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WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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a-MUSING



Now, Children get ready for 'Line Capturing'!

Line it up

The other day, at a shopping mall, a formidable matron was noticed marching up and down like a General marshalling his troops, placing her numerous children of various sizes in *every queue at every counter*, thereby annihilating the Chance factor.

Her tactics (and foresight in investing in large families) deserve appreciation.

This was obviously someone who had learnt one of Life's bitterest lessons the hard way: that there are basically two kinds of people on this planet – those whose very presence ensures that their particular queues move rapidly, and those Others, sad creatures, condemned to languish eternally in the land of 'Not Your Turn'.

At traffic signals, is your particular line riddled with slow starters? At supermarket checkout counters, does your queue always crawl? Or have 17 shoppers who appear to be preparing for some un-ending siege, while other queues contain frugal people carrying exactly one purchase each? Do check-out people (a) run out of paper, change or bags, or (b) get called away on undisclosed emergencies-just when it's your turn?

Is the queue that suddenly speeds up always the one you've just exchanged for a 'shorter' one?

If so, then you're definitely an 'Other'.

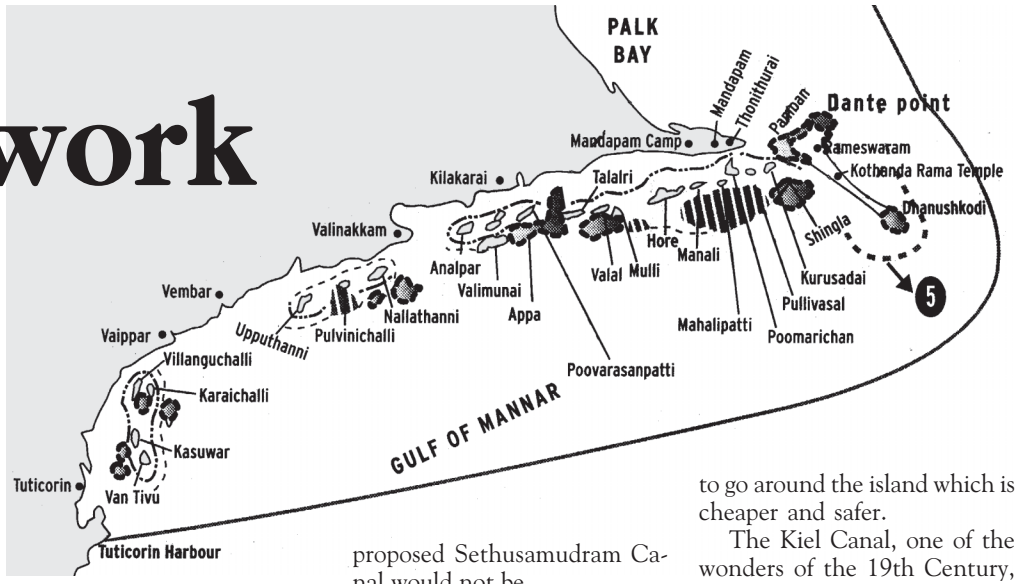
The Q-Phenomenon proves that the cosmos is riddled with jokers, lurking in Life's subterranean layers, smirking up their dark, glittery sleeves, waiting to pounce on the Innocents.

And that, I'm afraid, would be us.

Ranjitha Ashok

SETHU: Not too late for more homework

(by K.R.A. Narasiah)



The Cabinet committee may have approved it and the Ministry may have decided to go ahead with the construction of the Sethusamudram Canal, but it is still not too late to ponder over some of the points which the protagonists of the project have glossed over and to which answers may be found as the project gets underway.

Unlike the Suez, Panama and Kiel Canals, which were carved out of land, the Sethu will be dredged from a strait and comparisons to land-based canals, such as the Suez, Panama and St. Lawrence, are inapt. More importantly, these land-based canals are sheltered from wind and waves, while the proposed Sethusamudram Canal would not be.

What can be compared is the Magellan Straits separating South America and Tierra Del Fuego. This is no longer being used by shippers as they prefer to go around the island which is cheaper and safer.

