

# HEM News

web : [www.iaemp.org](http://www.iaemp.org) ♦ e-mail : [sunilsolar@yahoo.co.in](mailto:sunilsolar@yahoo.co.in) ♦ Mobile : 077398 02112

A monthly newsletter on "Home Energy Management Programme" of IAEMP

## Editorial

### Community of life



K.Jayalakshmi

*It was the end of a rather tiring, even if inspiring, week. The small classroom of 26 'students' was engaged in a letter-writing exercise of a different kind. This was a real inland letter they were inking their thoughts on. And this was a letter to the self they were busy penning.*

*I was there too and I did my bit too. Yes, it was a 'bit' compared to the lengthy ones some of my younger friends were writing. As I sat back after completing my task, I looked around at the faces pouring earnestly over the letters they were writing. And a warm glow of hope filled my heart.*

*Students, architects, teachers, professionals and even retired government employees had formed this motley class of a September workshop at Auroville. Varied, yet similar in their beliefs, they had come to explore a 'sustainable future'.*

*They were taken through desolate scenarios of water, food and energy and briefly dipped in waters of innovation and soils of hope, flowering with a hundred creative ideas borne out of a community living in sync with each other and nature. The despair faded (but remained) to the background, the hope remained.*

*Inspired by what they had heard and seen, the group made a few resolutions on what they would do in their communities and workspace. They put it down on the inland letter that would reach them in 6 weeks. To remind them of unfinished tasks.*

*Why did I go to the sustainability workshop? Sustainability was something I had been aware of as a crucial issue, more important than the climate change crisis. And yet, I had not been able to do anything with this awareness besides taking some steps in my own life, or speaking to my family (unsuccessfully). Somewhere between the loads of scientific data that proved we were on a collision course with Nature, and all those people who refused to acknowledge or take action, I had become a pessimist. I was looking for something that could give me hope.*

*The workshop did that. Perhaps it was the inspiring tales of people we met, or saw on celluloid. Perhaps it was the urgency of the situation narrated at the workshop. Perhaps it was living in those verdant settings that set me thinking of what could be. Or the enthusiasm of those few handful participants writing a letter to their self...*

*Hope came flooding me. As long as there are even a few ordinary people willing to do the extraordinary job of working together to heal the planet and restore dignity to human life, the dastardly acts of a powerful, corrupt few can be overcome. Even if there are only a few handfuls who believe in the interconnectedness of life on the planet, the big picture will emerge. The lines between the dots may be longer. Doesn't matter. The cells of a new consciousness have taken birth.*

*What were the key take-aways for me from the workshop? First, it was a reaffirmation of what I believe in - that life is a miracle and this planet a unique gem to safeguard. The solutions to most problems already exist and often they are simple and do not require technology. A dash of innovation, a sprinkle of imagination, and dollops of unlearning is all that is often needed. If Nature happens to be your 'boss' things are even more simple. Keep the principal untouched, use the interest to meet your needs, and your happiness quotient will beat the GDP hollow. There is no place for greed. Collaboration, and not competition, is the mantra for a sustainable quality of life. The lessons are all there in the evolution of life on the planet.*

*To paraphrase Thomas Berry, the human race can wake up from the isolation and rejoin the great community of life and take our part in the wonderful, unfolding story.*

## The world needs thousands of Auroville

Sunil Sood

I was one of the 26 participants who attended a 6 days residential workshop on the topic 'Exploring a Sustainable Future' - at Auroville, near Pudicherry (Pondicherry) from 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 to 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2010. 'HEM News' editor Ms.K.Jayalakshmi also attended the workshop which had a mixed profile participants from India and abroad. The unique thing I noticed was that there were no two participants with exactly the same profile but all had one common agenda in mind- to do something for a sustainable future!

The workshop was coordinated by Prof.R.Rajagopalan, a former IIT Madras Professor and author of several text books on environment. He was ably supported by faculty comprising of Tineke, Alan and Bhavana. There were several other guest lectures and site tours designed to



**Standing (L to R) :** John, Alan, Raghu, Nadessen, Jowalu, Sunil, Shyam, Meher, Prof.Rajagopalan, Jayanth, Mughda, Kunal, Sujatha, Jaya, Sinduja, Bhavana & Smita,  
**Sitting (L to R) :** Anil, Soe, Chinmai, Santosh, Jaganathan, Oum, Varun, Bala & Tineke

( Photograph by Kunal Sharma, a participant)

explain the finer points about sustainable living. We were put up in a guest house located amidst the nature's bounty. We were all taken care of very well during the whole week by the support staff headed by Sarvanan.

It was a great experience in these 6 days living amidst the nature and interacting with so many people from more than 40 countries doing excellent work for making our Planet a better place to live in. It is really a very difficult task to describe in words my experiences in 'Auroville'. It is said that a picture is worth thousand words and to my good luck, Chinmai Hemani, a young IT professional working in Mumbai who was a co-participant in the workshop, has put up everything in the form of excellent photographs and posted on the internet. Some of the photos are included in this issue which will provide you some glimpses of the life in Auroville. For more satisfying experience, Please click on the following links:

- 1) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54210158@N06/> - auro part1
- 2) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54282034@N08/> - auro part2
- 3) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54204078@N05/> - auro part3
- 4) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54257831@N07/> - auro part4
- 5) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54244982@N02/> - auro part5
- 6) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/54320515@N08/> - auro part6



Overall, it was a great learning experience. I was very much impressed by the sincerity and dedication with which every one does his/her job. I hope to get another chance to live in Auroville in the near future. In the meantime, I am working on a 'Green Ashram' project in Karnataka which will be like a mini-Auroville. Since it is not possible to create the magic of original Auroville in short time, I hope that more such smaller projects will be taken up all over the world as I feel that the world needs thousands of Auroville-even if they are a miniature model of the original one.

# Experience Aura of Auroville

## What is Auroville?

Auroville is a universal township in the making for a population of up to 50,000 people from around the world.

## How did Auroville begin?

The concept of Auroville - an ideal township devoted to an experiment in human unity - came to the Mother as early as the 1930s. In the mid 1960s the Sri Aurobindo Society in Pondicherry proposed to Her that



*Electric Bike*

such a township should be started. She gave her blessings. The concept was then put before the Govt. of India, who gave their backing and took it to the General Assembly of UNESCO. In 1966 UNESCO passed a unanimous resolution commending it as a project of importance to the future of humanity, thereby giving their full encouragement.

## Why Auroville?

The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity – in diversity. Today Auroville is recognised as the first and only internationally endorsed ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness, also concerned with - and practically researching into - sustainable living and the future cultural, environmental, social and spiritual needs of mankind.

## When did Auroville start?

On 28th February 1968 some 5,000 people assembled near the banyan tree at the centre of the future township for an inauguration ceremony attended by representatives of 124 nations, including all the States of India. The representatives brought with them some soil from their homeland, to be mixed in a white marble-clad, lotus-shaped urn, now sited at the focal point of the Amphitheatre. At the same time the Mother gave Auroville its 4-point Charter.

## Where is Auroville?

Auroville is located in south India, mostly in the State of Tamil Nadu (some parts are in the State of Puducherry), a few kilometres inland from the

Coromandel Coast, approx 160 kms south of Chennai (previously Madras) and 10 kms north of the town of Puducherry.

## Who are the Aurovilians?

They come from some 45 nations, from all age groups (from infancy to over eighty, averaging around 30), from all social classes, backgrounds and cultures, representing humanity as a whole. The population of the township is constantly growing, but currently stands at around 2,160 people, of whom approx one-third are Indian.

## Peace Area

At the centre of the township lies the Peace Area, comprising the Matrimandir and its gardens, the amphitheatre with the Urn of Human Unity that contains the soil of 121 nations and 23 Indian states, and a lake to help create an atmosphere of calm and serenity and to serve as a groundwater recharge area.

## Industrial Zone

A 109-hectare area to the north of the Peace Area, the Industrial Zone, a zone for “green” industries, is focused on Auroville’s efforts towards a self-supporting township. It will contain small and medium-scale industries, training centres, arts and crafts, and the city’s administration.

such a township should be started. She gave her blessings. The concept was then put before the Govt. of India, who gave their backing and took it to the General Assembly of UNESCO. In 1966 UNESCO passed a unanimous resolution commending it as a project of importance to the future of humanity, thereby giving their full encouragement.



*aquaponics*



*Grey Water Treatment*

## Residential Zone

The largest of the four city zones, comprising of 189 hectares, the Residential Zone is bordered by parks on the north, south and west. Main access to the zone will be through the crown road with further traffic distribution via five radial roads that divide the zone into sectors of increasing densities. This zone wants to provide a well-adjusted habitat between individual and collective living. 55% of the area will be green and only 45% built surface, thereby creating an urban density balanced by nature.

## International Zone

The International Zone, a zone of 74 hectares to the west of the Peace Area, will host national and cultural pavilions, grouped by continents. Its central focus is to create a living demonstration of human unity in diversity through the expression of the genius and contribution of each nation to humanity

## Cultural Zone

Planned on a 93-hectare area, situated to the east of the Peace Area, the Cultural Zone will be a site for applied research in education and artistic expression. Facilities for cultural, educational, art and sports activities will be located in this zone.

## Green Belt

The city area with a radius of 1.25 km. will be surrounded by a Green Belt of 1.25 km width. As a zone for organic farms, dairies, orchards, forests, and wildlife areas, this belt will act as a barrier against urban encroachment, provide a variety of habitats for wildlife, and serve as a source for food, timber, medicines etc. and as a place for recreation.

Presently an area of 405 hectares, the Green Belt - though incomplete - stands as an example of successful

## Under that banyan tree I sat...

-Chinmai Hemani

Under that banyan tree I sat,

Wearing my thinking hat...

hearing the soft chattering of the leaves  
and see it dance with the breeze,  
how I wish the time to seize..

Calm within with the tunes of nature and  
time..

Peace pervades within me sublime..

And so I thought..

Nature is beautiful,  
Nature is Supreme.

So should we not care for the nature which  
gives us so much,  
How could we play like insane fools and  
take the path to devastate it so much.

Apathy.. Apathy...

In the name of industrialization and  
commercialization we devastated every  
thing that came our way,

wish nature had a tongue to share its state  
and wish we were sane enough to hear its  
say..

Its time we take care of our greedy selves  
Cos in the end if we don't protect nature,  
the god of nature will not protect our petty  
selves..

Under that banyan tree I sat,  
Wearing my thinking hat...



*Chinmai Hemani  
enjoying cycle ride*



transformation of wasteland into a vibrant eco-system. Its further planned extension with an additional 800 hectares will make it into a remarkable demonstration site for soil and water conservation, ground water recharge, and environmental restoration. As lungs for the entire township, it will complete the healing process that Auroville started several decades ago.

#### Auroville

The city-in-the-making is located on the Coromandel Coast in south India. It draws its inspiration from the vision and work of the renowned Indian seer and spiritual visionary, Sri Aurobindo. His spiritual collaborator, The Mother, founded the township in 1968 and gave its Charter, which you find scrolling on our homepage. The writings of these visionaries, and the specific guidelines for Auroville given by the Mother are crucial for in-depth understanding of what is trying to be achieved in Auroville, a collective experiment dedicated to human unity and international understanding.

#### Human Unity

*“With the present morality of the human race a sound and durable human unity is not yet possible; but there is no reason why a temporary approximation to it should not be the reward of strenuous aspiration and untiring effort. By constant approximations and by partial realisations and temporary successes Nature advances”*, writes Sri Aurobindo, and this reality stands central in Auroville and acts as perpetual encouragement for the residents to persevere. During all our meetings, deliberations and plannings, we are acutely aware of how vast and how high our aim is, for *“— in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity.”*

#### Puducherry

Auroville’s location in south India is connected with the fact that the Mother had been living in Puducherry since 1920. It was there, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1964 that the idea of Auroville was conceived. Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had expressed in their earliest writings the necessity of starting, at some point, a collective experiment under optimum conditions -

ideally in the form of a city - in order to create a bridgehead for a new consciousness which was seeking to manifest in the world. The Ashram itself, formally created in 1926, was a first attempt in that direction. It was only in 1964 that the Mother felt that the time had come for such a bold experiment to be started on the bigger scale of a township.

The name ‘Auroville’ was given in homage to Sri Aurobindo, while also meaning ‘City of Dawn’. The idea was recognised and taken up by the Government of India. A location near to Pondicherry was found. The time was right, the wheel set in motion, and support started coming in. The inauguration took place on February 28th, 1968.

#### Worldwide support

Since the very beginning, Auroville has received the unanimous endorsement of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1966, 1968, 1970, 1983, 2007. Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations in India and abroad have funded various development programmes, and donations have been received from foundations in Europe and the USA, from Auroville International Centres, and from private donors around the world. The residents themselves have also made, and continue to make, a major contribution of their resources and energy to the project.

#### Multifarious activities

Auroville is intended as a city for up to 50,000 inhabitants from around the world. Today its inhabitants number around 2000 people, drawn from some thirty countries. They live in 100 settlements of varying size, separated by village and temple lands and surrounded by Tamil villages with a total population of over 35,000 people. Their activities are multifarious, and include

afforestation, organic agriculture, educational research, health care, village development, appropriate technology, and building construction, information technology, small and medium scale businesses, town planning, water table management, cultural activities and community services.

#### Independent legal body

In 1988, the Government of India passed the Auroville Foundation Act to safeguard the development



**Handicraft Products**

of Auroville according to its Charter. This Act established three constituent bodies: the Governing Board, which would oversee the development of the township in collaboration with its inhabitants, the Residents Assembly and the International Advisory



**Solar Bowl**

Council, which can provide international support and advice, when required, to the Governing Board.

#### Faith in humanity’s future

As the world is rapidly changing and groping for new paradigms to re-model itself, so Auroville stands poised at the start of a new millennium, ready to enter a new phase of its development and growth, and aware of a new flowering of the faith in humanity’s future that it represents.



**mud block house under constnl**



**Raw Food Speciality**

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CREATE AN ETHICAL, VALUE BASED SOCIETY?

- Bharat Wakhlu

Excerpts from the book - Restoring Values-Keys to Integrity, Ethical Behaviour and Good Governance

In the month of November 2008, the Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV) undertook the task of conducting a two-day conclave in New Delhi. Almost 50 eminent thinkers from across the country were brought together to deliberate upon the causes of the decline in values in India and propose urgent steps that would arrest the rapid deepening of the malady.

There was unanimity that inaction would push India downhill. Inclusive and equitable economic growth could not be achieved without adhering to high standards of ethics and integrity in governance-especially where corruption and the lack of transparency in the process of serving citizens deprived millions of Indians of their legitimate right to the fruits of development.

One idea that emerged sharply, and found repeated mention throughout the 2 days, was that there was no dearth of practical, well-thought-out and implementable solutions to the larger issue of a deterioration of values. Over the past 62 years since India's independence, successive

governments have instituted numerous commissions and committees and at different times have brought together groups of distinguished men and women, to prescribe solutions to the diverse symptoms of the problem of declining values. Numerous suggestions have accordingly been proffered over the years. Few, however, have been implemented. What is lacking therefore is leadership. The leadership deficit impacts all walks of life but is especially noticeable within the political classes. It is the absence of leadership that is unable to transform the agony of citizens to a courageous and determined movement to implement essential changes.

Our foundation has chosen to work with leaders, to persuade and inspire them to live and work with values. The foundation is of the view that 'influencing influencers' is the swiftest route to transforming groups of people working towards a common goal, including organizations created to serve the public. This book is a compilation of some of the thoughts that were presented during the two-day conclave. Many of the articles included in this volume were shared by their respective writers during the conclave. However, a few other speakers, who penned their ideas more formally after the conclave, are also represented. The articles by Madhu Trehan and Gopal Ganesh have been specifically written for this book

The FRNV has as its inspiration and guide Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha-a living practitioner of Vedanta, who normally resides in his ashram in Thrissur, Kerala, but travels extensively to share his understanding on the workings of the human mind with a diverse and varied cross section of people.

In this volume, we have included one of Swamiji's speeches, adapted as the article, 'Nationalize Your Minds and Hearts!'

In his article, Swamiji asks some very pertinent questions. If a person belongs to a nation, is it not the person's obligation to abide by the fundamental duties that the nation has of its every citizen? Is it really so difficult for us to follow basic rules? Obviously, it is an absence of the inner gyroscope and having a constricted mind-which Swamiji exhorts is reflective of k?rpanya dosha-that makes people drift: whether from their fundamental duties as citizens or from adopting high standards of ethics and integrity in their personal lives. When citizens choose to elect lawmakers to occupy Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies, the expectation is that the representatives will also function ethically and with integrity. However, if that does not happen and a laxity is shown by parliamentarians or legislators in terms of not performing in a way that is good for the country, citizens need to act. If Parliament does not raise a red flag when it should or ignores injustice or unlawful activity, it is the bounden duty of citizens to galvanize and inspire Parliament to act. There is no scope for a passive tolerance of wrongdoing.

Arun Wakhlu in his article, 'Remembering Our Wholeness' reiterates that the only reason why there is a decline in the society is due to a decline in values. And values in turn cannot flourish in humans if there is a lack of awareness of who we truly are. Deficient notions of ourselves limit us, make us feel incomplete and disconnect us from all that is wholesome, positive, life-affirming and good. Humans have therefore to 'wake up' to understanding their wholesome, complete nature to be ethical.

It has often been observed that people, who indulge in 'rent seeking' and corruption, using their official position or clout, are those who are intrinsically greedy. Greed, or the psychological state of desiring more than a person deserves or needs, is viewed as a state of deficiency, where there is an inordinate emphasis on Mammon. Many times, the journey towards a life of unethical decisions (and sometimes crime) starts with legal ways of acquiring more wealth or benefits, but as time goes on, the fine line between what is appropriate and what is unethical is blurred, and, if one refuses to use one's intellect to discriminate between what is right and what is not, the decline in values commences rapidly, with all the attendant consequences. At the level of the mind, the rapaciousness for more material things stems from an ignorance of the abundance and the infinite possibilities that embosom human life. Obviously, remembering or 're-membering with' our true nature is a sound way to stimulate individual change for the better.

Arun Maira touches upon the Satyam story and the lessons to be learned from the episode, in his article 'Igniting the Truth Within'. His contention is that good governance is not just the result of having leaders of integrity but also the upshot of an appropriate architecture that enables enterprises to remain robust and trustworthy. The architecture has to be continuously strengthened by ensuring that everybody, including the 'builder' of the structure (that is, the promoters or key stakeholders), follows the rules of business without exception. There can be no rules that apply to one group only, even as those at the upper echelons can get away with disregarding them. If the key actors in the enterprise do 'forget' to follow rules, then those who notice such lapses have to courageously confront those involved.

In his article, 'Public Administration in India: Facing an Ethical Crisis', the President of FRNV, Dr E. Sreedharan, is dismayed that Transparency International's Global Corruption Index places India at the 85th position, out of the 180 countries surveyed. He is of the view that while administrators are given extraordinary powers in India, they are not held accountable for the results that they are expected to achieve (and which they often do not achieve), or the delays or losses that they might be directly responsible for. Dr Sreedharan emphasizes the criticality of transparency in minimizing the ills of public administration and suggests that the openness and the contingent efforts to remove the veils of secrecy in the system can go a long way to improve public administration. The Right to Information (RTI) Act has been an important step in the direction of encouraging transparency. Dr Sreedharan adds further that leaders need to be carefully selected from among those who are competent for the job, and who have an evidence-based track record of working with integrity. Once this is done, they

have to be backed and supported to enable them to perform as is expected of them. Rivalry and enmity, and other ego-driven flaws in associates and other team players, have to be managed so that the good work of the ethical leaders can continue unhindered.

In his lucid piece, 'Ethics in Governance: Perspectives from the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission', Dr Gopal Ganesh makes a strong case to show that the self-serving collusion between members of the bureaucracy and politicians makes it difficult for sound and well-thought-out recommendations-in this case put forth by the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission in its fourth report issued in January 2007-to be accepted and implemented with vigour. It does not matter that the public-the beneficiaries of having high ethical standards in the administration-are clamouring for things to improve. Interestingly, the government department, entrusted with looking at the recommendations, not only has rejected some excellent ones summarily but has also not assigned any reasons for doing so. Gopal suggests that citizens may need to take recourse to the courts of law to get the recommendations accepted by the government. But he also wonders why it should be so difficult for citizens to get what is good for them-and that too from representatives elected by the people!

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan (who was also a member of the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission) touches upon this in some detail in his article, 'Values versus Institutions: Moving beyond False Dichotomy'. He emphasizes the urgent need for creating institutions-political as well as others-that incentivize good behaviour and honesty. Besides, he is also of the view that deepening democratic values, allowing space for genuine dissent, instituting a system of proportional representation and reforming political parties would be the other elements to usher in a new phase of electoral politics, which does not strengthen unethical and caste-driven approaches. Dr Narayan also suggests that at the state level, the legislators need to see themselves more as lawmakers rather than disguised members of the executive. As proxy members of the executive, they end up making constant demands, and to quote Jayaprakash, 'postings, transfers, contracts, tenders, tollgates, parole, development schemes, and crime investigation-all become sources of patronage and rent-seeking'. The separation of powers and the direct election of ethical leaders at the state and local levels is therefore an essential prerequisite to prevent the misuse of authority. The concern that a directly elected state leader might become authoritarian, with the power vested in such a person, is In the month of November 2008, the Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV) undertook the task of conducting a two-day conclave in New Delhi. Almost 50 eminent thinkers from across the country were brought together to deliberate upon the causes of the decline in values in India and propose urgent steps that would arrest the rapid deepening of the malady.

There was unanimity that inaction would push India downhill. Inclusive and equitable economic growth could not be achieved without adhering to high standards of ethics and integrity in governance-especially where corruption and the lack of transparency in the process of serving citizens deprived millions of Indians of their legitimate right to the fruits of development.

One idea that emerged sharply, and found repeated mention throughout the 2 days, was that there was no dearth of practical, well-thought-out and implementable solutions to the larger issue of a deterioration of values. Over the past 62 years since India's independence, successive governments have instituted numerous commissions and committees and at different times have brought together groups of distinguished men and women, to prescribe solutions to the diverse symptoms of the problem of declining values. Numerous suggestions have accordingly been proffered over the years. Few, however, have been implemented. What is lacking therefore is leadership. The leadership deficit impacts all walks of life but is especially noticeable within the political classes. It is the absence of leadership that is unable to transform the agony of citizens to a courageous and determined movement to implement essential changes.

Our foundation has chosen to work with leaders, to persuade and inspire them to live and work with values. The foundation is of the view that 'influencing influencers' is the swiftest route to transforming groups of people working towards a common goal, including organizations created to serve the public. This book is a compilation of some of the thoughts that were presented during the two-day conclave. Many of the articles included in this volume were shared by their respective writers during the conclave. However, a few other speakers, who penned their ideas more formally after the conclave, are also represented. The articles by Madhu Trehan and Gopal Ganesh have been specifically written for this book

The FRNV has as its inspiration and guide Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha-a living practitioner of Vedanta, who normally resides in his ashram in Thrissur, Kerala, but travels extensively to share his understanding on the workings of the human mind with a diverse and varied cross section of people.

In this volume, we have included one of Swamiji's speeches, adapted as the article, 'Nationalize Your Minds and Hearts!'

In his article, Swamiji asks some very pertinent questions. If a person belongs to a nation, is it not the person's obligation to abide by the fundamental duties that the nation has of its every citizen? Is it really so difficult for us to follow basic rules? Obviously, it is an absence of the inner gyroscope and having a constricted mind-which Swamiji exhorts is reflective of k?rpanya dosha-that makes people drift: whether from their fundamental duties as citizens or from adopting high standards of ethics and integrity in their personal lives. When citizens choose to elect lawmakers to occupy Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies, the expectation is that the representatives will also function ethically and with integrity. However, if that does not happen and a laxity is shown by parliamentarians or legislators in terms of not performing in a way that is good for the country, citizens need to act. If Parliament does not raise a red flag when it should or ignores injustice or unlawful activity, it is the bounden duty of citizens to galvanize and inspire Parliament to act. There is no scope for a passive tolerance of wrongdoing.

Arun Wakhlu in his article, 'Remembering Our Wholeness' reiterates that the only reason why there is a decline in the society is due to a decline in values. And values in turn cannot flourish in humans if there is a lack of awareness of who we truly are. Deficient notions of ourselves limit us, make us feel incomplete and disconnect us from all that is wholesome, positive, life-affirming and good. Humans have therefore to 'wake up' to understanding their wholesome, complete nature to be ethical.

It has often been observed that people, who indulge in 'rent seeking' and corruption, using their official position or clout, are those who are intrinsically greedy. Greed, or the psychological state of desiring more than a person deserves or needs, is viewed as a state of deficiency, where there is an inordinate emphasis on Mammon. Many times, the journey towards a life of unethical decisions (and sometimes crime) starts with legal ways of acquiring more wealth or benefits, but as time goes on, the fine line between what is appropriate and what is unethical is blurred, and, if one refuses to use one's intellect to discriminate between what is right and what is not, the decline in values commences rapidly, with all the attendant consequences. At the level of the mind, the rapaciousness for more material things stems from an ignorance of the abundance and the infinite possibilities that embosom human life. Obviously, remembering or 're-membering with' our true nature is a sound way to stimulate individual change for the better.

Arun Maira touches upon the Satyam story and the lessons to be learned from the episode, in his article 'Igniting the Truth Within'. His contention is that good governance is not just the result of having leaders of integrity but also the upshot of an appropriate architecture that enables enterprises to remain robust and trustworthy. The architecture has to be continuously strengthened by ensuring that everybody, including the 'builder' of the structure (that is, the promoters or key stakeholders), follows the rules of business without exception. There can be no rules that apply to one group only, even as those at the upper echelons can get away with disregarding them. If the key actors in the enterprise do 'forget' to follow rules, then those who notice such lapses have to courageously confront those involved.

In his article, 'Public Administration in India: Facing an Ethical Crisis', the President of FRNV, Dr E. Sreedharan, is dismayed that Transparency International's Global Corruption Index places India at the 85th position, out of the 180 countries surveyed. He is of the view that while administrators are given extraordinary powers in India, they are not held accountable for the results that they are expected to achieve (and which they often do not achieve), or the delays or losses that they might be directly responsible for. Dr Sreedharan emphasizes the criticality of transparency in minimizing the ills of public administration and suggests that the openness and the contingent efforts to remove the veils of secrecy in the system can go a long way to improve public administration. The Right to Information (RTI) Act has been an important step in the direction of encouraging transparency. Dr Sreedharan adds further that leaders need to be carefully selected from among those who are competent for the job, and who have an evidence-based track record of working with integrity. Once this is done, they have to be backed and supported to enable them to perform as is expected of them. Rivalry and enmity, and other ego-driven flaws in associates and other team players, have to

**In his article, Swamiji asks some very pertinent questions. If a person belongs to a nation, is it not the person's obligation to abide by the fundamental duties that the nation has of its every citizen?**

**Dr Narayan also suggests that at the state level, the legislators need to see themselves more as lawmakers rather than disguised members of the executive. As proxy members of the executive, they end up making constant demands, and to quote Jayaprakash, 'postings, transfers, contracts, tenders, tollgates, parole, development schemes, and crime investigation-all become sources of patronage and rent-seeking'.**

be managed so that the good work of the ethical leaders can continue unhindered.

In his lucid piece, 'Ethics in Governance: Perspectives from the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission', Dr Gopal Ganesh makes a strong case to show that the self-serving collusion between members of the bureaucracy and politicians makes it difficult for sound and well-thought-out recommendations-in this case put forth by the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission in its fourth report issued in January 2007-to be accepted and implemented with vigour. It does not matter that the public-the beneficiaries of having high ethical standards in the administration-are clamouring for things to improve. Interestingly, the government department, entrusted with looking at the recommendations, not only has rejected some excellent ones summarily but has also not assigned any reasons for doing so. Gopal suggests that citizens may need to take recourse to the courts of law to get the recommendations accepted by the government. But he also wonders why it should be so difficult for citizens to get what is good for them-and that too from representatives elected by the people!

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan (who was also a member of the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission) touches upon this in some detail in his article, 'Values versus Institutions: Moving beyond False Dichotomy'. He emphasizes the urgent need for creating institutions-political as well as others-that incentivize good behaviour and honesty. Besides, he is also of the view that deepening democratic values, allowing space for genuine dissent, instituting a system of proportional representation and reforming political parties would be the other elements to usher in a new phase of electoral politics, which does not strengthen unethical and caste-driven approaches. Dr Narayan also suggests that at the state level, the legislators need to see themselves more as lawmakers rather than disguised members of the executive. As proxy members of the executive, they end up making constant demands, and to quote Jayaprakash, 'postings, transfers, contracts, tenders, tollgates, parole, development schemes, and crime investigation-all become sources of patronage and rent-seeking'. The separation of powers and the direct election of ethical leaders at the state and local levels is therefore an essential prerequisite to prevent the misuse of authority. The concern that a directly elected state leader might become authoritarian, with the power vested in such a person, is addressed by Jayaprakash. He sums up by suggesting that an assertive civic society, operating as a cohesive body, can make a huge difference to the pace at which many of the democratic and other reforms in the state can be brought about.

At the level of the regular citizen, there is a common notion that the bulk of them need a set of unambiguous and clearly articulated rules which they can follow-otherwise there can be anarchy and unwanted turmoil. In fact, N. Vittal, in his article, 'Designing a Value-based System for Dispensing Justice', is quite categorical in mentioning that it is a mere 5 per cent of people in society who are truly ethical and upright and who need no extraordinary regulations to prompt them to behave with honesty and integrity. The remainder consists of people who can only follow rules, and that too when strictly enforced. The urgency, therefore, is to provide a few but important regulations that are citizen-centric, easy to follow and which will make for an ethical society. However, there is another salient side to this. Rules and laws once enacted have got to be enforced without fail. It is this certitude of enforcement which deters people from breaking the law, despite temptations.

When it comes to enforcement, there are two articles in this volume that focus on the significance of enforcing the law, through the use of an ethical and upright police force. The first is the article by D.R. Kaarthikeyan entitled, 'Values in Law Enforcement and the Justice System'. The second is the article by Sankar Sen entitled, 'Integrity in Law Enforcement: Imperative for Gaining People's Confidence'. Both the authors stress the importance of an upright police force-with professionally competent, incorruptible and upright officers-that functions with transparency and is immune to the negative interference of political parties and their leaders. Sankar goes further in suggesting that part of the problem is also the prevalence of bad and unenforceable laws, which, in turn, results from having lawmakers with little interest in the welfare of society. Even the absence of concern in society, for the rights and dignity of common people, prevents the police from enforcing the law in humane, transparent ways, where one does not resort to the use of brutality or corrupt means to achieve the legitimate objectives of the police force.

Madhu Trehan in her article, 'Making Honesty Cool', highlights how ethical compromises have become so common in India, and corruption so much more widespread as a result, that everyone is shamelessly defending the continuation of dishonesty. In the process, we are becoming a nation that cannot be trusted. At the personal level, each citizen reflexively makes the choice between standing up for the truth and suffering for it, or turning a blind eye to the flaws of the system and playing along with it, and moving on. Unfortunately, many more play along. In the process, as India begins to assert its rights as an important economic player in an interconnected world, it is simultaneously eroding its moral capital. Interestingly, Madhu contends, nothing at all is being done at the national level to build our national character. She also makes an urgent plea that the absence and the lack of values have to be brought front and centre of the national debate. As she puts it, 'We have to take the "cool" out of dishonesty.'

The building of national character is something which everyone considers important, but apart from emphasizing the need for a better system of education, nothing more seems to be in focus. On the important aspect of building a national character, Fr T.V. Kunnunkal in his article, 'The Re-birthing of Indian Society', suggests that since Indian culture has a spiritual base, it becomes relatively easy to connect people with the essential requirements of dharma. But the apathy of the citizens towards the abject poverty that has over a quarter of the nation's population in its grips is a singular weakness of our collective responsibility towards building our nation on a foundation of equity. According to Fr Kunnunkal, our political

elite are comfortable with the prevailing feudal democracy-where the rights of those who govern are still disproportionately more than those accorded to the citizenry. Urgent interventions are therefore needed where the spirit of our constitution is reflected in our standards of governance, as well as in the manner and inclusiveness of our development. He further suggests that there is a need for a national movement, something akin to embarking upon a second freedom struggle, for the regeneration of India. His contention is that India's millions, and especially our committed youth, are ready for the movement and need to be galvanized so as to form a critical mass of people at all levels and regions, forging ahead till the goal is reached.

The former Speaker of the 14th Lok Sabha, Shri Somnath Chatterjee in his article, 'A New National Order Grounded on Values', suggests that politics reflects the essential characteristics of society. He decries the growing intolerance of democratic dissent which is vitiating India's political life and creating conditions where unscrupulous, and often, criminal elements are filling in the gap that is being created because critical issues are remaining unsolved. In fact, Somnath is concerned that since criminals are wilfully being deployed to settle political scores, India is witnessing a 'politicization of crime'. Furthermore, he expresses his alarm about the fact that the atmosphere for a mature debate does not seem to exist anymore-and this is as true within political parties as it is with dialogue between groups of people with different perspectives. Ideas that are divergent yield to the hardening of positions and violence, which further results in a digging in of heels and the concomitant absence of convergence. Such an atmosphere can only sharpen differences, and when lawmakers themselves function in such an atmosphere, they too can resort to devious means to secure power or to retain their positions. It is precisely such developments which encourage dubious characters to make an entry into politics, while simultaneously preventing committed and conscientious people from doing so. Somnath Chatterjee is emphatic that working wholeheartedly for the people can only become a responsible avocation, when committed and untainted persons join mainstream politics.

Justice K.G. Balakrishnan too highlights the point about the rise of institutionalized violence as a means to polarize the electorate in his article, 'Eliminating Corruption and Resolving Conflicts: Essential Elements for Societal Morality'. He states that agitations are resorted to for the flimsiest of reasons, and he sees this as a failure of ethical leadership in the political space. His contention is that ethical leadership can encourage mature dialogue and a resolution of differences thereby. Justice Balakrishnan also asserts that in the discourse of international law, corruption is now being viewed as a violation of human rights. This is a positive development since corruption is the equivalent of unjust restraint on the rights and personal freedoms of people.

Sadly, the reputation of our Parliament has also been sullied due to the poor standards of integrity and ethics that many of our Parliamentarians openly exhibit. Shri Lal Krishna Advani in his article, 'The Critical

Role of Leadership in Restoring Values', mentions that the faith of citizens in good governance is shaken when the highest institutions such as the Parliament and the judiciary are themselves found to have ethical weaknesses and collective flaws of character. He also adds that ordinary citizens are eager to emulate the standards and principles of people of social eminence. He concludes by suggesting that leaders in all walks of life need to consciously cultivate and enhance their 'quotients' related to Moral Intelligence (MQ) as well as Spiritual Intelligence (SQ).

Justice M.N. Venkatchaliah too is critical of the decline in the standards of Parliament. In his article, 'A Case for Institutionalized Probity in Parliament', he voices his deep concern about this; since he also holds the view that individuals shape the ideals and actions [of Parliament], he is emphatic that each MP has to enter the house with a sense of abiding commitment to integrity. But such a sentiment also needs to be publicly buttressed by having Parliamentarians frequently recite the pledge that was first taken in 1997, at the Golden Jubilee of India's independence. In this pledge, each MP would individually and collectively commit to cleansing public life and ensuring transparency, probity and accountability in all processes, so as to make legislative bodies effective in terms of their important role in a democracy.

Civil society in India is considered passive. It does not seem to shake us anymore when we encounter wrongdoing anywhere in the course of our lives. There might be an occasional mention in the media of a glaring transgression for a day or two, but new developments and other newsworthy stories quickly ease out matters that may be grave but have become stale. The silent majority, which might yearn for an honest society, does not seem to know how to raise the visibility of its concerns or participate actively in improving the quality of governance.

When those who are involved in dishonesty find that the majority of people are silent spectators to their wanton acts, they are emboldened and encouraged to continue with impunity.

Justice J.S. Verma in his article, 'The National Value Crisis and its Redressal', touches upon these points and gives insights into the steps that the judiciary can take to initiate beneficial change. Yet he too quotes Rajaji, who suggests that, 'if the parched fields of Indian politics and administration have to get fresh, green life and grow, we need the monsoon of purity in national character'.

Mr Pratyush Sinha in his article, 'National Values: The Ground and Goal of Administration' dwells on the above points, and indicates that while India's response to corruption is comparable with the best in the world, our record on the corruption index is rather poor and we do not yet discern any significant reductions in corruption. He cites a number of factors for this, some of which have been discussed earlier in this article. The lack of accountability, according to him, is one of the reasons. Along with a tardy disciplinary process

a delayed justice system and the absence of incentives for honest, upright decision-making and action, we have all the ingredients of a dysfunctional 'administrative ecosystem' that is unable to set the highest standards for probity, transparency and objectivity.

The Indian bureaucracy, today, is often seen as a part of the overall problem rather than the solution. Many still share the view that civil servants are generally men and women of character, who consistently show moral courage in standing up boldly and promoting ideas that are good for the nation in the long term. Others claim that there are more civil servants who are hand in glove with the political leaders and thus derive a sense of 'immunity' from prosecution for wrongdoing. Swami Bhoomananda does remind us that civil servants are as much a part of our society as the rest of us. Therefore, if we see them behaving in a certain way, they are reflecting the prevailing ethical standards of society as a whole!

India's system of democratic governance is one that most of the writers consider appropriate for the Indian condition. No comparisons have been made with China or other nations that follow the centralized system of functioning. Yet it is also understood that a democracy can only function effectively when the process of choosing representatives is itself objective, clean, transparent and ethical. Obviously, the role of inner-party democracy as well as transparency, good governance, the absence of nepotism (which Shri T.S. Krishna Murthy calls progeny politics) and intimidating leaders, have got to give way to a robust system that depends on the highest standards of individual integrity and good governance. In his article, 'The Need for Values in a Democracy', Krishna Murthy highlights a number of remedial actions that would improve the quality of legislatures as well as the effectiveness and transparency of public administration.

While reflecting on democracy and democratic values, Trilochan Sastry, in his article, 'An Indian Basis for Change', suggests that alongside a conscious effort by people to live and work with dharma, there is also a need for an alert citizenry to provide constant feedback to leaders. Furthermore, he suggests that political leaders have got to be accountable to the people and must operate with transparency and openness, even as they continue to serve the larger good.

At the conclave, it was former President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who delivered the valedictory speech. In this edition, his speech appears as the article, 'Possible Solutions for Nurturing National Values'. He too is of the view that the starting point for national values is righteousness in the heart. He adds further that the right guidance and the inculcation of values by significant elders play an important role in nurturing the spirit of being upright. He goes on to suggest that a personal commitment to follow what is truthful and honest goes a long way in enabling people to live by such values.

If I were, therefore, to summarize and list the most appropriate keys to integrity, ethical behaviour and good governance, I would definitely start with emphasizing the importance of our own selves. We hold within our minds and intellect the lever of making ethical choices-and hence, if we individually commit to living our lives with integrity, the journey towards a value-based society is indeed well begun. There is also no denying that irrespective of how complex an organization or how widespread its reach, it can only be as good as the people who constitute it and lead it. Therefore, we all need to make the conscious effort to seek out, encourage and promote ethical talent in all walks of life. That is, we actively search and support people with the needed professional competencies, who have also made a personal commitment to pursuing the greater good, selflessly and without fear or favour.

People will always have to be reminded of who they are and what the source of their inner abundance is. People have also got to be trained on the proper use of their minds and intellect to enable them to remain upright and ethical.

The tone and the culture of organizations are greatly influenced by the values and the style of the leader. An organization remains robust and adheres to the positive ideas of accountability, objectivity, integrity and agility in serving their customers, when the leader communicates unambiguously that this is what is expected of all. Leaders themselves have to work with openness, transparency and with the true spirit of teamwork. Their endeavour has to be to ensure that the services that their organization is intended to provide are delivered effectively and without any loss of benefits for those who are the beneficiaries.

Politicians and lawmakers have got to understand their critical role and responsibility. Institutions such as the Parliament have to remain sacred and should have the trust and faith of the people. Teachers, educationists, artisans, doctors, engineers and everyone else who comprise our diverse society have got to operate with the understanding that irrespective of their role, it is critical in the success of the nation.

Only when all these factors are permanently placed, can we expect our values to flourish, strengthen the milieu within which we operate and stimulate the development of our nation. Then and then alone can we hope to expect significant improvements in the quality of governance, and in the creation of a just, humane, open and a citizen-centric society.

I know this is a task that may not happen in a hurry, but it is important that we start now. History reveals that great and lofty societies have tripped and fallen in the past, because of a rapid and unchecked decline in the ideals that such states had stood for. India has come to a point where the challenges of the present era call for a strengthening of our national values, and having every citizen-but notably the thinkers and leaders among us-take a pledge to function with the highest standards of integrity and ethics.

**N. Vittal, in his article, 'Designing a Value-based System for Dispensing Justice', is quite categorical in mentioning that it is a mere 5 per cent of people in society who are truly ethical and upright and who need no extraordinary regulations to prompt them to behave with honesty and integrity. The remainder consists of people who can only follow rules, and that too when strictly enforced.**



#### RESTORING VALUES

Keys to Integrity, Ethical Behaviour and Good Governance

edited by E SREEDHARAN, Managing Director, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation

BHARAT WAKHLU, Resident Director, Tata Group, New Delhi

2010 / 228 pages

Cloth: Rs 395 (978-81-321-0475-9)

SAGE Publications