would reply 'eleven of the clock'."

"So instead of eleven o'clock, they used to say 'eleven of the clock'."

"That's right! At times, they dropped 'the' and shortened the reply to 'eleven of clock'. After some time, people began dropping the 'f ' sound in 'of '. So 'of clock' became 'o'clock'. Now tell me, why are you late?"

"Sunil and Karuna fought again. This time it was pretty serious. Karuna was so upset that she stormed out of the house with bag and baggage."

"That sounds pretty serious indeed. But you don't have to say 'with bag and baggage'."

"But I have heard many people say 'with bag and baggage'."

"That's true. But the correct expression is 'bag and baggage'. You don't need 'with'."

"I see. So I say, she walked out bag and baggage?"

"That's right. Here's another example. Raju was thrown out of the hotel bag and baggage."

"I wish we could do the same with some of our crooked politicians. I think it's high time that we get rid of them."

"It's high time that we got rid of them. Not 'get' rid of them."

"But why got?"

"Because when you use 'high time' the verb that follows is usually in the past. For example, it's high time that I went home."

"I see. It's high time Vasundara got married."

"I think it's high time you began studying for your various entrance exams. Anyway, needn't worry about Karu She has walked out on Sunil before. But she...."

"....thrice, actually. I mea three times. Tell me, what' wrong with thrice, though?"

"There's nothing wrong. It's considered rather old fashioned. Native speakers seldom use the word thrice. It's considered literary."

"So it's once, twice, three times?"

"Yes, that's right. Tell me, what did Sunil do to put Karuna out?"

"To put her out? You mean throw her out of the house?"

"No, no! When you put someone out, what you are doing is irritating or annoying the individual. That's one of the meanings of the expression. For example, Prabhakar really put me out when he walked into the house wearing his muddy slippers."

"My neighbour put me out by playing music loudly."

"That's a good example. So what did Sunil do to put Karuna out?"

"I understand that he cracked some joke about women."

"He probably did it to irritate her. He knows that his wife is a die-hard feminist."

"Does die-hard mean staunch or something like that?"

"That's right. A die-hard individual is someone who sticks to his opinions. Doesn't change them at all. In fact, he doesn't like change. For example, my neighbours are die-hard conservatives."

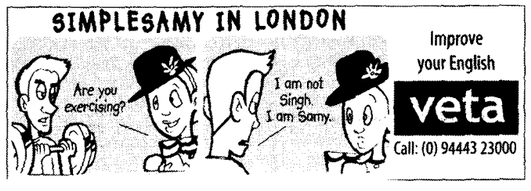
"Mine are die-hard Sania Mirza fans."

"It's high time she started performing on the tennis court."

"You're right. Otherwise her next ad might begin with the line, Sania Mirza ko tennis khelna nahin atha!"

"Opportunity may knock only once, but temptation leans on the doorbell." — **Unknown**

S. UPENDRAN

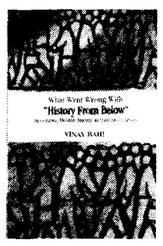


BOOK REVIEW

Announcement

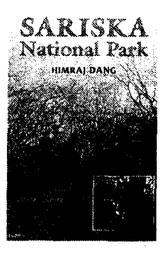
Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

NEW ARRIVALS



What Went Wrong with "History From Below" – Reinstating Human Agency as Human Creativity: Vinay Bahl; K.P.Bagchi & Company, 286, B.B. Ganguly Street, Kolkata-700012. Rs. 600.

Fowl!: Martin Gurdon; Distributed by Ecity Publishing and Distributing (I) P. Ltd., Fun Republic, Plot No. 844/4, Shah Ind. Est. Link Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai-400053. £ 5.99



Sariska National Park: Himraj Dang; Indus Publishing Company, FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi-110027. Rs. 200.

★ **Dew Drops** – Speaks About You: Vemuri Balaram; Vasan Publications, 25, Vasan Towers, Dr. T.C.M. Royan Road, Bangalore-560053. **Rs. 60.**

★ **Relativity Via Absolute Velocities:** T.R. Madangopal; T.R.M. Publications, 46-One Pathu Veli Agraharam, Thirukattupalli-613104. Price not mentioned.

★ **Beyond Borders** – Indian Foreign Policy in 21st Century Priorities and Prospects: Niraj K. Sinha; South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 50 Sidharth Enclave, New Delhi-110014. **Rs. 120.**

★ **The Aryan Path of the Buddha:** K. Manohar Gupta; Sundeep Prakashan, P.B. 2647, 6191/1 Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. **Rs. 1200.**

★ **The Writing On The Wall** – India Checkmates America 2017: Gen. S. Padmanabhan; Manas Publications, 4858, Prahlad Street, 24 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 595.**

★ **Information And Knowledge Management:** D. Kamalavijayan; MacMillan India Ltd., 2/10 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 240.**

★ **Trade, Technology and Growth on Analysis and Policies for Developing Countries:** Ram Upendra Das; Bookwell, 24/4800 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 495.**

★ **Back From Dead** – Inside the Subhas Bose Mystery: Anju Dhar; Manas Publications, 4858, Prahlad Street, 24 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 495.**

★ **The Political Economy of Federalism in India:** M. Govinda Rao, Nirvikar Singh; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 675.**

★ **Business Communication:** R.K. Madhukar; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 578 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014. **Rs. 135.**

★ **Consumer Behaviour** – Concepts, Applications and Cases: M.S. Raju, Dominique Xardel; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 576 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014. **Rs. 195.**

★ **Indian Coin Heritage:** A.V. Narasimha Murthy; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati KM Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 95.**

★ **Engineering Economic:** D.N. Dwivedi, Abhishek Dwivedi; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014. **Rs. 165.**

★ **Birds of Tamil Nadu:** K. Ratnam; Manivasagar Pathippagam, 31, Stringer Street, Chennai-600108. **Rs. 280.**

★ **Rural Marketing** – Environment, Problems and Strategies: T.P. Gopalaswamy; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 576 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014. **Rs. 95.**

★ **Standing At The Margins** – Representation and Electoral Reservation in India: Alistair MacMillan; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 625.**

★ **Longman Wordwise Dictionary:** Pearson Education (Singapore) Pt. Ltd., 482, Patparganj, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 275.**

★ **Ethics in Management and Indian Ethos:** Biswanath Ghosh; **Rs. 95.**

★ **Engineering Project Management with case studies:** Parmeshwar P. Iyer/ F.C. Kohli; **Rs. 270.**

★ **The New Handbook of Bioinformatic:** Puneet Mehrotra, Kumud Sarin; **Rs. 450.** The above books by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014.

★ **Iron Industry and Metallurgy** – A Study of Ancient Technology; B. Sasisekaran; New Era Publications, PB No. 8780, Adyar, Chennai-600020. **Rs. 950.**

★ **A Spoke in the Wheel:** Amita Kanekar; Harper Collins Publishers, 1A, Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 395.**

★ **Living Together Separately** – Cultural India in History and Politics; Mushirul Hasan, Asim Roy; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 750.**

★ **Great Women of India Vol 5:** S. Ramani N. Rajesh Kumar; Sri Ramakrishna Math, RK Mutt Road, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 25.**

★ **A Moral Reckoning** – Muslim Intellectuals in Nineteenth-century Delhi; Mushirul Hasan; Oxford University Press, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 575.**

★ **All India Directory of Pharmaceutical Companies: Rs. 150.**

★ **Directory of Paramedical Institutes & Courses in India: Rs. 75.** Both the books pub. by Student Aid Publications, 43 A, Krishna Enclave (Behind Kulachi Hansraj Model School), Ashok Vihar, Phase III, New Delhi-110052.

★ **Relativity Via Absolute Velocities:** T.R. Madangopal; T.R.M. Publications, 46-One Pathu Veli Agraharam, Thirukattupalli-613104. Price not mentioned.

★ **In the Path of Service Memories of a Changing Century** – (by Ashoka Gupta in Bengali); Sipra Bhattacharya/Ranjana Dasgupta (Tr.); Stree, Bhatkal & Sen, 16, Southern Avenue, Kolkata-700026. **Rs. 450.**

★ **Hindutva and Dalits:** Anand Teltumbde (Edited); Samya, an imprint of Bhatkal and Sen, 16, Southern Avenue, Kolkata-700026. **Rs. 500.**

★ **Mastering VAT:** Nirmala Asokan; Josh Indira Publishers, PB No. 8632, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 199.**

★ **Insights into Vedanta** – Tattvabodha; Swami Sunirmalananda; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 80.**

★ **My Reminiscences** – Social Development during the Gandhian Era and After; Renuka Ray; Stree, an imprint of Bhatkal and Sen, 16, Southern Avenue, Kolkata-700026. **Rs. 350.**

TAMIL

★ **Ramayana Oyil Nadagam:** K. Parthibaraja; Raagaas, 12 (Old No. 293) RH Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 75.**

★ **Pancha Boodha Thalangal:** P. Muthukumaraswamy, **Rs. 55.**

★ **Ulagin Sirandha Cinemak Kathaigal:** S.Guru; **Rs. 90.**

★ **Geethai Sirukathaigal:** K. Gurumurthy; **Rs. 60.**

★ **Sollonnap Peru:** Narasaiah; **Rs. 80.** The above books pub. by Palaniappa Bros., Konar Maligai, 25, Peters Road, Chennai-600014.

★ **Paithurai Chemmal Dr. N. Mahalingam:** K. Arumugam, Ramanantha Adigalar Foundation, Kumaraguru Engineering College, Coimbatore-6. **Rs. 200.**

★ **Vaazhvai Valamaakkum Kanovasivakkalai:** TGR Vasanthakumar; **Rs. 30.**

★ **Siddhar Thaththuva Sinthanaikal Paambatti Sidhar Thathuvam:** A.S. Vazhithunai Raman; **Rs. 115.**

★ **Viduthalai Velviyil Puducherry:** C.S. Mouraouguessine; **Rs. 100.** The above books pub. by Sankar Pathippagam, 21, Teachers Guild Colony, Rajaji Nagar Extn., Villivakkam, Chennai-600049.

★ **Devi Baagavatham Koorum Deiveekak Kathaigal:** E. Mani, Kurinji, 20-A, Teachers Guild Colony, Rajaji Nagar Extn., Villivakkam, Chennai-600049. **Rs. 90.**

★ **Illakkiya Illakkugal:** M.A. Susheela; **Rs. 33.**

★ **Kathai Arangam – 6: Rs. 40.**

★ **Ilakkiya Malargal:** Nirmala Mohan; **Rs. 45.** The above books pub. by Meenakshi Puthaka Nilayam, Mayura Complex, 48, Dhanappa Mudali Street, Madurai-625001.

★ **Mummannik Kathaigal:** Poovannan, Vatsala, Sadhana Radhakrishnan; Poovannan Pathippagam, 1, Bharathi Park Fourth Cross Road, Saibaba Colony, Coimbatore-641011. **Rs. 60.**

★ **Ilaijnar Sakthi:** Swami Aavabothanandar, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 20.**

★ **Sonnal Nambamatteergal:** Chinna Annamalai, Kumaran Pathippagam, 3, Muthu Krishnan Street, Pondy Bazaar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 60.**

★ **Poovannanin Punaikadhai Theeran:** V. Sabanayagam; Sadana Pathippagam, 264-A, Dr. Ambedkar Road, Velandipalayam, Coimbatore-641025. **Rs. 45.**

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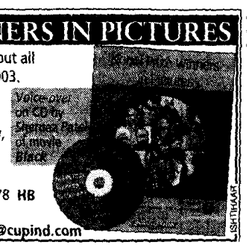

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Economic policies since Independence

The book will last as an excellent review of the political influences on India's economy and policies since Independence

S. L. Rao

Francine R. Frankel is an India scholar of very long standing. Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania and founding Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Centre for the Advanced Study of India, she also founded a counterpart Centre in Delhi. The first edition of the present book was published in 1978. There is a clear difference between the chapters from the first edition and the three chapters added to recount post-1978 events. The add-ons are more perfunctory and miss the mastery of the details of social, political and economic contexts and issues as well as of the personalities that are a feature of the first edition.

It is a monumental work and must be a compulsory reference for anyone wanting to understand the political influences behind the economic policies of India since Independence.

With 819 pages it may be greedy to ask for more but one misses a close analysis of the military, security and foreign policy issues that led to a considerable revision in India's policies in a uni-polar and globalising world.

Critique

Since these issues also influenced economic policies and outcomes, their detailed coverage would have been useful. For example, she devotes scant attention to the Narasimha Rao Government, the first non-Nehru family Prime Minister in a Congress Government (not counting Shastri); the Vajpayee Government, the first to be led by the BJP and to have lasted six years; the continuity in reform policies despite disparate coalitions; the ability of India to withstand the economic sanctions imposed after the nuclear tests by the new NDA Government; and the subsequent closeness that developed with the U.S. especially after the war on terrorism after 9/11.

There could have been more attention paid to the India-Pakistan relationship and its economic effects on both countries. Energy security has major implications for the economy and influences the whole spectrum of national policies but has not been touched.

Similarly more attention could have been given to the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) attempt to raise India's posture in the world with the nuclear explosions, significant defence expenditures and overtures to countries with which the Congress had maintained hostile or cold postures.

Readers might have been more beholden to the author if she had (as was her first instinct) brought out an equally comprehensive second volume instead of the 308 pages she has added to the first edition.

Contexts

The chapters in the first edition have exhaustive analyses that explain the political, social and historical contexts of the economic policies of the Nehru years. In her detailed discussion of the Indira Gandhi years, she draws attention to the hitherto hidden influence of the Communist Party of India (CPI) on Indira Gandhi (till Sanjay reduced it significantly). Without saying so, she draws attention to Indira Gandhi's "ignorance" of economics leading to the "direct" interventions in the economy instead of "indirect" ones to build the physical and social infrastructures and the institutions for people's participation to improve the accountability of the administration. There could have been a more comprehensive discussion of the political influences that sabotaged the well-meaning and desirable reform initiatives by Rajiv Gandhi.

Challenges

One notices throughout the book that Frankel is careful not to offend. For example, she says: "It is not clear whether Ms. Gandhi deliberately gave free rein to Sanjay...." and then recounts in detail the many interferences by him in the governments at the Centre and the states (especially Delhi) that could not have occurred without her knowledge and concurrence.

Her description of the events leading to the Emergency is well researched and convincing. However, despite her description of Indira Gandhi's fears of the breakdown of law and order and national unity, her argument (agreeing with P.N. Dhar) that the Emergency was therefore not an attempt to perpetuate her power and her family's dynastic rule, is not convincing. In fairness this lack of conviction is caused by the description in the book of her many acts and statements over the period.

The last chapter on the challenge of Hindu nationalism discusses the primary internal political challenge of communal harmony that India must tackle if democracy is to lead to poverty elimination and development for the very poor.

But the book could have devoted more attention to the development of caste-oriented politics and the consequent fracturing of political parties and the entrenchment of the economic policies of government giveaways.

Excellent history

The book is an excellent history of the Indian political economy. It is short on alternative policies, though that may not have been the purpose of the book.

For example, it seems clear that the BJP will always be constrained by coalitions and will be compelled if it wants to be in power to follow relatively secular centre of the road policies.

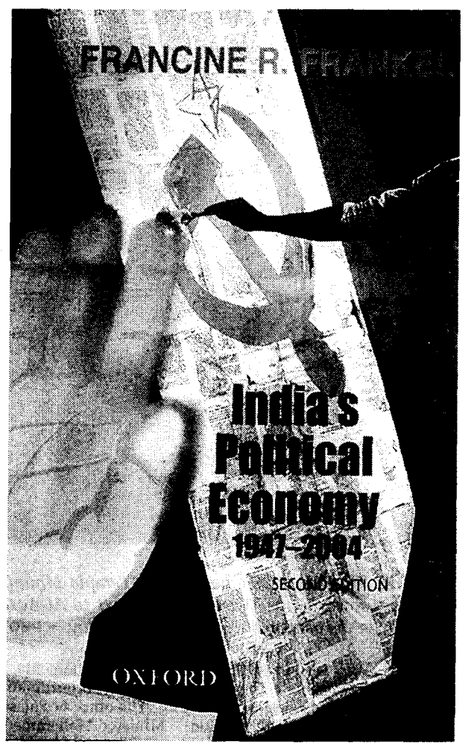
Economic growth is the aim of national parties, not the regional ones that appear to hold the political balance. Growth (not handouts) could reduce poverty speedily. Increasing urbanistion might help reduce caste and communal divisions.

In a book that covers as wide a canvas as Frankel's does it is easy to criticise, find omissions or inadequate coverage.

The surprising thing is that in a book that covers so many contentious issues of recent history, there is little to disagree with. That is a virtue of the book though it is also its weakness that she desists from expressing her opinions on many controversies.

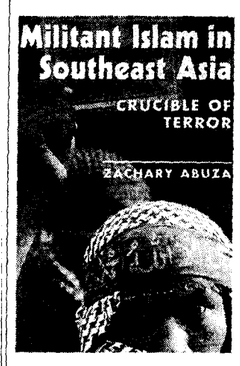
This is a book that will last as an excellent review of the political influences on India's economy and policies since Independence.

One looks forward to her next work, hopefully a detailed study of the post-Indira Gandhi years.



INDIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY–The Gradual Revolution,1947-2004: Francine R. Frankel; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. RS. 750.

Spread of extremism



MILITANT ISLAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA – Crucible of Terror: Zachary Abuza; Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., 4262/3, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 495.

Anandhi Subramanian

The blasts that shook the island resort of Bali seared the consciousness of the world to the extent and reach of the threat posed by Islamic militancy, nurtured or co-opted by Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia. Until 2002, Osama bin Laden and his cohorts had merely used Southeast Asia as a back office for its jihad against the West, but the blasts at the night club in Bali on October 12, 2002, confirmed that the region had, despite vehement denials by myopic experts, become the second front in the "war against terror."

Growth of extremism

In this book Zachary Abuza argues that the region with its network of Islamic charities and business-friendly environment attracted Al-Qaeda to set up front companies, recruit, fundraise and purchase weapons. It was only later that it became "a theatre of operations in its own right." He delineates the reasons for the shift as well. More than 230 million Muslims live in Southeast Asia.

Traditionally, the governments in the region were secular and followed pluralistic policies. Indonesia is home to the world's largest population of Muslims at just over 200 million. The Muslims here were different from the Arabs of the Middle East as they had fused Islam with Buddhism and Hinduism. They were secular in their outlook and rejected the radical strands of Islam of the variety found in the Middle East.

Abuza points out that any understanding of the radicalisation of Islam must acknowledge that the growth of extremism has less to do with theology and more to do with socio-economic failures of domestic governments, unemployment and the ever-widening rich-poor divide.

Historical context

Concentrating on the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, the author explains the historical context which helped extremism gain a foothold in the region. The economic breakdown of the 1990s with the attendant soaring unemployment and collapse of the regional currencies created the space for Islamic extremism to take root. While it was once "on the fringes of society, it now entered the mainstream."

A large number of people with legitimate grievances against the failure of civil society facilitated the mosque to become the rallying point of propaganda and anti-government resistance. A watershed event that led Muslims to believe in Islam as a catalyst of political change was the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979.

With secular institutions waning, madrassas and mosques backed by the financial clout of oil-rich Saudi Arabia spread the puritanical teachings of Wahabist Islam. And then the Palestinian issue: always a tinderbox. The injustices suffered by the Palestinians at the hands of Israel backed by the U.S have enraged Muslims across the world who see the Palestine issue as a religious struggle. Again, to many Muslims, the war in Iraq was yet another confirmation that the U.S. was waging a war against Islam and not terrorism.

It has to be mentioned that a majority of the Southeast Asian Islamic radicals already had their formative experience of jihad in Afghanistan during the height of the Cold War. They returned home to try and establish Islamic states governed by the Shariat.

While militant Islam is not new to the region, the transnational links are new as the Bali bombings seem to indicate. Much of the book attempts to trace the transformation of local jihadis who had narrow political agendas in their state to "internationalists." Al-Qaeda has been able to tap into this Islamic resurgence.

One striking characteristic of Al-Qaeda has been its ability to attract not only those in madrassas but recruits with secular, Western educated backgrounds. It grafted itself on to radical groups in the region or co-opted them as in the case of the Jemaah Islamiya. Abuza has made painstaking efforts to detail the origin of extremist cells in the region and how they came to forge transnational links.

It was no small coincidence that the then Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri was the first Muslim leader to visit the U.S. after the September 11 attacks.

As leader of the largest Muslim country, her support to the international coalition against terror was crucial. But what did the ASEAN do before the September 11 attacks to combat terrorism? Precious little. All too often, governments have only used Islam to bolster their political legitimacy.

State responses

The author contends that the ASEAN, though an appropriate forum to combat terrorism in the region, is much emasculated in its multilateral relationships and members have generally pursued individual national interests in confronting transnational terrorism. The ASEAN needs the U.S. to stay engaged in the region but this certainly comes at a price.

Abuza rightly warns that the war on terror cannot come at the expense of human rights in the region. Governments cannot use anti-terrorism legislation to curb and stifle bona fide political opponents. Disenchanted moderates must be engaged to counter the trend of radical Islam.

Ramayana retold

THE RAMA SAGA: Ramanath Tripathi in Hindi; Prabhat Kumar Pandeya – Tr. in English; Akshaya Prakashan, 208, M. G. House, 2 Community Centre, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi-110052. Rs. 450.

Prema Nandakumar

Modern Indian writers who go in search of myths for re-interpretation in contemporaneous terms usually wander around in the vast spaces of the Mahabharata. The Ramayana has attracted fewer creative writers though some readily come to mind: Kumaran Asan (Malayalam) Maithili Sharan Gupta (Hindi), K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (English). One of the reasons is that passions in the Ramayana cycle are muted. There is a gentleness about the retellings as if we were watching the ocean, all calm, with the serried waves never upsetting the tiniest ship.

A striking change instituted by Ramanath Tripathi in this book is the rational explanation of miracles. The fire ordeal in Lanka's battlefield, for instance. How come Seeta was not burnt by the fire, which she entered? Tripathi says that even as Seeta was moving towards the pyre Sarama and other Rakshasis came forward to protect her; the demonesses of the Ashoka garden set up a din about how Seeta was firm in her adherence to chastity when they tortured her; the Veda-reciting Brahmins with one voice speak of her chastity; the monkeys under Angada's leadership revolt.

"They started throwing burning wood. They started throwing dust, stone, and water on the fire. Agonised, Seeta fell on her back. Resplendent like fire, a rishi wearing red clothes came forward. He lifted her in his arms. Her long curly hair touched the ground."

That takes care of Agnideva. Tripathi is not happy with the traditional story of Seeta being found by Janaka. He announces that she was born in the palace just as her father was ploughing the ground to prepare for a Yajna. There is also a constant attempt to relate the main story to the tribal settlements of Juanga, Korba, Birhora and Munda in the forest. At times we get charming scenes as when Seeta interacts with the women of the Purava tribe. Generally speaking, Tripathi sees in the epic tale the spread of a rishi-culture in the place of anarchic rakshasaculture.

In the Uttara Kanda, when the tribal inmates of Valmiki's ashram sing the sad tale of Seeta, she protests. They tell her: "Deedee, the suffering you have undergone is no more just your own. It is of the entire womanhood. The hurt that we felt, pain that we suffered in you, we are only putting (sic) them in our song."

Seeta, however, defends her husband saying his only flaw is that "he is a true caretaker of the subjects and not a subject exploiter." There is a brave attempt by the novelist to make the story contemporaneous by condemning the manner in which public opinion is poisoned through the machinations of jealous power-mongers like Mayuraka (politicians?) and the so-called intelligentsia who are actually "rank hedonist, selfish and sophist." (the Press?)

Tripathi's mastery of Hindi blends very well the inputs regarding the guileless tribals and the wicked city-dwellers to come up with a racy style. Unfortunately, the translator has played havoc with the English version. Not a page can be turned without some linguistic inelegance staring at you and the devils set up a dance with English idioms. Quite often conversations reek of elementary bathos. Sprinkled with innumerable Hindi terms (jatacheera, jalee, magadha, ekadashee, satitva), the English style wobbles.

The points made by Tripathi in the appendix are interesting. Here is an answer for "modernist women" who question the rationale behind the banishment of Seeta: "Being woman is both a boon and a curse. Even if the male falls, he is blameless. If the woman falls or becomes insolent, she may carry a hybrid (vijateeya) foetus in her womb. Hence, purity is expected of her." I do not think even Rama would buy this argument in exchange for a twang of his bow.

TAMIL

Hagiography of Saiva saints

R. Gopalakrishnan

IRU PERUMAKKAL: A. M. Saravana Mudaliyar; Gangai Puthaka Nilayam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. Rs. 50.

AS THERE is no written history of the Saivite saints, it has led to a lot of speculation about their lives among scholars and devotees. However, scholars like Maraimalai Adikal, Maa. Rajamanickanar, Na. Mu. Venkatasamy Nattar, A. S. Gnana Sambandham and others have endeavored with their literary acumen and historical zeal to fix the dates and describe the events chronologically of the religious stalwarts of Saivism.

This book by A. M. Saravana Mudaliyar deals with the life portrayal of two eminent Saiva saints, Sambandhar and Appar, from a historical perspective.

First he presents the life-sketch of the two saints followed by research-based independent information about them.

Towards the end of the book, the author has incorporated several combined research views about the two saints that both of them were contemporary saints, the method of obtaining gold coin at Thiruveezhimalai, Sambandhar obtaining gold at Thiruvavaduthurai, the event at Thirumaraikkadu, the reasons for Sambandhar calling the other as "Appare", the total number of hymns sung by them, the age of both the saints, the non-availability of some historical evidences for both of them and inscriptions.

The erudition of the author is revealed in every page. A must read book.

TELUGU

Agenda for development

P.V.L.N.Rao

MANA KALALA DISAGAA REPATI BHARAT: K.C. Agrawal; Avancha Satyanarayana,Victory Publishers, 29-28-40, Dasari Vari Street, Suryaraopet,Vijayawada-2. Rs. 150.

AN ENGINEER turned social activist, the author started the Crusade-India (CI) for making the country into a powerful and developed nation. This book unfolds an action plan for achieving the CI's avowed mission.

An in-depth analysis of key issues is provided backed by facts and figures.

Part I traces the historical background. Part II reviews the track record of all the prime ministers since Independence.

The next part lists out vital areas, which can be solved only with a pragmatic approach. Rural development can be achieved through creation of city centres, acting as checks on the urban-rural divide.

Population control schemes have to be reoriented with more attention on basics than slogans.

Water and disaster management, promotion of tourism and information technology, afforestation, power generation and protection of the environment are some of the vital areas that need to be tackled on a priority basis.

The last part highlights the imperative of radical administrative reforms covering key areas like health, education, agriculture, and human resource development.

While one may not agree with all the opinions of the author, his agenda for development deserves attention for drawing useful lessons. The translation with a facile style is competent.

KANNADA

History of physics

K. S. Parthasarathy

SAMKSHIPTHA BHOUTHA VIGNANA CHARITHRE: A.O. Aavalamurthy; Pub. by Prasaranga, Kannada Vishwavidyalaya, Hampi. Rs. 100.

THIS IS an excellent publication on science in Kannada in recent times, which traces the history of the development of physics.

Starting from the contribution of ancient Greeks, the text traces the exciting and often tortuous path of dialectical progression in the development of knowledge up to lasers and quantum theory.

It is an additional reading for beginners as well. For the other inquisitive and philosophical minds it is a treat.

A list of Nobel Laureates in physics and their contribution are given.

There is a calendar tracing the important events in the history of physics.

The index to names figuring in the text indicates that the writing looks for the continuity in the development of physics as such and not to individuals, except in as much as they are important to the main narration.

The author claims he has based his text mostly on the classic *The History of Science in five volumes* by Ray Spanjenburg and Diane K. Moser.

The order of narration and the style closely accord with the original and it also stands out for the authenticity of facts provided.

The book is not a translation and quite original, and perhaps first of its kind in Kannada.

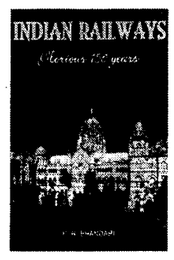
One wishes a list of further reading could have been supplied. The book is produced elegantly and priced reasonably.

Announcement

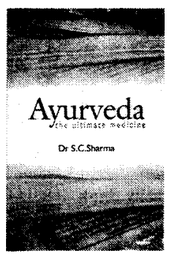
Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

BOOK REVIEW

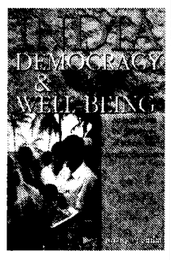
NEW ARRIVALS



Indian Railways – Glorious 150 Years: R. R. Bhandari; Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Patiala House, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 250.**



Ayurveda – The Ultimate Medicine: S. C. Sharma; Wisdom Tree, C 209/1, Mayapuri, New Delhi-110064. **Rs. 345.**



India: Democracy & Well-Being – An Inquiry into the Persistence of Poverty in a Dynamic Democracy: Amarjeet Sinha; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 595.**

- **Thirukkural – with English Verses:** K.C. Agamudai Nambi; Vanji Malar, 864/2, Marudhupandiar Street, Anbu Nagar, Madurai-625020. **Rs. 150.**
- **Capitalising on Customers – An Executive's Guide to CRM:** Patricia B Seybold, Mitchell I Kramer; Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110014. **Rs. 250.**
- **The Sangh Parivar – A Reader:** Christophe Jaffrelot; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Dehi-110001. **Rs. 675.**
- **Leadership in the Indian Army – Biographies of Twelve Stories:** Maj. Gen. VK Singh; **Rs. 450.**
- **Political Agenda of Education – A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas:** Krishna Kumar; **Rs. 480.** The above two books pub. by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017.
- **Human Resource Management:** LM Prasad; Sultan Chand & Sons, 23, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 235.**
- **Soft Skills for Success:** GRK Murthy; ICFAI University Press, 52, Nagarjuna Hills, Punjagutta, Hyderabad-500082. **Rs. 300.**
- **Drawing & Design of Residential & Commercial Buildings:** SKA Zaidi, S.Siddiqui; Standard Publisher's Distributors, 1705-B Nai Sarak, PB No. 1066, Delhi-110006. **Rs. 150.**
- **Plastics, Design & Processes:** SC Sharma; Standard Publishers Distributors, 1705-B Nai Sarak, PB No. 1066, Delhi-110006. **Rs. 125.**
- **Highwire Executive:** Peter Stephenson; *Penguin Books India* Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 150.**

  Easy Way to Learn Difficult Words – Unique Etymological Dictionary: B.Theodore; Theos Publications, Darga Street, Narsapur-534275, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh. **Rs. 195.**
- **Economics of P.R. Barhmananda:** Ajit Kumar Sinha; Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., F-159, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 450.**
- **India Towards Economic Super Power – A Journey of Economic Reforms:** Ajit Kumar Sinha; Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., F-159, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 1200.**
- **An Essential Guide to Sanskrit For Spiritual Seekers:** Dennis Waite; **Rs. 395.**
- **A Dictionary of Medicinal Plants:** A.S. Sandhu, A. P. Singh; **Rs. 695.**
- **Understanding the Kundalini – A Guide for Beginners:** Yogi Harinam Baba Prem Tom Beal; **Rs. 175.** The above three books pub. by Black & White, 6191/1 Block 1, Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.
- **The Way to Supreme Bliss:** Samvid; *Samata Books*, 10, Congress Building, 573, Mount Road, Chennai-600006. **Rs. 90.**
- **Kriya Yoga – Four Spiritual Masters and a Beginner:** Heidi Wyder; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 395.**
- **Authority for Advance Rulings:** V.S. Jayakumar; Snow White Publications Pvt Ltd., Jer Mahal, M 532 Kalbadevi Road, Mumbai-400002. **Rs. 150.**
- **Mullah Omar And Robespierre** – Essays in the Politics of ideas; Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr; **Rs. 395.**
- **The Tarot Power:** P. Khurana; **Rs. 150.**
- **Ceremonies of the Sikh Wedding:** Mina Singh; **Rs. 595.** The above three books Pub. by Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.
- **Corruption** – How to Deal with its impact on Business and Society: Godfrey Harris; Viva Books Pvt Ltd., 4262/3 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 150.**
- **Maya Running:** Anjali Banerjee; **Rs. 250.**
- **The Collector's Wife:** Mitra Phukan; **Rs. 295.**
- **Fearless Nadia** – The True Story of Bollywood's Original Stunt Queen: Dorothee Wenner; **Rs. 295.**
- **Girl Alone:** Rupa Gulab; **Rs. 225.**
- **Along The Ganga** – To the Inner Shorer of India: Ilija Trojanow; **Rs. 250.** The above books pub. by Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017.
- **The HarperCollins Book of New Indian Fiction** – Contemporary Writing in English; Khushwant Singh – Editor; HarperCollins Publishers, 1A Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 295.**
- **HIV/AIDS Transmission, Prevention And Alternative Therapies:** V.K. Ahluwalia, M Ahluwalia; Lotus Press, 4263/3, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 75.**
- **Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh Hope of India:** N. B. Ghodke; Vijayalakshmi Prakashana, Shree Renuka, 5th Cross, Laxmi Nagar, Dharwad-580004. **Rs. 100.**
- **Sorry Soldiers And Other Poems:** Prasad Kasaragod; Pustaka Nidhi, Gavali, Kundapura-576210. **Rs. 30.**

TAMIL

- **Sigaram Idazh Thoguppu:** S. Senthilnathan – Editor; Kamalalayan – Compiler; Sigaram Pathippagam, A-1, Arunachalam Apartments, 1077, Munusamy Salai, K.K. Nagar West, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 250.**
- **Oru Gnayiyin Athirvugal:** Saravanan; Pub. by Mithra Boomi, 12, Kabali Nagar, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 40.**
- **Thozhil** – Viyabarathil Selvam Peruga Yanthirangalum Manthirangalum: K. S. Pathanjali Iyer; **Rs. 40**
- **Pini Theerkkum Navarathinangal:** Devanatha Swamigal; **Rs. 50.**
- **Noothana Graha Pravesa Homa Vidhanam:** S. S. Raghavaacharyar; **Rs. 65.**
- **E-Mail Anuppuvadhum Payanpadhuthuvadhum Eppadi:** S. Thanigaiarasu; **Rs. 45.** The above books pub. by Narmadha Pathippagam, 10, Nana Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017.
- **Manaiyadi Sasthiram Ariviyal Nookil:** N. V. Arunachalam; Priya Pathippagam, Old No. K-33, New No. 7, 15th Street, K-Block, Chennai-600102. **Rs. 90.**
- **Athma Sakthi:** N. Thammanna Chettiyar; Bharani Publications, 2, Venkat Subramaniyam Nagar, Fourth Cross Street, Valasaravakkam, Chennai-600087. **Rs. 50.**
- **Karumbena Enikkum Kanidham:** Krishnaveni Arunachalam; Priya Pathippagam, K-33, Anna Nagar East, Chennai-600102. **Rs. 105.**
- **Vasthu Doshangalukku Pyramid Yanthirangal:** N. Thammanna Chettiyar; Bharani Publications, 2, Venkat Subramanyam Nagar, Fourth Cross Street, Valasaravakkam, Chennai-600087. **Rs. 40.**
- **Agame, Relax Pleasel:** Swami Sukhabodhananda; Prasanna Trust, 300/18, 6th Main, 14th Cross, Vyalikaval, Bangalore-560003. **Rs. 70.**
- **Kaseethan Kadavul:** N. Thammanna Chettiyar; **Rs. 30.**
- **Akkupressure:** N. Thammanna Chettiyar; **Rs. 35.**The above books pub. by Bharani Publications, 2, Venkat Subramanyam Nagar, Fourth Cross Street, Valasaravakkam, Chennai-600087.
- **Maka Vittuvan Ra Rakavaiyankar:** S. Krishnamoorthy, S. Sivakami – Editors: **Rs. 30.**
- **Siddhantha Seivar Ka Vellaiyaranar:** S. Krishnamoorthy, S. Sivakami – Editors; **Rs. 25.**
- **Tamil Urainataiyum Kirittuvar Pankalippum:** M. J. Rabi Singh; **Rs. 20.** The above books pub. by International Institute of Tamil Studies, II Main Road, CIT Campus, Chennai-600113.
- **Satta Badangalum Satta Moodhumozhigalum:**P.R. Jayarajan; Sri Pathi Rajan Publishers, 69/42, C Meenakshi Nagar, Aasthambatti, Salem-636007. **Rs. 45.**
- **Sri Thiruvaimozhi Eieeya Thamizh Urai** – Two Vols: A. K. Seethapathy; *Mahima Pathippagam*, 12-A, GKS Nagar, Pappanaicken Palayam, Coimbatore-641037. **Rs. 200.**

TELUGU

- **Krishnam Vande Jagadruru – Nritya Roopakamu: Rs. 30.**
- **Mandookya Geethamu: Rs. 14.**
- **Padarchana: Rs. 25.**
- **Telugulo Mahavakyam – Gilleliamudi Amma: Rs. 40.** The above books are written by BL. Prasanna Satyanarayana Sastri and published by *Amma Publications*, F 4, Sri Sai Prameela Enclave, Nagamallithola, Kakinada-533003.
- **Samayamu-Sandarbhamu:** Singamaneni Narayana; **Rs. 50.**
- **Mahatmudu:** Dasarathi Rangacharya; **Rs. 15.**
- **Sarath Saahithyam, Vol.2** – Srikanth: B. Sivaramkrishna – Tr. in Telugu; **Rs. 170.**
- **Jejamma Kathalu:** Sattiraju Rajya Lakshmi; **Rs. 40.** The above books pub. by Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001.

Policing: will the tide turn?

Politics and policing are intertwined in our country, thanks to the wrong lead given by the British, for whom the police were a mere tool to handle and stymie the freedom movement

R. K. Raghavan

The one stick with which the police in India are constantly beaten is that they are so much part of the political executive that they lack objectivity and neutrality, two qualities crucial to professionalism. This is the image that has stuck ever since the country attained Independence.

One school of thought, however, believes that this is a lopsided and harsh assessment, which ignores all the good work done by the police in diverse fields such as counterterrorism and VIP security. The truth lies somewhere in between, and a complicated function such as policing merits a balanced assessment.

There is fortunately abundant material that is available to a researcher exploring the achievements and failures of the Indian police, especially to one dedicated to the task of unravelling the policeman-politician relationship.

He has a goldmine of data, an advantage that former Madhya Pradesh Director General of Police, Kirpal Dhillon exploits fully in this elegantly written account that starts from the British days. I am happy that he performs this exercise without going overboard and losing his academic élan.

A former Vice-Chancellor of Bhopal University, he has done some assiduous research to come up with his findings, none of which, however, has been heard for the first time. What he possibly lacks in original analysis, he more than makes up for by providing abundant statistics that will delight future explorers of the Indian police.

Politicisation

Politics and policing are intimately intertwined in our country, thanks to the wrong lead given by the British, for whom the police were a mere tool to handle and stymie the freedom movement.

This is a plausible and attractive explanation why the Indian police are mired in the current despicable street-level politics. But is it strong enough reason why they should be so, nearly six decades after we got rid of the alien ruler? This is the embarrassing question that greets me whenever any of my former colleagues or I speak from a public platform.

The author devotes a whole chapter on the political environment that prevails in India. Naturally, criminalisation of politics figures prominently here. This is a phenomenon that has assumed gargantuan proportions in recent years, and most of those arraigned by courts seemly hardly weighed down by the slightest of inhibition, something that was associated with their predecessors. Politicisation of policing has to be viewed in this light. To analyse either the police or the polity independent of each other in vacuum seems preposterous.

Malady

Dhillon is naturally appalled how recruitment practices and promotion policies have fallen prey to the venality of politicians and senior police officers. Ironically, these have become so much a part of the system that only a few now speak of them in disparaging terms.

There is a certain resignation in attitudes that is regrettable and dangerous. Is it not fatal to civil society to not even demur and demand that the police and the judiciary should set their own standards of probity, instead of following the rest of the crowd like sheep?

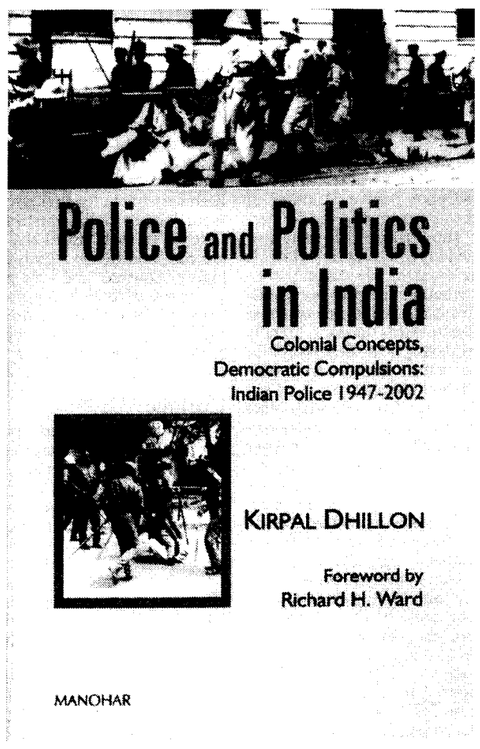
Dhillon cites many communal riots in free India to support his thesis that policing devoid of politics is a thing of the past. The post-Godhra riots have been dissected so clinically that there is a consensus now that any effort to ensure objectivity in crises like Gujarat cannot succeed without releasing the police from executive control.

The remedy seems to be clearly known. But the malady has become deeply cancerous offering little hope that someone sufficiently enlightened and influential in the country's establishment will ever perform the needed surgery.

Need for professionalism

The author sticks to the tradition of police literature to include a reference to the National Police Commission's recommendations dating back to 1979-81.

This is a hackneyed subject. There is little political will to see through the Commission's major recommendations that were well-intentioned and sweeping and aimed at professionalising police responses to contentious situations.



POLICE AND POLITICS IN INDIA–Colonial Concepts, Democratic Compulsions: Indian Police 1947-2002: Kirpal Dhillon; Manohar Pubishers & Distributors, 4753/23, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 1095.

Scholars like Dhillon nevertheless carry on gallantly with their perseverance, in the hope that some day in the future the tide will turn. As things stand presently, these spirited men seem too few and too optimistic, ambitious and unrealistic.

Some recent incidents of gross police misbehaviour now provide grist to the mill of the majority in the country who firmly believe that the police, as organised and peopled now, hardly deserve any concessions.

I will salute the man who will carry enough persuasion to convert this hardened group. Till then, the labours of respected scholars like Dhillon will have to continue. This is because even incremental reforms flowing directly from their writings could give the right incentive for those to follow and who demand major changes that will transform the police image.

Jungle book for backpackers

A GUIDEBOOK TO NAGARHOLE AND BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARKS: C. R. Sarath; Macmillan India Ltd, 2/10, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 175.

G. Ananthakrishnan

When it is night and there is a hint of rain, the forests of Nagarhole come alive with a spectacular display of nature's brilliance. Calls from the depths of the jungle pierce the night and the dance of the fireflies begins.

Not many who visit Nagarhole National Park today may recall that much of this idyllic reserve was in the throes of unrest over a dozen years ago when a fire was set off in a large area of the park as a sequel to the shooting to death of a man.

The firing and shocking blaze followed a spate of reports that poachers were active. Several square kilometres of forest were laid waste by the blaze and it has taken years for the flora to regenerate.

The national park in Nagarhole was again the target of a big group of poachers on a tiger hunt in 2002.

The world got a shocking view of a tiger that had lost a paw to a crippling trap set by the poachers, while officials were in a state of denial.

Havens of flora and fauna

In spite of such assaults, the Nagarhole National Park with its beautiful Kabini river and the neighbouring Bandipur National Park, both forming part of the Nilgiris biosphere, have survived as havens of globally admired flora and fauna. They attract a mix of visitors – dedicated scientists, wildlife enthusiasts and, unfortunately, many merrymakers who see it as nothing more than an open-air zoo.

C. R. Sarath's guidebook is meant for the serious guest and for those who are willing to learn. It is the kind of guide that will first be included in the tour kit by the wildlife enthusiast and then relocated to the bookshelf as a first reference book.

Beautifully illustrated with sketches by Maya Ramaswamy, this volume does what official publications rarely attempt – to provide a quick overview of the region's animals.

Diversity of birds

A checklist of the region's rich bird diversity has also been thoughtfully included, an addition that will gladden birdwatchers (they should carry a separate guide to birds with identification particulars, however).

Proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Kabini Foundation, a community-oriented wildlife conservation organisation that is described as the brainchild of the author.

Most visitors to the two national parks, Nagarhole in particular, carry home vivid memories of animals and birds that they spotted in plenty. Sighting of elephants and deer is common even on the road leading up to Nagarhole from Hunsur while luckier visitors come across a tiger in the core area without much effort.

The two national parks can be explored on a limited scale with the budget-priced lodges run by the forest department serving as the base.

Mobility for the general visitor from park headquarters is normally limited (and disappointingly, noiseless vehicles suited for such a need are not the forte of state forest departments).

Alternatively, there are private resorts (the author is the chief naturalist at one such venture) that are located in beautiful properties surviving from the days of the Raj.

Such private tours provide opportunities for a more comfortable appreciation of one of the ecological hotspots of the world, of course with the higher costs that go into such a leisurely enterprise.

THIS IS THE KIND OF GUIDE THAT WILL FIRST BE INCLUDED IN THE TOUR KIT BY THE WILDLIFE ENTHUSIAST AND THEN RELOCATED TO THE BOOKSHELF AS A FIRST REFERENCE BOOK

Vishnu Purana commentary

SRI VISHNUCITTIYA OF VISHNUCITTA: M. A. Ranganayaki; copies can be had from the author, 25, Thirunarayana Avenue, Kilpauk, Chennai-600010. Rs. 100.

V. N. Gopala Desikachariar

This book deals with the Vishnucittiya, the commentary on the Vishnu Purana by Vishnucitta, popularly known as Engalazhvan, a celebrated disciple of Ramanuja and Kurukesa.

Among the 18 Puranas, six are listed as Sattvika Puranas, of which the Vishnu Purana occupies the pride of place. The western scholar, Wilson, asserts that this is the earliest of the Puranas.

The disciple, Vaisampayana, asks his Guru, Sage Parasara, about the principles of evolution, sustenance and dissolution of the universe, the nature and identity of the Supreme and so on; and Parasara proceeds to explain at length, leading to the birth of the Vishnu Purana.

This is extolled as the "Purana ratna" (gem among Puranas) by Alavandar and Adi Sankara has also referred to and interpreted the Purana in support of Advaita.

Engalazhvan has written a scintillating commentary and there is another equally noteworthy one by Sridhara, from the Advaita standpoint.

The Purana, in six chapters, deals with various subjects like the structure of the universe, the stories of Dhruva, Prahlada and Bhagiratha and so on, with one full chapter devoted to Krishna, His divine deeds and pursuits.

Philosophical aspects

But the author focusses more on the philosophical aspects discussed in the Purana. She begins her study, explaining the fundamentals of Visishtadvaita – the three Reals (Tattvas) namely the sentient, the non-sentient and Isvara; their nature and the body-soul relationship between them; recognising Narayana as the Supreme Brahman; role of Sri as His divine consort; the summum bonum of life (Moksha) and the means of attaining the same; followed by a brief narration about the Acharyas preceding Engalazhvan.

The author then proceeds to study the life and works of Azhvan. Taking up the commentary Vishnucittiya next, she shows how these various aspects are clearly brought out in the commentary, confirming the Visishtadvaita character of the Purana. She further explains how Azhvan in his commentary closely follows Ramanuja's commentary on the Brahma Sutras, the Sri Bhashya giving prolific examples.

It would have been interesting if the author had made a comparative study of the two commentaries of Azhvan and Sridhara, at least with regard to some of the more important issues.

At several places, Sanskrit verses and phrases are quoted from the Purana and texts like Sri Bhashya without providing the English translations, and terse words in Sanskrit are used in abundance throughout without furnishing the English equivalents, making it difficult to follow for the lay reader, not well-versed in Sanskrit.

The book will be useful for those with an adequate knowledge of Sanskrit.

Desika's hymn

SRISTUTI OF VEDANTA DESIKA – with traditional Commentaries: V. N. Vedanta Desikan – Editor; Pub. by Sri Poundarikapuram Srimad Andavan Ashramam, Srirangam-620006. Rs. 50.

N.S. Ramanuja Tatacharya

Vedanta Desika, believed in tradition to be an incarnation of Lord Srinivasa of Tirupati, rendered yeoman service to the cause of propagating Sri Vaishnavism through more than 100 works on the lines of the Azhwars and preceptors, Alavandar and Ramanuja.

Among his works include 32 Sanskrit hymns on some deities of the 108 holy Srivashnava shrines. His emphasis in these hymns is on the supremacy of Lord Narayana, His charm and infinite auspicious qualities and the efficacy of Saranagati (surrender).

Desika's Sri Stuti, the present publication, is a hymn of 25 verses in praise of Mahalakshmi. Though there is a belief that Desika composed the hymn to enable a poor Brahmachari to become rich by invoking Sri, it is believed to be very efficacious to get desired goals and auspicious benefits. According to Desika, the Divine couple, Lord Narayana and Lakshmi, constitute the Godhead, the ultimate Master of all, to whom an aspirant soul has to perform Saranagati. The sixth verse of the hymn dwells on the role of Goddess Lakshmi in surrender.

DESIKA'S SRI STUTI IS A HYMN OF 25 VERSES IN PRAISE OF MAHALAKSHMI

This book contains the reprint of commentaries of great scholars like Atreya Varadacharya and Gopala Tathacharya and also the Sanskrit commentary of A.V. Gopalacharya. These commentaries are rich in content and quotations. V.N.Vedanta Desikan has explained in Tamil and English the purport of each verse with the present day reader in mind.

The publisher deserves praise for bringing out the work. A dozen beautiful photographs of Lakshmi in the holy shrines add value to the book.

TAMIL

Essay anthologies

C. G. Rishikesh

NAALU MOOLAI: Ra. Ki. Rangarajan;
VARI VARIYAGACH CHIRI: J.S. Raghavan; Both the books pub. by Kizhakku Pathippagam, 16, Karpagambal Nagar, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. Rs. 80 each.

THE TWO books are collections of essays published earlier.

Rangarajan's essays are miscellaneous in content. Some take off from a newspaper item; some review a book, a play, a TV show or a concert; some are impressionistic sketches of personalities such as musicians, writers, artists and politicians. Through them all emerges the personality of the author himself.

The essays have many a yarn embedded in them. Some begin with a joke; some end with a joke; some begin and end with jokes.

The titles of his essays might have borne a second look: to give just one example, an essay that is all about film censorship in Tamil Nadu is captioned "Kanmani Rajam" after a marginal reference in a digression towards the latter part.

An addendum that gives an address of an institution could have been printed at the end of the relevant essay.

In *Vari Variyagach Chiri* J. S. Raghavan offers fun in good measure. Raghavan's first essay is a series of questions for each of which the answer could be derived from the question itself.

His agglomeration is astonishing. The same breadth of vision and a keen eye for detail are seen in the essays that follow.

Astrology, Vaasthu Shastra, television, gastronomy, education, music, advertising, flying, marriage – anything is grist to the humour mill.

Gentle fun is poked at a multitude of people, whether it is the martinet of a schoolmistress who would not allow her wards to touch anything even at a book fair or the man who dozes while travelling in a suburban day train or Ms. Know-all with her ever-so-frequent "I told you so..."

In some essays like the one on travelling in a jutka, he raises nostalgia for old, happy, far-off things.

In the latter part of the book the scene shifts to the U.S. where the author (and his laptop) must have been on a visit. He takes an amusing look at the lives of the NRIs in the foreign climate.

TELUGU

Children's literature

Ambika Ananth

BALA (1945-1959) Vihanga Veekshana Samputi: Produced and published by Vahini Book Trust, 1-9-286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. Rs. 558 (set of four volumes)

PUBLISHED AS a tribute to a very endearing and famous pair Balaannayya and Balakkayya, for their great contribution to children's literature, this set of four volumes, is a compilation of absorbing stories, limericks and literary pieces, culled from the issues of *Bala*, an illustrated children's magazine, published by the couple, during 1945-59.

With their genuine warm feelings for children and natural spontaneity, they designed and awakened little characters, both on the All India Radio and in their magazine, and made them immortal; so, they continue to live in this set of four volumes.

Many famous writers and artists of today began their careers as contributors to this magazine.

One can see the special knack, with which, all the stories were told and attractive illustrations filled the books.

The collection is a good source of factual knowledge and entertainment, not only for children but also for adult learners. They are particularly appropriate for today's children as they provide the cultural flavour of yesteryears.

Some characters are so lifelike, they jump off the page literally.

Since children's fancy runs between fact and fantasy, these volumes are a perfect collection for children to get transfixed and transported to a pristine world.

To improve the children's declining interest in reading, books like these are important.

The four volumes hold within their covers, refreshingly sweet and tender literature, which can encourage children to spend time in reflection.

Though the illustrations seem drab now in the present context of beautiful graphic technology, still they retain their own appeal.

The language, which is little vintage, may require explanation, to facilitate comprehension by today's children.

Yet, as an important contribution to children's literature, this set of books is a collector's item, worth adorning all personal and school libraries.

LATEST FROM MANOHAR
STABILITY THROUGH ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN A NUCLEAR ENVIRONMENT by Saira Yamin
81-7304-635-2, 2005, 83p. Rs. 225 (Pb)
NEPAL'S MAOIST MOVEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA AND CHINA by Nishchal Nath Pandey. 81-7304-623-9, 2005, 175p. Rs. 340 (Pb)
4753/23 ANSARI ROAD, DARYAGANJ, NEW DELHI 110 002
Phones: 23262796, 23260774 Fax: 23265162
email: sales@manoharbooks.com www.manoharbooks.com

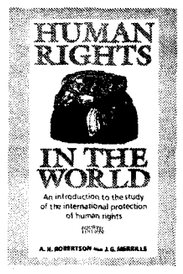
BOOK REVIEW

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

NEW ARRIVALS

Technology Leadership – A Revolution in the *Making*: A. Sivathanu Pillai; Tata Mcgraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd., 7, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008.



***Human Rights in the World* : A. H. Robertson, J.G. Merrills; Universal Law Publishing Co., Pvt. Ltd., C-FF-IA, Ansal's Dilkhush Industrial Estate, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi-110033. Rs. 315.**

The Discovery of the Child: Maria *Montessori*; Aakar Books, 28 E, Pocket IV, Mayur Vihar Phase I, Delhi-110091. Rs. 250.

- **Empowerment of Women and Rural Development:** B. Sambasiva Rao, V. Indira Kumari; **Rs. 795.**
- **WTO And The Agriculture:** Talwar Sabanna; **Rs. 895.**
- **Globalisation and Liberalisation** – Nature and Consequences: Falendra K. Sudan; **Rs. 695.**
- **Dimensions of Rural Poverty:** C. Erraiah; Rs. 495. The above books pub. by Serials Publications, 4, BSS Hall, Khyber Pass Market, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054.
- **Principles of Communication:** P. L. *Vishweshwer Rao; Media House* Publications, 1-9-289/4, Behind Post Office, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. **Rs. 70.**
- ***A Yogi's Prophetic Vision*** – Kannada Bhashya on Kalajnana by Kaipu Lakshminarasimha Sastry: N. Nanjunda Sastry (Tr.); Sri Yoga Naraeyana Ashrama, Srikshetra, Kaiwara-563128. **Rs. 100.**
- **Health and Physical Education:** J. C. Aggarwal; **Rs. 140.**
- **Globalisation and Challenges for Education** – Focus on Equity and Equality: Yazali Josephine; **Rs. 450.**
- **Psychology of Learning and Development:** J. C. Aggarwal; **Rs. 120.**
- **Educational Technology** – Towards Better Teacher Performance: Surender S. Dahiya; **Rs. 140.** The above books pub. by Shipra Publications, 115-A, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092.
- ***Human Syndromes:*** P. D. Gupta; Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., 66, Janpath, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 450.**
- **Do Not Weep, Lonely Mirror:** Deepa Agarwal; Frog Books an imprint of ZZEBRA, A to Z Business Chambers, Fort, Tamarind Lane, Mumbai-400023. **Rs. 60.**
- **Science and Art of Management** – How to Solve Tough Management Problems: Murli Dhar Dalmia; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, KM Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 250.**
- **I Have Read That Somewhere:** Aswath Venkataraman; Frog Books, an imprint of ZZEBRA, 4A, Diamond House, Linking Road, Bandra (W), *Mumbai*. **Rs. 245.**
- **Remote Sensing and Archaeology:** Alok Tripathi – Editors, Sandeep Prakashan, P.B. 2647, 6191/1, Dev Nagar, *Karol Bagh, New Delhi*-110005. **Rs. 1750.**
- **Romance of Kings and Commoners in Golcunda:** Rahimuddin Kemal; Fase Brothes, Al-Riyaz, Road No.3, Hyderguda, Hyderabad-500029.
- **Dictionary of Extension Communication and Rural Development:** A. K. Pandey, R. M. Srivastava, S. N. Pandey; Kalyani Publishers; B-1/1292, Rajinder Nagar, Ludhiana-141008. **Rs. 85.**
- **A History of Fine Arts in India and The West:** Edith Tomory; Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 3-6-752, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 425.**
- **The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988: Rs. 195.**
- ***Indian Penal Code:*** *Padala Rama* Reddi, Padala Srinivasa Reddy; **Rs. 130.**
- **Code of Criminal Procedure 1973:** *Padala Rama Reddy, Padala Srinivasa* Reddy; **Rs. 195.** The above books pub. by Asia Law House, Opp. High Court, Hyderabad-2.
- **Rural Development in India** – A Multi-Disciplinary Analysis: C. Narasimha Rao; **Rs. 795.**
- **Women's March on the Path of Progress** – A study of Decadal Change in Role Conflict: Nilima Srivastava; **Rs. 495.** The above books pub. by Serials Publications, 4 BSS Hall, Khyber Pass Market, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054.
- **Laghudharimaprakasika** – A Study (Sanskrit Text): C. Lalitha Kumari; **Rs. 300.**
- **Sriramapancasati Of Ramaparasava** – With Sanskrit Text: N. Viswarajan. **Rs. 375.**
- **Method and Metaphysical Meditations:** Rene Descartes; **Rs. 300.**
- **A Higher Sanskrit Grammar:** M. R. Kale; **Rs. 160.**
- **Encyclopaedia of Hindu Architecture:** P. K. Acharya; **Rs. 1200.** The above books pub. by Oriental Book Centre, Shop No. 18, II Floor, 5574-A, Kashiram Market, Durga Complex, New Chandrawal, Delhi-110007.
- **Legitimately Divided** – Towards a Counter Narrative of the Ethnographic History of Kerala Christianit: M. P. Joseph; Christava Sahitya Samithy, Tiruvalla. **Rs. 60.**
- **Glimpses of Indian National Movement:** M. Abel; ICFAI University Press, 52, Nagarjuna Hill Punjagutta, Hyderabad-500082. **Rs. 400.**
- **Kaisika Mahaathmiyam & Its Observance at Srirangam and Thirukkurungudi:** Yagapuram K. *Raghunathan*; Pub. by A. Nambi, 12/49, North Mada Street, Thirukkurungudi-627115. **Rs. 30.**

TAMIL

- **Oree Oru Varthaiyeel Palavagai Sirippugal:** T.N. Emajan; **Rs. 32.**
- **Sadhitthu Kaatu:** Hussain Jamal; **Rs. 24.**
- **Alaskavil Jothidaraga Naan:** Seetha Murugesan; **Rs. 50.**
- **Pengal Samuthayame Neemirundhu Nil!:** *Ilaimaraikani*; **Rs. 26.** The above books pub. by Manimegalai Prasuram, 7, Thanikachalam Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017.
- **Needhikku Sila Kathaigal:** N.C. Deivasigamani; Kannappan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadasan Salai, T.Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 20.**
- **Varnaashrama Dharma, Tiruvaay Mozhi and Valluvam:** T. Murugarathanam; Tamizh Cholai, 5, South Street, 3, Aravaazhi Nagar, Palkalai Nagar East, Madurai-625021. **Rs. 55.**
- **Nugarvoor Urimaigalum Nugarvoor Padukkappu Sattamum:** P.R. Jayarajan; Sri Pathi Rajan Publishers, 69/42, C Meenakshi Nagar, Aasthambatti, Salem-636007. **Rs. 85.**
- **Arusuvai Podigal Arubadhu:** K.S. Ilamathi; Narbhavi Prasuram, 57-B, Bazulla Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 35.**
- **Thirumalai Thirudan:** Divakar; **Rs. 150**
- **100 Vagai Kozhi, Muttai Samayal:** K.P. Palanichamy; **Rs. 65.**
- **Sindhikavaikkum Pudhir Kanakkugal:** Dharmaraj Joseph; **Rs. 65.**
- **Idhaya Noigalai Thadukkum Unavu Thayarippu Muraigal:** C.S. Devnath: **Rs. 55.** The above books pub. by Narmadha Pathippagam, 10, Nana Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017.
- **750 Indhiya Sutrula Idangal:** A. Raamgopal; Puthiya Puthaga Ulagam, 52-C, North Usman Road, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 40.**

TELUGU

- **Manava Manikyam:** Mandali Venkatakrishna Rao; Gandham Subba Rao; Devi Itihasika Parisodhaka Mandali, Gandhikshetram, Avanigadda-521121. **Rs. 100.**
- **Sivananda Tandavahela** Ghattu Seetharamaiah; Ghattu Publications, near Saibaba Theatre, Kodada, Nalgonda-508206.**Rs. 85.**
- **Teepitalapulu:** Himakara; Himatrao Pet Subhadradevi, 1-8-700/44, Padma Colony, Nallakunta, Hyderabad-500044. **Rs. 75.**

KANNADA

- **Pravaha:** Kalyani Venkataraman; Copies can be had from the author, 21-E, Nutech Ayappa Enclave, Sri Madhavan Road, Mahalingapuram, Chennai-600034. **Rs. 30.**
- **Periya Thirumozhi of Thirumangai Azhwar Vol. I:** N.S. Anantha Rangacharya; 780, 5th Main, Vijayanagar, Bangalore-560040. **Rs. 550.**
- **Horalunota:** S.V. Prabhavathi; Vasantha Prakashana, 10, *Tulasi Thoota*, Bangalore-560053. **Rs. 90.**
- **Koneyillada Yatre** – Kannada Version of the Tamil Novel by M.K.Krishnamurthy: Haricharan Shenoy; Pustakanidhi, Gavaly, Kundapura-576210. **Rs. 40.**

MALAYALAM

- **Yesu Chikitsikkattel:** Venu Thonnackal; Indian Atheist Publishers, 779 Pocket 5, Mayur Vihar I, New *Delhi*-110091.**Rs. 35.**
- **Pallipattu Kunjukrishnante Sampoorna Krithikal Part I:** Pallipattu Kunjukrishnan Centenary Celebration Committee, *Ushus*, Nangiarkulangara, Alappuzha-690513. **Rs. 100.**
- **Paramekkavu Sreeparameswaran:** C.A.Menon; Kacherimedu, Chittur, Palakkad-678101. **Rs. 100.**

- Cultural and religious Heritage of India (8 vols.); Suresh K. Sharma & Usha Sharma. **Rs. 6000 (set)**
- Indian Nation Builders (3 vols.) **Rs. 2100 (set)**
- Encyclopaedia of Guidance and Counselling (4 vols.); K.S. Lakshmi. **Rs. 2400 (set)**
- Encyclopaedia of Ecology, Environment & Pollution Control (20 vols.) R. Swarup et al. **Rs. 10000 (set)** Mittal Publications, A-110 Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059.
- The Mysore Tribes & Castes (5 vols.): L.K.A. Iyer. **Rs. 7500(set)**
- Gazetteer of South India (2 vols.) *W.Francis et al.* **Rs. 1000(set)**
- Public Governance and Decentralisation (2 parts): S.N. Mishra. **Rs. 2500 (set)**
- International Encyclopaedia of Sports & Games (4 vols): Ashok Kumar. **Rs. 2100 (set);** All above books are in English and published by Mittal Publications, A-110 Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059.

Environmental justice movement and the poor

Takes as its point of departure the international and intra-national inequalities in property rights, power and income, *which lead to unequal access to natural resources and* unequal distribution of the burden of pollution.

Mihir Shah

This book will prove to be a landmark in both political ecology and ecological economics. It takes as its point of departure the international and intra-national inequalities in property rights, power and in*come, which lead to unequal* access to natural resources and unequal distribution of the burden of pollution. While the insights for economic theory build on the author's own earlier work (*Ecological Economics*, 1987), the unique strength of the book is the way these insights are woven into a breathtaking overview of the worldwide movement for environmental justice.

Valuation

Martinez-Alier argues passionately against the notion that ecological economics is merely about "money-reductionist" attempts to internalise externalities that arise in many economic activities (such as pollution of rivers by industries or the destruction of forests and livelihoods of indigenous communities by large dams). *Some environmental economists* suggest that these losses can be compensated by establishing their economic value in fictitious markets.

But, "Who has the power to simplify complexity by imposing a single language of valuation?" asks the author, aimed at arriving at a single number, the benefit-cost ratio? We must respect the pluralism of values and recognise that there are "incommensurable values" and "unresolvable uncertainties" regarding the future impact of a project.

Cost-benefit analyses can also easily be manipulated by simply raising the "discount rate". The more we discount the future, the less weight will there be for ecological values. In any case, just because losers are compensated monetarily it must not become the basis for approving destructive projects dangerous to human life.

Increasing consumption

Instead, the author suggests use of multi-criteria matrices, such as by A.J. Gilbert and R. Janssen (1998) to study the *conflict between commercial* shrimp farming and mangrove forests. Such analyses may include monetary methods but they also allow the possibility that projects are rejected if they violate non-negotiable considerations (such as protection of natural habitats as in the Silent Valley case).

Some argue that since the New Economy (based on services and informatics) is "dematerialising" at a rapid rate, environmental concerns are *likely to be left behind with the* 20th Century. The author debunks such a view. He cites Faye Duchin's (1998) input-output analysis of household lifestyles that reveals the high material and energy requirements of consumption patterns of those employed in the "post-industrial" sector.

There is also the higher demand for power following the intensive use of computers. And energy needs are met increasingly from geographical *areas outside the rich econo*mies. By the turn of the century, the U.S. was importing more than half the oil it consumed.

So while the rate of growth of energy and material input may now be lower than the rate of growth of Gross National Product (GNP) within rich countries, this does not mean a lower dependence on these inputs. In 1990 world mining of coal was more than five times what it was in 1900.

Over the course of the 20th Century, world copper extraction had increased 25-fold. Some projections indicate that the world will have 10 times as many cars in 2050 than it did in the year 2000. The economy is increasingly driven by consumption and is certainly not *dematerialising, attested also* by growing greenhouse gas emissions from industry.

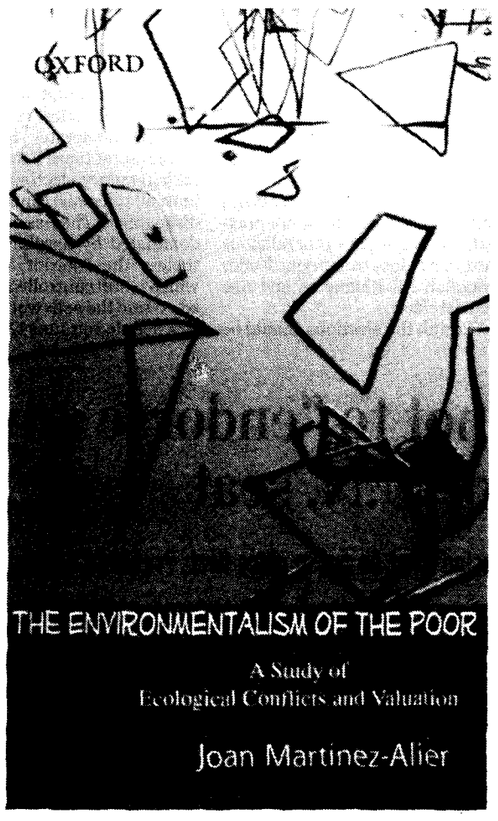
Struggles

The central thesis of the book is that the negative environmental impact of this economic growth is felt much more by the poor and powerless than by the rich and pow*erful within nations as also* across nations. This has given rise to the "environmentalism of the poor".

It provides a sweeping account of such struggles – from the workers and peasants against polluting mining companies in Spain, Japan and Peru in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries to the more recent struggles over gold (Peru), oil (Niger Delta, Guatemala), natural gas (Burma, Ecuador), forests (Venezuela, Thailand, *Malaysia, Costa Rica, India,* Brazil), rivers, bio-piracy, industrial pollution and GM seeds (India, Spain, Latin America).

There is also a fascinating chapter on the struggle against "environmental racism" in the U.S. and South Africa. In the U.S., this is a movement against the disproportionate dumping of toxic waste in predominantly African-American, Hispanic or Native American areas.

The South African conflicts are often a legacy of hazardous projects initiated by the apartheid regime and the damage they have caused to black workers. These damages to human life and dignity are hardly commensurable in monetary terms.



ENVIRONMENTALISM OF THE POOR – A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation: Joan Martinez-Alier; Oxford University Press, *YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi* 110001. Rs. 575.

Uneven success

The struggles documented in the book have achieved uneven success. Given the balance of power in the world, there have been more failures than successes. *Even so, the book has* shown how important it is to recognise a distinct environmentalism of the poor; sharply distinguished from the environmentalism of those concerned with wildlife for its own sake, quite independently of its link with livelihoods of the poor. In a sense only a poor person can be an environmentalist.

For only one who economises the use of resources can truly *live in harmony with nature* and protect the environment. But at the same time we must realise that an environmentalism of the poor needs very specific circumstances for it to be at all possible.

If the poor (like the tribal communities in India today) are totally disempowered, if they are routinely brutalised, if they are not allowed to decide rules for protecting what was their own for centuries, can we then really expect an environmentalism of the poor?

Comparative study of income tax

TAXATION OF INCOME – An International Comparison: Indu Jain; Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 4753/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 1195.

S. Rajaratnam

Tax literature has proliferated in recent years with most publications making the taxpayer none the wiser.

This book makes an ambitious attempt to digest income tax laws of six countries— the U.S., the U.K., Australia, India, Pakistan and Malaysia.

A broad conclusion that emerges from the study is that the systems are not materially different with exceptions only for taxes like capital gains tax, tax on book profits and now fringe benefit tax, which are not adopted by all.

Double taxation

Corporations and shareholders are both assessed on corporate income, whether directly or as in India by way of additional tax on distributed income. Undistributed income is deemed as dividend in most countries.

Double taxation in the economic sense is tolerated in all these countries because of *revenue consideration* with the U.S. alone attempting to soften the double taxation incidental in taxing both the *company profits and the* shareholders by permitting deduction partially with reference to the shareholding pattern.

Systems of depreciation and incentives also indicate lack of consistency of approach with reference to any basic principles.

Tax enforcement

As for assessment procedure, voluntary compliance is now enforced in all countries with interest and penalty for non-compliance or delayed compliance. Withholding tax, advance tax, interest and penalty for non-compliance or delay in compliance have become universal.

Search, whether with judicial approval as in the U.K. or otherwise is also now recognised as a legitimate weapon to tackle evasion in all the countries. Apart from penalty, prosecution is an admissible weapon for tax *enforcement.*

Elaborate as the book is, it spares the readers the au*thor's judgment on desirabil*ity or efficacy of the tax measures dealt with as to their impact on trade and industry. While accountability of the taxpayer has been ensured in all these statutes, there is no discussion as to how the accountability of the tax assessor, if at all, is ensured.

Efficacy of grievance procedure in law and practice is another area of study in greater detail, which should be useful, but missing.

Bad assessments, delay in decision of appeals, enforced collection of tax which is by and large ultimately refundable being part of the working capital locked up are matters of implementation of law; so *probably outside the scope of* the book.

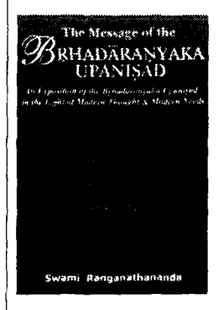
The only other regret is that the statistical data and the information regarding the provisions are, by and large, only up to 1998 with Indian law alone stretching for three more years.

It is, no doubt, not easy to keep pace with all the changes in law. All the same, it is a valuable addition to one's tax library.

It is a competent work, which will be useful for those *not only academically* inclined, but even others, who would like to have some exposure to the law in these countries.

A BROAD CONCLUSION THAT EMERGES FROM THE STUDY IS THAT THE SYSTEMS ARE NOT MATERIALLY DIFFERENT WITH EXCEPTIONS ONLY FOR TAXES LIKE CAPITAL GAINS TAX WHICH ARE NOT ADOPTED BY ALL

Timeless wisdom



THE MESSAGE OF THE BRHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD – An Exposition of the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad in the Light of Modern Thought & Modern Needs: Swami Ranganathananda; Pub. by Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata-700014. Rs. 150.

C. S. Ramakrishnan

Swami Ranganathananda needs no more introduction than the mid-day sun. He was a born orator, fluent writer, precise scholar, profound thinker, charming conversationalist and ever ready to extend a helping hand to those in need. His Mahasamadhi has plunged into gloom millions all over the world who loved him and adored him. Yet, here is ample solace as he has left behind a gigantic mass of spiritual literature brimming with ideas that *have wings.*

Insights

The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita were his forte. He delights in presenting their subtle and at times recondite concepts in remarkably lucid terms. Simultaneously, he keeps himself in touch with the latest mind-boggling theories of modern science.

It is a traditional practice to divide knowledge as apara (relative) and para (transcendental), but the adventurous Swami marches on interlinking western material science with Advaitic *spirituality. For instance,* he quotes with aplomb Schrodinger's finding that consciousness is singular with no plural – an echo of the Advaitic dictum that the Ultimate Reality is one indivisible. In fact, following Sankara the Swami is able to explain many of the insights on the basis of this dictum. For instance, in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad we come across the concept of Satyasya Satyam – the truth of truths.

Truths are many and vary according to their context, but the Ultimate Reality is indivisible. There is only one Brahman.

Unity in diversity

Again the Swami brings out the importance of the concept of Antaryami. There is only a single Reality, which manifests itself in various ways without losing its own singularity. For instance, it is the inner controller that regulates the five types of pranas, the various components of the subtle body and the workings of various organs including the nervous system. Unity in diversity is the principle followed by the scriptures.

In the remarkable dialogue that Yajnavalkya conducts with Maitreyi and Gargi we get the loftiest spiritual ideas. He tells his wife Maitreyi that it is the individual Self, which invokes all love. It is a great discovery that love cannot be divided – a position to which modern psychology is inclining.

In the dialogue with Gargi we find that when she asks what is beyond Hiranyagarbha, Yagnavalkya *cautions her not to* raise that question, otherwise her head will burst. This at first glance looks rather impertinent but actually Yagnavalkya is pointing out the Lakshman rekha beyond which our reasoning capacity cannot function. The Swami compares this to the scientist who cannot ask the question, "What was there before the Big Bang?"

The Brhadaranyaka, the big forest, is formidable, but Swami Ranganathananda takes us by the hand and leads us through the forest of Upanishadic wisdom without involving any strain. *We do not miss the wood* for the trees.

The book is indeed a highly useful company on the trek to the Himalayas of the soul.

TAMIL

Issues in privatisation of water

T. Ramakrishnan

THANEER YARUKKU SONTHAM? J. Paulbaskar; Aamaidhi Arakkattalai, Near Police Quarters, Tiruchi Road, Dindigul-624005. Rs. 50.

OF LATE, the hotly-debated topic among water experts is privatisation of the water sector. Several *countries of varying economic* strength have already embarked on this direction.

Some attempts are being made in India too. Though the pace of economic reforms with emphasis on greater involvement of the private sector in infrastructure has slowed down for the time being, it is believed in certain quarters that the process will resume sooner or later. *It is against this backdrop that* Paulbaskar's work has to be seen. The author needs to be commended for bringing out in Tamil several complex issues concerning the privatisation of the water sector. This will contribute in its own way to the education of the Tamil-knowing people on this subject, particularly the privatisation experiment in countries such as the *U. K., Kenya, Malaysia,* the Philippines and Argentina.

The author's efforts would have come in for greater appreciation had he paid more attention to the developments in the Indian water sector, especially several innovative efforts in Tamil Nadu.

Insights into the Kamba Ramayanam

PKR

KAMBAR KARUVOOLAM: M. Sayabu Maraikayar – Compiler; Gangai Puthaga Nilayam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. Rs. 110.

THIS BOOK is a collection of 40 valuable articles by various eminent professors and scholars such as R.P. Sethu Pillai, T.P. Meenakshisundaram, A. Chidambaranathan Chettiar, S. Maharajan, Mayilai Seeni Venkatasamym, Samy Chidambaranar and Rasikamani TKC written on various occasions for different journals and books.

The articles deal with the Kamba *Ramayanam from the literary* perspective. Sayabu Maraikayar has done a good job in the compilation and editing of the articles. It is a significant contribution to the study of the Kamba Ramayanam.

MALAYALAM

The Narayaneeyam in translation

Sreevarahom Balakrishnan

NARAYANEEYAM – Gadyaparibhasa: Prose Translation and Commentary by Panmana Ramachandran Nair; DC Books, Kottayam. Rs. 140.

ONE OF the celebrated Sanskrit poets in Kerala, Melputhur Narayana Bhattathiri (1560-1666 A.D.) is revered for his renowned work, the *Narayaneeyam, a sublime hymn on* Lord Guruvayoorappan.

