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Editorial

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Dear Colleagues,

This issue of PRAYAAS could have come a little earlier since most of the articles had been received in time. Meanwhile, preparation for the great festival of democracy – ensuing polls to the Legislative Assembly to be held during next two months- arrived with its first charge on our time. Another issue of PRAYAAS got thus delayed.

As promised in earlier issue, we are publishing some memoirs contributed by our senior colleagues and it is hoped they would be as inspiring as the earlier ones. Besides, it has some other precious contributions from our senior colleagues which would equally enrich our perceptions.

Next two months, when the State would be celebrating festivals like Durga Puja, Deepawali and Chhath, would be particularly testing our nerves, as Elections would be held during this very period. Our track records would however help us accomplish the tasks with the meticulous perfection they demand and require.

(Arvind Kumar Chaudhary)

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All views and opinions expressed in the contributions are of their authors.



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REMINISCENCES OF A DISTRICT MAGISTRATE & COLLECTOR

- K. N. Ardhanareeswaran

I was District Magistrate & Collector of Darbhanga District from 17th May, 1967 to 24th October, 1969. In those days the undivided Darbhanga District (The district was divided in 1972) consisted of 44 blocks (15 blocks in Samastipur Subdivision, 18 blocks in Madhubani Subdivision and 11 blocks in Sadar Subdivision) and a population of 46 lakh. During my tenure, I made it a point to attend monthly Subdivisional Coordination Committee Meetings, where I could meet every BDO and A.A. in the district once a month and review their performance. The meetings were held on the 10th, 12th & 15th of every month. It was really a rewarding, and also a learning experience for me. The district was represented by 30 MLAs, 5MLCs & 5 MPs.

I was in Darbhanga for 30 months. There were several incidents, small and big during my stay there; but the incident which is still fresh in memory is how we handled the situation in Darbhanga town during the observance of Moharram in 1968. Darbhanga town and the neighboring villages have a significant muslim population (maybe about 25%). During the observance of Moharram, processions from all the neighbouring villages would pass through Darbhanga town before reaching Karbala. About a lakh of muslims collected in Darbhanga town during the observance of Moharram and the processions would not deviate from the traditional route, which covered the clock tower and the adjoining lanes in Darbhanga town where a large number of shops of petty traders were located. The shops had utensils hanging in the doorway. Heavy deputation of magistrates and

police force had to be deployed to maintain law and order in the town.

In 1968, Moharram was observed in the second week of April. As usual, deputation of magistrates and police force was made at critical places in the town. The processions from different centres arrived in the evening and the processionists were carrying lathis and other weapons. They reached the clock tower in the centre of the town, and while passing through the narrow lanes they damaged, with their lathis the utensils hung outside some of the shops. The shop keepers came out and started protesting and threatened the processionists with dire consequences. Both sides traded insults and heated arguments followed. The intervention of the magistrate on deputation did not ease the situation. On being threatened, a large number of the processionists took refuge in a mosque close to the clock tower. The shop keepers now alleged that the Muslims had stored fire-arms in the mosque and insisted on entering the mosque to search for fire-arms. In the meantime, more and more processionists arrived on the scene. Seeing the situation going out of control, the magistrate on duty telephoned to the SDO and asked him to come to take charge of the situation. The SDO reached the scene and tried to broker peace between the two communities. All the while, the crowd was swelling and turning violent. After his unsuccessful effort to bring about peace and disperse the violent and unruly mob, the SDO telephoned me and asked me to come. I immediately contacted SP (the Late Shri. N. N. Singh) and we reached the site in a few minutes

with reinforcements. We sized up the situation and tried our best to make the two groups see sense, but they were in no mood to listen to sane advice and the violence and bloodbath seemed to be imminent.

After seeing the situation going out of control we decided to take another course of action. The SP who was six-footer ordered at the top of his voice 'fire, fire, fire'. He only ordered the firing of tear gas shells. But it had the desired effect as the mob thought it was police firing!! The mob ran helter-skelter and dispersed into the surrounding lanes and by-lanes. We sent police parties who rounded up about 100 persons who were the trouble makers from both sides.

At this stage Bihar was in a state of instability due to the fall of Mr. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha's and Mr. B. P. Mandal's governments in quick succession. In April, 1968, the Bihar Government consisted of the Chief Minister and two other ministers. One of these ministers represented Darbhanga town in the Legislative Assembly. He also happened to be a lawyer. The arrested persons, who were mainly small traders telephoned the minister and asked him to rush to Darbhanga to rescue them from police atrocities! The Minister arrived in Darbhanga the following morning. As soon as he reached the Circuit House, he sent for me. The minister, started raving and ranting about police excesses. I patiently explained to him the role of the administration and stated plainly that there would have been a serious communal riot leading to loss of many lives but for the intervention. The minister was in no mood to listen and insisted that the arrested persons be released forthwith after dropping the criminal cases against them. I

explained to him that the cases once instituted could not be closed without following the due process of law. I told the minister that the arrested persons could apply for bail and the applications could be considered by the court. Being a lawyer by profession, he could see the merit in my argument.

After returning home, I telephoned the SDO, who was also SDM. At that time there was no full separation of judiciary from the executive and the SDO also functioned as SDM. I instructed him to hear the bail applications and pass whatever order he thought appropriate. I purposefully did not give any other instruction to him as I wanted the law to take its own course. As there were a number of holidays, arrested persons were all remanded to jail custody. The process of law was not subverted.

As any communal incident during the observance of Moharram was considered serious, the Commissioner, Tirhut Division and DIG of Police visited Darbhanga. After discussion, they came to the conclusion that a very serious situation was handled firmly and decisively, with minimum use of force. In the meantime, to instill confidence in the people and restore normalcy, the SP had requested a company of mounted police from Muzaffarpur. When the mounted police arrived, the SP suggested that we should organize a route march in the town led by the DM and the SP. I welcomed the idea. I fished out my riding breeches from the very bottom of one of my trunks!! My immediate problem was whether I would fit in my riding breeches, ten years after I had left Metcalfe House. Fortunately I could, and the route march went off well. This was an improvement on my Metcalfe days, when the

horse bolted to the stables with me still in the saddle! It must have been a sight for sore eyes to see the DM and the SP riding on horse back through the streets of Darbhanga town!! The minister now nursed a strong grievance against me. When he came to know that the Commissioner and the DIG of police had visited Darbhanga and finally endorsed the action taken by the district administration, he got upset and agitated. He persuaded the Government to issue an order directing the Chief Secretary and IGP to enquire into the incident and submit a report. This was possible as the then Chief Secretary was known to fawn on ministers and bend backwards to please them.

The Chief Secretary and the IGP planned a visit to Darbhanga. The Minister also made a schedule to arrive on the same day, as he wanted to show his constituents that he could humble the district administration. The information about the plans of the CS and the IGP arrived first, and as was customary, the PA allotted Rooms 1 and 2 to them. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Mr. Dhanik Lal Mandal was already in Room number 3. So, when the Minister's tour plans arrived, he was allotted Room number 4. On the appointed day, I went to the airport to receive the C.S. and the I.G.P. The S.D.O. Sadar was deputed to receive the Minister. The C.S. and the I.G.P. arrived on schedule but the Minister's train was late. As the SDO had court duty on that day, he was not present when the Minister arrived. This infuriated the Minister and he became even more angry on reaching the Circuit House to find himself in Room 4.

In the discussions that followed the CS and the IGP were apprised of the events on Moharram

Day and how our intervention had actually saved the situation and prevented a blood bath. It was pointed out that there were no police excesses and the arrests were unavoidable. They left for Patna, fully satisfied with the actions taken. The minister also left at the same time but fretting and fuming.

On reaching Patna, the Minister created a huge furore that he had been humiliated by the DM and not allotted a room befitting his stature as Minister. He demanded that the DM be transferred forthwith for mishandling a communal incident and for insulting a Minister. The local dailies, 'The searchlight' and 'The Indian Nation' had headlines that screamed 'Minister humiliated in Darbhanga' etc. Unfortunately for the Minister and fortunately for me the government collapsed in the next two days and President's Rule was introduced! Thus, the story ended in an anti-climax for the Minister!!

I stayed on Darbhanga for 18 more months and conducted the unique mid-term poll for the Assembly in May 1969. I call it unique because the entire poll was conducted in one day. This was done for the first time in Bihar in 1969. Darbhanga had 30 constituencies and how we were able to organize and conduct the one day poll is another story.

PS – The Minister returned to the bar in Darbhanga and resumed his practice in a few days. He appeared in my court on a number of occasions, but relations remained cordial, as I nursed no ill will or grievance against him.

[Sri K. N. Ardhanareeshwan is an I.A.S. officer of 1958 batch. He stays at B9/ 6340, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110070]

FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

- U. K. Sinha

I would like to begin by taking a position that, as a class, civil servants are very poor in their financial planning and end up making sub-optimal or at times disastrous financial decisions. While the conduct rules of the civil servants do not proscribe investment in shares and securities, frequent dalliance with the market and profiteering from it is frowned upon. The majority of civil servants take this to extreme end and regard financial planning as some sort of taboo. Although having fixed income and well defined liabilities and life events, most of the civil servants end up putting majority of their money in savings bank, fixed deposits or National Saving products.

Financial Planning

One should begin by planning the needs at various stages of life and the likely savings that one is going to have. "One size fits all" should not be tried as a strategy. What is good for one need not necessarily be good for another civil servant. The total career span of approx three decades can be broadly divided into three parts. In the three different decades their financial needs are different and every officer needs to spend some time to plan his individual portfolio. Buying a house, providing for education of children or their wedding, post retirement years, family vacations etc. can be planned. Besides, there could be unforeseen expenses like medical expenses, for which some liquid money should be kept apart. We also often confuse tax planning with overall financial planning. Every February or March, the agents of National Savings or the officials of the Directorate of National Savings become the unofficial financial advisor for civil servants. The right approach would be to have an over-all financial planning, make broad allocation across asset classes and then decide which instrument to buy from tax efficiency point of view.

Risk Return Matrix

The simple law is that more return you are looking for, the more risk you are taking. Besides, the more *illiquid* an asset class is, the more opaque is the price discovery. Amongst the instruments, Sovereign Bonds i.e. Government Bonds, are known to be highest in safety and lowest in risk, followed by Bonds issued by Semi-Government or PSUs. This is followed by Bonds issued by corporates which can be categorized according to their rating. The highest rating is 'AAA' and the lowest can be what is popularly called as 'junk bonds'. The next asset class is the equity assets i.e. shares of listed companies. Here the companies with large market cap are generally regarded to be lower in risk compared to those listed companies having smaller market cap. This is mainly because the large cap companies are actively researched by analysts in the mutual fund, broking and insurance industry. Their corporate governance levels are stronger and entering or exiting from these companies at short notice is easier. Higher up in the risk matrix are the shares of unlisted companies or investments in real estate companies. One rider regarding bonds that needs to be kept in mind is that active trading in bonds can be risky because such a trader is taking a risk on the future. A civil servant should invest in Government bonds provided he is holding them to maturity and is not having any intention to do active trading in them. To give an example, if a 10 year Government bond is having a coupon rate of 7% but the current interest rate in the market is 8%, then the bond of Rs. 100/- sells at Rs. 93.20. If at a later date, the interest rate goes up, then the price of this bond will further come down i.e. even capital can be eroded. The following table gives some rudimentary idea about the risk-return profile of various asset classes.