The Kiel Canal, one of the wonders of the 19th Century, which provides direct access between Germany's Baltic and North Sea Coasts, was the fulfillment of a strategic dream that had fascinated Germany's naval planners. Like the Panama Canal, the Kiel Canal was designed for the rapid movement of warships from one sea to another, but it quickly proved indispensable for commercial vessels wishing to make substantial savings in time and money by not making the long passage through the Kattegat and around the Skaw. Some 53 miles long, with locks at Brunsbuttel, where the canal joins the River Elbe, and at Holtenau, where the waterway runs into Kiel Bay, the waterway is at sea level, the locks designed to prevent tidal effects.

The canal, however, has been suffering in recent years. Cost-cutting owners have elected to make the longer passage around Schleswig-Holstein, to avoid canal dues. Fast ferries, in particular, have tended to avoid the canal. Additionally, the astonishing growth of the North Sea ports of Hamburg, Bremen/Bremerhaven, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Zeebrugge, with their huge river- and canal-assisted hinterlands, have effectively drawn off trade that would otherwise have run north to the Baltic ports and thence been trans-

(Continued on Page 2)

An eco-freindly Sethu Canal promised

Taking environmental ..... into consideration, a new alignment has been chosen for the Sethu samudranm Canal, away from the five, suggested since 1961. Mooted by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, this alignment is more than 20 km away from the islands constituting the National Marine Park in the Gulf of Mannar, and 30-40 km away from the mangroves at Muthupettai, Kodiakarai and Adirmapattinam. The marine bioogical resources around these islands will not be affected to any significant level and there would not be any significant change in water quality, including turbidity ..... to NEERI.

Post-tsunami studies have also revealed that turbidity will not spread beyond one km on the channel route. Four earlier alignments, which passed through the Gulf of Mannar National Marine Park, suggested land cuts at Mandapam or Rameswaram. The new alignment is a significant factor in getting quick environmental clearance from official agencies, though environmental activists still have reservations. This alignment also facilitates safe disposal of dredged material at two places.

Dredging will be taken up on two stretches along the now onger 167-km-long channel. There will be no dredging for a length of 78 km in the Palk Bay. It will take plae along a stretch of 35 km in Adam's Bridge and 54 km in the Palk Strait. The project report prepared by L and T-Ramboll Consulting Engineers says 48 million cublic metres of dredged material will be generated in Adam's Bridge and 34.5 mi9llion cubic metres in the Palk Strait. the material from Adam's Bridge area will be dumped in the sea in the Gulf of Mannar at 20-30 metres of natural depth in Indian territorial waters, about 30 km away from Adam's Bridge. Material from the Palk Strait will be dumped in the Bay of Bengal at 25-30 metres.

The implementing authorities have drawn up an environmental management plan for construction and operation phases. The plan requires the contractor to have a dredging management programme before beginning the operation. Dredging should be avoided during the fish breeding and spawning periods. Five agencies, including the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institue, the Fishery Survey of India and the Zoological Survey of India, have been chosen for consultation. Periodic water quality monitoring, with emphasis on turbidity, will be conducted and submarine conditions recorded during dredging. All ships passing through the channel should comply with international Maritime Organisation standards and follow the Marpol convention. They will not be allowed to discharge bilge, ballast, treated sewage, solid and oily waste and spill cargo. The vessels should have proper treatment facilities for sewage, and treated sewage should not be discharged into the sea.

Dredging will be taken up by the Dredging corporation of India the day a formal inauguration takes place. Global tenders will be floated for dredging in places other than the one earmarked for the DCI. — (Courtesy : *The Hindu.*)

When the Community gets together

Two efforts that have improved neighbourhoods

Of late, proactive residents' associations and their community efforts seem to be achieving quite a lot. And apart from proving a point and setting a positive example, their members also have the pleasure of living in cleaner, greener, AND friendlier neighbourhoods!