Devotional in theme and didactic in treatment, it ranks among the popular hymns of Lord Vishnu and considered very propitious.

Even though the Narayaneeyam was completed as early as 1586 A.D., it appeared in print only after more than 250 years.

Thanks to the initiative of Irayimman *Thampi, poet laureate of Travancore* and an eminent lyricist, it could also secure royal patronage that more or less ensured its speedy circulation.

There have been several translations and scholarly commentaries on it ever since.

Comprising 100 cantos and 1000-odd verses, the Narayaneeyam narrates a series of episodes from the Bhagavata Purana, choosing the *most pious of the lot.*

The incarnations of Vishnu are traced with piety, though the chronological order has not been maintained.

Bhattathiri transforms the episodes into solemn prayers, pouring out his soul in total supplication before the Lord.

According to tradition, the author composed the poetic opus as an offering to his favourite deity, praying for solace from the throes of the affliction he was subjected to. And in the process, he identifies *himself with the characters like* Dhruva, Prahlada and Ambareesha. Such overt subjectivity is perhaps what makes Narayaneeyam at once evocative as well as elevating.

The final dasaka, Kesadipaada Varnanam, embodies an exquisite top-to-toe picture of little Krishna in all grace and glory that has seldom been excelled, let alone equalled. It exemplifies Bhattathiri's *communion with the Lord, and the* divine darshan he might have had.

Panmana Ramachandran Nair has rendered a great service to Malayalam by preparing a prose translation of Narayaneeyam that is true to the original in every sense. Simple and lucid, it brings the manifold splendour of the epic within the common man's reach and grasp. As G. Balakrishnan Nair observes in *his succinct but scholarly* introduction, this Malayalam rendering will serve a long way towards the spiritual well-being of the reader and the society.

Forthcoming reviews

Police and Politics in India — Colonial Concepts, Democratic Compulsions: Indian Police 1947-2002: Kirpal Dhillon; Pub. by Manohar Publishers & Distributors

Deepening Democracy — Challenges of Governance and Globalization in India: Madhu Purnima Kishwar; Pub. by Oxford University Press

BOOK REVIEW

Labour politics in the informal sector

This book breaks new ground by unfolding the strength of collective resistance of the working class in the informal sector

Suranjan Das

James Scott's classic, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Popular Resistance* has provided entry points for historians of popular protest politics. The present work is yet another example of this. Expansion of the informal industrial sector and the increase in the causal labour force in India in the aftermath of the country's economy opening up to globalisation have been adequately documented.

But this book breaks new ground by unfolding the strength of collective resistance of the working class in the informal sector. This has been on the basis of a study of "everyday" labour politics in handloom, power-loom and dyeing industries in the Bhavani and Kumarapalyam towns of Tamil Nadu.

Organised struggle

De Neve's work testifies to the diverse nature of relations between employers, workers and the state in the three industries. Thanks to their organised and sustained struggles, the Bhavani handloom weavers have ensured for themselves minimum wages and bonus.

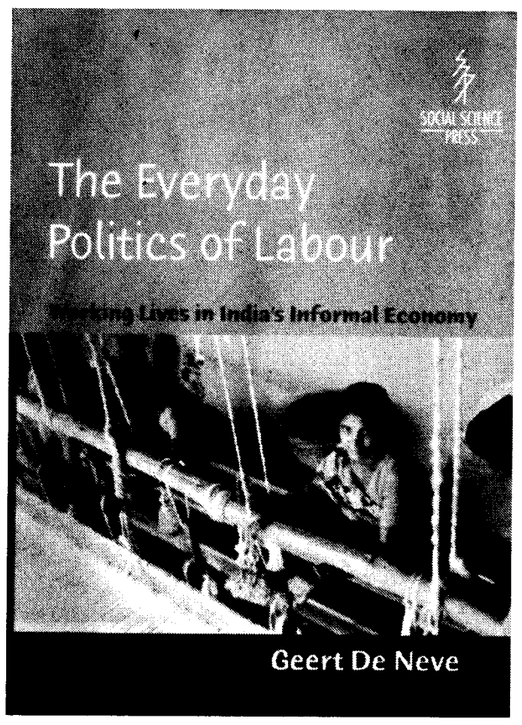
This was largely possible due to political support from the local Communist Party as well as caste solidarity and shared consciousness shaped by work-experience amongst the Vanniyars who constitute the predominant section of handloom weavers. Interestingly, successful working class movement has facilitated upward mobility of some Vanniyar weavers to master weavers and workshop owners.

The author, however, cautions us that this development has not generated a feeling of equality within the Vanniyar weavers. It is the male weavers who have benefited from social mobility causing feminisation of the handloom labour force in Bhavani. But these women workers experience marginalisation in the male-dominated union-activity and decision-making process.

Solidarity

The Kumarapalayam power-loom factory owners, however, have been able to forestall labour militancy. De Neve ascribes this primarily to the practice of "baki", according to which employers give cash advances to workers during recruitment.

Since these cash advances are not of a generalised nature but based on individual transactions, the employer-employee relationship in Kumarapalayam's power-looms is highly individualised in nature. "Individual strategies of negotiation," instead of collective resistance, became the hallmark of everyday labour politics. The consequent fragmentation of the labour force has created new forms of "labour bondage."



THE EVERYDAY POLITICS OF LABOUR — Working Lives in India's Informal Economy: Geert De Neve; Pub. by Social Science Press, 69, Jor Bagh, New Delhi, and distributed by Foundation Books, 4381/4, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 795.

Labour politics in the dyeing industry is significantly different. Till the 1970s, the workforce was here pre-eminently drawn from the Vanniyars. Subsequently, an entrepreneurial section amongst them became "factory owners and job workers." Since both the employers and the employees belonged to the same community, caste, kin and neighbourhood, solidarity determined labour relations in this industry. But this caste integrity has not ensured security in the labour market.

Role of caste

While kinship ties have gone against the employers' attempts to impose labour discipline, the uncertain nature of employment in the dyeing industry has forced the workers to maintain links with as many employers of their caste as far as possible so that they can opt for the best available job.

At the same time the employers have adopted "a discourse of caste and kin morality" to create a symbiotic relationship of trust with the workers, thus muting the possibility of collective working class militancy. Besides, the upward mobility of some Vanniyars has created class differentiation within what was once supposed to have been a homogenous community.

In his conclusion, the author draws two broad generalisations from his three case studies. Underlying the significance of caste as an organising force in the restructured "informal sector politics", De Neve contends that caste or kin ties in the informal sector of contemporary India have not necessarily created divisions amongst the workers, but have fomented unity and solidarity in various ways. At the same time communities beyond caste or class boundaries are constructed — however momentary their nature may be — around such collective rituals or ceremonies, as during the annual goddess celebration in Bhavani and Kumarapalayam.

Local employers patronise such festivals to win the loyalty of their employees. The author also argues that upward caste mobility in the informal sector — operating not through public support — offers new modes of competitions amongst the traditional caste groups.

Emerging inequalities

De Neve's second generalisation that the informal economy remains the only hope for improving the livelihood of India's subordinate social groups may evoke a scholarly challenge. What is true in a particular locality might not be valid at the macro level. Quantitative parameters cannot also be the sole indicators of better living standards.

Quality of life is an equally important constituent element of living standard. One may recall the debate on the conditions of the English working class in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution.

Besides, the three case studies in this work indicate gender and other forms of class inequalities emerging out of what the author celebrates — increasing opportunities of caste mobility and modernisation of caste structures.

Nevertheless, the book has opened up possibilities of new discourses on the impact of the informal sector on labour politics in India. The work deserves to be recommended to any scholar interested in contemporary Indian labour politics.

Gloss on Sankara's commentary with translation

VEDANTA VANDANAM II — Brahmasutra Sankarabhasyasangraha: Compiled by V. Swaminathan; Saradambal Seva Samiti Trust, Sankaranilayam, 3, Sankaranarayana Street, Tambaram,, Sanatorium East, Chennai-600047. Rs. 50.

S. Revathy

The Uttara Mimamsa deals with the Upanishadic phase of Vedic revelation and its systematisation was the work of Badarayana in his Brahmasutras. The distinctive character of this Mimamsa is that it consolidates the Upanishadic teaching about the Supreme Reality, termed Brahman, and promulgates the pathway of knowledge as the exclusive, paramount and final path for achieving the summum bonum of life.

Sankara's commentary is the earliest one we have on the Brahamsutras and it is commanding in style and compass. It is difficult to word a proper homage to this magnificent work.

It is in appreciation of this commentary that the present book has been compiled. It consists of four chapters with passages in Sanskrit culled from the well-known commentary of Sankara on the Brahmasutras of Badarayana, and arranged in such a manner as to give a continuous account of the Advaita doctrines.

Closely following the order of the chapters in the Brahmasutras the book is divided into four chapters called Reality, Refutation, Reflection and Result.

The passages are followed by an English translation, which is quite simple and readable.

Besides, there are four appendices wherein a summary of the sections of the commentary, quotes from it, greatness of the preceptor, cause of the world in different philosophical systems of Indian thought are given and they afford considerable help in its study.

A detailed table of contents is also provided. The author has accomplished it in an eminently satisfactory way.

This compilation should be of great value to students in comprehending the essence of Sankara's commentary.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

"Hi, come on in. Would you like something to drink? You look bushed."

"What are you talking about? I don't look anything like Bush."

"That's funny. I didn't say you looked like Bush. I said that you are looking bushed. In other words, you are looking exhausted."

"Exhausted! Is that what 'bushed' means? I thought you were making fun of my looks."

"Why would I do that? I've got better things to do. Sujatha was bushed after jogging a mile."

"That's understandable. Sujatha is out of shape. After playing two sets of tennis, I felt bushed."

"Good example. Is that the reason you look so tired now?"

"The reason I feel bushed right now is because thanks to the bus strike, I had to walk back from school."

"In this terrible weather! Have a glass of cold water, then. By the way, I understand congratulations are in order."

"Thank you. I didn't expect to do so well in the exam."

"My next door neighbour was crowing over how well his daughter had done, but...."

"....crowing over? What does it mean?"

"....when someone 'crows over' his achievements, he brags about them. Here's an example. I hate talking to Jai. The only thing he does is crow over his achievements."

"The members of the opposition were crowing over their victory."

"That's a good example. It is also possible to say, 'crow about'. It means the same thing as 'crow over'. The producer was crowing about the success of his new film."

"Sheetal was crowing about how well her daughter had performed in the interview."

"In India a lot of people crow about Sachin's achievements."

"I can tell you that I haven't been bragging about my marks. In fact, I haven't told anyone."

"It's good to know that you are grounded."

"Grounded? What are you talking about?"

"Well, when you say that someone is 'grounded' what you mean is that he is very sensible. Though the individual has everything, and has achieved many things, he behaves in a sensible fashion. This is one of the meanings of the word."

"In other words, you are saying that the individual has his feet on the ground."

"I guess you could say that. The kid's father is a business tycoon and his mother is a famous actress. You certainly can't expect him to be grounded."

"Suresh has everything that one can ask for, but he seems fairly grounded."

"The billionaire's wife makes sure that her children stay grounded. But tell me, if Suresh is grounded, then why do the others hate him so much?"

"I guess it's because they are jealous about his achievements"

"You are not 'jealous about' something, you are usually 'jealous of' something. For example, everyone is jealous of Hema's achievements."

"There are many people who are jealous of Dravid's wealth."

"That's understandable, I guess. Some of our players are..."

".... similarly, you are 'jealous of' someone and not 'jealous about' someone, I suppose?"

"Exactly! The two year old boy is jealous of his baby brother."

"Many of the tenants are jealous of the landlord."

"I believe he has written a book which is selling really well. Have you read it?"

"Just the first couple of pages. It was full of jargons, so I ...."

"....jargons! How many times have I told you...."

"....sorry, sorry. The word 'jargons' doesn't exist. The plural of jargon is jargon. See, I remember."

"You don't need to crow over something like that. Go home. You look bushed."

"Older people shouldn't eat health food; they need all the preservatives they can get." — **Robert Orben**

S. UPENDRAN

Announcement Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

OPEN PAGE

Need for data protection law

Relying on contract law to protect data does not work satisfactorily

Anurag K. Agarwal

DATA PROTECTION has to be understood in conjunction with privacy. Privacy generally encompasses a number of interrelated values, rights and interests unique to individuals. These may be the right to be left alone, the right to control personal information, the freedom from surveillance and integrity of one's body.

While talking about data protection, it is the right to control personal information or the "informational privacy" with which we are more concerned. It is the ability to control the collection, use and disclosure of any recorded information about an identifiable individual. Data protection is thus a sub-set of privacy laws.

'Safe Harbor' principles

The 'Safe Harbor' principles were issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce on July 21, 2000. The European Union's comprehensive privacy legislation, the Directive on Data Protection, became effective on October 25, 1998. It required that transfers of personal data take place only to non-EU countries that provide an "adequate" level of privacy protection.

While the United States and the European Union share the goal of enhancing privacy protection for their citizens, the United States takes a different approach to privacy from that taken by the European Union. The United States uses a sectoral approach that relies on a mix of legislation, regulation and self-regulation.

Given those differences, many U.S. organisations expressed uncertainty about the impact of the EU-required "adequacy standard" on personal data transfers from the European Union to the United States. To diminish that uncertainty and provide a more predictable framework for such data transfers, the Department of Commerce issued the "Safe Harbor" principles under its statutory authority to foster, promote, and develop international commerce.

The Indian scenario

There is no specific privacy or data protection law in India at present. The Constitution makes no specific mention of privacy, but the courts have read an implicit basic right of privacy in the Constitution. The Information Technology Act 2000 was enacted to deal generally with e-commerce. It has nothing specifically directed toward privacy; however, it touches briefly upon privacy issues. It focuses on abuse and evidence law with regard to computer crimes.

The protection to data at present is basically through contract law. Other laws which help in the process are the Information Technology Act, copyright law, the Indian Penal Code and customs and practices developed with the passage of time.

The Information Technology Act 2000 provides for punishment for tampering with computer source code, hacking and breach of confidentiality and privacy. However, there have been demands from the industry to amend this law to bring it in conformity with the EU "adequacy" clause.

The Indian Copyright Act 1957 — with latest amendments — is one of the best copyright laws in the world. Any person who knowingly makes use of an illegal copy of a computer programme shall be punishable.

The Indian Penal Code provides for punishment for criminal breach of trust and cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property. These are general laws and it is often seen that they do not serve the purpose in the case of crimes related to data.

Until a tighter data protection legal regime is in place, foreign customers are relying upon contractual obligations for protecting and preserving data. However, foreign customers are increasingly realising that such contractual obligations are not necessarily the best effective remedy available. This is so because in the event of a breach of the security of data, getting effective remedy under the contractual obligations is itself problematic, time consuming and self-defeating. Having appropriate statutory protection with stipulated statutory penalties, damages and other remedies would act as a good deterrent against the breach of data privacy.

Even though the government has delayed the implementation of a legal framework for prosecution of data and privacy breaches, Indian BPO companies have implemented processes such as the BS7799 and the ISO17799 standards for information security management, which restrict the quantity of data that can be made available to employees of BPO and call centres.

The government has put the ball in the industry's court. The industry has been asked to take contractual steps to ensure data protection, study global norms and come forward with detailed papers on best practices. NASSCOM is taking the lead and may be the government is convinced enough to come up with draft legislation on the subject.

To create confidence among foreign companies and investors, who send data to India for back-office operations, it is becoming increasingly important to have a specific law for data protec-

Child soldiers

N. Manoharan

THE LATEST report by Save the Children ('Forgotten casualties of war: girls in armed conflict') is revealing. It brings to us the larger issue of child soldiering.

A child soldier is any person under the age of 18 engaged in deadly violence (non-criminal) or "combat support" as part of a state armed force or non-state armed group by conscription (compulsory/obligatory military service), voluntary enlistment or forced recruitment. It is estimated that there are over 3,00,000 child soldiers, nearly half of them girls, in over 41 countries around the world.

Apart from direct combat activities, children are used as spies, messengers, sentries, porters, servants, for laying and clearing landmines, and in suicide missions. Young girls, besides performing the above functions, act as sex slaves.

Why they are preferred

There are two major factors behind children being preferred for soldiering. First, recruiting and maintaining children is cost-effective. They eat less, wear less and are paid less. It is estimated that expenditure on child soldiers is less than half of what is spent on their adult counterparts. But, when it comes to work, they are treated like adults — fighting on frontlines, carrying heavy war supplies and, at times, injured or dead soldiers, cleaning, guarding and cooking. The fearlessness and ignorance of children are manipulated to employ them on the most hazardous tasks such as laying and clearing landmines and handling toxic weapons.

Secondly, grooming children into soldiers is not difficult. They are highly motivated for one reason or another, which actually pushes them to join soldiering. They can be easily intimidated and are most obedient. They can be persuaded to switch sides by threats or inducements. Thus, one can find many instances of the same children fighting on opposite sides during civil wars. However, those children who continue to stay on in a particular armed group for a long period till their adulthood become fanatic soldiers as a result of protracted indoctrination. Such recruits are ideal for suicide missions that demand complete indifference towards their own and others' suffering.

The United Nations Report on 'Impact of armed conflict on children' (1996) notes that "one of the most basic reasons for children joining armed groups is economic." For orphan children, joining armed groups is attractive to guarantee themselves the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter. At times, poverty forces parents to offer their children for fighting in return for money. However, the children of parents who involve themselves in armed conflicts drift into soldiering by default. If there is a strong prevalence of violence within a particular community in a conflict area, there is a greater likelihood of children belonging to such communities to be part of hostilities. In these circumstances, a gun in their hands is a safer option rather than being without one.

THERE ARE OVER 3,00,000 CHILD SOLDIERS, NEARLY HALF OF THEM GIRLS, IN OVER 41 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD

Children at times readily join armed opposition groups to avoid harassments from the government forces. The urge to seek revenge in children for harassment by government forces is built on and carefully manipulated by armed groups for their advantage. The children also pick up guns for the thrill and power behind wielding weapons. But most child recruitment takes place by force. Kidnappings and press-ganging are popular methods used in Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Known as "*afesa*" in Ethiopia, children are picked up in streets by roaming security forces personnel. Orphans, displaced and street children are potential victims.

LTTE technique

Propaganda, widely used by armed groups, also persuades children to enrol themselves *en masse*. The LTTE is notorious for employing this technique to attract school children. A sense of guilt is inculcated in the children's mind to make them believe that resort to arms at the earliest is the only way to defend their families and communities. War is glorified and a 'cult of martyrdom' created to lure children on the grounds of "national liberation," "social reform" or "defending religion."

The international community has been concerned about this issue for quite some time. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in its plan known as the "Straight 18" position, prohibits governments and armed groups from using children under the age of 18 in conflict; bans all compulsory recruitment of those under 18; raises the minimum age and requires strict safeguards for voluntary recruitment.

But the international protection regime has to go beyond these legal provisions and look at the humanitarian aspects of child soldiering. Ultimately, unless the armed groups commit themselves against use of children in armed conflicts, there is no end to this distress.

(The writer is Senior Fellow, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi)

Acid attack on women

Rameeza Rasheed

THE MEDIA has reported recently an acid attack on a young woman and the readers would have passed it off as yet another story on crimes against women. Is society aware of the fact that, of all the gender specific crimes against women, acid attack is the most horrific one halting suddenly everything that revolves around a woman's life?

This crime, which is very common in Bangladesh and Afghanistan, has spread to India also. It is a crime of vengeance and the reasons are related to refusal to marry or accept proposals of love or sex and property disputes. Often the offenders are persons known to the victims. The purpose of the attack is to permanently mutilate unsuspecting women by throwing sulphuric or hydrochloric or nitric acid on the face with the intention of disfiguring the face or to destroy the physical appearance of the victim. It is an extreme punishment for women because they will experience excessive pain due to the melting of the skin tissues. The deep penetration of the acid into the skin results in exposure of bones. It causes blindness and loss of hearing too.

It is near impossible for a woman to get back her original looks after an acid attack. Reconstructive plastic surgery and post operative care are very costly and they need several such surgeries, with each lasting four to five hours. After this attack women become unfit to move in the outside world because of the disfigurement of the face. Hence job and education come to a halt.

Emotional trauma

The victim's parents are also punished because they cannot settle such daughters in marriage and in India unmarried girls become a permanent liability. The impact of the crime is catastrophic for women. It is because normal life is impossible and the future remains bleak. The emotional trauma and the physical and mental agony are unbearable and the victims often contemplate suicide.

The offenders succeed in putting an end to the normal life of women. It is an extreme form of revenge on women. The families hesitate to go ahead with legal battles to punish the offenders who come out on bail easily due to imperfections in the prosecution statements. Once they come out, they threaten the victim's family with further damage. The conviction rate for this crime is very low.

Acid attack cannot be treated as an act of rage because the offenders plan meticulously the type of acid to be used, the quantity, the time and the venue of the attack. Insensitivity of the police, the importance given by the judiciary to minor contradictions and lapses in the prosecution's statements cause the offender's easy escape from conviction.

Crimes against women will decline only if the mindset of men towards women changes. Drastic changes are required in school education to make it value based. Until then the goal of empowerment of women will remain a distant dream.

Deuba faces jail threat

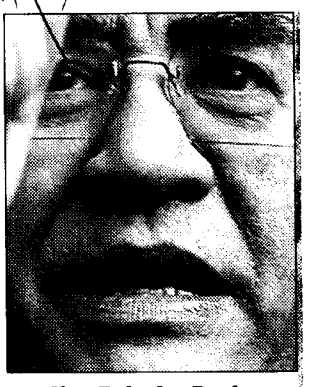
J. HEMANTH

Kathmandu, May 16: The Royal Commission for Corruption Control, set-up by King Gyanendra, today demanded a 10-year jail term for former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and former water resources minister Prakash Man Singh for their alleged role in a water project scam.

The commission in its chargesheet alleged that Deuba and Singh, who is still in detention, had accepted bribes of over Rs 370 million while awarding the construction contract of the Melamchi water project.

The two politicians were recently arrested for refusing to respond to the commission's summons. They, instead, questioned the legality of the commission by saying that it was constituted by Gyanendra with the sole objective of launching a witch hunt against the politicians.

The anti-graft body is expected to give its verdict tomorrow.



Sher Bahadur Deuba

EU urges talks

The EU welcomed the formation of an alliance by the seven major political parties and hoped that it would lead to a dialogue between the parties and Gyanendra.

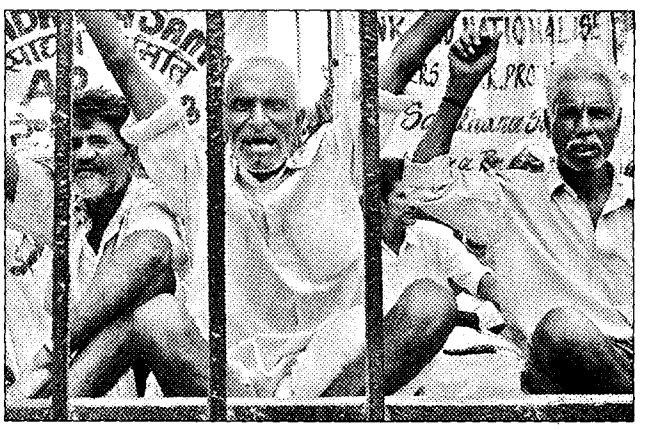
In a statement issued here today, the EU said that its 25 member states strongly believed that the development of multiparty democracy in Nepal must be an essential part of any acceptable and sustainable resolution to the current conflict.

"The EU urges both the king and the political [illegible] to show flexibility [illegible] this dialogue and [illegible] reviving the democratic process," the statement said. It stressed on the need to respect civil and political rights.

17 MAY 2005 THE TELEGRAPH

Trade reforms blamed for farmers' suicide: Study

VIJAY Dutt
London, May 16



PTI
File picture of farmers protesting against shortage of water in an Andhra Pradesh district.

UK-BASED CHRISTIAN Aid, a leading charity has claimed that trade reforms, funded by the British government have caused an agricultural crisis in India leading to the spurt in farmers' suicide.

Thousands of farmers in Andhra Pradesh have died, since a programme of free market measures was implemented by a "hardline liberalising regime" with the help of a £1.65m grant from the Department for International Development (DFID), said the study. The study claims that the dramatic increase in the suicide rate, which saw 2,115 farmers take their lives last year compared with 588 in 2003, is directly linked to British support for policies joining aid to economic liberalisation in developing economies.

Research found that farmers in the state who had traditionally grown their own food were persuaded between 1999 and 2004 to swap to cash crops and incurred large debts, which they were unable to pay due to fluctuating global prices. The result, the study says, has been a catalogue of family tragedies among thousands of farmers who were forced to approach unscrupulous moneylenders to fund fertilisers and pesticides that gave little or no financial return.

Daleep Mukarji, director, Christian Aid, was reported in the Independent saying, "It is a scandal that the British government has backed policies and pumped in British taxpayers' money into schemes which have contributed to poor Indian farmers killing themselves.

"The report shows in stark detail the damage that is done to poor people when the dogma of so-called 'free' trade is pursued in the name of poverty relief." The study commended DFID, which has spent £248m on aid to Andhra Pradesh since 2000, for its work on improving health and education in the region.

But it found that the ministry was also bankrolling the closure, restructuring and privatisation of 43 state-run enterprises, including agencies supporting farmers.

The programme, run by the Naidu government until it was voted out of power last year, was advised by the consultants from the London-based Adam Smith International—a commercial enterprise affiliated to the right-wing free-market think tank, the Adam Smith Institute. The report in the daily said, the consultants were working for the Implementation Secretariat—a body set up by the state government with the help of a £1.65m grant from DFID.

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INDIAN EXPRESS

New dawn in East, but US still asleep

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

FOR so many years, America's economy was so dominant on the world stage, so out front in so many key areas, that we fell into the habit of thinking we were competing largely against ourselves. If we fell behind in one area or another — whether it was math and science skills, broadband capacity or wireless infrastructure — we took the view that: "Oh well, we'll fix that problem when we get to it. After all, we're just competing against ourselves."

In recent years, though, with the flattening of the global playing field, it should be apparent that we are not just competing against ourselves. The opening of China, India and Russia means that young people in these countries can increasingly plug and play — connect, collaborate and compete — more easily and cheaply than ever before. And they are. We, alas, are still coasting along as if we have all the time in the world.

I helped teach a course at Harvard last semester on globalisation, and one day a student told me this story: He was part of a student-run collaboration between students in the US and China. The American and Chinese students had recently started working together by using Skype, the popular, freely downloadable, software that enables you to make free phone calls over the Internet to other Skype users. But what was most interesting, the student told me, was that it was the Chinese students who introduced their US counterparts to Skype. And, he noted, these Chinese students were not from major cities, like Beijing, but from smaller towns.

With the flattening of the global playing field, US is not just competing against itself. The opening of China, India and Russia means that young people there can increasingly plug and play — connect, collaborate and compete — more easily. And they are. America, alas, is still coasting along as if it has all the time in the world

On April 7, CNET News.com reported the following: "The University of Illinois tied for 17th place in the world finals of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest. That's the lowest ranking for the top-performing US school in the 29-year history of the competition. Shanghai Jiao Tong University of China took top honours this year, followed by Moscow State University and the St. Petersburg Institute of Fine Mechanics and Optics. Those results continued a gradual ascendance of Asian and East European schools during the past decade or so. A US school hasn't won the world championship since 1997, when students at Harvey Mudd College achieved the honour. 'The US used to dominate these kinds of programming Olympics,' said David Patterson, president of the Association for Computing Machinery and a computer science professor at the University of California at Berkeley. 'Now we're sort of falling behind'."

Earlier this week, a special report on the Indiana University High School Survey of Student Engagement, which covered 90,000 high school students in 26 states, was published. The study noted that 18 per cent of college-track seniors did not take a math course in their last year in high school — and that "more than a fifth (22 per cent) of first-year college students require remediation in math." Just 56 per cent of the students surveyed said they put a great deal of effort into schoolwork; only 43 per cent said they worked harder than they had expected.

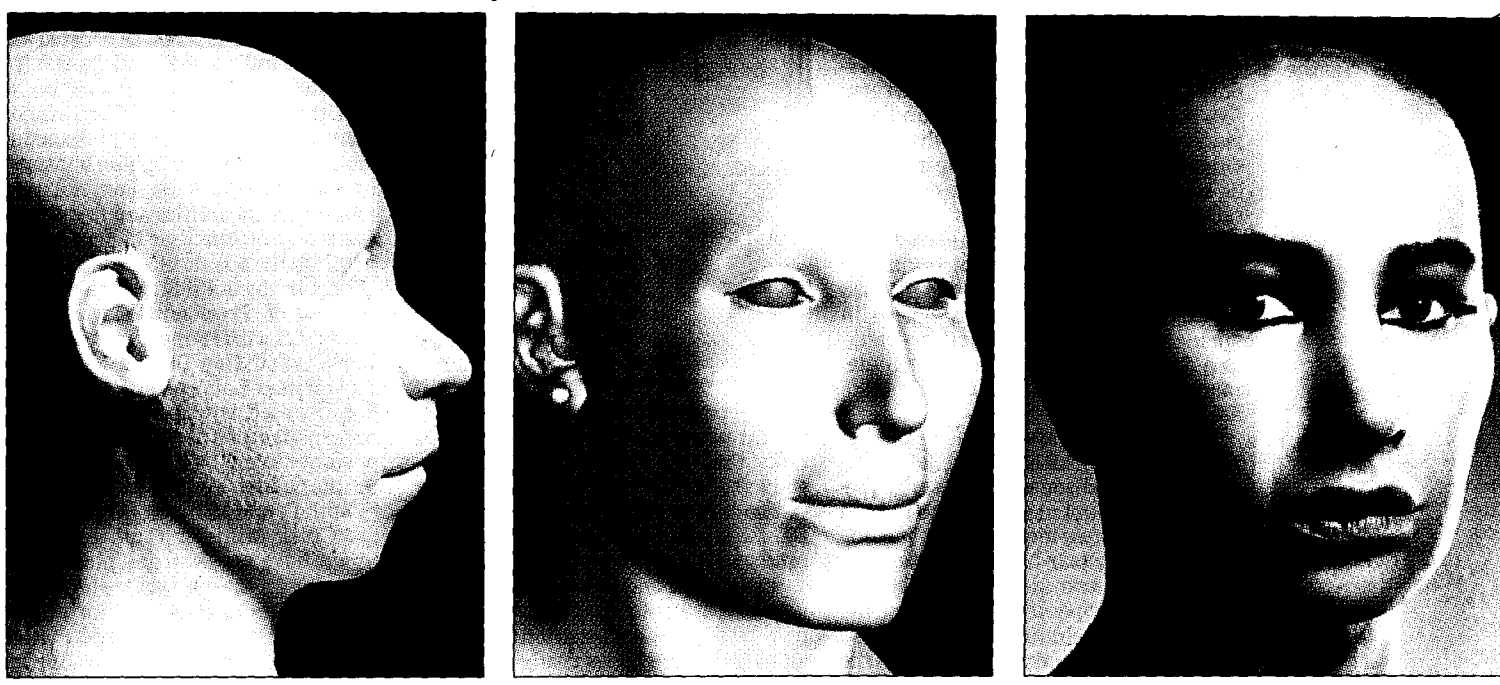
Even though 55 per cent said they studied no more than three hours a week, 65 per cent of those students reported getting mostly A's and B's.

"Students are getting A's and B's, but without studying much," Martha McCarthy, the Indiana University professor who headed the study, told me. "Our fear," she added, "is that when you talk to employers out there, they say they are not getting the skills they need," in part because "the colleges are not getting students with the skills they need." McCarthy said one of the main reasons Indiana did this study is to better inform high school educators what is going on in their own schools so they can find remedies. All of these shortcomings developed over time, McCarthy said, but "we as a nation became complacent about them."

America today reminds me of our last Olympic basketball team — that lackadaisical group that brought home the bronze medal. We think that all we need to do is show up and everyone else will fold — because, after all, we're just competing with ourselves.

And we think we don't need to get focused and play together like a team, with Democrats and Republicans actually working together. Well, on the basketball court — and in a flat world, where everyone now has access to all the same coaching techniques, training methods and scouting reports — a more focused, motivated team always beats a collection of more talented but complacent individuals.

—*NYT*



Using modern techniques, three teams of researchers have painstakingly reconstructed Egyptian King Tutankhamun's looks. PHOTOS: AP

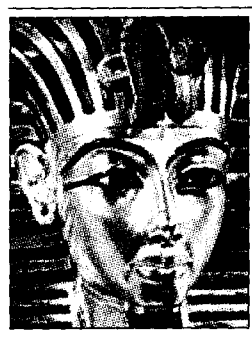
3,300 years on, Tut gets a face

TIM Radford

THIS IS the face of the world's most famous boy king. Tutankhamun died in mysterious circumstances 3,300 years ago in ancient Egypt. He was buried with pomp, golden ornaments and a glorious catafalque and then forgotten for 30 centuries, to be unearthed in one of archaeology's most romantic moments.

Now three teams, backed by National Geographic and the Egyptian authorities, have used forensic techniques to reconstruct the face that history forgot. French and Egyptian scientists knew it was Tutankhamun. The American team did not. Tutankhamun's fragile body has lain undisturbed since an X-ray examination in 1968.

On January 5 the Egyptians, led by Zahi Hawass, secretary general of Egypt's supreme council of antiquities, used a scanner to peer beneath the ancient wrappings of the world's most famous mummy and pick up the contrasting densities of soft tissue and bone. From the 1,700 separate high resolution "slices" of the scan, the researchers assembled 3D models.



The boy king

1344 BC	Tutankhamun born to Kiya, a lesser wife of Egyptian king Akhenaten
AGE 9	Became king when Akhenaten died. Married Ankhesenamun, daughter of Akhenaten and queen Nefertiti
1325 BC	Died after reign of 9 or 10 years. Cause of death – murder or accident – still debated
1922	Tomb discovered by the British Egyptologist Howard Carter

The first results were announced in March: the teams confirmed that Tutankhamun had died at about 19. He had been well fed and there was no evidence of a supposed blow to the back of the head — and therefore no evidence of murder. But there were signs of a recent leg injury. The young king might have died from infection.

The French researchers were led by Jean-Noel Vignal, who works with the police to reconstruct the faces of decayed victims. He used the scanning data to position the nose, mouth and chin, and the probable thickness of skin. He sent his skull "map" to Elisabeth Daynes, an anthropological sculptor in Paris, who added the skin tones of modern-day Egyptians, with eyelashes, kohl and jewellery.

A second team, led by Susan Anton of New York, looked only at the CT data and identified a male aged 18 to 19, of North Africa with Caucasoid affinities: enough to work with an artist on a plaster cast. To everybody's relief, the second likeness closely resembled the first.

The US and French scientists started with a plastic model of the skull. The Egyptians fashioned their own version from the CT data. All three teams ended up with a skull basically the same shape.

Guardian News Service

12 MAY 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Forthcoming reviews

The Truth About the Drug Companies — How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It: Marcia Angell; Pub. by Random House, New York.

The View from Below — Indigenous Society, Temples and the Early Colonial State in Tamil Nadu 1700-1835: Kanakalatha Mukund; Pub. by Orient Longman

BOOK REVIEW

Of lost childhood

Despite the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 that prohibits marriages below the age of 18 in the case of girls and 21 in the case of boys the practice of child marriage continues with great impunity

Geeta Ramaseshan

Child marriages are a matter of great concern in India. Despite the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 (CMRA) that prohibits marriages below the age of 18 in the case of girls and 21 in the case of boys the practice of child marriages continues with great impunity with even infants getting married in some states. The CMRA, however, only punishes the perpetuators of these marriages such as priests, parents and relatives but leaves the status of the marriage untouched.

Such marriages are legal under personal laws. Questions often arise as to whether child marriages should continue to be legal till such time the change comes from within or whether such marriages could be declared null and void. The Committee on the Status of Women in its report in the 1970s was of the opinion that if such marriages were declared void more than half of the marriages in India would become a nullity, which in turn would affect women adversely.

The situation remains the same even today. Even the Child's Rights Convention, one of the most important international conventions in the context of child's rights does not specifically prohibit the practice of child marriage.

Dimensions of the problem

Sagade examines the social, religious, cultural and legal factors that encourage this practice. She starts by addressing the dimensions of the problem of child marriage in India by listing some of the reasons for its prevalence. She points out that there is a great paucity of well-conducted, community-based studies on sexual activity among adolescents whether married or unmarried.

Tracing the history of the CMRA with specific reference to the 19th Century case of Phulmonee in which a child bride died of haemorrhage because of forced sexual intercourse by her husband she argues that the Act was mere tokenism when it was enacted in the last century and continues to be so till date. Phulmonee's case highlighted the existing inadequacies on consent and that of the rape law that ultimately led to raising the legal age of consummation of marriage from 10 to 12. (It is now 15.)

The legal approach

The author is highly critical of the approaches of courts and lawyers towards child marriages. "The Indian judiciary, which is otherwise very active, has not interpreted CMRA as to do real justice to the victims of child marriages. It seems that the judiciary has ignored the repercussions of child marriages in the wider context affecting the whole society and not only the young girls who are victims of such marriages. Equally responsible is the legal community that has not brought the severe consequences of child marriage on a girl child's reproductive health and development to the notice of the judiciary. The combined result is the denial of justice to the young brides."

She advocates an activist approach by asking lawyers to adopt a *Brandeis Brief* (named after Louis D. Brandeis, a judge of the U.S. Supreme Court who a lawyer developed this practice) that would make use of social science and economic studies in addition to legal principles and case law. This she says could be useful in filing a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court. While a PIL is currently pending in the apex court relating to child marriages, can this be the answer to address this problem?

The rights perspective

Sagade thinks so, though she cautions that one must keep in mind that law is not the panacea for all social evils. "It has certainly a positive, educative role, and many times a symbolic role to play."

"It is equally true that unless legal rights are created, it is difficult to demand enforcement of those rights. But the law has its own limitations, particularly in the area of family relations and such issues where sentiments of people are involved."

The author considers the custom of child marriages as violating the human rights of the girl child and a failure on the part of India to meet its obligation under the International Human Rights treaties.

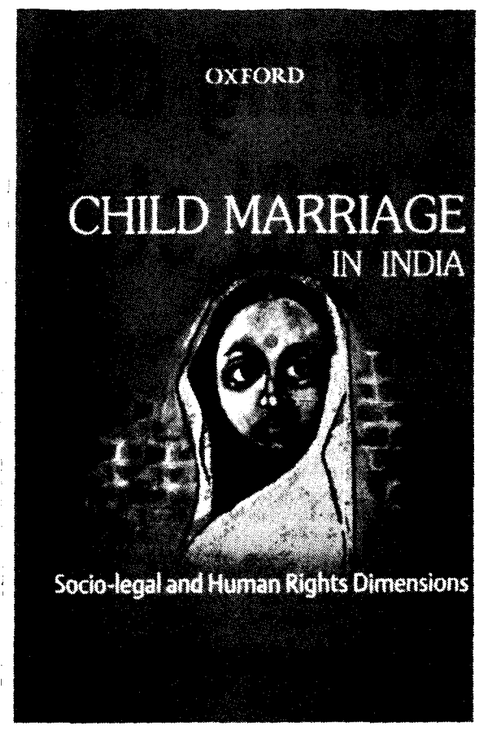
She is critical of the lack of political will in implementing the existing law and expresses concern over the fact that there is still no central legislation for compulsory registration of marriages.

She recommends various strategies and actions, and suggests four principal amendments to the CMRA.

On the issue of declaring such marriages as void, she suggests that such a provision could be postponed for a decade to prepare people to accept the change and provide breathing space to the government to create necessary support structure to give unmarried girls an alternative to marriage.

The book is from a girl child's perspective and does not take note of the role of the boy child in such marriages.

It would be of interest to those studying and working in the area of child marriage and women's rights.



CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA — Socio-legal and Human Rights Dimensions: Jaya Sagade; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. Rs. 545.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the meaning and origin of "to leave no stone unturned"?

(D. Srinivasan, Kallidaikurichi)

When someone says that he will leave no stone unturned what he means is that he will do everything he can in order to achieve something. In other words, he will try every possible means to get the desired results.

*The Chief Minister has said that he would leave no stone unturned to find the culprit.

*Both countries claimed that they would leave no stone unturned to find peace.

In 477 B. C, General Polycrates defeated General Mardonius in a battle. According to rumours, the Persian general, Mardonius had a lot of treasure hidden under his tent. But when Polycrates and his men searched the tent, they found nothing. The disappointed General went to an oracle in Delphi and told him his problem. The oracle instructed him to return to the place where the battle had been fought and to look under every stone for the treasure; he asked him to leave no stone unturned. Polycrates went back and searched under the stones, and sure enough he found the treasure.

Where did the word "hijack" come from?

(K. Rajeevan, Coimbatore)

Nowadays, this word is usually associated with airplanes. When you hijack a plane what you are doing is taking control of it and forcing it to go to a destination of your choice. In the process you make the passengers aboard the aircraft your hostage. It is not only planes that you can hijack, but also other vehicles — cars, trucks, boats and ships. "Hijack" has another meaning as well. It also means to steal goods from vehicles, especially from trucks. Did you know that the original hijacker was someone who stole from other criminals? He specialised in robbing bootleggers — people who sold illicit liquor. According to some scholars, the "hijacker" got his name from the command he gave the people he was about to rob. Apparently, he used to point his gun at his victim and say, "Stick them up high, Jack." In other words, he wanted his victim to raise his hands above his head. Since "Jack" is a very common name in the U.S., he called all his victims "Jack". From "high" and "Jack" we get "hijack".

What is the difference between "life assurance" and "life insurance"?

(R. M. Lakshmi, Madurai)

There is no difference; some companies call themselves "life insurance" companies, while others call themselves "life assurance" companies. They both do the same job. I understand that the term "Assurance Company" is mostly used in countries where English is not spoken as the first language — for example, in countries like Germany, Egypt, and the Philippines.

There is, however, a difference in meaning between "assurance" and "insurance". One normally "assures" against something that will definitely happen — for example death. No matter how important we are, none of us can escape death. *It is* inevitable. You usually "insure" yourself against something that may or may not happen — for example, fire, burglary and flood. Not all of us will have our house destroyed in a fire accident. But some of us do buy "fire insurance" and "flood insurance".

What is the meaning of "monobrow"?

(S. Shanthi, Vellore)

The next time you look at yourself in the mirror, take a good look at the eyebrows. If the two join just above your nose, then you can say that you have a "monobrow". The word is mostly used in informal contexts, and is not found in many dictionaries.

"Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

— **Satchel Paige**

S. UPENDRAN

FROM THE BLURB

One More Step — An Autobiography: M. S. Kohli; Viking, Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. Rs. 495.

A spirited recounting of the adventurous life of Captain Kohli, who is best known as the leader of the first successful Indian expedition to Everest in 1965 that saw a record-breaking nine climbers atop the peak. The success followed two earlier heartbreaking attempts, in one of which he spent a harrowing three nights in the death zone (above 27,650 feet) thus setting a world record.

The author's turbulent childhood prepared him for the rigours of life later on. Born in the scenic Haripur, now in Pakistan, he survived a hair-raising train journey to Amritsar at the time of the Partition. Apart from the indefatigable spirit of heroism and adventure, the account conveys an amazing zest for life and his "never say die" philosophy.

Talking New Politics — Are Other Worlds Possible?: Jai Sen and Mayuri Saini; Zubaan, K-92, First floor, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110016. Rs. 195.

Outcome of the "Open Space" seminar series organised by civil activists and students in Delhi University before the 4th Word Social Forum (WSF) held in Mumbai in January 2004 to discuss the Forum and its politics.

This book, the first in the series that explore the new ideas generated by the discussions that took place on all these issues, comprises chapters based on the presentations made by academics and activists, as well as discussions on questions arising from the presentations:

Can the WSF help us to conceptualise and actualise a new politics? Can this new politics be free from violence? Can the experience and knowledge of great movements such as the movement for the environment and the women's movement contribute to the creation of a new politics? How can such a politics be sustained?

The essays offer different and complex ways of understanding the processes that have helped to shape the WSF and the new politics that seems to be emerging and what all this represents for life, society and politics more generally.

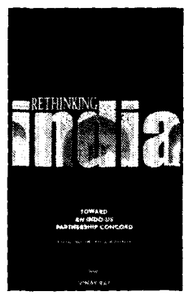
Light on the Upanishads with Sri Aurobindo Darshana: T.V. Kapali Sastry; Pub. by Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, No.63, 13th Main, IV Block East, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011. Rs. 100.

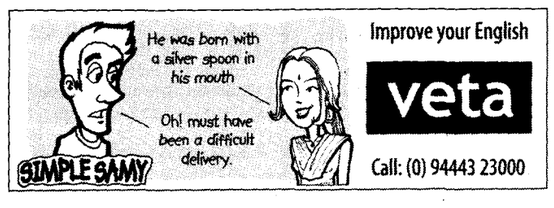
Throws light on six Vidyas (practices) taught in the Upanishads as these spiritual texts according to the seers are meant for Self-realisation on the basis of the thought of Sri Aurobindo. This new edition is of the original published in 1947.

Rethinking India — Toward an Indo-US Partnership Concord: Vinay Rai; Pub. by RF Publications and distributed by Excel Books, A-45, Naraina Phase-I, New Delhi-110028. Rs. 295.

Brings into sharp focus the evolving relationship between the U.S. and India, and suggests that their converging interests at this point in history hold immense potential for a "partnership concord."

The study posits that geopolitical compulsions as well as economic considerations will drive Indo-U.S. relations toward a consonance of aspirations that will not only optimally engage American and Indian energies but will also augur well for the larger basis of global democracy, peace and prosperity.





Announcement Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

OPEN PAGE

Crackdown on Mumbai's nightlife

Maharashtra's action is laudable but not enough. Proactive and rehabilitative measures must follow.

Y.V.N. Sarma

IN THE conservative Chennai, the news item (April 12) "Dance bars banned" in Maharashtra would have gone unnoticed. Even the follow-up reports on the protests mounted by the affected are a surprise catch: another sign of the cosmopolitanism of venerable *The Hindu*. The crowning piece, of course, is the critique offered by Kalpana Sharma on April 15 in news analysis. An irresistible coincidence and the issue needs to be joined.

Coming close on the heels of the drive against illegal slums, the new initiative of the government of Maharashtra is against slime and sleaze that have come to characterise the famed night life city of Mumbai. The measure is all the more appreciable as it comes from a government headed by the Congress while the one headed by the Hindutva brigade did precious little to rein in what is easily the ugliest spot on the Mumbai's moral skyline.

Mumbai prides itself in its purchase power. In this commodity paradise, women are also a paraded commodity. In the vast market everything is up for trade: traits, talents, taboos and turn-ons! Nothing is sacrosanct in the mega bazaar — much less the modesty of woman.

Dens of depravity

For one who spent a decade in Mumbai watching its glories, the dance bar is gory stuff representing a civilisational and cultural cancer: sheer and crass commoditisation of women. These bars, havens for the lewd and ludicrous, have slowly acquired social acceptance over years — perhaps a mark of our degenerative progress which reduced dance to the gyrations of the gaudily clad hungry women in these dens of depravity.

The mushrooming of such bars over the years in Mumbai has been tremendous with the migration of destitutes from all parts of the country to the land of opportunities. The dance bars became a ready buy: easy money as reward for easy virtue. The spiralling growth of bars, which were once a hangout for anti-social elements, represents a culture shock with youngsters of various backgrounds frequenting them (recall the heists for money by juveniles over the years). The cancer is now spreading to various cities in Maharashtra and other States as well.

The action of the government initiated by Home Minister R.R. Patil is worth saluting. However, it should be followed up by proactive and rehabilitative measures offering alternative sources to the hapless women trapped in the most 'happening city' of India. The Hindu ethos talks of *dharma, artha, kama, moksha*. But the outright trading of *kama* for *artha* is neither *dharma* nor will it lead to *moksha* from poverty.

As Gandhiji said the hungry man's religion is bread but let us not reduce life standards to the level of loaves alone. The degradation and dehumanising of the quality of life, particularly the young minds, need to be halted by the strong measures initiated by the government. Mumbai boasts of several world class corporate houses. Can't they lend a hand in ridding the city of its grime?

Let's welcome the action and wish the proponents the best. It is also the duty of the media to welcome such bold moves rather than find fault on irrelevant technicalities and shed the 'thin skinned' approach.

Iran gas & pipeline politics

There is more in the U.S. objection than meets the eye

S. Ramanathan

THE U.S. has issued a veiled threat to both India and Pakistan, expressing its concern against the proposed gas pipeline from Iran, apparently on grounds of Iran's alleged nuclear intransigence. multaneously, it has offered F16 planes to Pakistan and defence equipment and nuclear energy cooperation to India. There is obviously something more than meets the eye in the U.S. objection to the pipeline.

After the infamous 9/11, it was a great revelation to the U.S. that

* More of West Asia oil has started moving eastward. India's import from Saudi Arabia has increased fourfold during the last five years.

* The swing production potential of Saudi Arabia is now only about one million barrels a day and hence unable to play any decisive role in OPEC's oil price control.

* Spot markets have sprung up increasingly with unaccounted production; thus, quotas have limited relevance.

Caspian fantasy

The U.S. expects oil to continue as primary energy for at least another five decades. It has therefore shifted its focus to the oil rich but landlocked Central Asian countries.

The Caspian fantasy of the U.S. policy administration, even during the Clinton regime, envisaged one oil pipeline and three alternative gas pipeline routes from Central Asia to Western Europe.

The Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, free from Russian and Iranian dependence, to the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, was flawed because of a "missing link" of about 800 km from Tengiz fields of Kazakhstan to the Caspian, which would require transit through Russia.

The Transcaspian gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey was aborted because of economic and financial realities. In the meantime, the cheap gas from South Pars giant offshore gas field of Iran, the northern continuation of the giant Qatar North field, has been contracted by Turkey and a pipeline laid. The U.S. does not contemplate any action against Turkey because of its extensive cooperation with Israel and its vital base in Incirbik in southeast Turkey.

A trans-Afghan pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan was proposed. However, the geopolitics played by Russia in the "failed coup" of Turkmenistan in November 2002 paid rich political and economic dividends in April 2003 to Russia. The two countries signed a 25-year natural gas agreement which if successful is projected to sell two trillion cubic metres of gas to Gazprom at about half the prevailing price in the European market. There is an option to renegotiate the price in 2007.

IF THE IRAN-PAKISTAN-INDIA PIPELINE IS ALLOWED TO FRUCTIFY, IT WILL EFFECTIVELY RULE OUT THE LAST CHANCE FOR A HOLD FOR THE U.S. IN CENTRAL ASIA

The fourth pipeline is a phantom line from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Iran, which has totally different implications.

Dependence on Russia

The European Union is already nervous of excessive dependence on Russian gas (36 per cent of Western Europe and over 50 per cent of Central Europe is dependent on Russian gas). Russia is envisaging for itself a central role for gas, analogous to Saudi Arabia in OPEC for oil, and may consider formation of an organisation of gas producing and exporting countries. If the Russian Turkmenistan deal is continued beyond 2007, it will place Kremlin in firm control of the European market. This has killed the U.S. and Royal Dutch Shell supported Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey pipeline. As much as 70 per cent of Kazakh current oil production is already piped to Russia. If the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline is allowed to fructify, it will effectively rule out the last chance for a hold for the U.S. in Central Asia.

It is in this context that the U.S. threat has to be viewed. The following points are relevant:

a. Pakistan is in a desperate need of at least ten million cubic metres of gas a day by 2010 to meet the needs of the existing industries due to the depletion of its own Sui field. The South Pars pipeline is needed urgently for this and additional developmental requirements. Pakistan is no less a friend to the U.S. than Turkey.

b. India needs the gas for its future development. The quantity will, however, have to be carefully decided in conjunction with the reliability and deliverability of gas from the Godavari basin and the utilisation of residual fuel oil from North Gujarat oil and even more from the Barmer fields of Rajasthan of heavy oil. A pipeline can neither be underdesigned nor allowed to run half empty.

c. The world's biggest gas field in Iran, South Pars, is being/proposed to be developed in 30 phases. The first 12 phases are under way and each phase is designed to produce about 30 million cubic metres of gas and 40,000 barrels of condensate a day.

d. State sponsored terrorism is different from local disturbances. Pakistan is certainly interested in a large capacity pipeline from Iran since that would reduce the cost of transportation for Pakistan as well. While clauses will certainly be built into an international contract against possible risks, Pakistan will look at this pipeline as a win-win situation and need not be expected to sponsor terrorism.

e. Instead of dissipating energies in such far flung areas as Venezuela, Angola and Sakhalin, India's diplomatic activism should be focussed around Saudi Arabia, Iran and Central Asia.

(The writer is a former Member, ONGC)

Privatise agricultural extension services

B. Rajasree

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION — a system where people are motivated through a proper approach to help themselves by applying science in their daily lives in farming, home making and community living — plays a pivotal role in the community development. It is a two-way channel that brings scientific information to village people and takes their problems to scientific institutes for solution. In India, as in many other developing countries, the task of extension goes beyond an educational role, dealing with the human resource development of its clients.

The traditional extension model is based on government intervention. Our government extension programmes, especially in agriculture and animal husbandry as followed for the past 50 years, have focused on providing technical, economic advice to farmers as well as on implementing the governmental agricultural policy; they are organised and financed by the government and the extension officers are civil servants; they have been, in general, closely related to the policy goals of the government.

Limitations

This approach is not without limitations. For the government, it involves high cost with low impact of the extension programmes. It has led to growing conflicts between farmers' interest and policy goals. On the other hand, farmers are not able to get need-based, timely services. At the same time, from the extension worker's point of view, there is no financial incentive or reward system for good performance. With depleting fiscal support and changes in public priorities, there is a general consensus that governmental service including extension should be demand-driven and with minimal budgetary support. We have been experiencing better results in other fields since the early 1990s when the government started allowing private players to perform a leading role. Hence, it is worth pondering limiting the government's role in this field also, paving the way for the private sector.

Already in vogue

Some of the elements of privatisation are already in vogue in India by way of cooperatives, marketing federations, etc. However, there needs to be a greater thrust.

A successful privatisation programme should have a vision of its goals resulting in a clear mission statement and formulation of a strategy and flexibility in managing the change process; it should have market orientation and the staff should be made accountable through performance monitoring; above all, services must be needs-driven. For an effective change-over, it is advisable to privatise in a phased manner without affecting the interests of farmers (clients) and the existing service providers. The following approaches are suggested:

a. Collection of a nominal charge from the beneficiaries which may be increased gradually in the ensuing years.

b. Financing by organisations engaged in agro processing and input delivery industries — poultry breeders, feed manufacturers, private manufacturers of medicine, vaccines and farm implements. At initial stages, the government can provide grants/subsidies to projects in this field till they become self-sustainable.

c. Creation of service specific corpus funds raised from the fees for the services provided which has to be spent on R&D and extension of new technologies.

d. Gradual autonomy for the agencies engaged in extension like creation of extension boards with a clear direction that they should become self-sustainable in a given time-frame eventually leading to full autonomy with zero funding by the government.

Nikaah reaches the Internet

IANS
Lucknow, April 24

A MUSLIM family in Lucknow solemnised their daughter's nikaah ceremony over the Internet. Shabnam, the 26-year-old bride, said "*Qubool hai*" (I accept) to groom Abdul Kalaam in front of a web camera on Friday. While Shabnam sat in a cyber cafe in Lucknow, Kalaam was in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Shabnam's brother Hazrat Ali said his mother and elder brother had finalised the match with Kalaam, who hails from TN. "We arranged the wedding. My sister and Kalaam have never met before. She will soon join her husband."

The family arranged the Internet marriage as the groom was unable to get leave to come to India.

That Kalaam was a computer engineer only made things easier. "In fact, the suggestion for the Internet wedding came from Kalaam," said Ali. The nuptials were not without the usual gathering of family members and celebrations.

PTI
The nikaah being conducted at a cyber cafe in Lucknow.

At least 40 relatives of the Ali family were huddled up in the cybercafe to witness the unique ritual that was followed by a small celebration and a feast at home. Kalaam too was joined by a few friends in Makkah. The nikaah also had the blessings of the religious heads. Ali said the family had sought the approval of the Ulema before formalising the union.

Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali, Naib Imam of Lucknow's Idgah, said: "A nikaah on the Net is valid as it fulfils every provision of the shariat."

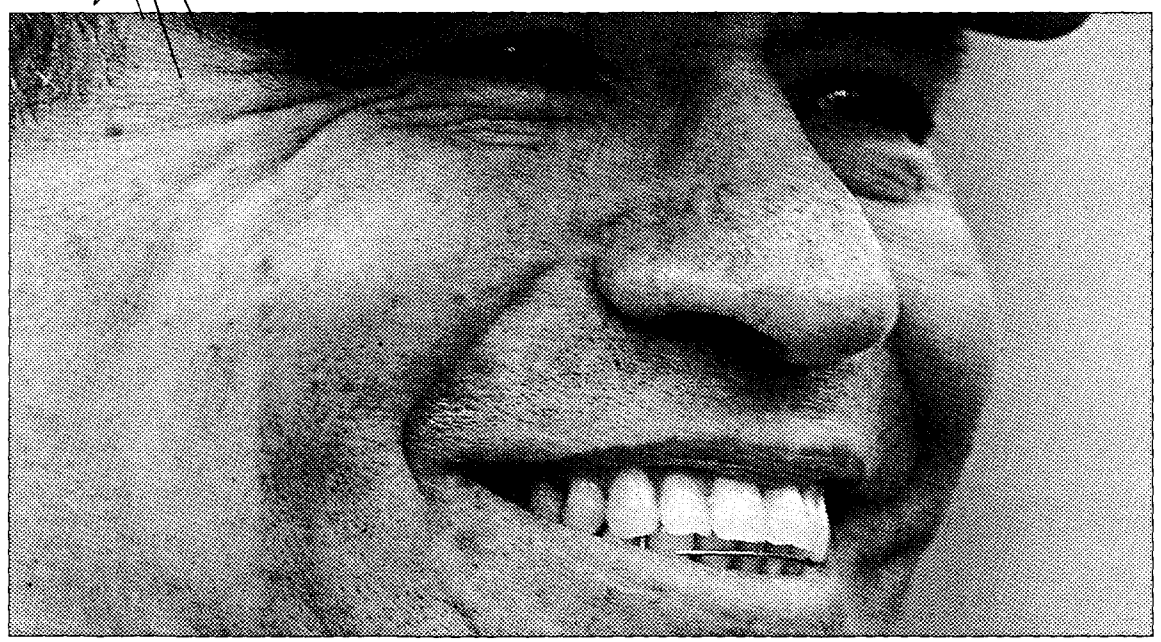
25 APR 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Army brass cleared in Abu Ghraib case

Associated Press
Washington, April 23



LT GEN. Ricardo Sanchez (photograph alongside), faulted by some for leadership failures in the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal, has been cleared by the army of all allegations of wrongdoing and will not be punished.

Three officers who were among Sanchez's deputies during the period of the abuse in the fall of 2003 also have been cleared. An army one-star general has been reprimanded, and the outcome of seven other senior Army officer cases could not be learned Friday. Sanchez, who became the senior US commander in Iraq in June 2003, two months after the fall of Baghdad, has not been accused of criminal violations. It is unclear, however, whether the controversy surrounding his role in Iraq will stand in the way of his earning a fourth star.

After assessing the allegations against Sanchez and taking sworn statements from 37 people, the army's inspector general, Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Green, concluded that the allegations were unsubstantiated, according to officials familiar with the details of the probe. Green reached the same conclusion in the cases of two generals and a colonel who worked on Sanchez's staff.

The officials who disclosed the findings spoke on condition of anonymity as the results on Sanchez and 11 other officers who were the subject of Green's scrutiny have not yet been released and Congress has not been fully briefed. The question of accountability among senior army and defence department officials who were in positions of responsibility on Iraq detention and interrogation policy has been hotly debated in Congress.

Some Democrats accuse the Pentagon of foisting all the blame onto low-ranking soldiers. In a statement issued Friday that did not mention Sanchez or other specific cases, John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that as soon as all Pentagon assessments of accountability are complete he will hold a committee hearing "to examine the adequacy of those reviews" and to hear senior civilian and military officials address the issue.

Warner said he agrees with one investigation report that concluded last year that commanders should be held accountable for their action or inaction and that military as well as civilian leaders in the Pentagon "share this burden of responsibility."

In addition to clearing Sanchez, the army inspector general has determined Sanchez's former top deputy, Maj. Gen. Walter Wojdakowski, Maj. Gen. Barbara Fast, or to Col. Mark Warren should not be punished.

Policy's bitter fruit

TUCKED AWAY in the India-China joint statement and among the diplomatese on border negotiations and UN roles and high rhetoric on information technology cooperation is a reference to bitter gourd. This attracted little attention from the media. The terrible thing for India is that the larger issue around this reference attracts little attention from the government. The joint statement spoke of establishing sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) for trade in certain items, bitter gourd among them. SPS are basically technical and scientific measures to ensure safe (from the point of view of health) trade in plant (phyto refers to plants) and animal products as well as to reduce the possibility of countries using health safeguards as an excuse to prevent imports; such excuses come under the broad heading of non-trade barriers (NTBs). SPS is a controversial subject with many disputes between countries on safety definitions and NTBs. For India, however, SPS represents a policy failure.

This country is potentially a world-beater in fruit and vegetable exports. Varying agro-climatic conditions, the absence of a severe winter except in parts of the north, strong indigenous research capability and the ability to absorb foreign research, excellent large-scale farming traditions and corporate interest in agro industry, all of these could have made India an export powerhouse in fruit and vegetables had the government supplied a few basic infrastructural facilities like cold chains for doing business in perishables and the power supply needed to run them.

It is astonishing that a traditional strength remains unexploited simply because administrators cannot be bothered to effect elementary modernisations. More so because cold chains not only guarantee good export markets but also help to even out domestic price fluctuations and make domestic produce a better competitor of some imports. When the neighbourhood fruit seller offers crunchy 'Australian' apples, he is basically saying domestic varieties are a victim of bad business practices. Chinese consumers may get to taste India's bitter gourd. But India would still be missing out on a sweet taste of a major economic success.

14 APR 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

MATTERS OF POLICY: *Blair cannot conceal advice given to him on the legality of the Iraq war*

Courting trouble

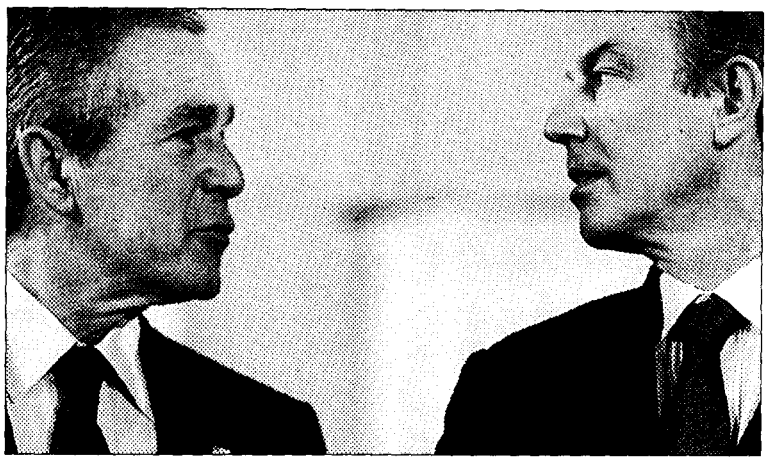
By A.G. Noorani

TONY BLAIR faces a bruising legal battle in the courts, not only in Britain but also in the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg. On December 4, 2004, Rob Evans of *The Guardian* wrote to his office requesting disclosure, under the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, of copies of "all documents drawn up by the Attorney General (Lord Goldsmith) and received by the prime minister which gave him advice on the legality of the military intervention against Iraq", the identities of any other legal advisors who "were involved" and the dates on which they were approached and copies of their advice, if any.

The request was refused on January 25, in so far as it concerned the AG. Answer on advice from others was deferred. The grounds of refusal were professional privilege, formulation of policy, confidential information obtained from another State, etc. As the Act provides, a review followed. Evans is armed with 'advice' from Keir Starmer, Q.C., signed on February 14. The exemptions relied on are qualified by the test of 'public interests'. Blair chose to 'cherry-pick' the AG's opinion in 2003 when some of it was disclosed. It is a waiver of privilege.

On March 17, 2003, the parliamentary foreign affairs committee was given a memorandum by the Foreign Office (FO) on the legal aspects. On the same day, the AG's 'opinion' that use of force in Iraq would be legal was put out in a written answer in Parliament.

The Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, can order disclosure. His orders can be challenged in the high court. On March 11, 2005, he launched an investigation into the concealment of the AG's formal opinion of March 7, 2003. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002. The US conceded that it had "no automacity" with respect to the use of force against Iraq. Russia, France and Germany said in a joint statement that if Iraq refused to keep its promises, it would "be then for the council to decide on the basis of the report on the WMD. The US and Britain could not get the second resolution; they went to war, nonetheless, and found no WMDs. The AG had opined that Resolution 1441 sufficed; as did the FO. The next day Elizabeth Wilmshurst, deputy legal advisor to the FO, resigned. Her chief, Sir Franklin Berman, shared her doubts.



LOOKING BEHIND HIS SHOULDER: Tony Blair (right) with George Bush

Since then, Blair has been hit by one damaging disclosure after another. On February 25, 2004, the AG withdrew the case under the Official Secrets Act against Katharine Gun, a translator in the GCHQ, for leaking to *The Observer* in March 2003 an e-mail sent by the US National Security Agency, asking the GCHQ for help in spying on the Security Council's delegates, on the eve of the vote on the second resolution. The reason was that her lawyers sought disclosure of his opinion in full in order to contest the legality of the war and establish her defence of public interest — saving lines in an illegal war.

Worse followed four days later, when *The Observer* reported that the Chief of Defence Staff, Sir Michael Boyce, had "demanded an unequivocal statement that the invasion of Iraq was lawful". Goldsmith had written to Blair in January 2003 that the war might be illegal without a second resolution but "was forced hastily to redraft his legal advice... to give an 'unequivocal' assurance to the armed forces that the conflict would not be illegal". Without it, Boyce felt, his "troops could have laid themselves open to charges of murder in war". Boyce confirmed to *The Observer* on March 7, 2004, that he had, indeed, asked for the assurance on March 10, 2003. It was given on March 15, five days before the attack on Iraq. "An earlier draft of the advice, produced around March 7, prevaricated." More, on February 10, the AG was in the US to meet its AG, the infamous John Ashcroft, but remained "undecided". All Boyce "eventually got was... two or three lines saying our proposed actions were lawful". Around this time, Ann Abraham, the Ombudsman, began a probe into the government's refusal to disclose the facts to the public.

Blair's problems did not end there. *The Guardian* reported on February 24 this year that while the March 7 "written advice" said that war without a second resolution "could be found illegal in an international court", by March 13, he "abandoned his view". How and why? "Transcripts of evidence given in private by the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, to an official inquiry by Lord Butler suggest that the crucial advice on the legality of war, presented to Parliament in his name, was written for him by two of Tony Blair's closest allies. In them, the attorney general suggests his parliamentary statement giving legal backing to Britain's participation in the invasion was 'set out' by Charles Falconer, then Home Office Minister and now Lord Chancellor, and Baroness Morgan, the prime minister's director of political-government relations at a meeting in Downing Street on March 13, 2003." another on March 7, a meeting on March 13; two or three lines to Boyce which "did not purport to be a summary of my confidential legal advice to government". Lord Falconer's legal advice on the validity of Prince Charles's wedding was published. There are a couple of precedents when law officers' advice has been published.

Philippe Sands' disclosures last February put all the pieces in place. "A key meeting took place in July 2002, at which various ministers, including the attorney general, were present. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw complained that the case was thin, not least because Saddam Hussein was not threatening neighbours and had a lesser WMD capability than Libya, North Korea or Iran. The attorney general confirmed that self-defence and humanitarian intervention were not justified. The head of MI6, Sir Richard Dearlove, confirmed to the BBC on March 20, 2005, that he had told Blair on July 22, 2002, that war was inevitable and the US was fixing the intelligence. Michael Foster, MP and assistant to the AG, confirmed that he was later "asked the question, would regime change be lawful *per se*, and he said no, it wouldn't".

If a second resolution was unnecessary, why did the US and Britain try so frantically to get one? The AG's opinion on March 7, 2003, is not a great secret. It runs into 13 pages and prevaricates. The PM could go to war; but "if the argument were to come before a court of law, it might well be unsuccessful". Boyce, the soldier, had no time for the quibble.

Sands adds that in a cabinet meeting on March 17, "ministers were provided with just two pieces of paper, the same document that was delivered in the House of Lords later that day," not the text. A cabinet office document of May 1992 entitled 'Questions of Procedure for Ministers' (para 23) says that if the conclusions are furnished to the cabinet, "the complete text of the (legal advice) should be attached".

Worse followed on March 23, 2005. The FO published Wilmshurst's letter minus a key para which Channel 4 published. She believed that "an unlawful use of force on such scales amounts to the crime of aggression" and that, in a matter of days, the AG had changed his mind twice before advising on March 13, 2003, that the war was legal.

A 'senior Westminster source' said of Goldsmith, "He is the only person I know in this business who behaved thoroughly dishonourably." The AG's close friend, Tony Blair, has a greater claim to that censure.

05 APR 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Baingan turns 'American'

Surajit Dasgupta in New Delhi

April 4. — Call it the fallacy of a capitalistic patents regime or the American "smartness" in laying claims over crops traditionally grown outside the USA, the good old *baingan* (eggplant) is no longer ours. The brinjal you get from your vegetable vendor is now a foreigner's intellectual property.

"It is an approach to seed litigation," Mr Frank G Basile, the American farmers' lawyer, said. "I believe the seed crop was hybridised with the Indian crop and what we got was wild weed eggplant." The eggplants, nurtured from the seed since March 1999 in a greenhouse, sprouted in late June, Mr Paul Earnest Jr, a Bridgeton farmer, said. But the colour was not the "deep, dark purple" that the consumers expected, but "more like something from a crayon". Also, the eggplants were shaped like basketballs. Many around Cumberland County that summer reported disappointing results. The culprit: bad seeds sold as Special HiBush Eggplant by Harris Moran Seed Co.

In January, the eggplant growers won a settlement for the unwanted crop. Harris Moran had said the farmers were due some $5,250, the purchase price of seeds. But The Modesto, a California-based firm, agreed to pay $1.55 million after a judge issued a ruling that put Harris Moran at risk of trial. Thousands of acres of eggplants had been ploughed under and farmers claimed losses worth nearly $2.76 million. The seeds were not the expected Special HiBush Eggplant and the judge determined that New Jersey and federal truth-in-labelling laws trumped the Uniform Commercial Code, one which could have limited the company's liability to the price of seeds. But the seed industry is yet to take notice of the case. In Delhi, Harris Moran representative, lawyer Mr Jay H Greenblatt, said he found no broad implications from the ruling. "Another judge in another county, or the same county, on another day, may very well rule a different way," he said. This means India still has hope, only if our judiciary takes note.

05 APR 2005 THE STATESMAN

WMDs and India's security

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION — Options for India: Rear Admiral Raja Menon — Editor; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 330.**

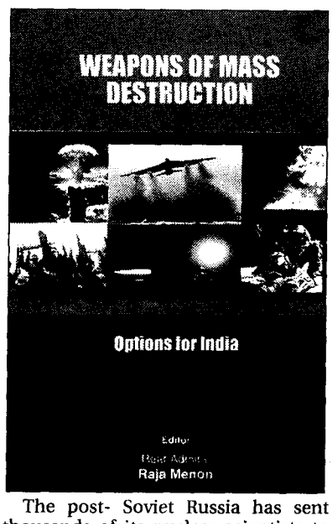
WEAPONS OF Mass Destruction (WMD) has become common parlance with the U.S. launching action against Iraq for the alleged, still unsubstantiated crime of producing and stockpiling WMDs. After Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya and Syria are the designated rogue states accused of possible use of WMDs, which could invite retribution from the U.S. With the collapse of the U.S.S.R and the balance of power conferring uncontested superpower status to the U.S., Washington believes that it will determine who possesses WMDs and who can use them without provoking U.S. action.

WMDs include, besides nuclear weapons, also chemical weapons (CW) and biological toxin (BT) weapons. Their purpose is destruction of human lives and material. From the common or garden variety of warfare with swords and weapons in ancient times, methods of killing and destruction have progressed beyond recognition. From killing a 1000 people in the days before Christ, to the times of the coming into use of gunpowder with a killing capacity of tens of thousands, the Second World War raised killing capacity to about a million. The use of air power brought about the adding of another zero to the figure and now the missile age talks in terms of killing capacity per hour of a billion persons.

Limited use

The CW and BTs according to this bunch of papers have limited littoral war use as their killing capacity is limited and their end results not economical. These weapons used in Vietnam War by the U.S. are now considered to be more feasible for the terrorist organisations operating all over the globe. It is easier to make these weapons and deliver them for small-scale operations planned by terrorists than to produce and deliver nuclear weapons.

And with the U.S. still determined to decide which countries can produce nuclear weapons and how, nuclear disarmament, which was close to its heart when the USSR overtook them in nuclear capability, is eluding international agreement. The U.S. and Russia have now decided to reduce their stockpiles. But, neither the Western allies nor the rest of the world are yet agreeable to trust the nuclear powers to safeguard their freedom.



The post- Soviet Russia has sent thousands of its nuclear scientists to work for the U.S. China whose initial progress in nuclear weapon technology battened on its relations with the USSR, the Koreans who managed to develop their nuclear capabilities through Chinese technology passed on to them by Pakistan and countries like Libya which shopped around in the grey world arms market to acquire nuclear capability, all have defence as their main aim.

Apart from believing that nuclear disarmament regimens are not applicable to the U.S. and that first use possibilities in the U.S. interests cannot be denied, the U.S. is also blocking agreement on the use of chemical and BT weaponry. There is little hope that the next meeting for the purpose next year will produce any agreement.

Nuclear proliferation

The U.S. decides who can deal in nuclear technology. The former chairman of the Centre of International Politics, Organization and Disarmament Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and Senior Associate Member of the St. Antony's College, Oxford, Matin Zuberi has clearly exposed the activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan of Pakistan in aiding nuclear proliferation.

He says it would be difficult to believe that Khan exported Pakistan's nuclear technology to Iran and Korea without the support of the Pakistani Establishment. Khan's work continued from the mid- 1970s. And even after Khan's involvement in exporting technology and aiding the Iranian and Korean governments has been exposed and admitted, the U.S. is ignoring the whole subject.

India's interests

Arundhati Ghose, who was India's permanent representative to the U.N. offices in Geneva and the Conference on Disarmament, in the article "Implications and Options for India's Security Interests" has clearly shown that the U.S. is not about to subscribe to any international control and supervision even in regard to CW and BTs.

As for India, the world situation is further complicated because, "India is a potential victim of biological warfare (BW) attacks or blackmail by sub-national groups, acting either alone, at the behest of a hostile country or the mafia. The threat to India is real and action needs to be taken urgently, if we are to prevent any incident that might have disastrous consequences for the country as a whole."

The collection of articles in this book also show how the WMDs have become items of trade with the developed world fully engaged in it, including the U.S. commercial establishments and the developing nations and terrorist organisations becoming the buyers.

E. R. GOPINATH

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

"Hey, where are you off to so early in the morning?"

"To the station. Have to pick up my uncle Balu."

"I remember your uncle Balu! Isn't he extremely tall and good looking?"

"He is tall, but the rest of him has gone to seed, I am afraid."

"You make your uncle sound like a plant. What does 'gone to seed' mean?"

"When you say that someone has gone to seed, what you mean is that they are not as good looking or as healthy as they once were. For example, most actors go to seed once they quit the film industry."

"That's true. I ran into my former physics teacher the other day. He seems to have gone to seed."

"Sounds good. It is also possible to say, 'run to seed'. My neighbour is running to seed."

"Is it OK to use this expression with things as well?"

"Yes, it is. According to some of my friends, the economy has gone to seed."

"My friend has a farmhouse. When he bought it, it was great. But now it's gone to seed."

"Unfortunately my uncle's old farmhouse is running to seed as well."

"That's too bad. Tell me, why is your uncle coming to see you?"

"He's planning to start a new business, and he's looking for some seed money."

"Why would a man running to seed ask for seed money?"

"That's a good one! Seed money is money that you give someone to help them start a business or a project. My friend was willing to give me 20 lakhs as seed money."

"I don't believe you. No one in his right mind would give you seed money. You are incapable of starting your own business."

"That's true. Even if I did start one, it would probably run to seed pretty quickly."

"I am sorry to hear that your uncle isn't doing well. The man is so energetic and so full... ."

"....yes, he is a real go-getter all right. At least he was."

"Haven't a clue what you are talking about."

"When you refer to someone as a 'go-getter' what you mean is that the individual is very energetic. He is full of confidence and has the will to succeed. For example, my cousin Kunthala is a real go-getter. I wouldn't be too surprised if she becomes a General Manager very soon."

"The only way to turn this company around is to replace the dead wood with some young go-getters."

"If my uncle heard you say that, he would go ballistic."

"When you 'go ballistic' you become very angry, don't you?"

"That's right! When you go ballistic, you lose your cool easily. You become extremely angry about something. For example, when Raju heard that Ganesh was not ready with the report, he went ballistic."

"There are times when Amrit goes ballistic for no reason at all."

"Everyone was shocked when Saurabh went ballistic during the meeting."

"Saurabh went ballistic! That must have been a sight to behold. But tell me, why would your uncle go ballistic if I said that we must replace the dead wood with go-getters?"

"It's simple. According to him, it was the go-getters who ran the company to seed."

"I see. So, are you going to give your uncle seed money?"

"I don't think so. If I did, my parents would go ballistic!"

***** ***** *****

"She tells enough white lies to ice a wedding cake."
— Margot Asquith

S. UPENDRAN

Tragedy too deep for tears

SHADOWS IN CAGES — Mother and Child in Indian Prisons: Ruzbeh Nari Bharucha; Fusion Books, X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-110020. **Rs. 225** (With free CD).

ONE CANNOT be too sure that visuals have outstripped the printed word. Often we would prefer our own experience to provide the right imagination for complementing a news item. While the CD gifted with *Shadows in Cages* is revelatory, it is the author's pen that holds our attention better by avoiding the colours of the visual that romanticise the drab reality.

To be born into a punishment or pushed into it for no fault of the child is the terrifying reality of Indian prisons today. Bharucha has done well to present the Indian conditions in which children of prisoners have to live till they are five years old. For, the mother cannot abandon the baby in the womb or in her hand when she is isolated from humanity.

While this tragedy is too deep for tears, the causes for the crimes that have made such living terrors possible are an avoidable legion. An argument over water at a public tap: one dead woman and two in prison. Domestic abuse: a dead child and the young mother charged with murder.

"What must it be like to spend nearly five years in a closed cell, day in and day out, repenting that in sheer anger and frustration, you had killed your own child? My God, one did not have to die to go to hell. Often hell was right here ... in our hearts and minds. What could have driven the woman to kill her own child? Poverty, hunger, abuse ... what kind of madness could have propelled a mother to murder her own bundle of joy?"

Social document

Such questions by the author could help the readers become socially conscious in their own spheres of existence. For compassion remains alive in the heart of the really poor like Madan and Ramu's mother. The author's interviews with voluntary helpers, lawyers, prison authorities, the accused and the children themselves are informative and educative.

The interaction with Kiran Bedi is inspirational. Some of the pages can also administer a trauma to us as the manner in which Tihar Jail became a hellhole again when R.S. Gupta succeeded Bedi. There is so much to know about the Indian Penal Code and the Jail manuals for different states! In any case, there is a law for the rich and another for the very rich, and the poor are just goats on their way to the slaughterhouse.

Fortunately, there are pockets of sanity still. Justice Krishna Iyer. R. Sreekumar. And Bedi's assurance, "Wherever combined determination is based on innate goodness ... anything is possible." The author deserves praise for this sane, genuine social document.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

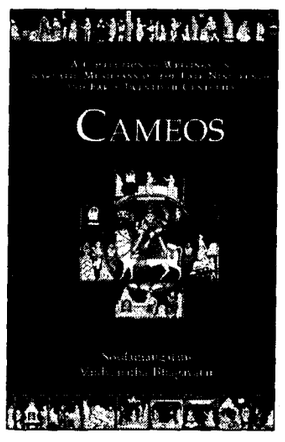
Legendary Carnatic musicians

CAMEOS — A Collection of Writings on Karnatic Musicians of the Late 19th and 20th Centuries: Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar; Translated by P. Sambamoorthy, R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar, Padma Narayanan; Pub.by Sunadham, 11 B, Surya Apartments, 18/16, Baliah Avenue, Luz, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 250**

INFORMATION AVAILABLE on eminent musicians of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries is inadequate. What little is available is marred by inaccuracies and apocryphal observations.

Personal rapport

This Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar's brief portrayals of his contemporaneous musicians are precise and adequate. Bhagavatar penned a balanced characterisation eschewing unwarranted criticism.



As a famous Harikatha exponent of yesteryears Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar knew all the musicians he wrote abut and enjoyed a personal rapport with them.

His writings were in Tamil, translated later into English by P. Sambamoorthy, Rangaramanuja Iyengar and Padma Narayanan. Some of these articles were published in *The Hindu*, nearly 60 years ago.

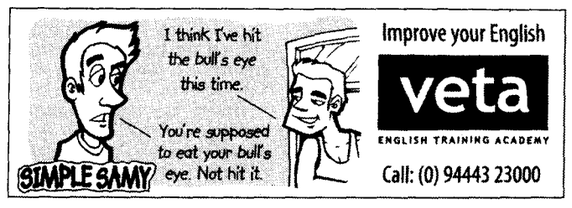
The book provides information on 65 famous musicians of different genres and will be a source of authentic information.

Tributes to Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar by leading personalities like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, K. Subramanian and "Avvai" Shanmugam are also included.

Cameos has titular fidelity and is a welcome addition to any archival collection. Students of the history of Carnatic music will find this book to be of high reference value.

Very welcome publication, brought out by Bhagavatar's descendents, led by his grandson, M. Rammohan.

V.V. SRIVATSA



OPEN PAGE

Health care outsourcing

RAVI (NOT his real name) is a 32-year-old computer engineer from India, working in Chicago for three years. He experienced severe abdominal pain and the emergency room doctor diagnosed a kidney stone. The urologist he was referred to reviewed his X-rays and explained to him that he was suffering from a partially blocking kidney stone and advised extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL) of the stone, wherein the stone will be disintegrated into small particles by shock waves.

Ravi checked with the hospital regarding the cost of the procedure. He is insured by his employer. However, he has to pay a 20 per cent deductible. His father in India consulted a local health care facility and informed him that the cost of the procedure in India and the airfare for his travel to India will be less than the 20 per cent deductible. Ravi travelled to India, had the ESWL procedure done, and returned to Chicago and went back to his work.

When a patient in Altoona, Pennsylvania, needs an emergency brain scan in the middle of the night, a doctor in Bangalore, India, is asked to interpret the results.

These incidents described are not becoming uncommon scenarios, more so as the escalating health care costs in the United States are driving health care and its technical components to overseas markets. The medical processes being outsourced to India and other countries, apart from health care itself, include medical transcription, insurance claims processing, revenue cycle management, medical billing, and coding.

Over 75 per cent of the U.S.'s $10 trillion economy is in service industries, amongst which health care rides high in the ladder. The reason for the global outsourcing is obvious: lower costs (50-70 per cent savings) and productivity improvements that result from outsourcing. Health care outsourcing is a part of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), which is a large growing global business. The BPO to India had exceeded $300 billion by 2004, according to conservative estimates, primarily from the United States, Europe, Canada and Japan.

Mecca of health tourism

India has become the centre of this "health tourism" because of the technologically advanced health care facilities, medical specialists, a large proportion of whom are trained in countries like the U.S. and the U.K., and of course the cost advantage. A heart surgery in the U.S. costs $30,000, while the same could be done for $6,000 in India. Indian health care facilities are a haven to patients with chronic renal failure, seeking kidney transplants. Not only is there a greater choice of live donor kidneys, the procedure itself costs a fraction of its cost in the United States. In countries like Canada and the U.K. with universal health care, where there is a long waiting line for procedures like coronary bypass surgeries, the patients are travelling to India.

With shortage of U.S. radiologists and the practice of technologically 'advanced' medicine that prompts sophisticated scans for scores of ailments, the U.S. radiological services are being outsourced to the other side of the globe. The night time emergencies are being read and interpreted in places where it is daytime. So, shortage of night-time-on-call radiologists is being taken care of. That means radiologists in Australia, India, and Lebanon are reading scans of U.S. patients. A two-man U.S. trained radiology services, Teleradiology Solutions, in Bangalore, is being utilised by 40 U.S. hospitals, including Altoona, PA.

Escalating costs

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) created a hysterical outcry from political and legislative leaders and made headlines during the American Presidential elections. According to McKinney & Co., a U.S. business organisation, this hysteria is misguided. Every $100 of labour cost outsourced offshores creates over $112 of value for the U.S. economy through savings, new revenues and repatriated profits.

American capitalism is based on the idea of protecting the welfare of consumers. Health care is no exception; the health care 'industry' has out-priced itself with costs beyond the reach of the middle class and the elderly. With more than 45 million Americans uninsured, it is not only the uninsured that are not able to afford the escalating costs of health care, but also the middle class and the elderly whose life savings can be wiped out by one major illness in the family. It is time to evaluate the microeconomics and restructure the cost of the health care in the United States before finger-pointing at other countries that they are invading into its service industries.

● **Dr. SIVAPRASAD MADDURI**
Poplar Bluff, MO, USA

Budget deficit as a ratio to GDP

IT HAS become an accepted practice with the Finance Ministers to present deficit budgets and to relate the same as a ratio to the GDP, since a mild dose of deficit finance can be a stimulant to the growth of the economy. The Union Finance Minister presented the budget proposals for 2005-06 with a revenue deficit of Rs.95,312 crores and a fiscal deficit of Rs.1,51,144 crores. As a ratio to the GDP the revenue deficit would be 2.7 per cent and fiscal deficit 4.3 per cent.

He claims that the GDP-GFD ratio was brought down by 0.5 per cent in 2004-05 and that the deficit would be brought down further to the level fixed by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act by 2008-09. However, the burden of deficits has been rising year by year. In 1970-71, the fiscal deficit accounted for only Rs.1,408 crores. It increased to Rs.8,299 crores by 1980-81, to Rs.44,632 crores by 1990-91 and to Rs.1,18,816 crores by 2000-01. There is thus a steep rise in the absolute size of the fiscal deficits over the years without any sign of a fall.

Unreliable indicator

Admittedly, there is a consensus among the scholars that growth of deficit finance beyond a limit can undermine the economy. However, nobody is sure as to the precise limit up to which deficit can be resorted. Instead of prescribing such a safety limit, their approach seems to be to look at the GDP-GFD ratio as an indicator for evaluating the seriousness of the deficits in the economy and thereby to apply corrective measures. At the same time, the governmental approach seems to be to raise the GDP by applying further dose of deficits instead of reducing the expenditure or tax rates for populist reasons. Even the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act seems to rely on a reduction of GDP-GFD ratio as a sound measure for correcting the danger from deficit financing. The question is how far can GDP-GFD ratio be regarded as an authentic indicator for evaluating the seriousness of budget deficits in the Indian economy.

An evaluation based on GDP-GFD ratio by itself seems somewhat meaningless in a country like India for a variety of reasons. First, much of the statistical data needed for compiling the national product are inadequate and even unreliable. Secondly, the periodical revision of the GDP, undertaken apparently for the purpose of accommodating structural changes in the economy, very often results in an abnormal spurt in the very size of the GDP. The revision with 1993-94 as the base resulted in inflating the figure by 9 per cent in 1993-94, the base year itself, in comparison with the estimates based on 1980-81 series. In the case of Kerala, the revision resulted in a spurt of 18 per cent in the volume of SDP compared with the volume based on the previous base.

Such abnormal increase in the size of GDP can certainly reduce the GDP-GFD ratio. Changes in the data base as well as the methodology are stated to be the reasons for the increase in the value added by certain activities/services. In the case of ownership of dwelling houses for example, "the estimate of GDP in 1993-94 went up to Rs. 44,140 crores in the new series as against Rs.21,981 crores in 1980-81 series, showing an increase of Rs. 22,159 crores," apparently on account of the change in the methodology.

Who knows whether such an increase in the magnitude of GDP will not take place with the revision due before 2008-09, the date fixed by the FRBM Act for bringing down the GDP-GFD ratio? It may adopt new norms in the valuation of activities/services in the estimates of GDP in the context of what some state accountants speak of as underestimation in areas like that of the organised and unorganised service sector. In such an eventuality, budget deficits can be brought down to the level stipulated by the FRBM Act, without actually curtailing the deficits at all.

If the GDP-GFD ratio remains an unreliable indicator for assessing the seriousness of deficit financing, what alternative can be adopted for evaluating the seriousness of the issue, and thereby to assess the debt bearing capacity of the economy? Why not think of adopting the cumulative volume of debt or the volume of debt charges as a ratio to the revenue receipts of the government to be an alternative?

There is something definite about the volume of debt or the debt charges unlike the ambiguity regarding the real size of the domestic product. In 1970-71, the revenue receipts totalled Rs.3,293 crores. The interest charges on the other hand amounted to Rs.606 crores accounting for18 per cent of the revenue receipts. By 1990-91 the revenue receipts totalled Rs. 54,954 crores with the interest payments amounting to Rs.21,498 crores. The interest payments accounted for 39 per cent of the revenue receipts. The interest payments would be Rs 1,33,945 crores in 2005-06 against the anticipated revenue receipts of Rs.3,51,200 crores. As a percentage, it accounts for 38.13. Apparently, very little correction has been effected in the deficits so far. In addition to the interest payments of the Central government, the interest payments of the State governments are also increasing at an alarming rate which is sure to add new dimensions to the burden of the economy.

Accumulated debt

The conditions of buoyancy which the country now experiences may not remain for ever. There are indications of the country falling into a debt trap. The accumulated debt of the Central and State governments put together adds up to Rs. 30,00,000 crores. Some of the State governments like that of Bihar have not been able to pay the salary of its employees for months on account of non-availability of funds. All such indicators point to the heavy burden on the economy brought about mainly by the growing volume of deficit financing. The positive factors like the accumulated foreign exchange reserves and the inflow of private transfer payments, which prop up the economy from crumbling under the heavy weight of the mounting deficit finance, may not be able to hold for long. Drastic reduction of the deficit financing and not adjustment of the GDP-GFD ratio is the only way out for salvaging the economy and keeping it intact.

● **K.V. JOSEPH**

Private universities: ensure standards

THE RECENT Supreme Court judgment declaring the establishment of private universities illegal has evoked varied responses. Educationists have by and large welcomed it as a timely corrective to the mushrooming of teaching shops while thousands of students who are enrolled in these institutions have expressed anguish over their uncertain future. The recent piece (Open Page, March 8) by K. Venkata Reddy is along familiar lines of lauding the judgment and launching a harangue against "privatisation of higher education." His arguments are not quite logical, though there can be no doubt about the good intentions behind them.

Mr. Reddy's basic point is that these private universities were nothing but "teaching shops" which will "devalue the status of public-funded universities and place the captains of industry in charge of the frontier sectors of information and knowledge." From this, Mr. Reddy goes on to argue that the establishment of private universities is "but to pave the way for privatising the present Central and State universities." I am not quite sure I understand the logical reasoning behind such an assertion.

Is it obvious that the state wants to abdicate its responsibility in higher education by allowing the private sector to open "teaching shops"? By the same logic, allowing the establishment of private medical colleges (many of which are even worse than teaching shops!) should really be seen as a way for the state to exit the field of medical education!

No logical connection

Of course, there can be no logical connection between the two assertions. And that is what they are — assertions about assumed intent on the part of the state as to its motivations and future course of action. It is nobody's contention that the private universities are centres of excellence or anything more than teaching shops. But is it necessarily bad to have "teaching shops" when by Mr. Reddy's own assertions, the total enrolment in higher education is only about 6 per cent of the population? Of course, the state should significantly enhance the resource allocation for higher education. However, experience has shown that this is usually done at the cost of the primary and secondary sectors.

I have not analysed the enrolment patterns of private universities but I suspect that the majority of students in the private universities are primarily those who cannot get admission in the state financed ones. It is hard to imagine middle class students opting to pay huge amounts to an unknown teaching shop if they could get admission in a well known state university. In this case, the choice is really between getting a degree and not getting one.

Wider choice of courses

The other reason why some students might choose a private university could be because of the wider choice of courses being offered. While the quality of these courses could be suspect, they at least provide the students with some choice to pursue off-the-beaten-track courses. These could include courses in cyber crime or television script writing or accessory design! A globalising economy would presumably need skills of a much wider variety than those offered at our universities where even the existing syllabi are usually hopelessly out of date.

Private universities are teaching shops — but then so are most of the private medical and engineering colleges. Does it mean that we close them down? I am sure Mr. Reddy would agree that the solution lies in tightening the regulatory control (as is presumably the case with medical colleges) to ensure standards and not in declaring them illegal.

The state financed universities in our country need to be strengthened. There is a need for rationalising the fee structure with ample money being provided for means-based financial assistance or a student loan scheme. The students who pay thousands of rupees as school fees should be made to pay the actual cost of higher education at the tertiary level. The state should continue to subsidise higher education through improving the infrastructure and providing a safety net for the economically weaker sections in the form of free-ships and low interest loans. It should also expand the reach of higher education, though not at the cost of the primary and secondary sectors. But how does the proliferation of private universities threaten any of these laudable goals is something which defies logic.

● **SHOBHIT MAHAJAN**

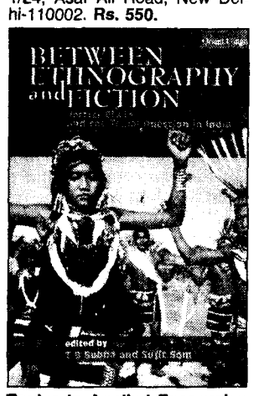
Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

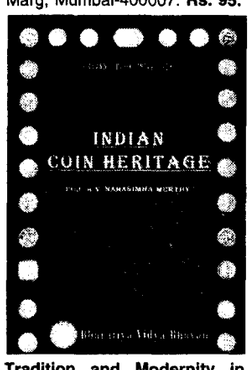
BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Doctor At Home** — The Comprehensive Handbook on Fitness & Health for Today's Proactive Family: John Daniel, Jagjit Daniel; EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 571, Poonamallee High Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai-600029. **Rs. 275.**
- **Altar of Power** — The Temple and the State in the Land of Jagannatha Sixteenth to 19th Centuries: Yaaminey Mubayi; Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 4753/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 650.**
- **Much Travelled Yarns:** Joyseej Mukherjee; FROG Books, an imprint of Zzebra, A to 2 Business Chambers, Fort, Tamarind Lane, Mumbai-400023. **Rs. 95.**
- **Serving the Nation** — Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship: Carey Anthony Watt; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 595.**
- **Vedic Mathematics Decodes Space Book:** Cosmic Kapoor; Lotus Press, 4263/3, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 195.**
- **Between Ethnography and Fiction — Verrier Elwin and the Tribal Question in India:** T.B. Subba and Sujit Som — Editors; Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 1/24, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 550.**



- **Topics in Applied Economics Tools, Issues and Institutions:** G. Mythili, R. Hema; Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road, (23, Ansari Road), Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 695.**
- **Khasi Cultural Resistance to Colonialism:** Sharmila Das Talukdar; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 320.**
- **Earth Quake Tsunami What Why How and Safety Measures:** A. Prabakaran; People Awareness Forum, C-3, Ramakrishna Flats, No. 20, Ramakrishna Puram 3rd Street, Adambakkam, Chennai-600088. **Rs. 45.**
- **Memoirs of a Naga Centenarian:** Pftiron Sentsi; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 380.**
- **Globalization — India Nation, State and Democracy:** C.P. Bhambhri; Shipra Publications, 115-A, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 550.**
- **Essays on the History of the Mizos:** Sangkima; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 550.**
- **The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible — A Free Market Odyssey:** Ken Schoolland; Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 295.**
- **Value And Interest — An Alternative to Fact-value Dichotomy:** Vanlainghak; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 195.**
- **Reforming the Labour Market:** Bibek Debroy; P.D. Kaushik; Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 695.**
- **Indian Coin Heritage:** A.V. Narasimha Murthy; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K.M.Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 95.**



- **Tradition and Modernity in Khasi Society:** N. K. Dev; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 690.**
- **The Last Waltz — The Collective Shadow:** Jacqueline Maria Longstaff; Singing Heart Publications, distributed by Prism Books Pvt. Ltd., 1865, 32nd Cross, 10th Main, BSK II Stage, Bangalore-560070. **Rs. 150.**
- **The Kuki Uprising in Manipur — 1917-1920:** SMAW Chishti; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 295.**
- **Migration in South India:** K. S. Mathew, Mahavir Singh, Joy Varkey; Shipra Publications, 115-A, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 495.**
- **The History of the Zeliangrong Nagas — From Makhel to Rani Gaidinliu:** Gangmumei Kamei; Spectrum Publications, Panbazar Main Road, PB No. 45, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 660.**
- **Crossing the Frontiers of Conflict in The North East & Jammu & Kashmir:** V. K. Nayar; Shipra Publications, 115-A, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 650.**
- **Relationship as a Spiritual Pathway:** Jacqueline Maria Longstaff; Singing Heart Publications, distributed by Prism Books Pvt. Ltd., 1865, 32nd Cross, 10th Main, BSK II Stage, Bangalore-560070. **Rs. 180.**
- **Economci Reforms — The Indian Experience:** K. D. Saksena; Shipra Publications, 115-A, Vikas Marg, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 1,200.**

Tamil

- **Hanuman Pamalai: Rs. 30.**
- **Oru Kavijnanin Payanam: Rs. 60.** Both the books authored by Sivanandham Natarajan; Manivasagar Pathippagam, 31, Singer Street, Parrys, Chennai-600108.
- **Sports Quiz — 1000:** S. A. Anandhakumar; Anuragam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 30.**
- **Vallalar Neri:** Kuppu Su Mani; Arunthathi Nilayam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 55.**
- **Athma Thiyanam:** Swamy; Anuragam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 37.**
- **Kodikanakil Panam Sambathikka Namakku Naamay Athirstathai Pera Mudiyum:** Ravindar; Arunthathi Nilayam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 55.**
- **Vetriye Unthan Vilai Enna?:** S. Punithavalli: Anuragam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 60.**
- **Enna? Enge? Ean?:** S. Anandhakumar; Arunthathi Nilayam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**
- **Marketing:** Gangasudhan — Tr. in Tamil; Anuragam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 60.**
- **Namadhu Thamizhil Aangeelam** — Thamizh Vai Aangeela Payirchi Nool: Flourish Institute, 146 (Old No. 27), R.K. Mutt Road, Mandaveli, Chennai-600028. **Rs. 200.**
- **Vakkappatta Boomi:** Susi Ganesan; Kalaignaan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 130.**
- **Maramalla... Manitham!:** V. John Devavaram; Arumbugal Pathippagam, 1, 5th Street, CTN Nagar, Nerkundram, Chennai-600107. **Rs. 40.**
- **Vellai Manasu:** Lotus Edison; Theresa Nool Aalayam, Poonchoolai, A-24, Housing Board Colony, Polur-606803, Thiruvannamalai. **Rs. 130.**
- **Padaiyoora Signalgal:** A Stephen; Winnerpu Annai Veliyeedu, Aayar Illam, 34, Officers Lane, Vellore-632001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Mahakaviyin Mayakkam:** C. R. Ravindran; Meenakshi Puthaga Nilayam, Mayura Complex, 48, Thannappa Mudali Street, Madurai-625001. **Rs. 40.**
- **Unakkagave:** K. Maheswaran; Vidya Publications, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. Rs. 100.
- Palan Tharum Balakandam: T. M. Sundararaman; Kalaimagal Traders, 7, Ponnambala Vadhyar Street, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 14.**
- **Ithaya Ranigalum Ispade Rajakkalum:** Jayakanthan; Meenakshi Puthaka Nilayam, 48, Dhanappa Mudali Street, Madurai-625001. **Rs. 30.**
- **Raja Narthagi:** Saraswathi Ramnath; Kannappan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**
- **Interviewvil Neengalum Vetri Peralam:** V. Thamayanthiran; Kannappan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 35.**
- **Research Articles of Perumpulavar V.A. Arangasamy:** A. Murugaian; Poonkodi Alli Publishers, E-20, Bharathidasan Road, Block-8, Neyveli-607801. **Rs. 80.**
- **Sutrupurasuzhal Paadhukappu:** C.D. Sankaranarayanan; Yegam Pathippagam, PB No. 2964, 3, Pillaiyar Koil 2nd Lane, I Floor, Triplicane, Chennai-600005. **Rs. 30.**
- **Jadhaga Sandireegal:** Kadalangudi Natesa Sastrigal; Kadalangudi Publications, 38, Natesa Iyer Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 40.**
- **Meenvala Pookkal:** V. Sundararaj; **Rs. 125.**
- **Thunindhu Nil:** Ratna Natarajan; **Rs. 40.**
- **Kaalara Sikichaigal Thaduppu Muraigal:** S. Muthuchellakumar; **Rs. 30.** The above books pub. By Yegam Pathippagam, PB No. 2964, 3, Pilliyar Koil 2nd Lane, Ist Floor, Triplicane, Chennai-600005.

Telugu

- **Ativeda Pedadhoranulanu Adhigaminchi Commuynistulandaru Ikyam Kavali:** Parakala Pattabhi Ramarao; Visalandhra Publishing House, Vignan Bhavan, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Morrietho Mangala Vaaralu:** T. Padmini; Alakananda Prachuranalu, Opp. Maris Stella College, Vijayawada-520008. **Rs. 80.**
- **Sametha Kathalu Mini Kathalu:** L.R.Swami; Visalandhra Publishing House, Vignan Bhavan, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Yevarunna Iekunna:** Mukunda Ramarao; Nishita Publicatlons, 1-7-23/1, Street No 8, Hubsiguda, Hyderabad-7. **Rs. 50.**

Kannada

- **Malayalam Natakagalu:** Mohana Kuntar; Prasaranga Kannada University, Hampi, Vidyaranya-583276. **Rs. 50.**
- **Swatantra: Satyakama;** Ankita Pustaka, 53, Shamsingh Complex, Gandhi Bazar Main Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 140.**
- **Nammolagina Manushya:** Shanthanaik Shiraganahalli; Tara Printing & Publishing House, 285/F6, Uttaradimutt Road, Mysore. **Rs. 130.**
- **Paramparеyondige Pisumathu:** Baraguru Ramachandrappa; Ankita Pustaka, 53, Shamsingh Complex, Gandhi Bazar Main Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 70.**

At a crossroads

THE IDEA OF PAKISTAN: Stephen Philip Cohen; Oxford University Press, YMCA library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs.495.**

IS PAKISTAN a moderate Islamic state well positioned to enter an era of prosperity, as President Pervez Musharraf insists it is? Or is it, as depicted by its harshest critics, a rogue state heading rapidly towards systemic collapse? The renowned scholar of South Asian affairs, Stephen Philip Cohen, analyses these questions seriously and attempts to give balanced answers in this book.

While it is difficult to do justice to a work of such range and sophistication, Cohen's approach and assessments can be broadly set out. He examines the questions about Pakistan's present and future by treating the "idea of Pakistan" and the "state of Pakistan" as subjects worthy of being studied separately, but must be studied together, since each aspect has impacted on the other. For instance, the idea that Indian Muslims needed a separate homeland where they could be secure led to the creation of a new state.

History

This state was riddled with internal contradictions from birth — the most important being the need to nurture a sense of common citizenry that would supersede narrow identities among the diverse people of a nation created on the basis of a sectarian narrative. But, before this task could be really taken up, the military and to a lesser extent the civilian bureaucracy had come to dominate the state structure by demonstrating their indispensability. This state of affairs, shaped to a large extent by the hostility that has characterised its relations with India, in turn created the idea of Pakistan as a fortress.

The author traces Pakistan's history as an oligarchic state by discussing the role played by different national institutions — the military (along with its adjunct, the civilian bureaucracy), the political class and the irredentist Islamic forces — in three separate chapters.

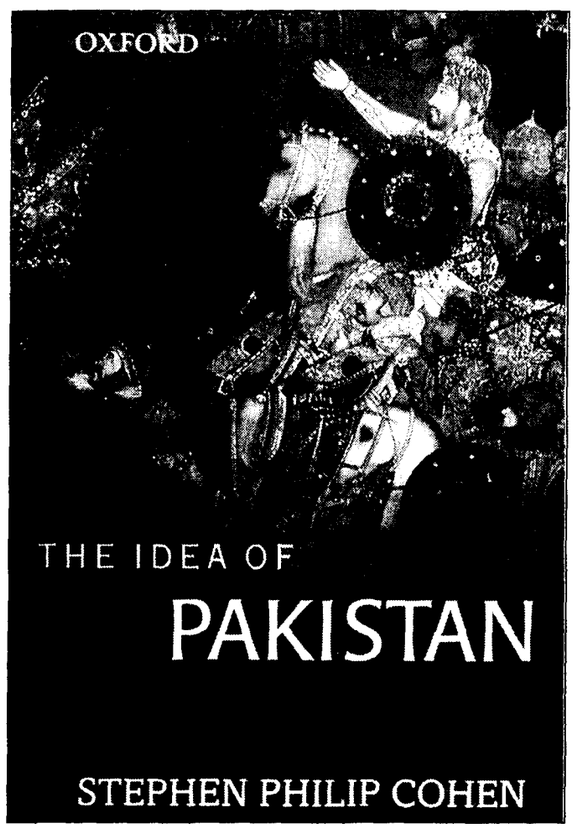
Other chapters are devoted to the study of demographic and economic trends and the divisions within Pakistani society, all of which will have an impact on the country's future.

Challenges

Pakistan's prospects for dealing with the challenges before it are set out in a chapter that lists the alternative directions in which the country's future could unfold. Broadly stated, his conclusion is that Pakistan is still quite a distance away from becoming a failed state although the challenges are formidable.

He, however, fears that the oligarchy might not have the capacity to cope with these challenges if they are not addressed in the next half a dozen years. That leads on to a discussion of what other countries, mainly the U.S. and India, could do to help Pakistan stabilise itself as an ideologically moderate, middle-income country.

In discussing the alternative scenarios into which current



trends could possibly push Pakistan Cohen suggests that the oligarchy (or the Establishment as it is usually called) could endure provided it attunes itself to the internal and external forces acting on the country. As he points out, "Domestically, there is no question that Pakistan is subject to unprecedented demographic pressures, exacerbated by the poor performance of the economy, an inadequate educational system and a staggering rate of urbanization." Foreign assistance is likely to be all the more necessary since Pakistan is currently ill equipped to deal with a globalising world.

However, the Establishment appears to be complacent that the assistance currently being provided because of Pakistan's strategic position as the base for operations against the Al Qaeda/Taliban might not last for very long. While some members of the Establishment do acknowledge the lack of long-term thinking, few dare group these challenges together to formulate an alternative to "an adaptive status quo policy."

Future

If, as Cohen says, the Pakistan army is, "strong enough to prevent state failure, but not imaginative enough to impose the changes that might transform the state," what could the future hold? "The current system may continue if its leadership is able to do a few things reasonably well — such as repair the economy, contain the Islamist radicals and maintain good relations with powerful states while avoiding a new major confrontation with India. This is not impossible, or even improbable, but it is also unlikely."

Reforms

In returning to this question in the concluding chapter, Cohen outlines a number of steps that the U.S. could take to make Pakistan carry out far-reaching and enduring reforms. As expected he adds the caveat that Washington should keep sufficient distance so that it is not seen to be forcing Pakistan.

The author makes the very pertinent observation that the U.S. sought to achieve only short-term objectives when it struck up alliances with Pakistan in the past. Such an approach, he points out, is no longer tenable.

Some of the trends that are discernible in Pakistani society today could have a direct impact on the security of the U.S. and other countries if they are left unaddressed over the long-term.

The falling deterioration of the public education system and the emergence of the madrassas as the replacements are among the foremost of these trends. Cohen obviously does not think much of General Musharraf's plans to transform the madrassas by forcing them to incorporate secular subjects into their syllabus or making them adopt modern teaching methods.

He quotes a Pakistani interlocutor to the effect that the madrassa students would access only extremist sites if they were provided with the Internet. As an alternative he proposes that Pakistan should be encouraged through inducements as well as the threat of economic sanctions, to open the education sector to citizen sector organisations both domestic and foreign that are of a liberal bent.

The author does not believe that Pakistan is on the brink of either becoming an Islamic state or of breaking up into separate units. However, he does not appear to rule out either possibility if the Establishment is unable to hold its ground or carry through the necessary reforms.

KESAVA MENON

Community health care visionary

REFLECTIONS: Rs. 50.
COMMUNITY HEALTH: Rs. 95.
Both by Dr. K. S. Sanjivi; Pub. by the Voluntary Health Services, Adyar, Chennai-600013.

IT IS befitting that in the birth centenary year of Dr. K. S. Sanjivi, VHS medical centre, his brainchild, should come forward to make available for wider reading two short books depicting the life and professional career of this great community health care visionary.

Reflections takes us briefly through young Sanjivi's upbringing in a middle class, conservative Brahmin family in Pelathope, Mylapore — a family with the highest moral code, which at the same time encouraged free thinking and action.

Early life

Sanjivi relates the events that shaped his life, his childhood pranks, the strong influence of his two elder brothers (who in later life proved themselves to be intellectual giants), schooling at P.S. Secondary School, intermediate at Presidency College, followed by his medical graduation and M.D. in General Medicine.

His training under medical luminaries like Dr. Guruswami Mudaliar and Dr. (Lt. Col.) McRobert of the IMS receive special attention. His early foreign travels, took him to the tuberculosis speciality centre at Cadriff, Wales, Brompton Chest Hospital, London and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, U.S. for periods of intensive training.

Reflections

What is of sustaining interest in the book are Sanjivi's reflections that derive from his knowledge and experience in the diverse disciplines of medicine, sociology, economics, business management, religion and ethics, to create his uniquely blended formula for an Indian community health care programme.

He is equally comfortable discussing the merits of the daily 45-minute walk, the mutual support system offered by the traditional Indian joint family, the reliability of the domestic help of bygone days or the concept of realising God through Karma Yoga.

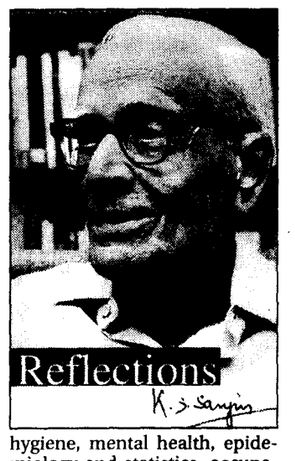
Its Tamil version *Ninaivugal*, was published as early as 1967 under the Vachagam Vattam imprint.

The latter portion of *Reflections* deals with his formula for a realistic and sustainable community health programme which calls for total commitment of the medical team, unstinting cooperation from individual families which form the primary unit of health care focus and public participation and partnership.

He founded the Voluntary Health Services medical centre and with years of his careful nurture, he witnessed it grow into astounding proportions within his lifetime over the next two decades.

Community health care

The second book, *Community Health* which contain the selected writings of Dr. Sanjivi outlines the challenge in adopting the modern strategy of community medicine/ health which encompasses environmental hygiene, mental health, epidemiology and statistics, occupational health, housing, communicable diseases, nutrition, problems relating to sex, marriage and reproduction, accidents, violence and even war, and the organisation of medical care and health promotion.



These may sound dry topics for the lay reader, but they were aspects of Dr. Sanjivi's magical personal touch to breathe life and dynamism into this venture. One must remember that his path-breaking effort in community medicine was at a pre-Alma Ata era, when the right to "health for all" was not even conceived and health appeared to be a prerogative of the affluent.

He extended health care to the rich and the poor, the urban and rural population alike. Be it preventive or curative healthcare or family planning, his secret recipe was to create awareness through health education, even among the illiterate, whom he was convinced are endowed with basic intelligence; roping in especially the help of the womenfolk of the families, who had greater concern for the welfare of the family; stationing the lay first-aid giver in the village for direct and closer relationship with the community and interaction at a personal level through health workers and doctors.

Public participation

He drew public participation from the urban rich by convincing them that "money spent on health development for yourself and your poor neighbours is an investment, not consumption; the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings; maximum benefits will accrue from decentralisation of health functions with concern for local conditions and problems." It was no longer a lone crusade as the message of Indian community health care spread wide to witness an ever-expanding network of the delivery system.

The two books thus are most readable, the first with human appeal and a subdued humour in parts. The account of Dr. Sanjivi's youth lacks the vibrancy it deserves, perhaps due to space constraint.

The second contains the inspired writings of a man with a mission. It gives technical information of excellence for the specialist in the field, even as it bears the indelible stamp of the author's conviction running through the pages.

KRISHNAMOORTHY SRINIVAS
N. SUBBULAKSHMY

● Fiction anthology ● Wide-ranging stories ● Multifaceted personality ● Memoirs

TAMIL

PERUMOOCHIN NEELAM: Andal Priyadarshini; Yegam Pathippagam, 3, Pillayar Koil 2nd Lane, Triplicane, Chennai-600005. **Rs. 60.**

THIS BOOK is a collection of 16 short stories. Poet, short-story writer, novelist, orator, TV producer, all rolled into one, the author brings to bear acute social awareness on her writing. One story portrays the instant respect that slum-dwellers have for the vote-seeking politician even though their life may not have seen a whit of improvement.

The title story, is a denunciation of the politician hankering after power and pelf but curiously it is a first-person narrative, accentuating perhaps the fact that the wily man, wearing as he does a fair-and-lovely mask, is quite conscious of his own machinations as he broods over the heyday that is now behind him.

By far the majority of stories have women as central characters. In three stories women take revenge on their heartless husbands, one in a self-sacrificing act, another in a horribly excoriating deed and a third in a misrepresentation uttered in her deathbed as a parting shot.

If these stories reflect the seamier side of life, there are other stories that show women in bright light: in one a young woman forsakes the pleasures of matrimony to join the army and serve the nation; in another a career-oriented woman is quite up to the rigours of everyday life even as she has to work odd hours.

"Poojai" is a celebration by a woman devotee who resists the indignities heaped on her by transcending above all material things in life; yet it is the inanimate objects in the temple that are witness to her religious zeal. There are some light-hearted stories like the one in which a poet seeks and finds a space for herself and another in which a man escapes from the incessant and loud chatter from the idiot box in a spur-of-the-moment action.

The style of writing has a literary flavour about it, often reflecting the poet in the author. Sometimes it is compulsive as words come thick and fast; sometimes it is iterative as the same idea is expressed in different collocations.

C. G. RISHIKESH

TELUGU

VENNELA KURISINA RAATRI: Akkinapalli Subbarao; Pub. by Vahini Book Trust, 1.9.286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044. **Rs. 80.**

THIS BOOK covers a wide range of subjects. The author powerfully penetrates subtle realities with evocative and strong characterisation. There is a synthesis of harmony, strong ideology and a good narrative tone in the book. He weaves the stories with a mastery of the medium and with a freedom bestowed by honest perceptions, which make his characters speak effortlessly and fluently. Making his presence felt as an inseparable part of the socio-cultural milieu of the plots, the author makes his stories speak for themselves — therein lies his strength. While appearing to have drawn his material from his vast worldly experience and observations, he does not seem to be limited by them; he goes beyond and says something powerful, as in the very first story "Vennela Kurisina Raatri" where he condemns the way human perception is always superimposed by age-old social and psychological scripts.

Great strength is given to the story "Bhavna", by imbuing the protagonists, Shashank and Bhavna, with dignity, dependability, humanity, and from a storyline point of view, with novelty. How they, when forced to live under one roof, due to the sheer pressure of circumstances, begin a beautiful platonic relationship, resulting in a strong emotional bond is depicted with sensitivity.

The manner in which Western influence almost unconsciously alters human perceptions about love, marriage and divorce, and a helpless acceptance is powerfully brought out in "Neeti lo Kaagitam Padava". Stories such as the title one "Adavi poolu", "End Game" and "Paadyami Chandrudu" merit serious attention.

There is no slipshod treatment anywhere, though one or two stories sound familiar, and gives one a feeling of *deja vu*. The queries that arise in a discerning reader's mind do not get direct answers in the narrative; the themes, however, provide great food for thought.

AMBIKA ANANTH

KANNADA

KANDADDU KANDAHAAGE: P. Lankesh; Patrike Prakashana, No.9, Aanjaneya Gudi Rasthe, Bansavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 125.**

THIS new edition deserves at the least an introduction, an index of contents, dating the articles and a competent self-assessment, as the author Lankesh is no more. The blurb carries his crisp statement on the standards of literary criticism he set for himself. A theatre personality, an excellent teacher, a journalist with a readership who at once hated and doted on him, he was above all an irreverent literary critic hitherto unheard of in Kannada literary field. The articles retain a refreshing contemporaneity.

The title, which is derived from a popular saying, brings out succinctly the dilemma of an honest critic. The truth of another version of the same saying was the sad personal experience of Lankesh. With his uncompromising standards of criticism, often condemned as virulent and disrespectful, he set a storm sweeping through Kannada literary fields.

An *iconoclast par excellence*, he struggled to escape becoming an icon. His journalistic venture *Lankesh Patrike* taught a generation how to take on political corruption without fear. He feels that the freedom of expression in our democracy is not limited merely by the subtle and not so subtle controls exerted by the state or by the poverty and illiteracy of the people.

These can be overcome; but the more difficult one is the painful awareness that dawns when the writer suddenly realises that he may be writing to an audience which is increasingly evolving in a way not capable of grasping what is said, behaves as if it is not for them.

K.S. PARTHASARATHY

MALAYALAM

ANNAMMA — Memoirs: K. M. Mathew; Malayala Manorama Publication Division, Kottayam-686001. **Rs. 90.**

THIS IS the work of the author in memory of his wife who authored 25 books. There is a woman behind every successful man and so is the case with the man at the helm for the success of the most widely circulated newspaper chain in India.

The book is an endearing memoir of the 61 years of married life. It vividly portrays their life, having come from two walks of life and from two sects. Belonging to different poles, with one full of arts and music and social life, and the other an astute businessman and editor, they lived a life, "without any major quakes." It is magnanimous to admit that while the couple travelled, the wife got more public attention. Annamma Mathew was the longest surviving editor of a women's magazine. She made it her mission to contribute to culinary variety and it makes interesting reading while the husband admits, rather obliquely, that his tastes were set aside for the tastes of the reading public.

Annamma grew up in Tamil Nadu and she had an innate talent for music and was very fond of jasmine flowers. Now the husband poignantly adorns flowers on her photo and starts the day.

The couple met for the first time in the church and then they lived in an estate in Coorg. It was in Mumbai that life blossomed for the woman who was reluctant to move to Kottayam. But once she was there, she established an empire for herself and would not move out even if she "were killed." Such was her dedication to whatever she did.

The author has been very economical with his words and the blue pencil has been effectively applied. There is not a single extra word in the highly readable book.

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN

LATEST FROM MANOHAR
A CONCISE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF NORTH INDIAN PEASANT LIFE *ed. by Shahid Amin*
81-7304-597-6, 2005, 596p. Rs. 2250
EARLY INDIA: A Concise History by D.N. Jha
81-7304-578-X, 2004, 269p. Rs.395 (Hb)
81-7304-587-9, 2004, 269p. Rs.150 (Pb)
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Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

Blueprint for sustainable development

PLAN B — Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble: Lester R. Brown; Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 1/24, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 330.**

LESTER BROWN, the Founder-President of the Earth Policy Institute, Washington, is a doughty green warrior of impeccable credentials. Planet Earth, in his eyes, is indeed in peril as evidenced by burgeoning undernourished populations, the HIV/AIDS menace, water stress, falling land productivity and adverse climate change induced by greenhouse gas build-up in the atmosphere.

By their very nature, these issues cannot be tackled by mere technological fixes. What *Plan B* advocates is a transformed lifestyle marked by the small family norm, switchover to an economy based on renewable energy, water use efficiency and above all a world that believes more in human development than in an arms race.

The great divide

Brown draws upon a vast mass of data in picturising the challenges facing mankind. What emerges strikingly is the great divide between one section of humanity and another. On the one hand, there are those who have a surfeit of everything and on the other are those who have very little of anything. Thus, in a world of five billion people, about 1.2 billion are over-nourished and an equal number are grossly undernourished. While in some countries more than half of all young men and women are college graduates, there are 875 million illiterate adults in others.

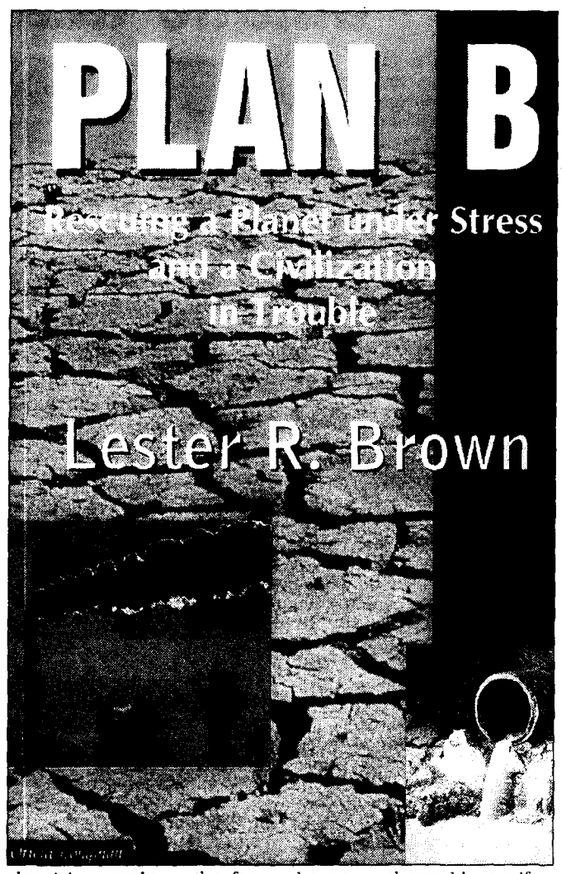
Life expectancy is set to fall precipitously in many regions of Africa due to the spread of AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, it has fallen from 62 years to 47, from 70 to 40 in Botswana and to 33 this year in Zimbabwe. South Africa, under White rule till a few years back, would experience a shrinkage in life expectancy to 42 years from 68.

The fall in productivity of agricultural lands is a global phenomenon. The annual rise in land productivity that averaged 2.1 per cent in the period 1950 to 1990 fell to one per cent during the next 12 years. Between 1997 and 2002, the average annual rise was a mere half per cent. As a result, per capita grain production, which climbed from 251 kg in 1950 to 344 kg in 1984, fell to 290 kg in 2002.

The blame for the fall in land productivity can be ascribed to poor land management encouraged by poor government policies. Governments extend wrong subsidies, more people lead to fragmentation of land holdings and markets send out wrong signals to agriculturists.

Global warming

The water crisis, asserts Brown, is again manmade almost totally. Water suffers from all the misuses and abuses to which all public goods are subject. It is either not priced at all or grossly under-priced. Free



electricity supply to the farm sector, as in India, has only encouraged wasteful use of electricity as well as of water. In many parts of the world, even the non-rechargeable aquifers have been exploited to exhaustion. Brown shares the grim view of many scientists that the biggest threat to mankind's survival may arise out of global warming. Of the greenhouse gases, the most prominent one namely carbon dioxide is emitted by the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas for myriad purposes.

The fossil fuel driven economic growth that began in the last century is like an expanding soap bubble that may burst sooner than later. Hence, Brown argues for less dependence on fossil fuels and greater reliance on solar and wind power, hydro energy and hydrogen.

Sustainable model

Plan B's messages make one recall the prognosis made by the Brundtland Commission almost two decades back. The call for sustainable development is being heard but sadly not still acted upon vigorously.

There could be three possible reasons for this inaction. One could be that history had proved false many an apocalyptic prediction beginning from that of Malthus in the 19th Century to the "Limits to Growth" study in the 1970s. The other could be the familiar "Prisoner's dilemma" which makes each country feel that adoption of any alternative model of development may leave it disadvantaged compared to others. The arms race is a testimony to this dilemma.

On top of it all, disagreements among scientists on issues like climate change and scepticism on the part of economists of concepts like sustainable development have not helped matters much. There is a beguiling and self-deluding comfort in following what Brown calls Plan A, "Business as usual."

Plan B may, at first sight, appear to be unfeasible given the sea change in attitudes and goals that it calls for. But, surprisingly, the world is already moving towards its implementation, albeit slowly and unnoticeably. Take energy. One cannot fail to appreciate the progress made by Europe in switching over to renewable sources of energy.

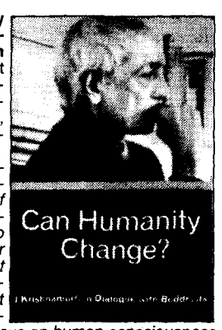
Germany already has 12000 MW of wind-based electricity generating capacity and Denmark with 2900 MW is meeting 18 per cent of its electricity needs through this renewable source. India has an impressive fifth position in the world with 1700 MW of which Tamil Nadu accounts for two thirds.

Restoring the productive capacity of agricultural lands is receiving priority, notably in the U.S. Striking advances have been made the world over in water conservation in agriculture and industry.

The question, therefore, is not whether sustainable development is achievable or not but of converting people to believe in it. In fact, the world is not so much in need of monumental scientific and technological breakthroughs to improve peoples' living standards as of a just and equitable economic order. Brown's message is straight and simple.

N. R. KRISHNAN

FROM THE BLURB



- **Can Humanity Change? — J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists:** David Skitt — Editor; Pub. by Krishnamurti Foundation India, Vasanta Vihar, 124, Greenways Road, Chennai-600028. **Rs. 100.**

Record of the historic encounter between Krishnamurti and a group of Buddhist scholars providing a unique opportunity to see what the great teacher had to say about Buddhist teachings. The conversations, which took place at Brockwood Park in England in the late 1970s, focus on human consciousness and its potential for transformation. The participants included Walpola Rahula, the renowned Sri Lankan Buddhist monk and scholar, author of the classic introductory text, What the Buddha Taught.

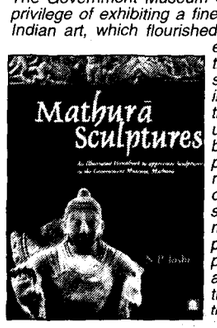
- **A New Religious America** — How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation: Diana L. Eck; Frank Bros. & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.; 4675-A, Ansari Road, 21, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 294.**

An eye-opening account of the changing religious landscape of the U.S. America has always been a land of many religions and a vast textured pluralism was present among the Native peoples even before the European settlers came to these shores. The immigrants of the last three decades — after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act — however, have expanded the diversity of religious life dramatically, exponentially. People from all over the world came to the U.S. and became citizens and with them have come the religious traditions of the world — Islamic, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Zoroastrian, African and Afro-Caribbean. The challenge today, the author says, is to simply open our eyes to these changes, to discover America anew, and to explore the many ways in which the new immigration has the changed the religious landscape of its cities and towns, its neighbourhoods and schools. The questions that emerge today from the encounter of people of so many religious and cultural traditions go to the very heart of who the Americans see as their people.

- **Iron Industry and Metallurgy** — A Study of Ancient Technology: B. Sasisekaran; New Era Publications, Post Box No. 8780, Adyar, Chennai-600020. **Rs. 950.**

This monograph deals with the distribution of iron ore, the Iron Age in Tamil Nadu, literary references to iron, the iron and steel production centres, the types of furnaces that were in use and the techniques employed to produce iron and wootz steel employing crucible process by ancient and post-medieval communities of South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. The most important study pertains to metallurgical study of iron objects found in the sites excavated in Tamil Nadu and reveals "the maturity of ancient Indian metallurgist to obtain various categories of steel for different purposes" and expounds "on the basis of level of mineral transformation of iron artefacts, a hypothesis to relatively date the excavations."

- **Mathura Sculptures** — An Illustrated Handbook to Appreciate Sculptures in the Government Museum, Mathura: N.P.Joshi; Sundeep Prakashan, Post Box No. 2647, 6191/1, Block-1, Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. **Rs. 1500.**



The Government Museum of Mathura has the unique privilege of exhibiting a fine collection of the school of Indian art, which flourished in Mathura right from the early centuries of the Christian era. Though eminent scholars have written on this important school, much of the quality material remains unpublished. This work brings to light some such pieces meant for popular reading and for appreciation of the rich and beautiful sculptures exhibited in this museum. Contains over 100 plates illustrating select pieces from the museum and also 75 line drawings of the different decorative motifs seen in the Mathura art.

PERFECT KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the meaning of "blonde moment"? *(R. Anuradha, Secunderabad)*

This is an expression of recent origin. In the United States, for several decades now, the word blonde has become synonymous with stupidity. Women with blonde hair have always been perceived as being beautiful but without an iota of intelligence — beauty without brains. A very common expression associated with them is "dumb blonde". When you say that you had a "blonde moment" what you are implying is that you behaved like a typical blonde — you became scatterbrained and did something silly.

*I don't know why I said what I did. I must have had a blond moment.

What is the difference between "award" and "reward"? *(Dr. M. Veeramohan Rao, Kurnool)*

An "award" is a prize that you receive for having done something noteworthy. It is always associated with something positive; you have done something which people approve of. It is a sign of appreciation. You could be awarded a medal, a prize, or a certificate by an organisation for an outstanding achievement. When judges bestow an award on you, they are honouring you.

*The only award that Neelam ever won was the Pulitzer Prize.

A "reward", on the other hand, is usually associated with something valuable — money, for instance. You may get a reward for finding and returning someone's dog/cat. The police may offer a reward for information about an escaped convict. It is seen as something that you get as just compensation for the good that you have done or the hard work that you have put in. For example, if you have worked really hard to write a novel, and later you receive an award for it, you may feel that it is a recompense for all the work you put in, that it is a reward for your effort. While the word "award" is associated with only positive things, "reward", on the other hand, can be associated with both good and bad. One can be rewarded for the evil one does as well.

How is the word "bonhomie" pronounced? *(T. Anitha, Chennai)*

The "o" in the first syllable is like the "o" in "on", the following "h" is silent. The "o" in the second syllable is like the "a" in "china" and the final "ie" is like the "i" in "pit", "kit", and "bit". The main stress is on the first syllable. The word comes from the French "bon" meaning "good", and "homme" meaning "man". The word is used to refer to an individual's good nature, his easy and pleasant manner.

*Jai's bonhomie won the hearts of all those who came into contact with him.

What is the meaning of "fall on stony ground"? *(C. Ganeshan, Trichy)*

When someone gives you a piece of advice and you choose to ignore it, then you can say that the advice fell on stony ground. In other words, the ground is so hard that nothing penetrates it. The expression, I understand, comes from the Bible and it has more or less the same meaning as "fall on deaf ears".

*The Management's repeated requests to call off the strike have fallen on stony ground.

Is it okay to say, "The teacher was angry on the students"? *(G. Sarita, Chennai)*

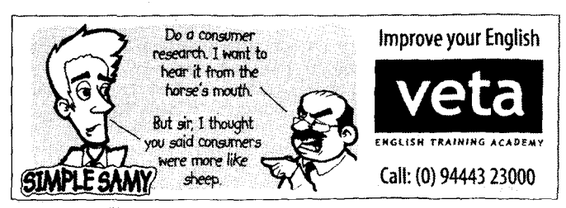
There is a tendency among Indians to use the word "on" with "angry", but it is wrong to do so. You cannot be "angry on" or "pleased on" a person. Both these words are usually followed by "with".

*The new principal was pleased with the children's performance.

***** ***** *****

"There are three kinds of men who don't understand women — young, old and middle aged."
— Unknown

S. UPENDRAN



OPEN PAGE

Attention economy

HOW DOES Yahoo! provide us e-mail service with a whopping 250 MB space, free of cost? The numerous TV channels, in a similar way, provide programmes without charging us. Obviously, the people behind these make money, as otherwise these business models would not have been continuing. The secret is the emergence of a whole new form of economy called "attention economy" where traditional wealth becomes less important than the ability to capture people's attention.

By definition, economics is the science of the production and distribution of goods. Also it is the study of how a society uses its scarce resources. When it comes to information, it is not a scarce entity — especially on the Net, where it is not only abundant, but overflowing. We are drowning in information, yet constantly increasing our generation of it.

So the key question then is: Is there something else that flows through cyberspace, something that is scarce and desirable? Yes, there is. No one would put anything on the Internet without the hope of obtaining something. It's called attention. And the economy of attention — not information — is the natural economy of cyberspace. Attention has its own behaviour, its own dynamics, its own consequences. An economy built on it will be different from the familiar material-based one.

There are a good number of people who have become millionaires by putting up websites which people visit. Their money making secret is quite simple: advertising and sponsorship. It's just the same as with commercial TV too: we don't pay to watch the programmes. The programmes are paid for by advertisers, who, in return, get to display their advertisements (ads) to audiences alongside the shows.

In the same way, we get to access Web services, such as the Yahoo! directory for free. The only price we pay is being exposed to some inescapable ads. Yahoo! is in a great position to scoop up advertising revenues, because it can 'deliver' ads to people who are actually interested in particular things. For example, the kind of people who look for information about 'dogs' in Yahoo! are exactly the people that dog food manufacturers are targeting.

Numerous other Web services such as free e-mail and free Web space are paid for in the same way. The user is pleased to get these handy services for no payment, the advertiser is pleased to be able to flash their messages directly at the real user and the service provider is pleased to take money from the advertiser.

Scarce resource

The scarce resource which everybody with a presence on the Internet is struggling for is 'attention.' On the Net, information or money is not the most important scarce resource. The Web contains oceans of information, but its scarce resource is attention, because there is so much information out there, and everyone has so little time to look at it. The success on the Web is to have lots of people giving attention to a particular site.

Big companies do not automatically get attention on the Web simply because they have lots of money, create a flashy multimedia website, and generate awareness of it through conventional media and promotions. If the site has no engaging content, it will not win attention. If a commercial website does not have the right content, other websites will not link to it, it will not be talked about in e-mail discussions or on newsgroups, and will not be visited by people who matter.

Any website which is full of appealing, regularly updated, brilliant content has a better chance of getting attention. By getting linked to other websites, and listed in directories, search engines, and magazines, a website can come to command a lot of attention.

One of the properties of attention is that it can be passed from one location to another. If attention is commanded by a person, for example a top film star, the attention will also travel along with him to various locations he visits.

Some experts have funnily opined that money will become less important and that attention will be the new wealth. But since money shows little sign of extinction at the moment, perhaps it's a better use of the basic argument to say that attention certainly does equal wealth in the new economy.

● N.T. NAIR

Changing employees' mindset

THE NATION has been talking about administrative reforms for decades in seminars and august assemblies. Several committees have been appointed, but their suggestions remain buried under heaps of files. Attempts have been made in the past to draft an HRD policy, but not heard afterwards. The stress has always been on announcements, not in developing a delivery system.

Impossible though it sounded in the beginning, Gujarat has embarked on a massive mission to train all the five-lakh and odd government employees in the State in good governance by December-2005.

Not many people in the State or outside are aware of the magnitude of the mission or about the methodology to implement the task. It is based on the belief that every employee wants to do something good for the government but is bogged down by the prevailing administrative culture. It is backed by a well-researched scientifically developed systematic training programme, called 'vibrant governance' or 'v-governance' in short.

It is to bring about an attitudinal change among all the employees in the State, right from the Secretary level office to the last peon or the driver, in education, health, panchayat and other departments. For instance, there are 50,000 employees in the police department alone.

It has been observed that if the policy is right, it can be implemented. It has been possible because the government has an HRD philosophy. It is also perhaps for the first time that Gujarat has taken a lead in framing a State HRD policy, a State training policy. Only if you have a policy can you implement it.

More carrot than stick

The stress is on changing the employees' mindset, touching their heart not so much their head, offering more carrot rather than stick, changing their attitude to work, sensitising them to the people's problems, improving their interpersonal behaviour, infusing personal convictions and developing communication skills, rather than on subjects.

Once the goal was set and objectives defined, it was around June 2003, a core group started discussing the issue through a series of brainstorming sessions to devise ways to achieve the target. The core group prepared a module of attitudinal training based on Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

The next step was course design and evolving a delivery system. A 20-hour interactive training module, comprising five hours' daily session spread over four days, was specially designed. A professional agency was hired for Training of Trainers (ToT) and logistics management. It was initially run on an experimental basis between September and December, 2003.

Trainers drawn from both government department and private companies were selected by the agency. The expertise of many professionals and retired people was also requisitioned. Only those willing were trained as trainers from the government department.

Delivery system

The database of all the employees was prepared. Training is simultaneously being imparted in 250 batches of 20 employees each at 22 government institutes and academies for various departments. The lead is taken by the State's apex Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration (SPIPA). In designing the delivery system, it was also ensured that not more than 15 per cent employees of one office were absent on any given day attending the training programme.

I had the privilege of presenting the salient features of v-governance at the last meeting of Directors of State Administrators Academy at Mussoorie on July 14-15, 2004. The Gujarat module of v-governance came in for appreciation and many wanted to implement it in their States. Some of the bureaucrats however pointed out that in some of the States it is unimaginable to think of government employees sitting through similar training programmes even for a minute, let alone expecting them to learn something.

● HASMUKH ADHIA

(The writer belongs to the Gujarat IAS cadre. The views expressed are personal.)

Scales of achievement

ONE OF India's most famous scientists, S.N. Bose, never obtained a Ph.D. degree. Worried, that because of this he might not be considered for a university job for which he had applied, he requested Albert Einstein for a recommendation letter. Einstein is reported to have exclaimed in disbelief "My God, haven't they heard of your work!"

Einstein perhaps did not know that job applications are scrutinised by clerks in the office of the registrar who may not have heard of the Bose-Einstein statistics, or of particles that have come to be known as bosons. Nor might they understand that once a person has proved his excellence by high achievement, his past record becomes irrelevant. The best writer of a generation need not have been a "university topper" and the best musician may not have completed a degree course. Einstein was rated a poor student by his teachers. Bose, on the other hand, was once given 110 marks out of 100. In the light of their later achievements, both stories make interesting anecdotes but say nothing about their standing in science.

A few years ago I received nomination forms for a prize described by its sponsors as "India's most coveted award for science and technology." After explaining that the purpose of the award is to recognise "outstanding Indian work" and it is "bestowed on a person who has made conspicuously important contributions to human knowledge and progress" the proforma for nomination asked for certain information. "Specimens" of completed forms were also given.

Under the head "Academic qualifications" I expected to see a mention of the nominee's highest degree (with apologies to S.N. Bose) but the specimen made it clear that one should provide details of all college degrees with marks, divisions and "additional particulars" like "1 Rank Gold Medalist" or merely "1 Rank." Under the head "Positions held earlier" one was asked to supply details of all positions "held from the beginning" with "scales of pay." Since pay scales are periodically revised the specimen showed entries like "Rs. 700 — 1400 (then)", "Rs. 4500 — 7300 (old)" and "Rs 16,400 — 22,400 (now)." The designers of the form seem to have been concerned that an old pay scale may be confused with a new one and become a cause for misjudgment of the person's worth.

This form is sent to top academic officials and to past winners of the award whose list includes most of India's best scientists. I wonder whether any of them noticed the incongruity between the professed high status of the prize and the nomination form that made it look like an application for a middle-level job. Four years later this part of the form remains unchanged. It is thus reasonable to believe that in the opinion of the sponsors and the award committees, performance in degree examinations and "pay scales enjoyed" are important information along with details of conspicuously important contributions at the highest level.

As in the story of Bose and Einstein, I can imagine a present-day scientist going to his director to complain that he was ignored for the award, and the director exclaiming "My God, didn't they see what pay scale we offered you!"

● RAJENDRA BHATIA

Burning solution to a grave problem

THE CLOSURE of fresh burials at the Kilpauk cemetery in Chennai (*The Hindu*, March 17) is a reminder of the scarcity of natural resources. With our bourgeoning population, the man land ratio is worsening by the day. Yet, significant areas are covered by cemeteries, *qabristans* and other graveyards. Each grave occupies at the least five square yards or more considering the pathways and margins. In the case of the *qabristan*, conceptually the grave is supposed to be eternal. Long after the remains have degenerated, the land continues to remain occupied.

An appeal should therefore be made to everyone concerned that bodies should be cremated rather than buried, wherever a gas or an electric crematorium is available. All in all, this is a plea to the various governments to discourage Hindus from using up wood and the others from wasting land. The decision of the Madras Cemeteries Board to construct an electric crematorium at Kilpauk testifies that there is no religious obstacle between burial and cremation. The Bishops of Madras Mylapore have also given their consent for this break from tradition.

A colossal crime

Cremation by wood is a colossal crime against the country's forest cover or rather the nation's ecology. Estimates of the quantity of wood used annually for cremation across the country vary from 12 to 72 lakh tonnes. Regardless of the actual quantity used, it is easy to see what a waste of wood it is. Wood that takes years to grow is blown up in smoke to dispose of, what in the Hindu ethos is, polluted waste matter.

It is not surprising that tradition insists that the body of a person who dies during the day must be cremated before sunset; that of someone who dies at night must be disposed of before sunrise. This is logical enough in a climate which is generally hot and humid. How polluted the dead body is considered to be is illustrated by what many a family in Gujarat practises. A dying person is transferred to the bare floor well before life goes out. The idea is to avoid polluting the bedding. I have met a person who had survived two transfers to the floor!

The ceremonial use of ghee, sandalwood, etc., was introduced to help the priest to earn some money and to enable the cremating staff to make a living. The attitude towards the body is so casual that all garments are allowed to be taken away by the cremating staff before the funeral pyre is lit. True, there is a sentiment attached to *homagni* or the *havan* as an essential part of the ceremony. However, a small *havan* in a container can be performed without having to waste so much wood, say some 400 kg at a time. There is, therefore, no religious or sentimental barrier to a widespread changeover to electric or gas crematoria.

Our country is wakening rapidly to the importance of ecology and environment. It is, therefore, surprising that no national leader has taken the initiative and appealed to the Hindus to stop using wood and instead use electric or gas crematoria, wherever available. It is more unfortunate that gas or electrical facilities are not being introduced with any speed in the towns and villages of India.

At the time of Independence, on paper, India had about 25 per cent forest cover. How much is the difference between the paper records and the reality on the ground is difficult to say. It is, however, not difficult to believe that by now the actual forest cover would not be 10 per cent in the country as a whole.

True, poverty in some of the rural areas is so excruciating that the local people have no alternative but to live on the surrounding forest. Equally perhaps, beyond a point, the governments are not able to prevent smugglers from illegally denuding the forests. But there can be no excuse for the policy not to be in tune with the country's ecological necessity.

● PRAFULL GORADIA

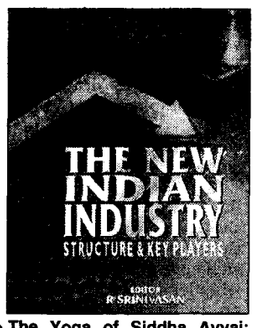
Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Genes, Trade and Regulation** — The Seeds of Conflict in Food Biotechnology: Thomas Bernauer; Universities Press (India) Pvt. Ltd., 3-5-819 Hyderguda, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 205.**
- **Hinduism Past and Present:** Barbara Harshaw; Orient Longman Pvt Ltd., 3-6-752, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 325.**
- **8 Preposterous Propositions:** Robert Ehrlich; Universities Press (India) Ltd., 3-5-819, Hyderguda, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 220.**
- **Statistical Methods:** S.P. Gupta; Sultan Chand & Sons, 23, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 320.**
- **The Bhopal Saga** — Causes and Consequences of the World's Largest Industrial Disaster: Ingrid Eckerman; Universities Press (India) Pvt. Ltd., 3-5-819, Hyderguda, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 250.**
- **The New Indian Industry** — Structure & Key Players: R. Srinivasan — Editor; Macmillan India Ltd., 2/10, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 525.**



- **The Yoga of Siddha Avvai:** S.N. Kandaswamy; distributed by Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharyas Trust, PO Box 5608, Malleswaram West, Bangalore-560055. **Rs. 350.**
- ***India in a Globalising World:*** Desh Gupta, Shri Bhagwan Dahiya; Hope India Publications, 85, Sector 23, Gurgaon 122017. **Rs. 800.**
- **Encyclopaedia of Herbs Condiments and Spices:** Geeta Bhatia, Komal Bhatia, Urwashi Sharma; Gita Enterprises, 3026/7H, Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi-110008. **Rs. 230.**
- **Soldier's Memoirs:** Lt. Col. Gautam Sharma; Reliance Publishing House, 3026/7H, Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi-110008. **Rs. 195.**
- **Dr. Kalam's Pure Model and Societal Transformation:** P. Jegadish Gandhi; Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., F1-59, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 300.**
- **Param Vir Chakra Winners:** N. Kunju; Reliance Publishing House, 3026/7H, Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi-110008. **Rs. 125.**
- **Self Development for Sure Success:** P.N. Singh — Editor; Copies available from Shri Bishwanath Singh Memorial Educational & Welfare Trust, 502-505 Sai Chambers, opp. Santacruz (E) Railway Station, Mumbai-55. **Rs. 290.**
- **Planning for Development:** C. Karthikeyan, N. Balasubramani; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 600.**
- **Early India — A Concise History:** D. N. Jha; Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 4753/23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 395.**
- **Indian Regional Journalism:** P. K. Ravindranath; **Rs. 225.**
- **Human Rights and Policing:** R.C. Mishra; **Rs. 600.**
- **Apartheid, Fundamentalism and Humane Global Governance:** R.S. Saini; **Rs. 500.** The above three books pub. by Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092.
- **Management Guide to Quality and Productivity:** M.R. Gopalan, John Bicheno; Pub.by Bizantra, an Imprint of Dreamtech

Press, 19-A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 299.**

- **Open Management** — Managing Confidence; Managing Motivation; Managing Time; Managing Creativity; Managing Concentration; Managing Communication: The above books are authored by Puneet Srivastava; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 60 each.**
- **Towards South Asian Economic Integration and Unity:** Saifuddin Soz, S.K. Sahni, R. N. Srivastava; Foundation for Peace & Sustainable Development, A-6, Prasad Nagar, New Delhi-110005. **Rs. 600.**
- **Consequences of Child Maltreatment:** S.P. Gomango; Authorspress, E-35/103 Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 550.**
- **Sorcerer's Spring:** Dhruv Chak; **Rs. 195.**
- **Quotes From Tagore: Rs. 195.**
- **Thirst of a Minstrel** — The Life & Times of Ganesh Pyne: Shiladitya Sarkar; **Rs. 295.**
- **Female Deities in Buddhism** — A Concise Guide: Vessantara; **Rs. 195.**
- **The Woman and the Puppet:** Jeremy Moore — Tr. in English; **Rs. 195.**
- **Comrades of Jesus** — by Indira Parthasarathy: K.V. Ramanathan — Tr. in English; **Rs. 195.** The above books pub. by Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.

Tamil

- **Thavam:** Bhanukumar; Rajam Pathippagam, 120, Arisikkadai Street, Mannargudi-614001. **Rs. 30.**
- **Sambandhar Thevara Thiruvamudhu:** V. Narayanaswamy; copies can be had from the author, 1, Sapthagiri Towers, 14, Ramar Koil Street, Ramnagar, Coimbatore-641009. **Rs. 20.**
- **Tamil Mozhi Arimukam:** P. David Prabhakar; Vivi Publications, 3/9, Avvaiyar Street, Rajakeelpakkam, Chennai-600073. **Rs. 50.**
- **Bahappirivinai Chattankalum Uyil Chattankalum:** Pulamai Venkatachalam; Thamarai Publications (P) Ltd., 41-B SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 50.**
- **Seranattu Sirukathaigal: Compiled by** Trivandrum Thamizh Sangam; Ainthinai Pathippagam, 279, Bharathi Salai, Triplicane, Chennai-600005. **Rs. 65.**
- **Indiya Saatchiya Sattam:** Pulamai Venkatachalam; Thamarai Publications (P) Ltd., 41-B. SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 60.**
- **Bharathidasan Kavithaigalil Bharathiyar:** V. Manikandan; Vizhigal Pathippagam, 8 (M-139), 7th Cross Street, Thiruvalluvar Nagar, Tiruvanmiyur Extn., Chennai-600041. **Rs. 70.**
- **Kutrath Thandanaiyum Theerppuraikalum:** Pulamai Venkatachalam; **Rs. 75.**
- **Aathankarai Oram:** V. Iraianbu; **Rs. 55.**
- **Iraianbuvin Chinthanai Vaanam:** Sundara Avudaiyappan; **Rs. 40.** The above books pub. by New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098.
- **Bharathiyin Parimanankal:** M. A. Palaniappan; Arivu Pathippagam, 142, Jani John Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 25.**
- **IAS Thervum Anugumuraiyum:** V. Iraianbu; New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 45.**
- **Aravilakku Arasar Muthiah:** A. R. Alagappan; Thirunelveli South India Saiva Siddhantha Noorpathippu Kazhagam Ltd., 154, TTK Road, Alwarpet, Chennai-600018. **Rs. 50.**
- **Sri Garudapuranasaram:** S. Gokulachari; Aalaya Dharisanam, 66A, Main Road, Bhuvanagiri-608601. **Rs. 25.**
- **Sri Raghavendra Mahimai:** Amman Sathyanandhan; Arulmigu Amman Pathippagam, 8, Gangaiamman Koil Street, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 130.**
- **Seeri Chinandha Selveezhi:** Rasa Vedantham; Minvariar Thamizharvalar Thamizhpani Arakkatalai, 49, Doraiswamy Nagar, Cuddalore-607001. **Rs. 55.**
- **Payanangal-Paadangal** — Thozhilathibar 'Gem' Veeramani Avargalin Velinaattu Payana Anubavangal: Ranimaindhan; Kalaignaan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 110.**
- **Kutti Devathai:** K. Gurumoorthy; Rajarajan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 50.**
- **Chess Vilaiyada Katrukollungal:** Priya Balu; **Rs. 50.**
- **Thirupathi Venkatachalapthi Mahimaiyum-Varalarum:** V. Narayanaswamy; **Rs. 50.**
- **Siruvargalukku Payantharum Pannattu Needhikadhai Kalanjiam:** Arulnambi; **Rs. 225.**
- **Siruvargalukku Podhu Arivu Kalai Kalanjiam:** Kamala Kandaswamy; **Rs. 170.**
- **Thirumoolar Vaazhvum Vaakum:** Durai Rajaram; **Rs. 55.** The above five books pub. by Narmadha Pathippagam, 10, Nana Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017.

Telugu

- **Vennela Kurisina Raatri:** A. Subba Rao; **Rs. 80.**
- **Kalakaalam Nilichedi:** T. Ramachandra Rao; **Rs. 150.**
- **Katha Kanchiki:** M.S. Prakasa Rao; **Rs. 50.** The above three books pub. by Vahini Book Trust, 1-9-286/3, Vidyanagar, Hyderabad-500044.
- **Marxism Moolasutralu-1:** K. Satyanarayana Sr.; Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 12.**
- **Astothara Sata Nama Ratnavali:** D. Sarojini Varadarajan; 9, V Palaniswami Naidu Street, Avanashi Road, Coimbatore-641018. **Rs. 45.**
- **Marxism Moolasutralu-2:** K. Satyanarayana Sr.; Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 10.**

Hindi

- **Islami Rajya Banam Muslim Rajya: Rs. 300.**
- **Islam — Siddhartha Aur Swaroop: Rs. 275.** The above two books authored by Jafar Raza; Lok Bharthi, 15-A, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Allahabad-1.
- **Tirukkural Dharma-Tattva:** Inderraj Baid; AP-1469, Street II, Sector-I, K.K. Nagar, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 100.**
- **Aarti Ka Diya Uskel Naam:** Tirulochan Singh; Motila Banarsidass, 120, Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 25.**
- **Bharatiya Darshan Shastra Ka Itihas — Parts 1 & 2:** Jayadev Vedalkar; **Rs. 800.**
- **Noydarshan May Praman Vichar:** Kamala Sharma; **Rs. 300.**
- **Naotheekatha Evam Samajit Visangatheeya:** Mukesh Chandra Demaree; **Rs. 450.**
- **Bas Ka Rangmunch** — Niband Aur Samvad: Sangeetha Gundeycha; **Rs. 250.** The above books pub. by New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Shop No. 18, II Floor, 5574-A, Kashiram Market, Durga Complex, New Chandrawal, Kamla Nagar, Delhi-110007.

In defence of the oppressed

DR AMBEDKAR AND UNTOUCHABILITY — Analysing and Fighting Caste: Christophe Jaffrelot; Permanent Black, D-28, Oxford Apartments, 11 IP Extension, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 495.**

IN THE project of fabricating India into a modern nation-state, three broad responses were forthcoming. The first sought to define Indian nationalism in exclusively cultural terms and suggested cultural nationalism as the way out for defining an Indian identity.

Another strand favoured a territorial definition of nationalism based on formal and impersonal criterion of constitutional government and the idea of citizenship. A third alternative accepted the formal inevitability of the post-Westphalia nation-state system while rejecting the ideological baggage that accompanied this endeavour.

Fighting caste

What is common to all these three efforts is the question of the place of an entity called "Hinduism" within each model. Is India a Hindu nation? If it is not, then what are the ways in which Hinduism could be equipped to live with other faiths? Can Hinduism cope with the ever growing pressures exerted by democracy, liberal institutions and modern technology? These questions continue to haunt India to this day. But equally crucial is the possibility of various strands within this entity called "Hinduism" to live in peace with each other.

One of the most eloquent and lucid attempts to answer this conundrum was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's intervention in the political discourse of modern India. This Christophe Jeffrelot's book is an admirable attempt in understanding Dr. Ambedkar's role in what the suggestive subtitle of the book calls "analysing and fighting caste."