TABLE - I

Investment	Risk Level	How to Buy
Government Securities	Lowest	Generally available in larger lots. Exposure can be had through G-Sec Funds of Mutual Funds.
Postal/ National Saving Schemes	Lowest	Can be purchased by applying directly to the Post Office or through an agent. Tax benefits are available. The scheme has the backing of the Government of India so there are no risks associated with the investment. Can be bought in small amounts.
Mutual Fund Schemes (Details in Table II)	Low to High depending upon the category of the schemes.	Investors purchase mutual fund units from the fund itself or through Agents, Banks, Post Offices, Stock Exchanges (available for select mutual funds on NSE and BSE). Systematic monthly Investment plans are available with as small as Rs. 100/- per investment.
ULIPs of Insurance companies	Low to High depending upon the type of the Policy.	ULIPs are products that combine insurance and investment for the insured and are mostly market-linked. ULIPs can be bought directly from Insurance Companies or through banks, authorized agents etc.
Shares of Listed companies	Moderate to High Risk	Shares can be bought through IPO or Stock Exchanges. IPO gives a chance to buy shares directly from the company. Once shares are listed they can be bought through Stock Exchanges.
Commodities (such as Gold, Silver, etc.)	Moderate to High Risk	Can be bought directly from the market. Alternative, exposure can be had through futures on commodities traded on Commodity Exchanges. Fluctuations in prices are relatively higher. Liquidity would be lower if held in physical form.
Shares of unlisted Company	High Risk	Can be purchased through private placement. Liquidity is low.
Real Estate	Very High	Requires large investment. Direct investment in Real estate properties or indirectly through investment in companies engaged in Real estate activities.

Buying Process

Normally in this country, there are insurance agents, mutual fund agents and agents of National Savings and postal products. Currently, the insurance regulation requires a person to be selling products of only one insurance company (except in case of corporate agents). So, an insurance agent that one might encounter in the district town or State capital is most likely to be an agent of a particular insurance company with the intention of selling the product of that company itself and not having the incentive to genuinely advise about the merits of various competing

products. The mutual fund industry on the other hand, follows the open architecture method. This means that old agents selling UTI or other Mutual Funds are actually Independent Financial Advisors (IFAs) having a mandate to advise the clients about various products rather than pushing a particular product. But it is common knowledge that most of them push only those products where the mutual funds are offering them higher commission. The distinction between insurance product and a mutual fund product has also got blurred in this country over the last 10 years. Planning for a life cover in the

event of an untoward incident is a very legitimate desire and must form part of one's overall planning. However, the recent dispute between SEBI and IRDA has underscored the fact that many products are, in fact, investment products having a very limited insurance component. One should, therefore, plan for a Team Policy for life cover and if one is buying a ULIP or other similar products from an insurance agent about what commission the agent is getting, what are the other costs which the insurance company will be deducting and what amount out of Rs. 100/- given by the customer is actually going to the investment in his name.

Mutual Fund Products

Some people commit the mistake of buying and

selling shares on the confidence about their own individual analytical capabilities. Unless one is really an expert in the financial markets, one should distance oneself from such a venture. The thrill of making direct investments in share market does not justify the risk of losing hard earned money by a civil servant. Ideally, this work should be given to Fund Managers. Here also, there is a hierarchy of products with their own risk-return profile. A primary risk-return profiling of mutual fund products is given in the table below:

Alternate Products

Portfolio Management Services and Private Equity:

Many banks, mutual funds and brokerage houses

TABLE II

Product Category	Brief Investment Objective	Risk	Return
Liquid / Money Market Mutual Funds	Portfolio of money market securities with high liquidity and quality debt. Can be used to invest for as low as one day.	Safe	Return more than Savings account.
G.Sec (Short Term)	Generate credit risk free return through investments in Short term sovereign securities. Investment Horizon: Short Term.	Low Risk	Higher Return than Liquid/ money market and savings accounts.
Bond Funds	Pure Debt fund. Invest in rated corporate dept papers and Govt. securities. Liquid Investment. Investment horizon 1-3 years.	Low Risk	Higher Return than Liquid/money market and savings accounts.
Gsec Funds (Medium/ Long Term)	Generate credit risk free return through investments in long term sovereign securities. Investment Horizon – Long term.	Low to Moderate Risk	Fairly Stable and market oriented Returns.
Balanced Funds	Investment in Equity and Debt with a view to generate regular income together with capital appreciation.	Moderate Risk	Provide a balanced mixture of safety, income and capital appreciation.
Diversified Equity Funds	Investment in equity and equity related instruments with an objective of long-term capital appreciation. Investment in Open ended funds can be redeemed on any working day.	Moderate to High Risk (Large cap funds less riskier than Mid / small caps)	Actively managed funds seek to outperform Broad markets. Hedge against inflation over long periods.
Sectoral Funds (e.g. Energy/ Power/ Banking)	Investment is concentrated in one/two sectors of the economy. Higher risk than diversified funds.	High Risk	Besides the skill of the fund manager, the return is also constrained by the performance of the Sector. As such, can give very high or moderate return in short spurts.

offer Portfolio Management Service (PMS). These are available to investors investing above a certain amount of Rs. 5 lakh & above. Here the Fund Manager creates a specific portfolio for the client and manages it on his behalf. My personal belief is that this is not an ideal option for civil servants unless they have a big amount (Rs. 25 lakh or more) to invest and do not have any requirements of funds in the foreseeable future of 3 to 5 years. Investment in Private Equity is a risky from the point of view of investors. The pay-off time is also generally large – 5 to 8 years, and there is no guarantee of return. A civil servant should avoid getting into this class unless he himself understands this business very well.

Health insurance

While civil servants (both serving and retired) are CGHS, the rigour involved is so high and the quality of service is so markedly different from good quality private hospitals that, I would recommend civil servants to buy their own medical cover from their mid-30s or 40s for themselves as well as their spouse. If these policies are taken well in time and claims are not made for reasonable period of time, a track record is built for charging lower premium

when one is no longer working, in advanced age and these medical cover can be of great help.

Conclusion

India is a country with high savings rate but moderate investment rate in financial products. There are several well-run research agencies providing regular update and analysis of various investment products. Besides, electronic portals there are magazines and financial planners now available for advice. Instead of getting intimidated by unknown terminology one should go for professional consultation and have planning for entire life-cycle. This is more important now because newly recruited Central Government employees, All India Services Officers and State Government employees are no longer entitled to an assured pension. They must plan for their old age income security very early in life.

[Sri U. K. Sinha I.A.S. (1976), is C.M.D. of UTI AMC. Views expressed are personal.]

A man may hope for anything while he has life.

- Telesphorus of Rhodes

How on earth are you ever going to explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love?

- Albert Einstein

If you cannot be star in the sky be a bulb in your home.

- A Siberian Proverb

Life is nothing but a competition to be the criminal rather than the victim.

- Bertrand Russell

Genius is born not paid.

- Oscar Wilde

WELL DONE ABBA !

Mainstreaming of the 'Muslim' in Hindi films

- Anil K. Upadhyay

You would be hard put to recall a mainstream film whose hero bore the name Salim, Javed or Asghar – unless it was a 'Muslim' film. You might think of the student poet Anwar (Rajendra Kumar in *Mere Mehboob* 1963) plaintively singing *Mere mehboob tujhe meri mohabbat ki kasam* at the college farewell function, which was actually addressed to the mysterious beauty whom he had accidentally bumped into and caught only a fleeting glimpse of, clad as she was in burqa. He could not forget that *suhana manzar*, and ever since he had been looking for her in *har raah har mehfil* with all consuming yearning to have her *deedar* once again in life. Lest you miss the point the campus could be Aligarh Muslim University. Regulation Johnny Walker could be there to provide comic relief to the brooding hero and help resolve the mystery at crucial moments.

The alluring glimpse of the heroine through the veil or burqa not only aroused passion, it would potentially cause misunderstandings and tangled wires, sometimes with tragic consequences as in *Chaudahvin ka Chand* (1960).

These familiar clichés made 'Muslim social' a well recognized genre in the 1960s. Indeed once in a while a film would come with a more sophisticated theme such as *Garam Hawa* on partition or *Nikah* on the issue of triple talaq. The most recent *My Name is Khan* seeks to challenge the community profiling in the wake of 9/11. *Chak de India* at one

level is about women's empowerment, but the sole driving force of Kabir Khan (Shahrukh Khan), the coach of the Indian women's hockey team, is to redeem himself of the bigoted insinuation that his suspect loyalty was behind India's loss to Pakistan under his captaincy in the World Cup final some years ago.

Another stock Muslim character in mainstream films is the cameo of the lovable and kind hearted neighbourhood *Chacha* – as if the director was trying to make a statement 'Muslims are also nice people' or 'I have some very close Muslim friends who are like my family members'. You could think of Shakti Kapoor in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun*, Yunus Parwez in *Deewar* and Iftekhar, Nazir Husain or A.K. Hangal in numerous films. A Muslim character in Hindi films always has his identity stated in a very overt manner. It is true that India being over 80% Hindu you relate more easily to Raj, Rahul or Vijay. But there is no reason why there can not be an Angry Young Man named Afzal who is angry not because he is a Muslim but because he faces the same harsh society that Vijay faced in *Zanjeer* or *Deewar*.

'*Well Done Abba*' breaks new ground in that its main characters are Muslim in a very un-self-conscious manner and the situation they face are of everyday India regardless of identity. The main protagonist is the endearing and garrulous driver Armaan Ali (Boman Irani), who had gone

on one month's leave to his village to find a match for his teenage daughter (Minisha Lamba) who lived there with his twin brother and his wife. When he comes back after three months, his irate boss threatens to sack him. Armaan Ali pleads with him to just hear out his story which detained him. The story told in flashback is of the relentless corruption of the entire government system from patwari to sarpanch to engineers to photographer he encountered when he was persuaded to apply for a scheme of government well that would have solved his problem of water shortage. After paying out the prescribed bribes to everyone, all he was left with was just a well on paper but with all the documentary proofs of its successful completion. His bold and confident daughter who is a class XII student and is familiar with the Right to Information Act spurs him to take on the vile guys which snowballs into a mini-revolution threatening the fall of the government.

The film is a dramatised depiction of Rajiv Gandhi's famous quip that only 15 paise of every rupee spent by the government on welfare programmes actually reaches the beneficiaries (in this case nothing does). One can quarrel with Shyam Benegal for showing a bleak reality in an amusing and comic manner. But the film is eminently watchable for its credible performances.

Shyam Benegal has meant it as a satire on a social issue but what I find striking is the seamless manner in which Muslim and Hindu characters straddle the film without any clichés. Armaan Ali himself is illiterate. But his daughter is educated and confident not in a way of message of 'even Muslim women can be educated' but in a very matter of fact manner as a natural consequence of economic development that each succeeding generation would have more literacy and women's empowerment.

The mass popularity of Hindi films has played a major role in national integration. They have done more to propagate Hindi in the country than all the sarkari and non-sarkari Hindiwallas. In a society where caste is seen as a predominant identity, their heroes are casteless unless that is the issue in the film. We are all happy with their heroes being just Rahul, Raj or Vijay not caring whether they are a Srivastava or Tiwari. The film world in their inter marriages and social behaviour are patently non-sectarian. *Well Done Abba!* could be a milestone if it were to herald an era of heroes being Salim or Rahman just as likely as Raj or Rahul without anyone batting an eyelid.

***[Sri A. K. Upadhyay, I.A.S. (1975), is
Secretary to Govt. of India,
Department of Youth Affairs.]***

If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

- Isaac Newton

I like pigs, Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals

- Winston Churchill

THE DARBHANGA CONNECT

- R. J. M. Pillai

A senior retired colleague of mine was with me the other day in connection with an official engagement with the Bihar Public Service Commission. In the course of discussions along with a few professors of History, I narrated an anecdote. Lo and behold my senior colleague caught me off guard and asked me to write an article for PRAYAAS. Many well wishers keep encouraging me to pen my stories, anecdotes etc and as is usual, you procrastinate for some other time. Another reason to write is that my previous article was appreciated by three persons and if I were to include my wife then it would make it four. Four is a fairly good number and that too for an article, the first one submitted to PRAYAAS. It may sound that I have been writing for some other publications also, which is not a fact. But I am very much inclined to do so with a fond hope that a few articles here and there may pass me off as a person of literary pursuits and you never know, you may get nominated to the upper house.