K.V. Mathew, President of the Luz Avenue Residents' Welfare Association (LARWA) for the last many years (by popular request), remembers, "Mine was the first house in what was then a bare, treeless area. Naturally, first on our list of priorities was tree planting. Initially, there was no enthusiasm from the neighbours. Convincing their children to plant, water and watch 'their tree' grow was next. With sponsors to bear the cost of a protective brick wall around each sapling, we put up boards that highlighted the name of the child who planted it. And were they proud! I remember how a weeping nine-year-old Girija – whose tree had been 'killed' by a passer-by – stopped crying only when we arranged for another to be planted in the same spot. The beautiful, shady canopies you see now are all the trees those children – now engineers and computer experts, husbands and wives – planted."

Another significant ritual they enjoy is when on New Year's Eve, between 6.30 p.m and 9 p.m., each member conveys his good wishes by taking a candle to his neighbour's house. He in turn takes his candle to the next house and so on. "This year, even the children accompanied us!" says Mathew. Lists of volunteers who can be contacted in emergencies round-the-clock within the colony, names of doctors etc. have been compiled and circulated among members. Even birthday lists. Cooperative efforts with the Corporation of Chennai's conservancy operations are also on LARWA'S agenda.

The Association has adopted the Corporation school in the locality. In coordination with the headmistress, students have been supplied with plates, glasses, games equipment, a steel almirah and a library. "Each family in our association takes turns to supply the necessary vegetables for the school meals with the cooperation of our local vegetable vendor who supplies and collects the money from each of us, in turn. All this has created a tremendous community feeling. One new resident confided that she moved into the area because she heard of this 'close knit' residents' welfare association," says Mathew, who strongly feels that 'persistence is crucial'. "Once people realise you are not selfish and are not doing it for publicity, they'll reciprocate. Think positive, affirm even the small successes, and communicate with the community!" is his advice.

Another group which has made a mark in recent years with its excellent residents' welfare projects is the Harrington Road Residents Association (HRRA). Sabina Narayan, one of the Secretaries of the Association, said that it started with a chance distress phone call on December 6, 2002, from a friend, Sheetal Parakh – now Joint Secretary of HRRA. Stuck in a traffic jam caused by cars which came to drop children to one of the eight schools located on the road, she wailed, "You are always talking about doing something about all

(Continued on Page 7)

SETHU: MORE HOME WORK

(Continued from page 1)

ported out via the Kiel Canal. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet system and the several years of readjustment meant that a major customer of the waterway saw its activities considerably shrunk. Now its use has been reduced. The future fate of the Sethu Canal also must be studied in such a context.

On the other hand, the Suez Canal is one of the most important waterways in the world. The 101-mile waterway connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, avoiding a trip around a whole continent. But to run the Canal is not cheap. Money has to be spent on maintenance and on the large deepening, widening and enlargement projects. As an example, when the Canal was deepened to 19 metres in 1980, the final cost of the project came to US $1.3 billion. Not cheap by any means and in those days well above the income received through dues received. Another great expenditure is the massive radar system and the system of navigational aids that ensure the safety and free flow of vessels in the Canal. The initial high - tech system that was installed cost 18 million in 1981. Since then, thousands of upgrades and modernising features have been fitted at great cost to the SCA.

The Panama Canal of course is a preferred waterway between the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, as it reduces the distance of going round the entire South American continent.

The Sethu Canal can, by no stretch of imagination, be compared to these canals!

The leadership of all hues in Tamil Nadu is looking at this project more as an emotional issue — or is it a political issue — than a practical solution to a major problem. The fact is that what was a magnificent idea in Taylor's time in 1860 and Sir Robert Brislow's feasibility report in 1921 is no more so.

Even the NEERI report has not addressed the economic viability issue. The report merely bases its cost estimates for the proposed canal project as worked out by PTCS Ltd. based on the same quantities of dredging as in the 1983 report but with updated rates for 1996. The operation and maintenance cost was estimated by PTCS Ltd. at Rs. 4.52 crore per year, which does not appear realistic.

The NEERI report says, "The Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve (GOMMBR) has been notified in 1989 through an executive communication from the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests, to the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu".