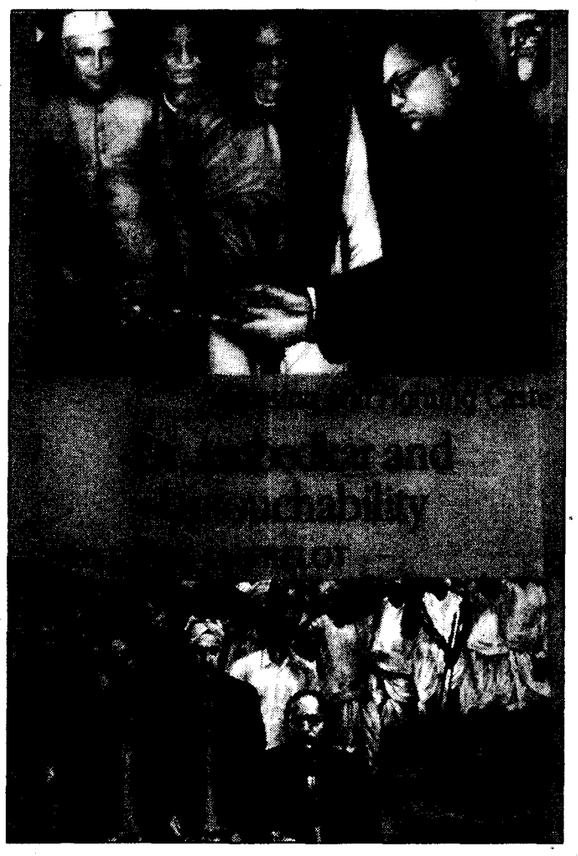
'Graded inequality'

The book traces the development and refinement of Dr. Ambedkar's thought and his politics in order to grant Dalits in India their rightful place. Jaffrelot rightly suggests that it is important to place Ambedkar as a modernist who was deeply influenced by Western ideas of personal freedom and equality.

Fidelity to these ideas led Ambedkar to believe that Dalits had no place within Hinduism. As long as Dalits participated in reforms within Hinduism that led to eventual "Sanskritisation", imitation of the mores of the upper castes, there was no escape from the stranglehold of caste.

Ambedkar believed that the very foundation of Hinduism rested on caste, a system which he evocatively formulated as one constituting an "ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt," or more strongly as an "ascending scale of hatred and a downward scale of contempt."

This was "graded inequality", as Ambedkar chose to put it. Emancipation for the Dalits lay in a total rejection of Hinduism. Ambedkar's eventual conversion to Buddhism, rather than equally egalitarian faiths like Islam and Christianity, completed the process.



Through the course of his remarkable political career, Ambedkar remained torn between the imperatives of giving Dalits an identity and a voice independent of Hinduism on the one hand, and his fidelity to the fundamental principles of constitutionalism and citizenship.

Jeffrelot alludes to this tension constantly, yet never questions the inherent value of the rights discourse or the incommensurability of ultimate values such as equality, personal freedom and justice.

Ambedkar's total allegiance to the idea of India as one nation often came into conflict with the place of Dalits within this nation at a practical level. As a legal idealist, Ambedkar believed that the formal devices enshrined in the Indian Constitution and strict adherence to them would take care of primordial identities and resolve all latent conflicts.

Choice of Buddhism

While the author is entirely correct in delineating the influence of thinkers like Thomas Paine and John Dewey on Ambedkar's thought, it would be an exaggeration to say that his thought was determined entirely by these thinkers. Western Enlightenment thought did provide Ambedkar with the initial road map in his quest to question Hinduism's graded inequality but that is not all.

His choice of Buddhism as the vehicle for Dalit emancipation is much more than an act of political pragmatism. In Buddhism, Ambedkar found the earliest and the most comprehensive model of dissent against Hinduism that had little to do with Western models of dissent and egalitarianism. Buddhism not merely questioned the social and ritualistic basis of Hinduism, but struck at the very foundation of Hinduism, namely, the existence of God. Another element in Jaffrelot's argument that does injustice to an otherwise admirable book is his treatment of the Ambedkar-Gandhiji relationship.

Ambedkar stood up to the Mahatma, refused to be smothered by the Mahatma's awesome reputation and mystique, yet never resorted to reducing the Mahatma into a stiff and formal "Mr. Gandhi" in the manner of a Jinnah.

Two versions of morality

Gandhiji reciprocated in kind with unconcealed admiration for Ambedkar. The only way to understand either of them, beyond the cut and thrust of politics of the time, is to see their differences as two rival versions of morality and two largely incompatible, yet legitimate, ideas of India.

A scrupulous scholar like Jeffrelot could have, therefore, completely dispensed with quotes from Dhananjay Keer's biography of Dr. Ambedkar. Keer's quotes are often fiction, as anyone who has read his hagiography of Savarkar would testify.

Even the disclaimer in footnote 17 of the 4th chapter about the content and date of a certain attribution to the Mahatma in Keer's book being "not fully ascertained" does not absolve Jeffrelot of a momentary lapse into intellectual laziness. This quibble does not, however, diminish the readability and the worth of an otherwise excellent book.

JYOTIRMAYA SHARMA

Tenets of Suddhadvaita

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE VALLABHA SCHOOL OF VEDANTA: K. Narain; Published by Indological Research Centre, B 34/115, Sukulpura, Durga Kund, Varanasi-221010. **Rs. 495.**

THIS BOOK deals with the philosophy of Vallabhacarya, (1479-1531) whose system is known as Suddhadvaita or pure monism. It is a philosophical and religious school of Vaishnavism, popular in Central and Western India and has developed the concept of Pushtibhakti, which treats devotion not only as a means but also as an end in itself. It is by God's grace (pushti) alone that man attains release. The book examines the philosophy of Vallabha from the epistemological, metaphysical and ethical standpoints in 13 well-argued chapters.

The Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra, which constitute the Prasthanatraya, allow hermeneutical interpretations by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka, Baladeva and others. This gave rise to the emergence of the major systems of Vedanta. Each system claims that it represents a faithful and authentic exposition of the teachings of the scriptures.

Four sects

There are four sects of Vaishnavism: Sri, Brahma, Hamsa and Rudra, representing the four schools, namely, Visishtadvaita, Dvaita, Dvaitadvaita (Nimbarka) and Suddhadvaita (pure monism of Vallabha).

There are some differences among these schools with regard to concepts like nature of the Reality, creation, soul and Bhakti. The author explains how Suddhadvaita differs from the other three schools. Here Bhakti is considered superior to the state of release and is recognised as the fifth Purusharatha. Two major contributions of this school are Brahmavada or Suddadvaita and Pustimarga.

Chapter three and four discuss the nature of Brahman. There is also a thorough study of the three means of knowledge, namely perception, inference and testimony in the next chapter. One of the important problems of Indian philosophy is the relation between identity and difference.

The Vallabha school takes the middle position by saying that the difference is only a manifestation caused by Brahman's inscrutable will. Pure monism is not one of absolute identity but of an identity that is tolerant of difference. The relation between identity and difference is according to this system to that of the whole to its parts.

Chapter nine explains Vallabha's understanding of the atomic dimension of the individual soul. But the Advaitins would argue that this is only with regard to the empirical status conditioned by intellect, and hence the atomic character should be taken only in the figurative sense.

The Vallabha Vedanta answers this by saying that the dimension of the jiva is neither all-pervasive nor of medium dimension but is atomic in nature. It is said here that the identity passages interpreted by the Advaitins are all against them.

Comparative study

According to the author the Vallabha followers claim that the Advaitins were much influenced by the spell of Buddhist logic that they not only lost the real meaning of the Upanishadic texts but even worked hard to misrepresent them. This point is a debatable one since all the preceptors have interpreted the texts by applying the rules of interpretation.

Only if there is a hermeneutical violation, then only a particular interpretation can be incorrect. By the hermeneutical interpretation, it can be said that all the interpretations are correct within a particular framework.

The book makes comparison with other systems of Indian philosophy wherever necessary. It is well argued how Vallabha's contribution is unique and novel. The author deserves praise for his excellent study on the subject. This book will serve as a resource material for those who are interested in the philosophy of Vallabhacarya.

S. PANNEERSELVAM

Technology of desalination

INTEGRATED POWER AND DESALINATION PLANTS: Asghar Husain — Editor; Pub. by Eoloss Publishers Co. Ltd, 58 ST Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1ST, U.K. Printed in India by Multivista Global Ltd., Chennai. Price not mentioned.

DESALINATION PLANTS have again caught the attention of people. They became the subject of political discourse in Tamil Nadu a few years ago and more so during the Lok Sabha elections in 2004. Of course, it is not just Chennai but several coastal cities that have studied this option to tide over the increasing water crisis. It is against this backdrop that this book has to be seen.

It is a compilation of articles written by several international experts dealing with different types of desalination plants that are based on two processes — thermal and membrane-based.

Edited by Asghar Hussain the book contains articles of Darwish Al-Gobaisi who has approached the question of sustainability in the context of desalination plants excellently and, Antonio Valero and his colleagues, who have dealt with the subject of thermo-economics exhaustively.

The Indian experts, C.V.S. Murty, K.V.Reddy and B.S.N. Murty have discussed performance evaluation of multi-stage flash desalination plants using artificial neural networks and detection of steady-state plant data.

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

Commentaries on Desika's hymn

SRI GODA STUTI: The original with the commentaries of T.S.S. Raghava Patracharian (Sanskrit), Kidambi M. Rajagopalacharian and A.V. Gopalacharian (Tamil). Edited with explanations in Tamil and English by V.N. Vedanta Desikan; Pub. by Paundrikapuram Swami Asramam, 43-A/13, Asramam Road, Srirangam-620006. **Rs. 50.**

THOUGH VEDANTA Desika's works have been priceless guides for Srivaishnavism, it was only in the last century that they were given wide publicity through critical editions and commentaries. The present pontiff of the Srimad Paundrikapuram Asramam has been the inspirer of such editions in this century. As part of the programme of republishing the existing commentaries on Vedanta Desika's Sanskrit hymns, Sri Goda Stuti comes to us almost as a master document prepared by V.N. Vedanta Desikan.

The brief Sanskrit commentary of Raghava Patracharian is couched in easily assimilable Sanskrit and draws our attention to the signification of the term "Goda", the association of the term with various rivers like Sona, Yamuna and Godavari, the linkage with the Ramayana, the soulful snippets of "ninda-stuti", the divine romanticism of Andal and the manner in which the prayer has risen spontaneously from Vedanta Desika. Kidambi Rajagopalachariar's explanations are brief and pointed.

A.V. Gopalachariar's detailed gloss evokes sustained dramatic dialogues between Goda and Vedanta Desika. Inspired by the experiential commentaries in Manipravala, Gopalachariar examines each word in the hymn as an expert jeweller and records his experiences as a scholar-devotee.

There are charming vignettes when describing the Lord as the bridegroom come to wed Andal, and the finest of them all is the in-depth humour describing Adisesha as the bed, the umbrella, the lamp, the garment and the sandals of the Lord. Would it not be frightening to the young bride? This commentary with plentiful inputs from Sanskrit works and the hymns of the Azhwars is a gift of immeasurable delight.

The Tamil and English commentaries of Vedanta Desikan are helpful. Some of the English phrases have a quaint charm like "a great jackpot for the South" and "His feet flavour the Vedas." His advice to scholarly speakers in the Tiruppavai season (December-January) to add one verse of Sri Goda Stuti daily to their explanatory lectures is pertinent.

For the hymn is a piece of great literature, a guide for spiritual Sadhana and a golden bridge to envision the only poetess who became a goddess and who remains the fount of all that is sublime and beautiful in Vaishnavite theology.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

• Anthology of stories • Tamil and Saivism • Polemic on patents • Treatise on Sufism

TAMIL

SRI VENUGOPALAN SIRUKATHAIGAL — Two Parts: Sri Venugopalan (Pushpa Thangadurai); Lakshmishri Pathippagam, 848, 91st Street, 13th Sector, K.K. Nagar, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 180.**

THIS IS a twin anthology of 32 long and short stories by a popular and prolific writer of novels and short stories, Pushpa Thangadurai. A study of this anthology is a rewarding experience.

Every story is a masterpiece as the reader gets absorbed in the characters, atmosphere, emotions and the realism. The range of storylines: a distant memory; weaving the flowers of thought into a garland; a guilty conscience; a horrifying experience; a widow's upsetting experience at the sight of her still-born baby; the immanence of Sakti; the depths of despair; life's little ironies; a poignant memory; it takes patience to appreciate domestic bliss; the course of true love; a mystery resolved; the grammar of love; the bizarre story of a speech-impaired eccentric; a maelstrom of conflicting emotions.

Hope is life; a lyricist's advent in films; unfulfilled dream; where national interest is paramount; an old man with two wives aspiring for yet another; the odd man out; marital disharmony; the clash of ego that costs dear; a nagging doubt; awareness in choosing a life's partner; a sweet relationship that went sour; a situation verging on the farcial; discrimination between good and evil; and the power of the human spirit in the face of vilification are the themes of some of the stories. It is a wonderful collection that should reach a wider circle.

The description of C.S.Chellappa's role for realising the then budding author's ambition to get into print lends charm, on a par with the illuminating forewords by R.V., Vallikkannan and Vikraman. The cherished impressions of some of the giants in the literary field, both living and dead, form an appendage.

P. SUNDARESAN

SAIVAMUM THAMIZHUM: N. Subbu Reddiyar; Pub.by the Tirunelveli South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 522, TTK Salai, Chennai-600018. **Rs. 180.**

TAMIL PLAYS a vital role in Saiva religion and philosophy. And this work depicts the role of Tamil in this religion. Sambandhar hailed it as "Thiruneriya Tamil" (Tamil of the sacred path). All the Saiva saints have glorified Tamil and the devotional utterances are sanctified just because they had poured forth in chaste and lucid Tamil.

When the saints reveal their experiences in their own mother tongue, naturally the words, sentences and phrases form a poetic order and also refer to the gracious nature of God, personal experiences as well as the pernicious nature of the world. In this sense religious language and philosophical wisdom go together.

Starting from the ancient Tamil literature like the Pathupattu, Ettuthogai, Pathinen Kilkanakku, Irattaikkappiyangal (Silappathikaram and Manimegalai) Sivaka Chinthamani, Kamba Ramayanam and the Villibharatham, the author highlights the descriptions of Siva in other Tamil works. The holy Saiva canonic literature called the Tirumurai, Puranic literature, Prabandha literature, Siddha literature and the contribution of later scholars like Thayumanavar and Ramalinga Adigal find place in the book.

He has extensively quoted from the respective works and offers explanations and wherever possible gives critical notes. The work will be a useful reference on Saivism.

R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

KANNADA

PATENT PEDAMBHUTA: Madhava Ithal; Pub. by Rutha Pusthaka, 48, 7th Cross, Swimming Pool Extension, Bangalore-560003. **Rs. 100.**

INVENTIONS ARE the result of the cumulative genius of an ever-experimenting community over a long period of time. Need to offer incentives, both financial and in the form of community appreciation to individuals is not the same as allowing exclusive rights to multinational companies (MNCs) on such inventions. This book covers the various aspects of the raging polemics on the subject of patenting, bringing together all the extant material in various NGO literature and proceedings of the World Social Forum. The attack is particularly strident and the arguments seem to be gaining acceptance in the field of pharmaceuticals. It is not emphatically denied by anybody that after the amendment of the Patent Act, the price of medicines and fertilizer would rise enormously, beyond the affordability of the poor nations. Besides, it is bound to destroy domestic self-reliance in these vital areas. The underlying market expansion of the MNCs backed by their powerful governments is the issue. Poor nations do not even have the financial and legal capacity to fight against these organisations.

The book covers all these and more issues in good Kannada, is well edited and offers a wealth of information. It is a good handbook on the growing movement. Seems to have been hurriedly brought out in view of the discussion of the Patent Bill in Parliament, without an introduction or even a subject index.

K. S. PARTHASARATHY

HINDI

ISLAMI ADHYATMA SUFIBAD: Zafar Raza; Lok Bharati Prakashan, 15 A, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Allahabad-1. **Rs. 150.**

THIS BOOK deals with Sufism and its beliefs. It begins with a clear historical background to Sufism. In five chapters the author documents the Sufi philosophy, its tenets, various traditions and its growth in India with remarkable clarity. It enables to transcend human limitations and go into the spiritual realm. It is a way of being which is the actualisation of the attributes of God. In simple words it is relating to God, good to other creatures in the world and good to oneself. One interesting aspect of the book is that it devotes a chapter to assess Sufism in relation to mysticism, which it is often misconstrued for.

Since there are profuse quotations from the Quran a glossary of words used in the religious scriptures and Sufi writings comes in handy. Details about various Sufi saints and spiritual traditions of Sufism make it a complete treatise on Sufism. An exhaustive list of related books should help the scholars to go into deeper and variegated study of Sufism as a major product of Islamic religious thought.

The author spells out clearly that the objective of the book is to see Sufism as a unifying force for the Muslims and the Hindus.

BIBHUTI MISHRA

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

THE TELEGRAPH
23 MAR 2005

Judge denies feed-tube plea

Pinellas Park (Florida), March 22 (Reuters): A federal judge refused to order the resumption of feeding for brain-damaged Florida woman Terri Schiavo today in a blow to the parents, who have support from the US Congress and President George W. Bush in trying to keep her alive.

US district judge James Whittemore issued a 13-page ruling rejecting a request by Schiavo's parents for the tube, which was removed on Friday under a state court order, to be re-inserted pending a fresh review of the case.

The judge took up the case in a two-hour hearing yesterday in Tampa, Florida, after Congress rushed through a special law on Schiavo over the weekend. The highly unusual congressional intervention allowed the parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, to go to federal court in their effort to keep Schiavo alive.

Whittemore acknowledged the gravity of the consequences in denying the request for an emergency order to restore the feeding tube, but said he was bound to follow the law.

"The court is constrained to apply the law to the issues before it, as plaintiffs have not established a substantial likelihood of the success of the merits of their case," he said in his ruling.

A Terri Schiavo supporter outside the Woodside hospice in Pinellas Park, Florida. (Reuters)

The parents, who have battled for years against state court verdicts that Schiavo would not have wanted to live in her condition, were likely to appeal quickly to the 11th US circuit court of appeals in Atlanta, Georgia.

"We were so encouraged when Congress and the President signed into law this bill and thought that my sister's feeding tube was going to be re-inserted and to get this news this morning, I'm just, I'm at a loss," Schiavo's brother, Bobby Schindler, told NBC's *Today* show.

"I'm sure it will be appealed. But it just seems to my family that these judges are adamant on seeing that my sister dies," he said on ABC's *Good Morning America*.

Schiavo's feeding tube was removed on Friday on the order of the Florida court that first ruled five years ago that the tube could be taken out. Experts said she could be expected to live for one to two weeks without it.

Schiavo suffered a heart attack in 1990 that left her in what courts have declared a "persistent vegetative state." State courts have consistently sided with Schiavo's husband and legal guardian, Michael Schiavo, in finding that she would not wish to live in this state.

Whittemore had made clear at yesterday's hearing that he could issue the emergency order only if he believed the Schindlers would be likely to succeed when the full case was heard in the federal court.

Schiavo's parents have argued their daughter responds to them and could improve with treatment, and in recent weeks their campaign to keep her alive was joined by anti-abortion activists and Christian conservatives who lobbied intensely in Washington to win lawmakers' support.

Congress interrupted its Easter holiday to pass the Schiavo bill and Bush cut short a brief Texas vacation to sign it. The law allowed the parents to take the case to federal court.

In their request for a new review of the case, the Schindlers, who are Roman Catholics, argued several violations of their daughter's rights, including the right to due process and to practice a religion.

But Michael Schiavo's lawyer, George Felos, told the court that the two sides were back in court because of "popular political clamour" and he said it would be "a horrific intrusion on Schiavo's liberty" to re-insert her feeding tube.

Power sector policy reforms

PRIVATISING POWER CUTS? — Ownership and Reform of State Electricity Boards in India: Joel Ruet; Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23 Bharat Ram Road (23, Ansari Road), Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 795.**

RUET IN his earlier book on *state electricity boards* (SEBs) in India argued that the fundamental problem of SEBs was the absence of a management or enterprise culture. He has again established through his further studies of their operations that the SEB's have an administrative culture.

Unbundling was expected to bring transparency into their operations. Corporatisation has had *little effect* on efficiency since it has not changed the culture from paperwork, procedures and processes of government. Authority still remains concentrated in the state's power secretary. Only, there are now managing directors instead of SEB members.

This book goes farther than his earlier one and argues that the SEB culture must change if they are to perform better. He highlights the irrationality of the state to the SEB. There are *few policy directives.* Instead there is a plethora of minute political and executive instructions. Measures of performance are about adherence of procedures with no focus on costs and efficiency.

Decision-making process

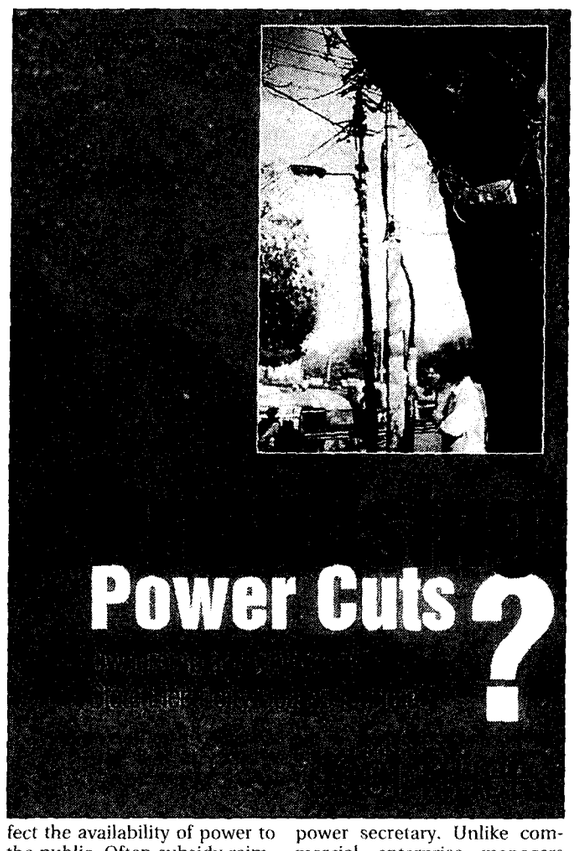
The book provides graphic descriptions of the internal decision-making processes in SEBs. *Highly centralised* and with a culture of putting everything down on paper, real authority rests with the government. He concludes that *internal organisation* matters, as do the decision-making processes. Choices must be conditioned by information and reporting systems. In SEBs they *do not exist.* He describes the hierarchical nature of SEB organisations and the *deleterious* impact on executive decision-making.

His description of the budget processes in SEBs is depressing. It has nothing to do with efficiency, cost control and quality but with protecting turfs and evading individual responsibility. Costs are budgeted for but not incomes. With state electricity regulatory commissions requiring annual revenue requirements for determining tariffs, SEBs have to forecast *incomes and expenditures.*

Revenue

No SEB has successfully presented even close approximations. There is no flexibility to the operating executive for reallocating funds and no cash with field executives for petty payments. Physical inputs when sanctioned are sent centrally from the board to divisions and circles. Information is not integrated and reports cannot be used as centralised management tools.

There is no set procedure for calculating subsidies. Reimbursement depends on an evaluation by the government of its own resources and how holding back reimbursement might affect the availability of power to the public. Often subsidy reimbursements are done out of funds sanctioned for capital expenditures.



All dealings with public sector undertakings (PSUs) like the NTPC especially on supplies and payments are by the state power secretary. Unlike commercial enterprise managers who negotiate purchases and payment terms with their suppliers, SEB managers have no authority. The author does not discuss the availability based tariff (ABT) introduced by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) in 2000 that has enabled some SEBs to trade in electricity, earn extra income and brought entrepreneurial initiatives and culture to SEBs.

'Enterprisation' model

Unlike a company SEBs have none or limited property rights, *no asset lists and values.* They have little motivation to repair burnt-out transformers and other equipment even when the cost is small and the resultant benefit to power supply for the community is great. They also do not have rights over their cash flows. Corporatised SEBs have much paperwork to accomplish before getting the control but suppliers largely *hold it in escrow.*

Ruet questions if there are alternatives to the World Bank model of unbundling and corporatisation. By themselves they have had little positive effect in improving efficiencies. His answer is "enterprisation", the bringing in of a management culture.

He commends the Delhi model of public-private partnerships through contracts that might lead ultimately to full-fledged private ownership. But he says that achieving it will require considerable change in administrative mindsets both in the governments and in SEBs. They have to move from nil management culture to one in which managerial attitudes and practices are at the fore.

It requires adequate capitalisation and handing over of property rights to the SEB. Lenders need asset registers to know the asset backing. The SEB will have to be reorganised around cost and efficiencies as the central concepts. Budget allocations and strict budget constraints must apply.

A transparent and synthesised management information system must deliver timely management information as *tools* for the field and as well as control tools for headquarters. Coordination between field and headquarters must be structured with considerable autonomy to operating executives.

Alternative approach

The book is short on discussion of electricity regulatory commissions and their role in bringing about an enterprise culture in SEB's. It devotes excessive and unnecessary space to theoretical concepts that are fairly obvious in any good management school.

Ruet does not use the body of literature after the CERC was created in 1998 and the many decisions of regulatory commissions and courts. He ignores the tendency of the Central and the state governments to withhold powers from regulatory commissions.

Despite these lapses, SEBs, regulators and government officials must read the book. It provides an alternative approach to the World Bank model but forgets that governments in India will never allow autonomy as required for "enterprisation" of SEBs. That is also why eliminating government from SEB ownership is essential.

S. L. RAO

Ritual text of the Vedic tradition

APASTAMBA SRAUTA SUTRA — Text in Sanskrit with *English Translation and Notes*, Volumes I & II: G. U. Thite; New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Shop No. 18, II Floor, 5574-A, Kashiram Market, Durga Complex, New Chandrawal, Kamla Nagar, Delhi-110007. **Rs. 2500** (for the set).

THE VEDAS are made known by means of the auxiliaries called Vedangas, which are six in number. Of these, Kalpa is one. The Srauta sutras belong to the Kalpa. They deal with rituals called Srauta, which only an Ahitagni (one who has established the three sacred fires) can perform. The Garhapatya, Ahavaniya and the Dakshina are the three fires. The Srauta rituals are broadly classified again as "Istis" and "Somayajnas."

These again have further subdivisions. Each of the four Vedas has its own recensions (sakhas). There are Srauta sutras attached to all these Vedic branches. Several Vedic branches are now lost. The Srauta sutra of Apastamba belongs to the Taittiriya branch of the Krishna Yajurveda. Besides Apastamba, Bharadvaja and Satyashadha-Hiranyakesin also wrote Srauta-sutras. The two volumes under review provide the full text of Apastamba Srauta sutra with a good, standard, reliable English translation and notes. Sage Apastamba is believed to have lived in Andhra Pradesh around 5th Century B.C.

The editor observes that the language and style of the work are similar to that of classical Sanskrit. But there are peculiarities, grammatical aberrations and archaisms in the text. Some critics like Buhler including the editor, Thite are of the opinion that "ritualists were in general, deficient in their education." But one has to keep in mind the time in which this work was composed.

It is quite possible that ancient authors like Apastamba followed a grammatical system, which was different from that of Panini, with which South Indians are familiar. We cannot therefore sit in judgment over Apastamba's grammar. The editor accepts that there are several instances of archaism in Apastamba's language.

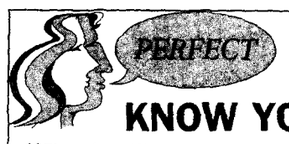
These are the days of a general decadence of study and lack of interest in Vedic Srauta ritualism. The Srauta sutras give details about a variety of rituals, those which are obligatory and those which are optional, the methodology, the priests to participate, *the fee to be given* to them, the mantras to be chanted, the kind of *purodasa* (translated as "bread" by the editor) to be prepared, the types of offerings to be made and the results promised.

Study of another Vedic auxiliary called the Mimamsa, which is concerned with Vedic exegesis, is very much in neglect nowadays. This is partly because of the domineering position of the Vedanta systems, which teach that the so-called rituals, which are complicated and difficult to perform, yield only temporary and limited results. Ultimate liberation is assured only by the Vedantas.

It is against this background that the present work has to be assessed and admired. The translation fulfils a long-felt desideratum.

Both the translation and notes are of great value for students of the Srauta literature. Thite deserves praise for bringing to light this work, which represents a neglected branch of Vedic study.

M. NARASIMHACHARY



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

"Looks like our team *snatched another draw* from the jaws of victory."

"Yes, Ganguly and his men seem to specialise in that. I am sure your cousin, Prasad, the dyed-in- the-wool cricket fan had a lot to say about the first test."

"My cousin is very much alive. He did not die in any wool. What are...."

"I did not mean d..i..e..d, but d..y..e..d. When you refer to someone as being "dyed-in-the-wool" what you mean is that he or she has very strong opinions about something. Opinions that are not easily changed."

"In other words, the person is very stubborn. His beliefs cannot be changed."

"I guess you could say that."

"My cousin Vindya is a dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist. She believes that a woman's place is in the kitchen."

"Good grief! Where did she get such an old fashioned idea? I understand that my grandfather was a dyed-in-the-wool conservative."

"My neighbour claims to be a dyed-in-the-wool communist. But he lives in a huge house and drives a Benz."

"Some communists in our country do that! Tell me, what is the origin of 'dyed-in-the-wool'?"

"I understand that wool that is dyed before it is spun into yarn retains its colour. The colour becomes permanently fixed. Anyway, tell me what did Prasad have to say about the match?"

"He said that someone *should have told Tendulkar* to score quickly."

"No one could get in touch with Sachin. Since he was performing at the crease, he had his cell switched off!"

"Very funny! What was your reaction to the draw?"

"Well, after the first drinks interval, I kind of sensed that our overpaid underachievers weren't going to win. So I started channel hopping."

"Channel hopping? Does it mean the same thing as channel surfing?"

"Yes, that's right! When you channel surf or hop, you keep switching from one channel to another using the remote control."

"Mohan constantly channel surfs. You can't watch any programme with him."

"My constant channel hopping drives my mother up the wall."

"I can imagine. Your mother wants everything just right. She...."

"....she is a bit of a control freak, isn't she?"

"You are calling your mother a freak? How can you do that?"

"All I am saying is that she is a control freak. In other words, she likes to be in total command of a situation. She feels this....."

"...she has an obsessive need to have control over herself and others around her?"

"Exactly! Control freaks need to feel they have control over everything around them. Including the people. They must be in total command of the situation. I am told that Anand's wife Sonia is a control freak."

"Oh that she is. How about this example? My father's new boss is a control freak and he has made life miserable for everyone."

"Sounds good. I don't think I would like to work for a control freak."

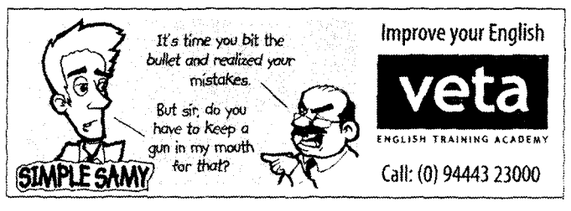
"I don't think I would either. To tell you the truth, I just don't want to work!"

"That sounds like you."

***** ***** *****

*"I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life." — **Rita Rudner***

S. UPENDRAN



OPEN PAGE

Faith and the scientific spirit

THE CONSTITUTION of India enjoins the people and the government to cultivate a "scientific temper." Recent events not only in India but also in scientifically advanced countries like the United States indicate that there are some parties outside the scientific establishment that are trying to influence what is taught and practised in the name of science. The only defence against such creeping obscurantism is for the public to be informed about science and the scientific method. Science is not just a collection of facts and results but a way of looking at the world.

The first point to note is that a scientific theory, unlike a mathematical theorem, can never be proved. It can only be verified or validated on the basis of experiments and observation. Newton's gravitation theory, for example, has been verified by literally millions of experiments and observations of natural phenomena like planetary motions. But there is never complete certainty. When new facts come to light which an existing theory cannot properly explain, a new theory will have to be formulated. The Michelson-Morley experiment on the velocity of light brought about the downfall of classical physics and led Einstein to formulate his relativity theory.

This means that a 'theory' in science does not mean the same as 'theory' in everyday English, which has the sense of a hypothesis or conjecture. A scientific theory is a statement, usually mathematical, that seeks to explain a natural phenomenon. Once a theory is presented it should be capable of verification using scientific methods and arguments. This means it should also be capable of falsification; falsification is as much part of the scientific method as verification. Science has no place for claims of infallibility.

Another aspect of science is that it is open ended. There is no finality about any theory, no matter how eminent the scientist who created it. Scientists as great as Newton and Einstein have been found to be wrong on occasion. Also, simply because a theory leaves some open questions it does not mean that an alternative should be accepted. The alternative must pass the test of verification and falsification.

Thus, the falsifiability of a claim or even a theory is central to the scientific method. This is what gives science the correction mechanism, allowing it to weed out unsound claims. Such a claim may be frivolous like those about miracle healing and herbal petrol, or serious like cold fusion, or new race-based theories in the name of genome research. These can be disproved as long as one stays within the boundaries of science. This means: anyone making a claim in the realm of science must accept the possibility of the claim being proved false.

Principle of falsifiability

It is precisely on this point — the principle of falsifiability — that faith based theories like 'creationism' come into conflict with science. Advocates of creation science (now called "intelligent design") claim that their explanation for life on earth, based on the biblical belief that world with all its organisms and fossils was created on October 23, 4004 BC, must be treated as a scientific alternative to the theory of evolution by natural selection. If so, they must accept also the possibility that the claim derived on the basis of scripture can be false.

The issue then is not whether science comes in conflict with religious belief, but whether scripture can be false and therefore fallible, as indeed scientific results and theories can be. There can be no half measures in science: we cannot have one set of rules for results derived from non-religious sources like empirical methods and mathematics, and a second set that claims to derive from scripture and therefore infallible, yet unverifiable.

This is the heart of the problem: using faith as a source of science forces the believer to accept that scripture is falsifiable. How many believers are prepared for it? Perhaps the best way out of the dilemma was suggested 400 years ago by Cardinal Baronius, Galileo's friend and himself a man of faith: "The goal of scripture is to teach how to go to heaven, not how heaven goes."

● **N.S. RAJARAM**

Disaster management: then and now

THE RECENT tsunami which hit parts of India was a disaster which no one who wrote the manuals of disaster management would ever have dreamt of. In its character, range, magnitude of the damage inflicted, compactness of time in which such damage was wrought, the insidious manner in which it struck, and the number of human lives lost, it bears no comparison with any disaster that the country has seen in living memory. It is also unique in the challenges it has thrown up in the area of relief management.

Major fires, road accidents, floods, cyclones, and droughts are the types of disasters that have confronted field officers. Each of them carries its own tale of human suffering and trauma, but these challenges have been met with success and courage.

The basic ingredients of relief and rehabilitation have not changed over time. Provision of cash for sustenance, immediate treatment of the injured, disposal of the dead including assistance for funeral expenses, rebuilding of homes and livelihoods have all remained priorities for the administration.

A fact that has remained constant is that all disaster management programmes have to be implemented at the district level under the guidance, coordination, leadership and responsibility of the district administration, for the simple reason that for long years, the district has been a unit of administration that common people recognise, understand and look up to, particularly in times of distress.

Role of Collector

The British, through their association with rural India and as part of their strategy to provide a human face to their colonial administration, evolved the concept of '*ma-baap*' under which the District Collector became the fountainhead of all authority within his territory and consequently emerged as the 'great protector and provider.'

One needs to look into past practices and present initiatives, taken in a constantly evolving technological, political and social milieu, to understand the extent of change that has taken place.

Till about the mid 70s, most districts were of large dimensions in which one could travel nearly 100 km in any direction and still be within jurisdiction. Communication within the district was generally through manually operated trunk telephones, and beyond, through the wireless network of the police, which was being put in place in a phased manner. Availability of vehicles was confined only to the senior levels.

On the political side, the Congress party was the dominant force and regional parties were emerging slowly. Respect for district administration and its credibility were very strong. Political interference was minimal and selective. Instruments of civil society, NGOs and activism had not acquired the muscle that they now have. Above all corruption at the political and administrative levels was the exception.

In such an environment, management of disasters, of course not of tsunami proportions, provision of relief and rehabilitation were carried out promptly, effectively and in a non-discriminatory manner under the direction and supervision of the Collector. Funds were mostly provided by the government on the basis of norms specified in codes or manuals and additional resources raised from local contributions in kind. Officials were given space to think clearly and initiative to act with determination to provide speedy relief despite physical constraints. And recipient groups had faith in the objectivity of the district administration.

Today, the size of most districts has shrunk drastically. District officials have immensely better infrastructure now, in terms of mobile phones, email, STD facilities, fleet of vehicles, better medical aid, etc. Alongside, there has been a perceptible increase in levels of public awareness, political interference, NGO activity, activism and media penetration. The decline of the Congress paved the way for the presence of strong regional political parties, leading to fractured mandates and horse trading to retain power.

Political interference

Disaster management and provision of relief is an area that political parties perceive as being useful for deriving political mileage. The temptation is all the more today because flow of funds from donors is of mind-boggling proportions. It is no surprise therefore that political hacks, supported by their bosses, interfere at the local level to determine the manner in which aid should be disbursed.

A consequence of this is mud-slinging between parties, often accusing the district administration of favouritism or non-performance, thus deflecting staff from their main duties. A noticeable trend is the demand that funds be delivered in cash, for obvious reasons, rather than the request for completion of the rehabilitation package by bona fide agencies. With the multiplicity of political parties and no single party having a decisive mandate, the pressures on the district administration are awesome, and can only get worse unless leadership at the top reins in the lower formations to allow the district administration to function objectively.

A disturbing phenomenon these days is the increasing number of non-official bodies/agencies entering the field of rehabilitation, each one seeking to carve out space for itself. Their bona fides should be verified, credibility established and numbers limited to ensure effective monitoring, implementation, and that the affected are not taken for a ride.

No amount of improvement in infrastructure or gadgetry can alleviate the trauma if extraneous considerations are allowed to enter the disbursal of relief and implementation of the rehabilitation package. The approach of the district administration should be inclusive, taking on board all bona fide players. It is the duty of higher leadership to ensure this. A district administration that is a pawn in the hands of local political forces will only add to the misery of people, already traumatised.

The clear stream of reason should not lose its way in the dreary desert sand of politics.

● **P.M. BELLIAPPA**
IAS (retd.)

e-governance: cautious approach needed

THE CENTRAL and State governments are spending crores of rupees every year on e-governance with the objective of ensuring efficiency, transparency and better citizen-friendly interface. In certain cases, such as land registration, motor vehicles department, railways and utility bills payment centres, there has been a marked improvement in the quality of service offered to the citizens.

Interoperability

But if e-governance were to be truly effective, then individual application program of one department should be able to 'talk to' another application program installed in another department. Interoperability of e-governance projects is thus of vital importance if the citizens are to feel the benefit of IT in day-to-day life. In other words, every IT project should have a clear government to government (G2G) interface before a meaningful government to citizen (G2C) solution can be implemented.

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has already started work on the interoperability framework for the Central and State governments as the realisation has now come that databases of one department should be compatible with another all over the country. Some of the departments identified on a priority basis to have interoperability implemented are Treasury, Hospital, Employment Exchange, Registration and Land Records.

Many government departments in their eagerness to catch the IT bandwagon installed PCs and their own legacy software applications without any vision regarding its future scalability and interoperability. The result is a set of independent databases that are not compatible with each other.

European countries, which started computerisation decades ago, also face a similar problem with regard to legacy systems. Now with the advancement of secure 'open systems' enabled by web technology, both the industry and governments in those countries are in the process of migrating from the older legacy systems, which entails huge costs but provides business opportunities for the Indian software industry.

But in our country the cost of migration from legacy to open systems should be lower considering the fact that computerisation began as a wave only in the late 80s. That is one of the advantages of being a late-comer in an age where obsolescence also happens in nanoseconds.

State governments going ahead with e-governance projects should exercise caution in implementing them going by their own experience as well as that of developed countries. In view of the fact that taxpayer's money is being spent on such projects, the solutions in terms of hardware, software and applications chosen should be the most cost effective.

In many large organisations it has become a practice to have a high-profile chief information officer or chief technology officer who holds the responsibility of sourcing the best possible hardware, software and applications suited for the company. Sometimes, these officers also find a place in the board of directors.

Critics argue that crores of rupees have already been spent on e-governance projects and the citizen has not gained any major benefit. There is still no consensus about the deployment of open source and proprietary software. Complaints regarding IT implementation are surfacing one by one. The most recent example being the problems in the billing software implemented on Microsoft platform and the application software developed by PriceWaterHouseCoopers for the Kerala State Electricity Board.

National vision

In IT implementation in the government it is the department heads concerned or private solution providers who decide what technology or solution is to be adopted for each project. Every government needs to have a CIO who will hold the responsibility for implementing G2G and G2C projects adopting the best practices and at the same time not bleeding the scarce government resources. This will ensure that department heads do not undertake IT implementation in a haphazard way and fail to pass on the benefits to the common man.

Considering the complexity of the information technology sector, in terms of technology, applications and solutions available, it would not be wise to entrust e-governance projects to a small group of people.

There should be an empowered panel consisting of a cross-section of major stake holders — government officials, solution providers in the private and public sectors, hardware vendors, people's representatives, scientists and others. This panel should evolve a national vision for e-governance and continuously advise, assist and coordinate the e-governance activities in the country.

● **SREEKUMAR RAGHAVAN**

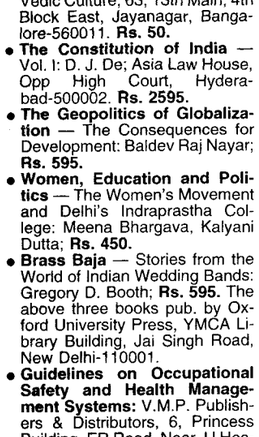
Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Gaddi Land in Chamba Its History, Art & Culture:** O. C. Handa; Indus Publishing Co., FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 600.**
- **A Bird's Eye View:** J. T. Jayasingh; *Roots, Royal Medicals*, Elappara P.O., Idukki, Kerala-686501. **Rs. 70.**
- **Quality of Life in the Himalayan Region:** L. R. Sharma; Indus Publishing Co., FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 600.**
- **Ancient Tales of Wit, Wisdom & Humour:** S. P. Sharma; Unicorn Books Pvt. Ltd., Distributed by Pustak Mahal, J-3/16 (Opp. Happy School) Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 48.**
- **3rd Degree:** James Patterson, Andrew Gross; Headline Book Publishing, a division of Hodder Headline PLC, 338, Euston Road, London NWI 3BH. **Rs. 200.**
- **The Legacy of India:** G. T. Garrat — Editor; Black & White, an imprint of Sundeep Prakashan, P.B.No 2647, 6191/1, Block-1, Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. **Rs. 495.**



- **Essentials of Krishna & Shukla Yajur Veda:** R. L. Kashyap; Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, 63, 13th Main, IV Block East, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011. **Rs. 60.**
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- **Rudra Mantras from Taittiriya Samhita:** R. L. Kashyap; Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, 63, 13th Main, 4th Block East, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011. **Rs. 50.**
- **The Constitution of India** — Vol. I: D. J. De; Asia Law House, Opp High Court, Hyderabad-500002. **Rs. 2595.**
- **The Geopolitics of Globalization** — The Consequences for Development: Baldev Raj Nayar; **Rs. 595.**
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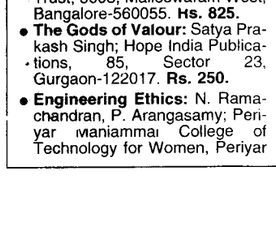
- **Lectures on Human Rights and International Law:** Rega Surya Rao; Asia Law House, Opp. High Court, Hyderabad-500002. **Rs. 225.**
- **The Magic of Nepal:** Deb Mukharji; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 1500.**



- **Safety and Health in the Non-Ferrous Metals Industries:** V.M.P. Publishers & Distributors, 6, Princess Building, ER Road, Near JJ Hospital Traffic Signals, Mumbai-400003. **Rs. 95.**
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- **Total Quality Management:** N. Ramachandran, V. R. Vivekanandan, C. Vimala; Periyar Consultancy Services, Periyar Maniammai College of Technology for Women, Periyar Nagar, Vallam, Thanjavur-613403. **Rs. 220.**
- **The Yoga of Siddha Boganathan** — Vols 1& 2: T. N. Ganapathy; Banaji's Kriya Yoga & Publications Inc., distributed by Babaji's Kriya order of Acharyas Trust, 5608, Malleswaram West, Bangalore-560055. **Rs. 825.**
- **The Gods of Valour:** Satya Prakash Singh; Hope India Publications, 85, Sector 23, Gurgaon-122017. **Rs. 250.**
- **Engineering Ethics:** N. Ramachandran, P. Arangasamy; Periyar Maniammai College of Technology for Women, Periyar Nagar, Vallam, Thanjavur-613403. **Rs. 120.**
- **Global Perspectives on E-Learning Rhetoric and Reality:** Alison A Carr-Chellman; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, *Panchsheel Enclave*, PB 4109, New Delhi-110017. **£ 40.**
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Tamil

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- **Sri Godasthuthi:** V. N. Vedanta Desikan; Srimad Andavan Poundarikapuram Swami Asramam, 43-A/13, Ashramam Road, Srirangam-620006. **Rs. 50.**
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South Asian literary traditions

LITERARY CULTURES IN HISTORY — Reconstructions from South Asia: Sheldon Pollock — Editor; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 1495.**

THIS LEARNED anthology of essays on South Asian literature edited by Sheldon Pollock is a welcome departure from many of the books, which have so far been published on this subject starting from the colonial period to the present era. Sanskrit came as a revelation to the Western scholars in the 19th Century and this led them to look at India as the repository of Europe's vanishing spirituality.

Max Muller introduced the study of the Vedas, the ancient texts in Sanskrit, "as the dawn of the religious consciousness of man," while at the same time providing the missionary with a knowledge, "as indispensable as a knowledge of the enemy's country is to a general." Although Hinduism is not strictly a religion in the Western sense inasmuch as it does not have scriptures as the arbitrary authority, the early Western missionary Indologists associated the Vedas with religion, which were in fact social documents depicting the way of life of a primeval tribe.

Once Sanskrit was associated with religion, it became a natural tendency on the part of the later Western missionary scholars to look at literature in the vernacular languages of India through the same "religious" lens and they confused the issue further.

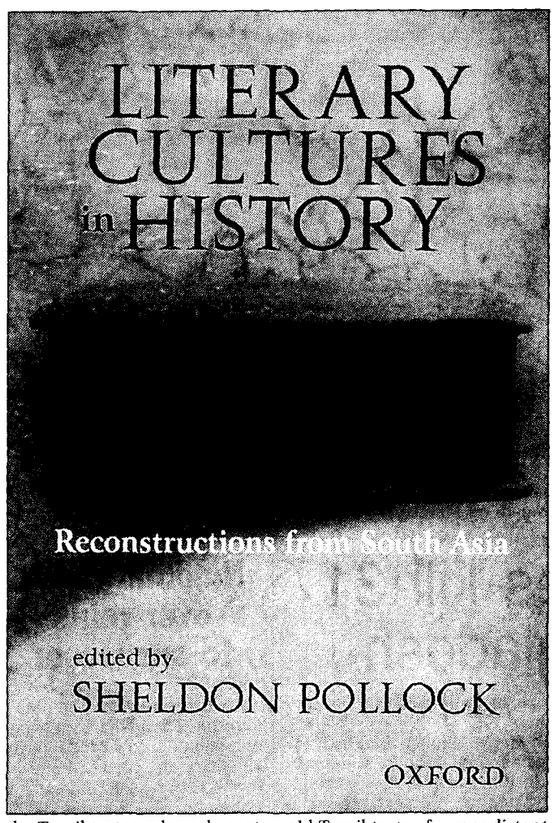
History of literature

Sheldon Pollock and his fellow contributors to this remarkably communicative book have set their aim in the right direction to clear many of the cobwebbed problems that contemporary students of literary historiography of South Asia have inherited from the early European scholars in this regard.

A history of literature in any language does not mean merely narrating the succession of books in a chronological order to claim antiquity and archival superiority for the concerned language. It has to deal with the continuity of relevance of any great book in that language not only for the period in which it was written but also for the succeeding eras and how each of them had responded to it in accordance with the changing values of the given period.

Literature in a text is not of absolute and permanent nature but very much depends upon how the reader at a given era relates to it. Pollock illustrates this with an interesting quotation from Terry Eagleton, "Literature is like weed; one person's pest is another's flower and yet another's dinner."

Considering every specific situation is historical, the literary has a functional meaning and validity, and cannot claim to have an ontological existence of its own unrelated to the changing social values. So, instead of assuming critical positions before approaching the subject and demanding answers from *the texts only to justify the stand* already taken, this book is oriented toward focussing on the critical processes themselves and "listen to the questions the texts themselves raise."



Innovative approach

Such an innovative reading practice has led the contributing authors of the book to critically appreciate and understand what the texts of South Asian literature meant to "the people who wrote, heard, saw or read them, and how the meanings may have changed over time."

This is precisely what Norman Cutler has done in his subtle and sophisticated reading of the Tamil texts under a dramatic title, "Three moments in Tamil literary culture". He deconstructs the genealogy of Tamil culture by focussing on the autobiography of U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer, histories of Tamil literature that emerged as a genre of scholarship in the 20th Century and a 15th Century literary anthology titled "Purathirattu".

U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer is forever visualised by the Tamils as the grand old man of the Tamil language, not only because he lived up to a ripe old age but also for his reclaiming the grand old Tamil texts of a very distant past. He provided a long history for the Tamil language and also cultural politics for the Tamils, though unwittingly.

'Culture war'

Thanks to the early British historians and missionary philologists, a dubious theory of Aryan-Brahmin-Sanskrit versus Dravidian non-Brahmin-Tamil conflict got so ingrained in the psyche of many of the English-educated Tamil scholars of that period that the first history of the Tamil language (1904) is informed by a chronological obsession and an abundant zeal for establishing that Tamil antedated Sanskrit.

The irony was that this culture war became only possible after Swaminatha Iyer resurrected many of the ancient literary works in Tamil belonging to the Sangam age. M.S. Purnalingam Pillai's primer of the history of Tamil literature became the blueprint for many of the histories that succeeded it, in which the bottom line of discussion was the date of the literary works marked by aggressive arguments in favour of an earlier or later date. This historicised perspective is unique to Tamil and forms the essential part of the Tamil literary culture.

Summing up the essential feature of Iyer's autobiography, Cutler says, "Swaminatha Iyer's account of his own life suggests that during the 19th Century the cultural activities of at least some Brahmins and high-caste non-Brahmins were largely congruent, much more so than one might expect from certain modern-day politicised readings of Tamil cultural history, according to which Vellalas and members of other non-Brahmin castes are true sons of the Tamil soil and Brahmins are interlopers from the North."

Cutler refers to the 15th Century Tamil anthology, the Purathirattu (anthology of poems on the exterior world as opposed to the interior landscape i.e. "akam") compiled by an anonymous editor. According to him the work reveals "a much greater consciousness of a literary heritage than in the case with either the canonisation of Bhakti poetry or the compilation of Saiva Siddhantha Sastras."

That the spontaneous outpourings of the Bhakti poets became liturgical texts much later does not reflect that they were in any way of less of literary heritage than the Purathirattu, which includes poems from the Sangam works, the Purananuru and the Pathitruppaththu and poems from some of the later didactic works like the Naladiyar and the Pazhamozhi and also from the epics, the Kamba Ramayanam and the Civaka Cinthamani.

Bhakti hymns

The mystical poems of the Bhakti saints can claim their lineage from the Sangam love poetry ("akam") and as such, are endowed with a rich literary heritage no less significant than the Purathirattu poems, which are in the "puram" stream as codified in the Sangam tradition. It looks like Norman Cutler has made a rather sweeping generalisation while comparing the consciousness of literary heritage of the Bhakti hymns and the Purathirattu.

Of course the 15th Century anthology shows that there existed a non-sectarian culture during this period as was evident from the nature of the poems that have been compiled, which belonged to different faiths such as Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism. The role model for this great work was the Thirukural, a trans-sectarian masterpiece, though surprisingly, not a single couplet from this great work has been included in the Purathirattu.

Perhaps, for the first time in a book on Indology, English has also been treated as one of the South Asian languages and befittingly so. The Anglo-Indian literature has a distinctive culture of its own that constitutes an intrinsic part of the Indian consciousness.

To associate a language with a nation-state is no longer valid for much of the literatures in languages like English and Spanish, have become "resolutely supra-national", to quote Sheldon Pollock.

INDIRA PARTHASARATHY

Patriarch of Yoga

THE YOGA OF THE YOGI — The Legacy of T. Krishnamacharya: Kausthub Desikachar; Published by Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, 31 (Old no. 13), Fourth Cross Street, R. K. Nagar, Chennai-600028. **Rs. 500.**

THIS ELEGANTLY wrought coffee-table book is a well-worded homage to a patriarch of Yoga by his discerning grandson. "Yoga is dexterity in action," says the Bhagavad Gita. How richly this definition fits T. Krishnamacharya is shown by the expertise and penchant for perfection evident in the least of the Yogi's words and deeds.

Today, Yoga has become "the in-thing." It is almost a status symbol. It is a panacea for all ills. All over the world we find it practised in a variety of ways by all sorts of people, young and old, rich and poor.

Executives under stress, school children with special needs, men and women in the evening of their lives harassed by geriatric problems, prisoners on the path of reform, policemen tackling crime — all resort to yoga with great expectations.

Ancient practice

This, however, is a revolution of recent decades. Yoga is quite an ancient concept; Patanjali's *Yogasutras*, the definitive text on Yoga is perhaps 2000 years old. But even in the earlier part of the 20th Century, very few people, mostly ascetics living in mountain caves and dense forests, practised Yoga. And they mastered only a score of Asanas.

If today Yoga is so popular the main credit must go to great teachers like Tirumalai Krishnamacharya whose saga, the grandson, Kausthub Desikachar, has presented in a charming diction. Indeed many of the internationally famous Yoga teachers like Indra Devi, Pattabhi Jois, B.K.S. Iyengar and T.K.V. Desikachar are Yogi Krishnamacharya's meticulously trained students.

Kausthub traces the evolution of his grandfather from his birth as the scion of an ordinary pious orthodox middleclass Vaishnava family to the Himalayan height of a Yogi par excellence. Hunger for knowledge was almost an addiction with young Krishnamacharya.

Travelling mostly on foot and braving inclement weather and climate he crisscrossed the land and studied under a galaxy of teachers not only the minutiae of Yoga but also Tarka and Vyakarana, Samkhya and Mimamsa.

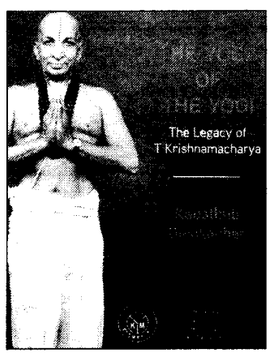
He took degrees from universities as far apart ideologically as Benares and Navadwip, Allahabad and Baroda. He went to Tibet and Manasarovar and finally found his prime Guru in a cave near the lake.

With this hermit, Rama Mohana Brahmachari, he stayed and underwent rigorous training in the theory and practice of Yoga for eight years. All that the master wanted as Gurudakshina was: Krishnamacharya should spread the saving message of Yoga to as many aspirants as possible.

Dedicated life

The book describes how faithfully Krishnamacharya dedicated the rest of his life to train Yoga teachers and use Yoga therapy to alleviate physical and mental suffering.

We got heart-warming accounts of his work as the Yoga



teacher of the Maharajah of Mysore and as the founder of the "Yoga shala" in the Mysore palace.

After Independence, however, the Maharajah's patronage ceased and Krishnamachari had to shift to Madras, where he became a legend. Kalidasa says that when a pure mind has made a resolution, nothing can thwart it.

Krishnamacharya took a vow that he would dedicate his life to Yoga and spurned many attractive offers that came to him. Sacrifice characterised his Yoga. As a trainer he was very strict but outside the classroom he was kindness itself.

His approach was always holistic. He studied each patient thoroughly before prescribing a separate regimen for him. "One size does not fit all," he used to stress. And he opened the portals of Yoga to women.

Nature paid its apt tribute by keeping him shining even up to the age of 101; and his son T.K.V. Desikachar has immortalised him by founding the now famous Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram in Chennai.

C. S. RAMAKRISHNAN

• Literary miscellany • The tribal world • Tagore in translation • Father of modern Malayalam

TAMIL

NAAN — A Miscellany: La. Sa. Ramamirtham; Vanathi Pathippagam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai 600017. **Rs. 60.**

A NEW book by the much-loved Tamil writer, La. Sa. Ramamirtham (La. Sa. Ra.) is always looked forward to by his aficionados and *Naan* (I or myself) should not disappoint them though they would have liked a little more of the different categories of writing in this book which is a kind of miscellany.

There are many passages affirming the writer's profound admiration and love for his mother, for her earthy and stinging assessments and observations that may not have all the readers admire the revered person.

But what should interest new writers and aspiring fictionists is the disclosure of the author's writing discipline and, the writers he admired and chose to emulate. Hemingway appears repeatedly. Also his penchant for a well-written letter. And the need to be "touched" spiritually.

La. Sa. Ra. writes about his mentor Thi. Ja. Ranganathan who was not only a fine writer but was also a self-taught mathematics researcher and a chess theoretician. He had been a literary guide and inspiration to a number of young writers of the 1940s. He felt La. Sa. Ra.'s stories were above the heads of the readers of the magazine he worked for. That led him to *Manikkodi*, now a legendary avant-garde periodical of the late 1930s and 1940s.

Of the Manikkodi writers, he chooses to write specially about Na. Pichamurthy. The book also tells of the three years La.Sa.Ra. worked as a typist in Vauhini Pictures, which then produced a series of landmark Telugu films like "Vande Mataram", "Sumangali", and "Devata". It was then K. Ramnoth, another legendary South Indian movie director told La.Sa.Ra. not to waste his gift indicating that his hoping for a career in films would not be salutary.

He ultimately became a banker but he continued with his writing and stayed a movie buff all through. The book has a couple of short stories and a detailed interview he gave to a magazine called *Kumudam Junction*. For those who had read his earlier autobiographical writings, the book may seem a little familiar. One wishes that a knowledgeable person had proofread at least the English words and phrases occurring so frequently in the book.

ASHOKAMITRAN

SOLAKAR THODDY: S. Balamurugan; Pub. by Vanam Veliyeedu, 17, Pavadai Street, Bhavani-638301.**Rs. 100.**

THIS IS a novel based on the tribal people of Solakar Thoddy, a forest village on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border. They are a peaceful tribe enjoying nature's gift of clean air and water and conscious of their traditions, culture, religion and rituals. They fight predators to save their crops, mostly ragi. The book is in two parts with the first dealing with the way they live. Their life is disturbed only by the forest officers when they kill a deer or a bear for food. The officers catch them and detain them for a day or two.

The second part deals with the forest brigand Veerappan. When a special task force arrives to nab Veerappan the entire village is disturbed. The police presume that the tribal people are helping him with food and other items. One after another, all the tribal people, men as well as women, are taken to the police post, kept there for long without legal sanction and tortured.

The novel describes the horrifying details of the torture, especially at the electrical workshop. A woman even gives birth to a baby at the police post without any help and the police kill the baby.

Sivanna and Thamaiah escape from the post after suffering torture for not divulging the whereabouts of Veerappan. They meet a group of people and one person in the group introduces himself as Veerappan. He asks them to help him carry food bags and they do so several miles daily. Subsequently, both of them escape from Veerappan and surrender before the magistrate's court.

The author has been in contact with these people and studied their life, culture, religion and rituals. The introduction summarises the tribal life in the village. Writers and students of sociology will benefit from the novel.

SE. GANESALINGAN

TELUGU

RAVINDRA KATHAAVALI — Anthology of Short Stories by Rabindranath Tagore: Maddipatla Soori — Tr. in Telugu; Sahitya Akademi, Ravindra Bhavan, 35, Ferozshah Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 180.**

THIS IS a collection of 21 short stories of Rabindranath Tagore written between 1891 and 1918. Each one of the stories is a masterpiece in itself. They reflect his broad vision, realism, intolerance of injustice, his keen observation of men and matters and universal outlook rendering him the all-time great writer and thinker.

His works directly touch the hearts of his readers. It is difficult to single out any one of them. However, two stories "Postmaster" and "Kaabooliwaallah" excel in their portrayal of human feelings and instincts under certain situations.

Written in a racy Telugu, the translation by the veteran Telugu-Bengali scholar, Maddipatla Soori aptly conveys the spirit of the original. The Sahitya Akademi deserves praise for bringing out literary works into other Indian languages.

B. S. R. KRISHNA

MALAYALAM

THEEKKADAL KADANHU THIRUMADHURAM — Biographical Novel: C. Radhakrishnan; Hi-Tech Books, Azad Road, Kochi-682017. **Rs. 225.**

THIS BOOK is the author's magnum opus. He has made commendable efforts to sift the grain from the chaff by extensive research on the father of modern Malayalam poetry and language. The author also claims that he belongs to his lineage, in the 14th generation.

The life story of Ezhutthacchan also presents a finely woven fabric of the then social, cultural, political and economic hierarchies of the period — almost five centuries ago.

Thunjathu Ramanujan Ezhuthhacchan is the father of modern Malayalam language and poetry and he designed the present Malayalam script, synthesising the "Vattezhuthu" and modern alphabets. With his masterly quality in writing and aesthetic propriety his period marks the triumph of modernism over medievalism.

With his works, the Adhyatma Ramayanam and the Sri Mahabharatham and the two shorter works, the Harinamakeerthanam and the Irupathinaalu Vrittham he became the greatest spokesman of the Bhakti movement.

The book describes the life story in four parts: about his childhood and education in Thaanniyur, life in Thiruvoor (Tirur), next in Sabarakottam and finally in Shokanasini.

Ezhutthacchan's family of uncle, brothers and sisters valued his life as the most precious and all of them despite their tragedies and sufferings stood by him. He went to Tamil Nadu Adeenam for attaining higher knowledge.

He gained the highest level of knowledge, which he imparted to his disciples and students and spread it to other parts of the then Kerala. Despite the occasional verbosity in the narrative, as found in many of the author's later novels, the book is a masterpiece combining fact and fiction.

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

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BOOK REVIEW

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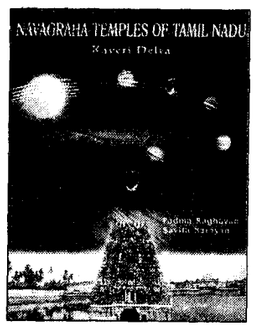

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Secularism in practice

CONFESSIONS OF A SECULAR FUNDAMENTALIST: Mani Shankar Aiyar; Penguin Books India Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 425.**

VERY FEW among the political leaders of India have written on secularism with so much passion and conviction as Mani Shankar Aiyar. Yet, he is no fundamentalist, as some might misconstrue from the title of the book. As evident from its dedication — to his mother who is both religious and secular — the brand of secularism he advocates does not seek to negate the religious belief of the faithful. Indian secularism, he avers, is not anti-religious or irreligious.

Its fundamental character is equal respect for all religions, with the state refraining from professing or propagating any religion. This principle is encoded in the Indian Constitution without impinging upon the personal beliefs of the people. Secularism, however, is not a purely political doctrine; it is as much a social phenomenon, particularly in a multi-religious society. Upholding the principles of secularism, however, has not been easy for many, in the wake of the ideological and political advance of the Sangh Parivar.

Uncompromising advocate

The author is one among the few who withstood the onslaught. He did not flinch, even when not only the Hindu communalists but also his own colleagues were critical of his principled stand, as was the case in the removal of the plaque extolling Savarkar in the cellular jail in the Andamans.

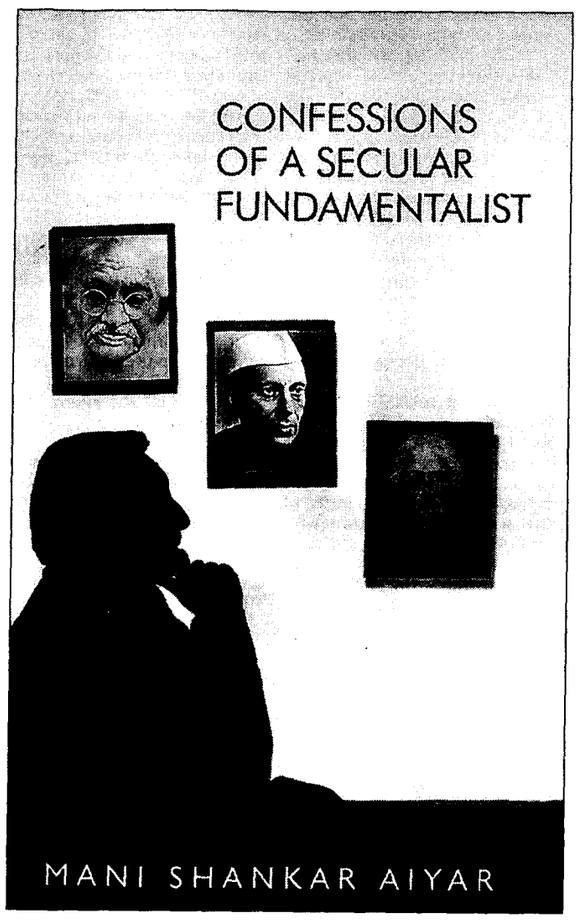
In doing so, he had upheld his credo of secular nationalism in contrast to the religious-cultural nationalism of the Sangh Parivar. If Aiyar is a fundamentalist, it is as an uncompromising advocate of the Nehruvian notion of secularism. The Indian society would do well to have more of that creed.

This book is not so much about the idea of secularism, which has aroused considerable debate, but more about its practice. Both among the Hindus and Muslims tendencies inimical to the growth of secularism had emerged from the latter half of the 19th Century itself. The emergence of communitarianism and its eventual transition to communalism was a defining feature of this era.

Historical background

While a religion based sense of separatism grew among the Muslims leading to the formation of the Muslim League, the Congress- led national movement suffered from an undercurrent of Hindu sentiment, providing what the author calls the "Muslim and Hindu origins" of the Partition. Throughout the anti-colonial struggle the liberal secular opinion was not able to adequately resist the pressure exerted by the communal forces, be it in the case of the Lucknow pact or the Delhi proposals.

As a result communal ideology continued to be a subterranean force posing a great challenge to the post-Partition



effort to build a secular state and society. The Congress leadership, including Gandhiji, as demonstrated by the author, faltered at crucial moments. The communal forces built their influence on this historical legacy and gained enough strength by the end of the century to gain control over the state institutions. In this context a critical look at the secular practice becomes pertinent.

Politicisation

The secular practice of political parties, particularly those in power, has been far from satisfactory. Although committed to the ideal of secularism there were several instances in their history when they succumbed to the easy political gains from communalism. Be it the Kashmir issue or Shah Bhano case or Ayodhya or the Hindu-Sikh relations the Congress party failed to live up to the standard set by Nehru.

Therefore, the Congress could not effectively counter the onslaught of Hindutva with the conviction that "unalloyed secularism was not only the right moral support, but it was also the politically winning response." As a consequence a large section of Congressmen either tried to appropriate the communal discourse or migrated to the communal camp.

The author rightly remarks that the "real danger before the country is not a BJP electoral victory. The real danger lies in the rest of us seeking to thwart the rise in electoral support to the BJP by becoming pale imitations of the original."

In fact, it was the compromising attitude of the Congress leadership during the post-Ayodhya period which created the necessary space for the communal forces to work their way to power.

In contrast the Congress was able to extricate itself from the brink of political disaster in the election of 2004 by an aggressive campaign against communalism led by Sonia Gandhi.

Lesson

An analysis of Kashmir, Ayodhya, Kashi, Hubli and Gujarat highlights the difference between the Congress and the BJP. The author does not try to hide the failures of the Congress as in the case of December 6, 1992 when "a secular government dithered between secular principle and communal compulsion."

Yet, he suggests that such instances, however deplorable, were momentary aberrations. The Congress is not inherently a communal party. It has struggled to regain its secular image, in spite of the vacillation of some of its leaders. On the other hand, the BJP is a communal party, in its programme, ideology and aims.

The author has rightly highlighted this difference. A conversation between the author and Arun Shourie, an ardent advocate of Hindutva, forms the prologue of the book. It is an extremely suggestive record of how insidious and intolerant a communal mind could be.

If this book offers any lesson it is that ideas emanating from such minds cannot be countered by compromise or conciliation. Neither soft Hindutva nor soft secularism can save the nation from communalism, which internalised by the majority would turn into fascism. The author's plea for secular fundamentalism becomes meaningful in this context.

K. N. PANIKKAR

Legal redress for the poor

LAW, POVERTY AND LEGAL AID — Access to Criminal Justice: S. Muralidhar; LexisNexis Butterworths, 14th Floor, Vijaya Building, 17, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 325.**

THE CRIMINAL justice system in India is founded on colonial laws and is heavily weighed against the poor be they the victims or the accused. Legal aid though guaranteed by the Constitution and statutory law, still remains an elusive dream to those who due to circumstances are forced to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

In this book Muralidhar analyses an area not generally charted by many in the study of law and draws attention to the status of legal aid in India in the criminal justice system.

There were about 7,11,408 lawyers in the country as on June 2001. "If indeed the presence of a lawyer at the time of arrest of a person, at the stage of being taken into police custody, at every subsequent stage of the criminal justice process is seen as imperative to ensure the rights of a person to a fair trial, the number of lawyers in the country is far too inadequate."

With this and other impressive details he makes out a case for a workable legal services programme in the criminal justice system.

Concept of legal aid

He starts his analysis by addressing the roles of the police, the courts and the persons engaged with the system, which includes the accused, complainant and witnesses. He then moves on to analyse the evolution of the concept of legal aid in India from colonial times till this day.

Tracing the development of legal aid in criminal cases through decisions of various high courts and that of the Supreme Court he explores the relationship of legal aid to public interest litigation and then to human rights violations.

In the context of poverty, he chooses three specific areas — vagrancy, sex work and mental illness. Critically examining legislations governing them his observations about persons affected in these three areas indicate how being poor can be a crime in India.

"Their activities are as a result of economic and social deprivations. Secondly, they encounter rejection either by the family or by the society or both and are left to fend for themselves. Thirdly, they are viewed as a nuisance or a parasite needing to be isolated and segregated from society. The law steps in to describe the activities of these persons as offences and therefore requiring to be dealt by the criminal justice system."

Decriminalisation

They differ from others in the realm of criminal behaviour but get treated no differently from them. "The difference is that they are termed as 'offenders' not for what they do but for what they are."

He stresses the necessity of providing a separate treatment in the legal services programme for such persons while arguing for decriminalising their activities through law reform and institutional reform litigation.

A survey of the legal services systems in the U.K., the U.S., South Africa and Bangladesh also forms part of the book. It is exhaustive in its coverage of the subject and the author shows great concern for the state of legal aid in India.

It is a must read for those seriously concerned with not just legal aid but also with the criminal justice system.

GEETA RAMASESHAN

Self-motivation for success

HEART/MIND OVER MATTER — A New Mantra for Success: Virendra Kapoor; Macmillan India Ltd., 2/10, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 195.**

THE AUTHOR has made an attempt to bring together elements of emotional intelligence (EI) on the one hand and, motivation and success on the other. While his approach is enterprising, if the common understanding of the now well- known term "emotional intelligence" were first presented and then the author's own broader canvas of this was painted, it could have helped a better appreciation by the reader.

While presenting multiple intelligence theory, new domains of "spiritual intelligence" and "cultural intelligence" have not been mentioned, though aspects relating to these are discussed elsewhere in the book. It has a number of quotes from famous people including unusual ones, which tend to raise one's eyebrows. To name a few: from Mark Twain, "If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principle difference between a dog and a man." Discussing about the competencies of women, Eleanor Roosevelt is quoted, "A woman is like a tea bag; only in hot water do you realise how strong she is."

Simple concepts have been very lucidly presented with narration of small stories. For example, on "optimism", he says that a Japanese general tossed a coin after a prayer at a shrine to boost the morale of his army. When it was heads as he had called, the soldiers developed confidence and emerged victorious. Later, when the general's lieutenant mentioned about the role of destiny, the general revealed the secret, that the coin had heads on both the sides.

There are exercises presented at the end of each chapter, which are fairly easy, appealing and inviting the reader to respond. On the whole, the book is easily readable and could serve as an energiser for self-motivation, which the author terms as "A new mantra for success."

M. S. S. VARADAN

Stars and fortune

STARS SPEAK FORTUNE IN OUR HAND: K.S. Magesh Kumar; Mahesh & Mahesh Book Publication, Post Box No.5563, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 140.**

THE MYSTIC power of stars is evident from the way astrologers analyse the past, present and future events in one's life based on planetary rulership of each of the four padas (quarters) of the 27 stars and placement of planets, their conjunctions and mutual aspects in a birth chart. The author of this book portrays the diverse characteristics, profession, wealth, health and conjugal life of people born under the 27 constellations on different dates.

He also pinpoints the particular lifestyle and the diseases likely to afflict those born under the same star but on different dates with a rider that the portrayal is general in nature and does not provide a complete insight into the life of an individual saying it requires the correct date of birth, time and place of birth. Strikingly missing are reference to planetary rulership of the stars and other vital data that provide the fulcrum to determine the Dasas and the Bhukti periods and sub-periods that hint about the events during the lifespan of an individual.

However, going through the book, a reader is bound to appreciate the author's analytical skills in giving a reasonably good profile of people born under different stars.

R. PARTHASARATHY

• Chaplin and his oeuvre • Sankara's commentary on the Gita • Historical novel • Tragedies of the tinsel world

TAMIL

THIRAIYULAKA MEDHAI CHARLIE CHAPLIN: Randor Guy; Shanthi Pathippagam, 27, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002. **Rs. 90.**

STARTING HIS career at the age of five in a music hall, Charles Spencer Chaplin grew into an actor and went on to become one of the greatest filmmakers in history. Even as the new medium of cinema was evolving, Chaplin revealed his genius by grasping its nature, its essentials and putting that understanding into effective use.

He used images, facial expressions and body language efficiently to examine the social and political issues of his times. As J.B.Priestly said, "Chaplin has turned film clowning into social satire and criticism, without losing his astonishing ability to make us laugh." Appropriately, this book by Randor Guy has been dedicated to N.S.Krishnan.

Written in a racy style and packed with information, the book is about Chaplin and his oeuvre. The author traces the biography of Chaplin, its highlights and then deals individually with some of his important films.

Two of his lesser-known films "Monsieur Verdoux", a black comedy and "A King in New York", a criticism of American politics are also included. Some of the events in his life, such as his meeting with Gandhiji, are dealt with.

The author analyses in a simple style, certain scenes from his films, like the famous close-up in "City Lights". And he does not forget to point out the influence of Chaplin on Indian films. About 64 photographs, from the life and films of Chaplin are included in the book.

It augurs well for film appreciation in Tamil Nadu that Chaplin is getting the attention of Tamil writers. Last year N.Chokkan brought out *Charlie Chaplin Kathai* (Kizhakku Pathippakam) and now we have this welcome gift for Tamil readers. One wishes for more such works from Randor Guy on the other immortals of the screen.

The publisher should pay closer attention to editing particularly English spelling of proper names, as the services of professional Tamil editors are now available.

S. THEODORE BHASKARAN

TELUGU

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA — Sankara Bhashyamu: S. Radhakrishnamurti — Tr. in Telugu; Copies can be had from Ramadevi, 10-30/5, Koundinya Homes, Gokhale Nagar, Ramanathapur, Hyderabad. **Rs. 250.**

ADI SANKARA has elaborately commented upon the Brahmasutras, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. His commentary on the Gita has been available for long and this has been further examined and commented upon by preceptors like Ramanuja and Madhva. Sankara provided the platform for understanding the philosophical concepts.

All works, particularly the religious texts were written in Sanskrit in those days and the scholars had the task of learning the language, its grammar, logic, etymology and allied branches of knowledge to arrive at the right understanding. The laypeople depended on the scholars who unfortunately were given to misinterpretations because of their lack of skills and prejudices.

The non-availability of the commentaries in various Indian languages still stands in the way of enthusiasts to understand the original text. The lay reader is helped much by the rendering of the Sanskrit textual commentary, its literal translation and the basic verses of the Bhagavad Gita.

The translator deserves praise for rendering Sankara's Gita commentary into facile and readable Telugu. This has been long overdue. The translation is faithful to the original.

N. C. RAMANUJACHARY

KANNADA

NEELI CHANDIRA — Shivaprasada Simha in Hindi Original: P. Shashikala — Tr. in Kannada; Sahitya Academy, Central College Compound, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore 560001. **Rs. 350.**

THIS WORK is a Kannada translation of the award-winning Hindi novel, "Neela Chaand". Continuing the theme of his earlier work "Gali Aage Mudthi Hai", the author Shivaprasada Simha tells the story of the people during the heyday of Kashi in the 10th and 11th Centuries A.D.— Kashi before the occupation of Muslims, the intrigues of kings and courtesans, of priests and warriors and misery of the common people.

The novel amply employs rich contextual materials of North Indian history spread over 1000 years before this period to the time of the Buddha. It is full of quotations in Sanskrit and other literary sources.

Though he seems to mostly depend on Bhavan's Indian History series edited by R.C. Majumdar, in addition to original Eastern and Western sources, the picture is similar to the one depicted by Rahul Sankrityayan in his "Volga se Ganga". No wonder some of the critics have found the depiction realistic.

The story is woven romantically around the grand period of a king, Karna who defeated the Kalachuri Devavarma Chandela of Khajuraho, overcame Sampurna Jajhouthi, built his Karna Meru palace and assumed the title "Kaalah Kaalanjaraadhipatanah".

The characters are a mix of the grand and the degenerate. We learn that Kaashi was once dubbed as "the city of cheats". The genre of historical novel offers much freedom to a creative artist to provide an enjoyable, often instructive, yet make believe, not necessarily completely historically authentic stuff. The translation is excellent and the text is seamless, the prose vibrant reading like an original.

K. S. PARTHASARATHY

MALAYALAM

KARIMUTHU: Mohanachandran; Current Books, Round West, Thrissur-680001. **Rs. 130.**

THIS WORK, which is the author's eighth novel had a long gestation period. Although he started work on it in 1981 it was only in 2000 that he could complete it and offer it for serialisation in a magazine.

He gives credit to the magazine's publishers for getting him to complete it. His account of the circumstances of its birth does not throw light on the extent to which his proclaimed propensity to experiment with the grammar and syntax of the novel contributed to the delay.

One of the characters of the novel tells another: "Like any other field — say, politics, defence, civil services, business — cinema, too, is very colourful. But all professions have their tender tragedies — the feeling that the pasture is greener on the other side. But those outside the profession do not see any of them."

The novelist lays bare before the reader the tragedies of the tinsel world of South Indian cinema. They are not all tender, though.

The reader, like the diver, has to struggle to get to the pearl. For the novel has a long succession of episodes in which fact and fantasy are often mixed and the distinction between the living and the dead is sometimes blurred.

It has some memorable characters like Madhavan Master, who made it to the top climbing over corpses, Varkey, who is transformed into superstar Anil Deep, and Aleyamma, who set out from Kottayam with plans to conquer Chennai.

B. R. P. BHASKAR

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

Alternative funding for development

NEW SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENT FINANCE — UNU-WIDER Studies in Development Economics: A. B. Atkinson — Editor; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **£ 21.95**

THIS STUDY prepared by the World Institute for Development Economics (WIDER) at Helsinki and the U.N. University seeks to explore alternative sources of financing to the official development assistance (ODA) in order to meet the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), since ODA has been inadequate.

The main goals are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, reduce child mortality, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and empower women. There are 12 papers containing discussion essentially on seven proposals on the alternatives sources.

Seven proposals

The editor, Atkinson has estimated the gap in meeting the MDGs as a minimum of $.50 billion a year up to 2015. Atkinson has provided an account of the overarching issues and towards the end a way forward while dealing with the writers' views on the proposals.

In addition there are two general and somewhat utopian pieces by J. A. Mirrlees and R. Boadway providing a public finance perspective.

Let us take up the seven main proposals. Sandmo argues in favour of global environmental tax to control climate externalities and to utilise the receipts from such a tax (estimated to be at least $. 50 billion) at rates much lower than the proposals on the table now, exclusively for global development.

Sandmo believes that this would be politically acceptable. The problem with this idea is that all developed countries irrespective of their public finance positions have to agree to such a tax on a global basis.

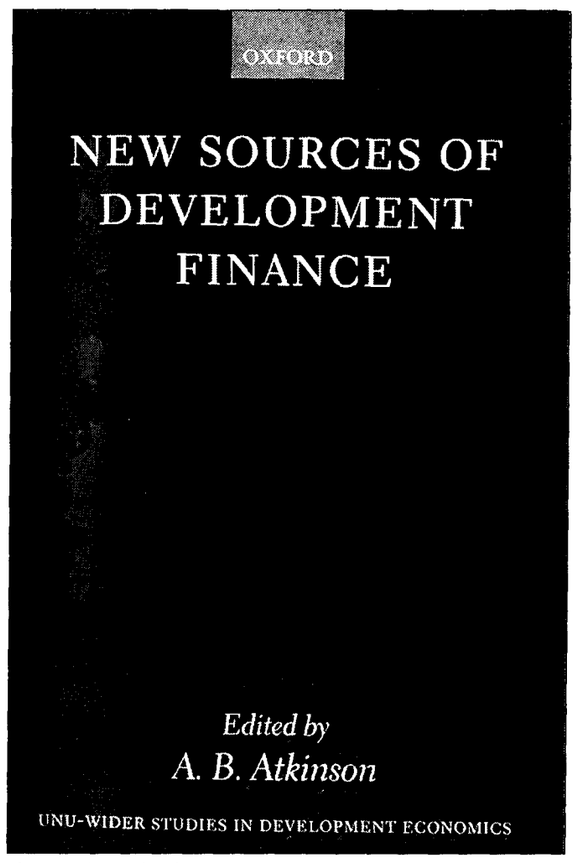
There is also no reason why the tax receipts should not be used for the global good of sustainable development rather than for the limited purpose of meeting the MDGs.

Machiko Nissanke considers the imposition of a Tobin-like tax on cross border currency transactions as technically feasible and revenue giving (estimated at $. 17 to 35 billion even at very low rates of 1 to 2 basis points). Nissanke favors a global rather than region-centric (such as the European Union) implementation of the tax.

However, as Atkinson has rightly pointed out, the final distributional effect and the effects on real transaction of the tax cannot be easily predicted. Besides, political acceptability is one of doubt.

U.K. proposal for IFF

Ernest Aryeetey's treatment



about the development-focussed Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) allocation of $ 25-30 billion on the lines of the contributions of George Soros and Joseph Stiglitz is not realistic at all. It is also not new— it has been in the literature in the 1970s and 1980s. The problem with the proposal is that it ignores the content and spirit of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Articles of Agreement and the effects that it would have on the world economy. For this reason, this proposal would just not take off.

George Mavrotas' discussion of the U.K. proposal for the International Finance Facility (IFF) is useful in that the donor countries purchase bonds issued in the international capital markets to ensure that the funds so gained would be disbursed through bilateral and multilateral aid-delivery agencies including the World Bank.

Through the Facility, it would be possible to double the existing ODA but the success of the proposal depends on the number of donor countries that would sign up and make commitments to outflows.

Yet, it is a promising proposal that could be made workable through suitable adjustments. The IMF and the World Bank would have to have pressurised to consider the proposal seriously and suggest any adjustments that would be acceptable to the membership at large.

Incentive for action

The proposals for private donations by John Micklewright and Anna Wright and remittances by emigrants by Andres Solimano would succeed only if there are sufficient incentives for individual actions.

But these are not proposals per se especially since no one is certain as to how large would be the flow of funds and how the flows could be linked to development.

The proposals for a global lottery and a global premium bond by Tony Addison and Abdur Chowdhury, seemingly creative, entail ethical, distributional and government domestic debt management issues, even if the costs of administering the lotteries are minimised with the use of the current Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, and linked with specific purposes, such as promotion of education.

The study is excellent in terms of the delineation of technical details and analysis of the proposals. It has a European flavour—one wonders whether one is missing the U.S. or Canadian viewpoints.

Its main and indeed critical message is that unless there is international economic cooperation the MDGs cannot be realised. Stretching the logic, such cooperation is necessary for promoting global good.

Once this is accepted and striven for, one would have cause to believe that there would be universal peace and ready acceptance of democratic principles throughout the world.

A. VASUDEVAN

PERFECT KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the meaning of "on a wing and a prayer"? *(Ananya, Secunderabad)*

If you say that you are writing an entrance exam "on a wing and a prayer", what you mean is that you are not confident that you will pass. You are hopeful, but chances are you are unlikely to succeed. You are relying more on luck, rather than your ability.

*Anju was playing the game on a wing and a prayer. She had no idea what she should do to win.

*Raju is taking the interview on a wing and a prayer.

The expression became popular during World War I. The story goes that a pilot managed to land his plane successfully even though one of his wings had been badly damaged. When his friends asked him how he had managed to land his crippled plane, the pilot replied that it was his prayers that kept the aircraft aloft. To which one of his fellow pilots quipped, "A wing and a prayer brought you back!"

What does "Rx" stand for in a doctor's prescription? *(D. Bhaskara Reddy, Kurnool)*

Many words commonly used in medicine come from Latin. The Rx is the abbreviation of "recipo" meaning, "take". The doctor is giving you a recipe for your cure and he wants you to take it! If you look at a doctor's prescription carefully, you will find that a line runs across the foot of the letter R. This, I understand, is actually the symbol of the Roman god of medicine, Jupiter. All medicines come under his protection. That's understandable, I guess. Given the illegible manner in which some doctors write their prescriptions, we need all the protection we can get!

How is the word "peccadilloes" pronounced? *(Amit Kumar, Delhi)*

The first syllable is pronounced like the word "peck" and the following "a" is like the "a" in "china". "Dill" rhymes with "pill", "chill", and "fill", while the final "oe" is like the "o" in "go", "so", and "no". The main stress is on the third syllable. A "peccadillo" is a minor sin or fault.

*The star's latest extra marital peccadillo didn't go down well with his fans.

What is the difference between "acquittal" and "exoneration"? *(Soji Mathew, Manali)*

Very often an innocent man is accused of a crime and dragged to court. After the judge has heard both sides of the case, he usually finds him not guilty; the judge acquits the man of the crime. This formal declaration made by the judge in a court of law is called an acquittal. The "a" in the first and final syllable is pronounced like the "a" in "china". The second syllable, which has the main stress, is pronounced like the word "quit". *The trial resulted in an acquittal for the three men charged with first-degree murder.

The word "exoneration" has more or less the same meaning as "acquittal". When a judge exonerates someone of something, he is pronouncing the person not guilty. He doesn't find any evidence that the accused has done anything wrong. Unlike the word "acquittal", someone other than a judge can exonerate a person. For example, in government offices whenever something goes wrong, a committee is formed to determine the causes. The chairperson is also asked to find out if any particular individual is to be blamed for the failure. If the committee finds that no one is to be blame, then everyone is exonerated. The official report that the person in authority writes exonerates everyone.

*The long awaited report exonerated the teachers.

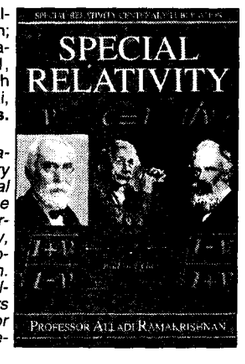
***** ***** *****

"Common sense is in spite of, not the result of, education." — ***Victor Hugo***

S. UPENDRAN

FROM THE BLURB

- **Special Relativity:** Alladi Ramakrishnan; EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 571, Poonamalle High Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai-600029. **Rs. 180.**



Brought out on the occasion of the centenary year of Einstein's Special Relativity this book is the author's tribute to the architects of the theory, G.Fitzgerald, H.A.Lorentz and Albert Einstein. The monograph is a collection of the papers published by the author on the concept of space-time unity.

The book provides an easy and novel access to Special Relativity for the new entrant by utilising inter-relations among the fundamental concepts in mathematics — vectors, matrices and transformations, sequences, finite and infinite, convergence and divergence, limits and limiting processes, complex variables, exponential and logarithms, and correspondence between geometrical figures — all through the magic wand of the Lorentz Transformation. This monograph contains four distinct new methods of derivations of the Lorentz Transformation.

- **Attaining the Millennium Development Goals in India** — Reducing Infant Mortality, Child Nutrition, Gender Disparities and Hunger-Poverty and Increasing School Enrolment and Completion: Anil B. Deolalikar; Oxford University Press; YMCA Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 450.**

India has committed to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015 and significant among these goals are: halving the child underweight rate (from its level in 1990); halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; two-thirds reduction in infant mortality rates; universal primary schooling and complete elimination of gender disparities in schooling opportunities.

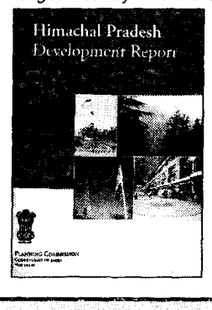
This report critically analyses India's performance across these five selected MDGs using a variety of data sources to analyse past progress in social indicators, paying particular attention to the heterogeneity of progress across India's many states and sub-units. It establishes correlations between the millennium development outcomes and various policy interventions and proceeds to project the likely evolution of the millennium development indicators through 2015 based on particular policy scenarios.

- **Classification and Valuation in Customs and Central Excise Laws:** J. Sridharan; Business Datainfo Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., 103/C-7, Sector 8, Rohini, Delhi-110085. **Rs. 425.**

Classification and valuation of goods under the Customs and Central Excise laws are the two important aspects having a bearing on collection of proper revenue to the exchequer. The process of classification under the Customs and Central Excise Tariffs is governed by the principles of classification with the help of "general interpretative rules", which are very technical in nature.

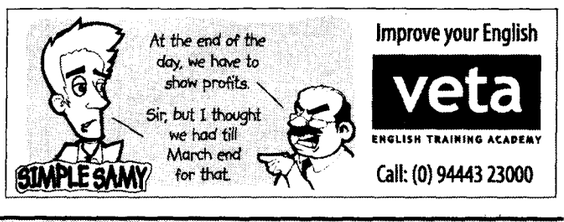
Similarly, Customs Valuation Rules based on GATT Valuation Code and the present Central Excise Valuation based on "transaction value" are also highly technical. The author in this book has made an attempt to explain the eight-digit code classification and the valuation provisions in respect of Customs and Central Excise laws in a simple manner with the help of several examples.

- **Himachal Pradesh Development Report:** Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi. Pub. by Academic Foundation, 4772/23, Bharat Ram Road (23 Ansari Road), Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 895.**



The Planning Commission decided to prepare State Development Reports (SDRs) for all states and union territories with the objective of providing a credible independent quality reference document in the development profile, set out strategies for accelerating the growth of states, lessen disparities and reduce poverty. The SDR is meant to discuss the constraints and challenges faced by a state and provide a vision, blueprint or a roadmap for its socio-economic progress. This Himachal Pradesh Development Report reviews this State's development experience and highlights issues critical for its future progress.

Its latent potential in hydel power, tourism, bio-business and its transformation in social sectors is documented in this report, which is expected to serve as a useful reference and stimulate informed debate on the policy issues facing the hill state.



OPEN PAGE

Why not elected Governors?

THE GOVERNOR is part of the legislature. He sends fortnightly reports and reports under Article 356. He chooses and dismisses the Chief Minister, tests the majority of the government, dissolves the Assembly and recommends President's rule. He grants or withholds assent to the bills passed by the Assembly. He is the Chancellor of universities in the State. He has power to grant pardons, reprieves, etc. He has election related functions as well. He is thus the executive head of the State.

Various anomalies and problems surround the Governor. He is only 'appointed' by the President, and not 'elected.' Though he is the head of the executive and the legislature, the people of the State have no voice in his appointment. This appointment has been reduced to a rehabilitation process for those rejected by the people in the elections, to reward some for their services to political parties and to settle disputes within parties. Since the Governors 'hold office during the pleasure' of the President (read ruling party at the Centre) their tenure can end at any time, though such removal is opposed to the federal structure of our Constitution. Naturally controversies are created.

Against democratic norms

The duties, powers and the style of functioning of Governors also do not go well with democratic norms. Choosing and dismissing Chief Ministers, dissolving the Assembly, etc., by a person appointed in a manner similar to the appointment of the Chairman of a PSU appear very illegitimate. So is the power granted to Governors to block assent to various bills passed by the legislature. There are a number of instances of ignorance, incapability and misuse of power on the part of Governors. Severe criticisms have come up against many Governors, particularly on reports submitted under Article 356. Even the Supreme Court has made adverse comments against them. And there is no provision for impeaching a Governor.

Another aspect to consider is the work each Governor is expected to do. The work of fortnightly reports can be altogether dispensed with as it serves no useful purpose. Regarding the various bills that come up in the legislature, the Governor has a role only at the final stage of 'his assent.' Even if he delays by sending a bill back to the Assembly, he has to grant 'assent' ultimately when the same is returned to him again. All other issues where the Governor can use discretionary powers occur once or twice (sometimes never) in his normal tenure. It is upon these very few occasions, the Governors mostly fail the Constitution and the people.

Along with this shall be made a cost analysis of the Governor's job. The institution of Governor is ostensibly luxurious. The expenses on a Governor's establishment run to crores of rupees. Though India is a rich country, many Indians are poor and most among them are below the 'poverty line' howsoever low it is drawn. We cannot afford to have the present level of luxury for the work of Governors.

The proposal to replace the present system with a new one at some nominal cost can be considered. As an immediate measure, amendments to the existing legislation can be brought about.

An ideal method

An ideal method is to elect the Governor by the State legislature, similar to that of the President. Alternatively a collegium for selection of Governors consisting of the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the State shall be composed. The selection procedure shall be as follows: A sub-committee consisting of the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister shall prepare a list of at least three persons. The President and Vice-President shall make the final selection from this list. The whole proceedings shall be recorded and transparent. The Supreme Court can review the validity of the proof of the criteria for selection and compliance of all rules. The person to be appointed Governor 'should be an eminent person.' Proven integrity, proven experience as a successful administrator and a minimum educational qualification shall be insisted on.

Whenever one or more of the persons of the collegium for the selection of Governors changes, the Governor shall also be changed. A Governor shall be removed from office at any time, for failure to discharge his duties as per the Constitution and/or on grounds such as allegations of corruption, misbehaviour with women, proceedings in civil/criminal cases, failure to pay government dues/taxes/refund of loans, amassing wealth disproportionate with known sources of income, charges of cheating by words/deeds, etc., by a decision to this effect by at least a three fourths majority of the committee. A 'guidelines to Governors' shall be incorporated into the laws.

The Governors are empowered with discretion and blessed with immunity. This is the main reason of misuse of their powers. Accountability at higher levels is sure to change the situation.

● P.R.V. RAJA

Interlink project & Bangladesh's protests

THE PROPOSED project on interlinking of rivers (ILR) is back in the news due to criticism from an unexpected source, neighbouring Bangladesh. According to reports from there, Bangladesh wants international mediation to get rid of the mega project being planned by India. Using disinformation, Bangladesh is creating an impression in the world fora that the life saving waters of the Brahmaputra and the Ganga would be diverted by India to ultimately cause water scarcity in Bangladesh. For justifying its stand, various myths have been engendered and project features distorted by excessive generalisation to get public emotions come in the way of rational judgment.

This is not the first time Bangladesh indulged in spreading canards on Indian water resources projects. Many issues on the waters of the common rivers have been under contention between the two countries for decades. However, continued negotiations in a cordial atmosphere under a favourable combination of various internal and external circumstances helped the two to promote a constructive dialogue culminating in a treaty (1996) between the two governments for sharing the lean flows of the Ganga at Farakka. Even then, off and on there have been complaints from Bangladesh that it is getting less than its share of water as provided for in the treaty. However, the data obtained through joint flow observations by the two countries confirm India's stand that it is fully honouring the provisions of the treaty.

Peninsular component

The ILR project as being planned now on the basis of studies carried out since 1980 by the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) of India envisages a peninsular rivers component for water transfer from surplus to deficit basins in the southern part of the subcontinent and a Himalayan rivers component. The plan under the Himalayan component proposes to divert excess flood waters of the eastern tributaries of the Ganga to the parched lands of Western India; similarly, the excess flood water of northern tributaries of the Brahmaputra i.e. Manas and Sankosh rivers, causing floods in Assam and Bangladesh, to the drought prone areas in the east and southeast parts. Water balance studies carried out have established that excess flood water (after meeting all in-basin requirements in the foreseeable future) is available at all diversion points planned on the Himalayan rivers. All the link proposals under the Himalayan component involving other countries are based on desk studies and are at a conceptual stage of planning at present.

The task force constituted by the Union Ministry of Water Resources on the ILR proposal gave priority to taking up the peninsular links since the Himalayan links require understanding with neighbouring countries. Hence, further action involving international rivers is to be taken up at a later stage in consultation with the Ministries concerned when the detailed projects are drawn up. The task force also submitted two action plans to the government of India in this regard. The ILR programme has to go through various stages before its actual implementation as at present, feasibility studies on the links of the peninsular component alone have been completed. The government thinking is also along these lines as evident from the National Common Minimum Programme.

A study of the available data indicates that the average annual flows in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin in India are estimated at 1200 billion cubic metres. Of this only 3 per cent would be considered for diversion outside the basin in the Himalayan rivers component of the project.

Hidden agenda

Why then is there so much opposition to the project from Bangladesh?

It is the result of a campaign spearheaded to malign India by spreading wrong information, based on subjective conclusions; it is the hidden agenda of the powers that be to sabotage India's Herculean efforts to mitigate the ravages of floods in both the countries.

The policy of the government of India is to implement the project in a fully consultative manner and at present, only the peninsular component is being taken up, which in no way affects Bangladesh. We have been all along going out of the way to accommodate our neighbour's demands. Taking this as weakness, Bangladesh may next insist that India get clearance from it even for planning a project in the interior Madhya Pradesh on the Chambal river just because it is in the GBM basin. Why should we succumb to such pressure tactics and test the patience of our countrymen?

India has already clarified its stand on these issues. Now, instead of remaining defensive, it should act and proceed further with its plans for detailed studies on the Himalayan component even if the ILR proposals for this component are not a priority for the Government. Indians have every right to know whether the much talked about projects are feasible on the ground. Just to please Bangladesh our people should not be asked to wait for years to get this basic information. After field studies of the Himalayan component are completed by India, at the implementation stage, a dialogue with Bangladesh can be considered, if necessary.

● M.S. MENON

Former Chief Engineer, Central Water Commission

Public transport in Chennai and its suburbs

PUBLIC TRANSPORT in Chennai metropolis and its suburbs is provided by Metro Transport Corporation buses, State Transport Corporation buses and by electric multiple units (EMUs) run by Southern Railway. As per 2001 Census, 40 lakh people reside in the Chennai Corporation area and 60 lakhs in the neighbouring districts of Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur. Nearly 35 lakh passengers daily use the MTC and STC buses and four lakh passengers in the Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu sector, two lakhs passengers in the Chennai Central-Arakkonam-Tiruttani sector and one lakh passengers in the Chennai Central-Sullurpeta sector daily use EMUs. Thus, buses carry five times more passengers than suburban trains in Chennai and its suburbs. The total number of private vehicles in Chennai and its suburbs is nearly 25 lakhs.

The city has seen significant residential growth on the southern side near Velachery in the recent past. Old Mahabalipuram Road is fast developing into an IT corridor and a number of colleges and industries have come up between Tambaram and Chengalpattu. Rapid residential growth is seen in the northern and western parts also.

The problems faced in providing metro rail transport are the very high cost of infrastructure and the very long time period required for execution. Work on the Kolkata Metro started in 1972 and so far 17 km has been commissioned for service. The Delhi Metro was approved in 1996 and so far 33 km of the facility has been commissioned for service. Work on the Mass Rapid Transit System in Chennai started in 1983 and so far 16 km of the facility has been commissioned for service from Chennai Beach to Tiruvanmiyur. The average cost of providing Metro transport ranges from Rs.100 crores to Rs. 300 crores per km of double line track.

Main reason for high cost

The main reason for the high cost and high gestation period for these projects is that construction of a metro rail system is started after full development has taken place in the user area. This necessitates the metro rail to be taken either above the ground on trestles or below the ground by making tunnels involving high costs and long time for construction.

The recently completed suburban gauge conversion project in the Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu sector shows a way out of this situation. Construction was started in 2000. As four lakh passengers were using the services daily, it was necessary to take up the work in phases with minimum disruption to the services. In spite of this major constraint, in a span of five years conversion of 115 km of track has been completed successfully. With this, two dedicated suburban lines have been provided from Chennai Beach to Tambaram.

For complicated problems like providing public transport in metros, no universal solution can be prescribed. Action has to be specific to the metro and the areas served. However, if provision of rail infrastructure precedes the habitation the gains are enormous. In Chennai, mail/express/passenger and goods trains are handled on the same tracks as suburban EMU trains except in the Chennai Beach-Tambaram section. Keeping this scenario in mind, for Chennai and its suburbs action needs to be initiated immediately for providing rail infrastructure as follows:

1. Providing a new suburban surface corridor in Velachery-Mahabalipuram route (50 km). Approximate cost — Rs. 200 crores. Approximate completion period — 2 years.

2. Providing a new suburban surface corridor in Velachery-Tambaram-Avadi-Ponneri route (75 km). Approximate cost — Rs. 300 crores. Approximate completion period – 2 years.

3. Providing separate suburban corridors in Chennai Egmore-Tambaram-Chengalpattu-Kancheepuram-Arakkonam-Tiruvallur-Chennai Central and Chennai Beach-Basin Bridge-Gummidipoondi routes. Approximate cost — Rs. 800 crores. Approximate completion period — 5 years.

Less pollution

On dedicated suburban tracks on all the routes mentioned above, EMUs should be run at eight-minute intervals in the combinations of three, six, nine and 12 coaches. With this, EMUs will start carrying five times more passengers than buses and provide fast, comfortable, safe and peaceful travel for those living and working in Chennai and its suburbs. There will also be less environmental pollution and high economy in operational costs. In Mumbai, all suburban trains run on the surface and carry nearly 60 lakh passengers a day.

The scheme merits serious consideration as it has the potential for improving the lives of more than a crore of people. The Finance Minister has mentioned in his budget speech that under the National Urban Renewal Mission urban facilities will be provided in our cities to cope with the rapid increase in urbanisation and he is looking forward to receiving proposals in this regard. Will Chennai make a call in time on the above lines?

● P.K. MISHRA

Indian Railway Service of Engineers

Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Indian girl stripped, tortured in Malaysia

Agencies
Kuala Lumpur, March 14

A 19-YEAR-OLD Indian girl was allegedly tortured for 27 hours by her Malaysian employer who accused her of stealing $10,526. The incident happened in northern Penang state.

Sonia Sharma, a part-time worker at a mobile phone shop, said she was stripped, kicked, punched and beaten with a piece of wood by her former employer. He also cut her forehead, face and arms, and burnt her with cigarette butt, the *New Straits Times* reported.

It carried a picture of the victim with a black eye and bruises on her body. The Malaysian police later arrested the man.

The 37-year-old man, whose identity was not disclosed, was found with a packet of drugs, believed to be a type of metamphetamine, Penang state criminal investigations department deputy chief Razali Basri said.

The victim, Sonia Sharma, said she quit her part-time job, which she had been doing for two months, a week ago.

The reason she quit was that her employer had accused her of stealing 40,000 ringgit (US$ 10,526) from the shop.

Sharma denies having taken the money. She said her former employer falsely accused her.

On March 10, three days after she quit, her employer called her and demanded she come and see him. He said that he wanted to discuss an important matter with her.

"When I went into the shop, he locked the door immediately, before (alleging) that I had stolen RM 40,000 from his shop," Sharma was quoted as saying by the *Star*.

"I denied stealing the money and told him the accounts were in order while I was working there. "He threatened to kill my whole family if I did not return the money," she said.

He then ordered her to strip naked and when she refused, tried to suffocate her.

She passed out and when she regained consciousness, she found herself naked, she said. He then threatened to abuse her sexually if she did not pay back the money, Sharma said.

The man kept her locked in a room for more than 27 hours, during which he assaulted and threatened to sexually abuse her and tried to strangle and suffocate her, according to the complaint she had lodged with the police, Razali said.

Sharma managed to escape the following day when the man fell asleep and lodged a police report, Razali said.

The Northeast police chief assistant commissioner Hamzah Md Jamil said the police arrested the man the same night.

They also found the victim's bloodstained clothes in his possession. If convicted, the man can be jailed for a maximum of three years and fined, the *New Straits Times* said.

According to Razali, Sharma holds an Indian passport. Her father is Malaysian while her mother is an Indian national. He, however, could not say which part of India she is from.

AFP

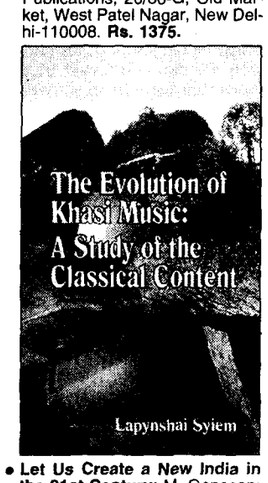
Sonia Sharma shows her injuries on Monday.

15 MAR 2005

BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **The Yoga of Yogi** — The Legacy of T. Krishnamacharya: Kausthub Desikachar; Pub. by Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, 31 (Old No 13), IV Cross Street, R.K.Nagar, Chennai-600028. **Rs. 500.**
- **Science, Religion and Peace:** Surya Nath Prasad, Suman Shukla; International Association of Educators for World Peace, 216, Laxminagar, Nagpur-440022.
- **India-Vietnam Relations** — First to Twenty First Century: Geetesh Sharma; Dialogue Society, 19B, Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700087. **Rs. 150.**
- **Corporate Laws and Secretarial Practice:** G.K. Kapoor; Sultan Chand & Sons, 23, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 170.**
- **The Universal History of Numbers** — The World's First Number Systems, Vols. I to III: Georges Ifrah; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 1615.**
- **The Evolution of Khasi Music** — A Study of the Classical Content: Lapynshai Syiem; Regency Publications, 20/36-G, Old Market, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008. **Rs. 1375.**



- **Let Us Create a New India in the 21st Century:** M. Ganesan; Manimekalai Prasuram, PB No. 1447, 7 Thanikachalam Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 35.**
- **Nationalist Movement in South India** — A Study of the Role of Vishakapatnam District: M.S.R. Anjaneyulu; Copies can be had from the author, 42, Jeevan Jyothi Apartments, Ramnagar, Visakhapatnam-530002. **Rs. 140.**
- **Powerful Media Words:** K. Khaja Mohideen; Gazzali Publication, 15, VST Mosque Street, Ambai Road, Melapalayam-627005. **Rs. 90.**
- **J. Krishnamurti Demystified:** Kalidas Joshi; Pustak Mahal, J-3/16, (Opp. Happy School) Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 80.**
- **Stars Speak Fortune in Our Hand:** K. S. Magesh Kumar; Mahesh & Mahesh Book Publications, PB No. 5563, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 140.**
- **The Everyday Politics of Labour** — Working Lives in India's Informal Economy: Geert De Neve; Social Science Press, 69 Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110003. **Rs. 795.**
- **Social Democracy in Practice Socialist International — 1951-2001:** Pradip Bose; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 800.**
- **Beyond Shirdi** — Stories of the Living Presence of Sai Baba: K. Venkataraman; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, KM Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 135.**
- **Buddhist Centres of Orissa** — Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri: Bimal Bandyopadhyay; Sundeep Prakashan, 6191/1, Block-1, Dev Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. **Rs. 1500.**

- **What Happens to Gods and Demons:** H. N. Verma: Bluejay Books, an imprint of Srishti Publishers & Distributors, 64-A, Adichini, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 250.**
- **Cultural Tourism Management:** Vishwas Mehta; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 650.**
- **Simplified Electric Rice Cooker Cooking:** Shashi Madan; Shree Shenbaga Pathippagam, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 35.**
- **The Lost Dreams** — Collection of Poems: Mohammed Salim; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 100.**
- **Nobel Prize Winners in Pictures — 1901-2003:** National Council of Science Museums; Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., Cambridge House, 4381/4, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 695.**
- **The Rama Saga** — A Novel Based on Valmiki's Historical Great Soul Rama by Ramanath Tripathi: Prabhat Kumar Pandeya; Akshaya Prakashan, 208 MG House, 2 Community Centre, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 450.**

Essentials of Buddhism and Jainism: K. N. Neelakandan; copies can be had from the author, Quarters B-8, CU Campus Calicut University PO, Kerala-673635. **Rs. 80.**

Identity & Image Management: Rajendra Ghuge;

- **Promising Professions: Mamta Ghuge;**
- **Art, Craft & Science of Communicating: Rajendra Ghuge;**
- **Creative Professions:** Mamta Ghuge; The above four books pub. by Galgotia Publications, Pvt. Ltd., 5, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 90 each.**
- **Literary Cultures in History** — Reconstructions from South Asia: Sheldon Pollock — Editors, Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. Rs. 1495.
- Value Education The Indian Tradition: D. P. Mukherjee; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 210.**
- **Earthern Lamps:** Jhaverchand Meghani; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. Rs. 160.
- Counter View: Kalluri Bhaskaram; for copies, K. V. Ramana, 2-2-1149/1 Flat 85, Tirumal Enclave, Hyderabad-44. **Rs. 90.**
- Brand-Wise Leveraging People to Build Powerful Brands: Jyothi Menon, Pradeep Nevatia; East-West Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 571, Poonamallee High Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai-600029. **Rs. 225.**
- **Majority People's Right for Preferential Participation:** Jawahar Nesan; Educated Chamber, 1 C Panangattu Street, Sirkali (PO) Nagapattinam Dt., Tamil Nadu-609110.
- **Mahashwetha:** Sudha Murty; EastWest Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd., 571, Poonamallee High Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai-600029. **Rs. 150.**
- **Advanced Accounting:** V. K. Saxena; Sultan Chand & Sons., 23, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. Rs. 360.
- Cancer Made Me: Kasthuri Sreenivasan; Coimbatore Cancer Foundation, G. Kuppuswamy Naidu Memorial Hospital, P. N. Palayam, Coimbatore-641037. **Rs. 120.**

Tamil

- **Anuvin Atharam Om:** Swami Parameswar; Ramprashanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jhankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 25.**
- **Mosadi Mannan DIG Ali:** Nakkheeran Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Poy Va Maruntheː** Arun Chinniah; Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jhankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Jagajala Jaya:** Nakkheeran Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 50.**
- **Aaralamana Jokes:** Kavignar Deivachilai; Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 30.**
- **Sangoli:** Chinnakuthusi; Nakkheeran Publications, 105, Jani Jhankan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 60.**
- **Kanmaniye:** SAP; Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Jayalalitha-Karan Thapar-Nerukku Ner:** Nakkheeran Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 35.**
- **Ulagin Thalai Sirandha 100 Cricket Veerargal:** S. Chandramouli; Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Nanum Veerappanum:** Nakkheeran Gopal; Nakkheeran Publications, 106, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 45.**
- **Athirshta Kavacham:** Kalki (R. Krishnamurthy); Vanathi Pathippagam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 50.**
- **Kilu Kilu Ulagam:** Narayana Reddy; Ramprasanth Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 30.**
- **Meera Yathirai:** Kalki;; Vanathi Pathippagam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**

Telugu

- **Neevu Neeputtuka:** V.R. Sastry; **Rs. 10.**
- **Navvula Navabu Nasiruddin Kathalu — Parts 1 & 2:** P. Rajeswara Rao; **Rs. 25** each.
- **Bangaru Rekkalu:** D.K. Chadvuulababu; **Rs. 25.**
- **Appu-Nippu:** D.K. Chadvuulababu; **Rs. 25.** The above books pub. by Visalandhra Book Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001.
- **Tatva Vethalu:** Gopi Chand; **Rs. 200.**
- **Jnanam Parignanam:** M. Rajendra; **Rs. 100.** The above two books pub. by Alakananda Prachuranalu, Opp. Maris Stella College, Vijayawada-520008.

Kannada

- **Majesticnalli Chandra:** Na. Gethacharya; Kannada Geleyara Balaga, Srinagara, Bangalore-560019. **Rs. 50.**
- **Sriguru Tulasiramadasaru:** Na. Gethacharya; Tulasiramadasa Shathamanothsava Samithi, 23/2, 5th Cross, KG Nagar, Bangalore-560019. **Rs. 50.**
- **Basavannana Samagra Vachanalu:** D. Rajeswari, Ambika Ananth; Basava Samithi, Sri Basaveshwara Circle, Bangalore-560001. **Rs. 125.**

Malayalam

- **Tiruvithamcore Swathanthriya Samara Charithram:** C. Narayana Pillai; C. Narayana Pillai Foundation, Thiruvananthapuram. **Rs. 500.**
- **Anamma — Ormayude Pusthakam:** K.M. Mathew; Manorama Publication Division, Kottayam. **Rs. 90.**
- **EmSinte Sampoorna Kritikal Vols. 36 & 37** — Collected Works of EMS Namboodiripad: M. A. Baby; Chintha Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram. **Rs. 150** each.
- **Vykthikal, Kazhchappadukal:** V. K. Madhavankutty; Indian Atheist Publishers, 779, Pocket 5, Mayur Vihar I, New Delhi-110091. **Rs. 50.**

Re-imagining Nepal

FORGET KATHMANDU — An *Elegy for Democracy*: Manjushree Thapa; Viking-Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 350.**

WRITTEN WITH a deep concern for the political future of a Nepal cornered by the authoritarian impulses of the monarchy, the grotesque factiousness of the parliamentary parties and the anarchic violence of the Maoists, this book is Manjushree Thapa's lament for the apparent impossibility of democracy in her country.

Published weeks before King Gyanendra's February 1, 2005 coup, the book is a highly accessible chronicling of not just 200 years of palace intrigue but also the frustratingly circular transition from Rana rule to that of the Shah kings, the compromise which brought in multiparty democracy in 1990, the still mysterious June 2001 massacre which took the life of King Birendra and brought Gyanendra to the throne, and the subsequent usurping of power by the palace in 2002.

Maoist movement: insights

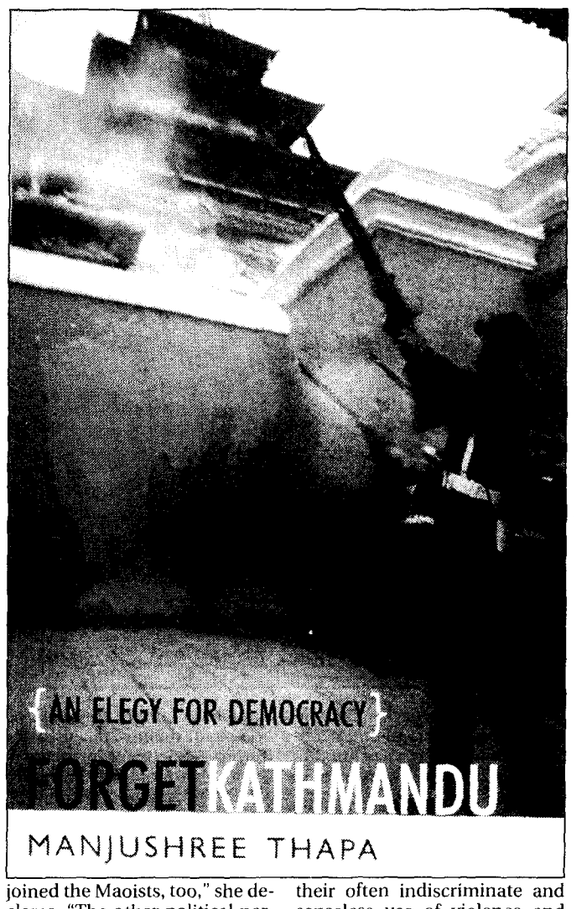
Thapa's account of the Maoist movement might lack the academic depth and methodological rigour of other books — I am thinking mainly of Deepak Thapa and Bandita Sijapati's excellent *A Kingdom Under Siege: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2003* (Kathmandu: The Printhouse, 2004) and Deepak Thapa's edited volume, *Understanding the Maoist Movement in Nepal* (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003) — but her chapter based on a week-long trek through insurgent strongholds in the western districts of Dailekh, Kalikot and Jumla is full of insights into the nature of the Maoist movement at the grassroots level.

It is clear from her tone, which is sometimes condescending and betrays her impatience with many of the party cadres she met, that she is not impressed with the comrades. And yet, the picture she paints is one which the Nepali elite would find deeply troubling: of villages which fear the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) more than they do the Maoists, of communities so wretchedly poor that the rebels' promise of equality is a magnet for large sections of the youth.

After spending days in search of women cadres — and meeting male party leaders and "motivators" whose rhetoric left her cold — Thapa finally encountered a group of teenaged girls active with the Maoists in Jumla. "I asked the first girl... what she was doing before she joined the party. 'Nothing,' she said. 'I was at home, spending my days cutting grass.' Then, with a blithe tone that belied the grimness of her message, she said, 'You see, before, there were only sickles in the hands of girls like me. Sickles and grass. And now there are automatic rifles'."

RNA's repression

The author's Kathmandu-bourgeois cynicism wilts in the face of this expression of female empowerment growing out of the barrel of a gun, "All my irritation at the Maoists fell away with this. If I had grown up in one of these villages, and were young, uneducated, unqualified for employment of any kind, and as a female, denied equality with men — hell, I would have joined the Maoists, too," she declares. "The other political parties had not offered better options, and neither had the government. Join the Maoists is what any spirited girl would do."



At the same time, the author makes it clear she has no illusions about the Maoists with their often indiscriminate and senseless use of violence and their undemocratic impulses (which has led them to attack members of other parties).

Despite travelling through villages which have borne the brunt of the RNA's repression, she never came across anyone who was not a Maoist who acknowledged supporting the insurgents.

On the road to Manma in Kalikot, the author spoke to villagers who provided a chilling account of the Army's atrocities — of how soldiers in 2002 had killed innocent men, raped women, burnt more than 30 houses and dropped bombs on the village by helicopter. Asked about Maoist violence, villagers said there had only been one instance — the killing, under rather brutal circumstances, of a man suspected of being an informer.

The Maoists also destroyed a local bridge, but villagers rejoiced despite the inconvenience this caused them. "It's been a relief since the bridge was bombed," a boy told Thapa. "Before that, the Army used to come here on weekly patrols... (they) would beat men and boys, they'd speak roughly to women... call them whores." And yet, these villagers were not Maoist supporters. If there were elections here tomorrow, who would win, Thapa asked. "Not the Maoists," a man answered. "Not if they have to put down their arms... The government thinks we are all Maoists, but the fact is, nobody likes them. Nobody."

'Destruction of truth'

Nothing sums up the elegiac nature of her narrative better than the dirge of an old widow in western Nepal who tells Thapa the sad story of her family's destruction. "Her elder son and daughter-in-law had been shot dead by security forces because the villagers, on some grudge, had reported them as Maoists," she writes.

Fearing for their lives, her second son and one of her daughters fled the village, never to return. "Her entire life had fallen apart around her. After telling me her story in almost one breath, she chanted over and over, 'My truth has been destroyed... My truth has been destroyed'." This metaphor — of the destruction of truth — is a recurrent theme in the book and the culprits are many.

The sad fact is that Thapa has written an elegy for a democracy that was never, except for brief moments that never lasted more than a few months, allowed to even be born. The promise of a constituent assembly, made by King Tribhuvan in the 1950s, has yet to see the light of day and it is this demand, which the Maoists have made the focus of their political platform today.

Time ripe for democracy

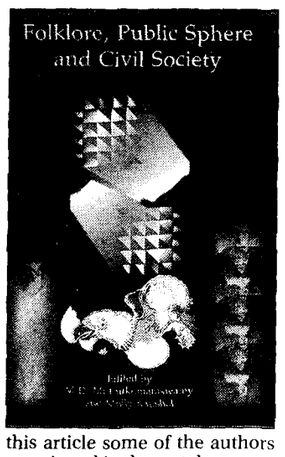
For most of her book, the author describes rather than prescribes but in the end she does put her own cards on the table, "Nothing is more critical to Nepal now than winning back democracy... Only democracy, and the sovereignty of the Nepali people, matter. Neither the monarchy nor our failed leaders nor any national myth or relic need be kept if they pose obstacles. It is time to re-imagine Nepal."

It is increasingly apparent that King Gyanendra has emerged as the principal obstacle to democracy. A democratically elected constituent assembly with a mandate to retain, reinvent or end the monarchy as an institution is the only legitimate instrument to effect the re-imagining of Nepal that Thapa rightly says the time is ripe for.

SIDDHARTH VARADARAJAN

Vibrant medium of social change

FOLKLORE, PUBLIC SPHERE AND CIVIL SOCIETY: M. D. Muthukumaraswamy, Molly Kaushal — Editors; Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi and National Folklore Support Centre, 7, V Cross Street, Rajalakshmi Nagar, Velachery, Chennai-600042. **Rs. 400.**



THIS BOOK is the result of a symposium organised by the Janapada Sampada of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts with the help of Ford Foundation and National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC). It contains 23 different articles arranged in six thematic sections. The editors summarises all the contributions in a brilliantly written introduction.

In the first section, "Concepts and definition" Alan Jabbour deliberates on the role folklore plays in providing intra-cultural and intercultural identity and discourse.

Sudhakar Reddy examines folklore in the public sphere in contemporary civil society. In this article some of the authors mentioned in the text do not get listed in the bibliography.

Roma Chatterjee examines "Chho" dance of Purulia as a medium through which popular culture interacts with prevailing social forces.

Her paper requires a word of special appreciation for its rich ethnographic content and information based on fieldwork.

The reviewer feels that the author should not consider "folk" and "popular" as merely two opposing categories, instead actually two ends of a long chain of overlapping intermediate categories with two-way mobility.

'Historical spaces'

In the next section, "Historical spaces, folklore and public sphere" Jawaharlal Handoo recommends that the oral should be considered as a non-hegemonic view of history as against the written history, which is influenced by the powerful. Lokendra Arambam examines ritual theatre of Manipur; Saugata Bhaduri probes origin of community Durga Puja in Bengal; Pankaj K. Jha recommends Maneri's Malfuz as a source to reconstruct settlement history of Muslims of Bihar during the 14th Century A.D. and Hanne M. Bruin examines the Devdasi system as forming a public sphere with varying value loads given in various contexts.

The other sections embodying a variety of debates around folklore are: Physical spaces as public spheres in civil society; Performative folk traditions as public spheres; Oral and other folk traditions as public spheres and contemporary forms; Shifting contexts and transmissions.

Public sphere domains

"Film entertainment in South India" by S. Theodore Baskaran and "Chaupal as multidimensional public space" by Kailash K. Misra attempt a historical reconstruction of public space in two different areas with two distinctly different functions. "Mask theatre of Garhwal" by Purohit and Bhatt, "Folk theatre of Karnataka" by Bilimale, "The folk festivals of Gaddis in Western Himalaya" by Molly Kaushal, "The Bhagvata mela in Tanjavur" by Madhu Khanna and "Dhola epic of North India" by Susan Wadley are some of the excellent area studies with the aim of demonstrating public sphere domains in each of these regions.

Daniel Negers raises some questions on Jangamkatha and Burrakatha in Andhra Pradesh. This is done to demonstrate the process of construction of a neo-folklore tradition in the contemporary society. Michael Nijhawan discusses how the Dhadi oral tradition of folk Punjab was recalled and restructured by the urban Sikh elites of the Punjab after 1909.

Advaitavadini Kaul describes how Pandit-Krishnajoo Razdan, who lived during 1850 and 1926, created "Shiva Lagna" to propagate ancient Saiva tradition in Kashmir. Written in Kashmiri language and also in the form of chanting these lores could easily spread a popular ideology to the folk level.

Changes in traditions

In the last section M.R. Raina examines the nature of changes observed in folklore of Kashmir, Bihar and Jharkhand. Here it is shown how tribal Karma dances do no longer remain traditional but are remoulded to spread literacy or social awareness.

Anjali Capila describes how folk songs have become a powerful media of propaganda.

She reports some interesting songs from Garhwal through which several types of social evils have been addressed. Finally Eric Miller examines the various features of public sphere as proposed by Jürgen Habermas and interactive telecommunication, which can facilitate rural participation in India and join orality with literacy to create a public sphere for meaningful debates.

The discussions of folklores in this volume make folk-urban continuum not only a demonstrable reality but in addition the public sphere considerations make folklore emerge as a vibrant medium of social change.

I am certain this excellently brought out book will be of great help to both experts as also persons from literature. The extremely reasonable price is an additional attraction.

D. K. BHATTACHARYA

• Malayalam fiction in translation • Child rights • Vedic wisdom • Folk literature

TAMIL

RAACHIYAMMA — Malayalam Sirukathaigal: Sura — Tr. in Tamil; Imayavan Pathippagam, 824, N.V.N. Nagar, Thirumangalam, Anna Nagar West, Chennai-600040. **Rs. 55.**

THIS IS a collection of stories by some of the renowned writers of Malayalam. While the stories of Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, Karoor Neelakanta Pillai, Vaikkam Mohammed Basheer, P. Kesava Dev, S.K.Pottekkad and Uroob represent the previous generation, stories of M.T.Vasudevan Nair, Madavi Kutti, Paul Zacharia, Unnikrishnan Puthur, M. Mukundan and Eakalaivan who are all still in the scene are also included. The stories representing the post-modern period are not included.

Karoor Neelakanta Pillai's story "Mara Bommaikal" (Wooden dolls) is outstanding for its crispness and peculiar narrative style with the use of minimum words. It has already been translated into other Indian languages including English and Tamil.

The effective Tamil translation by the famous Tamil writer Nakulan some years ago (Marappachikal) was well appreciated in literary circles. However, one more translation shows its exceptional quality.

The stories of Thakazhi ("Avan thirumbavaruvaan" He will come back), Basheer ("Pazham" Banana) and Eakalaivan ("Namakku nallathu kaadukal" Forest is good for us) cover the anguish and pains of people living below the poverty line. Uroob's "Raachiyamma", though somewhat romantic, touchingly pictures the melancholic life and silent attachment of a raw village girl of Nilagiri.

M. T.Vasudevan Nair's "Koottai Nizhal" (Shadow of fort) is about a love affair and sacrifice of the past with a historical background of northern part of India in a moving tone. Madavikutti's "Virundu" (Feast) narrates the vanity of the luxurious life of a society lady at Kolkata, as in her other stories.

Kesava Dev's "Kaaykarikkari Kaarthiyaayini" (Vegetable vendor Kaarthiyaayini) essays humorously the lighter moments of a local woman vegetable vendor. Zacharia's story "Crane shot" is different from other stories because of his narrating technique through a film director's movie camera eyes.

If in T.Padmanabhan's story Kili (Parrot) a parrot plays the main role to unwind the protagonist's mind who is admitted in a nursing home, Mukundan in his "Muttai idum yaanai" (Elephant which lays eggs) depends on fantasy to bring out the hollowness of marital relationship. On the whole, imaginative skill and sensibility make most of these stories readable. Sura's translation is satisfactory in bringing the essence and meaning of the original stories.

NEELA PADMANABHAN

KUZHANDAIYIN URIMAIGAL: Chandra Thanikachalam; Indian Council for Child Welfare, Tamil Nadu, 5, III Main Road, West Shenoy Nagar, Chennai-600030. **Rs. 50.**

THE RIGHTS of children have had over the years many vociferous campaigners at the local, national and international levels. Yet, every step taken to increase awareness of child rights in society is to be recognised and promoted, in an effort to get closer to the ultimate goal of securing each child his/her rights to live, receive care and protection and access to free and quality education. This slim volume of Chandra Thanikachalam is just that — a step in the right direction.

A lawyer by profession, with an abiding interest in child and law, the author bases her arguments on her solid knowledge of the legal and constitutional provisions that exist to ensure the protection of children.

The challenge she has had to face in writing the book is not so much translation, as providing brief, yet concise previews of the elaborate legal set up that remains, largely on paper, to ensure that children have their rights.

And it is this point that she makes continuously throughout the book: That laws exist but only awareness about them among the public will force their execution.

Working with the U.N. Child Rights Convention as the fulcrum of the movement, she provides brief insights into the laws that exist at the national and at the state level to bolster a rights perspective.

She begins with the right to live and winds through several provisions that touch on, among other issues, eliminating child labour, ensuring education, care and protection and the special rights of the disabled and the disadvantaged children.

A rather elaborate chapter on adoption is well worth the attention the author has paid it, clearing as it does, several misconceptions about the process of adoption and guardianship that Hindu and non-Hindu families must adhere to, besides providing some details on "foster care", a western trend finding increasing acceptance and relevance in India.

RAMYA KANNAN

TELUGU

VEDADARSHANAMU — Kulapati Ekkirala Krishnamacharyulu: Dharma Radhakrishnamurti — Compiler; Copies can be had from Maitrayee Publication, 5-78-21, 3/4, Ashok Nagar, Guntur-522002. **Rs. 100.**

THE VEDAS were revealed to the seers who were deeply interested in finding out the fundamental truth. Ekkirala Krishnamacharyulu, a scholar and a sincere aspirant of truth was attracted to this lore. He gave lectures and nurtured the light of Vedic wisdom.

His English talks on various occasions on different topics have been translated by Dhara Radhakrishnamurti and compiled in a book form for further benefit of seekers. Translation of certain terms and concepts is difficult, yet this is achieved in this book for the reason that the etymological meaning was relied upon.

It is divided into five sections and care is taken to see that what is relevant is brought within one frame. References to original Sanskrit verses are also provided if the seeker wishes to contemplate on the same.

In this age when the return to ritual and religious philosophy is advocated more on a scientific basis books of this sort are relevant besides being helpful for the seekers to transcend the stage of blind faith to that of analytical understanding.

This book will be a valuable addition to the scriptural studies.

N. C. RAMANUJACHARY

KANNADA

JANAPADA KATHANA GEETHEGALU: P. K. Khandoba, T. M. Bhaaskar — Editors; Pub. by Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga-585016. **Rs. 50.**

THIS IS a thematic collection of 16 lyrical ballads, variously described as "Kathana geethe", "Khanda kaavya" and "Laghu kathana geethe" selected from already published sources of folk songs. There is an introduction explaining the theme, context and content each of these ballads.

List of sources and a compilation of the meaning of some difficult words are also given. While "Govina Haadu" and "Kerege Haara" remain most celebrated, there are 10 poignant songs, each of them depicting the sufferings of women in a feudal society.

"Kontyamma" is about the travails of Kunti, mother of the Pandavas. "Gangi Gouri Haadu" is a parody on Lord Siva struggling like common folks between two wives. There are three ballads on Basavanna and his disciples, celebrated as folk heroes, namely Akka Naagamma, Maadara Chennaih and Kalyana Basavaiah. Perhaps they better qualify to be classified as "Laavani".

"Barada Haadu" and "Mali Haadu" are poignant songs on failure of rain and description of gruesome famine conditions common to the North Karnataka region with graphic portrayal of the suffering of the masses.

The texts of these songs vary slightly from region to region as is common with folk literature. This is a good handy volume.

K. S. PARTHASARATHY

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

Beijing broth awaits Left at Singh's table

RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

New Delhi, Feb. 23: The "neutral umpire" is set for another "balancing" act.

Sources close to Manmohan Singh said if he refused to campaign in the Bihar elections to avoid being seen as taking the side of either Laloo Prasad Yadav or Ram Vilas Paswan, he hopes to do a similar "balancing" act on the budget.

The Prime Minister, they added, would try to keep the Left "happy" and the pro-reform group in his government smiling.

The sources said it was "easier said than done" but stressed that Singh was "very clear in his mind" that the budget's prime thrust would be on infrastructure.

Singh, who meets Left leaders for a breakfast session at his residence tomorrow, is expected to reiterate his fundamental thesis that if India has to compete with China and build on its real and projected economic growth, the byword is infrastructure. "He will tell them that with a positive growth rate and other economic indices looking suitably good, the budget is a historic opportunity to build on these advantages and not to be wasted on polemics. 'We must not lose the opportunity'," a source said.

The Prime Minister, the source said, would hold up China as a role model for two reasons: it would blunt the edge of the Left's objections against economic growth and convey the point that without a "powerful" economy, India would be "worth nothing" in the eyes of the world.

"Take the example of Nepal. India's advice (against the royal coup) was ignored because Nepal was confident of China's support. China is pumping millions into its economy. It is aiding the infrastructure development of not only Nepal but also of Pakistan, Myanmar and Thailand. Indian businessmen are willing to risk their investments in China instead of India and all for one reason — it has the right infrastructure backup," the source said.

QUOTE

This is not a snub

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

on the Queen's decision not to attend Charles's wedding

Singh's belief is the "world" expects India to emerge as a second "Asian tiger", which can countervail China. "But this is not possible even halfway unless we get the infrastructure in place," the source said.

The Prime Minister is also likely to raise the issue of private participation in infrastructure development and mention the "interest" Japan had shown in modernising the Calcutta airport. "We are sure the Bengal chief minister will warm up to such a proposal," the source said, "but what of the hardliners in his party?"

The most charitable view the Prime Minister's Office is willing to take of the Left's stand against reforms is "it is a part of the internal power struggle" within the CPM. "The CPM and the BJP are facing a similar crisis of a generational shift from the old guard to the newer leaders. The newer leaders are basically bureaucrats who were created by the (party) system and not by people. By raising economic issues, they hope to create a mass base for themselves," the source said.

If infrastructure is the budget's thrust area, the focus of the President's joint address to both Houses of Parliament on February 25 will be on the Congress-led government's "human face".

The source said the address would dwell on implementation of the "pro-people" commitments in the common minimum programme like holding the price line, legislating the national employment guarantee bill, introducing the food-for-work scheme and restoring the 9.5 per cent interest rate on the employees' provident fund.

The address — which will be a status report on the state of the Union — would also dwell on national security and foreign policy. While the "Naxalite problem" is expected to be defined as a "socio-economic" one, the address would highlight the turnout in the Jammu and Kashmir civic polls as "evidence" of return of normality to the state.

■ **See Page 8**

THE TELEGRAPH 24 FEB 2005

Grassroots guarantee for employment

By L.C. Jain

IN THE article "Guaranteeing Employment" (*The Hindu* Dec. 27, 2004) Amit Bhaduri has opened our third eye to a radical alternative to our globalisation-fixated economic strategy. He has shown that a great deal of economic fortune is in fact in our own backyard. Ironically, the rest of the world sees the vast potential of our domestic market and, via MNCs, is vying to cash in on it while we are busy acquiring the capacity to step into the global market. By all means let us go to the world but we ought not to mistake the chaff for the grain. The grassroots market is enormous, easier to access, and relatively more stable, apart from lightening the burden of poverty and unemployment.

The selling of our goods in this admittedly under-supplied market is only one aspect. The real reward in domestic production for the domestic market is in putting purchasing power in the hands of millions of the unemployed and underemployed. A discreet support to labour-intensive techniques of production to meet domestic demand can enhance the employment content of the production process. Production for the domestic market to meet unsatisfied demand thus offers the most guaranteed form of employment over the long term.

We need to summon to our aid the salutary lessons from the European experience of single-minded pursuit of growth and international competitiveness via standard solutions — higher investment, more mergers, expanded trade and full throttled deregulations. It was nearly 10 years ago that a 167-page White Paper of the European Commission titled *Growth Competitiveness and Employment* admitted that in spite of an impressive record of growth and competitiveness, unemployment in Europe had reached "serious proportions." More instructive for us was its confession: "we know how to produce but our manufacture often destroys jobs."

According to economist Chris Freeman (Science Policy Research Unit of the Sussex University), the unemployment scene in Europe is in fact grimmer and comparable to that experienced during the Great Depression. A similar concern was written in the annual review of the OECD (1993) titled *Employment Outlook*, which argued that Europe's statistics for the 1990s understate unemployment as they do not capture all of the labour slack that exists in OECD countries.

Production for the domestic market offers the most guaranteed form of employment over the long term.

The white paper underscores that this level of unemployment has been reached despite the fact that investment went up by one-third between 1985 and 1990, there were three times more company mergers and acquisitions, trade doubled in sectors previously regarded as sheltered from competition, while massive deregulation eliminated 70 million customs documents. Yet the European Community failed to match the increase in generated wealth with parallel improvements in job opportunities. In a general manner, it shows that "growth is not in itself the solution to unemployment, that vigorous action is needed to create jobs."

No doubt, technical progress is presenting opportunities for growth but, the white paper argues, we can avail ourselves of it on the condition that we alter our development model, meet the needs stemming from the upheavals in social life and urban civilisation, preserve our rural areas, and improve the environment and the quality of our national assets. Further, while the dynamism of the market can help boost growth, experience has also shown that the market is not without its failings. It tends to underestimate what is at stake in the long term. The speed of the changes it creates affects the different social categories unequally and it spontaneously promotes concentration, thereby creating inequality between the regions and towns. Indeed, in most European countries, the proceeds of economic growth have mainly been absorbed by those who remained in employment, and there is a large pool of unemployed that has been excluded. The paper concludes on a chilling note: if only proof were needed that our economies have not yet reached maturity, it would be the existence in Europe of some 50 million people below the poverty line.

In the 1980s, the growth of our product rose to 5.3 per cent from 3.5 per cent, but it was accompanied by a disastrous decline in the growth rate of employment from 2.8 per cent to 1.5 per cent. This trend worsened in the 1990s — the celebrated decade of economic reforms, notwithstanding the assurance to Parliament by the then Finance Minister that "reforms were aimed at encouraging a pattern of industrial production which is labour intensive."

A May 2002 report of the Planning Commission says the employment generating capacity of the economy, especially the organised sector, *vis-à-vis* the GDP growth is "declining fast over time (1983 to 2000)", though during the same period GDP growth accelerated from 5.2 to 6.7 per cent per annum. The report says in the late 1990s the organised sector reached a state of "almost a near jobless growth." The Planning Commission report does not elucidate why the organised sector is not delivering jobs though it has been liberated from all major shackles — licensing and controls over imports and foreign investment — since the 1990s. Was jobless growth an intended objective of strengthening the organised sector?

While investment flooded the organised sector *a la* economic reforms, during the same period not only millions of our men and women but also our vast production resources — the semi-arid and rain fed areas (i.e. two thirds of our cultivable area) — were kept on starvation diet investment-wise. Apart from investment, a precondition for raising productivity and hence employment intensity of these starved areas is an appropriate institutional framework. The finger points to a functioning panchayat in each village. Recently a seminar in Chennai organised by the National Commission on Farmers and *The Hindu* Media Resource Centre for Sustainable Development identified multiple institutional deficiencies, including non-empowerment of elected panchayats, as major constraints in eliminating deprivation of marginal farmers and landless agricultural workers.

Unquestionably, it is the village panchayat alone which can focus on raising productivity of soil and water and on not raising unemployment and underemployment.

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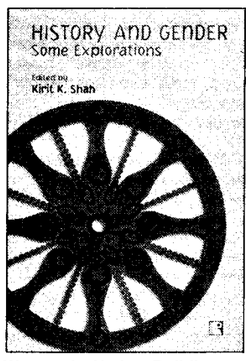
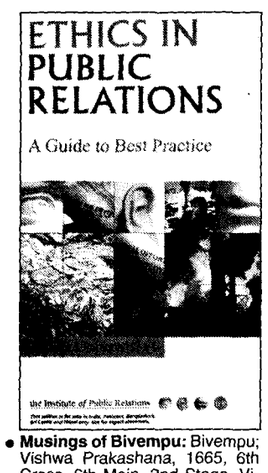
BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **The Supreme Yoga:** Swami Venkatesananda; Motilal Banarsidass, 120, Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 250.**
- **Speaking of Diabetes and Diet:** Deepa Mehta, S. A. Vali; New Dawn Press an imprint of Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., A-59, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **Rs. 95.**
- **Folktales From Northern India:** William Crooke, Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube; Shubhi Publications, 15 AKD Towers, Sec 14, Gurgaon-122001. **Rs. 1675.**
- **The Power of Mantras:** Vijaya Kumar; New Dawn Press an imprint of Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., A-59, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **£ 4.**
- **Environmental Activism** — A Reference Handbook: Jacqueline Vaughan Switzer; Shubhi Publications, 15, AKD Towers, Sec 14, Gurgaon-122001. **Rs. 975.**
- **History and Gender** — Some Explorations: Kirit K. Shah — Editor; Rawat Publications, Satyam Apartments, Sector 3, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur-302004. **Rs. 400.**



- **Women in Nation Building** — Perspectives, Issues and Implications: Susheela Subramanya, Meera Chakravorty; Southern Economist, 106-108, Infantry Road, Bangalore-560001. **Rs. 295.**
- **Asia** — A Continental Overview of Environmental Issues: Kevin Hillstrom, Laurie Collier Hillstrom; Shubhi Publications, 15 AKD Towers, Sec 14, Gurgaon-122001. **Rs. 750.**
- **Surada's Poetry:** A. K. Moorthy; Valluvar Tamil Peedam, 56 A, Dr. Lakshamanasamy Salai, K.K. Nagar, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 30.**
- **Journey to Empowerment** — A Roadmap for 'Special Children': Kavita Shanbhag; English Edition Publishers & Distributors (India) Pvt. Ltd., 5/10, 11, 105, Jogani Industrial Complex, V. N. Purav Marg, Chunabhatti, Mumbai-400022. **Rs. 195.**
- **Just Beyond** — Short Stories Based on Surrealistic Experiences: Anjan Ray; Om Books International, 4379/4B, Parkash House, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 195.**
- **Chatterjee Babu** — His Life & Lies: Dhruva Chak; Om Books International, 4379/4B, Prakash House, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 225.**
- **Rising Elephant** — The Growing Clash with India over White-Collar Jobs...: Ashutosh Sheshabalaya; MacMillan India Ltd., 2/10, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 275.**
- **Prophet of Devotion Life and *Teachings of Sri Guru Angad* Dev:** Jaswant Singh Neki; Satvic Media Pvt. Ltd., SCO 98, City Centre, Amritsar-143001. **Rs. 450.**
- **India Brandished** — The Branding of a Nation: A Gopalakrishnan Iyer, A Prakash Iyer; English Edition Publishers & Distributors (India) Pvt. Ltd., 5/10,11,105, Jogani Industrial Complex, V. N. Purav, Chunabhatti, Mumbai-400022. **Rs. 295.**
- **An Army Abandoned** — A World War II Story: *Rajib Das*; B. R. Publishing Corporation, 425, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar, Phase IV, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 1000.**
- **Ethics in Public Relations** — A Guide to Best Practice: Patricia J. Parsons; Kogan Page India, 2/13, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 325.**



- **Musings of Bivempu:** Bivempu; Vishwa Prakashana, 1665, 6th Cross, 6th Main, 2nd Stage, Vijayanagar, Bangalore-560040. **Rs. 40.**
- **The Philosophy of the Vallabha School of Vedanta:** K. Narain; Indological Research Centre, B 34/115, Sukulpura, Durgakund, Varanasi-221010. **Rs. 495.**
- **Critical Spectrum** — Essays in Literary Culture: Satish C. Aikant; Pencraft International, B-1/41, Ashok Vihar II, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 550.**
- **Propagation of Plants:** V. K. Sharma; Indus Publishing Co., FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 250.**
- **Rethinking Modernity:** Santosh Gupta, Prafulla C. Kar — Editors; Pencraft International, B-1/41, Ashok Vihar II, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 495.**
- **Kailash-Mansarovar** — A Day-to-day Account of the Journey to Eternity: K. L. Sharma; Indus Publishing Co., FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi-110027. **Rs. 165.**
- **In Translation Reflections, Refractions, Transformations:** Paul St-Pierre, Prafulla C Kar; Pencraft International, B-1/41, Ashok Vihar II, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 575.**
- **Computer Education:** S. Rajasekar; Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd., Sultan Bazaar, Hyderabad-500095. **Rs. 95.**
- **Forster's A Passage to India** — An Anthology to Recent Criticism: G. K. Das, Christel R. Devadawson; Pencraft International, B-1/41, Ashok Vihar II, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 450.**
- **Past Forward** — Six Artists in Search of Their Childhood: Gowri Ramnarayan; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 125.**

Tamil

- **Shivalaya Prayassiddhangal:** R. Sridharan — Compiler; Copies can be had from the author, 'Swarnapuri', Plot No. T-7, I Cross, 46th Street, Nanganallur, Chennai-600061. **Rs. 40.**
- **Nellai Vattara Vazhakku Sollakaradhi:** P. Murugayya; Amudha Pathippagam, 435A, Vaidhyar Road Extn., Trisoolam, Chennai-600100. **Rs. 150.**
- **Upanishad:** R. Sridharan — Compiler; Copies can be had from 'Swarnapuri', Plot No. T-7, Ist Cross, 46th Street, Nanganallur, Chennai-600061. **Rs. 70.**
- **Vayaloorakkavidhaigal:** P. Murugayya; Bhanu Pathippagam, 435, Vaidhyar Road Extn., Trissoolam, Chennai-600043. **Rs. 30.**
- **Madurai Naicker Varalaru:** A.K. Parandhamanar; distributed by Pari Nilayam, 90, Prakasam Salai, Chennai-600108. **Rs. 150.**
- **Agni Sirakugal:** Kavignar Vairamuthu; Charkha Audiobooks an imprint of Karadi Tales Co. Pvt. Ltd., 3A, Dev Regency, 11 First Main Road, Gandhinagar, Adyar, Chennai-600020. **Rs. 125.**
- **Vainava Malargal:** M. Varadarajan; Copies can be had from the author, Sri Ananth Publications, 6-40 Padmavatipuram, Tiruchanur Road, Tirupati-517503. **Rs. 40.**
- **IAS Avadhu Eppadi?:** R. Perumal; Karpagam Puthagalayam, 50/18, Rajabhadhar Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 75.**
- **Thamizhagathin Veerakkalaigal:** K. Kannan Aasan; Thamarai Noolagam, 7, NGO Colony, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 150.**
- **Manavar *DMK* Varalaru:** Thoppur Thiruvengadam, N. Anbu Chezhiyan; Thenbulam Pathippagam, Gandhi Nagar, Vellore-632006. **Rs. 60.**
- **Vasikara Viruthee Bodhini:** P.M. Abdulla Saheeb; Thamarai Noolagam, 7, NGO Colony, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 30.**
- **Moolaroga Sikicha Bodhini:** P.M. Abdulla Saheeb; Thamarai Noolagam, 7, NGO Colony, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 50.**
- **Gnana Kanavu Kanda Malai:** R.A. Niranjana Devi; Thamarai Noolagam, 7, NGO Colony, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 20.**
- **Enadhu Kanavil India:** A. Mohammad Ismail; Unique Publications, 30, Northmada Street, Madurai-625001. **Rs. 100.**
- **Enbadhu Naalil Ulagam:** Ka. Panchapakesan; Vanathi Pathippagam, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 40.**
- **Solla Kothikkuthada Nencham:** Savithiri Kannan; Niveththa Pathippagam, 1, 3rd Floor, *Pudhur* 13th Street, *Ashok Nagar*, Chennai-600083. **Rs. 80.**
- **Poyudhil Pootha Malargal:** Prakasam; Alarmelmangai, 1, Pudur 13th Street, Ashok Nagar, Chennai-600083. Rs. 30.
- **Ulagap Pugazhpetra Manimozhigal:** Kavignar Deivachilai; Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 35.**
- **Nattuppura Ilakkiathikku Islamiyarin Pangalippu;** Aru Azhagappan; *Vanathi Pathippagam*, 23, Deenadayalu Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 50.**
- **Serina;** Nakkheeran Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 30.**

Telugu

- ***Balija Raya Tarangini:*** S.S.Giridhara Prasad Reddy; Royal Literary Cultural Development Society, Ananthapur and S. Sreeramulu, D. No LIG 271, AP Housing Board Colony, Ananthapur-515001. **Rs. 75.**
- **Bhoomi Bhasha:** Katti Padmarao; Lokayata Publications, Lumbini Vanam, Ambedkar Colony, Ponnur-522124. **Rs. 50.**
- **Bhavanalu:** T. Patanjali; Copies can be had from B. Vittal Reddy, 17-1-388/2C, Flat No 401, Laxmi Towers, *Saidabad Colony*, Hyderabad-500059. **Rs. 25.**
- **Madhurantakam Rajaram Kathalu — Part 3:** Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 130.**

Kannada

- **Patent Pedambootha:** Madhava Ithal; Rutha Pustaka, 48, 7th Cross, Swimming Pool Extension, Malleswaram, bangalore-560003. **Rs. 100.**
- **Anabi Krishi:** Muniyal Ganesh Shenoy; Pustakanidhi, Gavaly, Hallady-Harkady, Kundapura-576210. **Rs. 15.**
- **Manju Kavidha Sanje Haagu Ithara Kathegalu:** P. Lankesh; Patrike Prakashana, 9 EAT Street, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 85.**
- **Adrashya Taila Mattu Kathegalu:** P. Shivarama Rai; Pustakanidhi, Gavaly, Hallady-Harkady, Kundapura-576210. **Rs. 45.**

Performance of the economy

INDIA DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2004-05: Kirit S. Parikh, R. Radhakrishna — Editors; Pub. by Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 445.**

THIS IS the fourth India Development Report (IDR) published by the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research reviewing the development performance of the previous year. Not surprisingly the central topic in this report is the "India Shining" theme that dominated public discussion in 2003-04, particularly its second half after the then Union Cabinet made the decision to hold the general elections in the first quarter of 2004, slightly ahead of schedule. But the elections held in April and May showed that large sections of the population did not seem to share the optimism of that much-publicised slogan.

IDR 2004-05 goes into a critical appraisal of the performance of the Indian economy of that year. It is affirmed that the rate of growth of the economy in 2003-04 was indeed an unusually high eight per cent or so. But it is pointed out too that it was essentially a recovery rate from 2002-03's very low performance.

'High growth'

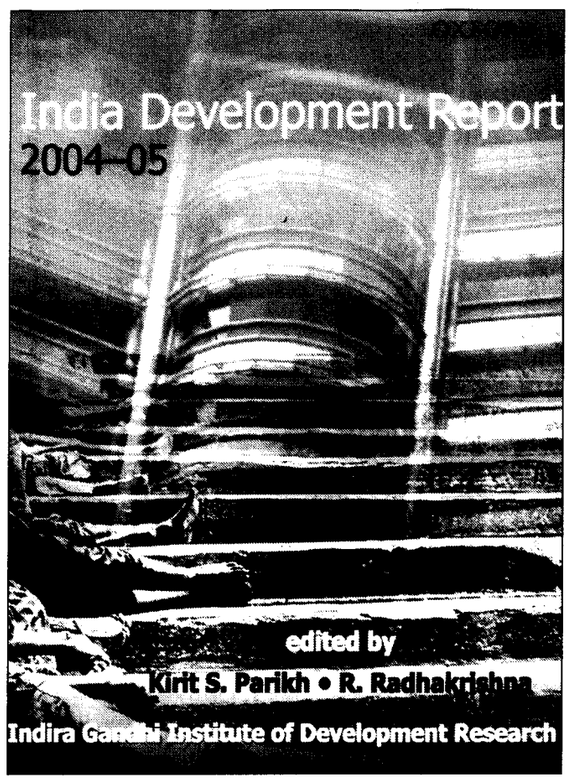
The high rate of eight per cent reflected mainly the agricultural sector's growth of nine per cent after the preceding year's poor performance. For instance, food grains production, after reaching a record of 212 million tonnes in 2001-02 plunged to a low of less than 180 million tonnes almost going back to the performance of the early 1990s. From there it rose to around 210 million tonnes in 2003-04, a spectacular recovery indeed, but still less than what it should have been.

Other aspects of the "high growth" of 2003-04 are examined, especially in chapter two dealing with the macroeconomic scene. But the report's focus is different as seen from the statement, "Economic growth is, after all, for the people. If the people are poor, if they remain unemployed, or their livelihoods are threatened, if they don't have access to clean water and clean fuel, if they do not have adequate health services, and if rural and urban development remains unsatisfactory, then growth loses its lustre."

The next four chapters on poverty, public health, on energy, water and sanitation and on social sector expenditure deal with what may be described as conditions of life of the people, and this review will also concentrate on that theme. It is now fairly well established that poverty has been coming down, both in terms of the percentage of the population below the norm set in the early 1960s and in terms of what is usually described as chronic poverty. But two disturbing aspects still continue.

Poverty

First, poverty is the affliction largely of the socially vulnerable groups, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and some sections of the Other Backward



Castes. Second, and perhaps less well known, is that the percentage of those who are malnourished and suffering from chronic energy deficiency is much higher than that below the poverty line. That is, poverty eradication does not even ensure adequate nutrition.

Turning to health, over the years the country has built up a vast health infrastructure and manpower at primary, secondary and tertiary care in the government, voluntary and private sectors. But even in 2003-04 the country was far from the targets set in 1978 for Health for All by 2000. The current infant mortality rate of 66 per 1000 live births is below the goal of 60 and maternal mortality rate at 479 per 100,000 live births is well above the goal of 200. The health gap between the rich and the poor is large and the rural-urban differences are also significant.

A vast number of people in rural India do not have easy access to clean energy, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Apart from the drudgery of collection and transportation of firewood and other forms of fuel, about 175 million women are exposed to high levels of respirable suspended matter during cooking and some 24 million rural adults have symptoms of respiratory diseases.

Social sector expenditure

Social sector expenditure in recent years was low in terms of standards set by the United Nations and when compared to other developing countries. Neither the Centre nor the States increased expenditure on health to any considerable extent and the expenditure on education as a share of the GDP is below the level considered desirable.

Apart from these distressing findings of general interest, those looking for more specialised treatment will find it in other chapters of the report. Those who are interested in fiscal and monetary policies and the manner in which they influence the performance of the economy will find chapter 12 on puzzles in Indian performance useful. Chapter 11 on banking has a critical appraisal of the New Basel Capital Accord. Chapter 13 on urban transportation will be of use to specialists in the area as well as to the general public.

The chapter on new technologies has an account of the phenomenal growth of the information and communication industry and the knowledge industry in general. Chapter nine is on biotechnology with emphasis on hybrid rice. It compares the Indian experience in this area with the rest of Asia, particularly China.

The chapter on patent policy is closely related to new technologies and sets problems of the Indian economy in a rapidly commercialising global economy. Chapter 10 on trade facilitation takes up issues relating to international trade and the World Trade Organisation regime.

A decade of reforms

A thematic reorganisation of the report along the lines indicated above would have given it greater coherence. However, the chapters are independent pieces and may be read in any order. Those who are interested in the current performance of the Indian economy and conditions of life of the people will find the 20-page overview chapter by the editors extremely valuable. It also has a review of 10 years of reform and guidelines for the future.

The statistical appendices enhance the Report's usefulness considerably. The public service that the scholars of the Indira Gandhi Institute (and a few from outside also) have rendered in making available this report is highly commendable.

C. T. KURIEN

Perspectives on development

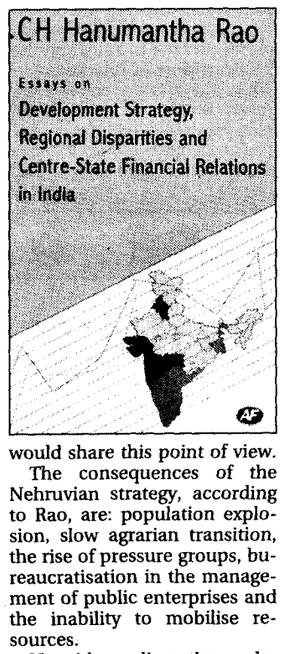
ESSAYS ON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, REGIONAL DISPARITIES AND CENTRE-STATE FINANCIAL RELATIONS IN INDIA: C. H. Hanumantha Rao; Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road (23 Ansari Road), Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 595.**

THIS BOOK under review follows the latest trend among the senior Indian economists to bring out a collection of their past writings.

Hanumantha Rao by offering these essays for wider readership has demonstrated the range of his economic thinking that goes beyond his well-known expertise in agricultural economics. The collected essays belonging to the period 1969-97 is preceded by the author's brief introduction.

Nehruvian strategy

On the development strategy, Rao's position is close to that of the late Sukhamoy Chakravarty's. His defence of the adoption of the Nehruvian strategy leaves an impression that there were no differences of views among economists on the development strategy. It is doubtful if economic historians



would share this point of view.

The consequences of the Nehruvian strategy, according to Rao, are: population explosion, slow agrarian transition, the rise of pressure groups, bureaucratisation in the management of public enterprises and the inability to mobilise resources.

Notwithstanding these developments, the Nehruvian strategy, as Rao seems to suggest, was necessary in the 1950s. He however, does not indicate as to when the switch away from that strategy to market orientation would have done India good.

He endorses the reforms strategy of the 1990s but prefers to have state intervention in the form of investment in essential infrastructure along with market orientation in order to help generate employment and human development and to provide equitable gains from growth.

He places particular emphasis on improving the socio-economic position of the poor as an integral part of the ongoing reforms. By the mid-1990s, he was somewhat disheartened by the progress of reforms. He felt that reforms should reduce inflation, step up investment and growth by reducing subsidies for the well-off sections, and decentralising management of public enterprises and rural development. In his view, privatisation of irrigation, power and transport could be undertaken if there is resistance to reduction of subsidies in these three areas.

Regional disparities

The section on regional disparities is a powerful plea for sympathetic treatment of the backward regions — Bihar, the Eastern states and Uttaranchal, to cite some examples. Rao's views on Centre-state financial relations generally reflect the majority view.

He felt that indirect tax revenues from the rural sector could go up if the sector is modernised and is enabled to consume urban goods and services at lower prices. He considered that direct taxation on agriculture should be equitous, not necessarily progressive.

He explains that 50 per cent of a farmer's agricultural output could be considered as costs and the remainder as income for tax assessment with exemptions for farmers having less than the standard 10 acres of land.

He favoured an improvement of the Gadgil formula and thought that an additional 10 per cent of central assistance to states with per capita incomes below the national average would be just.

For those who yearn to know the positions of different economists on different economic issues of the period in which the essays were written, the book is of immense historical value.

A. VASUDEVAN

Karanas in dance

KARANA-KUSUMAKARA: Bhatt Bhalachandra; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 500.**

THE WORD "Karana" in Sanskrit means "any act or action." Sage Bharata in his *Natya Sastra* explains Karana as a graceful coordinated movement of the hands and feet in dance. Abhinava Gupta, a commentator on the *Natya Sastra*, further elucidates the words "hand" and "foot" as connoting the torso and the lower part of the body.

Contrary to popular belief, Karana is a graceful movement and not just a static pose. Karanas can also be representational in portraying emotions such as love, valour, anger and humour effectively. The author says that there is no statement in the *Natya Sastra* limiting Karanas to a particular number as after describing 108 Karanas, Bharata says that various combinations of these may be produced.

In this book the author has dealt with 128 Karanas after considerable research giving full page colour photographs of himself performing the Karanas. Being a Sanskrit scholar he has given suitable verses describing each Karana on the model of the *Natya Sastra* and has furnished them below each photograph with an English translation.

He has traced the origin of the Karana and how it figures in the Indian classical dances like Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Kathak. Certain dancing Karanas shown in sculptures and paintings have no support from treatises. Karanas depicting love sports cannot be shown on the stage.

Unfortunately, most of the Karanas conceived by him are too acrobatic in nature and look like Asanas performed by practitioners of Hatha Yoga. Some of the Karanas are in the sitting posture and cannot be adopted for practical dancing.

After describing the new set of Karanas, the author has depicted the concept of Rasa (sentiment) followed by a glossary of important technical terms in dance. This section will be highly useful to students of dance.

He concludes the work with a verse "The human mind is not capable of composing a perfect work of art. So do not try in vain, otherwise you will lose art from that work." Several printing mistakes mar this otherwise well-produced publication.

T. S. PARTHASARATHY

• In search of the Self • Historical novel • Hawking's lectures • Ode to native glory

TAMIL

NAAN YAAR?: T. S. Satyanarayanan; Kumaran Pathippagam, 7, Muthukrishnan Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 40.**

IN THIS book the author has elaborated that the soul is immortal. He has conjured up delicious feast out of a few of the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in answer to the famous question, "Who Am I?"

While he has drawn profusely from the Vedas and the Upanishads, Swami Vivekananda, Tirumoolar, Tiruvalluvar, Tirunavukkarasar, Bharati and Socrates, the influence of Advaita and "Vethathirism" is pervasive in the pages.

His analysis of the subject in the 12-chapter book lifts it to a spiritual plane. After dealing extensively with ego, which he defines as, "edging God out," he derives a formula through a descriptive chart. It becomes clear how enlightenment happens when the false identification of the Self with the non-Self (the body and the mind) ends.

The author's exposition of the question, "Who Am I?" is lucid. He winds up with a 15-point tabular statement showing the advantages and disadvantages of knowing and not knowing the significance of the question.

P. SUNDARESAN

UDAIYAAR — Part III: Balakumaran; Thirumagal Nilaiyam, 16 (Old No. 55), Venkatnarayana Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 225.**

THIS NOVEL, throws a flood of light not only on the political, social and religious conditions of South India during the reign of the imperial Cholas, but also on the architectural excellence, cultural values and aesthetic enjoyment of the medieval Tamils. Balakumaran has made the narrative realistic, lively and readable. The hero of this historical novel is Rajaraja Chola I, the great empire builder and also the grand temple builder. Among his many queens, Panchavan Mahadevi, the daughter of the Pazhuvur chieftain, a loyalist to the royal family of the Cholas, has been accorded a unique position and her manifold active roles in the transactions of the Chola administration have made her the heroine of the narrative.

It is curious to note that the inspiring events of Arunmozhi Devan's (who later became Rajaraja I) youthful days, wandering from place to place in disguise, gathering valid information to wreck vengeance against the culprits Ravidasan and Paramesvaran, the Chera official enjoying prestigious position at the court of Uttamachola, responsible for the assassination of Aditya Karikala, his elder brother and heir-apparent to the throne, are touchingly portrayed in the later portion of the novel.

His military expedition to the Chera kingdom and destruction of the ships at Kanthalursaalai and return with the booty after the subjugation of the Chera king are interestingly related. In the earlier sections the main activities of Rajaraja associated with the construction of the marvellous Brahadeeswara temple in Thanjavur, the citadel of the Chola empire and solemnised as Rajarajesvaram by the hymns of Karuvur Devar, his spiritual guide are splendidly depicted.

In the course of the novel, the novelist narrates Rajaraja's successful efforts with the help of Nambiandar Nambi in the retrieval of the Tirumurai hymns from the closed chambers in Chidambaram Nataraja shrine, which culminated in the revival of Saivism and Bhakti traditions. It would have been better if enough attention had been paid to avoid the printing mistakes seen in almost all pages of the novel, leave alone some factual errors such as the reasons adduced to the construction of the big temple in Thanjavur.

S. N. KANDASWAMY

TELUGU

KAALA BILAALU PILLA VISWAALU — Black Holes and Baby Universes: Stephen Hawking, Translated by M.Vijayakumar and A. Gandhi; **Rs. 60.**

KAALAM KATHA — A Brief History of Time: Stephen Hawking; A. Gandhi — Tr. in Telugu; **Rs. 90.** The above two books pub. by Peacock Classics, G14, Pragathi Enclave, Bhagyanagar Colony, Kukkatpally, Hyderabad-500072.

THE STORY of Stephen Hawking, distinguished author of the two books under review, is fascinating. A mathematics professor at Cambridge (a chair once occupied by Newton), he blazed new trails in scientific research. When he was struck by ALS (Motor Neuron disease) in 1963, doctors gave up hope. He not only survived the trauma but married in 1965 and became father of three children. Later, despite losing his voice during a tracheotomy operation in 1985, he gave lectures and wrote books with the aid of a personal computer and speech synthesiser improvised in a wheel chair.

The first book comprises 13 essays based on lectures delivered at prestigious institutions during 1976-92. There is also a Desert Island Discs interview of BBC, a unique programme reserved for celebrities. Hawking explains that a fusion of General Relativity (Einstein) and Quantum Mechanics (Planck) concludes that time started with the big bang and might end with the big crunch. Black holes, from which nobody travelling at a speed less than that of light can escape, emit radiation. It is difficult to count the proliferating baby universes, since some of them are mini atoms.

A Brief History of Time, which entered the Guinness Book of Records with sales crossing the 10 million mark, correlates principles of geography, astronomy and space science for arriving at new conclusions. There are 11 chapters besides profiles of Albert Einstein, Galileo Galilei and Issac Newton in this book.

Despite minor problems of syntax (unavoidable in translation of a scientific work) and some printer's devils, the translators have done a commendable job in communicating complicated ideas in a simple style.

P. V. L. N. RAO

MALAYALAM

KARTHIKODAYAM: C. V. Kunjuraman; Kaumudi Public Relations, 5/2246-4, New Kowdiar Garden, Golf Links, Thiruvananthapuram-695003. **Rs. 25.**

IN THE introduction to the first edition of this book, which appeared in 1917, Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, the renowned poet, hailed it as a work of pristine beauty and praised the author, C. V. Kunjuraman, as a poet of distinction. Thanks to a great-grandson, whose life mission is to bring to light C. V.'s forgotten writings, the small but significant work has become available to the public again. Young readers of today are sure to find the work appealing. Much of modern Malayalam poetry being obscure, the utter simplicity and directness of C. V.'s lines are bound to make a deep impression on them.

C. V. wrote the work to mark the birth of Princess Karthika Thirunal of the Travancore royal family, who is still with us. But it is not a mere ode to royalty. It is a celebration of native glory. It consists of 172 stanzas, divided into three cantos. The royal birth is dealt with in 37 stanzas in the last section. The first and second sections, with 61 and 74 stanzas respectively, demand greater attention. As Sukumar Azhikode points out in the introduction to this edition, it is as though a small house has been equipped with a huge entrance.

The first section, which sets forth Kerala's ancient lore, is the most appealing. In it the poet leads the reader quickly from the mythical past, when, as legend has it, Parasurama retrieved Kerala from the sea, to the modern times. As he does so, he obliquely denounces the social stratifications of his time, "there was not a caste that did not rule, and not a class that did not bear arms." The second section narrates the history of the erstwhile Travancore state.

B. R. P. BHASKAR

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

LATEST FROM MANOHAR

WHO IS A BRAHMIN: The Politics of Identity in India by Gilles Chuyens, 2004, 292p., Rs. 725

RELIGION AND LAW IN INDEPENDENT INDIA ed. by Robert D. Baird, 2005, 518p., Rs. 750

EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY IN INDIA ed. by Anne Vaugier-Chatterjee, 2004, 278p. Rs. 695

4753/23 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002
email: sales@manoharbooks.com www.manoharbooks.com

Members Recommend 'Black Box' Warning

Panel okays return of Merck's Vioxx drug

Lisa Richwine &
Susan Heavey

GAITHERSBURG 19 FEBRUARY

POTION PLAY

MERCK & Co's withdrawn arthritis drug Vioxx is safe enough to rejoin Pfizer's rival pain relievers Celebrex and Bextra in the US market, an advisory panel said after concluding that all three medicines posed some level of heart risk. The 17-15 vote on Vioxx's safety to go to market electrified Merck shares, which closed up 13% at $32.61 on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). Pfizer gained 6.9% to close at $26.80.

It was a stunning turnaround for Vioxx, which was withdrawn in September by Merck after a study showed the drug doubled heart attack and stroke risk compared with a placebo in patients who took it for at least 18 months.

Celebrex and Bextra, which had been under the same cloud of elevated risks of heart problems, also could stay on the market, the panel said. Most members felt all three drugs should have 'black box' warnings — the strongest warnings used for prescription drugs — explaining their heart risks.

Many urged restrictions if Vioxx is sold again, such as limiting sales to the lowest dose and recommending it be a second choice after patients try another pain reliever. John Cush, a rheumatologist at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, said the risk of heart problems with Vioxx was "still very small" and he wanted "as many options for my patients as possible". One opponent to Vioxx sales, panel chairman Alastair Wood, said "there's a clear signal this drug appears substantially worse than the others" in its potential to damage the heart.

Celebrex seems to be the safest of the three based on what scientists know now, he said.

The FDA usually follows advice from its panels. Officials said the agency will make final decisions on Celebrex and other pain relievers in the next few weeks. "Merck has appreciated the opportunity to present data at this advisory committee meeting," the company said in a statement.—Reuters

The Economic Times 20 FEB 2005

Civil society and the state

By Harish Khare

LW 20-10 16 2

The discourse over the attack on S.A.R. Geelani has revealed a number of disturbing trends.

IN THE last few days, three members of the Muslim community — Iqbal Mirchi, Sania Mirza and S.A.R. Geelani — have made different kinds of demands on our collective attention and affection. How we deal with such demands tells us about the emotional prejudices and preferences we invest in our political and constitutional order.

First, Mr. Mirchi. He is wanted by the Indian police authorities as one of the prime accused in the March 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, widely perceived in the popular imagination as "their" response to the desecration of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992. Last week, Mr. Mirchi was ranked by a United Nations agency as one of the world's top 50 drug barons. He has been avoiding extradition to India. He was quoted as having told a group of British journalists that "India was pursuing him for two crimes he could not help, namely, being Muslim and a successful Muslim businessman." Mr. Mirchi chooses to wear his Muslim identity on his sleeve and proclaims loudly that he will not get "justice" from the Indian legal system.

Sania Mirza. A young Muslim girl, who belongs to a traditional family, has suddenly captured the national attention, especially after a credible performance in the Australian Tennis Open. This attention got converted into a national euphoria when she won the WTA tournament in Hyderabad last week. The media mills, which routinely churn out information and images and crank up emotions behind those images, effortlessly elevated her to a national icon. Neither did she flaunt her Muslim identity nor did anyone feel it was necessary to highlight her Muslimness; rather it can be argued that the young woman has perhaps been heaped with far too much praise and with the expectations that come with such admiration. Still, the point that needs to be made is that she was accorded the public adoration and admiration on account of her achievement in an international competitive arena. Her Muslim identity was no hindrance to adoration and applause.

Syed Abdul Rahman Geelani has, once again, made the most difficult and dramatic claims on our attention. He was accused of being a part of the conspiracy to attack Parliament House on December 13, 2001. He was sentenced to death by the Sessions Court but was later acquitted by the Delhi High Court. Last week every liberal soul was shaken to its core when someone shot at and grievously injured him outside his lawyer's house.

December 13 was no ordinary event. Symbolically, it was an attack on the very temple of democracy; from its dramatic content it was meant to demonstrate to the entire world the audacity of those who call themselves jehadis; it was also designed to graphically expose the vulnerability of the Indian state and its capacity to perform its obligation to protect its citizens.

STATECRAFT

It took place at a time when the Vajpayee-Advani regime was trying to divide Indians into "us" *versus* "them" categories. The regime had proceeded on an assumption that after 9/11, it had the international (at least, the American) understanding, if not approval, to institute a politics of divisiveness at home. It nervously talked itself into raising our quarrel with Pakistan to a new high and ended up mobilising the Army for a six-month-long face-off on the border.

Given the political and emotional context, it was only natural that there was a scramble to invest the December 13 event with certain sinister meaning. Voices of scepticism and dissent were drowned in the establishment-inspired guilt apportioning. So traumatic and so dramatic were the December 13 images, played over and over again a million times, that we lost our own sense of equanimity. We collectively needed identifiable villains and the Delhi Police (with considerable help from other "agencies") produced a cast of unusual suspects. Mr. Geelani was one of them.

Mr. Geelani and others were not only charged as guilty of the actual crime but were judged to have been doing so as part of a larger conspiracy, designed and financed by those bad guys from across the border. The mass media proved a willing and enthusiastic partner in this establishment-cranked up finger-pointing.

But a small section of the civil liberty community bravely refused to give in to the demands made in the name of national hysteria. A legal battle was waged in defence of Mr. Geelani. Respected and eminent members of civil society gladly associated themselves with the Geelani defence. It became an opportunity to test the depth of our collective commitment to the rigours of the rule of law.

His acquittal was one of the finest moments in the history of the Indian legal system, even though the good professor chose to underline his "Kashmiri" and "Muslim" identity. It did much to restore, at home and abroad, the image of the legal system's fairness and proved that it was not a handmaiden of the political leadership and its prejudices. It also provided a moment of considerable satisfaction to the liberal community, which had taken up cudgels on his behalf.

After Mr. Geelani's acquittal, his supporters accused large chunks of the mainstream media of demonising an innocent professor, and playing up planted stories in order to discredit him; those in the academic community who did not join in the defence were accused of being soft on communalism, etc. Ironically, now we are invited by Professor Geelani's supporters to demonise the police force, at least a section of the Delhi Special Cell.

Though there is yet no convincing answer as to who gains what from an attack on the professor, we do need to have some convincing answer about the identity (and patrons) of the assailant because the discourse over the shooting incident has unwittingly revealed a number of disturbing trends.

First and foremost, the presumption of police complicity. It reflects a wider societal distrust of the police force. If this distrust is so pervasive in the very heart of the national capital, it must be totally paralysing in distant districts. If the popular assumption is that the police force is anti-people enough to want to silence a man just for the sake of settling some real or imaginary score, then the police force cannot rely on the kind of cooperation from citizens that is a hallmark of a modern society. There can be no good governance if citizens feel so alienated from one arm of the government.

Secondly, on a more sophisticated level of argumentation, it is suggested that the attack on the good professor could be the handiwork of "rogue" elements within the Delhi police force, aided and abetted by other "lawless" and "unaccountable" official "agencies." There are bad eggs in every basket and black sheep in every force. The "rogue" element suggestion does not take into account the change in the regime at the Centre, nor does it take into account the fact that the new dispensation cannot be suspected of tolerating any such unworthy elements. In fact, this charge is of a piece with a special project that seems out to discredit and virtually dismantle all those instruments of state power that are vital to our collective security and harmony. Special police forces and intelligence agencies are unavoidable necessities in any state system, and the deployment of such instruments is the price that even democracies have to pay. Just because there is a "peace process" at work between India and Pakistan, it would be totally irresponsible to believe that men, ideas, ideologies and organisations that had masterminded December 13 have packed up their terror bags.

Thirdly, there is a disturbing assumption in the current discourse: because Professor Geelani is a Muslim he would be done in by the "system." This is grossly unfair, mostly to those who stood by the professor in his hour of trial. This kind of accusation strengthens the likes of Iqbal Mirchis and distracts from the new role models such as Sania Mirza.

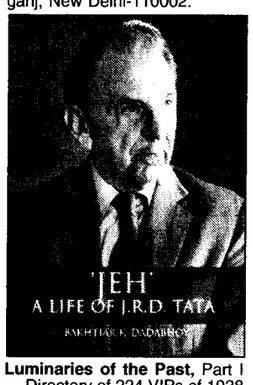
Lastly, there is the obligation of responsible criticism: How to make the exercise of state power reasonable, restrained and responsible without destroying its efficacy and legitimacy. Civil society has every right to raise its voice in defence of a citizen but this voice will not be heard if it is raised in a wrong tone and pitch.

THE HINDU 16 FEB 2005

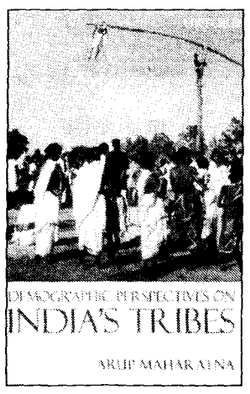
BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Recognition and Regulation of Anti-Dumping Measures Under GATT/WTO:** Sheela Rai; Eastern Book Co., 1267, Kashmere Gate, Old Hindu College Building, Delhi-110006. **Rs. 695.**
- **The Matchless Weapon Satyagraha:** James K. Mathews; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, K. M. Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 200.**
- **Occidentalism** — The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies: Ian Buruma, Avishai Margalit; Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 200.**
- **Child Marriage in India** — Socio-legal and Human Rights Dimensions: Jaya Sagade; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 545.**
- **'Jeh'** — A Life of J.R.D. Tata: Bakhtiar K. Dadabhoy; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.



- **Luminaries of the Past,** Part I — Directory of 224 VIPs of 1938 who were students of Madras Christian: V. Theetharappan — Compiler; Copies can be had from the author, Kasi Arcade, Ist Block, Ist Floor Flat H-SVM Illam, 32, VOC Steeet, Kaikankupam, Valasarvakkam, Alwarthirunagar, Chennai-600087. **Rs. 40.**
- **The Cambridge Guide to English Usage:** Pam Peters; Cambridge University Press, distributed by Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 4764/2A, 23, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 475.**
- **Making India Hindu** — Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India: David Ludden — Editor; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 550.**
- **The Wisdom of Vasishta** — A Study of Laghu Yoga Vasishta from a Seeker's Point of View: Raghunandan; Motilal Banarsides Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 120, Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 795.**
- **Agricultural Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Abbreviations:** Amita Bishnoi, Milind Singh; Kalyani Publishers, B-I/1292, Rajinder Nagar, Ludhiana-141008. **Rs. 140.**
- **The Eucharist, The Holy Spirit, And the Church:** Joseph Erambil, VC; Intercultural Publications (P) Ltd., A-1/270, Sec. 4, Rohini, New Delhi-110085. **Rs. 600.**
- **Making Human Beings Human Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development:** Urie Bronfenbrenner — Editor; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017.
- **Aspects of Indian Police:** Ashok Kumar Singh; Academic Excellence, 42, Ekta Apartments, Geeta Colony, Delhi-110031. **Rs. 175.**
- **The Handbook of Community Practice:** Marie Weil; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 125.**
- **Demographic Perspectives on India's Tribes:** Arup Maharatna; Oxford YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 595.**



- **Militant Islam in Southeast Asia:** Zachary Abuza; Viva Books Pvt. Ltd., 4262/3, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 495.**
- **Elites and Power Structure in Rural India:** Ramesh Kumar; Mohit Publictions, 4675/21, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 280.**
- **Life And Beyond Life:** Bhupati Das; Katha Publications, Katha, 8 GF Comfort Market, Jasawanta Road, Panbazar, Guwahati-781001. **Rs. 200.**
- **Kathanjali** — A Collection of Thirteen Short Stories in Sanskrit and English: Shanta Venkataraman; Flat 'D' Samudram Apartments, 24, 4th Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 50.**
- **Krishnadevaraya** — The Great Poet-Emperor of Vijayanagara: G.S.P. Rao; Director, Publications Division, Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Public Gardens, Hyderabad-500004. **Rs. 120.**
- **Let's Learn Esperanto** — The International Language: P. V. Ranganayakula; Copies can be had from the author, 46, JO Qrts., KT Road, Tirupati-517501. **Rs. 100.**
- **Space Time Consciousness The Fifth Dimension:** Bhaskar Vyas, Raini Vyas; Bharatiya Vidya Nagar, Bungalow Road, Delhi-110007. **Rs. 400.**
- **The State of Islam:** Abdul Moghni; Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, D-307, Abul Fazi Enclave, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025. **Rs. 60.**
- **Sufism and Shariah** — A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism: Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari; MMI Publishers, D-307, Abul Fazl Enclave, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025. **Rs. 190.**
- **The Qur'an and Science** — Proceedings of a Seminar: Abdul Ali, Sayyid Ahsan; The Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002.
- **All India Directory of Agricultural Institutes & Courses:** Student Aid Publications, 43A, Krishna Enclave, Ashok Vihar, Phase III, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 75.**
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- **Bank PO Exam Practice Work Book** — Solved Model Practice Papers Based on Latest Pattern: Sanjeev Joon; Student Aid Publications, 43A, Krishna Enclave, Pocket A, Ashok Vihar, Phase III, Delhi-110052. **Rs. 220.**
- **Broadcast Journalism in the 21st Century:** K. M. Shrivastava; New Dawn Press an Imprint of Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., A-59, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi-110020. **£ 20.**

Tamil

- **Tamil Cinema Ezhuchiyum Veezhchiyum:** J. Bismi; Saaru Prabha Publications, distributed by Ramprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 30.**
- **Sivappu Deepangal — by Madhavikutti:** Sura — Tr. in Tamil; Ramaprasanth Publications, 106/4, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 30.**
- **Nan Yean:** Ra. Ki. Rangarajan; Saaru Prabha Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 45.**
- **Appaavin Kaadhali:** Paarappurathu; Sethu Prabha Publications, 106/4, Jani Jhankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 25.**
- **Harithuvaril Maniyosai:** M. Mukundan; Saaru Prabha Publications, 106/4, Jani Jhankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 35.**
- **Jayendrar** — Vazhvum Vazhakkum: Nakkeeran Publications, 105, Jani Jhankhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 50.**
- **Neelakkadalil Oru Kolaththeevu:** S. Ganesan; Thamarai Selvi Pathippagam, 14/3, Peters Colony, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Udhirntha Moottukal:** N. Sundaravadivel; Vanmugil Pathippagam, 97/88, Bajanai Koil Main Road, Choolaimedu, Chennai-600094. **Rs. 100.**
- **Maveeran Napoleon Vazhvil 100 Suvaiyana Nigazhchigal:** Banukumar; Anbagam, P 58/7th Cross Street, Anna Nagar, Chengalpattu-603001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Thoorigai Pesugirathu:** Nellai Manibharathi; Pulamai Pathippagam, 10, Parthasarathy Swami Lane, Triplicane, Chennai-600005. **Rs. 40.**
- **Siththar Siththantamum Sufisamum:** Se. Ganesalingan; Kumaran Book House, 3(12) Meigai Vinayagar Street, Via Kumaran Colony, 7th Street, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 50.**

Telugu

- **Mullapudi Venkata Ramana Sahithee Sarvaswam 6** — Cineramaneeyam 1: M.B.S. Prasad; **Rs. 150.**
- **Marxism Paataalu Vols 1-3:** R. Venkateswara Rao; **Rs. 28.**
- **Cineramaneeyam-2: M.B.S. Prasad; Rs. 150.** The above three books pub. by Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001.
- **Mana Kalala Disaga Repati Bharat:** Avancha Satyanarayana — Tr. in Telugu; Victory Publishers, 29-28-40, Dasarivari Veedhi, Suryarao Pet, Vijayawada-2. **Rs. 150.**
- **Pracheena Bharatha Nyayasastramu Manusmrutiloni Saswatha Viluvalu:** Krishnamurthy — Tr. in Telugu; H. No 8-3-1056, Flat No 67, Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad-500073. **Rs. 100.**

Kannada

- **Antharala** — A Collection of Thought Provoking Articles: Panditaradhya Shivacharya Swamiji; Shivakumara Kala Sangha, Sanchalli-577515, Chitradurga District. **Rs. 60.**
- **Computer Kaliyona** — A Manual to Learn Computer in Kannada: M.C. Praveen Kumar; Pustakanidhi, near Gavaly School, PO Hallady-Harkady, Kundapura, Udupi. **Rs. 75.**
- **Kandaddu Kandahage** — A Collection of Critical Essays: P. Lankesh; Patrike Prakashana, 9, EAT Street, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 125.**

Malayalam

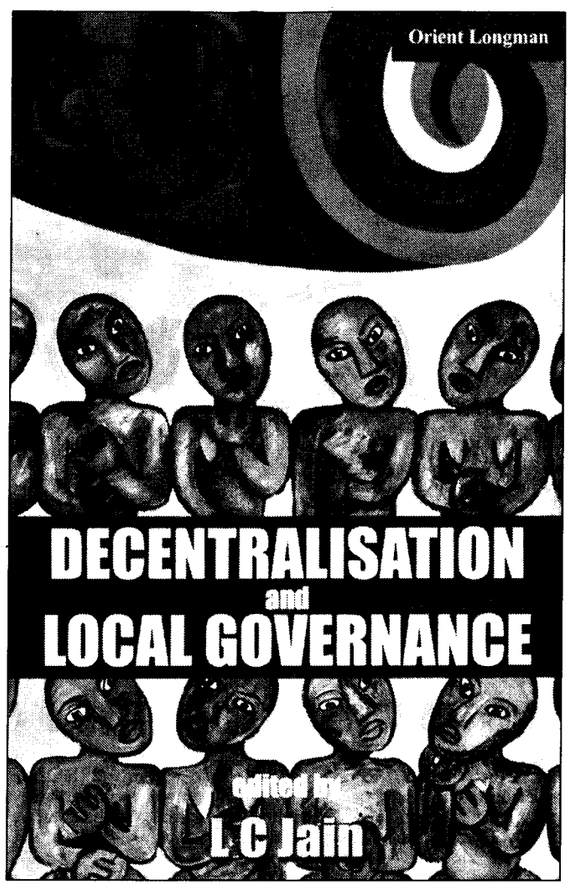
- **Bhaktikavyam:** Attoor Ravi Varma; *Sahitya Akademi*, 35, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 160.**
- **Anmaykku:** M.T.Vasudevan Nair, Current Books, Round West, Thrissur-686001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Sasyangalum Manushyanum:** Koshy Abraham: Copies can be had from the author, Keerikkattu House, near SCS Junction, Tiruvalla, Kerala. **Rs. 50.**

Hindi

- **Company Bahadur:** Ajay Goyal; Prakashan Sansthan, Dayanand Marg, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 100.**
- **Tenali Ram:** S. Nagarajan; Chenna Books, C-2, Abirami Garden, 5 Porur Street, East Tambaram, Chennai-600059.

Grassroots governance

DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE — Essays for George Mathew: L.C. Jain — Editor; Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 1/24 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 690.**



A STIRRING introduction by the editor in his own inimitable style truly whets the appetite of the reader as he opens the volume. There is an exciting array of contributors too, including some of those who have played a key role in shaping the evolution of the Panchayati Raj in India as also fascinating insights from the experience of local government in South Africa and South Asia. They have all come together to pay tribute to George Mathew, the genial, tireless advocate of the Panchayati Raj.

Review of Panchayati Raj

Happily, the best pieces are by the politicians, the practitioners. Mani Shankar Aiyar (described funnily in the volume merely as Union Minister for Petroleum) makes a scathing review of the state of Panchayati Raj in India today. His piece reads as a virtual outline of the agenda he has (and certainly should if he has not) set out for the Panchayati Raj Ministry. Aiyar points to a complete lack of clarity about the specific roles of the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj (except in States like Kerala and Karnataka). He insists that the Central Government must channel all the Eleventh Schedule funds directly to the Panchayats at the appropriate level. He urges disbanding of the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) and their merger with the district Panchayats. He regards Article 243G relating to the powers, authority and responsibilities of the Panchayats as the kernel of the Panchayati Raj.

He criticises the Union Government for doing little to monitor the progress towards implementation of this Article in letter and in spirit. The two key functions as defined under Article 243G are preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and their implementation by the Panchayats. As Aiyar says, in most states Panchayats do little planning and, "implementation has been reduced to a nexus between the contractor, the chairperson of the Panchayat and the bureaucrats and technocrats of the line department."

This has resulted in functional impotence and corruption at all levels. He ambitiously hopes that the Tenth Five-Year Plan will be based on plans prepared by all the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system. He believes that with greater civil society involvement in this exercise such a dream could indeed become a reality.

Women's participation

Despite being one of the principal architects of the People's Planning Campaign (PPC) in Kerala, T.M. Thomas Isaac displays remarkable intellectual objectivity in making a critical presentation of the role of women elected representatives in the PPC. Perhaps the most enriching part of his contribution are the voices of the women themselves that ring out loud and clear in painting a vivid picture of their sense of excitement, hope, struggle and despair during the PPC.

The very same political parties that literally beseeched these women to fight elections were full of patriarchal institutions and structures and a male chauvinist style of functioning. The initial enthusiasm of these women turned to declining participation over the years. This was also a consequence of conflicts with demands of domesticity and lack of time following absence of requisite family support. Isaac documents the struggle of these women and their many positive learnings and achievements that emerged in the process.

Ash Narain Roy's beautifully written, moving tribute to George Mathew concludes the volume. The biggest weakness of the book is the almost complete absence of a review of the operation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.

For effective implementation

How the implementation of this legislation can be made truly effective is of utmost importance to India's Adivasi areas. I write this review even as the Panchayat elections in the predominantly Adivasi States of Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh come to a close.

Reports from those who have worked tirelessly over the years to strengthen the Panchayati Raj here are less than encouraging. Apathy and disinterest are reported to have led 45,000 panches and sarpanches being elected unopposed in Chattisgarh. The number is even higher in Madhya Pradesh. More than 50 per cent panches have been elected unopposed here. Five per cent posts are going to remain unfilled. This is the same Madhya Pradesh, hailed as a relative success by most observers, including those in this volume. Clearly, research is missing something crucial.

As L.C. Jain reminds us in his introduction, lakhs of villages in India are still very far from even the minimum requirements of food security. It is not enough to pass a constitutional amendment and sit back and merely hope for the social melting pot to churn in the desired direction. Immense creativity is required in action to prevent the Panchayati Raj being taken over by the very same forces that it was seeking to displace in the first instance.

Much more of what Mani Shankar Aiyar advocates, is obviously needed for the new order to become truly effective. Let the Institute of Social Sciences headed by George Mathew commission more genuine grassroots studies of the kind done by Thomas Isaac to give detailed substance to the Minister's efforts in this direction.

MIHIR SHAH

Attitude to poverty

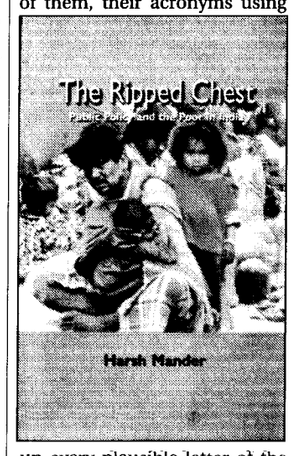
THE RIPPED CHEST — Public Policy and the Poor in India: Harsh Mander; Books for Change, 139, Richmond Road, Bangalore-560025. **Rs. 350.**

WHAT IS the difference between a tsunami demolishing poor Indians' huts and the Bombay Municipal Corporation demolishing poor Indians' huts? Why does the first result in middle class India racing to loosen purse-strings and people volunteering to help; but the other gets approval and support from the same middle-class India? The slums are "illegal", of course; they must be demolished.

But so were the fishermen's colonies on the Chennai shore. Yet, when the tsunami struck, we did not sit back saying "right, they had to be demolished." No, we ran over to help. What explains this schizophrenia?

Antipoverty measures

In some ways Harsh Mander alludes to this too, through this book. Because he writes about case after case, through our post-Independence history, of government programmes to tackle what is arguably India's greatest shame — widespread poverty. There has been no lack of them, their acronyms using



up every plausible letter of the alphabet such as UBSP, EIUS, SJGSY, SEP, IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, MWS, RPWP, NRY, JRY, JGSY which is the new avatar of JRY and in fact all of these are collectively called APPs (antipoverty programmes).

They have all had laudable objectives, been launched with fanfare and high hopes. For example, the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme aimed to "raise the income levels of [poor] women," and thus improve their "access to basic services of health, education, childcare, nutrition, water and sanitation." Similarly for the others. Fine aims. But measured by the level of poverty around us, DWCRA and every other scheme have clearly failed.

To know the truth of that, you need only walk out onto any street in any city in this country; you know that within minutes — seconds — you will see some of the one-third or more of our nation that suffers the miseries of being poor.

And as you read this book, digest its litany of failed programmes, and try to understand why they failed, the feeling grows on you that the reason for failure is, above all, attitude; a certain middleclass contempt for the poor. And as long as that persists, whatever we try — whether state employment programmes or a totally free market — will fail.

Attitude

Because in a real sense, too many of us do not much care about the poor and their daily struggles.

That attitude is the root of the schizophrenia I mentioned. It raises its head all through Mander's book. Thus the scheme to "assure" wage-employment to poor rural families "assures" instead of "guarantees" so that the scheme will not be legally binding. Or the belief among policymakers that "economic development need not take into account the interests of the poor."

Or that "the poorest are deliberately kept out" of self-employment programmes as they are seen to "lack motivation." Or the "bitter irony" that "the very people who build homes [i.e. construction workers] should be rendered homeless."

The profound injustice of India's poverty leaves you feeling bleaker and bleaker as the pages of this comprehensive book go by. Yet, there are tools now available to improve governance and thus, both Mander and his reader might hope, to improve the lives of India's poor.

Right to information

The Right to Information Act is one such. "The only feasible way" of ensuring good governance, writes Mander, "is for people to exercise direct control over a significant part of the levers of government" and right to information (RTI) offers at least the potential for just that. But that hope runs up against attitude too. As I write this, the drive on slums in Mumbai has accounted for nearly 50,000 homes belonging to fellow Indians.

It has left some 2,00,000 of fellow Indians homeless and devastated. Those numbers are comparable to that of tsunamihit Tamil Nadu (though thousands actually died in Tamil Nadu).

What are not comparable are our reactions to these two disasters. That leaves me baffled and I get the feeling it does the same to Harsh Mander.

DILIP D'SOUZA

People's history

KHASI JAINTIA FOLKLORE — Context, Discourse and History: Soumen Sen; Pub. by National Folklore Support Centre, 7 V Cross Street, Rajalakshmi Nagar, Velachery, Chennai-600042. **Rs. 200.**

IF ONE visits any big bookstore in either India or any western country, one can observe that normally folklore publications are neither displayed nor are there many enthusiast seen seeking such publications. It is possibly because folklore studies are generally considered as the past preoccupation of the early travellers and colonisers who discovered new cultures and merely documented "strange" beliefs and lore.

Although India has one of the richest repositories of such lore, folklore studies in this country had long been pushed away to the periphery of mainstream academic concern. In this regard the National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), which has brought out this book, needs to be congratulated for helping to resurrect interest in such studies in a number of ways. This includes bringing out a periodical besides supporting, documenting and publishing folklore studies.

Soumen Sen has spent more than two decades working on the various socio-political facets of the Khasi-Jaintia society and has published enormous amount of information about this picturesque tribe of Meghalaya. In this book all the previous publications of Sen have been systematically summarised. The latest of his works included is a lecture titled, "Facing the twenty first century: The Indian chapter of Folkloristics."

Sen is an erudite scholar and a man of eminence in his field. His constant effort of going beyond the content and morphology of folklores is amply demonstrated in such chapter titles as: "Proverbs: a hegemonic discourse; Narratives as designer texts or mythogenesis; Theological constructs and cultural identity."

All through these chapters one can discern the firm conviction of the author about the historical relevance of folklore.

In his own words, "Peoples oral accounts of their culture and beliefs, although at times shrouded in fanciful details, often provide the material for history, specially what has been designated as people's history."

I am certain this publication will enable many social scientists to get freshly interested and reinitiated into folkloristics. The price of the book is indeed surprisingly low. This, I am sure, will further encourage many book lovers to be initiated into this fascinating discipline.

D. K. BHATTACHARYA

● Educative social novel ● Medieval Tamil lexicon ● Sufi poetry ● Universal values in the Vedas

TAMIL

IRU MUKAM — Two Faces: Se. Ganesalingan; Kumaran Publishers, 3(12), Meygai Vinayakar Street, Via Kumaran Colony 7th Street, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 60.**

BELONGING TO an earlier generation of Sri Lanka's progressive writers, Se. Ganesalingan's creativity has been prolific. Among the first novelists to give us "the smell of the terrain" (Karthigesu Sivathamby), Ganesalingan has added a helpful introduction to *Iru Mukam*.

We have entered the Age of Knowledge, which is a crucible of capitalism, science and technology. Increasingly physical labour is getting sidelined and we find that in spite of mind-boggling advances, the gap between the rich and the poor has become unbelievably vast.

This new dispensation has no patience for art and culture. For instance, the capitalistic society exploits woman's body to turn out films and T.V. serials so that it can laugh all its way to the bank. There is, then, the condition of woman. In spite of tall talk, she is still a piece of property for man.

After this heavy matter packed in a few pages, the narrative of this book presents fast-moving action. The beautiful college student Mohana becomes the wife of the very rich Murugaiya. Getting trapped into marriage with an impotent man is not a new theme. To break out of a marriage with an understanding and indulgent husband is more difficult though.

Murugaiya is not violent and vindictive like Raghu in Vaasanthi's *Manitharkal Paathi Neram Thoongugirarkal*. Nature had denied Murugaiya fatherhood. However, Mohana will not be cheated out of what she considers to be the mark of fulfilment. The author walks the razor's edge when detailing the deliberate deceit practised by her to become the mother of Mahendran's child. Mahendran has no faith in conventional shackles like marriage but she does not care.

Quite a few questions remain unanswered in the novel, which often sounds like a seminarial document. But it makes us cogitate on the state of the global community today, which justifies this educative novel. And there is the Ceylonese Tamil used by the novelist, which peppers the narrative with an enduring charm.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

MADURAITH THAMIZH PERAKARATHI (Two Parts): Sandhya Natarajan — Editor; Sandhya Publciations, Flat A, Nu-tech Vaibhav, 57-53rd Street, Ashok Nagar, Chennai-600083. **Rs. 625** (Part1); **Rs. 575** (Part 2).

THIS VOLUME in two parts is a most welcome addition from a historical point of view. We understand that the book's first edition published in 1937 is not available. Its second edition in two parts appeared in 1956. The great Tamil scholar U. Ve. Saminathaiyar has written a foreword to the first edition and the same appears in the second edition too.

The University of Madras completed the Tamil lexicon work (in seven volumes) in the year 1936. It is not possible for a common man to buy the volumes for personal use whereas this work is within reach of all both in size and price.

The editor of the second edition E.M. Gopalakrishna Kon has provided the researchers with a brief history of Tamil lexicography. P.R. Subramanian, a renowned lexicographer has given a good account of the history of Tamil dictionaries and points out the relevance and usefulness of the present volumes.

Even a cursory look at this volume shows that the concept, the content of the entries and the presentation techniques in lexicography have undergone a lot of change during the last 100 years.

It will be immensely useful for the study of medieval Tamil literature and the early Sangam works. The editor who has designed the volumes in a way to appear neat and beautiful deserves praise for this significant work.

PKR

TELUGU

SUFI KAVITVAM — Sufi Poetry: Translation of the poems of Mowlan Jalaluddin Rumi, Fariuddin Attar, Shamsuddin Mahammed Hafiz and Rabia, Deevi Subba Rao — Tr. in Telugu; Navodaya Book House, Street Opp. Arya Samaj, Kachiguda. Hyderabad-500027. **Rs. 125.**

THIS ANTHOLOGY of poetry includes the works of four early Sufi poets, Mowlana Jalaluddin Rumi(1207-73 A.D.), the most eminent of the Sufi poets, Fariuddin Attar (1136 -1230 A.D.) a businessman-turned fakir, Shamsuddin Mahammed Hafiz of the 14th Century A.D. and Rabia of the 8th Century A.D., the earliest of the four.

Sufism was an offshoot of Islam. Its proponents were all intellectual independent thinkers. Though the new sect broadly confines to the main tenets of Islam, some among them challenged the teachings of the Ulema. Sufism is considered to be a purist ascetic movement, preaching austerity in living and purity in thought. The very name was derived from the word "Sufi" which means course clothing.

The major part of the book covers 154 poems of Rumi. While there is only one piece by Attar and 56 compositions by Hafiz, Rabia's poetry— six poems are included here —indicates the highest state of Bhakti and complete surrender to Allah (God). While she composed her poetry in Arabic, the other three wrote in Parsi language. Sufism preaches the concept of gradual renunciation of the earthly comforts and physical pleasures to reach Allah.

Subba Rao's effort is commendable in that he took pains to inform the Telugu reader about the greatness of this religious sect. His Telugu style is well chiselled and easy flowing, conveying the spirit of the originals.

B. S. R. KRISHNA

MALAYALAM

VEDARTHA VICHARAM — Philosophy: V. K. Narayana Bhattathiri; Pub.by V.K. Naryana Bhattathiri Smaraka Trust, 20/150, Dutt Saw Mill Road, PO Kallai, Kozhikode-673003. Distributed by The Mathrubhumi Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd, Kozhikode. **Rs. 50.**

THIS IS a compilation of 34 essays on the Vedas. They are ancient texts forming the basic principles of Hinduism. The essays bring out the significance of the essentials of the Vedas and the author drives home the fact that even before the actual codification of the four Vedas, a fund of knowledge existed in India, and that formed the principles of Indian culture.

It was in 1915 that the author started studying the Vedas. His inspiration came from the magazine *Arya*, run by Sri Aurobindo and his essays, Veda Rahasyam. The author then studied the Rig Veda for 30 years. He further studied Sankara's commentary on the Vishnu Sahasranama.

The first essay is on the philosophy of Aurobindo, followed by a brief sketch of the Vedas. The status accorded to women during the Vedic period is interesting. The importance of Mantras and their definitions and the statement of the Rig Veda that God can be mentioned by every sound are revealing.

The author's catholic vision, tolerance and the importance of religious amity, and prophetic image of the social order and emphasis on the innate principles of religions preaching human values transcending geographic barriers come out in the essays.

Abstract philosophical principles are explained in a lucid manner and the author's erudition comes out clearly in each essay. The book is educative and informative, and despite being written at least more than half a century ago it has topical relevance, as they strongly plead for a secular society.

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

With neighbours like these

A case for security multilateralism and economic unilateralism

C. RAJA MOHAN

THE sharp criticism directed at India after its decision to pull out of the South Asian summit in Dhaka last week may be less important than the prospect of a series of political crises engulfing the Subcontinent and derailing regional peace and cooperation.

The two reasons India cited for its decision on the Dhaka summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) relate to profound internal convulsions in neighbouring countries — the royal coup in Nepal and the deteriorating security conditions in Bangladesh. Both crises have implications far beyond the question of holding SAARC summits on schedule. They are likely to draw India deep into the internal politics of Nepal where the crisis has boiled over and Bangladesh where it is simmering.

India's stakes in the stability and security of Nepal are huge. Preventing state failure and the emergence of an extremist government in Kathmandu have become India's national security objectives. They have shaped India's response to the rise of the Maoists over the last few years and the more recent coup by King Gyanendra.

Similarly the turmoil in Bangladesh — marked by the bitter and bloody rivalry between the government and the opposition — is bound to intensify. Dhaka's inability to provide security to its leaders in political opposition and its blind eye to the rise of extremist forces in the country presage an extended period of domestic instability in Bangladesh. The Khalida Zia government has blamed the opposition Awami League for creating conditions inimical to holding the SAARC summit and lobbying India to avoid attending it.

As the crises in Nepal and Bangladesh deepen, one thing is clear. The recent brief period of relative political quiescence in South Asia has come to an end. The prospect of one or two failed states on India's doorstep is real. Whether New Delhi wants it or not, India is being irrevocably sucked into the internal politics of Nepal and Bangladesh.

Political classes among Indian neighbours will at once seek and resent India's intervention in their internal affairs. They want to leverage India's weight in the region to settle scores with domestic adversaries.

India needs to enter this phase of South Asian turbulence with eyes wide openand a full awareness of the potential dangers that could arise from its interventions aimed at shaping the political evolution of its neighbours. Interventions are never easy and even in the best of circumstances will invite charges of hegemonism. Bitter arguments about India's role in the region will begin to cast a shadow over the fledgling process of expanding regional cooperation.

The prospect of one or two failed states on India's doorstep is real. Whether it wants it or not, India is being irrevocably sucked into the internal politics of Nepal and Bangladesh

As India considers a variety of options in managing the emerging crises in the region, New Delhi will have to give up the traditional notion that it can handle them unilaterally. The idea of the Subcontinent as an exclusive sphere of influence has been an enduring one in Indian strategic thought. India's suspicion of the great powers and outsiders in the past naturally led to a policy aimed at minimising their influence. This is increasingly unsustainable amidst the globalisation of South Asian security.

To some extent, India has already adapted its policy towards the neighbourhood. In the Sri Lankan crisis at the turn of the decade, India allowed, after considerable initial reluctance, Norway to mediate between Colombo and the Tamil Tigers. It has allowed Japan to take the lead in the international development assistance to Sri Lanka as part of the peace process. After the tsunami, India agreed to let American troops conduct relief operations in Sri Lanka.

In the last few years, India had also developed a regional security dialogue with the US. This has helped generate greater understanding of Delhi's security concerns in Washington and the prospects for harmonising Indian and American interests in South Asia.

As the situation in Nepal started degenerating in recent years, there has been close consultation and coordination between the Indian, US and British missions in Kathmandu. A few weeks ago, in a simultaneous move New Delhi, Washington and London cautioned Gyanendra against his plans to grab all power. And since the coup there has been a coordinated response from the three capitals.

Despite these adjustments there is strong resistance in Delhi against thinking about South Asian security in multilateral terms. Acting in concert with others does not take away India's primacy in the Subcontinent. In fact, such an approach will reduce the risks inherent in Indian interventions and make its regional policy less costly and controversial.

India needs to consider expanding its regional security dialogue to cover other major powers like the European Union, Japan and China. As a neighbour of the region and the second largest economy in the world, China's presence south of Himalayas is bound to grow. Instead of trying to keep China out of the Subcontinent, it makes sense for New Delhi to test Chinese intentions by engaging them in a substantive dialogue on regional security.

While India-led multilateralism is the future of South Asian security, unilateralism remains a potent instrument of India's regional economic policy. Functionalists will shed few tears at the failure of SAARC to hold even regular summits. SAARC has shown no real life when it comes to regional economic integration. Even when impressive agreements like the South Asian Free Trade Agreement were signed at Islamabad last year a lot of difficult issues like rules of origin and dispute settlement were left unresolved.

Given its economic size and the fact that only India shares borders with all South Asian countries, New Delhi can easily bind the region together through forward-looking regional economic policies. Instead of waiting for SAARC to become effective, India must open its market to the neighbours, promote transregional transportation and energy corridors, facilitate Indian investment in the neighbourhood and reduce trade surpluses with the neighbours. And India's economic initiatives must be de-linked from its other political differences with the neighbours.

If India does not act wisely and decisively at this moment, the turbulence in South Asia will pull India down as well. The two principles that must guide India's new approach to the troubled neighbourhood must be security multilateralism and economic unilateralism.

INDIAN EXPRESS 08 FEB 2005

The pressures on Bush!

Suddenly, letting down Musharraf was expected

It has taken President George W Bush just two days to reverse himself completely, and shrink into something infinitely smaller that his aggressive language against North Korea would suggest, and which he has repeatedly accused of being a rogue state, unworthy of even being in existence. His White House spokesman quickly got into the act and denied that America has any conflict or argument with that country; insisting that *the issue was a regional issue*! Suddenly the six countries which are legitimately concerned over the headlong abuses hurled at North Korea without any consultation with anyone of them, have come into their own but it is too late. South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and the United States must consider what they are doing being dragged into line by Bush to share his dim and not very clear objectives. Neat and altogether unconvincing! If it was only a regional issue, on whose authority did the American President mount such fierce attacks on that country and threaten it as only a few other countries have been threatened? Bush's discomfiture is plainly apparent. A day after this, his State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, says quite clearly that *it would be a good step for Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf to relinquish the post of the Army Chief* and emphasised *that the country should continue its transition towards a fully functioning democracy*. The reference to moving towards a fully functioning democracy should not confuse anyone. It is diplomatic language that hardly means what it says. What it does mean is that the country should now move towards democracy because it has not done so yet! There is no mistake here; for some reason, Bush has decided that Musharraf is dispensable.

It might be hasty to come to such a conclusion, waiting a day or two longer, in these fast moving times for more declarations by George Bush would be wise. On the face of it, his message seems clear and uncompromising but anything can happen. As for Musharraf, he has chosen to place himself completely at the mercy of the American President, reducing himself to nothing. There are any number of people who have been treated like this by America in the past; Musharraf was warned, but refused to listen. What exactly has led to this volte face may not be known for a while yet, but something seems to have gone terribly wrong. One thing is clear; the pressures on Bush have become irresistible.

THE STATESMAN

No western monopoly on modernity

By Martin Jacques

IN HIS inauguration speech, American President George W. Bush pledged to support "the expansion of freedom in all the world," deploying the words free or freedom no less than 25 times in 20 short minutes.

The neoconservative strategy is quite explicit: to bend the world to America's will; to reshape it according to the interests of a born-again superpower. Even though the Iraqi occupation has gone seriously awry, the United States still does not recognise the constraints on its own power and ambition.

This was something that Europe learned the hard way: two world wars, the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union, and the anti-colonial struggle have taught the European continent the limitations of its own power. That is why Europe today, with the partial exception of Britain and France, and exemplified by Germany, is so reluctant to use military force. The U.S., of course, is the opposite. It measures its power not by its relative economic and technological prowess, which would suggest restraint, but its military unassailability, which implies the opposite.

Nor is this attitude simply a product of the neoconservatives. It also draws on something deeper within the American psyche. The birth of the United States and its expansion across the American continent — the frontier mentality — was an imperial enterprise, involving, most importantly, the

subjugation and destruction of the American-Indians. This is part of the American story, and it helps to inform and shape its global strategy and aspirations.

It is not difficult, of course, for the United States to throw its weight around in the Middle East, a poor and defeated region, one of the big-time losers from globalisation. The world's superpower versus a failed region is a hopelessly unequal contest, especially when the former can rely on the support of its regional policeman Israel, to do its bidding. But this is not the dominant story of our time, even though the Bush regime, in its desire to exploit the country's status as sole superpower, has chosen to define this conflict as the central narrative. History will judge differently. The rise of China and India will have a far more profound effect on the world than a small band of Islamist terrorists.

American dominance is bound to wither as Asia's confidence grows.

Indeed, there is something faintly bizarre about the psychotic worship of American values, the incantation of its applicability to each and every country, at an historical moment when, for the first time since its emergence half a millennium ago, the modern world will, in the not too distant future, no longer be monopolised by theWest. It is not difficult to imagine that, by the middle of this century, both China and India will rank among the top five largest economies in the world, with China perhaps the biggest. Nor is this just an economic story, which is how it is generally told. With economic strength comes, in due course, political, cultural and military influence: such has been the case with the emergence of all great powers.

The fact and significance of this, of course, has been hugely underestimated. The dominant view of globalisation is that it is overwhelmingly a process of westernisation: indeed, the neoliberal form of globalisation espoused by the Washington consensus has deliberately sought to define it as such. The prevalent western view is well-articulated by Chris Patten in his book *East and West*, where the differences between western and east Asian countries, like China, are explained simply in terms of historical timing. The closer they get to western levels of development, the more they will come to resemble the West. Or, to put it another way, there is a singular modernity, and that is western.

Given that modernity is not simply a snapshot of the present, but a product of history, not only a function of markets and technology, but the creation of a culture, then this is utterly mistaken. One cannot make sense of American modernity — and how it diverges from European modernity — without understanding its history, in particular that it was a settler society, without any prior experience of feudalism.

If Europe and the U.S. differ because of their diverse pasts, even though they palpably share a great deal in terms of history, culture and race, then how much more true it will be of countries like China and India, whose civilisational roots — from religion and ethnicity to history and geo-location — are completely different to those of the west.

China and India, of course, will take on board a great deal from the west in their modernisation. But that can only be part of the picture. They will also draw from their own history and culture. The outcome in each case will be a complex hybrid, its character varying from country to country. In future, international discourse — the word "international" is now invariably shorthand for the west — will no longer be overwhelmingly western. — ***©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005***

THE HINDU 07 FEB 2005

No Guatemala trial

GUATEMALA CITY, Feb. 5 — Guatemala's highest court said yesterday it cannot try soldiers charged with participating in a wartime massacre of more than 300 civilians, until a separate court determines whether the charges are admissible under the country's post-war National Reconciliation Law.

The Constitutional Court's decision, the first based on the law, sets a precedent that could affect several similar pending cases, both military defence and human rights lawyers said yesterday.

The court's ruling was issued in December but not distributed to the parties involved until Wednesday.

In it, the tribunal argued that it cannot rule on the charges against 17 soldiers because of appeals the defendants filed — one of which argues that the National Reconciliation Law precludes their prosecution. An appeals court has not yet issued a ruling on that issue, the decision noted.

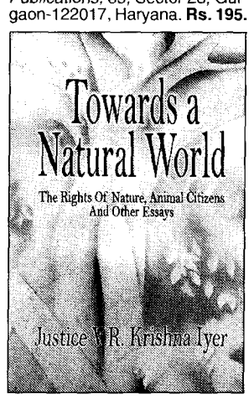
The law is a type of amnesty Congress approved in November 1996, a few weeks before the government and ex-guerrillas signed peace accords ending the country's 36-year-old civil war. — **AP**

THE STATESMAN 06 FEB 2005

BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Public Investment in Primary Health Care:** Suranjan Sarma; **Rs. 295.**
- **Encyclopaedia of Agricultural Marketing** — Marketing of Farm Inputs Seeds, Fertilizers & Irrigation: *Jagdish Prasad — Editor*; **Rs. 695.**
- **History of Education:** Nirmal Kaur; **Rs. 450.**
- **Global Poverty, Terrorism and Peace** — Gandhian Perspective: Himanshu Bourai; **Rs. 695.** The above four books pub. by Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059.
- **Indian Economy and Society *in the Era of Globalisation and* Liberalisation:** C. H. Hanumantha Rao, B. B. Bhattacharya; **Rs. 795.**
- **Emerging Rural Development Through Panchayats:** Bibek Debroy, P. D. Kaushik; **Rs. 795.**
- **Essays on Development Strategy, Regional Disparities and Centre-State Financial Relations in India:** C. H. Hanumantha Rao; **Rs. 595.** *The above* three books pub. by Academic Foundation, 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road (23 Ansari Road) Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.
- **Towards a Natural World** — The Rights of Nature, Animal Citizens and Other Essays: Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer; Hope India Publications, 85, Sector 23, Gurgaon-122017, Haryana. **Rs. 195.**



- **Let Us Know Festivals of India:** Kartar Singh Bhalla; Star Publications (Pvt.) Ltd., 4/5B, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 225.**
- **AIDS in the World** — Global Dimensions, Social Roots and Responses: Jafar Mahmud; **Rs. 695.**
- **A History of Sino-Indian Relations** — 1st Century A.D. to 7th Century A.D.): Yukteshwar Kumar; **Rs. 595.**
- **Dictionary of Politics:** M. Mahmood; **Rs. 395.**
- **Taxation:** R. Jayaprakash Reddy; **Rs. 395.** The above four books pub. by APH Publishing Corporation, 5, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.
- **Amazing Chemistry Quiz:** P. K. Gupta; **Rs. 95.**
- **Amazing Physics Quiz:** T.R.R. Iyengar; **Rs. 100.**
- **Holy Places of Northern India:** H. L. Luthra; **Rs. 60.** The above four books pub. by Pitambar Publishing Co. (P) Ltd., 888, East Park Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.
- **Eyewitness Kashmir** — Teetering on Nuclear War: Arun Joshi; Marshall Cavendish Academic, Times Centre, 1, New Industrial Road, Singapore-536196, published by Overseas Press (India) Pvt. Ltd., Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **$. 19.**
- **Question Bank in Chemistry for Class XII:** Prem Dhawan, Vandana Dhawan; Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., 7, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008. **Rs. 225.**
- **Black Statements:** Sylvia Plth's Poetry and Fiction: Shyamsundar Padihari; Prakash Book Depot, Bara Bazar, Bareilly-243003. **Rs. 55.**
- **The Indian Commodity-Derivatives Market in Operation:** J. N. Dhankhar; Skylark Publications, 1/5, Bhagat Singh Lane, Gole Market, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 500.**
- **Forging the Raj** — Essays on British India in the Heyday of Empire: Thomas R. Metcalf; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 575.**

- **They Thought Differently:** V. C. Kulandaiswamy; Pavai Publications, 142, JJK Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 100.**
- **Without Margins:** Sukrita; Bibliophile South Asia in association with Promila & Co. Publishers, C-127, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 150.**
- **Gifted and Talented Education:** Mohan Nath Dubey; Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059. **Rs. 450.**
- **Marriage, Love and Caste** — Perceptions on Telugu Women During the Colonial Period: Inukonda Thirumali; Promila & Co. Publishers, C-127, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 295.**
- **Groundwater Resources of India** — Occurrence, Utilisation and Management: Inder Jeet; Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059. **Rs. 450.**
- **Realizing Brand India** — The Changing Face of Contemporary India: Sharif D. Rangnekar — Editor; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 395.**
- **There is a Beautiful You Within You:** N. D. Khetarpal; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, *Kulapati Munshi* Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 160.**
- **The Art of Tagore:** Rabindranath Tagore; Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 595.**
- **Young Aurobindo's Vision** — The Viziers of Bassora: Manoj Kumar Mishra; **Rs. 200.**
- **Acquisition of Hindi and English — A Comparative and Analytical Study in Developmental Linguistics:** Uma Rajput; **Rs. 225.** The above two books pub. by Prakash Book Depot, Bara Bazar, Bareilly-243003.

Tamil

- **Nambikkai Vai:** A. S. Chandru; *Thamarai Publications* (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 30.**
- **Mohini Thirukkolam:** Sri Venugopalan; Lakshmisree Pathippagam, 848, 91st Street, 13th Sector, K.K. Nagar, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 95.**
- **Sri Venugopalan Sirukathaigal** — 2 Parts Sri Venugopalan; *Lakshmisree Pathippagam*, 848, 91st Street, 13th Sector, K.K. Nagar, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 180.**
- **Udaiyaar-Part III** — History of Cholas: Balakumaran; Thirumagal Nilayam, New No. 16, Old No. 55, Venkatanarayana Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 225.**
- **Nallavan:** Se. Ganesalingan; *Kumaran Publishers*, 3 (12) Meigai Vinayagar Street, Via Kumaran Colony 7th Street, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 60.**
- **Nenjil Malarandha Malargal:** Karmoogilon; Jayalakshmi Pathippagam, 4, Muthukrishnan Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 40.**
- **Mutthangal Theernthuvittana:** *Andal Priyadarshini*; *Kumaran* Pathippagam, 3, Muthukrishnan Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 60.**
- **Thirukkudanthai:** S. Sabarinathan; Oscar Publications, 51, Naickamar Street, West Mambalam, Chennai-600033. **Rs. 75.**
- **Velu Nachiyar:** K. Jeevabharathi; Kumaran Pathippagam, 3, Muthukrishnan Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**
- **Therdhal Kannottam:** R. Baskar; Saregamapadani, 7/4, Pujangarao Street, Saidapet, Chennai-600015. **Rs. 25.**
- **Thirukkural 1330:** Kumari S. Neelakandan; Thirunelveli South India Saivasiddhantha Noorpathipu Kazagam Ltd., 522, (Old
- **Kadhavai Thira... Kattru Varattum** — Part I: Parahamsa Sri Nithyanandhar; Dhiyanapeetam, Nithyanandapuri, Mysore Road, Pedathi-562109, Bangalore. **Rs. 75.**
- **Vikragam:** Sathyanandan; Kaavya, 14, First Cross Street, Trust Puram, Kodambakkam, Chennai-600024. **Rs. 65.**
- **Kurunthogai** — Parts I to IV: M.C. Prabhakarbabu: Thamizhkavi Pathippagam, 2/1, Solai Street, Ayyanpuram, Chennai-600023. **Rs. 280.**
- **120 Siruthoyil Seimuraigal:** S. A. Susairaja; Vidya Publications, PB No. 8859, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 55.**
- **Chozhar Kala Samayam:** A. Padmavathy; Kumaran Book House, 3 (12) Meigai Vinayagar Street, via Kumaran Colony 7th Street, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 45.**
- **Siruvar Vikramadhithan Kathaigal:** N.C. Deivasigamani; Vidya Publications, PB No. 8859, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 65.**
- **Arutperunjothi Andhadhi:** Siva Selvaraj; Samarasa Suddha Sanmarkka Sathiya Sangam, 18-259, Mani Illam, Vadakku Kundal, Kanyakumari-629702. **Rs. 10.**
- **Iniya Thamizh Vazhi Hindi:** C.N. Krishnamoorthy; Shree Shenbaga Pathippagam, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**

Telugu

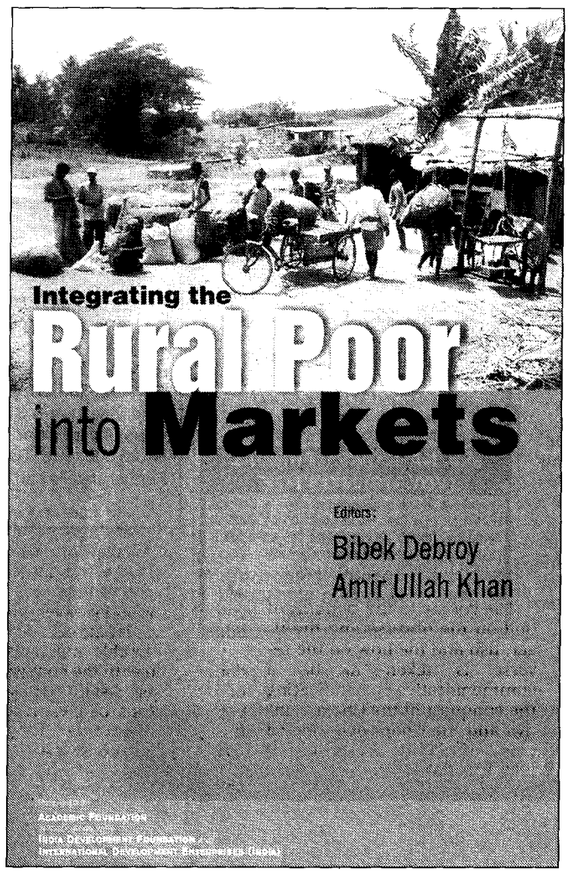
- **Telugu Katharamam:** N.C. Ramanujachary; Prapti Books, PB 5018, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. **Rs. 100.**
- **Sri Vaishnava Sampradayamu Sangraha Parichayamu:** R.S. Sudarsana Charlu; Copies can be had from the author, 10/553, Bellammandy Street, Cuddapah-516001. **Rs. 40.**
- **Manavatha Shatram:** D. M. Ravi Prasad; Maitreya Publications, 1-9-252/6/A/G3, Ramnagar, Hyderabad-500020. **Rs. 50.**
- **Menoo — Naa Rachanalu:** A. Anasuya Devi; Vanguri Foundation of America, Flat No. 102, Subhodaya Apartments, Officer's Colony, RK Puram, Secunderabad-500056. **Rs. 160.**
- **Shekartoons:** Shekar; Chetana 1-4-113, Bholakpur, Kavadiguda, Hyderabad-500080. **Rs. 50.**

Kannada

- **Bharana** — Commemoratory Volume on T. S. Nagabharana: M. A. Anand; Nagabharana Abhinandana Samithi, 148, 32nd 'A' Main, JP Nagar I Stage, Bangalore-560078. **Rs. 100.**
- **Americadalli Nanna Anubhavagalu:** Venkataswamy; **Rs. 80.**
- **Shabdartha Manjari** — Kannada-Kannada Dictionary: Rudramurthy Shastry; **Rs. 160.**
- **Monachu Haasya Kavanagalu** — Collection of Humorous Poems in Kannada: M.P.Manoharachandran; **Rs. 60.** The above three books pub. by Alilu Seva Samsthe, 133, I Floor, KR Road, Obalappa Garden, Bangalore-560082.

Enabling the poor to become consumers

INTEGRATING THE RURAL POOR INTO MARKETS: Bibek Debroy & Amir Ullah Khan — Editors; Academic Foundation in association with India Development Foundation & International Development Enterprises (India), 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road, (23 Ansari Road), Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 695.**



THE ESSENCE of poverty is consumption poverty. Economics defines market as a system which brings demand and supply together. It also defines demand as desire backed by purchasing power. The poor are poor precisely because they do not have purchasing power. Sustainable purchasing power itself can be obtained by the poor not from perennial doles from the government, but through what Amartya Sen calls exchange entitlement, that is, by exchanging something marketable for money.

The paradox, therefore, is that because the poor do not have purchasing power they cannot buy in the market and consume more, and they cannot get purchasing power unless and until they sell something in the market. It is in this context that the title of the book appears intriguing and inviting.

'Market-shed development'

The International Development Enterprises India (IDEI) has been experimenting with projects based on an approach called Integrating the Poor into Market Systems (IPMAS) in India aimed mainly at helping the rural poor to produce a marketable surplus of some saleable commodity so that they may first enter the market as sellers, acquire purchasing power, increase consumption and thus rise above the poverty line.

The IDEI's mission is, "To improve equitably the social, economic and environmental conditions of families in need with special emphasis on the rural poor, by identifying, developing and marketing affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable solutions through market forces."

The emphasis may be said to be on "market-shed development" ... watershed development in hydrology. Unlike a watershed where the water flows only in one direction, in a market-shed, goods, services, credit and information flow from the market to the agricultural population and the responding surplus production flows to the market.

Global outlook

The book keeps in view not only local but also global markets especially as agriculture is the main sector where India may be hit by the unconscionable subsidies extended by western nations to their agriculture sector and the trade barriers erected by them for keeping out imports from developing countries.

The reform agenda for agriculture is vast, encompassing ... investments, extension services, research, land ownership and tenancy, outdated controls on production and distribution, regulatory oversight and extending the Green Revolution to areas not so far covered by it. All these are sought to be tied together by an overall strategy, whose different aspects are covered by the majority of the papers in this volume.

Of the 17 papers in the book, 11 relate to the various aspects of a revamped agricultural strategy, which would result in a marketable surplus in the hands of the rural farmer. Two papers relate to the use of information technology in aid of agricultural productivity, one to the role of genetically modified crops and the remaining three deal with ... American agriculture, and environmental and phyto-sanitary standards.

Synergising resources

The whole strategy of creating surplus value in agriculture rests on synergising the three crucial resources — people, land and water. This is to be done through a catalysing combination of research, technology, production inputs, free pricing and marketing options, supplemental non-farming activities and public investment in rural infrastructure. Intensification, diversification and value addition are the key directional goals.

The IDEI believes in exploiting micro-irrigation potential and liberating the agricultural markets as the two leading thrusts in this exercise. If only about Rs. 5000 to 10,000 could be added to the annual income of the population hovering around the poverty line, it would substantially reduce the proportion of those living below the poverty line. This is the ultimate concrete aim of IPMAS.

Considering the extent of meticulous, coordinated effort required for implementing the IPMAS strategy, it is clear that decentralised, autonomous, representative local institutions are a must and no single, centralised organisation can deliver the goods. Unfortunately, the vision of Nehru and S.K.Dey during the early days of Community Development to achieve this through a network of throbbing cooperative institutions failed. Or, rather, we failed these institutions.

In many of the articles, the authors recommend the creation of not only such institutions but also institutional alliances. Whether, in the present vitiated political environment, the cooperative concept can regain its old prestige and performance is doubtful.

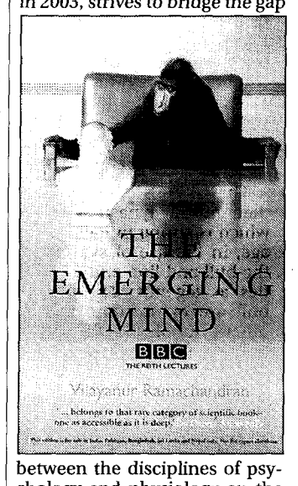
One of the reasons why globalisation has faced some opposition in India is the neglect of agriculture; though it contributes only 26 per cent of the GDP it still employs nearly 70 per cent of the population directly or indirectly. It is this lacuna that this book seeks to address and redress to some extent.

P. K. DORAISWAMY

Frontiers of the mind

THE EMERGING MIND: V. S. Ramachandran; Published by the BBC in association with Profile books Ltd., London. Distributed by Viva Books Private Limited, 4262/3, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 195.**

V. S. RAMACHANDRAN, A cognitive neuroscientist who won critical acclaim for his first book, *Phantoms in the Brain* has come up with yet another book to make the human mind less of an enigma to both the layperson and the professional. Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition and professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of California, and adjunct professor of biology at the Salk Institute, the eminent author in this book based on the BBC Reith lectures he delivered in 2003, strives to bridge the gap



between the disciplines of psychology and physiology on the one hand and, science and philosophy on the other.

Two main themes

The book focusses on two main themes — neurological conditions, about which there is limited recorded data and the evolutionary perspective to understand these conditions. The author's choice of unusual phenomena presented in this book is most praiseworthy. Notes on "prosopognosia", the inability to recognise faces, "Capgras syndrome", the failure to identify and accept an entity through visual appearance alone and "synesthesia", the predisposi... stimulation, such as a musical tone or number are guaranteed to grasp and sustain the reader's interest.

There are parts of the book worthy of special mention as they reflect Ramachandran's pioneering work. One such example is his study of the "phantom limb", where a patient continues to perceive a limb that no longer exists after amputation.

He successfully demonstrates the use of mirrors as a means of visual feedback in the "unlearning" of learned paralysis and pain in the phantom limb. Experiments with schizophrenics laughing while tickling themselves, notes on pain "asymbolia" (where pain stimulates laughter) and the controversial redefinition of "free will" are extraordinary and quite delightful to read.

'Neuropsychiatry'

One of the greatest merits of this book is its exploration of mental illness within the boundaries of organic terminology, giving the discipline its new name — "neuropsychiatry". Conditions traditionally thought to be psychological in origin are shown to have a strong neurological basis. The experiments described are simple, yet staggering in their implications. The author's expertise is evident in his effective combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

There is an element of personal involvement — the enthusiasm regarding his discoveries is contagious. Unexpected touches of humour, interesting analogies and the superb rendering of the implication of neuroscience in psychology are the strengths of the book.

For the layperson the author's discussion of certain concepts elaborately may be tedious reading and the book's rather technical terminology difficult to decipher. Despite these limitations, the book is bound to stimulate not only further reading but also encourage interested laypeople and professionals to play an active role in the development of cognitive neuroscience.

MADHUMITHA BALAJI

Through the labyrinth of labour laws

A PEEP INTO LABOUR LAWS: V. S. Ekambaram, V. S. Balasubramaniyan; Pub. by Tamil Nadu Bank Employees Federation, Singapore Plaza, III Floor, 164, Linghi Chetty Street, Chennai-600001.

THIS IS a handy and compact book and a single source of reference on labour laws. The most important among the Acts covered are the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Trade Union Act. Although the authors have not reproduced the Acts in their work their comments on the various sections of each Act is lucid and cogent.

It will be of great help to workmen and trade union leaders and also budding lawyers to understand the nuances of the law. Inclusion of the Act would have made the publication more comprehensive.

The presentation gives an impression that the labour laws are meant only to protect the workmen ignoring the interest of the consumer, the common man and the employer. It is not so. There are many cases where the court decisions have gone against the plea of workers. All the Acts are there to protect diverse interests.

Changed situation

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S. ARUNAJATESAN

• The cyclonic monk • Bharati in the political domain • Ambassadors in classical literature • Social novel

TAMIL

SWAMI VIVEKANANDAR VIRIVANA VAZHKAI VARALARU — Vol I, Rs. 160, Vol II, Rs. 140: Swami Asutoshananda; Sri Ramakrishna Math, 31, R.K. Mutt Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004.

THE RAMAYANA begins with Sage Valmiki seeking information from Sage Narada, "Is there, anywhere on Earth, an individual who can be called perfect in every respect?" Narada responds with delight. Yes, there is Sri Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, who shines with 16 supreme virtues. Valmiki gets the inspiration for composing his immortal epic.

Swami Asutoshananda must have experienced a similar itch to know. In our own troubled times, is there a prophet in whom all excellences meet and mingle and to whom we can turn to, to find life's fulfilment? Yes, there is Narendra, a prince among men, better known as Swami Vivekananda. And with great elan Asutoshananda's facile pen places before us a very detailed two-volume biography of Vivekananda.

He is an "orator by divine right." His five words, "Sisters and brothers of America," roused the 7,000 strong audience at the Chicago Parliament of World Religions to give him a standing ovation for many minutes.

There was no subject, secular, scientific or philosophial, of which he was not the master. His memory was prodigious; after glancing through a few pages of a book he had not read before, he could repeat those pages verbatim. His very stance proclaimed a hero per excellence.

On the Madras Marina he could wrestle with a professional wrestler and defeat him. He was acclaimed as the cyclonic patriot-monk and became a role model for the youth, so much so that his birthday January 12, has been declared the National Youth Day. With his razor-sharp intellect he could overwhelm anyone in debate. His lectures, letters and writings made recondite Vedantic ideas easy to understand.

Swami Asutoshananda has meticulously gathered all the details available about Swami Vivekananda in the various languages and crafted them into a highly readable story. He has not omitted any significant event in the hero's career, but has carefully checked and rechecked the details.

One special feature of this biography is that we get a memorable picture of Swamiji as the Guru, training disciples in the evening of his life. Hence this biography becomes an authoritative text to rely upon for all future writers and researchers on the Swami who is "the morning star of Indian Independence" and the "prophet of the divinization of man."

C. S. RAMAKRISHNAN

BHARATHIKKU THADAI — A Political Biography of Poet Bharathi: V.Venkatraman; Sudandhira Publications, 52 A, Nattukal Raja Street, Rajapalayam-626117. **Rs. 250.**

OVER THE past 75 years, numerous editions of Bharati's poetry have appeared. His works have been translated extensively, and both he, as a "character" and his works have been featured in a number of films. However, the writer pinpoints that the expansion of public access to Bharati's works has been matched by a decline in the quality of publication, from both technical and critical points of view.

While this is the concern of all, this book, written on the basis of accurate data and factual information, selectively gathered through assiduous research for well over a decade, provides a deep insight into the trial and tribulations undergone by Bharati not only in running newspapers and magazines during the freedom struggle but also in making his fiery articles see the light of the day.

In this 500-page volume which include some rare pictures, political cartoons that earned the wrath of the British rulers, and official orders pro... scribing the books of the poet, the author without much of ornamentation deals with facts and figures culled from records in government archives and renowned libraries.

His simple presentation takes the reader into the domain of Bharati as the editor of *India*, *Bala Barath* and many other magazines, as a committed soldier in the struggle for freedom, the unswerving disciple of Balagandara Tilak and above all a versatile poet who left an immortal treasure for the benefit of those in free India although he did not live to enjoy the fruits of his selfless toil.

The author has vividly narrated the untiring efforts of the poet to cement unity among Indians to stand as one man against the rulers by deftly using an episode from the Mahabaratha. The poet's treatment of *Panchali Sabatham* (the vow of Draupadi), projecting her as Mother India and comparing Kurushekthra war with the struggle for freedom, remains evergreen in the minds of the people as an unparalleled literary creation with a national message.

N. KALYANASUNDARAM

TELUGU

DOOTYA SAAHITYAM: Vallivedu Vidyalatha; 97/3, Velachery Road, Guindy, Chennai-600032. Distributed by Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 200.**

THIS BOOK deals with the theme of role of ambassadors as expounded in around 60 classics published between 15th and 20th Centuries. This treatise excels both in breadth and depth.

In the Mahabharatha (the trio of Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana) while the omniscient Krishna mediates between the Pandavas and the Kauravas as a last resort for avoiding the war, Bhishma goes as a self-appointed messenger (swayamduta) to Dasaraja seeking his daughter Matsyagandhi's hand for his father Santanu. In Bhaskara's Ramayana, Hanuman searching for Sita in Lanka is a three-in-one mission between Rama, Sita and Ravana.

In Kumarasambhava (Nannechoda) the seven sages (Saptarshis) request Himavan to offer his daughter Parvathi to Lord Siva, whose background is known to none except the saints. The role of divine swan (swan) in bringing together Nala and Damayanti in Srngara Naishadha (Srinada) and that of the Brahmin priest in carrying Rukmini's message to Krishna in Potana's Bhagavata are well known.

In Jashuva's Gabbilam (bat) a Dalit sends a bat as a messenger to Siva conveying his decision to perform abhishekam with his tears. All the books discussed abound with similar themes.

Going back to basics, the author discusses the figures of speech, sentiment and style. The book has fitting tributes by D. Chinnikrishniah and S. Akkireddy. The cover design with a bird messenger is elegant. The author deserves praise for her painstaking research in producing the volume.

P. V. L. N. RAO

MALAYALAM

DAIVATHINTE NIZHAL: Sulochana Nalappatt; DC Books, DCB Complex, Good Shepherd Street, Kottayam-686001. **Rs. 40.**

SULOCHANA NALAPPATT made her literary debut with "Kavadam" (Entrance), a novel, which she co-authored with her sister, Kamala Surayya (Das). With "Daivathinte Nizhal" (God's shadow), she emerges from the shadow of her famous sister and establishes herself as a novelist in her own right.

The central character of the novel is a doctor, who breaks away from the family to marry a north Indian collegemate only to return in an unsound state of mind after his wife's premature death. Much of the story, set against the backdrop of a traditional "Nair tharavad", centres on the way the rest of the family responds to him. As the sto... ry progresses, there are complications of a familiar kind: the teenaged companion of his younger brother's bride becomes pregnant and the family contains the scandal by finding her a suitable husband.

The distinguishing feature of the novel is the handling of the character of the doctor, whose consciousness flutters like a butterfly. Running through the story is a supernatural element that imparts it something of an ethereal quality.

The novelist, a doctor too, draws not only from her medical knowledge but also from such other sources as Carl Jung and the *Kathopanishad* to carry conviction with the reader.

B. R. P. BHASKAR

- **Global Poverty, Terrorism and Peace** — Gandhian Perspective: Himanshu Bourai; **Rs. 695.** The above four books pub. by Mittal Publications, A-110, Mohan Garden, New Delhi-110059.
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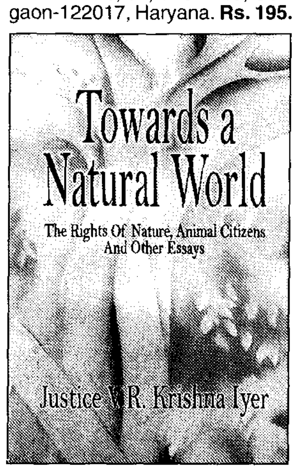

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Tamil

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- **Velu Nachiyar:** K. Jeevabharathi; Kumaran Pathippagam, 3, Muthukrishnan Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**
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- **Kadhavai Thira... Kattru Varattum** — Part I: Parahamsa Sri Nithyanandhar; Dhiyanapeetam, Nithyanandapuri, Mysore Road, Peedathi-562109, Bangalore. **Rs. 75.**
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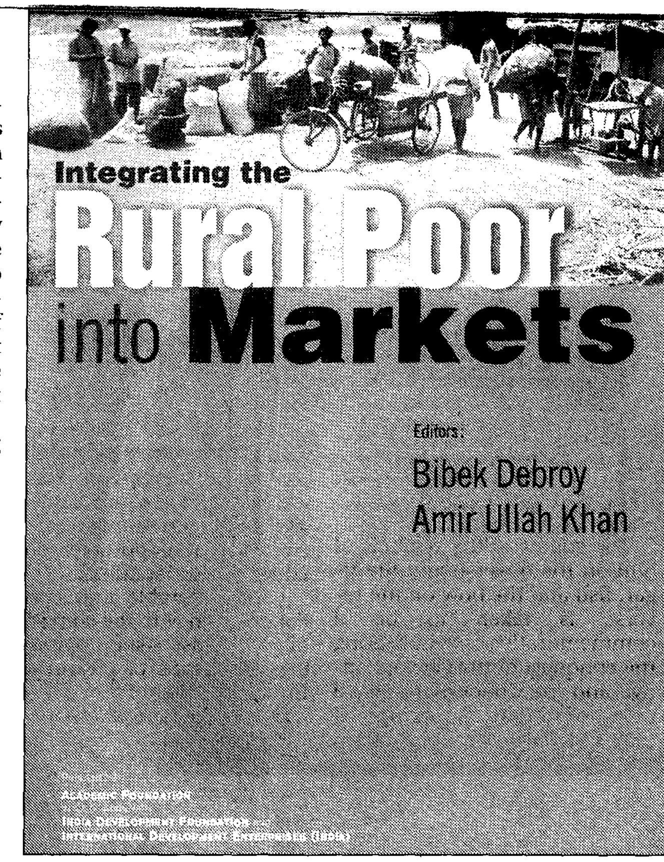
Enterprises (India), 4772-73/23, Bharat Ram Road, (23 Ansari Road), Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 695.**



THE ESSENCE of poverty is consumption poverty. Economics defines market as a system which brings demand and supply together. It also defines demand as desire backed by purchasing power. The poor are poor precisely because they do not have purchasing power. Sustainable purchasing power itself can be obtained by the poor not from perennial doles from the government, but through what Amartya Sen calls exchange entitlement, that is, by exchanging something marketable for money.

The paradox, therefore, is that because the poor do not have purchasing power they cannot buy in the market and consume more, and they cannot get purchasing power unless and until they sell something in the market. It is in this context that the title of the book appears intriguing and inviting.

'Market-shed development'

The International Development Enterprises India (IDEI) has been experimenting with projects based on an approach called Integrating the Poor into Market Systems (IPMAS) in India aimed mainly at helping the rural poor to produce a marketable surplus of some saleable commodity so that they may first enter the market as sellers, acquire purchasing power, increase consumption and thus rise above the poverty line.

The IDEI's mission is, "To improve equitably the social, economic and environmental conditions of families in need with special emphasis on the rural poor, by identifying, developing and marketing affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable solutions through market forces."

The emphasis may be said to be on "market-shed development" similar to the concept of watershed development in hydrology. Unlike a watershed where the water flows only in one direction, in a market-shed, goods, services, credit and information flow from the market to the agricultural population and the responding surplus production flows to the market.

Global outlook

The book keeps in view not only local but also global markets especially as agriculture is the main sector where India may be hit by the unconscionable subsidies extended by western nations to their agriculture sector and the trade barriers erected by them for keeping out imports from developing countries.

The reform agenda for agriculture is vast, encompassing rural infrastructure, public investments, extension services, research, land ownership and tenancy, outdated controls on production and distribution, regulatory oversight and extending the Green Revolution to areas not so far covered by it. All these are sought to be tied together by an overall strategy, whose different aspects are covered by the majority of the papers in this volume.

Of the 17 papers in the book, 11 relate to the various aspects of a revamped agricultural strategy, which would result in a marketable surplus in the hands of the rural farmer. Two papers relate to the use of information technology in aid of agricultural productivity, one to the role of genetically modified crops and the remaining three deal with international issues like subsidy to resources — people, land and water. This is to be done through a catalysing combination of research, technology, production inputs, free pricing and marketing options, supplemental non-farming activities and public investment in rural infrastructure. Intensification, diversification and value addition are the key directional goals.

The IDEI believes in exploiting micro-irrigation potential and liberating the agricultural markets as the two leading thrusts in this exercise. If only about Rs. 5000 to 10,000 could be added to the annual income of the population hovering around the poverty line, it would substantially reduce the proportion of those living below the poverty line. This is the ultimate concrete aim of IPMAS.

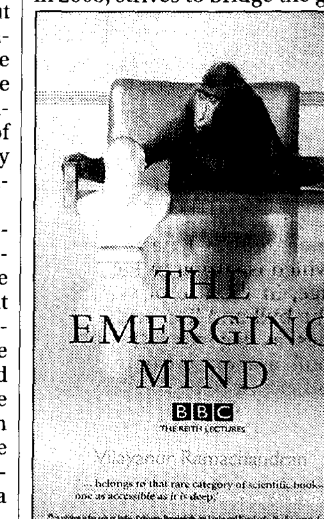
Considering the extent of meticulous, coordinated effort required for implementing the IPMAS strategy, it is clear that decentralised, autonomous, representative local institutions are a must and no single, centralised organisation can deliver the goods. Unfortunately, the vision of Nehru and S.K.Dey during the early days of Community Development to achieve this through a network of throbbing cooperative institutions failed. Or, rather, we failed these institutions.

In many of the articles, the authors recommend the creation of not only such institutions but also institutional alliances. Whether, in the present vitiated political environment, the cooperative concept can regain its old prestige and performance is doubtful.

One of the reasons why globalisation has faced some opposition in India is the neglect of agriculture; though it contributes only 26 per cent of the GDP it still employs nearly 70 per cent of the population directly or indirectly. It is this lacuna that this book seeks to address and redress to some extent.

P. K. DORAISWAMY

critical acclaim for his first book, *Phantoms in the Brain* has come up with yet another book to make the human mind less of an enigma to both the layperson and the professional. Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition and professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of California, and adjunct professor of biology at the Salk Institute, the eminent author in this book based on the BBC Reith lectures he delivered in 2003, strives to bridge the gap



between the disciplines of psychology and physiology on the one hand and, science and philosophy on the other.

Two main themes

The book focusses on two main themes — neurological conditions, about which there is limited recorded data and the evolutionary perspective to understand these conditions. The author's choice of unusual phenomena presented in this book is most praiseworthy. Notes on "prosopognosia", the inability to recognise faces, "Capgras syndrome", the failure to identify and accept an entity through visual appearance alone and "synesthesia", the predisposition to see colour in sensory [...] continues to perceive a limb that no longer exists after amputation.

He successfully demonstrates the use of mirrors as a means of visual feedback in the "unlearning" of learned paralysis and pain in the phantom limb. Experiments with schizophrenics laughing while tickling themselves, notes on pain "asymbolia" (where pain stimulates laughter) and the controversial redefinition of "free will" are extraordinary and quite delightful to read.

'Neuropsychiatry'

One of the greatest merits of this book is its exploration of mental illness within the boundaries of organic terminology, giving the discipline its new name — "neuropsychiatry". Conditions traditionally thought to be psychological in origin are shown to have a strong neurological basis. The experiments described are simple, yet staggering in their implications. The author's expertise is evident in his effective combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

There is an element of personal involvement — the enthusiasm regarding his discoveries is contagious. Unexpected touches of humour, interesting analogies and the superb rendering of the implication of neuroscience in psychology are the strengths of the book.

For the layperson the author's discussion of certain concepts elaborately may be tedious reading and the book's rather technical terminology difficult to decipher. Despite these limitations, the book is bound to stimulate not only further reading but also encourage interested laypeople and professionals to play an active role in the development of cognitive neuroscience.

MADHUMITHA BALAJI

Through the labyrinth of labour laws

A PEEP INTO LABOUR LAWS: V. S. Ekambaram, V. S. Balasubramaniyan; Pub. by Tamil Nadu Bank Employees Federation, Singapore Plaza, III Floor, 164, Linghi Chetty Street, Chennai-600001.

THIS IS a handy and compact book and a single source of reference on labour laws. The most important among the Acts covered are the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Trade Union Act. Although the authors have not reproduced the Acts in their work their comments on the various sections of each Act is lucid and cogent.

It will be of great help to workmen and trade union leaders and also budding lawyers to understand the nuances of the law. Inclusion of the Act would have made the publication more comprehensive.

The presentation gives an impression that the labour laws are meant only to protect the workmen ignoring the interest of the consumer, the common man and the employer. It is not so. There are many cases where the court decisions have gone against the plea of workers. All the Acts are there to protect diverse interests.

Changed situation

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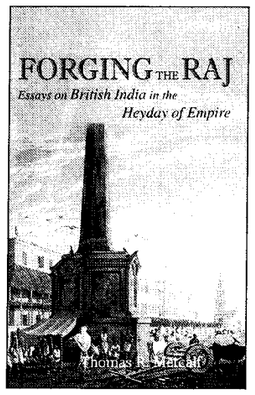

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- **Therdhal Kannottam:** R. Baskar; Saregamapadani, 7/4, Pujangarao Street, Saidapet, Chennai-600015. **Rs. 25.**
- **Thirukkural 1330:** Kumari S. Neelakandan; Thirunelveli South India Saivasiddhantha Noorpathipu Kazagam Ltd., 522, (Old No. 154) TTK Salai, Alwarpet, Chennai-600018. **Rs. 130.**
- **Kadhavai Thira... Kattru Varattum** — Part I: Parahamsa Sri Nithyanandhar; Dhiyanapeetam, Nithyanandapuri, Mysore Road, Pedathi-562109, Bangalore. **Rs. 75.**
- **Vikragam:** Sathyanandan; Kaavya, 14, First Cross Street, Trust Puram, Kodambakkam, Chennai-600024. **Rs. 65.**
- **Kurunthogai** — Parts I to IV: M.C. Prabhakarbabu: Thamizhkavi Pathippagam, 2/1, Solai Street, Ayyanpuram, Chennai-600023. **Rs. 280.**
- **120 Siruthoyil Seimuraigal:** S. A. Susairaja; Vidya Publications, PB No. 8859, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 55.**
- **Chozhar Kala Samayam:** A. Padmavathy; Kumaran Book House, 3 (12) Meigai Vinayagar Street, via Kumaran Colony 7th Street, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026. **Rs. 45.**
- **Siruvar Vikramadhithan Kathaigal:** N.C. Deivasigamani; Vidya Publications, PB No. 8859, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 65.**
- **Arutperunjothi Andhadhi:** Siva Selvaraj; Samarasa Suddha Sanmarkka Sathiya Sangam, 18-259, Mani Illam, Vadakku Kundal, Kanyakumari-629702. **Rs. 10.**
- **Iniya Thamizh Vazhi Hindi:** C.N. Krishnamoorthy; Shree Shenbaga Pathippagam, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**

Telugu

- **Telugu Katharamam:** N.C. Ramanujachary; Prapti Books, PB 5018, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. **Rs. 100.**
- **Sri Vaishnava Sampradayamu Sangraha Parichayamu:** R.S. Sudarsana Charlu; Copies can be had from the author, 10/553, Bellammandy Street, Cuddapah-516001. **Rs. 40.**
- **Manavatha Shatram:** D. M. Ravi Prasad; Maitreya Publications, 1-9-252/6/A/G3, Ramnagar, Hyderabad-500020. **Rs. 50.**
- **Menoo — Naa Rachanalu:** A. Anasuya Devi; Vanguri Foundation of America, Flat No. 102, Subhodaya Apartments, Officer's Colony, RK Puram, Secunderabad-500056. **Rs. 160.**
- **Shekartoons:** Shekar; Chetana 1-4-113, Bholakpur, Kavadiguda, Hyderabad-500080. **Rs. 50.**

Kannada

- **Bharana** — Commemoratory Volume on T. S. Nagabharana: M. A. Anand; Nagabharana Abhinandana Samithi, 148, 32nd 'A' Main, JP Nagar I Stage, Bangalore-560078. **Rs. 100.**
- **Americadalli Nanna Anubhavagalu:** Venkataswamy; **Rs. 80.**
- **Shabdartha Manjari** — Kannada-Kannada Dictionary: Rudramurthy Shastry; **Rs. 160.**
- **Monachu Haasya Kavanagalu** — Collection of Humorous Poems in Kannada: M.P.Manoharachandran; **Rs. 60.** The above three books pub. by Alilu Seva Samsthe, 133, I Floor, KR Road, Obalappa Garden, Bangalore-560082.

prove equitably the social, economic and environmental conditions of families in need with special emphasis on the rural poor, by identifying, developing and marketing affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable solutions through market forces."

The emphasis may be said to be on "market-shed development" similar to the concept of only local but also global markets especially as agriculture is the main sector where India may be hit by the unconscionable subsidies extended by western nations to their agriculture sector and the trade barriers erected by them for keeping out imports from developing countries.

The reform agenda for agriculture is vast, encompassing rural infrastructure, public

Of the 17 papers in the book, 11 relate to the various aspects of a revamped agricultural strategy, which would result in a marketable surplus in the hands of the rural farmer. Two papers relate to the use of information technology in aid of agricultural productivity, one to the role of genetically modified crops and the remaining three deal with international issues like subsidy to

doubtful.

One of the reasons why globalisation has faced some opposition in India is the neglect of agriculture; though it contributes only 26 per cent of the GDP it still employs nearly 70 per cent of the population directly or indirectly. It is this lacuna that this book seeks to address and redress to some extent.

P. K. DORAISWAMY

evolutionary perspective to understand these conditions. The author's choice of unusual phenomena presented in this book is most praiseworthy. Notes on "prosopognosia", the inability to recognise faces, "Capgras syndrome", the failure to identify and accept an entity through visual appearance alone and "synesthesia", the predisposition to see colour in sensory

cepts elaborately may be tedious reading and the book's rather technical terminology difficult to decipher. Despite these limitations, the book is bound to stimulate not only further reading but also encourage interested laypeople and professionals to play an active role in the development of cognitive neuroscience.

MADHUMITHA BALAJI

Through the labyrinth of labour laws

A PEEP INTO LABOUR LAWS: V. S. Ekambaram, V. S. Balasubramaniyan; Pub. by Tamil Nadu Bank Employees Federation, Singapore Plaza, III Floor, 164, Linghi Chetty Street, Chennai-600001.

THIS IS a handy and compact book and a single source of reference on labour laws. The most important among the Acts covered are the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Trade Union Act. Although the authors have not reproduced the Acts in their work their comments on the various sections of each Act is lucid and cogent.

It will be of great help to workmen and trade union leaders and also budding lawyers to understand the nuances of the law. Inclusion of the Act would have made the publication more comprehensive.

The presentation gives an impression that the labour laws are meant only to protect the workmen ignoring the interest of the consumer, the common man and the employer. It is not so. There are many cases where the court decisions have gone against the plea of workers. All the Acts are there to protect diverse interests.

Changed situation

The Industrial Disputes Act by itself is vaguely worded and loosely structured. The labour situation and the attitude of industry and management to workmen in 1947 were very much different from that prevailing in 1974, which have again changed considerably in 2004. Today the buzzwords are contract labour, outsourcing, downsizing, market economy and increasing private sector employment.

While the Act remains static, the situation is highly dynamic. The provisions of the Act have to be interpreted in the current context. The authors have done a good job in this regard. However, a more elaborate treatment of the Industrial Disputes Act would have been useful.

The case laws cited are useful source of information. A few instances where the trade union or the worker lost the case had been presented it would be helpful as a learning point for union leaders and workmen. On the whole the book is a very useful addition to the subject of labour laws.

S. ARUNAJATESAN

• The cyclonic monk • Bharati in the political domain • Ambassadors in classical literature • Social novel

TAMIL

SWAMI VIVEKANANDAR VIRIVANA VAZHKAI VARALARU — Vol I, Rs. 160, Vol II, Rs. 140: Swami Asutoshananda; Sri Ramakrishna Math, 31, R.K. Mutt Road, Mylapore, Chennai-600004.

THE RAMAYANA begins with Sage Valmiki seeking information from Sage Narada, "Is there, anywhere on Earth, an individual who can be called perfect in every respect?" Narada responds with delight. Yes, there is Sri Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, who shines with 16 supreme virtues. Valmiki gets the inspiration for composing his immortal epic.

Swami Asutoshananda must have experienced a similar itch to know. In our own troubled times, is there a prophet in whom all excellences meet and mingle and to whom we can turn to, to find life's fulfilment? Yes, there is Narendra, a prince among men, better known as Swami Vivekananda. And with great elan Asutoshananda's facile pen places before us a very detailed two-volume biography of Vivekananda.

He is an "orator by divine right." His five words, "Sisters and brothers of America," roused the 7,000 strong audience at the Chicago Parliament of World Religions to give him a standing ovation for many minutes.

There was no subject, secular, scientific or philosophial, of which he was not the master. His memory was prodigious; after glancing through a few pages of a book he had not read before, he could repeat those pages verbatim. His very stance proclaimed a hero per excellence.

On the Madras Marina he could wrestle with a professional wrestler and defeat him. He was acclaimed as the cyclonic patriot-monk and became a role model for the youth, so much so that his birthday January 12, has been declared the National Youth Day. With his razor-sharp intellect he could overwhelm anyone in debate. His lectures, letters and writings made recondite Vedantic ideas easy to understand.

Swami Asutoshananda has meticulously gathered all the details available about Swami Vivekananda in the various languages and crafted them into a highly readable story. He has not omitted any significant event in the hero's career, but has carefully checked and rechecked the details.

One special feature of this biography is that we get a memorable picture of Swamiji as the Guru, training disciples in the evening of his life. Hence this biography becomes an authoritative text to rely upon for all future writers and researchers on the Swami who is "the morning star of Indian Independence" and the "prophet of the divinization of man."

C. S. RAMAKRISHNAN

BHARATHIKKU THADAI — A Political Biography of Poet Bharathi: V.Venkatraman; Sudandhira Publications, 52 A, Nattukal Raja Street, Rajapalayam-626117. **Rs. 250.**

OVER THE past 75 years, numerous editions of Bharati's poetry have appeared. His works have been translated extensively, and both he, as a "character" and his works have been featured in a number of films. However, the writer pinpoints that the expansion of public access to Bharati's works has been matched by a decline in the quality of publication, from both technical and critical points of view.

While this is the concern of all, this book, written on the basis of accurate data and factual information, selectively gathered through assiduous research for well over a decade, provides a deep insight into the trial and tribulations undergone by Bharati not only in running newspapers and magazines during the freedom struggle but also in making his fiery articles see the light of the day.

In this 500-page volume which include some rare pictures, political cartoons that earned the wrath of the British rulers, and official orders proscribing the books of the poet, the author without much of ornamentation deals with facts and figures culled from records in government archives and renowned libraries.

His simple presentation takes the reader into the domain of Bharati as the editor of *India*, *Bala Barath* and many other magazines, as a committed soldier in the struggle for freedom, the unswerving disciple of Balagandara Tilak and above all a versatile poet who left an immortal treasure for the benefit of those in free India although he did not live to enjoy the fruits of his selfless toil.

The author has vividly narrated the untiring efforts of the poet to cement unity among Indians to stand as one man against the rulers by deftly using an episode from the Mahabaratha. The poet's treatment of *Panchali Sabatham* (the vow of Draupadi), projecting her as Mother India and comparing Kurushekthra war with the struggle for freedom, remains evergreen in the minds of the people as an unparalleled literary creation with a national message.

N. KALYANASUNDARAM

TELUGU

DOOTYA SAAHITYAM: Vallivedu Vidyalatha; 97/3, Velachery Road, Guindy, Chennai-600032. Distributed by Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 200.**

THIS BOOK deals with the theme of role of ambassadors as expounded in around 60 classics published between 15th and 20th Centuries. This treatise excels both in breadth and depth.

In the Mahabharatha (the trio of Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana) while the omniscient Krishna mediates between the Pandavas and the Kauravas as a last resort for avoiding the war, Bhishma goes as a self-appointed messenger (swayamduta) to Dasaraja seeking his daughter Matsyagandhi's hand for his father Santanu. In Bhaskara's Ramayana, Hanuman searching for Sita in Lanka is a three-in-one mission between Rama, Sita and Ravana.

In Kumarasambhava (Nannechoda) the seven sages (Saptarshis) request Himavan to offer his daughter Parvathi to Lord Siva, whose background is known to none except the saints. The role of divine swan (swan) in bringing together Nala and Damayanti in Sringara Naishadha (Srinada) and that of the Brahmin priest in carrying Rukmini's message to Krishna in Potana's Bhagavata are well known.

In Jashuva's Gabbilam (bat) a Dalit sends a bat as a messenger to Siva conveying his decision to perform abhishekam with his tears. All the books discussed abound with similar themes.

Going back to basics, the author discusses the figures of speech, sentiment and style. The book has fitting tributes by D. Chinnikrishniah and S. Akkireddy. The cover design with a bird messenger is elegant. The author deserves praise for her painstaking research in producing the volume.

P. V. L. N. RAO

MALAYALAM

DAIVATHINTE NIZHAL: Sulochana Nalappatt; DC Books, DCB Complex, Good Shepherd Street, Kottayam-686001. **Rs. 40.**

SULOCHANA NALAPPATT made her literary debut with "Kavadam" (Entrance), a novel, which she co-authored with her sister, Kamala Surayya (Das). With "Daivathinte Nizhal" (God's shadow), she emerges from the shadow of her famous sister and establishes herself as a novelist in her own right.

The central character of the novel is a doctor, who breaks away from the family to marry a north Indian collegemate only to return in an unsound state of mind after his wife's premature death. Much of the story, set against the backdrop of a traditional "Nair tharavad", centres on the way the rest of the family responds to him. As the story progresses, there are complications of a familiar kind: the teenaged companion of his younger brother's bride becomes pregnant and the family contains the scandal by finding her a suitable husband.

The distinguishing feature of the novel is the handling of the character of the doctor, whose consciousness flutters like a butterfly. Running through the story is a supernatural element that imparts it something of an ethereal quality.

The novelist, a doctor too, draws not only from her medical knowledge but also from such other sources as Carl Jung and the *Kathopanishad* to carry conviction with the reader.

B. R. P. BHASKAR

Coins of the Pallavas

THE PALLAVA COINS: R. Krishnamurthy; Garnet Publishers, T-7/1&2, Kaveri Salai, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. **Rs. 800.**

PALLAVA COINS have been known ever since Sir Walter Elliot's *Coins of Southern India* was published nearly a century and a half ago. However, their attribution could not be indisputably established. Attempts were also made by scholars like R. Nagaswamy, K.V. Raman and others to locate and identify Pallava coins in stratified excavations. In the last 20 years, a more intensified search for South Indian dynastic issues by A. Sitaraman and R. Krishnamurthy has brought to light quite a few coins of the Pallavas.

This work of R. Krishnamurthy is the most comprehensive, with an almost exhaustive account of Pallava coins and excellent illustrations, underlining the importance of the new discoveries. It is the first attempt to provide a scientific analysis of the metallurgy of these coins and the sources of the metals used by the Pallavas and their contemporaries.

Uncertainties may still persist because of the lack of good specimens and due to the occurrence of symbols such as the lion and the bull common to dynasties like the Vishnukundis and the Salankayanas, contemporaries of the early Pallavas. Yet, the present work may prove to be a basic source for research on the Pallavas, which needs to be taken serious note of in numismatic studies, as the paucity of coins in early medieval times has influenced studies on society and economy. The book in 13 sections covers a range of issues with elaborate footnotes and references giving special attention to the problems of identification and comparative study of the types of dynastic issues in appendices and notes.

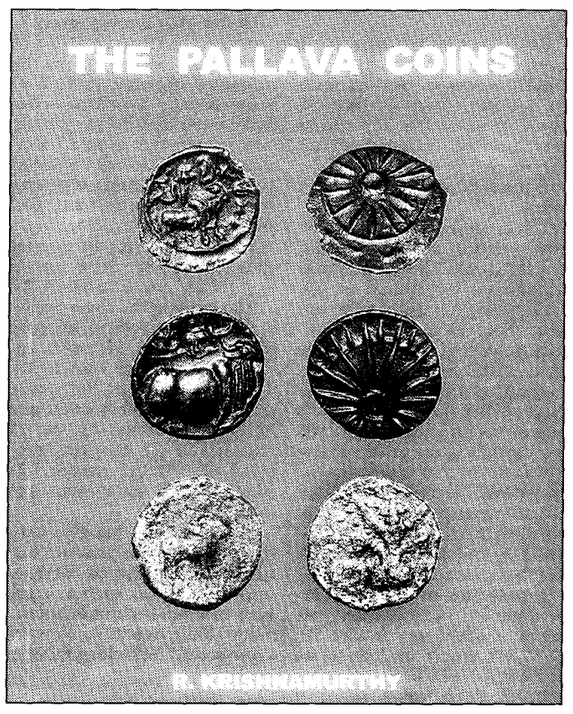
Pallava history

The first three sections provide an overview of the Pallava history and recount the author's experience of the collection of the coins over a period of time from the riverbeds of the Vaigai, Amaravati and south Pennaiyar, explaining their importance for the present study.

The significance of the work lies in the fact that the author introduces a periodisation by distinguishing the coins of the early Pallavas (4th-6th Centuries A.D.) of the southern Andhra region and those of the Simhavishnu line (6th-9th Centuries A.D.) ruling from Kanchipuram over the northern Tamil region and classifying them as those of the Pre-Mahendravarman I period i.e., Early Pallava coins with typical Pallava symbols but without legends and of the period of Mahendravarman I and his successors, with legends in addition to symbols.

Symbols and legends

The author rightly points out the Andhra dynastic tradition, which is strong in Pallava coinage, in the use of symbols like the bull and lion and Telugu titles as legends. The lion and bull are often combined with other symbols like the svastika,



srivatsa, the sacred lamp, kumbha, chakra, trisula, and the ship and horse. Symbols like the bull also occur on the early Pallava copper plate seals.

The die-struck technique is common to most of these dynasties. The Pallavas issued coins in lead and copper (high-tin bronze), lead for being soft, ductile and cheaper and high-tin bronze for its gold-like appearance. Silver seems to have been hardly used, although some have been reported from Sri Lanka.

The coin with the symbols of bull on the obverse and the tiger, fish and the bow on the reverse is taken to be a commemorative one, indicating the conquest of the Chola, Pandya and the Chera dynasties, a coin of Mahendravarman I (580-610 A.D.) with his title Sri Vampu.

In his account of the coins of successive rulers (section VI) the author describes and classifies the symbols of different periods, makes clear attributions, while constantly emphasising the problems of identification and attribution. Coins with legends occur only from the period of Mahendravarman I, whose titles are either in Telugu (Curumpu and Udduti) or derived from Southeast Asian names like Blapu, Mlayu and Katuntarambu.

The Sanskrit titles of Mahendravarman like Mahamegha and Lalitankura are known also from the cave inscriptions of the same king. Titles such as Srinidhi and Sribhara, were borne by more than one king i.e., Narasimhavarman I and Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha) and their attribution has often oscillated between the two, the present author ascribing them to Narasimhavarman I.

Strangely, the author makes no reference to the recently reported coin of the later Pallava king Dantivarman, wherein the legend "Danti" occurs. Interestingly, the coin moulds discovered in the Kamakshi temple excavations at Kanchipuram, including Pallava coin moulds are dismissed by the author as ancient forgeries meant for fake coins, without however giving adequate explanations.

Of considerable interest is the comparison with the coin issues of Southeast Asian dynasties, e.g., the Mons of Dvaravati in the lower valley of the River Menam in Thailand from the 6th Century A.D. onwards, which are traced to the predominant Pallava influence and also of the Arakan rulers of the 7th–9th Centuries A.D. South Indian influence is attributed to cultural and trade contacts as attested by the legends of the origin of some Southeast Asian dynasties (Fu Nan), but more directly seen in the technique (die-struck) used by the Dvaravati coins and the script influenced by the Pallava Grantha.

Metal analysis

The section on the analysis of the metals carried out by scientists and carefully applied to the Pallava coinage is perhaps the most useful and shows that lead was subjected to the isotope, spectroscopic analyses and hardness study. Its sources are located, lead mainly in Spain being used in early Roman and South Indian coins, although the author denies the possibility of the Roman lead being reused or older coins being recast in South India.

He also points out that a high percentage of tin rather than lead or zinc was used as an alloying element in the copper alloy or bronze coins of the Pallavas, as copper and tin, known to be the oldest known alloy, a closer imitation of gold, was preferred by the South Indian rulers.

The entire book is done on art paper with high quality illustrations, both photographs and sketches. The bibliography is selective and adequate. The book is a major addition to our knowledge of South Indian coinage.

R. VANAJA

PERFECT KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the difference between "intuitively" and "instinctively"? *(Anne, Vishakapatnam)*

If someone were to shine a bright light on your face, you would automatically close or shield your eyes. You would do these things without even thinking. They are responses you are born with; they are "innate". This is what we mean by "instinctively". We respond to things without really understanding why we react that way. Our responses are automatic; whatever happens, happens unconsciously. Both animals and human beings are born with instincts.

*When Raju heard gunfire, he instinctively dived/dove for cover.

When you do something intuitively, you do react automatically, but in this case there is a suggestion that you understand what it is you are doing. You are able to figure out a solution to your problem in a fraction of a second without really thinking about it. The story goes that the structure of Benzene came to the chemist Kekule in a sudden moment of insight. This is a case of intuition, not instinct. The word "intuition" is mostly used with human beings, and not with animals.

*Hari intuitively began to attack his opponent's backhand.

What is the meaning of "modus vivendi"? *(N. K. Rayaguru, Chennai)*

In Latin, it means a "manner of living", or a "way of life". In English, however, the expression is not used to mean this. It is used to refer to a compromise, usually temporary, between two parties that are fighting each other. One often hears this expression used by foreign ministers. If someone in the foreign ministry were to say, "If India and Pakistan want to avoid a nuclear holocaust, a modus vivendi must be attained," what he means is that despite the many differences, the two countries must find a way of coexisting peacefully.

*The two rival gangs managed to achieve a sort of modus vivendi.

What is the meaning of "once bitten twice shy"? *(Dr. C. Venkatramaiah, Tirupati)*

If you fall in love with a girl and the girl ditches you, what would your reaction be? You would probably be really angry, but at the same time you would be scared to fall in love again. Having had a bad experience previously, you would be reluctant to put yourself in the same situation again. That's what the idiom, "once bitten twice shy", means.

*The caterer arrived three hours late last time, so Rama is not hiring him again. I guess it's a case of once bitten twice shy.

*The last time he ate fish, he almost choked. He's stopped eating fish altogether — once bitten twice shy.

How is the word "brochure" pronounced? *(G. Vedarajan, Thanjavur)*

The "o" sounds like the "oa" in "oat", "boat", and "goat". The following "ch" is pronounced like the "sh" in "should", "ship", and "sharp". The final "ure" sounds like the "er" in "her" and "herd". The main stress is on the first syllable. This is how the British pronounce the word. The Americans, on the other hand, pronounce the "ure" like the "ure" in "sure", "cure" and "pure". They tend to put the stress on the second syllable. A "brochure" is a booklet containing information about something.

*We want to bring out a brochure for the upcoming seminar.

***** ***** *****

"In my judgment, when the United States says there will be serious consequences, and if there isn't serious consequences, it creates adverse consequences." — ***George W. Bush***

S. UPENDRAN

FROM THE BLURB

- **Transition to Eminence** — The Indian Navy 1976-1990: Vice Admiral G. M. Hiranandani (Retd.); Pub. by Ministry of Defence (Navy), New Delhi in association with Lancer Publishers & Distributors, K-36 A (FF), Green Park Main, New Delhi-110016. **Rs. 1500.**

This volume of the Navy's history covers the period 1976 to 1990 and examines the Navy's success in keeping abreast of advances in technology in step with progressive self-reliance. In a decade and a half of innovation the Navy equipped its indigenously built frigates, corvettes and other vessels with combinations of the latest available weapons and equipment from the Soviet Union, Europe and indigenous sources.
All these hi-tech inductions needed to be operated and manned by better-educated and better-trained personnel. New maintenance, repair and refit facilities had to be created and the increase in the volume of spares and the diversity of sources compelled modernisation of the logistics system.
This volume analyses how these problems were tackled. Between 1987 and 1990, Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka provided valuable experience of supporting troops from seaward and of low intensity conflict in confined waters. This operation is discussed in the context of the strategic sensitivity of India's southern seaboard.

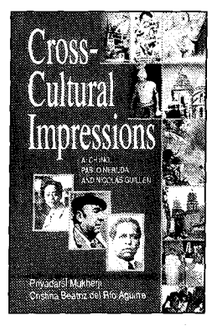
- **Hinduism** — Past and Present: Axel Michaels, translated from original German by Barbara Harshav; Orient Longman Private Limited, 1/24, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 325.**

Currently followed by one-fifth of humankind, Hinduism far from being a monolithic theistic tradition, the religion comprises thousands of gods, a complex caste system and hundreds of dialects. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have been hesitant to define universal Hindu beliefs and practices.
In this book the author breaks this trend and examines the traditions, beliefs and rituals Hindus hold in common through the lens of what he deems its "identificatory habitus", a cohesive force that binds Hindu religions together and fortifies them against foreign influences. In his analysis he not only locates Hinduism's profoundly differentiating qualities but also provides the framework for an analysis of its social and religious coherence.

- **Jinnah** — A Corrective Reading of Indian History, Vol.1: Asiananda; Open University Press, an affiliate of Intercultural Open University, Netherlands, S-221, Greater Kailash II, New Delhi-110048.

This first of the two-volume book is a quest of a post-nuclear global order on the matrix of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan on the postulate of a South Asian nuclear-free zone broadening towards a nuclear-free Asia and nuclear-weapon-free world as being pursued by the various resolutions currently on the U.N. agenda.
The author pleads for a new understanding of Jinnah in Indian history as he says that without a corrective reading of Indian history it is impossible for India to come to terms with the "legacy" of the Partition and a reconciled subcontinent is the precondition for an Asian peace order.

- **Cross-cultural Impressions** — Ai Ch'ing, Pablo Neruda and Nicolas Guillen: Priyadarsi Mukherji and Cristina Beatriz del Rio Aguirre; Authorspress, E-35/103, Jawahar Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092. **Rs. 300.**



An endeavour towards greater understanding between the Orient and the Occident, this is an anthology of reminiscences and poems by three international poets, Ai Ch'ing (1910-1966), a renowned litterateur of modern China; the Chilean Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda (1904-1973); and the famous Afro-Cuban poet Nicolas Guillen (1902-1990). The verses in this book reflect the cross-cultural impressions that the three poets had during their transcontinental tour. Ai Ch'ing's impressions of some Latin American and African countries and Neruda's and Guillen's impressions of China, Vietnam and India constitute the corpus of the book.

OPEN PAGE

The religion we need

"NOT RELIGION, but religious dogma" leads to conflict, "Religion should graduate into spirituality." These two epigrammatic statements of President Adbul Kalam are worth pondering over. It has been said that more blood has been shed over the cause of religion than any other cause. This is confirmed by what is happening today. It is a paradox that religion is at once a cohesive and divisive force. If religion with its potential for good has turned into a destructive force, it is but a perversion of religion.

Religion in its deepest sense has laid the foundation of moral order. It has extended the bounds of human sympathy and underscored the values of humanity, charity in the sense of love and tolerance, faith in a transcendental divine order, respect for the sanctity of all forms of life and observance of the decencies of life. The inherent divinity of the human being, universal brotherhood, unity of all faiths, and collective progress and peace — these are basic to all religions and form their core.

Erosion of values

All values advocated by religion are threatened by greed, violence, exploitation, competitive religion, consumerism, commercialisation and such forces. It looks as if religion has become its own enemy. Every sphere of human activity from the individual and domestic to the international level is torn with chaos and conflict. "Parents have very little love for each other and in the home begins the disruption of the world" (Mother Teresa).

The spirit of scepticism generated by science has resulted in an erosion of values. The world is broken into narrow domestic walls. Communities tend to be imprisoned in their watertight compartments bearing the respective labels — religion, caste, race, nation, ideology, etc. The phenomenal growth in knowledge is not matched by a commensurate growth in wisdom which lies in the cultivation of humanising impulses. "We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom and power without conscience. We know more about war than about peace, more about killing than about living" (General Omar S. Bradley).

We boast about our civilisation. There is nothing particularly civilised in travelling by plane or living in air-conditioned comfort. Speed, quantity, sophisticated lifestyle and bank balance do not make for civilisation. Human beings have been described as the elder brothers of the animals and the younger brothers of the gods. Civilisation fulfils itself when they are elevated from animality to spirituality. Religion and spirituality have their role in this transforming and regenerating process. Their role should be redefined and reformulated in the modern context.

Religion is awareness: it is wisdom and enlightenment. Bigotry, hatred, dogma, fanatical fury, intolerance and such negative elements are alien to it. "I was born not to share men's hatred but their love" (*Antigone*: Sophocles). True religion is free from the trappings of superstition, dogma, ritual, quackery, magic and witchcraft. It is sensitive to social needs. Holiness, purity, charity, human equality, service to human beings, etc., are religious universals and not the prerogative of any one faith.

Religion and spirituality should not be equated with otherworldliness or ascetic seclusion and escape from life's realities. They are related to life here and now and provide the guidelines for the art of living. One is most religious and spiritual when one is most human. A Russian peasant remarked at the conclusion of a lecture by Maxim Gorky on the marvels of science. "We are taught to fly in the air like birds and swim in water like fish, but how to live on earth, we do not know."

Fellowship of faiths

Religions are many, but religion is one. There is no relative superiority of one religion over another. One should go beyond denominational religion to understand religion. What the world needs is a fellowship of faiths on a common march towards a common goal. "Man must evolve for all human conflicts a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love." These words of Martin Luther King sum up the essence of religion. The present cancerous growth of hatred and violence can be averted by the inculcation and assimilation of the spirit of religion — religion understood to mean "refinement," "sweetness and light," "the culture of the soul," and "the culture of tolerance." The question is not, "why religion?" but "what kind of religion?"

• S. JAGADISAN & T.V. VENKATARAMAN

Baglihar project and Pakistan's tantrums

THE RECENT developments on the Baglihar Project subsequent to the inconclusive talks between the Water Resources Secretaries of India and Pakistan have serious implications for the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue for lasting peace in the subcontinent. Pakistan's decision to seek World Bank's arbitration on the ongoing hydro-electric project is in stark contrast to the confidence building measures being attempted by India.

Even though India had shown its willingness to be receptive on the issues of technical modifications for the project without endangering the safety of the dam and the hydropower plant under construction, it has been reported that Pakistan considers Baglihar as another dispute with India requiring solution for improvement in relations between the two countries.

Mediatory efforts

The World Bank came into the scene of dispute cropping up between India and Pakistan on the sharing of the waters of the Indus basin as a sequel to the partition of India in 1947. Mediatory efforts by the Bank resulted in the signing of Indus Waters Treaty in 1960. The treaty apportioned the entire waters of the three eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — to India except for limited domestic, non-consumptive and irrigation use by Pakistan; and the waters of the three western rivers, namely, the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum were allocated to Pakistan, less limited uses by India for domestic, agricultural and non-consumption purposes including hydro-power generation under certain conditions. Non-consumptive uses are permitted subject to the proviso that the water is returned to these rivers, exclusive of seepage and evaporation incidental to the drawal or use. The provisions in the treaty enable India to build storages with limited capacities on each of the three western rivers to be used for hydro-power generation and other purposes.

The treaty also specifies that the operations of any new run-of-river hydro plant have to be in such a way that the volume of water received in the upstream of the plant during any period of seven consecutive days shall be delivered into the river below the plant during the same seven day period and also ensuring certain minimum and maximum flows every day during such period into the river below.

The proposed Baglihar project envisages a run of the river scheme on the Chenab to facilitate hydro-power generation which would specifically benefit Jammu and Kashmir. The project has been planned as per the stipulations in the treaty and is under construction. The main objection from Pakistan is that with the project in position, India could hold the river flow to the disadvantage of Pakistan either by stopping the water supply to western Pakistan or creating flood situations downstream in that country by abrupt operations of the gated structure. However, these allegations have been made by Pakistan only with the sole objective of stopping the project construction as it is also aware that the existing Salal hydro-electric project located downstream would be severely affected to India's disadvantage with such haphazard operations.

India described these misplaced allegations as unfounded fears pointing out that the operations would be as provided for in the treaty. Further, any breach of the condition stipulated would tantamount to the breach of the treaty and India would never like to be a party to that. The country's record in this regard for the past more than four decades would clearly show that despite two wars and strained Indo-Pak relations in the past, India had honoured the treaty in letter and spirit.

Pakistan's fulminations over Baglihar have resulted in that country approaching the World Bank since in the laid down procedures, the treaty signed by the two countries provides for a role for the Bank. Though the Bank is not a "guarantor" of the treaty, it is signatory for specified purposes including settlement of differences and disputes between these countries on the interpretation of the treaty provisions. As provided for in the treaty, "differences" between them could be referred to a "neutral expert" and if the differences do not fall within the mandate of the expert or if the expert decides that the differences should be treated as a "dispute," then the Bank would be required to establish a "court of arbitration."

No logical reason

There is no logical reason for Pakistan for issuing such recriminations about Baglihar. Hence, India has to be prepared to meet Pakistan's tactics in the international media, given the fact that the treaty itself has been concluded at the instance of the World Bank ignoring the basic then existing criteria for sharing international waters as espoused in the Helsinki Rules and other precedents.

Further, India's bitter experience with the planned Tulbul Navigation Project on the Jhelum in India should be an eye opener while dealing with Pakistan on issues connected with the treaty. This navigation project in Jammu and Kashmir was taken up for construction in 1984, but the construction has been held up due to objections from Pakistan and the work stalled for the past two decades as discussions did not make any headway.

The present stand of Pakistan on the Baglihar is unfortunate as it is a ploy to negate India's efforts to develop the hydro-potential it is eligible to harness as per the treaty. The anguishing part of the fact is that though these rivers have an assessed hydro-potential of 8,825 MW (60 per cent load factor), as of now only about 1,350 MW has been harnessed by India. Such actions are likely to create a demand even for abrogation of the treaty, a demand which has been getting support from various quarters in India in the recent past, particularly in view of the general feeling that the treaty has been to the disadvantage of the country as the water sharing formula adopted therein is not equitable as per international practices followed for decades.

So far India has been compromising on many aspects to ensure the successful functioning of the accord. But Pakistan has carried the issues beyond the realms of the international agreement. Time has passed since the signing of the treaty, but history has not stood still. A situation has now come for India to take a tough stand on the Baglihar and other projects since India has strength in its arguments that it has not violated any provisions in the treaty; halting the work at this stage after investing crores of rupees on the project would be negating the development efforts for the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir; and the Bank has not been conferred any power to suspend the work on any project.

• M.S. MENON
Former Chief Engineer, CWC

What can NRIs do for India?

I AM an NRI from North America currently visiting India. I am being overtaken by an ineffable emotion of doing some good by India. But mine is not the only case. Some fellow NRIs now criss-crossing the country tell me of having a similar emotion. They too are besotted with India. Perhaps all this has to do with the Indian government's recently announced dual citizenship law and the effusive honour accorded to the NRIs at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. It seems the NRI is finally getting the recognition he deserves from the mother country.

This attitude differs sharply from the one that prevailed in the 1980s when a visiting NRI, regardless of his credentials, was deemed a potential smuggler and his humiliation began at the airport, especially if he refused to grease the palms of the Customs staff. That was the time when the 'licence-permit raj' ruled the roost and a morbid xenophobia gripped the country. Thankfully that era is behind us and Manmohan Singh, as the Finance Minister, had no small part to partially dismantle the system.

So what can NRIs do for India? A lot, is the answer. For instance, some 200,000 prosperous NRI retirees in Canada and the U.S., a new brand of tourists, want to visit India routinely to escape the cold weather of the West. They will pour millions of dollars yearly into Indian economy, creating a ripple effect for the hospitality, healthcare, clothing and tourism sectors. In return, they want India to provide long-distance bus service at the major Indian airports, more frequent air links to more cities and build some safe 3-star and 4-star motel chains.

Untapped resource

Again, a large number of foreign-educated NRIs (some 25,000) such as doctors, engineers, teachers, economists, MBAs and the like, now superannuated from service and earning fabulous pensions, yearn to serve India. These NRIs, the professional elites of the affluent First World, will accept volunteer assignments in the nation's schools, laboratories and institutions of higher learning. To date, this resource remains untapped.

Perhaps the privately-run Indian colleges can set the ball rolling and break the mould to herald an era of innovative teaching and learning. After all, in North American universities, summer courses are widely taught by the guest teachers. The Indian government institutions, caught as they are in inertia and red-tapism, will tend to resist. But once the barriers are removed India will create new intellectual trends to modernise learning and help accelerate its development.

Finally, NRIs with the dual citizenship would be well disposed to invest in the real estate field. India needs some 150 million new homes/apartments. NRIs have the money and experience of living in modern and safe apartments abroad. They would like to duplicate the experience in India.

But there is one serious hurdle. While in the West, buying and selling property is a simple affair it is not so in India. For example, many an NRI, especially from Punjab, who had migrated to Canada decades ago, have in due course become the legal heirs to their ancestral properties in the State. But this ownership is more imaginary than real. The NRIs' relatives, in collusion with the local officials, are often successful in intimidating and depriving them of their property.

A similar situation exists in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Perhaps the new Ministry of NRI Affairs will help untangle the mess to attract foreign investment in a big way.

If some 80 years ago, two NRIs, Gandhiji and Nehru, on returning home, could help throw off the yoke of the mighty British Empire, surely then the modern NRI can at least lend a helping hand to enhance prosperity in mother land. If given a chance, the NRI will become a metaphor for change.

• PREM KUMAR

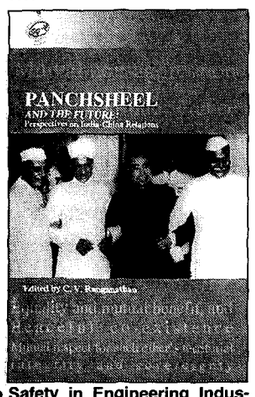
Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

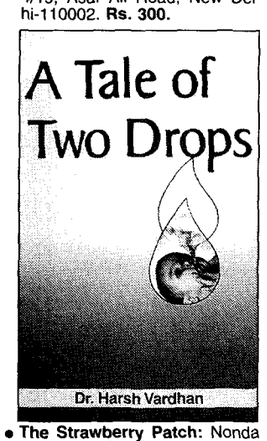
BOOK REVIEW

NEW ARRIVALS

- **State of Fear:** *Michael Crichton*; HarperCollins Publishers India, I A Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 250.**
- **Blossoms of Love:** Kodi Sateesh Kamath; English Edition Publishers & Distributors (India) Pvt. Ltd., 5/10-11, 105, Jogani Industrial Complex, VN Purav Marg, Chunabhatti, Mumbai-400022. **Rs. 150.**
- **A Shift in the Wind:** Aminuddin Khan; HarperCollins Publishers India, I A Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 295.**
- **Cultural Heritage of India:** J. Thuljaram Rao; Impress, 19, Krishnaswamy Mudaliar Road, R. S. Puram, Coimbatore-641002. **Rs. 125.**
- ***Know Your Power* — A Citizens Primer on the Electricity Sector:** Prayas; Prayas, C/o. Amrita Clinic, Athawale Corner, Karve Road, Deccan Gymkhana, Pune-411004. **Rs. 150.**
- **Panchsheel and the Future** — Perspectives on India-China Relations: C.V. Ranganathan — Editor; Samskriti, C-9020, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070. **Rs. 675.**



- **Safety in Engineering Industry:** N. Srinivasan; Vijay Consultant Services, 11 (Old No. 22) New Bangaru Colony, K.K. Nagar West, Chennai-600078. **Rs. 100.**
- **K.D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) — A Centenary Tribute:** Sachidananda Mohanty; The Integral Life Foundation, U.S., distributed by Rupa & Co., 7/16, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 200.**
- ***Historical Dictionary of Nepal:*** Nanda R. Shrestha; Keshav Bhattarai; Vision Books Pvt. Ltd., 24, Feroze Gandhi Road, Lajpat Nagar III, New Delhi-110024. **Rs. 750.**
- **Knowledge Management** — An Introduction to Creating-Competitive Advantage from Intellectual Capital: Carl Davidson; Philip Vass; Vision Books Pvt. Ltd., 24, Feroze Gandhi Road, Lajpat Nagar III, New Delhi-110024. **Rs. 395.**
- **A Comprehensive Dictionary of Bharathanatyam:** Vidya Bhavani Suresh; A. Skanda Publication, 9/1 (Old No.) Palathope, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 195.**
- **Sri Pei Azhwar's Moonram Thiruvandhadi:** N. Rajagopalan; II Floor, 'Sri Nidhi' T-37, A & B 16th Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. **Rs. 100.**
- **New Upgraded Encyclopedia of English Grammar & Composition:** Kavita Khurana; English Edition Publishers & Distributors (India) Pvt. Ltd., 5/10, 11, 105, Jogani Industrial Complex, VN Purav Marg, Chunabhatti, Mumbai-400022. **Rs. 395.**
- **Maintenance of Public Order — A Source Book:** Samar Singh; National Book Trust, A-5, Green Park, New Delhi-110016. **Rs. 60.**
- **Text Book of English Grammar:** Kavita Khurana; English Edition Publishers & Distributors (India) Pvt. Ltd., 5/10, 11, 105, Jogani Industrial Complex, VN Purav Marg, Chunabhatti, Mumbai-400022. **Rs. 195.**
- **You Can Live Successfully In Your Lifetime:** Ben Abbott; Arora's Book World, 120, Gandhi Market, Ambala Cantt. **Rs. 125.**
- **A Tale of Two Drops:** Harsh Vardhan; Ocean Books Pvt. Ltd., 4/19, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 300.**



- **The Strawberry Patch:** Nonda Chatterjee; **Rs. 250.**
- **Piece of Cake:** Swati Kaushal; **Rs. 250.**
- **Star Dust — Vignettes from the Fringes of the Film Industry:** Roopa Swaminathan; **Rs. 275.**
- **Under an Indian Shy — Ten Years in Bihar Village:** Janet Ganguli; **Rs. 250.**
- **Book of Nature:** Ruskin Bond; **Rs. 295.** The above five books pub. by Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-110017.
- **Planning Career in The Twenty First Century Job Market:** T. M. Farhathullah; Boston Publishers, 27, Hashim Nagar, Melvisharam-632509, Vellore. **Rs. 100.**
- **Law of Insecticides, Fertiliser (Control) Order and Seeds:** Asia Law House, Opp High Court, Hyderabad-500002. **Rs. 550.**
- **Kashmiri Pandits — A Contemporary Perspective:** M.L. Pandit, T.N. Pandit; **Rs. 395.**
- **Women Entrepreneurship:** Nayan Barua, Aparajeeta Borkakoty; **Rs. 595.**
- **Manmohan Singh Visionary to Certainty:** K. Bhushan, G. Katyal; **Rs. 295.**
- **Textile Testing:** Jewel Raul; **Rs. 595.**
- **The New Terrorism — Islamist International:** D. P. Sharma; **Rs. 1,295.**
- ***Poverty Alleviation in the Third World:*** Sita Ram Singh; **Rs. 795.** The above six books pub. by APH Publishing Corporation, 5, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002.

Tamil

- **Uzhaippal Uyarndha Uthamar** — Life History of P. Nachimuthu Gounder: Vimala Ramani; Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering and Technology, Udumalai Road, Pollachi-642003. **Rs. 115.**
- **Kaadhalin Paarvaiyil:** R. Deepa; **Rs. 25.**
- **Urchagam Oottum Vidukathaikal:** *Thillainambi*; **Rs. 30.**
- **Indhu Madham** — Mariporul Thathuva Vilakam: Akil; **Rs. 25.**
- **Top 10 Siru Kathaigal:** M. Ananthakumar; **Rs. 22.**
- **Anbuk Kuzhandaikalukku Azhagana Peyar Soottungal:** Annapoorani; **Rs. 55.**
- **Seerum Sirappum Mikka Ammanin Arulalayangal:** S.S. Ragavacharyar; **Rs. 40.** The above six books pub. by Thirumagal Nilayam, New No. 16, Old No. 55, Venkatanarayana Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017.
- **Pambatti Siddhar:** S. Madasamy; Aruvi Publications, 19, Santhanam Nagar, Madurai-625003. **Rs. 30.**
- **Thamizhil Kavithai Mozhipeyarppu:** K. Sahul Hammed; New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 70.**
- **Ilakkiya Ulaa:** M. Thirumalai; *Arivu Pathippagam, 142, Jani* Johnkhan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. **Rs. 40.**
- **Bharathiyin Muzhakkam:** Manitha Neyan; New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 30.**
- **Jadhagappadi Numerology:** G. Raveendranath, R. Karthik; Sri Shenbaga Pathippagam, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 20.**
- **Vaazhkkai Oru Jeevanathi:** Ushadhipan; New Century Book House (P) Ltd., 41-B, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600098. **Rs. 40.**
- **Kaniporiyil Page Maker:** Bala Sankaran; Young Diamond Publishers, Old No. 24, Krishna Street, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 65.**
- **Uyirinangalin Varalaru Kanda Darwin:** P. Senguttuvan; Sri Shenbaga Pathippagam, 24, Krishna Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 50.**
- **Sri Vaiganasabhagavath Sastram:** Sangendhi S. Muthu; GI Arakkatalai, 31, Sadayappan Street, Mandavali, Chennai-600028. **Rs. 100.**
- **Puducheriyil Bharathiyar:** P.B.B. Moore; IRISH — LPMS, 280, Annasalai, Pondicherry-605001. **Rs. 225.**
- **Inba Ninaivu and Santhippu:** Akilon; Dhagam, G3/8, Masilamani Street, Pondy Bazaar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 45.**
- **Alvathundugalum Sila Anugundugalum:** C. K. Chandramohan; Mathi Nilayam, Brindavan Apartments, 4(39), Thanikachalam Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**
- **Astronomy:** M. Arul Thalapathi; Comptex Publishers, T8, Power Tower, 91, Arcot Road, Virugambakkam, Chennai-600092. **Rs. 60.**
- **Manappadhivugal:** C. K. Chandramohan; Mathi Nilayam, Brindavan Apartments, 4(39), Thanikachalam Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 25.**

Telugu

- **Indradhanussu Yedo Rangu** — Seventh Colour of the Rainbow: Pennepalli Gopalakrishna; Prajasakti Book House, 1-1-187/1/2, Chikkadpalli, Hyderabad-500020. **Rs. 75.**
- **Divyajnana Taraka Rajayogi** — Life and Philosophy of Swami T. Subba Row: N.C. Ramanujachary; Prapti Books, PB No 5018, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. **Rs. 150.**
- **Ramayanam:** Mullapudi Venkatramana; Impressions, 26-4/1/-10, Krishnamurthy Street, Gandhinagar, Vijaywada-520003. **Rs. 150.**
- **Maa Iddari Katha:** S. A. Rao; Visalandhra Book House, 4-3-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Komarraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao:** Budaraju Radhakrishna; Sahitya Akademi, Southern Regional Office, Central College Campus, Dr B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore-560001. **Rs. 25.**

Kannada

- **Ayda Swaravachanagalu:** V.G. Poojar;
- **Janapada Kathanageetegalu** — Selected Works of Ballads: P. K. Khandoba, T.M. Bhaskar; **Rs. 50.**
- **Ayda Vachanagalu:** Sangamesh Savadathimath, S.M. Hiremath — Editors;
- **Ayda Keertanegalu:** Basavaraj Sabarad — Editor;
- **Nagachandra's Ramachandra Charita Purana Sangraha:** Shantinatha Dibbada; The above five books pub. by Prasaranga, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga-585106. **Rs. 50** each.

Malayalam

- **Upanishathukal Oru Vimarsana Padanam — Vols 1 to 4:** J. Edamaruku; Indian Atheist Publishers , 779, Pocket 5, Mayur Vihar I, New Delhi-110091. **Rs. 200.**
- **Svaritam:** K. N. Neelakandan; Lipi Publications, B-14, Vikas Building, Railway Station Link Road, Kozhikode-673002. **Rs. 40.**

The reforms experience

INDIA'S EMERGING ECONOMY — Performance and Prospects in the 1990's and Beyond: Kaushik Basu — Editor; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 525.**

THIS COLLECTION, one of the latest additions to the huge literature on India's economic reform, covers a wide variety of issues viewed from diverse perspectives. It is of more than ordinary interest because the contributors include some of the most knowledgeable scholars and commentators on India's development, persons with firsthand experience as entrepreneurs, policy makers or as policy advisors.

Prospects

Besides the editorial introduction, there are some 16 essays divided into five sections. In section two, Sen makes a strong plea for democracy, pluralism and secularism. He argues that their incorporation as core principles of the Indian Constitution is its distinctive and valuable feature and that sustaining them for over five decades has given strength and resilience to the system. However, he sees these being threatened by rising religious fundamentalism and pleads for fighting this tendency.

Bardhan and Harris-White towards the end of the collection, focus on the political economy of reforms. Both are pessimistic about the prospects of reform on the ground that political configurations are inimical to radical fiscal and governance reforms.

Harris-White argues that in the absence of a strong public mandate for tax compliance and against corruption, and effective mechanisms to ensure public accountability, the "intermediate classes" will continue to be powerful and this is inimical to accumulation and to achieving inclusive, broad based and egalitarian growth.

Increasing corruption

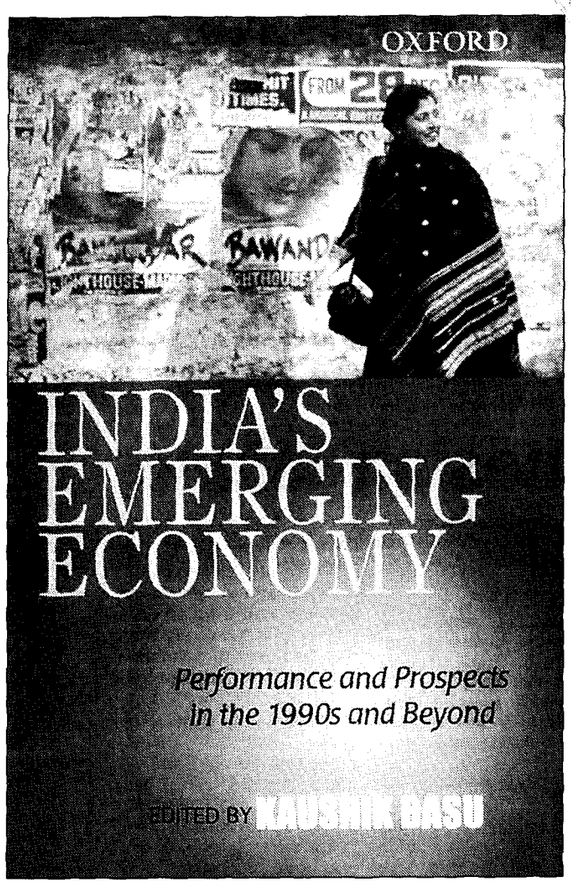
Bardhan too highlights these constraints but attributes increasing corruption and the breakdown of public institutions to the ascendancy of Other Backward Classes and other under-classes in the political power structure. This diagnosis is highly questionable.

Populism in public policy is not new. The reasons for burgeoning fiscal deficits have not changed; the beneficiaries of lax tax collection, salary increase for public sector employees and burgeoning subsidies continue to be well-to-do farmers, businessmen, organised sector workers and the middle classes.

Nor is corruption in public life new. Its increase and spread is arguably an intensification of a longstanding tendency of public servants to extract cuts on public contracts, and its growing collusion between elected political executives and the bureaucracy for siphoning off public funds (including those ostensibly meant for poverty alleviation) to line party and personal coffers, and for institutionalised dispensation of patronage to party workers and favoured constituents.

From a macroeconomic perspective

In section three, Mihir Rakshit reviews and critiques the reform experience of the 1990s from a macroeconomic perspective. Reddy provides a rich insider's account of the evolution and impact of monetary and financial sector reforms.



Govinda Rao focusses on the fiscal reforms at the state level.

Of the two essays in section four, Ferro et al's paper, "Policies for Pro-poor Growth" expounds the current World Bank view on India's development policies that while rapid growth is the main instrument for poverty alleviation, it needs to be combined with measures for "empowerment" of the poor by investing in their education and health, and decentralisation to ensure greater public accountability of the government.

Banerjee explores the role of historical background, social structure and political factors in accounting for regional differences in access to public goods. The paper is interesting for its attempt to develop measurable indicators of these aspects and exploring the use of econometric techniques to assess their influence on inter-district variation in education and health care in Andhra Pradesh.

IT and development

Section five "Technology and Take off" focusses exclusively on the potential of the software industry in India's development. Narayanmurthy provides a brief — all too brief — review of the evolution of the industry, the role of economic reforms in facilitating and stimulating its rapid growth and directions of further reform to sustain the growth.

Nirvikar Singh's paper is a much more comprehensive and detailed account of the evolution and current structure of India's information technology, its potential role in achieving faster overall growth.

In his view the projections of the software segment may be over optimistic but the complementary and spill over effects of IT are likely to be strong provided economic reforms both at a macro level and for promoting innovation and competition in the telecom sector.

In the last section, Jhabvala and Kanbur provide a grassroots perspective of the impact of reforms on the informal sector where women workers predominate. Based on ground level experience of SEWA, they find the impact "highly differentiated and nuanced." They at the same time find falling wages and declining bargaining power of unskilled labour and the increased risk and vulnerability facing them as troubling features calling for purposive and focussed corrective action.

Future directions

Besides highlighting the main points of the contributions, Basu provides an overview and interpretation of the slow pace of India's development before and during the 1990s, and on future directions.

Of special interest is his emphasis on the role of institutions, cultural norms and social structure that together determine what he calls "organisational capital."

Like most other contributors, Basu favours the move towards a liberal market economy, drastic reduction of direct state involvement in and control of economic activity and external liberalisation to allow for freer movement of goods, people and capital.

But, with reservations over its nature, extent and pace as evident in his caution about the adverse impact of too sudden and drastic liberalisation of imports on the capacity of indigenous industry and especially of the small scale and handicraft segments to compete with imports and plants set up by foreign companies; and of free flow of foreign finance capital on internal financial stability.

The essays do not add up to a comprehensive or unified assessment of the still-evolving reform experience. One wishes that several important and some critically important issues that are now in the centre stage had been addressed.

Despite this limitation, interested readers, especially non-professionals, would benefit from reading the clear and informed exposition of what happened, where the trends are headed, what kind of problems are emerging and how they are being addressed in several important aspects.

A. VAIDYANATHAN

Bridge between the past and present

SWAMI VIVEKANANDARIN JNANA DEEPAM — Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in 11 Volumes (Tamil): Sri Ramakrishna Math, 31, Ramakrishna Math Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600004. **Rs. 50** (single volume) and **Rs. 500** (for the set).

"HIS PRESENCE was dynamic. (When he spoke), instantly to me it was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth. From that moment life had a new import." The live wire, Ms. Josephine MacLeod, was reminiscing about Swami Vivekananda whom she met in New York.

She was affluent, fiery-spirited and imperial to her fingertips, but after meeting Swamiji, she stood transformed, like clay in a sculptor's hands.

That was Swamiji, "All who came into contact with him, directly or indirectly were overwhelmed by his charisma." The French savant, Romain Rolland says, "I cannot touch these sayings of his without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock." Gandhiji records, "I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after going through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand- fold."

Jawaharlal Nehru extols him, "Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige. Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a bridge between the past of India and her present."

Multifaceted genius

The highly critical Rajaji declares, "Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We owe everything to Swami Vivekananda." And Rabindranath Tagore gives a poetic touch, "If you want to know India, read Vivekananda."

This book throws a flood of light on the diverse aspects of Swamiji's multifaceted genius. Studying these pages we realise how appropriate is the description of Swamiji as the morning star of the Indian Independence. To a land writhing under economic and political slavery he restored national self-respect.

His message of fervent patriotism was a clarion call. He exhorted the youth to proclaim, "Every Indian is my brother, the ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian is my brother. The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good."

The prophet of mass awakening he cried out, "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." He was for man-making education and man-making religion.

Not a mere secular leader of men, he was an Acharya par excellence, of the calibre of Sankara and Ramanuja. His patriotism and humanism leapt from the springboard of spirituality.

He said, "His life's work was to propagate a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds."

'Practical Vedanta'

He presented his "practical Vedanta" in the Mahavakya, "Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling Nature external and internal. Do this by work or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these — and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrine or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."

And he gave a new turn to the fundamental concept of Sannyasa by asserting that renunciation must ride in tandem with service of fellowmen. With the slogan, "One's own salvation through welfare of the world," he established the Ramakrishna Mission whose multi-dimensional selfless service requires no introduction. The book is a must study for all who cherish the higher values of life.

C. S. RAMAKRISHNAN

Hinduism today

HINDU CIVILISATION AND THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: V. Ramanathan; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai-400007. **Rs. 595.**

THE BOOK offers a palliative to the western scholars' criticism that the Hindu civilisation is a wounded one. He has made strenuous efforts to establish the historical, sociological and Indological merits of this civilisation in a vivid and lucid manner.

He has taken adequate care to present the knowledge of the past in a scholarly fashion with a few objectives in mind like instructing the youth, survival of Hinduism in India, organisation and methods suitable for Hinduism.

This work is a systematic presentation covering several fields like religion, spirituality, philosophy, history, mythology and literature. The explanations and elucidations are exemplary. The encyclopaedic technique with illustrations shows the author's erudition and deep-rooted commitment to Hinduism.

In some places he develops his arguments concepts-wise and in others he explains the Hindu doctrines as envisaged by thinkers and seers. In some other places he resorts to the hermeneutic method of interpreting the holy scriptures of the Hindu faith.

While analysing the philosophical schools of Hinduism, the author has taken care to give the doctrinal expositions. Similarly, more than 100 pages are devoted to the origin, development, impact and the present condition of caste system in India. A careful study of this portion will clear all doubts from the minds of the people.

Hinduism is not viewed in this book as a bundle of creeds, doctrines and rituals, but as a huge reservoir of the age-old civilisation and culture, which would perpetuate the well-augmented philosophy of religion in the 21st Century.

The book can be equated to the genre of Radhakrishnan's *Hindu view of Life* but still it contains more than what Radhakrishnan has not touched upon. It is really a treatise on the Hindu view as well as the way of life.

R. GOPLAKRISHNAN

● Essays on culture ● Down memory lane ● Many-layered novel ● Plight of the elderly

TAMIL

INIYA CHINTANAIKAL — Two Volumes: Shanta Varadarajan; Surya Brothers. 3, Station Street, West Mambalam, Chennai-600033. **Vol. I. Rs. 30, Vol. 2. Rs. 40.**

THIS BOOK, in two volumes is a collection of 77 short essays on religion and culture. It gives general information about 18 festivals, 32 temples and 27 miscellaneous topics including explanations of some couplets of the *Tirukkural* and Subramania Bharati's nationalist vision. The author says she has collected the information from various sources and presented it for the sake of the younger generation to become familiar with our heritage.

The essays whet the cultural appetite of the Tamils, devotees and those interested in pilgrimages and the lore connected with them. There is a limitation that not all the aspects of the mythological stories about deities and temples are presented here but the saving feature is that only known facts and features are mentioned. However, occasional misstatements are detectable on in-depth analysis.

The author has collected short topical essays written on differing occasions, covering religious figures like Adi Sankara, Raghavendra, temples far and wide, ranging from those in Tiruvottriyur, Tiruvannamalai, Suchindram and Guruvayur, to temples in Pittsburgh, Chicago and Houston in the U.S. and festivals from New Year celebrations, Devi-puja, Krishna Jayanthi and Vinayaka Chaturthi to fasting observances like those of Purattasi and Maha Sivaratri.

The essays on Vibhishana's surrender (Saranagati), the nature of Bhakti and the four coronations (Rama's padukas (sandals), Sugriva's and Vibishana's and finally Rama's own) described in the Ramayana and similar topics add to the richness of content.

J. PARTHASARATHI

VAAZHKAICHUVADUGAL: Vallikkannan; Poonkodi Pathippagam, 14, Chitrakulam West Street, Mylapore, Chennai-600004. **Rs. 100.**

THIS BOOK is an autobiography of Vallikkannan, a pseudonym synonymous with small magazines. It is a significant attempt yielding much experience, information and help. Down his memory lane, Vallikkannan recalls a pat on the back from the Tamil savant R.P. Sethu Pillai, also the son of the Rajavallipuram soil.

He is proud of having studied once at Perungulam, a place associated with the celebrated novelist P. Madhaviah. His contact with the *Manikkodi* group and celebrities like 'Rasikamani' T.K.C and Bharatidasan besides his own kith and kin comes alive on the pages.

Going through this book is like visiting a multiplex cinema. Providing food for thought, the octogenarian emerges with a remarkably agile mind. The important themes handled in the book are: the legend that surrounds Vallikannan's name in his infancy "Gopalakrishnan"; his fascination for *Ananda Vikatan* from which he received remuneration for the first time for a short story that was published.

His "padayatra" in pursuit of his journalistic career, his experience with Pudumaipithan, Manjeri Easwaran, C.S. Chellappa and the like; the respect he commanded from two leading men of the theatre in those days; some successful script-writing for cinema much against his will and the role of Triloka Sitaram and Deepam Naa.Parthasarathy in furthering his career.

His participation in the historic team for the nationalisation of Bharati's works; those who excelled in word picture and epistolary novels; his prolific contribution of articles, short stories, novels, reviews, translations and free verses and his valiant efforts to get them published in book-form.

He was awarded the prestigious Sahitya Academy award(1978) for his collection of articles on the origin and growth of free verses serialised in the *Deepam* monthly. Many more awards followed. One cannot help feeling that a life of beauty is in the urge for writing.

P. SUNDARESAN

MALAYALAM

MUTHALAYANI 100% MUTHALA — Novel: G. R. Indugopan; D.C. Books, DCB Complex, Good Shepherd Street, Kottyam-686001. **Rs. 95.**

A CROCODILE is known for its thick skin consisting of scales and plates, long tail and massive jaws and teeth. A journalist does extensive research on its behaviour and based on reports of violence in a sanctuary surrounding a dam, where crocodiles attack human beings, he weaves a story bringing in elements of a family history.

The joint family home has virtually crumbled and submerged in the dam! Basically the novel deals with the struggle between nature and life and at a different dimension it can be interpreted as the portrayal of human life in the face of liberalisation and globalisation. Symbolically crocodiles represent the inescapable, cruel and disparaging aspects of globalisation and the loss of humanism.

The story begins with the homecoming of Raghuvaran, an expert on crocodiles, from the U.N., to prepare a report to advise the government on the measures to be taken against the crocodile menace. He is the grandson of an evil character Krishna Pillai whose hand was ripped off by a crocodile and he ceremoniously cremated the hand.

Raghu had intentions of revenge on the grandfather who had meted out inhuman treatment to his mother, but in the end he is helpless and inactive, and loses sight of even his mission of filing a report on the crocodile menace.

Interspersed are stories of local myths, faiths, revenge and quarrels associated with a Kerala village. The futile search for the illusory treasure and the pronouncements of Ammachiyamma add to the mystic nature of the novel. However, in his anxiety to end the narrative the novelist loses his tempo though figuratively it is like the loss of balance of Raghuvaran and the recurring theme of crocodiles.

It has a mixture of fine elements of journalism and of fiction, but their synthesis is not well integrated.

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN

HINDI

DUS PRATINIDHI KAHANIYAN: Mitheleshwar; Pub. by Kitab Ghar Prakashan, 24, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 100.**

THIS BOOK is an anthology of 10 stories taken from the author's different collections. These stories depict the remote village life of Uttar Pradesh. Each story has a moral depicting the plight of helpless women or the elderly people. The stories highlight the pathetic conditions of an old woman abandoned by her husband or of a widow rebuffed by her son and daughter-in-law.

The tone of almost all the stories is sad and there is a strain of loneliness showing the isolation of the central character. The countryside is no longer idyllic; the environment is suffocating. A large number of facts have been faithfully documented to show how society reacts to the events that take place. He studies them, argues and analyses, and arrives at logical conclusions.

Amidst the cyclical changes and flux of the vast panorama, the writer raises some epistemological questions. He is constantly in search of the meaning of values and institutions. In this collection, men and women in society and literature reflect their variegated roles and images.