In Sept. 1979, I was posted to Darbhanga as District Collector. Incidentally I was shifted out of Aurangabad District where I had hardly completed a term of over a year. In those days, we normally had tenure of two years. This was dramatic in the sense that the orders stated that I was to move out in 24 hrs. and take charge at Darbhanga. At that point of time, all I kept telling the Government was that I would move out in less than 24 hrs. (24 hrs. is too long) but that I intended to avail my joining time before taking charge at the new place. In a couple of hours I learnt that Government was not happy with my stand, so much so that both my Divisional Commissioner and Chief Secretary called me up over phone. The story in short is that the same evening I was on a train from Dehri-on-sone to

Kolkata, on my way to Madras. Nothing happened – those were the days. The feeling then was akin to what Aubrey Menon termed as “you felt like waving at every passing train”, that was of course, in a different context.

I did report to Darbhanga on time. My tenure at Darbhanga was for over two years. Incidentally, I availed a long leave to move out and landed in Health Department where I had a three years stay. Generally I was happy to have had fairly reasonable tenure. Much later I realized that as Home secretary and Vig. Com. put together I had an average tenure of three months.

Now to the story, it was late September 1979 when I received a letter from England. It was written by one Mr. Davies. He addressed me as “My dear Collector” and went on to add, I quote “I write to you as one of your erstwhile predecessors as I was posted as District Collector in 1934”. Mr. Davies was heading an organization in England which was trying to document all Christian graves in India. He further mentioned that one Mr. Preaudeax was his SDO at Samastipur and Archer of Madhubani painting fame was at Madhubani. The old district had become three entities. I did pass on the letter to my friend at Samastipur so that he could gather the details regarding the graveyard near the Samastipur Railway Station. The details were sent by DM Samastipur and I do recall that I had also sent a detailed reply. It was indeed surprising that Mr. Davies who must have been in his 80s, still remembered his officers: worth emulating by us who very often slip into selective amnesia.

***[Sri R. J. M. Pillai (1973), is presently the
Chairman, Bihar Public Service
Commission.]***

Chill4DRR

A Unique Global Initiative to make Disaster Learning Fun and Entertainment of Children

- Anil Kumar Sinha

Chill4DRR literally means Children for DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction). Children has been intentionally spelled with double l as the word 'Chill' is very popular and fashionable with children today and practically every parent would recall having heard it often from their children at home advising them to 'chill out' and keep 'cool'. As experiences, harrowing as they were, are constant reminders of their overwhelming impact on the one hand and their multifaceted character on the other. In such a situation, each and every section of the society needs to play a responsible role in reducing the disaster risk and mitigating the consequences thereof. As a result of this a new perception is gradually dawning upon the educated and informed section as well as a large section of the general population that the Disaster Management or risk reduction control can no longer be viewed as the exclusive mandate for the Government or any one or two of its agencies.

Children being one of the most vulnerable sections of the society, and one it is important to prepare them at the very earliest about the varying natures of disasters and in this process sharpen their curiosity and awareness which would enhance their preparedness. So far, imparting knowledge to children on disasters and DRR has been through the conventional text-book approach which invariably is uninteresting and dull. There is a need for an innovative approach to trigger the enthusiasm of children in learning about disasters and Chill4DRR is one such approach to make disaster learning Fun and

Entertainment for children. In other words, it is DISASTERTAINMENT- learning about disasters with fun, excitement and entertaining activities.

Why should learning about disasters be 'dull and boring'?

The whole venture and idea of Chill4DRR is inspired by a brief exchange I had in Mumbai with my niece – student of class X and throughout a topper in her class. Sighting the book on Disaster Management on her table I exclaimed with some show of excitement to know her response about the book on disaster management, which she knew was my profession and passion. I must admit I was shocked and fairly disappointed when she replied that she never felt enthused to read this subject as the book was very 'boring and dull' in her words. This was followed by a similar experience with students of class IX of an international school in Dehradun where I had gone to address a group of students and teachers in a workshop on data management organized by LIGHTS Research Foundation – an NGO with the support of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. Another experience with the students of class IX of Mother's International School in Delhi was no better and only strengthened my resolve to take up this as a challenge and do something about this. While disasters were undoubtedly serious business, I thought, learning about disasters need not be, and to be fair to children who were already 'loaded' with heavy school bags, we owe

it to them to make the learning process full of fun, activities, games and entertainment to the extent possible. That would hopefully help make it a part of their daily lives and nurture a culture of disaster preparedness and disaster prevention as it is done right from the childhood in many countries like Japan, USA, and Singapore etc.

Scope and objectives of Chill4DRR

The main scope of this endeavor is to make available as many games, videos, cartoons, posters, charts, slogans, etc. with which children could easily get involved and learn about disasters in a manner which is participative, activity-oriented, exciting as well as entertaining in nature. The main objective of Chill4DRR is to make our up-coming generations more prepared for future disasters and hence help in building future generations disaster resilient.

Thus, Chill4DRR has the following objectives;

- To make students more proactive in learning and participate in dissemination of knowledge related with disasters and disaster management;
- To enhance the potential of children and capacity building;
- To trigger the imagination and fire the enthusiasm of children to become young *Ambassadors of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*;

The main focus being on children the programme rests on the premise that it is driven and managed by children who take all the credits for their contribution and GFDR plays the supporting and facilitating role of providing a platform and channel for them to create, share and learn together. The mission is also based on the

conviction that given their wide exposure thanks to the media – both print and electronic, today's children can learn a lot amongst themselves by participating in group activities and by sharing and exchange of mutual ideas and experiences etc.

Chill4DRR on the Facebook

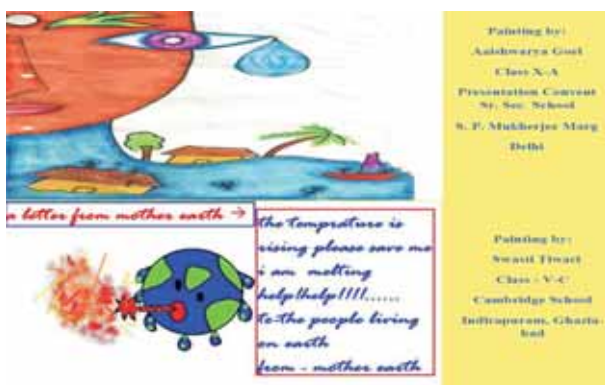
Research shows that not many countries or organizations devote much time or space for creating learning resources for children. GFDR has been striving towards creating a special corner on its website to make it the best resource cum reference point for children full of learning materials packed with fun and entertainment. In this context, some major initiatives were taken up, which include the following;

- Developed a special corner for children on GFDR website- www.gfdr.org and also a profile for Chill4DRR, on Facebook, with an open invitation to children from all over the world to share their experiences, stories, knowledge and activities with acknowledgment of full credit for their contributions. This is available on the link - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Chill4DRR/134762343225405?ref=ts>.



Picture 1. Chill4DRR on Facebook

- Dedicated a page in every issue of GFDR's Monthly Update for the young DRR Ambassadors. This page showcases the DRR related activities of children.
- Other series of school contact programs and sensitization program for the children in the neighborhood were also taken up.



Picture 2. Paintings by Children Published in Update

Some School Contact Programs and Neighborhood Sensitization Programmes

School Contact Programmes on 'Disaster Awareness: Safe School, Safe Community:

The program was organised by the Microdis team, Department of Anthropology, DU on 30th April, 2010 at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Keshavpuram, Delhi. GFDR also participated in the program and Ms. Victoria, Project Coordinator shared a



Picture 3. Students showing deep interest

presentation titled– Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools and shared knowledge with the students. It was organized with the objective to create disaster awareness among the school children.

An Interactive Session at the Mothers International School, New Delhi:

On May 1, 2010, an interactive session on disaster learning was organized by the Mother's International school, New Delhi. Mr. Anil K. Sinha, Chairman, GFDR, made a special presentation on Disaster Learning and Management. The session was attended by 190 students of Class IX and some of their teachers.

This session was very interactive and the students participated with enthusiasm and inquisitiveness. These students had some understanding of disasters and disaster management as it is a part of their school curriculum. However, the session was able to provide some new insights and a new perspective to the students and make them aware of their possible role in disaster management as Champions, Ambassadors, Leaders as well as Volunteers of disaster preparedness and prevention.



Picture 4. Students during the question answer session

Sensitizing the Children in the Neighborhood:

On 23rd June, 2010, a Neighbourhood Sensitization Program (NSP) cum learning workshop was held at The Palms, South City 1, Gurgaon, India. It was organized by GFDR and the Resident Welfare Association (RWA) of The Palms. The workshop was attended by around thirty children, housewives and senior citizens in the neighborhood.

The program was organised with the objectives to-

- Impart basic learning and orientation about disasters and emergencies among the residents including the children;
- Give suggestions on the role of neighborhood specially children and the housewives in disaster management;
- Make children, women and senior citizens more proactive in learning and participation in dissemination of knowledge related with disasters and disaster management;
- Rouse the enthusiasm of the children in the neighborhood to become young Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Ambassadors;

An Interactive session with the students of Environment Club of Mother's International School

As a follow up program, another interactive session was held with the members of Environment Club of Mother's International School. The main objective of this session was to orient the students about Chill4DRR.

During the visit, a preview of the summer project on disaster management submitted by the

students was also taken as GFDR was also involved in giving guidance for these projects. The members of club have been involved in creating various environment friendly objects like cards, toys, etc., from waste materials.

The children received Chill4DRR with enthusiasm and requested uploading of more videos and games.



Picture 5. Mr Sinha interacting with children in the neighborhood programme

What is GFDR ?

Global Forum for Disaster Reduction (GFDR), India, has been very actively involved in DRR activities since its inception. We believe in '**Global Vision – Local Action**' and hence emphasize on sharing of globally available knowledge and information to suit the local needs. It has been involved in a number of projects at local, national as well as international levels. GFDR is a non-profit, non-governmental organization registered as a society and with its global network spanning several continents and across countries like Japan, Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Indonesia and others.

For further details of its activities I will encourage you to visit the website: www.gfdr.org.



Picture 6. Mother's International School: members of the Environment Club

Building Back Better Bihar

Providence and 'cosmic conspiracy' as I call it brings me back to my own state of Bihar after a gap of fifteen long years to work for disaster management, which has by now become my profession with a passion and mission all its own. I will strive to provide regular contributions to our wonderful PRAYAS in the coming months with a rich variety of my experiences gained in course of my visits to different foreign countries. I would very much like to share them through my contributions to PRAYAAS. **Build Back Better (BBB)** – a coinage given by President Bill Clinton as the Special Envoy of UN Secretary General in the aftermath of Asian Tsunami of 2004, is the global mantra of recovery processes across the

world. All friends and colleagues with their children, wives and other family members are invited to join this mission to keep Bihar in State of ever preparedness to meet any eventuality caused by a disaster and continue to move onwards towards the bigger mission of **BUILD BACK BETTER BIHAR (BBBB)**.

[Sri Anil K Sinha, I.A.S. (1974), took voluntary retirement in 2004 and is currently Vice Chairman, Bihar State Disaster Management Authority. Worked as a Senior Consultant with the World Bank: Continues as Hony Chairman & Co-founder, Global Forum for Disaster Reduction (GFDR)]

LOVE

- Paromita Saha

We have entered an era in which we are in constant doubt about every thing – our future, our relationships, our interactions, our wants, our enemies and so on. We live in a society which has lost its heart. In our age or period, all the values of the heart have been weakened and we have lost all that is good, truthful and beautiful. In the mind of individual, there is intense tension and this tension has reached a level of near madness. One has to relax this tension, and along with it, tune the strings of the veena of the heart, from which arises the greatest music of life. If we want goodness and beauty to enter our lives there is no other way but to tune the strings of the veena of the heart.