"During the operational phase of the project, the most important instrument to be complied relates to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78) for which India is a signator."

It further says, "**Due to dredging, the bottom flora and fauna in an area approximately 6 km^2 along the canal alignment in Adams Bridge will be lost permanently.** This loss, however, will be very insignificant compared to the total area of 10,500 km^2 of the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve" (emphasis the writer's).

The report mentions, "All the ships originating from Tuticorin Port will comply to International Maritime Standards and follow MARPOL convention (MARPOL 73/78). Discharge of bilge, ballast, treated sewage, solid wastes oily wastes and spillage of cargo will not be allowed in the Gulf of Mannar area. A pilot will board the vessel to navigate the ship through the GOM area up to Bay of Bengal channel.

"The traffic of crude oil tankers will be allowed in this route with strict vigilance so as to avoid any possibilities of spillage in this region".

"It will be ensured that ships navigating in this region should not use such paints and anticorrosive agents on a ship's bottom which are known to cause damage to marine organisms".

"A pilot should be trained (for the purpose) or an environmental watcher will board the ship to watch marine animals, viz. turtle, dolphins, sea cow etc. in the region and navigate the ship safely avoiding any damage to this fauna."

These are easy to say, but difficult to follow! Can a pilot be trained as an environmental watcher? How would he simultaneously navigate the ship in a narrow channel? The pilot on the bridge cannot even notice what comes under the bow of the ship, as his concentration will be on the safe transit through the canal! A ship is not like any other transport to be steered easily; stopping a ship is impossible, as she will start drifting.

What about the economic considerations? In an erudite article in *The Hindu* (21.12.04) Sri Ramakrishnan (IAS retd) has clearly proved that the economics of sea transport does not render this project advantageous.

The questions that need to be answered clearly are:

1. The advantage in total cost of toll, inspections and pilotage against that of fuel for ships going round Sri Lanka. (The NEERI report says an expert pilot may be present on the vessel throughout its transit. The cost of pilotage therefore assumes great importance.
2. The number of merchantmen and the tonnage that can go through the Canal with the draft that will be made available immediately.
3. How the coral reefs will be protected?
4. How the ships are to be inspected to prevent usage of prohibited paints and who will be the regulating authority for this function? There is mention of 'Strict Vigilance', which is rather vague!
5. What are the costs involved for these services?
6. What about tugs? How many will be employed?
7. When the slow speed consumption of fuel is taken into account along with the above costs, how does the cost of going around Sri Lanka compare?

Any mega project requires realistic thinking as well!

A big 'Thank You' to of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.5.05 and 15.6.05, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

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OUR READERS WRITE



The first proposal

So at last the Sethusamudram project is getting underway. The idea of crossing the Southern Peninsula of India from sea to sea was first suggested in 1831-1832 at the behest of a (British) Parliamentary Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company. The committee was investigating the poor condition of commerce prevailing in the then Presidency of Madras. The ensuing report contained strong recommendation of creating canals and railway as one of the remedial measures. It was the first railway proposal made in India. Horse traction was proposed.

The railway was to run about 150 miles (approximately 240 Km) , along the course of the River Cauvery (Kaveri), from Cauverypattam to 'Caroor'. Proposed canals and railway were meant to create a corridor of water-way-cum-railway lines between the east and west coasts of the country.

In the event, the project disappeared in the labyrinth of beauracracy.

G.D. Patwardhan
11-A, Rajaramwadi,
Old 96-A, Hill Road,
R.N. Marg, Bandra (W)
Mumbai 400 050.

Hoped more

I was very happy to note the response to my article on Dr. Rangachari (*MM, ??*).

His statue has been painted and, the area spruced up. In backdrop today is the newly constructed twin tower blocks of General Hospital. The magnificent building, with 1800 beds, is the biggest in Asia and will shortly be declared open.

Apropos the letter by T.M. Ranghunathan (MM, June 1st) T.M. (Thodupur Madapuri) Rangachari was a close friend of Dr. S. Rangachari. It was in T.M. