



# PRAYAAS

**IAS OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, BIHAR BRANCH**

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## Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

Printing the issue of a vibrant magazine like "Prayaas" after a long gap is always difficult. But now that this issue is in your hands, we sincerely hope to have it printed regularly in future. For that, support of each one of you is solicited.

During the intervening period, events like Koshi Floods and General Parliamentary Elections tested the mettle of our service. We were able to put our best on these occasions.

The experiences we gather during such times are unique. Our learning is faster if we learn not only through our own and failure but also through those of others. For that reason also, I urge all of you to come forth and share your thoughts and perceptions in the form of articles in "Prayaas" for the benefit of us all.

Wishing you a happy Diwali.

(Arvind Kumar Chaudhary)

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**Editorial Board:** Balamurugan D., Divesh Sehera, Ajay Yadav, Manish Kumar, S.P. Sinha

## Secretary's Desk

Dear Colleagues,

The publication of Prayaas has not taken place for over a year now. Whatever be the reasons behind this an effort is now being made to ensure that the magazine is published regularly, as in the past. An in-house magazine or journal of any association or organization is important for several reasons and it is for these reasons that it is imperative that it is published on a regular basis.

Many of us, on many occasions, step back from our regular professional commitments and try to reflect upon the issues that confront us in our professional life. Many of these concerns that we reflect upon may be unique in their own ways and may not be found to have been expressed in any meaningful or significant manner in the public domain. It is for such unique reasons that journals like Prayaas become important, for it is only in such fora that one can expect to glean perspectives and viewpoints that are unique to the profession in question.

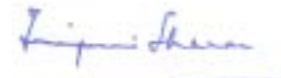
We now have a new editor of the magazine in Shri Arvind K Chaudhary and a Principal Editor in Shri S N Sinha. We are particularly fortunate to have Shri Sinha associate himself with this effort because we expect to draw upon his immense literary interest as also his vast experience as a former member of the service.

I take this occasion to place on record our gratitude to all members of the service for contributing generously to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in the wake of the unprecedented floods in the Koshi region last year. However, I would also like to urge all members to take a look at the dues of membership that they are expected to pay to the Association. Our books of account suggest that this seems to have missed the attention of several members.

It may be worthy to note that we are passing through a particularly critical phase in the life and times of the people of our nation and these changes are throwing up several issues that merit reflection and informed engagement from the professional quarters that we in the service man. It would be worthwhile to use a forum like Prayaas to meaningfully channelize such engagement.

We, therefore, hope for a very active involvement of our members in the multi-dimensional activities of our Association.

Yours truly,



**(Tripurari Sharan)**

Secretary, IAS Officers Association

Bihar Branch

## ***KNOW YOUR OFFICERS***



**Ashima Jain** : The woman topper of IAS 2008 Batch from Delhi with her immaculate background in Economics has come with the desire to utilize her potential and skills for the betterment of society and people. Always eager to learn, puts her best in whatever she does and has a strong desire to excel with 'do-or-die' attitude. A strongly determined and a dedicated person who strives for perfection with consistent hard work. A trained singer and an all-rounder with keen interest in activities like elocution, writing, music and dance.



**Kartikeya** : This 6ft tall lad coming from Bhuj, Gujrat is an avid adventure lover and wants to control his district with equal energy as he would control his horse. Recently got married and will start his married and career life together from Bihar. A great company with his own jovial ways, he always tends to keep his surrounding on toes with work.



**Pranav** : Pranav hailing from Chhapra, Bihar is again 6ft tall. A dedicated badminton player, he is sweet in words and action and lovely company to be with. He possesses good coordinating skills both in professional and personal life. Recently married, he will use his skills to come out shining both on and off the court.



**Girivar Dayal Singh** : The Nawaab of Lucknow winning the "Battle of UPSC" has been awarded with an opportunity to serve the people of Bihar. His head is hard to beat and these are the qualities that would take him ahead in life and career. His lawn will be a beauty because of his hobby in gardening until he ruins it by playing cricket in it, which is again his hobby.



**Ramandeep** : The tallest guy from the IAS 2008 batch, this "Shere-e-Punjab", with all his will and power is ready to stand tall against any adversity. Coming from the city of sports "Jalandhar" he plays almost all out door games - basketball, Cricket, Volleyball, Tennis, Squash and with equal intensity. A tough task master, he doesn't give up once he takes up a job. He has taken up the challenge to stick to his conviction whilst working in the cadre. A jovial person, he believes in a perfect balance of professional and personal life, and excelling in both fields.

# ***THE CHANGING FACE OF THE ACADEMY \****

**DR. C. ASHOKVARDHAN**

**L**ife moves as if in slabs : the slab of adolescence to youth; the slab of graduating from an alma mater, the lecture theatres, common rooms and hostel messes keeping alive; the slab of a first stint somewhere, if one; and then moving on to the job which stays on somewhat like a life-mate. But the slabs are all ensconced on a continuum. Reminiscing the past, looking back at the days gone by, one feels as if being a part of one's own history.

The day I had to take an evening train from Patna to Dehradun en route Mussorie in September 1980, brings forth vivid memories of a day, the last one in my erstwhile teaching career. Some of my closest folks in Patna University had come over to my small rented namesake of a flat on September 13 to say to me good-bye. For me it was a good-bye to a five-year old teaching innings on the campus. Those five years had meant a lot to me. It had been a sheer coincidence that prompted me to the civil services. Indrani Guha, a frail young girl from the Intermediate classes brought me one day the morning newspaper only to say, "Sir, the IAS results are out today and your name doesn't figure there!" It took me some time informing her that I had not taken the examinations at all, and then explaining, why not. Taking the civil services examinations came more like a group challenge than a personal choice.

Even as my train was lousily crossing station after station, destination Dehradun, not the faintest outlines of some ideology laid a seize on me. I had been sleeping most of the journey recapitulating the campus being pushed into the background. To be thinking about the next slot, I could only recall from my school days the aura that pervaded the flag

hoisting ceremony in the historical Ramna Maidan of my home-town, Arrah, Headquarters of old Shahabad district in Bihar- those vivid scenes of mounted police marching past and the District Collector, immaculately dressed, inspecting the guard of honour, in an open jeep.

Life has been varied and much more revealing since then. The LBSNAA, Mussorie presented the photogenic heights of the far away snow-clad Himalayas, the ageless trees and walls of hill surrounding the Queen of Hills, clouds descending and passing through persons on a stroll along the mall, the treacherous serpentine routes and the depths of valleys distraught. There used to be lots of reading, lots of writing, lots of home-work and lots of play and sports in the Academy.

Over a period of time, with the steady change in human volitions and planning, new training modules kept coming up replacing the old ones. After an accident of fire, the frontal portion of the Academy had to be raised anew. Even the old face is gone.

For us it was almost a daily ritual to stoop for a while and pull our wooden drawers, as we darted towards the lunch in the officers' mess. One looked for mails from our dear ones. The charms of the hills could not dispel the nostalgia altogether. Threads from the past ran on a continuum.

Drawn from multifarious streams as we were, it was in the nature of things for the Academy to bring us on to a rather broad base. Knowledge is power and we were

**\* Commemorative article to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussorie.**

exposed to various aspects of administration. And there were snap tests to keep us on our toes.

The Officers' mess had to have its own time schedule. As and when we were off to the Library Point, Kulri or Landhour, we had often to race against time, reaching for the mess. On one such late evening, as I was rushing back to the Academy, I was amused to see a batchmate moving, relaxedly, in the opposite direction. He whispered about the prospective in-laws (and the girl too) who were taking him on a dining out. Bachelors were, indeed, real kings and used to move about in royal, puffed up style. The Academy continues to be a living witness to promises kept and promises broken; to friendships and everlasting friendships, to nuptial ties (irrespective of concerns for a cadre change!) and to subtle and serene feelings that transcended formal relationships.

The kind of exposure I could get in the Academy was unique. First, during the foundational training in course of Inter-services mix and second, during out excursions. I could not, alas, savour much of the Bharat Darshan, being the leader of the South Central group of about 25 probationers; all pulling in different directions! While the rest of the folks slept (and some snored), I had almost to keep awake to give a wake-up call for the morning trains! And at the top of all this, I had a memo ('love letter' as it was nice-named) in my lockers, awaiting my return to the Academy, asking me to explain why a bus had to be hired to take the group from Bangalore to Goa direct, instead of taking a pre-fixed bus at Belgaum! The change was effected at group pressure, but it was only my forthcoming Holi (thanks to the love letter) that was sapped of all colours! Looking back I can see, seminally, sparks of a training input, there too, when I match trifles like these to more than life size situations, when I was all alone, fending for myself, in the years rolling by.

The tribal attachment in village Bendapalli in the Rampachowdavaram Block of East Godavari district in

Andhra Pradesh was no less than an adventure. Four of us (two men and two women) spent almost a week in a school building in the shadow of dense forests and ever looming dacoit menace. Filling up socio-economic profile columns of interior villages was certainly tardy but that was one sure way to have an inkling into ground realities. The Academy has since produced volumes on the outcomes of such surveys. But there was a micro-twist while actually surveying: the scent of the turf and the soil, the feel of the pulse and the throb, which remain with the ones who had actually walked a few miles, talked and perceived, in person.

Every batch has some radicals, the fire-brand sort. It was pleasure listening to the rhetoric in an otherwise cool and composed Academy. But once in the field, it was more of an encounter with a silent mass, with a muffled cry. With no light at the end of the tunnel, countless lives were singularly marginalized. Old time rhetoric had to retreat from a distance. The challenge lay in delivery, in giving a voice to the voiceless, power to the powerless, drawing for them the outlines of a secure future through haze, gloom and despair, to bring back those straying adrift into the mainstream, enabling them to re-invent and re-define themselves.

While all said, it has never been a cake-walk ever since we left the Academy. But the Academy remains the guide-post, despite its own limitations and confines. It remains an alma-mater to its alumni. Children may behave differently, but a mother is never wrong. We did have our lessons in commitment, integrity, secularism and impartiality. I recall Mr. V. Kurien talking to us in the Sardar Patel Hall about his strifes and struggles in bringing Anand to its present glory. Mr. P.S. Appu, our Director, with his penchant for land reforms was the beau ideal of a civil servant and continues to be a living legend by his works and example.

The Academy has been offering a platform to the newcomers to come over and learn. There are exposures

that bring about winds of change. Human mind is a tabula rasa. It is the blank tablet on which knowledge come by layers and layers of experience. The world around us has been changing fast. How best the Academy could be a vessel of change itself through suitable course designs, debates and conferences has been the concern of successive Directors. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift. We have to act not only to create new jobs, but to lay new foundation for inclusive growth. We have to build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and the digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We have to restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its costs. We have to harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. We have to transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. Above all, we have to drag our agriculture from out of its present morass and see what plagues rural development despite myriad interventions and hefty budgets over the years. In all this, the Academy has to build up its capabilities as a citadel of inter-disciplinary research and innovation.

Many are quitting the civil service fold to associate themselves with NGOs, MNCs and the like. And yet, civil services continue to be the choice of millions of young men and women. Diversification of media of expression has opened up new channels of inflow. Civil services are no longer big city preserves. There has been a steady inflow of aspirants from diverse previous pursuits. While an ever sprawling market economy is there to absorb the technical talent, civil service options do not call for an alibi. It is a conscious (much more conscious than in our days) decision. The need of the hour is to expose this lot to a work environment in a constant flux, through concerted efforts at capacity building. There could still be and always be some gaps on this score calling for studied policy initiatives. It can be hoped that the Academy will continue to provide necessary inputs to those who matter in the realm of policy, strategy and programme implementation.

As the cauldrons of change churn out new ideas, it is gratifying to see that the young leaders of today, highly talented youths from all over the country wish to challenge long-held beliefs and wish to have a choice. Caste, for example, has lost much of its sanction, in matrimony.

Today's youth is aware of the steady meltdown of confidence in leadership in politics, in business, in public policies. This is the time to show what drives us on. To openly debate the issues, the challenges, the solutions and most of all provide transparency where needed. Confidence, of course, is built on results, but lacking those, it is mandatory that leadership shows a willingness to debate in the open. While we have to worry about the glue of the global society, we have as well as to ensure openness for those who do not yet have access to fair opportunities.

The LBSNAA has to provide the mix of experience and youth, of background and insights that will spur the right focus.

It is but natural to carry on with a tragic sense of history and a realization of the ambiguities of the human condition. The road to self-assertion and self-definition for the disadvantaged groups in our society is long and difficult. As the Academy opens its doors to criticism and debate, there will be acquisition of insights and information from others. Not only the bubble of self-hood is to break, the bubble of power and fame too, will have to break. The Academy has to ensure that the elite of the elite civil services approaches the problem in a more logical, more drill down sort of way. The young entrants into the civil services have to understand that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they have to know that our power grown through its prudent use; our credibility emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering quality of humility and restraint.

**[Dr. C. Ashokvardhan is Principal Secretary, Revenue and Land Reforms Department, Govt. of Bihar.]**

## FILE-O-LOGY

**Divesh Sehera**

**What can be construed if some phrases start resonating in almost every official correspondence ad nauseam? Take your pick:**

1. NIDESHANUSAR (निदेशानुसार) I'm not inclined to trouble you, but my boss is ....
2. SARKAAR KA NIRNAY HAI (सरकार का निर्णय है) I'm not inclined to trouble you, nor is my boss, but you see....
3. VYAKTIGAT DHYAN DIYA JAYE (व्यक्तिगत ध्यान) Customized and personalized services on offer- Kotler effect - Dil pe mat le yaar !
4. KATHOR KARVIE KI JAYEGI (कठोर कार्रवाई) Die hard
5. KATHORTAM KARVAIE KI JAYEGI (कठोरतम कार्रवाई) Die harder
6. SHITHILTA NA BARTI JAYE (शिथिलता न बरती जाय) While laxity on the matter will not be taken, you can definitely afford to (re)lax
7. ISE ATYAVASHYAK JANE (इसे अत्यावश्यक जाने) Only this may be treated as important, rest of my letters can safely be confined to the dustbin
8. KATHORTA SE ANUPALAN SUNISCHIT KAREN (कठोरता से अनुपालन सुनिश्चित करें) Hard compliance may be sought
9. NYAYALAY KE NIRNAY KE ALOK MEIN (न्यायालय के निर्णय के आलोक में) We're incapable of taking a decision, so the reliance on Court order - smart boy !
10. VIDHISAMMAT KARVAYEE (विधिसम्मत कार्रवाई) After all, we equate law with rocket science, so help yourself
11. NIYAMANUSAR KARVAYEE (नियमानुसार कार्रवाई) I'm blissfully unaware of the rule, so I don't care what rule you quote
12. SAMYAK VICHAROPARANT (सम्यक विचारोपरान्त) After n years of study by Commission X , the recommendation of the committee that examined the report , was vetted by the departmental chota babu, bada babu, uska badaaaa babu.....
13. ISE SARVOCHH PRATHMIKTA DI JAYE ( इसे सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता दी जाय) Every second letter has this cliché, take your own sweet time !

**[Divesh Sehera is presently posted as DM, Banka.]**

## *Bureaucracy and Pig Ethics*

**D. BANDYOPADHYAY**

**F**IGURES and I do not match. And if quantities require to be processed through any arithmetical procedures, I am beaten hollow. It is said that no student is bad, it is the teacher who is. I wished it were entirely true. In that case I would have the satisfaction of getting into the hearse with my chin up and head and neck stuck stiffly to my body as a potential format, shifting all the blame for my arithmetical failures to my school teachers. With relief I parted company with figures in 1947 when I matriculated.

In the bumpy road of life, I had had an easy stretch till I completed my postgraduate degree and took the civil services examination. In due course I was called for the personality test. Before the letter arrived nobody ever told me that I had a personality. So, with the nonchalance of a non-person I started collecting my interview gear. Prudence suggested that in a chancy venture like personality test, there was no point in investing money in a new suit. The colour of my pair of trousers was dark. I started looking for a jacket of similar colour. A friend of mine agreed to give me his jacket on a lend-lease basis, because it required slight alteration. Colours did not exactly match, but the difference did not appear prominent in shade. So far so good. I had a problem with the tie. I did not know how to fix the knot. Another kind soul fixed the noose and advised me to put it round my neck and to pull the lower end gently till it fitted snugly with the collar. Everything was all right except that when I pulled the lower end lightly the upper end turned at an angle.

Thus attired I appeared for the personality test at Dholpur House on a chilly December afternoon. After being grilled for more than three quarters of an hour I was allowed to go. As I reached the door, in his booming voice R.N. Banerjee, then Chairman of UPSC, asked me about my height. I knew

my height. it was five feet seven and three quarters. But I blurted out five five and half. Pat came the retort, "you don't look so short". Only then did I realize that the figures again played a dirty-trick and I committed a faux pas. Either I had to own up to my foolishness or I could defend my statement to the best of my ability. I replied, "From a distance looks can be deceptive, Sir". As I went out I heard a roar of laughter in the room. I thought my civil service career ended before it began. But I had at least the solace that it ended with laughter and not in a whimper.

When the results came out I not only found myself very high on the list of successful candidates, but I was surprised to see that I also scored the highest mark in the personality test.

I was product of a vernacular school in Dhaka. Of course, I joined Presidency College and spent four years there till I graduated. I did not have the clipped accent nor did I have a stiff upper lip. Sartorial elegance and I were poles apart. I did not know what they found in me. Looking back I think they were in search of a rugged, honest, sincere fellow with commitment to some commonly cherished ideals. There could be another figure which might have had a role. I took the examination in 1954. My UPSC Roll No. was 1954. Some coincidences can be lucky.

Six years later I found myself drawn inadvertently into the vortex of a raging controversy on the issue of Civil Service vis-à-vis ministerial responsibility. The incident that caused it looked trivial then and it appears even more insignificant now. Deep inside Arambagh subdivision where communication was awfully bad a revenue camp was established in an interior village with hardly any communication with the outside world. But the camp was



located in a building owned by an important person who had considerable influence among the State leadership of the ruling party. Petitions were received from several other villages within the jurisdiction of the camp to shift it to another village situated centrally at the cross road with much better communication. Bus services were quite frequent in that village. Locationwise, the latter village was undoubtedly much better than the village where the camp was. After due local inquiry, it was decided to shift the camp to the second village.

The landlord of the other village took it as a matter of personal humiliation and he made a determined effort to stop the shifting of the camp. He approached the Minister and got the order of shifting countermanded. Those were the days of inefficient communication. Some holiday intervened. By the time the formal order from the Government was received the shifting was completed.

That gentleman represented to the Minister that this change of location was an act of willful defiance of the Government order to humiliate the Minister publicly. To cut a long story short Minister decided to make an on-the-spot visit to the earlier village. I was asked not to leave the headquarters lest I prejudiced his impartial inquiry. The Minister visited the spot along with some other officials of the district administration and declared publicly that the camp would be reshifted to the old site. While coming back through the latter village he met a hostile crowd. He was heckled for some time. Though I had nothing to do with the matter, the Minister thought it was engineered by me. Infuriated, he drove back to Calcutta. While all these were going on, I had routinely informed my superior who endorsed my stand.

I was expecting something to happen. Media played up the Minister's discomfiture, which naturally added fuel to theatre. Ultimately I received summons to present myself with my boss before the Chief Minister on a Saturday afternoon. Both of us arrive at the Chief Minister's Office slightly ahead of time. At the appointed hour we were ushered in.

We found Dr. B.C. Roy sitting alone in his office, engrossed in paper work. After a couple of minutes he raised his head and looked at my boss. He immediately started clarifying the matter. Dr. Roy again started looking at the papers. Meanwhile, the Chief Secretary entered the room with some files. All of a sudden Dr. Roy looked at me and asked whether I worked in the Survey Department. I had a sinking sensation at the pit of my stomach. In a dry voice I replied in the affirmative. He then said, "Tell me the dimensions of this room." My boss's face turned ashen. The Chief Secretary looked amused. I looked at the ceiling counted the number of wooden beams and rafters and replied 42X36X18. Dr. Roy looked at the Chief Secretary and said "Satyen, it is correct. Chhokra (boy) knows his job". Perhaps, the Chief Secretary was waiting for such a moment. He said "Both of them have applied for two months' leave and I have already sanctioned it". There was a sense of relief all round. Dr. Roy looked at both of us and said "Do not quarrel with your minister in public. During the holidays do not stay at home—travel around". With that the interview ended.

There was some lessons to be learnt from this episode. I was fully responsible for the shifting of the camp. My superior officer had nothing to do with it. He was not involved at all. On my report he endorsed my view. When the Government wanted a clarification from him he took the responsibility because he had approved my action. Hence he was summoned along with me. He could have easily passed the buck to me, since in any case the buck stopped with me. Instead he took a principled stand to support his subordinate officer whose action he had approved. He put his head unhesitatingly on the chopping block along with mine. He was a product of the system and the system clearly indicated what was done and what was not done. That's it.

Espirit de corps can develop only through baptism of fire. A leader has to stick his neck out and expose himself to the same dangers as others. It is then, he commands respect, loyalty and obedience none of which is ex-officio.

As we came to know later on, the matter was quite serious. The party hierarchy demanded my suspension and severe punitive action against my boss for ganging up against the minister with the clear intention of insulting him. The Chief Minister was under pressure to take action against us. He had the written complaint of the Minister. He also had our report which was forwarded by the Board of Revenue. He could have taken any action against us on the basis of the papers he had. Instead he wanted to hear us and gave us a chance to explain our side of the case. Being satisfied he mildly admonished us, gave a piece of fatherly advice and just let us off, to the chagrin of his party colleagues. This was fair play.

That is how systems are built and all within the system start respecting it. It gave me and others faith that if we did not do anything wrong, the system would take care of us. One felt free to exercise one's judgment and act without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. There might be honest error of judgment but so long as there was no malfeasance, one had nothing to fear. This was the essence of a non-partisan and impartial permanent civil service.

There was quite a bit of controversy in the Constituent Assembly regarding the creation of the All India Services as successors to the Secretary of State Services. One strong point of view was that such services would constitute a serious inroad to provincial autonomy and distort the federal character of the polity. It required effective intervention by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to incorporate provisions regarding the All India Services into the Constitution. In one of his speeches he said.

"I need hardly emphasize that an efficient, disciplined and contented service assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is a sine qua non of sound administration under a democratic regime, even more than under an authoritarian rule. The services must be above party.."

More importantly, it was expected that the members of the civil services would act fearlessly to the best of their knowledge and judgment.

Sardar Patel said:

"Today my Secretary can write a note opposed to my views. I have given that freedom to all my Secretaries... I will never be displeased over a frank expression of opinion. (B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution: A Study*; Publication Division, GOI, New Delhi ..... pp 715 and 728).

The framers of the Constitution of India expected efficiency, discipline, honesty, fearlessness and non-partisanship from civil servants. In return, apart from the Constitutional guarantee of security of service, pay, status etc. they offered an implied protection against public criticism through the principle of constructive liability under which the Minister alone is accountable to Parliament or State Legislature for all action and/or inaction of his Ministry/Department.

The central leadership under Jawaharlal Nehru and the State leadership under a B.C. Roy, a Govind Ballabh Pant, a Rajagopalachari, a B.G. Kher and others helped in the transition and in the running of the system. Civil Services at least at the higher echelons exhibited many of the attributes expected of them. There were aberrations which were in the nature of individual failures. But these did not impair the system.

The first test, and a fairly stiff one at that, the services faced was in 1967 when in a number of States the "opposition" parties came to power. After two decades of continuous single party rule, both the new set of political masters and the bureaucracy looked at each other with some degree of chariness and even distrust. But due to the maturity of the services and the sagacity of the new political leadership, a fairly stable working relationship got established after a few initial flutters. Hare Krishna Konar after becoming Minister in the United Front Government in West Bengal in 1967

described civil servants as “gutter vermin” at several public meetings. But by 1969 he changed his opinion and publicly praised a few civil servants who did carry out the lawful orders of the legally constituted first United Front Government conscientiously and as diligently as they did before. The civil service passed the test with credit.

The civil service faced the real crisis during the internal emergency in the mid-seventies. All the cherished ideals of civil service were thrown over board. An intense fear psychosis shrouded the bureaucracy. Any dissent was regarded as an anti-State activity. While Sardar Patel tried to put the fear of God into the minds of civil servants to make them fearless to the powers that be, during the Emergency conscious contrary efforts were made to paralyse the conscience of civil servants. Normal checks and balances, including the possibility of expose in the print or other media in an open society, were stymied.

A few buckled in. A few resisted. Many, not in the direct line of pressure, escaped unscathed. But in some, shorn of the normal restraining factors of an open society, the suppressed buccaneering urge reared up with all its ugly primeval aggressiveness. But they were the “heroes” of the Emergency. They violated all canons of decency and civilized code of conduct and gleefully trampled the rule of law with impunity. They prospered then. The tragedy was that they flourished thereafter also. That set in the process of corrosion of the moral fibre of the bureaucracy. The strong and determined remained incorruptible then and continued to be so thereafter. But many timid and fainthearted continued to be fearful even after normalcy was restored. The gangrenous sore of moral degradation that set in during the Emergency in the bureaucracy was never cured. A morally weak bureaucracy is a handy tool, for an immoral political system. Hence no determined efforts were made to stiffen the moral backbone of the civil services after the Emergency.

What was dormant gangrene became a festering suppuraung sore with the liberalization of the economy. Liberalization

meant to many liberation from all ethical and moral bindings and compunction. Many thought the other meaning of liberalization was libertinism. The whole set of values for which the bureaucracy stands committed is under threat of displacement in the name of liberalization and opening up of the economy. I have no quarrel with anyone who tries to enhance the efficiency of public and private sector enterprises by allowing them to compete among themselves. Debureaucratization is welcome, but that does not mean handing over the economy to an oligopolistic and distorted market dominated by giant national or transnational corporations making a mockery of free and fair competition. Dismantling of controls does not mean discarding our cherished values enshrined in the Constitution. What have been happening in pursuance of the economic reform policies often militate against many noble ideals and policy prescriptions contained in the Preamble and the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution which the civil servants are legally and morally bound to protect, preserve and uphold having sworn allegiance to it.

It looks that the buccaneers and privateers are having a free run of the economy since liberalization. Otherwise, how could one explain the continuous and rhythmic oscillation between scam and scandal, scandal and scam since mid-1991 till now? The economy is having no respite from piracy and pillage. Nowhere does the new-classical economics to which the new zealots of economic reform put their faith use liberalization as co-terminous with looting of public fund which is being done with such finesse, ease, facility and daring in the liberalized India today.

Much of what had happened was preventable and preventable largely by the bureaucracy. Where were they? Silence is acquiescence. Acquiescence in a criminal act is equally culpable. I see an ethical crisis engulfing the bureaucracy. Otherwise how could one explain the sordid incident of the wife of a Chief Minister conducting an open bidding for a bridegroom for one of her n<sup>th</sup> female progeny

sitting under the lofty deodar tree in front of the office of the Director in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussorie? The procedure adopted was no more edifying than what went on at Pushkar animal fair for sale and purchase of a virile stud bull.

Emergency and libertinism following liberalization caused a serious crack at the ethical foundation of the civil services.

Just before his assassination, that great humanist Abraham Lincoln expressed apprehension saying:

"I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country ... corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavour to prolong its reign by working on the prejudices of the people until wealth is aggravated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed."

What Lincoln said in 1864 about his own country seems to be equally valid for our country in 1996, one hundred and thirty two years later.

With the enthronement of greed and avarice as the sole determinant of economic action, a thickening dark fog of pig ethics is blanketing the conscience of men. Values which are at the foundation of our Republic are under assault.

We have to go back to the basics. "Shun the pig ethics, defend the Constitution, and preserve the Republic"—that should be the clarion call for the enlightened segment of the Indian bureaucracy to cure some of the evils that blight the nation. This is the minimum that the nation expects of them.

[Mr. D. Bandyopadhyay is an I.A.S. Officer of 1955 batch of West Bengal Cadre. He was, later on, appointed as Chairman of Land Reforms Commission, Bihar. This article was earlier published in the Statesman Festival '96. Mr. Bandyopadhyay was approached in Patna and requested to permit printing this Article in the "Prayaas". We are obliged for his consent.]

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### Some famous last words

Go on, get out! Last words are for fools who have not said enough.

--- Karl Marx, 1883

I am dying as I have lived-beyond my means.

--- Oscar Wild, 1900

Does any body understand?

--- James Joys, 1941

Drink to me, drink to my health, you know I can't drink any more.

--- Picasso, 1973

(Picasso died on April 8th, 1973 in Mougins, France while he and his wife Jacqueline were entertaining friends for dinner.)

## *Handling NGOs in Disaster*

**Dr. N. SARAVANA KUMAR**

**K**osi Disaster (2008) could have been a major challenge for the government, unenviable job for the district administration, research ground for experts, blamegame platform for politicians, fault finding opportunity for critics (to enrich their CV), but for many NGOs, it was a godsent opportunity!!

NGOs- local, outside, national & international mushroomed immediately showing alacrity to distribute relief to the flood victims. Initially, instead of supplementing the work of District Administration, NGOs were happy trying to prove themselves as a replacement for Administration in relief works. In the process, they used the media effectively projecting themselves, belittling the efforts of District Administration and accusing it of not supporting them. Banner makers of the area had a roaring business- as many NGOs were very careful to have big banners to showcase their good works. NGOs were constantly shifting from one place to another to distribute relief & getting them photographed. Banner has been the best tool for self projection and garnering popularity.

This was resulting in a situation of random relief works, marked with incidents of looting of relief materials, law & order problems, creating confusion amongst the flood victims. Many NGOs were ready to feed some 1000 people for few days. Absolutely, the situation was beyond their comprehension! When the District Administration was rescuing about 4 lakh people and more than a lakh people

were given shelter in the government relief camps, the small NGOs' unorganised, piecemeal-efforts were more of a nuisance, creating law & order problems.

Very soon, the District Administration realised that more NGOs including international ones are coming in a big way. If unregulated, it is going to be a major nuisance, rather than a support in relief works. So, the "NGO Coordination Cell" was setup at district level, with the intention of coordinating with all external agencies to regulate & channelise the relief works. The unique things introduced were;

1. No to Banners- Only those NGOs intended to do relief works without banners are enthused to work in relief activity, as use of banners was banned in writing by the District Administration. Instead, they were enticed with the promise of Appreciation letter based on their good performance.
2. Any external agency (NGO) should apply and get permission from the District Administration before doing relief works. Permission was assured within two hours of applying.
3. A copy of the permission letter was given to the respective field officers which has ensured smooth functioning of NGOs. A sense of accountability, shield of local administration support, quality of work were getting automatically ensured.
4. No political colour was allowed to creep in their efforts.

5. Weekly Coordination Meetings by District Magistrate with NGOs were held, in which NGOs were asked to submit their weekly performance report.
6. NGOs were not allowed to do the works already taken up by the administration, lest there is duplicacy ( cooked food to flood victims is one example) They were encouraged to do their relief operation in distant, hard to reach areas, rather than in the government relief camps.

Initially, these regulations (restrictions!) were tried to be projected as administration's unwillingness to promote NGOs or take help from NGOs. ( Some one even described the District Administration as inhumane too!!). But our non- relenting approach has effectively weeded out non-serious / fly overnight NGOs, inturn motivating serious NGOs with good intention/ reputation coming forward to work in the district. Thus the initial allegation/ apprehension of restrictions/ obstructions by the District Administration later turned out to be a proactive assistance of District Administration to NGOs in relief works, thereby ensuring qualitative relief works from NGOs too.

In this process, two positive things were observed.

- 1) Non-serious NGOs simply disappeared from the district. In an unprecedented manner, three NGOs including one PSU was show-caused for flying overnight without information to District Administration, leaving the flood victims unattended, in violation of the conditions in written permission given by the District Administration
- 2) A different model of NGO help was evolving. Many NGOs were willing to handover the relief materials of District Administration' choice to the District Administration itself for proper distribution without any expectation or preconditions. It was an indication of the increasing trust over the District Administration in relief works. Apart from other details, database of materials received from various NGOs was maintained and updated in the district's website on regular basis.

Fortunately, the experience of handling NGOs didn't turn out to be disastrous !!

**[Dr. N. Sarvana Kumar is presently posted as Director, Animal Husbandary. He was posted as District Magistrate, Supaul during the Kosi Flood, 2008]**

### Noble prize for literature: A surreal Saga

Unknown writers:

Frederic Mistral, poet, France (1904)  
 Eric Axel Karlfeldt, poet, Swedon (1931)  
 Halldor Kiljin Laxness, novelist, Iceland (1955)  
 Odysseus Elytis, poet, Czech (1984)

Overlooked:

Marcel Proust, Leo Tolstoy, Henry James, James Joys, Graham Greene, R. K. Narayan, Franz Kafka, Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Bertolt Grecht, Henerick Ibsen.

# *Typhoons & Tsunamis*

*(Current postings only)*

**Shri Shree Prakash Keshava (74),**  
Chairman-cum-Member, Board of Revenue.

**Shri Anup Mukherji (74),**  
Chief Secretary.

**Ms. Surinder Sidhoo (74),**  
Departmental Enquiry Commissioner,  
Department of Personnel & A.R., Patna.

**Smt. Dipika Padda (74),**  
Director General, BIPARD, Patna.

**Shri Navin Kumar, (75),**  
Development Commissioner.

**Shri Kirti Chandra Saha (75),**  
Agriculture Production Commissioner.

**Shri Vijay Kumar Verma (76),**  
Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department.

**Shri Anil Kumar (76),**  
Advisor, Planning Board, Bihar

**Shri Ajay Kumar (76),**  
Secretary, State Human Rights Commission

**Shri Alok Kumar Sinha (79),**  
Additional Member, Board of Revenue,  
Additional Charge of Examination Controller,  
Bihar State Joint Entrance Examination Council.

**Shri Hemchand Sirohi (79),**  
Principal Secretary, PHED.

**Shri Asok Kumar Chauhan (80),**  
Principal Secretary, Vigilance Department.

**Shri Jai Ram Lal Meena (80),**  
Principal Secretary, Forest & Environment Department.

**Shri Bhanu Pratap Sharma (81),**  
Principal Secretary, Finance Department.

**Shri Vijay Prakash (81),**  
Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department.

**Shri Shishir Sinha(82),**  
Managing Director, Bihar State Financial Corporation.

**Shri C. K. Mishra (83),**  
Principal Secretary, Health Department  
Additional Charge- OSD to Resident Commissioner, Bihar  
Bhawan, New Delhi.

**Shri Arun Kumar Singh (85),**  
Commissioner, Munger Division.  
Additional Charge- Commissioner, Bhagalpur Division.

**Shri A. Santosh Maitheu (85),**  
Secretary, Finance Department, Bihar.

**Shri Sanjeev Kumar Sinha (86),**  
Commissioner, Magadh Division.

**Dr. K.P. Ramaiah (86),**  
Secretary, S.C & S.T Welfare,  
Secretary, Rajya Mahadalit Aayog,  
Secretary, BC & EBC Welfare.

**Shri Sudhir Kumar (87),**  
Commissioner, Purnea Division.  
Additional Charge- Commissioner, Koshi Division

**Shri S. Shiva Kumar (87),**  
Commissioner, Saran Division.

**Shri Vivek Kumar Singh (89),**  
Secretary, Art, Culture & Youth Affairs  
Additional Charge- Chief Executive Officer, Bihar Foundation

**Shri Ram Krishna Khandelwal (89),**  
Secretary, Co-operative Department.

**Shri Brajesh Mehrotra(89),**  
Secretary, Building Construction Department.

**Dr. Deepak Prasad (89),**  
Secretary, Panchayati Raj Department.

**Shri Keshav Kumar Pathak(90),**  
Secretary, HRD Department

**Shri Pratyay Amrit (91),**  
Secretary, Road Construction Department, Bihar  
Additional Charge- Managing Director, Bihar State  
Road Development Corporation

**Shri S. M. Raju (91),**  
Commissioner, Tirhut Division

**Shri Chanchal Kumar (92 ),**  
Secretary to CM in CM Secretariat after completing  
Post Graduation in "International Development Policy."  
from Duke University, USA.

**Shri Ravi Manubhai Pramari(92),**  
Executive Director, Bihar Health Society.  
Additional Charge- Additional Commissioner, Health  
Department, Bihar

**Shri Amrendra Narayan Singh (92),**  
Chairman, Bihar Rajya Karmachari Chayan Aayog.

**Shri Uday Singh Kumawat (93),**  
State Transport Commissioner, Bihar

**Shri Rana Awdhesh kumar (93),**  
Commissioner, Darbhanga Division

**Shri Atish Chandra (94),**  
Managing Director, COMPFED, Bihar  
Additional Charge- Managing Director, Bihar State  
Bridge Construction Corporation.

**Shri Vishwanath Singh (94),**  
Special Secretary, Agriculture Department.

**Dr. B. Rajender (95),**  
Director, Agriculture, Bihar

**Shri Prabhat Kumar Sah (95),**  
Managing Director,  
Bihar State Schedule Caste Co-operative Development  
Corporation.

**Shri Uday Narayan Thakur (95),**  
Director, Handloom & Silk Directorate  
Additional Charge- Director, Industries, Bihar

**Shri Masud Hasan (95),**  
District Magistrate, Nawada

**Shri Ramesh Lal (95) ,**  
IG, Prisons.

**Shri Anjani Kumar Verma (95) ,**  
District Magistrate, Sitamarhi

**Shri Dayashankar Pandey (95),**  
District Magistrate, Arwal

**Sri Arun Chandra Singh (95),**  
District Magistrate, Sheikhpura.

**Shri Arun Prasad(95),**  
Director, Employment & Training

**Shri Arvind Kumar Singh (95),**  
District Magistrate, Munger

**Shri Rahul Singh (96),**  
Director in Urban Development Department after  
completing his 'Post Graduation in Management from IIM,  
Ahmedabad.  
Additional Charge- Managing Director, Bihar Urban  
Infrastructure Development Corporation & Managing  
Director, Housing Board, Patna



**Shri Pradeep Kumar (96),**

Managing Director, Bihar State Food & Civil  
Supplies Corporation

**Shri Kamal Kumar Sinha (96),**

Director, Secondary Education, HRD Department.

**Shri Yogendra Bhakt (96),**

Additional Secretary, Road Consturction Department.

**Shri Vimlanand Jha (96),**

Additional Secretary,  
Revenue & Land Reforms Department  
Additional Charge, Secretary, Board of Revenue, Bihar

**Shri Aashish Kumar (96),**

Director, Social Welfare.

**Shri Minhaz Alam (96) [Kerela],**

District Magistrate, Vaishali.

**Shri Santosh Kumar Mall (97),**

Additional Secretary, Rural Development Department.

**Shri Sanjeev Hansl (97),**

Additional Secretary, Health Department.

**Shri Vinay Kumar (99),**

Managing Director, Bihar State Beverages Corporation, Patna  
Additional Charge- Director, Tourism.

**Shri Jitendra Srivastava (00),**

District Magistrate, Begusarai

**Shri N.Sarvana Kumar (00),**

Director, Animal Husbandry.

**Shri Sanjay Kumar Agrawal (02),**

District Magistrate, Nalanda.

**Shri Sarvanan M (02),**

District Magistrate, Araria.

**Ms. Bandana Preyashi (03),**

District Magistrate, Bhagalpur.

**Shri Anupam Kumar (03),**

District Magistrate, Rohtas.

**Shri Lokesh Kumar Singh (03),**

District Magistrate, Saran.

**Smt. Palka Sahni (04),**

District Magistrate, Jehanabad.

**Shri Balamurugan D. (05),**

District Magistrate, Siwan

**Shri Kumar Ravi (05),**

District Magistrate, Supaul.

**Shri Divesh Sehera (05),**

District Magistrate, Banka.

**Shri Ajay Yadav (05),**

District Magistrate, Buxar.

**Shri Kuldip Narayan (05),**

District Magistrate, Gopalganj

**Shri Dayanidhan Pandey(06),**

Officer on Special Duty, Panchayati Raj Department, Bihar

**Miss Ashwini Dattatreya Thakre(06),**

Officer on Special Duty, Home Department, Bihar

**Shri Dharmendra Singh(06),**

Officer on Special Duty, Grameen Karya Vibhag, Bihar

**Shri Sandeep Kumar R. Pudkalkatty (06),**  
Officer on Special Duty, Health Department, Bihar

**Shri Manoj Kumar (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Virpur, Supaul

**Shri Deepak Anand (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Bettiah Sadar

**Shri Neeraj Kharval (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Purnia Sadar

**Shri Gopal Meena (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura Sadar

**Shri Sanjay Kumar Singh (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Darbhanga Sadar

**Shri Jay Singh (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Shahpur Patori, Samastipur

**Shri Vinod Singh Gujiyal (07),**  
Subdivisional Officer, Udakishunganj, Madhepura

### **Additional Charge**

- *Shri A.K. Sinha (76), Principal Secretary, Industries Department has been given additional charge of Principal Secretary, Sugarcane Industries Department, Bihar.*
- *Dr. C. Ashokvardhan (80), Principal Secretary, Revenue & Land Reforms Department has been given additional charge of Director, Consolidation, Bihar.*
- *Shri Vyas Jee (82), Principal Secretary, Labour Resource Department has been given additional charge of Principal Secretary, Disaster Management Department.*
- *Shri Ravikant (84), Principal Secretary, Science & Technology Department has been given additional charge of Principal Secretary, Energy Department.*
- *Smt. Anshuli Aarya (89), Managing Director, Bihar State Industrial Area Development Authority has been given additional charge of Managing Director, Bihar State Industrial Development Corporation.*
- *Shri Uday Singh Kumawat (93), State Transport Commissioner has been given additional charge of Administrator, BSRTC.*
- *Md. Sharif Alam (94), Additional Secretary, SC & ST Welfare Department, Bihar has been given additional charge of Director, SC & ST Welfare Department, Bihar.*
- *Ms. Vijaya Lakshmi Nadenla (95), Excise Commissioner, Bihar, Patna has been given additional charge of Managing Director, Bihar State Women's Development Corporation*
- *Shri Anand Kishor (96), Director Mid day Meal, has been given additional charge of Addl. Mission director, Bihar Prasasanik Sudhar Mission.*
- *Shri. Rahul Singh (96), Director, Urban Development Department has been given additional charge of Managing Director, Bihar State Housing Board.*
- *Shri Jay Mangal Singh (96), Additional Secretary, BC & EBC Welfare Department, Bihar has been given additional charge of Sugarcane Commissioner, Bihar.*

### **On study leave**

*Shri Sandeep Paundrik (93) has gone to Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University for a 2 year full time MA in Public Administration on a full scholarship.*

### **GOI Deputation**

- *Shri Raj Kumar Singh (75) has joined as Secretary, Defence Production Department..*
- *Shri B B Shrivastava (78) has joined as Secretary, Central Information Commission.*
- *Ms. Bindeswari Negi (90) has joined as Director, Census Operations, UT of Chandigarh.*
- *Shri Aruneesh Chawla (92) as Private Secretary to Vice Chairman, Planning Commission.*

### **Retirement**

- *K.D. Sinha (1972), Member, Board of Revenue, Bihar retired on 30.04.2009.*
- *Hasnain Alam (1994), MD, Bihar Text Book Corporation retired on 30.04.2009.*
- *Suman Kumar(1994), Special Secretary, Rural Development Deptt. retired on 30.04.2009.*
- *S. Vijay Raghavan (1973), Development Commissioner, Bihar retired on 31.05.2009.*
- *M.N. Prasad (1972), Secretary, Prime Minister Office (PMO) retired on 30.06.2009.*
- *V. Jayshankar (1973), Principal Secretary, PHED (Chief Secretary Scale), Bihar retired on 30.06.2009.*
- *Kamleshwar Prasad Singh (1993), Sugarcane Commissioner, Bihar retired on 30.06.2009.*
- *Ramshobhit Paswan (1993), State Transport Commissioner, Bihar retired on 30.06.2009.*
- *Syamanand Sharma (1993), Addl. Secretary, Energy Deptt., Bihar retired on 30.06.2009.*
- *R.J.M. Pillai (1973), Chief Secretary, Bihar retired (voluntarily) on 02.08.2009.*

***[IAS Association, Bihar Chapter welcomes them as Life Members]***

मीरा और बाबा ने मदद करके उसके पैर में लगी हुई गोली निकाली। बाबा ने किसी अच्छे डॉक्टर को बुलाने के लिए पैरवी की थी पर रमेश तैयार नहीं हुआ। डॉक्टर के नाम पर रमेश में एक अज्ञात भय समा गया जिसका कोई कारण एकाएक समझ में न आया।

बाबा ने गोली निकालने के बाद रमेश का हल्दी से उपचार कर दिया और कुछ दिन अपने घर में ही रुकने की सलाह दे दी थी। (शायद बाबा को कथन के वक्त यह अंदाज न था कि कुछ दिन कब कुछ वर्षों में तब्दील हो जायेंगे।)

“मीरा तुम्हारी देखभाल करेगी।” कहने को तो बाबा कह गये पर अक्सर इंसान इतना कुछ बोल जाता है जिसका उसको बाद में पछतावा होता है। एक निगाह मीरा पर डाल बाबा ने मुँह मोड़ लिया। बाबा को शायद यह अहसास हो गया था कि कुछ दिन कुछ वर्षों का ही पर्याय बन जायेगा।

रमेश की हालत सुधरने में वक्त लग गया। पर अपने आचरण के बल पर वह बाबा के भी दिल के करीब आने लगा। खाली वक्त में वह बाबा के बाँस के काम में हाथ बँटाता और जब बाबा चले जाते तो मीरा की घर में मदद करता। रमेश एक फुर्तीला युवक था और अपनी वाक्पटुता के बल पर उसने बाबा के हृदय को जीत लिया था। एक दिन बाँस छीलते हुए बाबा बोले “रमेश एक बात बोलें। बुरा तो न मानोगे ?

“आप भी कैसी बात करते हैं बाबा, आप तो मेरे आश्रयदाता हैं।”

“तुम्हें देख इन बूढ़े हाथों को, जैसे बल मिल जाता है। पहले सोचता था कि मीरा के हाथ पीले कर दूँगा तो मेरा क्या होगा। मैं तो शायद जीते जी ही मर जाता पर अब तुम्हें देखकर आसरा बँधा है।” सिर झुकाकर बोले, “बेटी का बाप हूँ। हाथ जोड़ विनती करता हूँ मीरा का हाथ थाम लो। मुझे अच्छे से ज्ञान है तुम भी हृदय से मीरा को वरण करते हो”।

रमेश का चेहरा एकबारगी स्याह पड़ गया। बाबा की बूढ़ी आँखें रमेश के चेहरे पर चढ़ते-उतरते भावों को न भाँप पायीं। पर रमेश गहन विचार-विमर्श में था। वह इस अचानक अप्रत्याशित हमले को झेलने के लिए मानो, तैयार न था। पर विगत कई हफ्तों से चले आ रहे मीरा के आकर्षण को वह एकबारगी चुनौती दे पूरे परिवार को संशय में न डालना चाहता था। इस घर में उसको पनाह मिली हुई थी और पनाह की गर्माहट को वह अपने किसी भी गलत निर्णय से तोड़ना नहीं चाहता था।

“बाबा वक्त दीजिए। मैं मीरा और अपने संबंधों को लेकर पूर्णतः आश्वस्त होना चाहता हूँ।”

“किसलिए”? बाबा के स्वर में कठोरता थी। “जब तुम मीरा के साथ घूमते हो, उठते-बैठते हो तो क्या तुम्हारा आचार-विचार सबको दिखता नहीं है। नहीं, मैं अब तुम्हें और वक्त नहीं दे सकता। तुम्हें या तो निर्णय लेना होगा या फिर मेरे घर को हमेशा के लिए छोड़ देना होगा।” बाबा के आदेशात्मक दबाव से रमेश थर्रा गया। बाबा को इतना सख्त उसने पहले कभी भी न देखा था। पर निर्णय वह तत्काल न ले पाया।

“मुझे एक दिन की मोहलत दीजिए। मैं अपनी भावनाओं में सुदृढ़ हो जाना चाहता हूँ।” एक लाचारगी की दृष्टि उसने गाय का दूध दुह रही मीरा पर डाली। मीरा के चेहरे पर रौनक थी।

बाबा ने एक सतही निगाह उसके ऊपर डाली और बहुत ही धीमे स्वर में बोले, “बरखुरदार, जहाँ प्रेम होता है वहाँ संशय नहीं होता, वहाँ विलम्ब नहीं होता।” और बाबा की पारखी निगाहों से अपना अंत्यपरीक्षण होते हुए रमेश अच्छे से महसूस कर रहा था। आत्मग्लानि से उसका मन भर गया।

पूरी रात उसको निद्रा न आई। आधी रात में उठ वह जंगल की तरफ निकल गया। दरवाजा खुलने पर एक झटके से बाबा की नींद टूटी

पर फिर शारीरिक थकान होने के कारण उठकर देखने की हिम्मत न हुई 'बिल्ली होगी'। मन को तसल्ली दे दूसरी तरफ करवट ले लिया।

रमेश वन में जाकर उस झरने के पास जाकर बैठ गया जिसके जीवनदायी जल से उसके प्राणों की रक्षा हुई थी। वह व्यथित अपने जीवन पर मंथन करता रहा। इधर एक नया सवेरा बाँह फैलाये उसका स्वागत कर रहा था। पीछे सिवाय एक अंधकार के और कुछ न था। एक अनाम जिन्दगी को पहचान मिलने जा रही थी। पर अगर बाबा को या मीरा को गलती से भी इसका ज्ञान हो गया तो कयामत आ जायेगी। अनजाने भय ने उसके सम्मुख उपस्थित हँसी को विलुप्त कर दिया। अनिर्णय की स्थिति हमेशा कष्टकर होती है। 'क्या करे क्या नहीं' के विचार में पूरी रात कट गयी। जब भोर का प्रथम संगीत कानों में पड़ा तो, मानो तन्द्रा टूटी। भोर हमेशा विश्वास लाता है, रात भय। मीरा का स्वाभिमानी स्वभाव जानते हुए भी रमेश ने निर्णय ले लिया। हाँ वह विवाह के लिए बाबा को बोल देगा। जो होगा उससे वह बाद में निपट लेगा। मीरा के स्नेह ने उसे भविष्य के प्रति आशान्वित कर दिया था। वह अपने निर्णय से खुश था। और चपल कदमों से उसने घर का रास्ता पकड़ा।

रमेश और मीरा के विवाह को कुछेक वर्ष व्यतीत हो चुके थे। रमेश के मन में अब जिम्मेदारी की काई जमने लगी थी, नयापन कुछ-कुछ समाप्त-सा हो रहा था। मीरा अब माँ बनने वाली थी। इधर रमेश का अपने पुराने दोस्तों से मिलना चालू हो गया था। उसके करीब-करीब सभी दोस्तों को देखकर मीरा ने आपत्ति उठायी थी। बाबा के वृद्ध और लाचार हो जाने के उपरांत रमेश के व्यवहार में भी हल्का-सा बदलाव आया था। अब वह मीरा को उतनी तवज्जो नहीं देता था। मीरा गुणी थी। उसने रमेश के बदले हुए मिजाज को भाँप लिया था। पर वक्त का तकाजा है सब सुधर जायेगा- कहकर अक्सर वह मन को दिलासा दे देती थी।

उस रात भी बाबा बिस्तर पर लेटे हुए ख़ाँस रहे थे। ख़ाँसी के साथ-साथ दम भी फूलता था। बाबा का रोआब और दबदबा उनकी ख़ाँसी की झन्कार ही बयाँ कर जाती थी। शायद पूरे इलाके में इतनी जोरदार ख़ाँसी और किसी की न होगी। उसकी गूँज दो-चार कोस तक थी। बाबा थे तो पिछड़ी जाति के पर अपनी ईमानदारी, होशियारी और

वफादारी के बल पर उन्होंने पूरे इलाके में अपनी पहचान बना ली थी। ईश्वर का भी उनके ऊपर साक्षात वरदान था। हाथ में ऐसा यश था जिसको आयुर्वेद की दवा दे देते वह स्वस्थ हो जाता। और पुण्य की यह थाती उनके साथ थी। अतः मृत्यु को इतने सन्निकट देखकर भी किंचित मात्र उनको भय न था। कुछ रातें पहले मीरा का हाथ थाम वह उसको दिलासा दे रहे थे।

“बेटा अब मैं कुछ ही दिनों का मेहमान हूँ।”

“ऐसा न बोलो बाबा!” मीरा रोने लगी, “आपके बिना मैं अनाथ हो जाऊँगी। आपके अलावा मेरा इस दुनिया में और कौन है।”

बाबा धीरे-धीरे उसके हाथ को सहलाने लगे। मीरा के रिश्ते से वह भी खुश न थे। रमेश का बदला हुआ व्यवहार उनको भी खलने लगा था। आँख मूँदने के पहले वह मीरा को खुश देखना चाहते थे। पर ऐसा न हो पाया। उनका दिल कचोट गया। पर वह अच्छी तरह जानते थे कि वक्त उनके पास बहुत ही कम है। मृत्यु का वार्तालाप उन्होंने सुन लिया था। उसकी पदचाप को वह पहचानने में माहिर थे। पर जाते वक्त बेटे को कम-से-कम आशीर्वाद की पूँजी तो वह अवश्य ही देकर जाना चाहते थे और दिलासा के साथ-साथ वह बेटे को आशीष देते रहे और उसके कुछ ही दिनों बाद बाबा सदा के लिए मीरा को अजनबियों के बीच छोड़कर चले गये।

बाबा की मृत्यु के बाद रमेश अपने असली रूप में आ गया और अपने मिशन को अमली जामा पहनाने लगा।

उसके संस्कारहीन दोस्त रात-रातभर घर पर ही डेरा डाले रहते और शराब और कबाब का दौर चलता। मीरा की आपत्ति के बाद तो उस पर हाथ भी उठाने लगा। पहले-पहल सिर्फ थप्पड़ से काम चल जाता था पर बाद में तो धुनाई भी कम पड़ने लगी। जब अति हो जाती तो मीरा को रोता हुआ छोड़कर जंगलों में निकल जाता। जंगल के रास्तों से वाकिफ इंसानों का शहरों में जरा कम ही मन लगता है। और अब तो रमेश कई-कई दिनों तक घर ही न आता।

मीरा कोई कमजोर महिला न थी। अपने त्याग और सहनशीलता से उसने अपने अन्दर एक अद्भुत शक्ति का संचय कर लिया था और वह शक्ति पर्याप्त थी उसके जीवन को खींचने के लिए और पति

का अत्याचार वह एक हद के बाद झेलने के लिए तैयार न थी। सबसे पहले उसे अकेले रहने का भय सताता। बाबा भी नहीं हैं और एक नये जीवन की तैयारी। इस नये जीवन के संचार के लिए उसको सहारा चाहिए। नये जीवन के लिए कुछ उम्मीदें थीं, कुछ सपने और इससे बढ़कर एक अवलम्बन। शायद वह अकेली होती तो और बात थी। मन में काफी मंथन किया, विचार-विमर्श हुआ, तर्क-कुतर्क हुए पर अन्त में अपमान को सहना कायरता ही सिद्ध हुई। शुरू-शुरू में उसने रमेश की हर बात को सहने का साहस किया, फिर उसे बदलने का दुस्साहस। जब उसमें भी सफलता न मिली तो अक्सर जीवन में बेहतर होता है उस विषयवस्तु पर अपना ध्यान न केन्द्रित कर किसी दूसरी चीज की तरफ विकेंद्रित हो जाना। और अन्त में मीरा का निर्णय अपने बच्चे पर आकर फोकस हो गया।

मीरा ने अभी अपने को बदलने की प्रक्रिया शुरू ही की थी कि वह रात उसके जीवन में एक चुनौती बनकर आ खड़ी हुई। शाम से ही उसका मन घबरा रहा था। किसी अनदेखी, अनहोनी की आशंका दिल दहला देती है। पर मीरा के पास अब खोने के लिए बचा ही क्या था। जब इंसान अपना सब-कुछ गँवा चुका होता है और खोने के लिए कुछ भी नहीं बचा होता तो एक अजीब-सी निर्भीकता आ जाती है। बाबा थे नहीं, पर यह बच्चा! नहीं, बच्चे को कुछ नहीं होने देगी। उसका हाथ अपने पेट की गोलाई पर आ गया। बस अब कुछ ही दिन बाकी थे उसके इस जगत में आने के लिए। हाथ फेरते-फेरते अनजाने में रुलाई फूटने लगी और उसको पता ही न चला कि कब अविरल आँसू की धार बहने लगी। वह चादर ओढ़ खटिया पर लेट गयी। घबराहट में मुँह ढाँप लिया पर उसका हृदय काँपने लगा। पता नहीं, कब आँख लग गयी। नींद तो तब खुली जब दरवाजे पर हल्की-सी आहट हुई। रमेश था, बाहर जाने की तैयारी कर रहा था। अंधेरे में भी आकृति स्पष्ट थी। पूर्णमासी की रात थी और पगडंडी पर उसकी आकृति की छाया उसका पीछा कर रही थी। न जाने क्यों मीरा उस दिन अज्ञात को जानने के लिए कृतसंकल्प थी।

मीरा के मन में जाने कहाँ से विचार कौंधा, 'आज पता लगाकर ही रहेंगे कि रमेश जाता कहाँ है।' और पदचाप को धीमा कर वह भी रमेश की परछाई का पीछा करने लगी थी। वैसे भी इंसान जब किसी का भी पीछा करता है तो थकान अवश्यभावी है। अपनी राह चलने वाला व्यक्ति अनन्त को भी सहज प्राप्त कर लेता है। वहाँ अपना

मानसिक संबल होता है। पर शुक्र है इस यात्रा की एक परिधि थी, एक सीमा थी और पेड़ों के झुरमुट के पास आकर रमेश रुक गया। वहाँ उसके मित्र पहले से ही उसकी प्रतीक्षा में थे। मीरा एक वृक्ष की ओट में हो गयी। अंधकार में आवाज गूँजती है। शायद सब-कुछ अस्पष्ट होने के कारण ध्यान सिर्फ ध्वनि पर केन्द्रित हो जाता है।

रमेश और उसके मित्र भावी योजना की तैयारी में व्यस्त थे।

“नहीं, हम लोग स्वतंत्रता दिवस के दिन ही इस कार्य को अंजाम देंगे।”

“हाँ, इससे उपयुक्त कोई दिवस दृष्टिगोचर भी तो नहीं हो रहा।”

“सही है।” रमेश बोला, “इस महान कार्य का क्रियान्वयन मैं करूँगा। हमें अपने अधिकारों के लिए लड़ना है। उस पुनीत दिन हम जिले के नेता को उड़ा देंगे।” और एक ठहाके से पूरा का पूरा समुदाय हँस पड़ा।

मीरा के नीचे से तो जमीन ही खिसक गई। उसका पति हत्यारा और एक मुजरिम है। उससे भी घातक वह एक देशद्रोही है। देश के अधिकारी जो अपने प्राणों पर खेलकर राष्ट्र को आगे बढ़ाते हैं उनके साथ विश्वासघात। राष्ट्र और जनता के साथ धोखा। उपद्रवी कभी किन्हीं अधिकारों के लिए लड़ता है क्या? उसकी लड़ाई हमेशा स्व की होती है। वह कभी किसी का हो ही नहीं सकता।

और मीरा यही बड़बड़ाते हुए अपने घर की तरफ निकल पड़ी। सामने चुनौती देने पर हार सुनिश्चित थी। इतने लोगों के बीच वह खड़ी तक नहीं हो सकती, ललकारना तो दूर। पर क्या वह खामोश बैठ जाये?

मीरा को खामोशी कुछ दिन खींचनी होगी। रमेश घर लौटकर नहीं आया। उसकी खामोशी एक प्रश्न बन उथल पुथल मचाये हुए थी। यह एक जलजला था जो फूटने के लिए बेताब था। क्या तबाही लाएगा इसका मीरा को खुद इल्म न था। पर रमेश से बात तो करनी होगी। उसको समझाना होगा, रोकना होगा पर अगर वह इंतकाम लेकर आया तब! तब तक तो बहुत विलम्ब हो जायेगा।

इस उदास खामोशी ने धरा-सी शान्त मीरा के हृदय में दरारें तो डाल ही दी थी और इन दरारों से उस दिन जलजला फूट ही पड़ा जब रमेश

घर वापस लौटकर आया।

“इतने दिन तुम कहाँ थे” – मीरा ने रास्ता रोक लिया।

“तुम पूछने वाली होती कौन हो।”

“तुम्हारी पत्नी, तुम्हारी जीवनयादिनी।”

“तुम अछूत से विवाह करके, अपना नाम देकर मैंने उस कर्ज को चुका दिया।”

“क्या पति-पत्नी का रिश्ता सिर्फ नाम का होता है या कोई कर्ज जो चुकाते रहते हैं। उसमें तो विश्वास, श्रद्धा, समर्पण और इससे भी अधिक प्रेम की जरूरत है।”

“प्रेम और तुमसे, तुम्हें तो छूते भी घिन्न आती है।”

मीरा अपने जन्म से जुड़े हुए अपमान से तिलमिलाकर रह गयी। वह नीची जाति की हो सकती है पर नीच नहीं है। उसने जोरों से चीखकर कहा, ‘ये जातियाँ तुम जैसे कमीनों की देन हैं।’

“क्या मतलब? क्या-क्या कहना चाहती हो तुम?” रमेश चीखकर बोला।

मीरा काफी देर मौन रही। उसकी शान्ति रमेश को और तिलमिला दे रही थी।

“बोलो, साफ-साफ बोलो।”

“सिर्फ इतना कि सदियों से कर्म प्रधान जाति को कमजोर और पंगु करके उनकी बोली छीन ली। वह संवाद कर पाने में भी असक्षम हो गये। संवेदनाविहीन समाज ने हमें दिया क्या है? सिवाय जिल्लत और घृणा के। जिस कर्म के आधार पर यह समाज टिका है उसी को तुम जैसे हत्यारों ने नीचता का दर्जा दे दिया। पर नीच तो तुम हो। तुम्हारा कर्म है। तुम साजिशकर्ता, षड्यंत्रकर्ता हो।”

“हत्यारा तू किसे कहती है?”

“तुमको, इस समाज को, इसके मूल्यों को, संस्कारों को, तुम्हारे विचारों को।”

“मेरे को।”

और चीख-चीखकर मीरा ने कानों से सुनी बातों को मुँह से उगल दिया।

एकाएक रमेश का चेहरा स्याह पड़ गया। मीरा उसके चेहरे पर चढ़ते-उतरते रंगों को पढ़ने की कोशिश करने लगी। थोड़ा स्थिर होने पर रमेश का क्रोध लौटा। उसके विवेक और चेतना पर हिंसा उतारू हो गयी।

मीरा भी कमजोर न थी। पहले-पहल तो इस अप्रत्याशित हमले से वह सिहर गई। पर आत्मरक्षा के लिए उसने वहाँ गिरी हुई कटार उठा ली और रमेश के पेट में कसकर घोंप दी। वह तब तक घोंपती रही जब तक रमेश की अंतिम श्वास ने भी उसका साथ न छोड़ दिया। शायद सदियों के उत्पीड़न को वह इसी हिंसा के माध्यम से समाप्त कर देना चाहती थी या फिर एक हत्यारे को उसके अंतिम मुकाम तक पहुँचा उसे सजा देना चाहती थी।

कुछ देर तक रमेश तड़पता रहा और मीरा चीखती रही। कटार का वेग थम न रहा था। शायद सदियों का अपना या देशद्रोही का साथ उस दंश को तीव्रता दे रहा था।

हर उफान में एक क्रान्ति होती है, जुनून होता है, पर धीरे-धीरे वह भी थमता है। जैसे ही रमेश ने अंतिम साँस ली मीरा का इन्तकाम पूरा हुआ।

बदहवास मीरा, बाल बिखरे, साड़ी अस्तव्यस्त, माथे पर लाल रक्त की बिन्दी और हाथों में संगीतमय चूड़ियाँ। एक उचटती दृष्टि मीरा ने रमेश पर डाली। आँखों में स्नेह उमड़ गया।

ये तो उसका पति है। मीरा फफक पड़ी। पति की लाश पर गिरकर वह मूर्च्छित हो गयी।

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(श्रीमती ममता मेहरोत्रा समाजसेवा एवं साहित्यकर्म से जुड़ी हैं तथा श्री ब्रजेश मेहरोत्रा, (1989) सचिव, भवन निर्माण विभाग की पत्नी हैं।)

# *Leaves From Wisdom Tree*

**Surendra Prasad Sinha**

1. One who is not wise, is otherwise.
2. Remember Old flames.
3. Have some sacred cows, never doubt their integrity and intention; this will give you strength during crisis,
4. Never imagine life without crisis,
5. If you are prepared to make compromises and make deliberate mistakes, you can afford a Godfather; no Godfather is free of cost.
6. Be a good listener, you are less likely to be caught unawares.
7. Do not enter into loose talks, more so, in public places, lest you are misquoted and misunderstood.
8. BEWARE OF COLLEAGUES
9. Try to be logical but also bear in mind that life is not all logic. Two plus two is not always four, if you pour, consecutively, four drops of water, one upon the other, the sum total be only one drop of water.
10. Never affix your signature to a document unless you have personally verified the facts.
11. Try to build up a team of performers, build up the team on the strength of every member. Gandhi used to say, "There go my people, I must follow them, I am their Leader."
12. Leadership requires an attitude to transfer credit to fellow members and to own lapses / failures. This will endear you to every member of your team.  
Be creative; leave an organization only when you have created an indelible mark, they must miss you.
13. Must have somebody before whom you could lay bare yourself, uncensored .Find out a Christ before whom you could confess and derive strength, this will ensure sound sleep and healthy mind
14. Conscience .is as disturbing as the appendix in the intestine, get it operated at the earliest.
15. Corruption is natural, honesty is deliberate.
16. An honest officer is a myth, decision based on any consideration, sans objectivity, is dishonest one.
17. An atheist is one who does not believe in himself.
18. The essence of power is to know the limits of power.
19. Wise men speak when they have something to speak; fools speak because they have to speak something.
20. Satire is the finest non- violent weapon ever invented by civilization.
21. The first person to hurl an epithet in stead of a stone was the inventor of civilization. When we learn to crack jokes and not heads we start becoming civilized.
22. Truth seldom prevails.
23. Do not hold goods from those to whom it is due, particularly when it is within powers of your hands to do so.
24. Do not deprive the poor from his hopes; that might be his only possession.
25. An ounce of spirit is far more valuable than a pound of knowledge.



26. Little drops of water,  
Little grains of sand,  
Make the mighty ocean  
And the beautiful land.
27. I will be as harsh as truth and  
As uncompromising as justice,  
I am in earnest, I will not equivocate  
I will not excuse  
I will not retreat a single inch; and  
I will be heard. **(William Lloyd Garrison)**
28. Never give in - never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large, or petty. Never give in except to conviction of honour and good sense. Never yield to force, never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. **(Sir Winston Churchill)**
29. It is not possible to discover new oceans, unless one is willing to lose sight of the shore.  
**(Lord Chesterfield)**
30. To get to be the best in class, you need to work at it. Daily. Consistently. Passionately. **(K.M.Birla)**
31. (a) I hate not kings. Let them rule men but only when they are wiser than man.  
(b) Madness in art is creation, in poetry it is wisdom, in the search for God, it is highest form of worship. **(Khalil Zibran)**
32. Existence is co-existence. Man is not an island, he is a social animal.
33. Future of India lies not in the hands of God but in the mundane works of men. So long as the constitution is not amended beyond recognition, so long as elections are held regularly and fairly and the ethos of secularism broadly prevails, so long as citizens can speak and write in the language of their choosing, so long as there is an integrated market and a moderately efficient civil service and army and- lest we forget – so long as Hindi films are watched and their songs sung, India will survive. **( Ramchandra Guha)**

### Tweedledee and Tweedledoom

Said the Undertaker to the Overtaker.  
Thank you for the butcher and the candlestick-maker.  
For the polo player and the pretzel-baker.  
For the lawyer and the lover and the wife-forsaker.  
Thank you for my bulging, verdant acre.  
Said the Undertaker to the Overtaker.  
Move in, move under, said the overtaker.

--- Ogden Nash  
(1902-1971)

# Surf-er Search !

Ajay Yadav

*The Search engines have re-defined and popularised the use of internet. Just type the subject on which information is needed and search engine comes up with a huge database of different related sites. There are a large number of search engines but some are more popular and others are quite novel.*

## **Google.com....**

*The king of search engines. The huge role it has played in making information accesible can be gauged from the fact that it has entered the English vocabulary. It is not uncommon to hear phrases like "google" it. The google home page is unique in its simplicity and design. Since it contains bare minimum number of tabs, it loads very quickly. This webpage is considered as the most prized property in the cyber world and is the home page of largest number of users. Direct link is possible to **News, Maps, Social networking site orkut, Gmail** etc. One can also set up your own personalised google page by clicking at **iGoogle**. The fact that google has been customised to meet the needs of various countries / communities and is available in major regional languages has also contributed to its popularity. Recently launched **google.com/squared** is better for comparative searches. For eg. If one just types in "digital camera" and square it the results are shown in different columns like item name, image, description, manufacturer, resolution and we can also add our own priorities like "price", zoom, pixels etc. for a better search.*

## **Yahoo.com....**

*Is another popular search engine, which is available in many languages but lags far behind google. **Bing.com** is recently launched search engine by microsoft. It is quite good but is largely focussed on U.S market and some of its features are not yet functional in India. Its home page has beautiful picture background which gets updated daily. If one wants to change desktop/laptop background then these pictures can be chosen for this purpose by just right clicking it and selecting the option. One of interesting features of Bing is that one can play the searched videos by just placing the cursor on that particular video and there is no need to go to the original website to play these videos as in other search engines. Another good feature is that by taking the cursor to the right corner of the websites displayed, an overview of that particular site is displayed, thereby making it easier to get relevant information.*

## **Ask.com....**

*Is an interesting search engine which in addition to its normal features has a facility of **(Q&A)** i.e. Question and Answers For eg. if one types in **Patna** and clicks Q&A, then the site comes up with a number of Q&A like - Where is Patna? What is Patna Rice? How big is Patna? How to reach Patna ? How is the weather in Patna? Is there any good thyroid specialist in Patna? and so on.*

*There are some new and novel search engines also.*

### **wolframalpha.com....**

Is a computational knowledge engine. It is predominantly science based and is handy for students as well as professionals. It is an online service that answers factual queries by computing answer from structured database. If one enters his/her **date of birth** than the engine comes up with the day of the week, different calendar formats, zodiac sign, time difference from today in days, weeks, years etc, notable events for that day in world history, time of sunrise/sunset, duration of daylight and phase of moon and more. It works for maths, physics, chemistry, earth science, engineering etc. It can compute Doppler shift, characteristics of AC signal, maximum force of spring, property of steam at given temperature, and even indoor air quality and mandated ventilation rate, calories burned in exercise, estimated risk of diseases etc. It is an excellent initiative.

### **Hunch.com....**

Helps you to take better, more informed decisions. The system asks you a series of questions, helps weigh the options and then presents the result. For example if you want to buy a **laptop**, then just type laptop in the searchbox

and hunch will answer questions like - what's the best laptop for me? should I buy a new laptop? what should I do with old laptop? which laptop bag to buy? and so on.

Other notable search engines are **fizy.com** for music, **blinkx.com** for videos, **Spezify.com** presents your search results in a completely new format. Some of the notable search engines exclusively for Indian context are **guruji.com**, **phulki.com**, **raaga.com** and so on.

Before saying "Happy surfing" I would like to mention about a new website. Recently I came across a wonderful website for children under the age of ten years. **Kidoz.net** is a customised website for children. It is very easy to use and kids do not even need to know how to read or write. It is safe and free. It has beautiful interface where the kids can not only browse, but also watch educational videos, nursery rhymes or cartoons.

**"Happy Surfing"**

**(Ajay Yadav is presently posted as District Magistrate, Buxar)**

## **SINGH IS KING**

- ◆ Boss: Where were you born?  
Sardar: India ...  
Boss: which part?  
Sardar: What 'which part'? Whole body was born in India
  
- ◆ 2 sardar were fixing a bomb in a car.  
Sardar 1: What would you do if the bomb explodes while fixing.  
Sardar 2: Don't worry, I have one more.

## Irksome Encroachments: Easy Removals

### **Background:**

I was posted as S.D.M., Dhanbad in 1998. Four-laning of the National Highway No. 2, Grand Trunk Road was in progress in the district. The engineers of NHAI approached us for sorting out problems in construction. One peculiar problem was there in the Govindpur block, where four temples, one majar (cemetery), one Imambara (shrine), part of a Gurudwara and part of kabristan were falling within the alignment for widening of the road. They had tried to sort this out at their level but failed to get people agree for removal of those structures. They were even considering changing the alignment of the proposed widening, though that was technically inappropriate.

### **Analysis:**

I discussed the matter with Dy. S.P., Govindpur; Circle Officer, B.D.O., Officer-in charge of Govindpur Police Station and Engineers of NHAI. Initially the local officers said that it would not be possible to remove these structures. I asked them to talk to the local people and get their feedback. I impressed upon them that the G.T.Road is there for five hundred years since the time of Sher Shah and would definitely remain there for another five hundred years. So, a well-made road would be something that we would be handing over to our future generations. They should discuss this while talking to the local people.

### **Arvind Kumar Chaudhary**

After a few days, I was given the feedback that local people are ready for removal of Imambara and temples if they are removed simultaneously and NHAI helps in building them on some other land provided by people. But Majar and Kabristan could not be removed. I discussed the matter again. The main concern of the people was that the body of the saint would be disturbed. NHAI had big Poclans machines which could dig very deep and remove the entire earth. We suggested that we will lift the entire soil of Majar from deep within and place it at some other place identified by people.

### **Action taken:**

Meanwhile, the High Court, Patna had already issued a general order for removal of encroachments from government lands in all the districts. In pursuance to that we decided to move fast. I briefed my Collector and S.P. They were very supportive but advised me to take adequate precaution.

Same day, I went to Govindpur and sat at the police station alongwith Dy.S.P., C.O., B.D.O., Officer in charge and NHAI engineers to chalk out the strategy. We planned for adequate deployment of force and also the 'chaukidars' for keeping continuous watch on the movement of the people. We mobilised force and chaukidars from nearby police station areas also apart from police line.

After coming back, I deputed two senior executive magistrates, one hindu, one muslim; for removal of the encroachments in the morning of the very next day. I also called a staff of the municipality who also used to do 'puja' for removing the idols from the temples after doing 'puja' and shifting them to a nearby temple which was not on government land, before the temple structures were removed. It was decided to use the machines of NHAI for removal of encroachment and also that two machines would simultaneously start work on a temple and imambara at 8.00 in the morning.

I was a little tense that night and went to see the preparations at 1.00 at night. Next morning, I briefed my officers at 6.30 in the morning and sent them along with the staff of municipality. I also told them that they have to do it and I would come only if the situation demands, though I would be ready all the time. They should inform me accordingly.

Unfortunately, the phones in Govindpur went out of order that day and I did not get any information. I didn't want to ask this on wireless. At 3.00 in the afternoon, I reached Govindpur and found my officers

relaxing at the Police Station. They greeted me and said that the encroachments were removed, all of them- four temples, one majar, one Imambara, part of a Gurudwara and part of kabristan. They started at 8.30 a.m. and it was all over by 2.00 p.m. Local people cooperated. No protests.

**Media coverage-** A small news item appeared on third page of the local Hindi daily 'Awaz' (published from Dhanbad) stating that the encroachments on G.T.Road at Govindpur were removed.

**Impact-** During the encroachment drive that went on for one and half months, altogether twenty seven temple structures were removed apart from part of one more kabristan and part of a gurudwara which was shown as being in illegal occupation even in the maps of 1908 Survey. And, I did not have to go personally at any of the places. Apart from Govindpur, at other places, local B.D.O., C.O. and Police officer in charge were able to do it on their own.

**Lessons for me-** Keep local problems local. Be absolutely fair and firm. Keep routine matters( e.g. encroachment removal) low profile. Be fully prepared. Empower and trust your officers and staff.

**Arvind Kumar Chaudhary, IAS is presently posted as Project Director, Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project.**

### **Mutual Problem**

Said Jerome K. Jerome for Ford Madox Ford,  
'There's something, old boy, that I've always abhorred:  
When people address me and call me "Jerome,"'

Said Ford, 'I agree;  
It's the same thing with me.'

--- William Cole  
(1919)