Love means to tune the strings of the heart from where music can rise. That is why love can be called prayer also. Love is a way to attain the divine. Prayer without love is false, hollow and meaningless. Most of us do not know love at all. We love – potato chips, we love a good perfume, we love a book and then we love a friend. At the end of the day, we come to the conclusion that we know what love is, maybe, this love which we think of as love, is probably not love and so long as we have this illusion that we know everything about love, how can we search and seek it? Maybe, we are not aware that the one who knows love has simultaneously acquired the capacity to know the divine. If you know love there is nothing else left to be known in life.

One afternoon Jesus stopped under a tree in a garden. It was very hot and he was tired, so he slept in the shadow of a tree. He did not even know to whom the house, the garden or the tree belonged. It was the garden of Magdalene, a very beautiful prostitute of those days. Magdalene looked out of the window and saw this handsome, person sleeping under the tree. She had never seen such a handsome man. Just as there is beauty of the body, there is beauty of the soul also. One can often see the beauty of the body but beauty of the soul is rarely seen. But when the beauty of the soul appears even the ugliest body becomes the most beautiful flower. She had seen many handsome men because there was always a crowd at her door. Magdalene was drawn to the tree as if pulled by some magnet. Jesus was about to get up and leave, as he had finished resting. Magdalene said – “Would you do me the favour of coming into my house?” Jesus said “I have finished resting now, and it is time for me to leave. But if I happen to pass by here again and I am tired, then I will certainly rest in your house.” Magdalene felt hurt. Great princes had been turned away from her door and now when she was inviting a beggar from the street in her house, he refused, it hurt her feelings. So she said, “no, I am not going to listen to this. You must come inside – won't you do even this much to show me your love? Won't you come and rest in my house for a while?”

Jesus said "By your very invitation, I have entered your house already,' and if you ask' won't you even show me this much love? Then I will say to you that you may have seen many people who have said to you 'I love you' but none of them loved you because in their innermost core they were loving something else. And I can assure you that I am actually one of the few people who can love you and who does love you – because only one in whose heart love has arisen, can love."

None of us can really love, because within us there is no flow of love. When we say 'I love you' we are not giving love, we are actually asking for love. All of us ask for love and how one, who himself is asking for love can give love? How can people who are asking for love be the givers of love?

All of us ask each other for love. The wife asks the husband for love, the husband asks the wife for love, the mother asks the son, the son asks the mother and the friends ask friends for love. Only a person who has risen above the need to ask for love can give love, for asking is an indication that there is no source of love within him.

Love is sharing, it is not begging. Love knows only giving, it does not know anything about asking. Only a sharing heart, a giving heart can know love. And the more love we give the more it will come back to us.

The whole world is an echo; you give hate the hate will come back to you, you give anger and anger will come back to you, you abuse others and abuse will return to you, whatever you have given comes back to you and if love has not returned to you in an immeasurable number of ways, then know that you have not given love.

Love is not something to be obtained from outside. Love is an inner flowering. It rises from some dormant energy within. Yet we search for love from outside. Love is the essential treasure of our being. We are born with it. But this treasure remains unexplored, while we are busy begging for love outside.

Love is the inner treasure and love itself is the music of the veena of the heart.

**[Smt. Paromita Saha, W/o Sri K. C. Saha
(1975), Development Commissioner, Bihar]**

एकै साथै सब सधै, सब साथै सब जाय ।
रहिमन मूलहिं सींचिवो, फूलहिं फलहिं अघाय ॥

रहिमन गली है साँकरी, दूजो नहिं ठहराहि ।
आप रहै तो हरि नहीं, हरि तो आपन नाहि ॥

रहिमन कबहूँ बड़ैन के नाहि गर्वकर लेस ।
भार धरे संसार को, तऊ कहावत सेस ॥

रहिमन देखि बड़ैन को, लघु न दीजिये डारि ।
जहाँ काम आवै सूई, कहाँ करे तरवारि ॥

DISASTERS OF OFFICIAL APATHY

- Satish Singh Thakur

Sometimes administrative apathy, inaction and indifference to people's problems give birth to public resentment and may lead to serious law and order problem. The present case study is an example where continued negligence and connivance of police officials led to serious law and order problem resulting into killing of several people.

I was posted as Sub Divisional Officer at Khunti (now a district) in Ranchi district from 1987 to 1988. One day I was called to Ranchi by the South Chotanagpur Divisional Commissioner Smt. Radha Singh. Probably it was the month of July and rains had started. She enquired from me whether I was aware that nearly 18 to 20 people, suspected to be dacoits had been lynched by the villagers in and around village Birbanki in Arki Block after public trial by the villagers.

I was not fully aware about the incident. I had just heard that some criminals had been awarded death sentence and killed in West Singhbhum district by the villagers but I was not aware that villagers of Khunti Sub Division have also adopted the same method to eliminate criminals. The Divisional Commissioner directed me to visit the affected village immediately and report back within two days.

I came back to Khunti and had a long discussion with the Sub Divisional Police Officer. He was also not aware about any such happening. We decided to visit Birbanki and surrounding villages next morning. As it was rainy season, journey to Birbanki was very difficult. The approach road was Kuchha and we had to cross three rivers

without bridges. But when situation demands, we do not bother about hurdles. Accompanied by the SDPO and armed force I reached Birbanki. We found the village market closed and were told by the village chaukidar that the villagers had disappeared after hearing the news of the arrival of the police. So entire area bore a deserted look. We moved from village to village, but no one came forward to talk to us. We found only ladies in the houses. They were not ready to talk to us, so we returned back disappointed without collecting any information.

But to my pleasant surprise, same night at about 11 PM about 10 people came to my official residence to talk to me. I was informed that some people from Birbanki had come and wanted to meet me. I called them inside my sitting room. They had come from Birbanki and adjoining villages. They told me that they were so scared of the police, that they had left the area after getting the news of the arrival of the Police. They then decided to meet SDO at his residence in the night and narrate the entire episode.

I, first offered them food and water and made them comfortable so that they could talk with ease. They narrated the entire episode.

They told me that there were a number of incidents of dacoity in village Birbanki and surrounding villages. The villagers got fed up and they were scared too. They reported the incidents to the local police but no action was taken. The villagers caught some dacoits and handed them over to the Arki Police. But the police connived with the criminals and set them free. The villagers

were very angry with the police. The police was not taking any action on the one hand and on the other they set free the dacoits caught red-handed by the villagers.

These incidents and inaction of the police led the villagers to believe that unless they took law into their hands and solved the problem themselves, they could not get rid of spate of incidents of dacoity. The area had ninety percent population of Munda tribe. Munda tribe is very sensitive towards their status and self-respect. They consider themselves as the rulers of the area.

In the wake of continued police inaction the villagers of Birbanki and surrounding villages held a meeting. It was decided in the meeting that if an incident of dacoity took place and the criminals were caught, the villagers would collect, would pronounce punishment in the people's court and execute it.

So, after this meeting whenever a dacoity took place and if criminals were caught, a meeting was called by the beat of the drum and hundreds of people used to collect in this people's court. The criminals were brought before the court. They were awarded death punishment. The punishment was executed on the spot at the same time in full view of the villagers. About 18 dacoits were caught and awarded death sentence. The death sentence was executed instantly.

The entire episode narrated to me by the villagers was very horrifying. I assured the villagers that they must not be scared and action would be taken against the criminals. They must not take law into their hands in future.

I fixed up a meeting with the villagers at Birbanki next day. I requested them to remain present in their village next day as I would like to talk to the villagers directly. They need not be scared to see the police.

I informed the then Deputy Commissioner, Ranchi, Sri B.K. Sinha about the entire episode. He came to Khunti along with the SSP, Ranchi and SP (Rural), Ranchi. He held a brief meeting, gave important instructions and directed us to proceed to Birbanki to meet the villagers and solve the problems.

I reached there along with the SDPO and SP(Rural) followed us with one platoon of CRPF. SP(Rural) Sri Ramji Singh (who incidentally died due to excessive drinking after some time) was very angry with the SDPO because he was travelling in my Jeep ahead of him. On reaching there, he gave a bit of his mind to the SDPO for travelling ahead of him. I had to pacify him.

We found that large number of people of surrounding villages had assembled at village Chalkad, the birth place of Bhagwan Birsa Munda. We had a very fruitful meeting with them. They openly expressed their grievances and anger towards the local police. They told us that they had to take law into their hands due to apathy and inaction of the police. They agreed to have a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner and the SSP to discuss rising crimes in the area and police connivance with the criminals. We fixed up a meeting accordingly.

On our return journey, I requested SP (Rural) to go ahead of us as he was angry with the SDPO. Being a senior officer he should be in the front. So Mr. Singh proceeded ahead of us along with the

entire platoon of CRPF. Incidentally he was not familiar with the area and as a result he lost the track. We returned after an hour or so. Next day a police Inspector came to me around 11 AM. He informed me that SP(Rural) along with the CRPF was stranded midway in thick forest as he had lost the way. I simply smiled as SP (Rural) had himself decided to go first as he claimed to be senior to the SDPO. He spent entire night in the mid forest along with the CRPF without food and water. His vehicle was also stuck up. I immediately arranged a tractor to pull out SP's(Rural) jeep. On return back to Khunti, he was very angry with us. Though he did not tell anything, he scolded all the local police officials for his plight in the night. I jokingly told him that he is lucky to have a wonderful feeling of spending night in deep forest. He himself was responsible for his plight. But I felt pity for the CRPF accompanying him.

The following day, Deputy Commissioner accompanied by the SSP and other officials came to village Chalkad (adjacent to Birbanki) where thousands of tribals of the adjacent villages had assembled. They openly criticised the police inaction and complicity of the police officials with the criminals. They admitted to have killed several criminals who had been caught red handed and tried in open people's court. Their direct action had stopped all the criminal activities in the area.

The Officer in Charge of the Arki police station was placed under suspension for his inaction, complicity and letting off the criminals caught by the villagers and handed over to the police. The villagers promised to the Deputy Commissioner that in future they would not take law into their hands. They were also highly critical

against Anchal Adhikari. They alleged that the Anchal Adhikari was a very corrupt official who did not do any work without taking bribe. He was also sexually exploiting tribal girls though he himself was a tribal. They demanded his immediate transfer.

The Deputy Commissioner promised to look into the matter on priority basis. A police out post was opened in village Birbanki. The Anchal Adhikari was transferred and an enquiry was ordered against him.

An FIR was instituted against about 40 persons for killing 18 people suspected to be criminals. Now the real problem before the police was to arrest the accused persons who had allegedly killed the so called "dacoits". There might be mass upsurge against the police, as the atmosphere was highly charged.

Incidentally, Arki block had more than eighty percent tribal population. They were simple and had total faith in sub divisional administration. I paid a surprise visit to the affected area without a single Khaki man. The villagers were happy finding me alone. They discussed everything affecting their life, exploitation by local block officials, money lenders, police, criminals etc. As the area was very difficult to reach, nobody ever cared to look into their problems. I did not promise anything but decided to do something for them, priority being road to Birbanki, bridges on three rivers, school building and a hospital. All these schemes were taken up but could be completed when I had left Khunti.

The villagers were scared about the criminal cases lodged against them. They apprehended their arrests. I impressed upon them that they should respect the law and should not take law

into their hands. I did not ask them to surrender before the police because that might have created adverse impact. I returned in the evening.

After two days at around 10 in the night I was informed that two persons had come to my residence from Birbanki to meet me. They wanted to disclose the purpose of their visit to the SDO only. I immediately asked them to be brought inside my residence. First, I offered them food and made them comfortable. They informed me that all the named accused in the murder case were ready to surrender. But they did not have faith in the police as police might torture them. It had been decided in a meeting of all adjoining villages that all the named accused persons would surrender before the SDO only, as they had no faith in Police.

I agreed to remain present in Arki police station on the proposed day of their surrender. All named accused persons must come to surrender and I promised to them that no coercive action would be taken. Accordingly I fixed up a date and time for their surrender. I informed the Deputy Commissioner about all these developments. He was extremely happy and wished me luck.

I reached the police station along with the SDPO about half an hour late as there was some traffic problem. I found nobody in the police station. As thana officials were not informed about the surrender, they expressed surprise about all these developments. I had informed even the SDPO at the last moment, as desired by the villagers. The thana officials told us that we had been cheated as no accused person would surrender. But I was confident and had full faith in them.

After waiting for half an hour, I saw people coming in groups. I saw all forty accused persons coming to the police station, I took a sigh of relief. They told me that they were waiting for the arrival of the SDO from morning itself. When they got confirmation of the arrival of the SDO, they marched towards the police station. First, I directed the local officials to arrange some food for them and later complete all the formalities. After completing this big surrender episode I requested the SDPO to take charge and ensure that no coercive action was taken. After that I left for Ranchi to apprise the Deputy Commissioner about surrender.

Sri B.K. Sinha, Deputy Commissioner, Ranchi was very jubilant to hear this news. He congratulated me and took me to the residence of the Divisional Commissioner, Smt. Radha Singh, she was extremely happy because the task which she had given to me, had been fully accomplished. She told the DC that SDO deserved a paid holiday. As a result I was packed to Puri along with my family on a paid holiday.

This incident is a pointer to the fact that official apathy to the problems of common man may lead to serious law and order problems which may go beyond control at one point. As a result people may be forced to take law into their hands once their patience is exhausted. The reaction may be disastrous.

[Sri Satish Singh Thakur (1988), is presently holding charge of OSD to the Chief Secretary, Bihar]

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EXPERIENCE PAPER - KOREA

- Arvind Kumar Chaudhary

The visit to South Korea was a very good experience for me – both personally and professionally. The change in the economy of South Korea is visible and the story of its turnaround is interesting and inspiring. The society and its value system are also remarkable. I will talk about some of these briefly.

South Korea is a small country. With a population of nearly four and half crore, it is equivalent to a medium size state in India. It does not have natural resources as India. Take for example the steel sector. South Korea does not have iron ores, nor coal. It imports iron and coal and still, today it is one of the major producers of steel in the world. Particularly, the high grade quality is its strength. Add to that, they have developed the best technology for making steel.

In ship building sector, when it started, it had no experience or expertise and still today, South Korea is a major ship building country. They learnt the technology, imported necessary skill and materials and worked hard on their way to the top.

Likewise, in DRAMs, South Korea today captures 50 percent of the world market. For this, what it did appears impossible for others. Three of its major Industry houses came together for research in this sector and are becoming the leader in the world. Today, they produce best quality DRAMs and all participating industrial houses are benefitting besides the nation as a whole.

In social sector, in 70s, the 'Saemaul Undong' programme was rolled out in all the villages. It gave power to the villagers for deciding their priorities, used common interest and motivation for changing the faces of the villages. This programme was very successful and brought down the rural poverty significantly.

The overall growth of the economy of South Korea has been very impressive. It was an export led growth. The policies of government during the transformation phase make for an interesting study. It's not that South Korea did everything right. It made many mistakes but kept on experimenting and changing as per requirement.

The people of South Korea are very hard working and generally honest and law abiding. Fifty percent population of South Korea follows Confucianism, nearly 25 percent are Buddhists and rest are mostly Christians. They have high moral values.

But on the flip side, South Korea was not a democracy to start with. For a major period after independence (incidentally, independence day of India and South Korea falls on the same date), it was under military rule. The democracy there does not have as deep roots as in India. The divorce rate in South Korea is the second highest in the world. The present rate of economic growth is down to 3-4%. A large number of students are migrating outside for studies.

And the economic progress of India too, in the last decade, since liberalization has been impressive, we have done equally well in economic sectors as well as in social sectors. And all this has been achieved with a functioning and strong democracy. To be honest, I have a strong feeling that twenty years hence, we will be sitting and discussing about the economic miracle that has happened in India.

[Sri Arvind Kumar Chaudhary (1995), is presently posted as Project Director, Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project.]

एक किताबी नायक

— एस. एन. सिन्हा

नायक बनना कभी चाहा नहीं
परंतु नायकों के द्रुद्ध-अन्तर्द्रुद्ध,
निद्रा-उपनिद्रा के युगों में जागता रहा
और एक दिन उस सफर में
एक नायक मेरा हमराज हो गया—
अब दुनिया उस नायक को पढ़े
या मुझे, दुनिया जाने!
तबसे मानो वह नायक
मेरी जिंदगी जी, कह रहा है -

आज तक मैं
तैयार नहीं कर पाया ऐसा वितान
जिसमें एक दिन को भी
अपने पालतू कुत्ते की तरह
अपना कहता
जो मेरे इशारों को समझता
और इस कदर
हर वाक्य को पूरा करने की
मजबूरी, उसके खतरे एवम् आचार,
व्यवहार आदि-आदि से बचाता
मैं केवल एक शब्द बोलने को होता
वह मेरे होठों को पढ़ता
और उसमें सागर भरता
दुनिया मेरे घर
सही मौकों पर गागर पहुँचाती!

ऐसा तो हुआ नहीं मेरे साथ
बल्कि आज हर दिन
मेरे लिए जैसे
एक लावारिस कुत्ते की तरह
एक लावारिस इंतजार है!
अब सोचता हूँ
देर से ही सही
उसी तरफ लौट चला जाय—
जीने, जिलाने के नये मुहावरे सीखे जायँ...

आखिर मैं भी
एक दिन उर्फ कुत्ते को अपना वारिस बनाता हूँ
वह तुरत लार टपकाता है!
शाबास, मेरे कुत्ते उर्फ मेरे दिन! शाबास!!

कुत्ते के घर देर है
अंधेर नहीं
मेरा भी उबेर दिखेगा कहीं !

मैं खुश हो आगे बढ़ना चाहता
सबरे से ही दोपहर को, तीसरे पहर को
पढ़ना चाहता,
पहाड़ बनाकर
उसपर चढ़ना चाहता
उस पार की एक झँकी के ख्याल से ही
अपनी पीठ थपथपाता
खुद को खुदखुदाता

लेकिन दूसरे ही क्षण
मेरी एक टाँग में
अपने ही वारिस कुत्ते के दाँत जमे रहते
और उसकी दुम
फिर अपने आप से खेलकर
मुझसे जैसे कह रही होती—
‘तुम भी तो दिन से
एक अदद खेल रच रहे थे!
रचना छोड़ा नहीं, फिर रचना के
धरम-करम से कैसे बच रहे थे?’

[श्री एस.एन. सिन्हा (1963), सर्जनात्मक एवं सामाजिक गतिविधियों के साथ ही कोसी क्षेत्र को उत्तर भारत की कोचि बनाने के अपने पुराने सपने को साकार करने की दिशा में सक्रिय हैं।]

दो कविता संग्रह राधाकृष्ण प्रकाशन प्रा. लि., नई दिल्ली से प्रकाशित—आठवाँ दिन (1997 ई.) दशम रस (1999 ई.)

संघर्ष

— ममता मेहरोत्रा

मैं क्या लिख रही हूँ और क्यों — शायद, इसका मुझको ज्ञान नहीं है। कभी-कभी वक्त ऐसा आता है कि इंसान हतप्रभ रह जाता है। नाटक का पटाक्षेप इतनी जल्दी होता है — इसका अनुमान संभव नहीं होता। फिर यह घटना थी भी ऐसी। नरेन मामा ने खुदकुशी कर ली थी। उस दिन शाम से ही कुत्तों के रोने का समवेत स्वर सुनाई पड़ रहा था। शायद जानवरों की मौन संवेदनाएँ इंसानों की तकलीफ पहले, बहुत पहले ही समझ लेती हैं। एक अच्छा भला इंसान भला क्यों अपनी इहलीला समाप्त कर लेगा इसकी कल्पना सहज नहीं। जब हम सुख से अपने घरों में बैठे होते हैं तो किसी की घुटन को महसूस कर पाना असंभव ही है। जीवन की भेंट को इतनी आसानी से खत्म कर देना एक असाधारण कदम है।

कोई क्यों कर लेता है ऐसा?

मौत शाश्वत है और एक हकीकत भी।

पंखे से लाश लटकी हुई थी। गला एक तरफ लुढ़क गया था। पैर जमीन से थोड़ा ऊपर हवा में झूल रहे थे। पास ही मेज पर पन्ने फड़फड़ा रहे थे। दस पन्ने। और पूरी जिन्दगी की कहानी उससे जुड़ी अपेक्षाएँ, आकांक्षाएँ, संघर्ष, असफलताओं की एक छोटी दास्तान। तमाम जिन्दगी जैसे कुछ थोड़े से पन्नों और शब्दों में सिमट कर रह गयी थी। जिन्दगी का अस्तित्व कागज के पन्नों में फड़फड़ा रहा था। शायद वह भी जिन्दगी की तरह हवा में उड़ जाना चाहता है। अब कुछ शेष रहा नहीं। शेष रह गयीं कुछ जिन्दगियाँ जो उनसे जुड़ी थीं। शेष रह गये उनके संघर्ष।

उम्र कोई ज्यादा नहीं रही होगी यही, कोई चालीस-पैंतालीस साल। दुबला पतला जीर्णकाय शरीर जो कभी हट्टा-कट्टा रहा होगा। उड़े-उड़े बाल — पर चेहरे पर अपूर्व शान्ति। वही शान्ति जिसकी तलाश में पूरी उम्र गुजर गयी। तमाम उम्र गुजार दी पर खुशी नहीं मिली। अब जब मिली तो उम्र से वास्ता ही न रहा।

आज से करीब पंद्रह-सोलह साल पहले उनकी शादी संगीता नाम की लड़की से हुई थी। लड़की थी बेहद सुन्दर। छोटी उम्र, सुन्दर रूप रंग और अच्छे पैसे वाले घर में शादी ने उसके दिमाग को उछाल दिया। सास की इकलौती बहू होने के कारण सास ने उसे धरती से ऊपर ही रखा था। मायके में संगीता के कुछ खास न था अतः यहाँ का पैसा उसको लुभाता। उसके पिता को पैरालिसिस था अतः उन्होंने पूरी जिन्दगी ही खाट पर काट दी। कभी भी पैसा असीम नहीं होता। जब आकांक्षाएँ असीमित होने लगती हैं तो धन की अपनी सीमाएँ बँध जाती है और फिर उसका क्षय होने लगता है। धन सिर्फ दान या भोग के निमित्त है। अगर उसका संचय होता है तो वह नष्ट होने लगता है। इसलिए धन का सदुपयोग होना चाहिए। पर नरेन मामा के पिता ने अति की कंजूसी की, अपने नाते रिश्तदारों को काट कर पैसा एकत्रित किया कि वे उनके एकमात्र पुत्र के लिए पर्याप्त होगा। वे उसके लिए इतना छोड़ जाना चाहते थे कि उनकी सात पुश्तें उसका उपभोग कर सकें। पर लक्ष्मी तो ठहरी चंचला—कब किसी के पास स्थिर रही हैं? बड़े-बड़े राज — पाट तो चौपट हो गये और महल—असबाब आज या तो धूल चाट रहे हैं या फिर भुतहा बंगला बने उसमें चमगादड़ लोट रहे हैं। राजे — महाराजे तो मिट गये फिर छोटे — मोटे आदमी की क्या विसात।

भीड़ बढ़ती जा रही थी। जो सुनता, हतप्रभ हो जाता। इतनी बड़ी घटना, खानदान में कभी नहीं हुई थी। फिर सबकी आँखों के सामने उनका चेहरा और बिताये हुए क्षण घूम जाते। कोई न कोई मीठी या खट्टी याद आ जाती और मन को कचोटती।

सुबह करीब बारह बजे वे घर से निकले थे। कह कर निकले कि — 'मैं इनकम टैक्स ऑफिस जा रहा हूँ, देर हो जायेगी। परेशान न होना।' रोजगारी आदमी को सेल्स टैक्स, इनकम टैक्स से तो बराबर सामना करना पड़ता ही है। घर में किसी को संदेह नहीं हुआ। फिर जैसे कोई लंबी यात्रा के पहले तैयारी से निकलता है, वैसे ही वह भी

बकायदा जूते मोजे पहन कर बढ़िया शर्ट—पैट चढ़ा कर अपनी लंबी यात्रा की तैयारी के लिए निकले। यात्रा लंबी थी उस लिहाज न तैयारी काफी नहीं थी पर उस यात्रा का अंत निश्चित था। न कोई पड़ाव न कोई उबड़—खाबड़ रास्ता, न प्राकृतिक दृश्य, न बच्चों का खेलना—खिलखिलाना, युवतियों का इठलाना—मचलना, सिर्फ एक मंजिल एक सीधा—सरल मार्ग। एक अपूर्व शांति।

उनका नाम नरेन था। अपने माँ—बाप की इकलौती संतान। बचपन से लाड़—दुलार से पले—बढ़े थे। पिता के पास पैसे की कमी न थी। संयुक्त परिवार था अतः पूरा दिन उधम—धमाचौकड़ी में निकल जाता था। माँ चूँकि रईस परिवार से आयी थीं अतः काम में उनको अधिक मन नहीं लगता था। वैसे भी संयुक्त परिवार में उसी बहू की इज्जत है जिसका मायका मजबूत है अपने मायके के बल पर वह ससुराल में राज करती है। बड़े बाप की बेटी होने के कारण उनसे कोई ज्यादा काम—काज भी नहीं होता था। पुत्र की परवरिश भी जैसे उनके ऊपर बोझ थी। जब उम्र अच्छी शिक्षा देने की थी तो माँ अपना वक्त त्रिया—चरित्र में बिताती थी। बेटा हाथ से निकलता गया। पढ़ने के वक्त वह मटरगश्ती करता था। बेटा इस तरीके से हाथ से निकलेगा—यह बात जब माँ को नागवार लगी तो उसने उसको दबाना शुरू किया। सबसे कम मिलने देना, घरवालों के खिलाफ भड़काना शुरू किया जिससे उसका बालपन ऊँचे उठने के बदले संकीर्णताओं और पारिवारिक कलह में लग गया और नरेन वास्तव में एक अयोग्य नरेन होकर रह गया।

बच्चों की परवरिश में उन्हें सांसारिकता की शिक्षा देनी चाहिए ताकि वह जीवन रूपी संग्राम का मुकाबला कर सके।

‘अरे यह सब कैसे हुआ?’
‘बात कब की है?’

बाहर परिचितों की भीड़ बढ़ गयी थी। सहूलियत से लाश को नीचे उतारा गया। उन्होंने अपने अच्छे कपड़े एक तरफ रख दिये थे। घड़ी और अंगूठी तो वह सहूलियत से घर पर ही रख आये थे। शायद अंदेशा था कि कहीं घर वालों से पहले किसी और की निगाह उस पर पड़ गयी तो

वह ले सकता है। लोगों का क्या? अगर उनका बस चले तो वे मुर्दों को भी बेच खाएँ। दुकान में वह बारह सवा बारह दिन तक पहुँच गये थे। पर जान देने की उन्होंने ग्यारह बजे रात को ठानी क्योंकि जब लाश पुलिस को मिली तो वह 10—12 घण्टे पुरानी थी। पुलिस का क्या? उसके लिए तो बस एक टूँठ का ढेर था, पर घरवालों के लिए उनका अपना। बेहद करीबी, प्यारा और अजीब। बारह बजे दिन से वे अपनी दुकान में बैठे रहे और तब कहीं जाकर 11 बजे रात में आत्महत्या की है। मरता हुआ आदमी भी मौत से बचना चाहता है। फिर उस आदमी के अन्दर मौत को आत्मसात् करने की इतनी व्यग्रता, इतना जुनून कि उसने बहुत ठहर कर उसको गले से लगाया। शायद मरने वाला भी डाक्टर से एक आखिरी प्रयास की उम्मीद करता है।

‘डा. साहब एक सुई दे दीजिए मैं बच जाऊँ।’

और यहाँ बैठकर वह सिर्फ और सिर्फ मौत का इंतजार करता रहा और आखिर उसका निश्चय सभी रिश्तों, भावनाओं, संवेदनाओं के ऊपर भारी पड़ी। वह रात को फॉसी लगा कर झूल गया।

उफ! कितनी पीड़ा और जिन्दगी से घोर घृणा। उस घृणा ने मौत को फतेह कर दिया। मरने के पहले वे दस पन्नों की चिट्ठी लिख गये जिसको पुलिस ने अपने कब्जे में ले लिया। उन चिट्ठियों में जिन्दगी का दर्द और हताशा सिमट कर आ गयी थी।

‘मैं खुदकुशी अपनी इच्छा से कर रहा हूँ। इसके लिए कोई भी जिम्मेदार नहीं है। मेरे परिवार को परेशान नहीं किया जाय।’

एक चिट्ठी सास के नाम—

‘मैं आपकी बेटी को संभाल नहीं पाया।’

एक चिट्ठी कर्जदारों के नाम—

‘जिस तरह से मेरी जिन्दगी बरबाद की है वैसे आइंदा किसी को न करना।’

एक चिट्ठी बच्चों के नाम—

‘मैं हार गया। मैं तुम्हें संतुष्टि नहीं दे पाया। तुम्हारे लिए इस जिन्दगी में कुछ नहीं कर पाया। मैं तुम्हारा दोषी हूँ।’

मुझे माफ करना।’

एक चिट्ठी पत्नी के नाम—

‘आर्थिक तंगी से तंग आ, घरेलू कलह से परेशान हो, मैं यह कदम उठा रहा हूँ। मैं आत्महत्या कर रहा हूँ। मैं तुम्हारी जिन्दगी से जा रहा हूँ। अब तुम आजाद हो हमेशा—हमेशा के लिए’।

दशहरा का दिन था। नरेन के लिए संगीता को घरवालों ने पसंद किया था। बेहद सुन्दर और स्मार्ट। पर एक तरह से बेमेल और इच्छाओं के अनुरूप विपरीत स्वभाव। जैसा कि पहले भी कथानक बोल चुका है, एक अपरिपक्व बुद्धि जिसको उछालना और बरगला लेना बेहद आसान है। उसी दिन संयोग से उसका जन्मदिन पड़ता था। सास ससुर ने काफी व्यापक पैमाने पर उसका आयोजन किया था।

‘अरे बहू का रूप तो देखो। नरेन के लिए ईद का चॉद ढूँढ कर लायी है।’

‘हाँ लड़की भी तो जेवरों से लदी राजरानी लग रही है।

जैसा रूप वैसा भाग्य।

‘क्या किस्मत पाई है! लगता है ईश्वर ने सबकुछ देकर संगीता को भेजा है।’*

लोग जलन—मिश्रित ईर्ष्या से भाग्य और रूप का बखान करते गये और वह हर बखान पर घमण्ड की एक—एक सीढ़ी चढती गई। नरेन उसके समक्ष गौण हो गया और गौण हो गया उसका भाग्य। सास भी नाते रिश्तेदारों को उलाहने दे रही थी।

‘अरे सबलोग मेरी बहू का बखान करो!’

जब भाग्य मुस्कुराता है तो लोग यह भूल जाते हैं कि जिन्दगी का चक्र अनवरत चलता रहता है। सुख और दुःख खुशी और गम तो आते—जाते रहते हैं। जैसे रात के बाद दिन और दिन के बाद रात होती है वैसे ही यह तुच्छ जीवन है। जो खेल खेलता है, वह तो ऊपर बैठा ईश्वर, सृष्टा और भोक्ता बन एक जीवन का तमाशा देखता रहता है। कब कौन अभागा और कौन भाग्यशाली, इसको समझना न केवल कठिन है, अपितु भेद—भरा भी है।

और वह गर्विता नारी रूप और धन के अंधकार में राजरानी की पदवी पर आसीन थी, भूल गयी कि नीचे एक वास्तविकता की जमीन भी है जो कठोर है और जब इंसान हवा में उड़ता है तो हवा निकल जाने के बाद औंधे मुँह जमीन पर गिरता है। जब कठोर धरातल पर मनुष्य के कदम होते हैं तब अगर ठोकर भी लगती है तो वह संभल जाता है और अगला कदम सोच कर उठाता है। गर्विता नारी कहीं भी पाताल की पहली सीढ़ी होती है और जिस नारी को रूप का घमण्ड हो उसकी तो जिन्दगी में पुरुषों द्वारा भोग्या बनने में वक्त नहीं लगता। अपने देवरों के मीठे संभाषणों ने उसके अन्दर नारीत्व का पोषण कर दिया और इसी में उसके संपर्क में एक देवर आया नीरज — जो भाभी की चाटुकारिता में अपना वक्त व्यतीत करता था। पुलिस आ गयी थी। लाश को नीचे उतारा जा रहा था। अभी तो पोस्टमार्टम होना चाहिए। वास्तव में हर जिन्दगी का एक पोस्टमार्टम होना चाहिए। क्यों उसके साथ ऐसा घटित होता गया? क्योंकि जैसे रिपोर्ट हमें यह अवगत कराता है कि इस बेजान लाश के साथ क्या कुछ किया गया होगा वैसे ही हर लाश उस बीती हुई जिन्दगी के सही और गलत कार्यों के निर्णयों को भी बताती है। कभी—कभी जिन्दगी का कोई निर्णय हमें सफलता के कगार पर पहुँचा देता है और कभी असफलता की गहन और घोर निराशा के भँवर में जिससे निकलने का कोई भी रास्ता नहीं सूझता। जिन्दगियों को क्षत—विक्षत करने से उससे उपजे अनुभव हमें ज्ञानी न सही, पर सीख तो अवश्य दे सकते हैं और किसी दूसरे इंसान की जिन्दगी संभल सकती है। जिन्दगी न्यूटन के सिद्धांत पर चलती है कि हमारे हर कर्म का एक प्रतिफल होता है जो जिन्दगी की धारा को बदल देता है।

शादी के साल भर के अन्दर संगीता को पुत्र हो गया और अब तो जैसे उसके भाग्य की खूबसूरती पर भी ठप्पा लग गया।

‘अरे बहू ने आते ही आते पुत्र को जन्म दिया।’

‘क्या कहा जाये कितनी भाग्यशाली बहू है!’

‘इस बुढ़ापे में इंदिरा के तो भाग्य खुल गये।’

‘अरे संगीता अब झटपट दूसरा भी कर लो।’

‘नहीं मामी जी।’ संगीता ने अहंकार वश कहा— ‘दूसरा कम से कम लड़का तो नहीं चाहिए। दो बेटे होने से

सम्पत्ति में बंटवारा होगा। मुझे तो एक ही बेटा चाहिए। दूसरी बेटा हो तो ठीक।’

‘अब बच्चा तो ईश्वर की देन है। देखो क्या लिखा है किस्मत में। जीवन और मरण तो ऊपर वाले के हाथ में है। पर मेरे लिहाज से दो हो जाते तो परिवार में रौनक लगती। फिर नरेन तो इकलौता है। दो होने से उसको व्यापार में दो मददगार हाथ मिल जायेंगे।’

पर होता वही है जो ईश्वर लिख भेजता है। उसने एक सुन्दर – सी बेटा को जन्म दिया। इस बीच में संगीता के ससुर का देहान्त हार्ट अटैक से हो गया था। उन्हें अपनी बहू के चाल-चलन पसेद नहीं आते थे। पर बहू को इस हद तक बढ़ावा दे दिया था कि अब पीछे हटना भी ठीक नहीं था। बेटे का भविष्य और बहू का व्यवहार उन्हें अन्दर ही अन्दर कचोट जाता था। यही गम उन्होंने दिल से लगा लिया और दिल का रोग उनके जीवन को लील गया। नरेन की माँ पति की मृत्यु के सदमे को बर्दाश्त न कर पायी। वह बीमार रहने लगी। उनका स्वास्थ्य भी गिरता चला गया।

‘अरे कितनी देर लगेगी? रिपोर्ट मिल जाये तो क्रिया-कर्म करें।’

सही बात है। शायद मौत रात के करीब 11 बजे के आसपास हुई होगी। ‘हाँ समझ में नहीं आता कि क्या से क्या हो गया। अरे 11 बजे तक मौत को गले लगा पाना कोई छोटी-मोटी बात नहीं है। कितनी यंत्रणा सही होगी। अपनों को हमेशा के लिए छोड़ने का मोह-त्याग, जिंदगी में उपजी गहन निराशा। अरे, बड़ा जिगर वाला ही ऐसा कर सकता है।’

तभी पुलिस बाहर आयी और उन्होंने कुछ दस्तावेज माँगे। उनके अंदर जाते ही फिर वार्तालाप शुरू हो गयी। माहौल गमगीन के साथ-साथ बोझिल भी था। इस तरह के संदर्भ के लिए कोई भी शायद तैयार नहीं था।

‘अरे कुछ नहीं तो कम से कम अपने बच्चों का ख्याल करना चाहिए था।’
‘अरे कभी हमसे बैठ कर अपनी समस्याएँ बतानी चाहिए थी। कोई न कोई हल निकलता।’

‘हाँ थोड़ी-बहुत सुगबगाहट थी कि आर्थिक तंगी है पर इतनी विकट समस्या होगी यह नहीं सोचा था।’

‘हाँ यार, इंसान क्या सोचता है कि क्या हो जाता है। देखो न, चाचाजी ने शायद कभी सोचा भी न होगा कि वारिस इतनी कम उम्र में मर जायेगा।’

‘हाँ, क्या उसने एक मिनट भी मरने के पहले किसी के विषय में नहीं सोचा?’

‘शायद स्वार्थी था।’

उसी समय पुलिस ने आकर उसकी चिट्ठियाँ माँगी। उसमें से नीरज की लिखी हुई चिट्ठी को नाते रिश्तेदारों ने हटा दिया। नाहक उनको पुलिस परेशान करेगी।

पर शायद संगीता को पिछले एक साल से कुछ-कुछ आभास था कि नरेन ऐसा कर लेगा। होता भी क्यों न? वह बार-बार आत्महत्या की धमकी देता था। सास को गुजरे भी एक अरसा हो गया था सर पर हाथ रखने वाला कोई न था। छोटी उम्र और पति से उसको कोई विशेष लगाव न था। वह समझती थी कि वह रूप के बल पर इस घर में आयी है नहीं तो नरेन की औकात ही क्या कि वह उस जैसी अप्सरा को पा पाता। इसी कारण वह नरेन की अवहेलना करती थी। नरेन भी अपनी पत्नी को बेहद चाहता था। लोग जब कहते कि देखो लंगूर को हूर – तो थोड़ा दुःखी होने के साथ-साथ वह भाग्य पर इठलाता। पूरे खानदान में उसकी बीबी से ज्यादा सुन्दर कोई नहीं था-और वह उसको अपना भाग्य मानता था। यही भाग्य उसका दुर्भाग्य बन गया।

अच्छे वक्त में ईश्वर इंसान को सब तरफ से देता है और इतना देता है कि वह समेटना चाहकर भी अपने अच्छे भाग्य को समेट नहीं पाता। उसको यह अच्छा भाग्य अपने गुणों और पुण्य-प्रताप का नतीजा प्रतीत होता है। तब वह औरों के दुर्भाग्य की जम कर व्याख्या करता है। उसकी मदद करने की अपेक्षा उसका मजाक उड़ाता है। अगर वह अच्छे वक्त को ईश्वर की कृपा माने और दुःखी लोगों की सेवा करे तो जिन्दगी का संतुलन ज्यादा सही होगा। उसकी तकलीफ में भी कोई आकर मदद करेगा। क्योंकि गीता में कहा गया है कि ईश्वर ही स्वयं भोक्ता हैं और सृष्टा है और अपने हर पात्र की तकलीफ में वह कहीं न

कहीं दुःखी होता है । ईश्वर की अनन्त कृपा होती है पर हम मूर्ख उसको अनुभव ही नहीं कर पाते और जो कुछ हमारे पास नहीं होता उसके लिए दुःखी होते हैं और उस सुख को भूल जाते हैं जो हमारे पास विद्यमान है ।

संगीता के साथ भी ऐसा ही हुआ । गरीब परिवार से आकर वह यहाँ ऐश्वर्य को भोग नहीं पायी । जो जिन्दगी उसको नहीं मिली थी उसकी तड़प उसे उस मार्ग की ओर प्रेरित कर ले गयी जहाँ वह धन का सदुपयोग नहीं कर पायी ।

उसको लगा कि जिन्दगी में उसके पास अथाह धन—सम्पत्ति है पर—अथाह तो किसी के पास नहीं होता । आमदनी से अधिक जब खर्च बढ़ जाते हैं तो मुश्किल होने लगती है । आदमी अपना संचित धन खाने लगता है । यही कुछ इस दंपती के साथ हुआ । ऐसी जीवन शैली अपना ली जिसको पूरा करने के लिए धन कम पड़ गया । इस कारण व्यापार में भी स्थिरता नहीं आ पायी । जब एक बार पैर उखड़ने लगता है तो फिर उसको संभाल पाना मुश्किल होता है । रोजगार पर से ध्यान हटा — वह मंदा चलने लगा । गलत वक्त में गलत लोगों का साथ मिल जाता है । वही हुआ । नीरज संगीता के रूप लावण्य से चिढ़ता था । उसको वह अपना नहीं बना पाया । लिहाजा उसको तबाह करने पर वह उतारू हो गया । नीरज के पिता का देहांत जब वह कक्षा दस में था तभी हो गया था । नीरज अपने पिता का इकलौता पुत्र था । उसकी तीन बहनें थी । पिता अथाह सम्पत्ति छोड़ गये थे । अपने पिता की मौत से उसके लड़के का जी काफी कड़ा हो गया । फैली हुई सम्पत्ति को संभालना और व्यापार आगे बढ़ाने का हुनर वह सीख गया । वैसे भी विकट परिस्थिति अल्पायु में पड़ती है तो इंसान को जिन्दगी जीने की कला सिखा देती है । यही कुछ इसके साथ हुआ । वह कुछ अनुभवी हो गया । बहनों का अच्छे घरों में विवाह कर और व्यापार को आगे बढ़ा कर एक कामयाब इंसान के रूप में परिवार में स्थापित हो गया । उसने जिन्दगी को गंभीरता से लिया, लिहाजा जिन्दगी ने उसको गंभीरता से लिया । नरेन सतही होकर रह गया । बचपन में माँ—बाप और जवानी में बीबी के हाथ की कठपुतली मात्र बन कर रह गया । इस कठपुतली की डोर संगीता के पास थी जो नीरज के प्रति आसक्त थी क्योंकि वह प्रगतिशील युवक था । उसकी प्रगति इनकी जिन्दगी में बाधक हो गयी । वह

कर्जों में इनको डुबोता गया । नफा नीरज को हुआ और नुकासन नरेन का । वह जिन्दगी का सौदा बुरी तरह हार गया और इस संग्राम में पीठ दिखा कर भाग गया ।

नरेन ने मरते हुए लिखा कि मेरी लाश घर न ले जायी जाय । सीधे विद्युत शवगृह में अंतिम संस्कार किया जाय । 'अरे ऐसा कैसा हो सकता है' घर चलकर उसकी लाश को एक बार बीबी बच्चों को दिखा देते हैं । उन्हें आत्मिक शान्ति मिलेगी ।

'सही बात है । अन्तिम वक्त में उन्हें एक दिलासा हो जाएगा ।' और नरेन की इच्छा के विरुद्ध लोग कुछ देर के लिए उसे घर ले आये ।

संगीता तड़पकर रो रही थी । उसके हाथ से सब कुछ निकल गया था । जिन्दगी में कुछ भी पाने की खुशी क्षणिक होती है पर जिन्दगी में जितना मिला है उसके खोने का दुःख असीम । संन्यासी शायद इसलिए इतना बेफिक्र घूम लेता है क्योंकि उसके पास सांसारिक वस्तु ही नहीं होती जिसको खोने का भय सताये । वह तो परमानन्द की स्थिति में घूमता रहता है । पर गृहस्थ अपनों की मृत्यु के उपरान्त जीवन का मोल समझ पाता है ।

'अरे अगर इंसान सलामत रहता तो सौ नियामतें हैं । पर जब पाला—पोसा इंसान चला गया तो बचा ही क्या?'

आज संगीता समझ पायी कि जिन्दगी की समस्त खुशी पति से है । पति का अर्थ जीवन साथी है । चाहे जैसा भी था—था तो पति ही । आज उसकी अर्थी पर रोते हुए वह अपने बीते हुए वक्त की गलतियों का स्मरण कर रही थी । शायद वह जिन्दगी को लेकर इतना हाय—तौबा न करती तो इतना कुछ इतना जल्दी न होता । उसकी आकांक्षाएँ असीमित थीं और जिन्दगी की परिधि सीमित । उसमें उनको पूरा कर पाना शायद असंभव था । शीशे के सामने रंगहीन श्वेत वस्त्रों में उसको अपने जीवन का सार समझ में आया । जीवन कितना बहुमूल्य और ख्वाहिशें कितनी गौण! काश, उसने पति को समझने का प्रयत्न किया होता, बात—बेबात झगड़ा न किया होता तो उसकी जिन्दगी की दिशा ही कुछ और होती । दुःख अभिव्यक्त कर आनेवाले सबके—सब जा चुके थे । कोरी संवेदनाएँ थीं

जो बची रह गयी थीं उसके पास। लोग शायद सब कुछ भूलकर फिर से जीवन में लग गये होंगे। कुछ दिन बीतते-बीतते लोग उसको भी पूरी तरह से भुला देंगे। दूसरे कमरे में बेटी पलंग पर बैठ कर खॉस रही थी। उसको दमा हो गया था। माता-पिता के कलह ने बच्चों के स्वास्थ्य को प्रभावित करना शुरू कर दिया था। बेटा शायद इस सदमे से उभरने का प्रयत्न कर रहा था।

अब न नरेन था न उससे जुड़ी शिकायतें और न शिकवा। अब सब कुछ शांत था। नरेन इस दुनिया से जाने के बाद भी हताश था। कहते हैं कि मरने के समय आत्मा का ध्यान जिनमें अटका रहता है आत्मा मृत्यु के उपरांत उन्हीं में भटकती रहती है। उसकी आत्मा को बच्चों की दुर्दशा कचोट रही थी।

उस दिन दिनभर वह अपनी दुकान में बैठा विवेचन करता रहा, जिन्दगी और मौत के द्वन्द में झूलता रहा। कभी जिन्दगी के मूल्य मौत पर हावी हो जाते कभी मौत सारी समस्याओं के एकमात्र विकल्प के रूप में प्रस्तुत हो जाती। काल, जैसे उसके सर पर ताण्डव कर रहा था। उसको जिन्दगी के समीप जाने नहीं दे रहा था। उसे माता-पिता दूसरी दुनिया में उसको बुला रहे थे। इस लोक में बच्चे पीछे रो-गा रहे थे।

पर न तो वह अपने बच्चों को कुछ दे पाया और न उनका सामना कर पाया। उसको लगा था कि उसका परिवार उसको बचाने के लिए अवश्य आयेगा। वह उस कमरे में बैठ उनका इंतजार करता रहा। फिर निराशा का दौर शुरू हो गया। जिंदगी उसके सम्मुख एक चुनौती बन कर खड़ी हो गयी। वह अब अकेले इसका मुकाबला नहीं कर सकता। एक समझदार पत्नी शायद उसको संभाल ले जाती। पर...नहीं, अब कुछ नहीं हो सकता था। सब कुछ चला गया। एक तरफ पत्नी रूठी रहती थी तो दूसरी तरफ बच्चों की आँखों में सूनापन, पीड़ा छाया रहता था। पत्नी का जब पहला जेवर उसने गिरवी रखा था तब उफ कितनी पीड़ा-नहीं अब और नहीं...वह हार गया है... पूर्णतः!.....बस....सामने मौत थी पर पीछे...एक बेकार सी लचर-पचर जिन्दगी जिसका वह सामना नहीं कर सकता। वह सोना चाहता है...सामने उसकी मॉ आ गयी। हाथ बढ़ा कर उसको बुला रही थी। 'आ जा बेटामेरे

पास आ...मैं तेरा सहारा हूँ...भूल जा सब कुछ...आ जा। तू कैसे बचपन में जब हार जाता था तो मेरी गोद में सर छुपा कर पनाह लेता था। अब तुझे क्या हुआ? काफी बड़ा हो गया है रे! आ मेरे बच्चे आ....।' नरेन वहाँ देखता रहा। माँ की आँखों में वात्सल्य था। हाँ, माँ का सहारा ही तो वह खोज रहा था। पर एक क्षण को बीबी और बच्चों का चेहरा उसकी आँखों के सामने घूम गया। बीबी तीन दिनों से नाराज थी। उसने खाना नहीं बनाया था। बच्चे तो अगल-बगल खा कर निश्चिन्त हो गये थे, पर वह...उसको भूख कस कर लगाने लगी..जी घबराने लगा। अब तो भूखे रहने की आदत हो गयी थी। "माँ, मैं आ रहा हूँ मुझे हलवा पूरी बना कर खिलाओगी ना।" और वह फॉसी पर लटक गया।

बाहर आकाश में लालिमा फैलने लगी थी। सूरज ने कब अपनी गति बदली है? सृष्टि तो चलती रहती है। चिड़ियाँ भी चीं...चीं... कर उड़ रही थी। सब लोग नरेन के कमरे में संगीता को घेरे बैठे थे। नरेन को गये एक महीना हो गया था। नाते- रिश्तेदार संगीता और बच्चों के भविष्य की चिन्ता कर रहे थे। कैसे उनकी गुजर-बसर होगी, इसपर सब विचार कर रहे थे।

'जाने वाला तो चला गया।'
'हाँ जो होना था सो हो गया।'
'जैसी ईश्वर की इच्छा।'

वक्त थमता नहीं है। जिन्दगी रुकती नहीं है। जो चला गया वह कल बन गया। जो जीवित है, वर्तमान में सब उसी की चिन्ता करते हैं। जो मर गया वह तर गया।

संगीता अपने बच्चों के साथ दुकान के बाहर खड़ी थी। नरेन की मौत के बाद आज पहला दिन था। शायद नयी शुरुआत। जीवन शायद कभी रूका नहीं है। यही सृष्टि का नियम है और दुकान के शटर खुल गये।

[श्रीमती ममता मेहरोत्रा साहित्यकर्म से जुड़ी हैं और श्री ब्रजेश मेहरोत्रा (1989), प्रमण्डलीय आयुक्त, पूर्णिया की पत्नी हैं।]

WAVES & RIPPLES

Sri Jairam Lal Meena, 80

Advisor, Bihar State Planning Board,
Additional Charge: *Additional Departmental Enquiry Commissioner, Bihar*

Sri Bhanu Pratap Sharma, 81

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs,
Government of India (Central Deputation).

Smt. Rashmi Verma, 82

Joint Secretary,
Defence Production Department,
Government of India (Central Deputation).

Sri Girish Shankar, 82

Principal Secretary,
Urban Development & Housing Department
Additional Charge: *Principal Secretary,
Panchayati Raj Department, Bihar.*

Sri Rameshwar Singh, 83

Principal Secretary, Department of Finance, Bihar.

Sri Deepak Kumar, 84

Additional Charge: Principal Secretary,
Tourism Department, Bihar
Chairman-cum-Managing Director,
Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation.

Sri Arun Kumar Singh, 85

Additional Charge: *Additional Departmental Enquiry Commissioner, Bihar.*

Dr. K. P. Ramaiah, 86

Secretary, Art Culture and Youth Affairs Department,
Additional Charge: *Chief Executive Officer,
Bihar Foundation.*

Sri S. Shiv Kumar, 87

Managing Director,
Bihar Industrial Area Development Authority,
Additional Charge: *Managing Director,
Bihar Infra Structure Development Authority and
M.D. Bihar State Industrial Development
Corporation, Patna*

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Secretary, Building Construction Department, Bihar

Sri Brajesh Mehrotra, 89

Divisional Commissioner, Purnia Division, Bihar

Dr. Deepak Prasad, 89

Divisional Commissioner, Bhagalpur Division, Bihar

Ms. Anshuli Arya, 89

Divisional Commissioner, Saran Division, Chapra.

Sri Vivek Kumar Singh, 89

Divisional Commissioner, Magadh Division.

Sri K. K. Pathak, 90

Managing Director, Beltron, Bihar.

Sri Sanjay Kumar, 90

Additional Charge: *Secretary,
Health Department, Bihar*

Sri Parmar Ravi Manubhai, 92

Secretary,
SC & ST Welfare Department, Bihar, Patna
Additional Charge: *Secretary,
Backward Classes and Extremely Backward
Classes Welfare Department
Secretary, Bihar State Mahadalit Commission.*

Sri Atish Chandra, 94

Divisional Commissioner,
Kosi Division, Saharsa.

Sri Pran Mohan Thakur, 94

Disability Commissioner, Bihar, Patna.

Sri Masood Hassan, 95

Labour Commissioner, Bihar, Patna.

Sri Arun Chandra Singh, 95

Special Secretary, Rural Works Department, Bihar

Sri Ramesh Lal, 95

I. G. Prison,
Bihar, Patna.

Sri Daya Shankar Pandey, 95

Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Bihar
Additional Charge: *Director, Veterinary, Bihar.*

Sri Arvind Kumar Singh, 95

Special Secretary,
General Administration Department, Bihar

Dr. B. Rajender, 95

District Magistrate, West Champaran.

Sri Bipin Kumar, 96
District Magistrate, Jamui

Sri Feraque Ahmed, 96
Special Secretary,
Minority Welfare Department, Bihar

Sri Vimla Nand Jha, 96
Director, Industries, Bihar.

Sri Devottam Verma, 96
Project Director, Bihar State AIDS Control Society
Additional Charge: *Additional Secretary,
Health Department, Bihar*

Sri Minhas Alam, 96
Special Secretary,
Human Resource Development Department, Bihar

Sri Pankaj Kumar, 97
District Magistrate, Samastipur.

Sri Sanjeev Hans, 97
District Magistrate, Madhubani.

Ms. Safina A. N., 97
District Magistrate, Nawada.

Sri Devraj Dev (T. N. 99)
Director, Mid-day-meal,
Human Resource Development Department
Additional Charge: *Special Officer, Chief Minister
Girls Cycle, Girls Dress & Boys Dress Scheme,
Human Resource Development Department.*

Sri Abhijit Sinha (Nagaland 2000)
Joint Secretary, Transport Department,
Additional Charge: *Additional State Transport
Commissioner, Special Flying Squad Transport
Department.*

Sri Prem Singh Meena, 2000
District Magistrate, Munger.

Sri Sridhar Chiruvolu, 01
District Magistrate, Vaishali.

Sri Pankaj Kumar Pal, (M. T. 02)
Chairman,
Bihar State Bridge Construction Cooperation
Additional Charge: *MD, COMFED, Bihar.*

Ms. Pratima Satish Kumar Verma, 02
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Sri Lokesh Kumar Singh, 03
District Magistrate, Siwan.

Sri Asangba Chuba Aao, 03
District Magistrate, Arwal.

Sri Kuldeep Narayan, 05
District Magistrate, Saran.

Sri Balamurugan D., 05
District Magistrate, Gopalganj.

Sri Divesh Sehera, 05
District Magistrate, Lakhisarai.

Sri Manish Kumar, 05
CEO-cum-Corporation Commissioner,
Patna Municipal Corporation
Additional Charge: *MD, Bihar State Water Board.*

Sri Adesh Titarmare, 06
District Magistrate, Banka.

Sri Daya Nidhan Pandey, 06
District Magistrate, Sitamarhi.

Ms. Ashwini Dattatreya Thakre, 06
District Magistrate, Katihar.

Sri Dharmendra Singh, 06
District Magistrate, Sheikhpura.

Sri Sandeep Kumar Pudkalkatti, 06
District Magistrate, Kishanganj.

Sri Neeraj Khairwal, 07
Relieved for Joining in Uttarakhand State Cadre.

Ms. Ashima Jain, 08
S.D.O., Sherghati, Gaya.

Sri Pranav Kumar, 08
S.D.O., Rajauli, Nawada.

Sri Girivar Dayal Singh, 08
S.D.O., Forbesganj, Araria.

Sri Buddhhabhatti Kartikeya Dhanji, 08
S.D.O., Danapur, Patna.

Sri Raman Deep Choudhary, 08
S.D.O., Chakiya, East Champaran.

KIDS CORNER

- Ashutosh Mehrotra

BALLOONS

*Balloons are full blown circle
or drawn oblong
Filled with air
they fly along
Children have fun
when they run
after it*

*They go high and high/up in the sky
in the shades of yellow, blue, green,
red and white.*

*Jump Jump to catch them
hold them tight
Before they fly
away away away from all of us
They are Balloons.*

TREE - TREE

*You give us for free
Air, Fruit and wood
We cut you Tree.
Or how could
We burn your twigs
to get warmth in
cold winter breeze
We get paper from you
and when we need rest
it is your shade we look
for shelter
and birds look for nest.*

*[Ashutosh Mehrotra, Class - 7 is son of
Sri Brajesh Mehrotra, 1989,
Divisional Commissioner, Purnia*

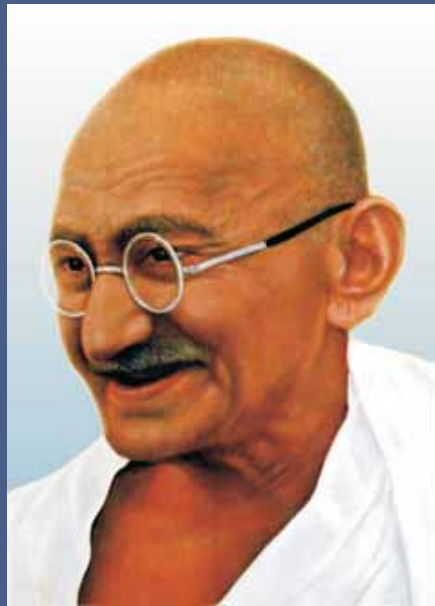
Quotations from Shakespeare

It is interesting to “discover” how many of the idioms and phrases we regularly use happen to be precious “quotes” from our great masters. Here's an example by way of an extract from the paper scroll I bought during a visit May last year to Shakespeare’s Globe, London with my parents and younger brother, Abhimanyu. With grateful acknowledgement to Bernard Levin who prepared the list and Shakespeare’s Globe, London which produced it :

If you cannot understand my argument and declare : it’s Greek to me, you are quoting Shakespeare. If you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare. If you act more in sorrow than in anger, if your wish is father to the thought, if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare. If you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green - eyed jealousy, if you have been tongue – tied – a tower of strength – hoodwinked, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play – stood on ceremony, danced attendance on your lord and master, then you are again quoting Shakespeare.

Shivaditya Sinha, Class IX, D.P.S, R. K. Puram, New Delhi
(elder son of Nikesh Sinha and Aradhana Sinha, elder daughter of
Sri S.N. Sinha (1963) and Amrita Sinha)

“I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self is too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of use to him, will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starved millions?



Then you will find your doubts about yourself melting away.”

- Mahatma Gandhi “Note” (August 1947)

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