MADHU DHAWAN

Announcement

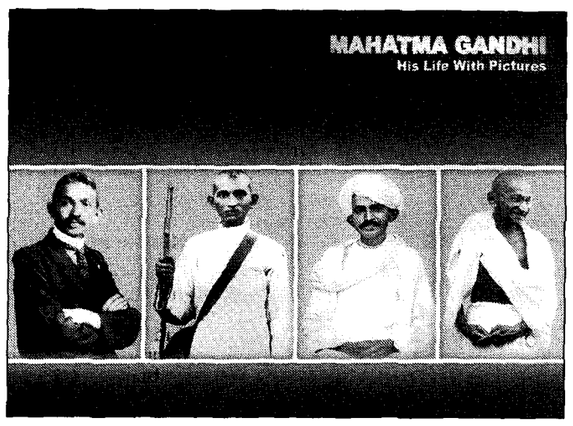
Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.

Tribute to the Mahatma

MAHATMA GANDHI — His Life With Pictures: Gandhi Study Centre, 58, Venkatanarayana Road, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND Gandhi is perhaps the most written and talked about person in the world. Books on him are legion. And yet, the impact made by this slim, but elegantly got up, commemorative volume of photographs on art paper, depicting the various phases of Mahatma Gandhi's splendid life has been palpable even for an old timer like this reviewer for whom the contents are familiar terrain.

It should not be surprising if everyone who picks it up goes through it a number of times compulsively, and while putting it down is in the same mental state as that unparalleled scientific genius of the last century, Albert Einstein, who exclaimed, "Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth."



Momentous times

At least, that was the impact of the book on the reviewer who was Gandhiji's doorkeeper during the 10 days of his visit to Madras in 1946 and had actually seen him in flesh and blood and sat on the same platform at his prayer meetings along with his "walking sticks", Manu and Abha. The intensity of the feeling that the book creates has as much to do with the loving care and grasp of the history of the momentous times with which the pictures have been selected and compiled as with the short, crisp and lucid annotations accompanying them both in English and in Tamil.

Adding to the net effect is the presentation of Gandhiji's multifaceted and even complex personality in neatly arranged, self-contained segments of just the right photographs representing the different stages of his evolution into one who has left his indelible impress with a powerful demonstration of the force of truth and non-violence.

S. Pandian and A. Annamalai of the Gandhi Study Centre, who have brought out this worthwhile pictorial biography with such competence and devotion at an affordable price, and M. Ramji of the P. S. Educational Society, who has provided every sort of encouragement are greatly to be commended for having thought of an attractive format most suited to an era in which people read while running.

Austerity

Especially worthy of praise is the great service that they have done in bringing home to the younger generation the quintessence of the Mahatma's life which, as he himself said, was also his message. Just one — the last — picture of his meagre earthly possessions tells all about the honesty, simplicity, austerity and sense of sacrifice for which he stood.

And this is how the apt annotation captures it, "He had never occupied any high office nor commanded any army. And yet, he had more power over his countrymen than any ruler of India ever possessed. With all that enormous power at his command, he had accumulated as his earthly possessions nothing more than a pocket watch, two pairs of sandals, a book of the text of the Gita, a rosary of beads, his pair of glasses and a few items of basic crockery and cutlery." And yes, the three Chinese monkeys seeing, hearing and speaking no evil. Can anyone dare tell that to the politicians of today?

Hagiological tribute

All that said, it should be understood that this book is meant to be a hagiological tribute and not a critical analysis of historic events centring on Gandhiji. For instance, it deftly sidesteps many of the controversies resulting from his stand on particular issues or his relations with personalities such as Subhash Chandra Bose or Rajaji during the unique freedom struggle, which he so spectacularly led to its successful conclusion.

For instance, the book gives no inkling of Gandhiji's role in putting up Pattabhi Sitaramaiyah against Subhash Chandra Bose as a candidate for the presidentship of the Congress and following the latter's victory, in a series of unpleasant manoeuvres, pushing him out of the organisation itself, much as he himself was pushed out of the train in South Africa. Again, he had sharp differences of opinion with many stalwarts of his day even about his concept of Satyagraha.

The Liberal Group, headed by Tej Bahadur Sapru, M. R. Jayakar and V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, took Gandhiji to task openly for breeding disrespect for law in the country.

The book could at least have had a picture of these leaders with Gandhiji with a brief mention of their point of view. In that sense, it is an uncomplicated and inoffensive portrayal of Gandhiji, the intention perhaps being that it should be a handbook that rests easy on the eye and on the mind.

With all this, there can be no hesitation in viewing the publication as a necessary and timely reminder of the relevance of the teachings and achievements of one of the tallest figures of all time. Altogether it is a book that should be in every home and library.

B. S. RAGHAVAN

The making of Eliot

T. S. ELIOT AND INDIC TRADITIONS — A Study in Poetry and Belief: Cleo McNelly Kearns; Samvad India Foundation, N-16/B, Saket, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 450.**

"THEIR (INDIAN philosophers') subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys." (T.S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods*) That Thomas Sterns Eliot was the literary dictator of the 20th Century is just a commonplace now. Eliot scholars and students have marvelled at his extraordinarily wide and diversified reading leading to maturity and profound wisdom.

This book originally published In 1987 by Cambridge University Press and now reissued by Samvad India Foundation with an added chapter "Drama and Dispassion", explores in great detail what kinds of reading and preparation in Eastern systems of thought had gone into the making of Eliot the major poet of our Age.

Consequent on his early exposure to Indic thought through Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, whether by chance or by personal bidding, Eliot resolved to go on a passage to India ("reason's early paradise" in the words of Whitman) and imbibe deep the native spring of the Vedas.

Influences

At Harvard Eliot took four courses in Sanskrit and Pali and an advanced course in "Philosophical Sanskrit". His mentors, Irving Babbitt and George Santayana, introduced the young and aspiring Eliot to interpretative problems in Hindu and Buddhist thought, enlarging his capacious mind and filling it with the basics in Indic philosophy.

The author maintains that Eliot's knowledge of Indic philosophy was quite extensive and profound — it was not just a sporadic journey through oriental mazes as some would have us believe — and with this intent forming the basis she devotes the whole book for a closer scrutiny of the specific Indic traditions that shaped the poet's belief, nourished his creative output and informed his poetic practice.

A good example, for instance, would be his absorbing the Mantric tradition from the Vedas and the Upanishads that assisted him in developing what he calls "the auditory imagination" which helps in building up through rhythm an incantatory effect that penetrates "far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word." Imagery and dialectic are clearly drawn from the Indic texts, which fashioned his outlook and faith.

The moral implications of the doctrine of Karma find a powerful evocation in the *Murder in the Cathedral*. The concept of the nature of true action that does not show any concern for the fruits of action is quite a rendition from the Bhagavad Gita.

Echoes from the Gita

In "The Dry Salvages" there are explicit echoes from the Gita. On the "Tradition and Individual Talent" essay, the influence of Patanjali's Yogasutra is unmistakable. "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." The central idea of the Yogasutras is the attainment of concentration through the separation of the body from the mind.

"Of all the moderns" says Kearns, "Eliot had the greatest susceptibility to influence, both conscious and unconscious. He had an uncanny ear, capable of registering and retaining for many years certain nuances of tone and style, and he joined to this gift a capacity for sympathetic and critical reading, an ability to meet a work on its own terms rather than merely appropriating it to some project, which no other poet of his time could match."

Back to wisdom

Finding that British drama had divorced itself from religious themes in the early 1930s, Eliot, through his poetic drama, sought to reunite religion and culture in the manner it existed during the Elizabethan Age. The dark side of human nature and the limitations of human action are explored in his plays and for these Indic metaphysics supplied him with the essential taproots.

Eliot's conviction was that our civilisation has grown complex. A poet of our time, were he to be true to his calling has to be allusive and indirect, and thereby force the reader to earn his meaning. Hence he rejected the vapid musings of the Victorians and turned towards the metaphysical texts of the 17th Century.

Oriental philosophy and metaphysics equipped him with the depth of knowledge so necessary for the "wisdom" mode his poetry is associated with. Undeniably, Kearns's book is the key to unlock Eliot and seek out that wisdom — the wisdom that we have lost in knowledge.

M. S. NAGARAJAN

PERFECT

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the difference between "impassive" and "impassioned"? *(K. Rani, Hyderabad)*

When something bad happens and you remain "impassive" what you are doing is keeping a wooden face. You are not displaying an emotion of any kind. It could be you do not feel any emotion, or you have chosen to hide it. The heroes in many of our movies remain impassive in all situations. They are the strong silent men who remain unmoved.

*After killing the man with his knife, the hero looked on impassively at the sea.

"Impassioned", on the other hand, means someone who is "full of passion", an individual who displays intense feeling about something or someone.

*The impassioned speech by the Vice-Chancellor brought the audience to its feet.

What is the origin of "yellow journalism"? *(Md. Khalid Ahmed, Jagital)*

When someone accuses a newspaper of "yellow journalism" what they mean is that it presents the news in a biased manner. It distorts the facts and sensationalises the news in order to get the public to buy the paper. It attempts to increase its circulation, not by providing accurate news, but by appealing to the public's curiosity. The term "yellow journalism" is no longer restricted to newspapers alone, it includes all other forms of media — television and radio.

*Some of the local newspapers are classic examples of yellow journalism.

The expression was popularised in the late 19th Century in the U.S. Two newspapers, "New York World", owned by Joseph Pulitzer, and "New York Journal", owned by William Randolph Hearst, were trying to become very popular among the public by printing sensational stories. Both newspapers specialised in muckraking. The "World" had a popular comic strip called "Hogan's Alley" in which the character "Yellow Kid" appeared. Hearst played dirty and got "Hogan's" creator, R. F. Outcault, to join his paper. The angry Pulitzer hired another artist and asked him to continue with the "Yellow Kid". The competition between the two yellow kids led to an all out war between the two papers. There was a court battle over the copyright, and very often, street fights broke out between the delivery boys of the rival newspapers. The fight between Hearst and Pulitzer over the "Yellow Kid" began to symbolise everything that was wrong with American journalism.

What is the meaning of "watchdog agency"? *(Niraj Kumar, Purnea, Bihar)*

Most people keep a watchdog in order to protect their house. When you refer to a group of people as being a "watchdog" committee or agency, what you are implying is that they are ensuring that your rights are being protected. They make sure that the companies, governments, etc, follow the letter of the law, and do not cheat the public. A watchdog agency looks after the interests of the public.

*We are hoping to set up an anti-drug watchdog agency soon.

What is the past tense of "quit"? *(B. Om Prakash, Ongole)*

Depending on the context, the word has two possible past tense forms — quit and quitted. When used to mean, "to leave" you can use both. For example, "Venu quit/quitted his job and moved to Chennai." The word "quit" can also be used to mean, "to stop". We can, for example say, "Venu has quit gambling". In this context, it is incorrect to use "quitted". The word "quitted" is going out of fashion; it is mostly used in formal contexts.

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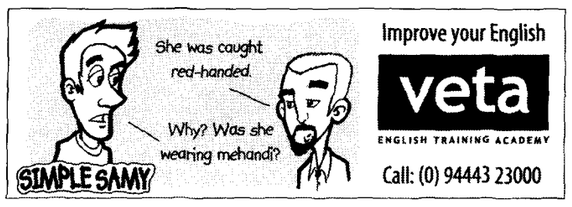
"I grew up with six brothers. That's how I learned to dance — waiting for the bathroom."
*— **Bob Hope***

S. UPENDRAN



OPEN PAGE

Why argue at all over 'freedom to women'?

I HAD missed G. Rajasekaran's original piece on 'Freedom to women' (Open Page, January 4), but recent responses to his essay made me hunt through the pile of old newspapers and dig it up. After going through the piece, I could not decide what offended me more — the essence of his entire essay or the last two words terming women 'falling angels.' The article seems modelled exactly on the gruel episode in "Oliver Twist." Look, women, we have eradicated the *sati pratha* for you. So now shut up, sit quiet and don't you dare ask for more.

The whole premise of his essay is built upon the smug belief that women have taken their freedom too far. By taking the term 'equality of the sexes' too literally, they are turning into 'falling angels' who must be 'redeemed' urgently, or the country faces an irreparable crisis. This idea is not so uncommon in a country where most victims of gender crimes meet silent indifference that screams out loud — she must have asked for it.

What exactly is meant by his asking "Is freedom to women a blessing or a blemish?"? Even if someone takes an extreme stand and pronounces it to be a 'blemish,' what is the treatment for this ungainly blemish? Take back the freedom so magnanimously given to women and put them back in fetters? Well, people, we did try out the experiment, but sorry it didn't work out so we are withdrawing it now.

Mind pollution?

The examples Mr. Rajasekaran gives to bear testimony to women's 'mind pollution' are 'cutting classes in groups, mandatory boyfriends, internet import of foreign culture, instant marriages and faster divorces, what else and what not.' Activities, incidentally, which have always been associated with the male half of the youth. But does Mr. Rajasekaran mention this point? No! And that is because Indian tradition is in crisis only when women indulge in such disgusting activities.

As far as the 'fast divorces' argument goes, being an 18-year-old student living in the heart of Delhi (quite the bastion of 'falling angels,' one would think), I know of hardly a handful of cases of women initiating divorce proceedings. On the contrary, I see around myself numerous instances where women, despite being trapped in abusive marriages, cling to the threads of matrimony because being a divorced woman is still a disgrace for many. So which imaginary world is Mr. Rajasekaran living in when he talks of 'instant marriages' and 'faster divorcees'? Yet, were any of these women to put her foot down and end her misery by walking out of the marriage, people like him would immediately term her a 'fallen angel' and hold her up as an example of the women's lib movement 'gone too far.'

Then the talk of 'Adam teasers.' Presumably, women on streets harassing men. I cannot really comment on that, not having seen much of it (though that must be the fault of my prejudiced, femi-nazi eyes; I will take Mr. Rajasekaran's word that they do exist), but it's no difficult task identifying the precursor of this phenomenon — harassment of females under the garb of the innocuous-sounding phrase 'eve teasing.' But does Mr. Rajasekaran make even the slightest passing reference to this routine preying on women? No! But if a woman dares to take a strong stand and fight back, she is a fallen angel who is labouring under the preposterous presumption that she has the right to mental peace on the street 'all in the name of freedom to women.'

So what, then, is the ideal solution to this harassment? Why, bow your head, bend down and ask your father or brother to escort you, because that is 'the shield of reverence created by our ancient forefathers/mothers for our great women.' And keep in mind, if you scoff at this shield ('of reverence and not of restriction'), you will be losing your revered status and be termed a 'fallen angel.' Alternatively, you may drop out of school/college and opt for home tutoring, but don't forget that education for girls is important because that is what our great social reformers had fought for. Social reformers who, presumably, for some reason I cannot fathom, would be aghast if they were to see what 'woman has made of herself today' whatever that means.

And finally, I think I have come to a decision regarding the most offending part of the piece. It was neither the general essence of the essay, nor the term 'falling angels.' The most offending part was that such an article was written by the head of an institution of education.

● **AMIYA SHARMA**

Pravasi Divas — do we really need it?

THE JAMBOREE feting the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has thankfully come to an end. The PIOs (persons of Indian origin) will celebrate yet another sop they wrenched from our government — that of dual citizenship. Fortunately we did not go overboard with our largesse and have held back their right to vote.

Indians always see foreign citizenship as a social leap. It is therefore no wonder that we find an occasion to rejoice in their fortune. The question is whether it benefits this country in any way. It is amazing that this government with its balanced outlook on secularism is pursuing this unnecessary exercise. One could understand the eagerness with which the NDA government wanted the Pravasi Bharathis.

Having found a safe economic haven in the West, the Pravasi Bharathis naturally reached back for cultural moorings to their erstwhile 'homeland.' Proud to be an American. Proud to be an Indian. Clearly a case of having the cake and eating it too. In their eagerness to please, they upheld the narrow parochial nationalism of their sponsors by beating their breast with just the right rhythm.

The previous government's decision to give dual citizenship to just 4.5 million of the 20 million people of Indian origin clearly shows that they did their demography and counted the dollars before deciding who they wanted to invite back. The fruits of this great welcome can be counted now. Just 5 per cent of foreign investments have come from the PIOs who were wined and dined last year. These would have come anyway.

Praful Bidwai classifies the Indian diaspora into four categories:

The first, and oldest, are those who were despatched (by the British) as 'indentured' labour to other colonies in the 19th century: hardy, humble peasants.

The second are the one million-plus Indians who went to Britain in the last century, some via East Africa. Most of them were petty shopkeepers, blue-collar workers, bus conductors and postal clerks.

The third group comprises the post-1973 temporary migrants to the Gulf — workers without full residency rights.

The fourth groups consists of affluent professionals and businessmen who migrated to the U.S., Canada and Western Europe from the mid-1960s onwards.

The first two groups went because they were forced to — taking nothing from this country. No social leap for them. They became citizens because they did not know how to come back. They are the ones who deserve the greatest welcome but they are the least wanted. Who wants Trinidadians, Guyanese and Fijians who are almost as poor as our own people? The third have no residency rights and have only benefited our economy.

Our obsession is with the rich and famous in the last group. Over 80 per cent of them had their basic education in India at state expense. They stood in long lines at American embassies. Threw parties when they got their visa. Celebrated their green cards as a salvation from this wretched land. Swore with their hands on their breasts to uphold their responsibilities as American citizens. Made their millions. Bought swanky houses and flashy cars.

When the honeymoon was over they became homesick — but only homesick enough to enjoy vicariously the attention they got as long forgotten brothers. Attention they could buy flashing their new-found dollars. But remember only to flash it at our hungry politicians. They would happily invest where they got their returns. Nationalism was only for their hearts. Their purses are zipped tight — except to finance nefarious groups such as the India Development and Relief Fund, which act as fronts for ultra right wing groups like the VHP.

One of the richest groups

The PIOs of America are one of the richest ethnic groups in their adopted country. Along with PIOs from other OECD countries their annual income at $160 billion is about half of India's gross domestic product. However they account for only 4 per cent of foreign direct investments. Their total investment is less than what Bill Gates invests in India. The Gulf NRIs on the other hand have contributed more significantly towards the economy of our country. We do not need to throw expensive parties for them. At least treat them with dignity.

Indian policy makers thought that we would benefit as the Chinese did from their diaspora. We have not and we are unlikely to. India needs to look at its own large workforce, many of whom spurned the temptations of the West and a glittering lifestyle to remain in India or come back with money and technology. If the Pravasi Bharathis feel so strongly about their country ask them to give up their foreign passports and become nationalised Indians. We will welcome them with open arms. Two citizenships is a measure of the distrust they have for this land.

● **GEORGE PAUL**

Consumer credit boom and its pitfalls

YOUR EDITORIAL "Consumer credit: boon or bane?" (*The Hindu*, December 31) was timely. As the Editorial points out, borrowing against future income has become a widespread phenomenon. Both consumers and banks have joined the financing boom with unfettered enthusiasm. The Editorial has raised some important concerns. One is the rising indebtedness of households, hardly a desirable phenomenon for a poor country like ours. The second is a pronounced bias on the part of banks for retail lending. This means a shift away from more traditional industrial lending activities that create productive assets, especially infrastructure, which is vital for a country like ours.

A fundamental principle of economics, which is beyond debate, is that poor countries need to save as much as they can. Such countries also need a well functioning financial system which can channel these savings into meaningful investments to create assets of lasting value. What the consumer financing boom is doing is to decrease, not increase, savings. The boom is also undermining the ability of the financial system to perform its main duty. Savings are simply not being channelled into investments.

All of us have aspirations as consumers. If we are confident about our future earning capabilities, there is nothing wrong in borrowing and buying something which we can consume from a relatively young age. The key assumption here is that our future financial circumstances will be more favourable than the present. If the assumption holds, the loan can be repaid with little difficulty. Unfortunately, this assumption is unrealistic in most cases.

Uncertainty

Many of the people taking loans today are relatively young professionals in sectors which look glamorous today but where there is considerable uncertainty in the medium to long term. Take the software engineers. They work in an industry where much depends on the growth of developed countries. If economic growth stalls in the U.S. or Europe and if the Information Technology (IT) industry slows down as it happened in 2001, IT companies will retrench. Earlier these companies could afford to keep people "on the bench." But now with intensifying competition and thinning margins, there will be no option but to fire surplus engineers.

Similarly, consider the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) boom. People have already started concluding that India has become the outsourcing hub of the world. The feeling is that more and more work will be outsourced to India and the boom will never stop. Again, this is a surprisingly simplistic and optimistic assessment. Even if outsourcing picks up momentum in the western countries, all the work may not come to India. And even if the boom continues in India, not all companies will do well. We can expect some industry consolidation to take place. Moreover, as technology becomes more sophisticated, many back end jobs will get automated. In short, there is likely to be rationalisation and job losses.

The bigger concern is the possibility of banks becoming full-fledged consumer financiers as opposed to project lenders. Indeed, terms like Universal Banks are nothing but a euphemism for this phenomenon. In a country like ours, where the capital markets are still very shallow, the primary role of banks is to appraise industrial projects and finance them accordingly. While big companies can raise money from the capital markets, small businesses have no option but to turn to the banks. And these businesses are just not getting the funds they need from banks. No wonder, our small scale sector is failing to take off. The world over, it is small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which drive economic growth.

But let us not blame banks for behaving like this. At the current low level of interest rates, giving consumer loans is more attractive than lending to industrial projects. Interest paid by banks on most deposits is less than 6 per cent and if a consumer loan is given at 8 per cent, the spread is very attractive considering that the risk is diversified across many customers. But lending at even 11-12 per cent to an industrial project is not attractive as the risk is much higher and difficult to quantify.

The larger issues associated with the consumer financing boom also need to be debated thoroughly, especially the priorities of our youngsters on whom the future of our country heavily depends. Youngsters are aspiring for all the goodies of life without realising they have to be earned the hard way. Thus it is common to see MBA students walking into the classroom carrying cell phones but not calculators. These students spend thousands of rupees at weekend get-togethers in swank restaurants. But if professors tell them to buy a couple of good books and read them, there is a lot of resistance. A decade back, people hesitated to get married till they had finished their studies and worked for at least 3-4 years. Today youngsters want to get married even before their studies are over. All this shows that the tendency for early gratification is on the rise.

I am not arguing that people should live like hermits. Indeed, we must enjoy life, for life is short. But we must enjoy life in a meaningful and sustainable way. Till we become a rich developed country, we need to be more circumspect. Living on borrowed money is fine as long as things keep going the way we expect them. But if something goes wrong down the line, it would be a real catastrophe. Major social upheavals would result.

● **A.V. VEDPURISWAR**

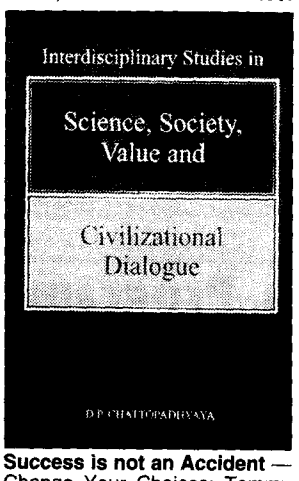
Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

Book review
HD-16
18/1

NEW ARRIVALS

- **Environmental Pollution** — An Overview: Mohd. Shahid, Mohd. Khalid; Raj Publications, 4855/24, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 625.**
- **Law of Trade Marks and Passing Off:** P. Narayanan; **Rs. 1275.**
- **The Law of Carriage of Goods by Sea and Air:** H. K. Saharay; **Rs. 550.**
- **Valuation of Real Property Principles and Practice:** Syamales Datta; **Rs. 585.** The above three books pub. by Eastern Law House Pvt. Ltd., 54, Ganesh Chunder Avenue, Kolkata-700013.
- **Interdisciplinary Studies in Science, Society, Value and Civilizational Dialogue:** D. P. Chattopadhyaya; Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla-171005. **Rs. 450.**



- **Success is not an Accident** — Change Your Choices: Tommy Newberry; Magna Publishing Co. Ltd., Mumbai, distributed by Alpha Land Books P. Ltd., 14, Jagannathan Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai-600034. **Rs. 175.**
- **Violence Against Women** — Human Rights Perspective: K. Uma Devi — Editor; Serials Publications, 4, BSS Hall, Khyber Pass Market, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054. **Rs. 550.**
- **Encyclopaedia of Indian Theatre-6** — Folk Theatre: Biswajit Sinha; Raj Publications, R-115/2, Model Town-III, Delhi-110009. **Rs. 1800.**
- **Rural Labour Market:** M. Soundarapandian; Serials Publications, 4, BSS Hall, Khyber Pass Market, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054. **Rs. 795.**
- **Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and His Contribution to Indian Music:** Vinita Sapra; Raj Publications, R-115/2, Model Town-III, Delhi-110099. **Rs. 795.**
- **Art of Yoga** — Illustrated Yogic Asanas: Amey Shashank Parulekar; V.M.P. Publishers & Distributors, 6, Princess Building, ER Road, Near JJ Hospital Traffic Signals, Mumbai-400003. **Rs. 195.**
- **The Bhumihars** — Caste of Eastern India: Sushil Kumar Sinha; Raj Publications, 4855/24, Ansari Road, Daryaganj New Delhi-110002. **Rs. 400.**
- **How to Improve Your People Skills:** Peter Honey; VMP Publishers & Distributors, 6, Princess Building, ER Road, Near JJ Hospital Traffic Signals, Mumbai-400003. **Rs. 395.**
- **Sociology of Media** — Impact of Doordarshan on Tribals: Sushil Kumar Sinha; Raj Publications, R-115/2, Model Town III, Delhi-110009. **Rs. 350.**
- **Free To Be Happy or Emotional Freedom with Energy Psychology by Tapping on Acupuncture Points:** Robert Elias Najemy; VMP Publishers & Distributors, 6, Princess Building, ER Road, Near JJ Hospital Traffic Signal, Mumbai-400003. **Rs. 150.**
- **Konkan Economy and Society in Transition — 1818-1920:** Sheela Mohan Nabar; Serials Publications, 4, BSS Hall, Khyber Pass Market, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054. **Rs. 995.**
- **The Changing Face of Globalization:** Samir Dasgupta — Editor; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 350.**

- **Laws Relating to Partition:** M. N. Das; Eastern Law House Pvt. Ltd., 54, Ganesh Chunder Avenue, Kolkata-700013. **Rs. 790.**
- **Rich Man Happy Man** — A Practical Guide to Achieving Riches and Happiness: Bill Lall; Main Street, B-13, Sector 81, Noida, Phase II, Uttar Pradesh. **Rs. 195.**
- **Gender, Politics and Islam:** Therese Saliba, Carolyn Allen; Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 3-6-752, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad-500029. **Rs. 350.**
- **Glimpses of Pakistan:** M. Rasgotra; Samskriti in association with Observer Research Foundation, C-9020, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070. **Rs. 375.**
- **Planting Times** — Selections from Planning Opinion & The Planters Chronicle: Aparna Datta — Editor; Macmillan India Ltd., 315/316, Raheja Chambers, 12, Museum Road, Bangalore-560001. **Rs. 1100.**
- **Economic Policy in Sri Lanka Issues and Debates:** Saman Kelegama; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 995.**
- **Journalism Principles and Practice:** Tony Harcup; Vistaar Publications, A division of Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 340.**
- **Journal of Theoretical and Experimental Biology** — An International Journal of Basic & Applied Biology: G. Kulandaivelu — Editor-in-Chief; Elias Academic Publishers, 214-B3/1 A Punnai Nagar, Nagercoil-629004. **Rs. 300.**
- **India & China 1904-2004** — A Century of Peace and Conflict: B. R. Deepak; Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd., B-7, Saraswati Complex, Subhash Chowk, Laxmi Nagar, New Delhi-110092. **Rs. 595.**

Tamil

- **Thirumanthira Karuthu:** Gnanananda; Sivagnana Swamigal Peravai, 505E, Main Road, Vickramasingapuram-627425. **Rs. 100.**
- **Dhyana Malai:** Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati; Shuddhananda Library M34, J, Mahalakshmi Colony, Opp. Thiruvanmiyur Bus Terminus, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 45.**
- **Kadayathil Udhirndha Bharathiyin Padayalgal:** S. Ganapathiraman; distributed by Thirumagal Library, 39, Kamakshi Nagar First Street, Maharajanagar PO, Tirunelveli-11. **Rs. 50.**
- **Cuba:** S. Pirugaspathi; **Rs. 65.**
- **Bhagath Singh Katturaigal Kadidhangal:** S. A. Purumal — Tr. in Tamil; **Rs. 50.**
- **Aayiram Kaigal Vuyarattum:** T.V. Rajendiran; **Rs. 55.**
- **Bhagath Singh Matrum Thozhargal:** S. A. Perumal; **Rs. 60.**
- **India Nathigalin Orunginaippu:** C. S. Kuppuraj; **Rs. 65.** The above five books pub. by Pavai Publications, 142, Jani Jan Khan Road, Royapettah, Chennai-600014.
- **Chithiram Pesudhadi:** S. Theodore Baskaran; Kalachuvadu Pathippagam, 669, K.P. Road, Nagercoil-629001. **Rs. 175.**
- **En America Payanam:** N. Subbu Reddiyar; Vengadam Veliyeedu, AD-13-14, 5th Street, 10th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai-600040. **Rs. 120.**
- **Madhippu Kooduthal Vari:** Nirmala Ashokan; Jose Indira Publishers, PB No. 8632, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 199.**
- **Illakkiya Selvaragal:** M. Saheeb Marakkayyar; Islamia Thamizh Ilakkiya Kazhagam, 37, Town Extn., Mayiladuthurai-609001. **Rs. 50.**
- **Uzhaippal Uyarndha Uthamar** — Life History of P. Nachimuthu Gounder: Vimalarani; Dr. Mahalingam College of Engineering and Technology, Udumalai Road, Pollachi-642003. **Rs. 115.**
- **Gnabagayathirai:** Kannukudi Subbu; M. S. Periodicals & Publications, New No. 54, Rajabather Street, Pondy Bazar, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 35.**
- **Indhiya Malargal Irandu:** Ranimaindhan: Kalaignaan Pathippagam, 19, Kannadhasan Salai, T. Nagar, Chennai-600017. **Rs. 100.**
- **Uyarvikkum Uraiyadalgal:** K. Suresh Sundar; Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation, G-B, Sai Karuna Apartments, 49, Five Furlong Road, Guindy, Chennai-600032. **Rs. 30.**
- **December 6:** P. Pugazhendi; Sandhya Pathippagam, New Tech Vaibhav Flats, 77, (New No. 57), 53rd Street, Ashok Nagar, Chennai-600083. **Rs. 50.**
- **Pirantha Mannin Pidi Varalaru:** A. Arumugam; Pavendhar Pathippagam, 4/79, Seeragam, Thirumayappadi-621851, Ariyalur. **Rs. 50.**
- **Noyum Marunthum Orey Idathil:** Aromani; Vijaya Pathippagam, 20, Raja Veedhi, Coimbatore-641001. **Rs. 60.**

Telugu

- **Navayuga Kavichakravarthi, Padmabhushan Jashuva Rachanalu-2:** Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001. **Rs. 80.**
- **Amrutha Hasthalu:** G.V.S. Sarma; 21-10/3-103, Srinagar 3rd Lane, SN Puram, Vijayawada-520011. **Rs. 60.**
- **Kalpitha Bethala Kathalu — Vols. I & II:** G. Sivakumar; **Rs. 40.**
- **Minister, Bramharatha:** D. Vijaya Bhaskar; **Rs. 40.**
- **Hiranyagarbha:** D. Vijaya Bhaskar; **Rs. 30.**
- **Aneka:** P. Lakshminarayana; **Rs. 60.** The above four books pub. by Visalandhra Publishing House, 4-1-435, Bank Street, Hyderabad-500001.

Kannada

- **Bellakki Hindu:** Shobhadevi Chakki; Samskruti Prakashna, Vahini Vihara, Basavanagara, Sedam-585222. **Rs. 50.**
- **Kathanjali** — A Collection of 12 Stories in Sanskrit & Kannada: Shantha Venkataram; Flat D, Samudram Apartments, 24, 4th Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 25.**
- **Ayda Sanna Kategalu:** Nagabai Bulla, Geeta Nagabhushana — Editors; **Rs. 50.**
- **Virat Parva Sangraha:** HT Pote; **Rs. 50.**
- **Ayda Vaicharika Prabandhagalu:** MS Patila, Swamirao Kulakarni — Editors; **Rs. 50.** The above three books pub. by Prasaranga Gulbarga University, Gulbarga-585106.

Malayalam

- **Karthbikodayam:** CV Kunjuraman; Kaumudi Public Relations, 5/2246-4, New Kowdiar Gardens, Golf Links, Thiruvananthapuram-695003. **Rs. 25.**
- **Kathanjali** — A Collection of Sanskrit & Malayalam Children Stories: Shantha Venkataram; Flat D, Samudram Apartments, 24, 4th Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai-600041. **Rs. 25.**
- **Theekkadalkadanhu Thirumadhuram:** C. Radhakrishnan; Hi-Tech Books, Kochi-17. **Rs. 225.**

India Giving

From an 82-year-old widow who cancelled her husband's *shradh* ceremony to a seven-year-old who emptied her piggybank, from slum children to corporates, Caring India puts in a never-before effort of collective kindness to help tsunami victims. In two weeks, the PM's Relief Fund logs Rs 403 crore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

IN Jammu's Raghunath temple, the sea god now tops the devotional charts. In Mumbai, anti-corruption specialist T S Bhal is taking two weeks off to go to Nagapattinam. In Delhi, a Rs 10,000 diamond was auctioned for Rs 1.35 lakh. In Jalandhar, 2.5 lakh quintals of potatoes are headed south.

And if Virender Sehwag gave up the bat that hit an electric 309 against Pakistan last March, Kolkata's Chinmoyee Roy, (82), handed in the Rs 2001 she was going to spend on her late husband's annual *shradh* ceremony.

Across the country, India's giving like never before. Harvard alumni, Tihar inmates, Tata's top brass. The contributions streaming in from street children, seniors, former militants, companies and residents' associations are adding up to unprecedented numbers.

At last count, by Saturday evening, the Prime Minister's Relief Fund had logged Rs 403 crore—that's already near the Rs 410 crore that took one year to collect after the 2001 Gujarat earthquake.

A just-married couple sent Rs 17,000. They were making reservations for their honeymoon, they wrote, when the tsunami struck. So they cancelled the trip, and handed in a cheque instead.

PMO officials say they got the maximum hits on their online donation site on New Year's Eve as a rush of people decided to skip the bash and donate the money instead.

PM Manmohan Singh visits survivors at a relief camp in Port Blair on Saturday. *Vikas Khot*

In fact, this time round, the Web has been a force multiplier. Nearly every popular site and blog in India has a tsunami relief link on its site.

"Through the web, the awareness is instant and in real time, not filtered through, which is very powerful and compelling. It creates empathy and a desire to help," said Dina Mehta, co-founder of tsunamihelp.blogspot.com, a web log that got a million hits in eight days.

On the ground, there's no shortage of innovative reactions.

"Lord Rama had to calm the sea god too. We are praying to pacify Varun *devta*," said Darshan Kumar, a priest at the Raghunath temple in Jammu. These days it's normal to see at least 200 people, including pilgrims from Vaishnodevi, at the usually deserted morning prayer.

The Potato Growers' Association of Jalandhar has pledged 2.5 lakh quintals of the humble spud and DuPont India's list of donations include 33,000 Tyvek Barrierman coveralls, 30,000 Sontara masks and 80,000 Solae energy bars. R Kugham, a ragpicker in Jalandhar has decided to give Rs 10 out of the Rs 50 he makes everyday. And in Tihar, inmates collected Rs 10 lakh.

A group of 100 men, most of them former militants of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), decided they would do their bit by donating blood. "Who can understand the pain and agony better than us," said Noor Mohammad Kalwal, a former militant who spent more than a decade behind bars.

Celebrities have got into the act too. Zakir Hussain collected Rs 12 lakh from an all-night concert in Mumbai with 14 musicians including Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, Pandit Jasraj, Toufiq Qureshi and Kishori Amonkar. "I sent a note to all the artistes and they confirmed immediately," said Hussain.

Bollywood names like Raveena Tandon, Shah Rukh Khan, Boman Irani and Bipasha Basu will egg you to donate funds via phone, SMS or the internet in a seven-hour telethon on January 26, starting noon on Sony Entertainment.

They will perform, answer phones and pledge stunts if a certain amount is raised by a given time. "It could be anything, like Tendulkar promising to sing," says Ingrid Srinath, CEO of organiser CRY. The target? Rs 2.5 crore, half of which will be donated to tsunami relief.

Sourav Ganguly plans to raise Rs 50 lakh from an auction at the end of the month. Going under the hammer will be memorablia from Ganguly, Tendulkar, Muthaiah Muralitharan, Sanath Jayasurya and Shane Warne.

Kapil Dev fan Vinod Kumar bought the all rounder's bat at one such auction for Rs 1.11 lakh. "I already have two bats and a ball signed by him. I don't want this one, but this was the minimum I could do to help," said the Delhi-based businessman.

Many folks across the country have just packed their bags and headed to Ground Zero. Delhi transport department's joint commissioner P R Meena, who was posted on the Andaman and Nicobar islands after he joined the civil services in the '80s, is currently supervising relief operations in Car Nicobar.

From top: JKLF blood donation camp in Srinagar; Pandit Jasraj and Ustad Zakir Hussain after a fundraiser concert; Jammu Arya Samaj School chips in

COMPANY OF DONORS

- **Infosys: Rs 5 crore**
- **Reliance: Rs 5 crore**
- **ITC: Rs 3 crore**
- **Larsen & Toubro: Rs 2 crore**
- **Bajaj Auto: Rs 2 crore**
- **Coca-Cola: Rs 2 crore**
- **Bharti Telecom: Rs 1 crore**

STATE SCORE

- **Karnataka: Rs 20 crore**
- **Bihar: Rs 10 crore**
- **Punjab: Rs 10 crore**
- **Delhi: Rs 5 crore**
- **Maharashtra: Rs 5 crore**

WHO GAVE WHAT

- **Anil Ambani: Rs 1 crore**
- **Shah Rukh Khan: Rs 25 lakh**
- **Rani Mukerji: Rs 25 lakh**
- **Preity Zinta: Rs 10 lakh**
- **Soli Sorabjee: Rs 2.5 lakh**

** All figures from PM's Relief Fund*

Other people who are already in the disaster-struck areas include Shamim Akhtar, superintendent of Tihar jail, the Tata Relief Committee (a 55-member team culled from group companies), Samir Modi,

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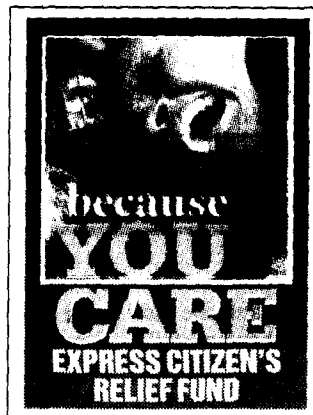


■ To help the tsunami victims pick up the pieces, *The Indian Express* is setting up a relief fund. As we did during the Gujarat quake, Mumbai's Black Monday and the War Memorial, confident in our belief that our readers care.

■ Please send your cheques payable to: Indian Express Citizen's Relief Fund. The Indian Express, 3/50, Lalbaug Industrial Estate, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Road, Lalbaug, Mumbai 400 012.

■ You may also send your contributions to your local office of The Indian Express. If you live overseas, please send dollar-denominated pay orders. **You can also donate online at: www.expressindia.com.** All contributions are eligible for tax deduction under Section 80G.

9 JAN 2005

Women and globalisation

GLOBALIZATION: Malini Bhattacharya — Editor; Tulika Books, in association with School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, 35-A/1, III Floor, Shahpur Jat, New Delhi-110049. **Rs. 295.**

THIS BOOK is based on the proceedings of the seminar, "Globalising Women" organised by the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. In its attempt to assess how women are involved in and are affected by (what it calls) "profound" economic, political and cultural changes taking place in India in the name of globalisation, the book traverses a wide area in terms of themes, disciplines and orientation of its authors.

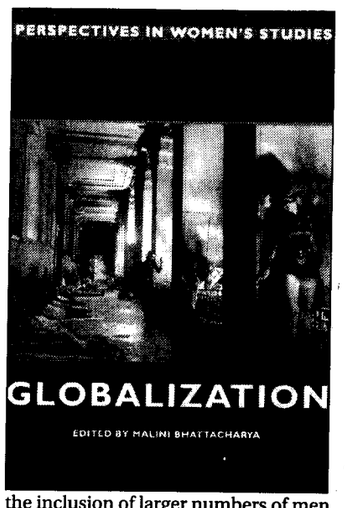
Malini's foreword attempts to impart a sense of coherence to the volume; this effort however cannot make up for the high degree of unevenness characterising the contributions, the sweeping generalisations in some of the pieces and/or the fact that, collectively, the volume at the end fails to make clear in what way or in which direction our understanding of the phenomenon of "globalisation" stands enriched by its contents even while the terms global, globalising and globalisation are freely used in the space, sometimes, of a single article.

Women and media

Individually, some of the articles are extremely well researched and thought provoking. Ipshita Chanda's piece on popular print media raises some pertinent questions on the relation between globalisation and the women's movement and the representation of this relation in the popular media.

Popular women's magazines, according to Ipshita, have taken up issues that feminist struggles have forced upon the public agenda — women's self-consciousness and assertion, right to work, right to education and freedom of career choice, to name a few — but presented them as a consequence and/or a characteristic of "modernity".

"By providing information and strategies to negotiate changes and changing circumstances, they have propagated what may best be called a "lifestyle" feminism, or even a modern "consumerist" feminism...Is it [then] worthwhile to discard the products of the popular media entirely as patriarchal ploys to keep women in thrall-...Before we give up the struggle as lost, I would like to think that there are at least two areas we might explore. First, we might rethink our position as feminists on certain issues, in the light of the process of globalisation. Does the feminist agenda for practice require reorientation? What will connote 'equality' in the changed circumstances, and what is the nature of 'exploitation', given the changed nature of global consumer capital and the structures of patriarchy that support and are supported by this version of capital? Does not this change necessitate



the inclusion of larger numbers of men and women within the struggle for equality?"

A couple of more articles deal with representation of women particularly in media; more analytical engagement with the interface between "globalisation" and the theme of "modernity", among others, however is warranted.

Impact of reforms

Utsa Patnaik's brilliant and persuasive piece on the impact of economic reform on employment and food security in India elaborately engages with the argument that, "the reform policies represent the interests of imperialism in achieving the economic colonisation of India...by re-instituting the most important economic features of a colonised economy."

"Looking at the trends in the 1990s, we find that there has been a rapid decline in development expenditures in rural areas, leading to decline in employment and incomes, rapid tertiarisation of the economic structures as income distribution worsens, a severe undermining of food security for the masses as food crops output slows down because exports are privileged and as mass purchasing power declines, raising once more the spectre of famine which stalked colonial India — with the difference that now, it is a case of increasing hunger in the midst of plenty."

The one jarring note in the piece is the unwarranted and unreferenced aside on those espousing the cause of gender discrimination and women's empowerment.

The burden of Nirmala Banerjee's article is that the debates on the issue of the impact of globalisation on women's work in India "has been somewhat misdirected" since it has mainly focussed on the possibilities of women entering export industries under particularly disadvantageous conditions.

Banerjee's argument is that the Indian economy is, and continues to be, structurally very different from countries from where the above concern originated.

Exports in India account for a relatively minor share of the Gross National Product (GNP) while employment in export industries does not set the pattern for the overall economy. Hence the Indian condition demands a separate analysis and "so far, the process of globalisation has done little to alter those conditions."

Food security and health care

The articles on food security, women, and agricultural workers, under the overarching theme of globalisation by Madhura Swaminathan and Asish Ghose are extremely useful and informative.

The theme of privatisation that Rama Baru's article explores on the conditions of workers in private hospitals is completely silent on two crucial questions: what were the conditions of employment before 1991? And why have public sector health care institutions, by and large, failed to deliver?

A more analytical engagement with concepts such as globalisation, modernity and privatisation, their interface and an interrogation of the manner in which these analytical categories have worked themselves out through the different themes covered in the book would have enriched considerably what the volume set out to achieve.

PADMINI SWAMINATHAN

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

What is the difference between "convicted" and "sentenced"? *(M. Natarajan, Annamapalayam)*

These are words frequently used in law. Once the lawyers have presented their case, the judge/jury then makes a decision as to whether the defendant (the individual who is on trial) is guilty or not. If he is found guilty, he is convicted of the crime that he has been accused of. A convicted individual is one who has been found "guilty" in a court of law. Once the defendant has been found guilty, the judge then decides what his punishment should be. Should the person be sent to prison for life or should he be hanged? Maybe the person should be made to pay a fine of some sort and then set free. These are the decisions that a judge has to make once he convicts a person. The punishment that the judge gives the individual on trail is the "sentence".

What is the plural of "formula"? *(R. M. Lakshmi, Madurai)*

The word has two possible plurals — formulae and formulas. The "ae" in the final syllable of "formulae" is pronounced like the "ee" in "bees", "fees", and "knees". The stress in the case of all three words is on the first syllable. The Latin plural "formulae" is the preferred word in scientific contexts, while "formulas" is used elsewhere. For example, one talks about "mathematical formulae" and "political and diplomatic formulas".

How is the word "caveat" pronounced? *(R. Jyothi, Hyderabad)*

There are different ways of pronouncing this word. The "c" is like the "k" in "kiss", "kill" and "kick" and the "a" in the first and third syllables is pronounced like the "a" in "cat", "hat" and "pat". The "e" is like the "i" in "pit", "hit" and "sit"; the main stress is on the first syllable. Some people pronounce the first "a" like the "ay" in "pay", "bay" and "hay".

"Caveat" is a word which is mostly used in formal contexts and it means warning or caution. When two businessmen make a deal, they usually stipulate that certain conditions have to be met. If they are not met, then the deal is off. A "caveat" is a proviso. Here are a few examples.

*She agreed to the divorce with one caveat — that he would never see the children again.

I'll agree to the deal with one caveat — that you will not enter into a deal with any other company.

The expression "caveat emptor" means, "buyers beware". In other words, when you buy something, it is your responsibility to ensure that everything is fine.

Which is correct? "Clinic timings/timing"? *(Vyas Chiplunkar, Udipi)*

I guess in the Indian context, "timings" would be the appropriate word. After all, everyone in our country talks about "school timings", "bus timings" and "train timings". A native speaker of English, however, would find both "timing" and "timings" unacceptable. He would prefer to say "Clinic hours". The word "timing" has nothing to do with duration, and as for the word "timings", well, you won't find it listed in most dictionaries. It is a word that we Indians have coined.

***** ***** *****

*"The average girl would rather have beauty than brains because she knows that the average man can see much better than he can think." — **Ladies Home Journal***

S. UPENDRAN

Path to achieving excellence

THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH: Kalyan Sagar Nippani; AITBS Publishers & Distributors, J-5/6, Krishan Nagar, Delhi-110051. **Rs. 250.**

THIS BOOK prescribes an eightfold path for individual and corporate excellence. Citing as examples the lives of great people, he prescribes eight sutras starting from the philosophical maxim, "Know thyself". While he concedes that the oft-quoted skills like leadership, vision, team building, ethics and creativity are essential for a good leader, he has also to satisfy himself about the efficacy and sustainability of any theory by looking at various other options. Here he follows Valluvar's advice.

One can easily see his scholarship ranging from Akio Morito to Ouchi's theory Z; the author also resorts to the Bhagavad Gita and the Bible.

Allegorical style

"Cheese movement" and the "Fish" series lately have influenced the readers for their "different ways" of story-telling. The book too is refreshing in treatment. Written in easy style with a fair sprinkle of humour, the book needs to be read with all seriousness to understand and appreciate the element of allegory. We have come across authors drawing from light comedies like Don Quixote *Gulliver's Travels* and *Alice in Wonderland.*

This author too has accessed them. So wide has been the author's reach that the Upanishads, Zen parables, the Buddha's "Ashatanga marga" have all found total relevance to the concepts explained by him.

The way he brings them into the context makes the book interesting and meaningful. Taking the cue from Arindham Chaudhri and Shiv Kera, the author has trodden a new path to prove his point and succeeded.

Effective managers

When asked, "What makes executives effective?" Peter Drucker, the management Guru responded with a set of eight observations, "They ask, what needs to be done; what is right for the enterprise; developed action plans; took responsibility for decisions; were excellent communicators; were focussed on opportunities rather than problems; ran productive meetings and they thought and said 'we' rather than 'I'."

This is just not another book on management. It can also serve as reference on management and self-development.

P. S. V. CHARI

Right to education

UNIVERSALISATION OF SCHOOL EDUCATION — The Road Ahead: V.P. Niranjanaradhya; Books for Change, 139, Richmond Road, Bangalore-560025. **Rs. 80.**

IN 1950, the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution envisaged in the Article 45, "The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years." They also called for the "state, within its economic capacity to make effective provisions for education."

A fundamental right

Never mind 10 years. Fifty-four years later, the country has only legislation and is yet to evolve a practical framework for its implementation.

This book comes at a time when the 86th Constitutional Amendment has made free and compulsory school education a fundamental right.

Self-confessedly, it hopes to influence opinions at the stage when the process of enacting the central legislation is still under discussion. It is based on the proposition that creating any number of new legislations in the absence of a well-defined policy document is a futile exercise.

The book not only looks at the road ahead, but also the road behind, sketching the paths that education has taken since the Vedic period. It is the author's contention that education for the masses took a beating in British India, with its elitist educational policies.

Since then, the decline has been rapid with alarming literacy levels all over the country, indicating that free and compulsory education has been furthest in the policies of the rulers.

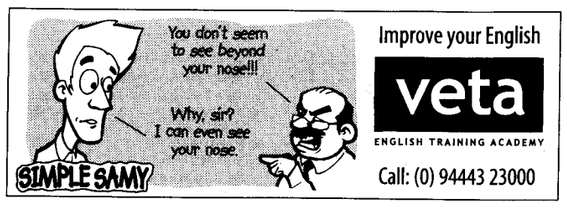
Working with the Centre for Child and Law, National Law School, Bangalore, the author naturally advances the Centre's proposals for effective implementation of the constitutional guarantee.

The book advocates universal access, enrolment, retention, achievement and community participation and a relevant institutional structure to achieve the above.

It is particularly valuable to anyone serious about the issue, providing as it does an exhaustive list of existing international, central and state legislations on education.

It, however, steers clear of the simultaneous debate on providing special facilities for certain children including girls, disabled and those from socially disadvantaged groups.

RAMYA KANNAN



OPEN PAGE

Rethink on adolescence

WE INDIANS are an extremely sensitive race. Right from the highest echelon to the commoner, we can trace a fire before smoke billows out of it. Problem lies not in sensing but in honest admission and quick redress of the matter. For a long time we have been shying away from the fact that our society is being increasingly infected by a festering younger generation. Every time we are shocked into realisation by incidents like the recent one concerning the sexual escapade of two schoolgoers and its commodification. Undeniably, a disproportionately large section of our youngsters feed and water their thoughts, actions and conversations with 'sex.'

This obsession with sex manifests itself with the diverse escapades that are coming to the fore through police raids and media led sting operations. Mobile, computers, VCDs, thanks to consumerism, have become a source of lewd entertainment. Things are changing for worse. Earlier, a "Debonair" used to be taboo for adolescents; now it is lively colourful visuals that spread MTV culture to every drawing room — without a hitch! Earlier eve-teasing meant 'teasing'; now it can also mean bestial 'torturing' — both mental and physical. Earlier the strayed ones frequented brothels to their own harm but now they drag out or woo young virgins to warm their beds.

Is it not time our politicians, bureaucrats, police, compradors and every other man in society woke up to brave the fact? The politicians can indeed do much more than squabbling on non-issues. Why not put all private entertainment channels under a regulatory system that would censure anything derogatory to our society? However, politicians will find little merit in this suggestion for we need FDIs, whatsoever germ it carries along! Compradors and other intermediary money makers can hardly be expected to forgo their share of profit in the name of some illusory 'social responsibility.' Why not make a stricter law for them as the one recently made for fake drug manufacturers?

Ultra-caring parents

Lastly, the biggest onus lies upon the family, precisely, the parents. In an attempt to befriend their children modern parents go to any extent. They equip the latter with money, mobile and motorbike, naively believing them to be a child's fascination. These ultra-caring parents hardly believe that their highly-groomed young ones turn out of home only to pose a serious threat to society. Why filial love has only to be adjudged against material enrichment? Paradoxically most of our adolescents find a yawning psychological chasm between them and their parents. This estrangement coupled with out-of-door enticements leads to degeneration of character. This gap needs to be bridged to wean them away from the comfort of the flesh to the joy of the mind.

Any effort at censure in our country is promptly chastised by such words as 'Talibanisation,' 'saffronisation,' 'Sanskritisation' and so on, but not a single word of disgust is muttered at naked flesh jiggling on visual screens. We raise a hue and cry on growing violence on women, on 4.58 million Indians being infected with HIV+. But this concern rises only to die down in its due time.

There is much talk about imparting value education in schools. Can a dry perfunctory lecture on righteousness make any dent in young minds when movies, music albums, mobile clippings and internets have so much stuff to offer them? Perhaps everyone, from politicians to parents, is too much bogged down by an unconscious fear of being labelled as 'undemocratic,' 'non-liberal,' 'conservative' and 'regressive.' Will it be a sin to cast off such unfounded fear and rediscover ourselves, apolitically, for a brighter and healthier future?

● **PAROMITA ROY**

Who is feeding the bin Laden legend?

ROBIN HOOD and not Osama bin Laden is the most celebrated outlaw in the English-speaking world. Part reality and part fantasy, Robin Hood has been written into children's stories and adult poems, portrayed on the stage and in movies, examined and re-examined in scholarly research. Even in the realm of law, Robin folk tales raise intriguing questions about law and lawlessness. Is Robin Hood a good lead to understanding Osama bin Laden? At first blush, any comparison between (Ro)bin Hood and bin Laden seems odd, most certainly to the English-speaking world for whom 'bin Hood is a romantic robber whereas bin Laden is a despised terrorist. The comparison might also displease Muslim militants who see bin Laden as a spiritual sheikh fighting the crusaders.

In the realm of manufacturing legends, however, the similarities between the two outlaws are so real and so fantastic that very little brush work is needed to draw them together.

Hidden presence

The most bewildering similarity between Robin and Osama is their hidden presence. To this day, scholars who expended their entire intellectual capital on tracing Robin's historical whereabouts are unsure whether he operated from Sherwood forest in Nottingham or from Barnsdale parks in Yorkshire. This controversy muddles history but nonetheless furnishes texture to Robin's legend. Now cometh Osama! Despite technology and resources available to experts and spies and despite a $25 million bounty placed on his head, Osama's whereabouts remain a deep mystery. Is he in Pakistan or Afghanistan? The tough mountains interweaving the borders of these two countries, captured in TV shots, add awesome scenery (*a la* American Western) to his inscrutable absence.

And yet Osama is far from hidden. You can hear him on the internet and see him on Al-Jazeera broadcasts. The snippets from his old videos — he riding a stout white horse or ambling down a rocky hill with a cane in his hand — are repeatedly shown on American television, adding fantasy to emerging tales of terror.

We know what makes Robin Hood a beloved outlaw and not a mere criminal. The romanticised distinction lies in the English folklore, generously expressed in ballads and poems written over the centuries, asserting that Robin's lawlessness had a redeeming value embodied in his egalitarian ethic of wealth redistribution. "Never poor man came for help/and went away denied." This non-conservative compassion for the poor sprang from Robin's systemic critique that "how (the poor) toiled without their share" under the then corrupt clerical/feudal alliance.

Robin and his Merry Men, however, were by no means bespectacled revolutionaries devoted to social justice. They were hurly-burly ruffians, hiding in the forest, having a good time, robbing bishops, killing the forbidden deer, and deceiving the Sheriff of Nottingham. Wanted by the Sheriff dead or alive, Robin is nonetheless a real hero in English folk tales "for not a soul in Locksley town/would speak him an ill word."

Wanted dead or alive by the Sheriff of the World, Osama too is an outlaw. But he is not a thief; he is a master terrorist who strikes embassies, ships, and towers without mercy. One can build a legend around Osama, even a bigger legend than that of Robin, since the stakes Osama raises are high, the conflict he espouses is monumental, and his story, going far beyond the confines of a Nottingham, cuts across cultures, religions and civilisations.

Celebration of outlaws

If the genius of an outlaw is to find law beyond law and to place justice at the core of criminality, Osama's claims that he is fighting against foreign occupation, neo-colonialism, and alien domination sound credible to Marxists, Palestinians, war critics, and anti-imperialists. And if the genius of an outlaw is to establish a popular constituency that roots for his breaches of law, Osama has done that too. Muslim militants see Osama as a righteous warrior, some have named their sons after him, some carry his picture in protest rallies. Under the American pressure, Islamic governments are prohibiting the sale of Osama posters, T-shirts, and other merchandise. Such suppressions, however, deepen his cult.

Ironically, Americans themselves are feeding the bin Laden legend. There is something in the American spirit that celebrates the outlaws, even violent outlaws. If Osama's comparison with Robin seems grotesque or contrived, consider comparing him with Jesse James, Al Capone, George Musgrave, Terminator, Arnold Schwarzenegger. American fascination with outlaws and gratuitous violence, generously depicted in Hollywood movies and in the real time bombing of a romantically-lit Baghdad, seems benign, creative, stunning, fun — having nothing to do with real death or grief or loss or barbarism. And it is all legal.

In this great tradition of violence starting with cowboys against Indians, Osama is an exotic but a perfect fit. Produced in Washington D.C., directed by the CIA, and filmed in Afghanistan, Osama is cast as a millionaire hero, the 17th son from a family of 50, who speaks softly but carries a cane, who prays five times a day and inspires his men to terminate Soviet helicopters flying low over the mud houses of a wretched Afghan population.

This alien hero, this entrepreneur of violence, this Osama, after successfully shooting the first movie against the Soviet evil empire, decides to go on his own. He moves the camera and the crew from an emptied Afghanistan to a city filled with skyscrapers. Planes hit the towers with real death and grief and loss and barbarism. This unprecedented though overly-familiar violence perpetrated in America against America, shown in real time, comes across as neither legal nor creative. September 11 changes the world, the norms of reaction, the meaning of violence, the definition of artistic expression, fun, the gulf between law and lawlessness. But has 9/11 changed the celebration of the outlaw?

While American soldiers, spies, bounty hunters, television, radio, magazines and private conversations pursue Osama to bring him to justice for perpetrating the crime of the century, and while Muslim militants pray, fast and plot to kill the enemy under Osama's real or inspired leadership, the yearly festival at Nottingham recites the 15th century ballads and later poems to keep alive the Robin Hood legend.

● **LIAQAUT ALI KHAN**

Freedom to women — blessing or blemish?

IS FREEDOM to women a blessing or a blemish?

A million dollar question which cannot be answered instantly, even by a staunch supporter of women's cause, if she has been a real witness to 'what woman has made of herself today.'

Woman is shakthi; woman is fair; an educated woman is a university; woman is everything — both creation and destruction; status of a woman is a sure indicator of a nation's success... etc., are fast changing to be history.

Just imagine! Our Maha Kavi Bharathi, Mahatma Gandhi, India's Nightingale Sarojini Naidu, Raja Rammohan Roy, and the like, were to view the free display of women's beauty in the films; do you think they would be happy that all their dreams had come true about freedom of women?

Our former social reformers had a clear vision and fought for women's freedom; accordingly certain social evils like *sati*, child marriage, denial of education to women, were resisted and a change for better was achieved too; these were some of the bitter and disgraceful manifestations of man's ignorance and superstition which are being erased out gradually — thanks to the great efforts of social reformers.

But the story does not end there; keeping pace with the fast moving world, the tale of women's freedom has taken a different turn, and the resultant ruin is being witnessed silently. 'Frailty! Thy name is woman!' This is four hundred years old lamentation by William Shakespeare, which is turning into a bitter reality!

Mind pollution

Girls in groups cutting classes for simple pleasures; clandestine meetings growing in number; mandatory boy-friends; internet import of foreign culture and immediate display and dissemination; Adam teasing; roadside Juliets; instant marriages and faster divorces... What else and what not? All in the name of freedom to women!

Why do the people concerned remain unconcerned? Perhaps, the responsible but passive onlookers are trying to steal the chestnuts out of a frying home. One need not be pessimistic to anticipate a hole in the ozone layer; our younger generation who are going to be the future victims to this day's whims and fancies will never forgive us; for, the damage being done to our good tradition is enormous. Mind pollution is more dangerous than air or water pollution.

Indian tradition is like an ivory tower very meticulously carved and wherein each iota is significant; either addition or deletion or replacement requires responsible thinking; our tradition and its strength is even now an inconceivable enigma even to the world of space scientists; such a tradition has a wonderful place for woman which is manifested in Indian mythology and epics.

The reverence and regard bestowed upon women in Indian tradition have come to the open market for sale under barter system just for mutable material advantages. The security and the shield created by our ancient forefathers/mothers for our great women is scoffed at and the angels have come out of their altar to create a world for themselves; is it a right decision? Yes, but if it is a right world. Employment to women is no more an advantage to them; rather it has turned out to be a fetter; employed woman is another added condition for marriage.

Reverence, not restriction

Forty years ago, if my sister had been escorted either by my father or by my brother while going for tuition, that was not denial of freedom to women; that seemed to me bestowing greater care upon them; in the name of freedom, today's women have lost that bliss and paramount importance; that was reverence and not restriction. Considering today's escort and company offered to school going girls, by the respective he-friends, the earlier escort would be more acceptable and reverential.

A word of caution and an 'awake and arise call' to yet another team of social reformers of 21st century to rescue and redeem the falling angels!

● **G. RAJASEKARAN**

Principal, District Institute of Education and Training, Lawspet, Pondicherry

Announcement

Contributions to the Open Page will be considered for publication only if they are in electronic form and emailed. The length of the article should not exceed 800 words. It may be addressed to the Open Page desk at openpage@thehindu.co.in

BOOK REVIEW

From Connecticut to Kabul

FRAGMENTS OF GRACE — My Search for Humanity From Kashmir to Kabul: Pamela Constable; HarperCollins Publishers, 1 A Hamilton Palace, Connaught Place, New Delhni-110002. **Rs. 495.**

THIS BOOK by the former South Asia Correspondent of the *Washington Post* is a work of intuition and reflection rather than scholarship. Portions of the book deal with the author's attempts to explain, mainly to herself, what drives her to lead the peripatetic and often dangerous life of a foreign correspondent. These portions, inserted as separate sub-chapters titled "interludes", make for interesting reading. However, they are likely to be overlooked by an Indian reader who would like to know the insights an outsider has to offer about our society, especially one who lived in our country in interesting times.

Impression about India

The problem of course is that this country is too immense and too forbidding in its diversities for most foreigners to form a deeply insightful, leave alone all-encompassing, view of India. There are positive passages such as the one that reads, "I was fascinated by the sheer human density of India and by the idea that one billion people, at least two thirds of them desperately poor, could co-exist in a cauldron of caste, ethnicity and faith without violent upheaval or state repression."

She also makes a serious attempt to understand how we as individuals can live in the crowded spaces of the sort that westerners probably find intolerable. "Indians lived in such dense proximity, with such glaring economic disparities that they created impenetrable walls around themselves, their property, their relationships and their capacities to empathise." Describing her "escapes" into the world of the five star hotels Constable writes, "For a few rejuvenating hours I could do what thousands of affluent Indians do every day; pretend that India did not exist."

Outsider's dilemmas

While acknowledging that India's public systems have worked to create a secular society, the author provides an outsider's timely reminder of the power that continues to be exercised by the unwritten codes of class, caste and religion.

She observes that the traditional practices help preserve order in a huge and complicated country but they hold back that society from developing the values of tolerance, merit and individual freedom that it needs to truly progress.

Nor should any right-thinking Indian object to the fact that she too wants to make her contribution to the list of off-putting habits that we are pathetically unaware of. Her particular complaint is about "well dressed passengers insinuating themselves ahead of you in line and pretending you don't exist."

She neatly pinpoints the dilemma of a foreign correspondent in India. Other than the rare exception most do not form deep attachments. This is not

only because of the restless drive of journalists who are always hungry for the next story. Nor is it only because the foreigner does not want to reach out.

People often keep them at a distance; as Constable points out they tolerate but do not trust the stranger.

About Pakistani leadership

To Indians who are always puzzled by the West's tolerance for Pakistani dictators, the author provides the hint of an explanation. After a succinct description of the attitudes of the feudal and industrial elite of Pakistan, especially their aloofness and venality, her narrative suggests that General Pervez Musharraf came as a breath of fresh air. As with many other western writers she approvingly mentions his soldierly demeanour, his upbringing as the son of a diplomat and, most tellingly, the fact that he spoke flawless English.

She does draw an uncomfortable parallel by observing that Gen. Musharraf's statements soon after he took over power were roughly the same as those of General Augusto Pinochet at the outset of his dictatorial regime. However, it is difficult to miss the sense of relief that the Pakistani leader she would henceforth have to study had an approach and style of articulation that she would be able to understand.

To be fair, it is also necessary to note that in that period most Pakistanis too were not unhappy about the change in leadership. Nor does she refrain from issuing the necessary warning, drawn from her Chilean experiences, that all dictatorships eventually degenerate irrespective of the noble intention with which they might have once been established.

Coverage of the Taliban era

Her coverage of Afghanistan during the Taliban era was a saga of coverage in itself. It took some guts for a western woman to even make the trip. This was after all a government that spewed hatred against the West and one that deprived Afghan woman of all their rights. The passages that provide insights into the life of women under the Taliban rule and describe the brutalisation of children are invaluable because few other chronicles are available.

The impact that the Taliban's barbaric rule had on the psyche of all who felt its power is well brought out in the passage where the author describes how she too began to look down on Afghan women as "annoying, anonymous blue blobs" after frustrated attempts to break through to the burka-covered half of the country.

Those seeking to understand the appeal that the Taliban had for the youth of Afghanistan might find this paragraph particularly perceptive. "And yet I was also struck by how innocent they seemed, how malleable and excitable, how yearning for certainty and inspiration, how churning with hormonal energy for which they had no socially permissible outlet...all that youthful drive was channelled by their elders into a straitjacket of piety whose only outlets were fantasies of revenge and martyrdom."

Perhaps the greatest benefit to be gained by a correspondent posted in foreign lands is that he or she will usually return with a deeper understanding of his homeland. That Constable went through this experience is clear when she writes, "Now I am finally beginning to appreciate the values that truly make Connecticut different from Kabul; the dignity and graciousness, the kindness and refinement that are the real luxuries of wealth."

KESAVA MENON

Between civil society and public realm

INVESTIGATING SOCIAL CAPITAL — Comparative Perspectives on Civil Society, Participation and Governance: Sanjeev Prakash, Per Selle — Editors; Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi-110017. **Rs. 550.**

THIS COLLECTION attempts to link several apparently distinct areas of discourse — empirical political science and political philosophy, northern and southern political science, and civil society and the state.

Those tasks are daunting even in the light of a minimal conception of civil society, "a non-state autonomous sphere, empowerment of citizens, trust-building associational life and interaction with rather than subordination to the state."

Conception

Perhaps inevitably, much of the work involves responses to Alexis de Tocqueville, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam. All three see a causative relation between social capital resulting from voluntary association, for example, in recreational activities and a capacity for civic participation and self-government. Social capital, then, is a "compound of trust, networks and shared norms."

Many of the contributors rightly criticise the complacency of such conceptions. One notes that the traditional exemplars of social capital, such as the 12th Century A.D. republican city-states of Northern Italy, gave way to oligarchies and tyrannies for the next 500 years.

The same contributor also identifies the severe tensions and violence that can be generated when, for example, intentional associations in India try to use legitimate institutions and resources for the legitimate spread of social capital.

Findings

Some significant findings emerge from dense empirical analysis. For example, participation in voluntary associations is very strongly correlated with education, income, and social class. This appears despite the apparent neglect of some powerful evidence.

The book makes little mention of Pierre Bourdieu, who originated the term "social capital" when analysing the evidence that the already wealthy and already educated do very much better than the poor out of the relatively high-quality systems of state education in Western Europe.

The wealthy and educated take more interest in their children's education, have more influence on the teaching staff and have immeasurably more time and money with which to support their children's learning outside school.

Neither does the collection mention the Black Report, which showed much the same in respect of access to the purportedly-universal British National Health Service.

Secondly, although most of the authors seem not to differentiate between government and state, several provide much evidence that transparent and procedurally fair institutions of state are essential to the maintenance of trust and confidence in the sphere of civil society.

One contributor refers to the substantial evidence that high levels of taxation transparently used for public goods generate more productive and more peaceable societies and that aggregate economic growth by itself is no guarantor of public goods.

Indeed it is a strength of the book that the authors are very suspicious of economistic concepts of social capital, such as the idea that social capital is an unintended consequence of self-interested actions.

This strength holds despite the fact that none of the authors takes the economistic theory to its logical conclusion — namely the question of what life would be like if all our actions were purely instrumental or if every other person were nothing but an instrument for our purposes.

"Within political science"

Yet, while all the contributors are rightly cautious about generalising ideas like trust and social capital across all societies, they remain well within empirical political science. This causes problems.

For example, in response to the difficulties of previous accounts of social capital, the authors call for more finely grained taxonomies, coherent testable frameworks and the identification of causative links.

That these might be misconceived approaches in the first place seems not to figure in the debate and while the contributors welcome recent methodological questionings within political science, they appear to be unaware that philosophers such as Peter Winch and Alasdair MacIntyre identified many of the same problems nearly half-a-century ago.

'Conceptual neglect'

One contributor notes something in the work of the 18th Century A.D. philosopher David Hume, but the contributors as a whole seem not to notice either the Hume-derived recognition that constant conjunction does not amount to causation or that their methods replicate Hume's own in the search for causation and will therefore fail for conceptual, not empirical, reasons.

Some of this conceptual neglect may have to do with funding bodies, which seem to want single definitions of very complex phenomena in order to demonstrate results (the former Cabinet Secretary, T. S. R. Subramanian has written that even when he severely criticised World Bank projects in India, the Bank's own final reports never described any project as a failure).

This collection, nevertheless, valuably reminds us of some basic truths, such as the importance of the state in creating the space for civil society. Hegel said civil society is the aggregate sphere of interests. It can never add up to the state.

ARVIND SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

• Fractured relationships • Heartrending stories • Hilarious anecdotes • Historical novel

TAMIL

ARDDHA NARISVARAR: Hindi original by Vishnu Prabhakar; Sundaram (Nageswar) Translation in Tamil; Sahitya Academy, Ravindra Bhavan, 35, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi-110001. **Rs. 300.**

THIS BOOK is a Tamil version of a Hindi novel depicting the problems in man-woman relationships caused by traditional notions, which impose one-sided values on women and subject them to male domination.

The characters are from the higher-middle class with liberated views among whom traditional prejudices still leave their marks; they struggle to overcome these. A woman subjected to rape and overpowered by violence she fights against, carries a stigma for no fault of hers. Her husband has the magnanimity to disregard this accidental disgrace but his wife feels that he regrets having let his wife suffer such a trauma. He seeks the company of another woman as compensation.

But his motivation is pure sympathy for the other woman's state with none to help her; she also has her mother to be supported and deserves his monetary help. This woman has the good sense to respect his married status and to revere his wife, she moves in with his family on affectionate terms.

This main story is criss-crossed by sub-stories of couples suffering fractured relationship in different ways and the author has endeavoured to hold up the ideal of equal partnership of man and woman, leaving enough space for each one's personality developments typified by the novel's title. The translation is readable.

J. PARTHASARATHI

TELUGU

ENUPAGAJJELA TALLI — Cruel Mother: Santi, Singamaneni Narayana — Editors; District Writers' Association, S. S. Apartments, Ramnagar, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. **Rs. 50.**

THIS BOOK is a collection of 18 stories on famine in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

Karuvu Kurisina Dhatri (when famine reigns) by T. Raghavendra Rao shows the plight of a typical village family. Mallamma, her son Ranganna and, his wife Rajakka and child Galenna go to a town hospital for the treatment of the sick child, where they get a raw deal. With no work in the village, the proud farmer Ranganna goes to Bellary Iron works as a labourer only to return with a little money and more illness.

Karuvu Peelchina Manushulu (people struck by famine) by P. Ramakrishna is in the form of a letter by the author to a senior colleague scoffing at the latter's suggestion to write a story on the theme of famine.

A woman in a hotel lobby offering money to a skeleton-like old man addresses the author, "Look uncle; these days fathers come to collect doles from daughters living in brothels."

The author recognises the woman as Papa (little girl) and the old man as her father, the haughty landlord Ramappa Naidu. Both have changed beyond recognition. Values thus become the first casualty of famine.

Suicide creates social tensions sometimes affecting others; in Alajadi (tremor) of S. Narayana, Sujata, a college student suddenly collapses in the classroom as she was haunted by the previous day's ghastly scene of uncle Pullana's hanging from a tree branch. The thought that this might happen even to her father makes her tremble.

Written in the Rayalaseema dialect, these stories serve a social purpose by highlighting the conditions that provoke suicides in the state.

P. V. L. N. RAO

KANNADA

RUCHIGE HULIYOGARU: Srinivaasa Vaidya; Ankitha Pusthaka, 53, Shamsingh Complex, Gandhi Bazaar Main Road, Bangalore-560004. **Rs. 60.**

IN THE short but excellent piece of a preface to this book A. Raa. Mitra, a noted humourist, assures us that this writing, the second book of the author after a long time is a natural development. May be this hibernation brought quality and at last, he has decided to pen these sketches anchored on seemingly silly issues and peculiar people, offering his ever hilarious, angular yet insightful thoughts.

There is this man who is worried equally at the presence of or the absence of a grievance, which is his staple food. The garbage bin opposite one's house provokes the identification of a larger societal garbage bin overflowing with unsolved problems. The piece "Dattopantana Pattedari" is a fantastic achievement.

The piece on the tinsel world heartthrob of every age and the trick it enacts on the ageing is funny. It is comfortable to know that the punch in "Yaakeekarana?" on Rajyotsava celebrations has been missed and enthusiasts continue to entertain us. Wit, humour, satire, fun and frolic, pun and punch and constructional twists, all so well stocked in his armoury, are drawn at will and thrown in with a subtlety to a telling effect.

The spoken Kannada of north Karnataka employed here is rich not merely for the sprinkle of words of border languages but for its unique construction, idiom and even expression. Did we miss our "Beechi" for long? Do not worry. Read this book in solitude or in an intimate group and enjoy the rib-tickling tingle. It is not for nothing that any session of a humour club is incomplete without Vaidya's presence.

K. S. PARTHASARATHY

MALAYALAM

ORA PRO NOBIS — Malayalam novel: Ponjikkara Raphi; D.C. Books, DCB Complex, Good Shepherd Street, Kottayam-686001. **Rs. 65.**

THIS IS a historical novel carefully woven on the background of Kochi in the 16th and 17th Centuries A.D. when the Portuguese dominated the western shore of India. The title is in Latin meaning, "Kindly pray for us", which is a repetition of a line of the prayer by the chorus (luthinia) addressed to Holy Mother Mary, sung by the Latin Catholics.

In 1663 A.D., the Dutch defeated the Portuguese who succeeded to a certain extent in implementing their "divide and rule" policy among the local rulers in the northern part of Kerala during their reign for one and a half centuries.

Though the chain of events narrated in this novel happened in 1750 A.D., the social and political scenarios of the preceding 115 years are also artistically amalgamated with minute anthropological details.

The incidents after the mass migration of the Portuguese from Kochi to Goa and Portugal are pictured through the distracted mental reflections and conversations of Chinna Ambrose — a fifth generation old man whose ancestors had been brought to Kochi by Captain Achakko and his wife Isabella, successors of the Portuguese barons Aswerasu in 1635 A.D. for looking after their horses.

The life stories of these Latin Catholic generations starting from the couple Michel-Monica and their children Jocki, Paaval and Ambrose are recorded in the family history by the third generation man Chinna Ambrose in Malayam-Tamil — a mixture of Malayalam and Tamil languages.

Their dialect throughout the novel is also in this mixed style, which gives a special individual flavour and effect to this work. Not only are the trials and tribulations of these family members living and dead but also the misdeeds like looting of the stockyards and temples by the Portuguese for want of money, by which they earned the hatred and enmity of the people, the inefficiency and surrendering mentality of the Kochi kingdom in that period and the social condition of the people in other religious classes like the Jews, Ezhavas, Nairs and the Konkanis are well depicted in the novel.

The interesting and pathetic incident narrated is the offering of the bloody sacrifice of the first generation Ambrose on January 13, 1663 A.D. at the age of 33 like the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in his 33rd year, with his full consent by the Portuguese for protecting their valuable treasure earned in this land that was buried secretly, just before their mass exodus from Kochi.

It is the firm belief of Chinna Ambrose who is the grandson of Ambrose (first) that he and his grandson — the present young Vella Ambrose and others who will follow after them should not disclose the place of the hidden treasure up to the period of the seventh generation when the real owners of the treasure, the Portuguese, will come again to claim it according to a record of the family history.

The novel ends with the demise of Chinna Ambrose while praying with the family members, but with a broken heart as his elder son Michel attempted to kill him a few hours ago since he did not disclose to him the place where the treasure was hidden.

NEELA PADMANABHAN

Announcement

Authors and publishers are welcome to send copies of their books to *The Hindu* for review. While every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of the books under "New Arrivals", the decision to review a book rests entirely with the newspaper. Receipt of individual books will not be acknowledged in response to enquiries.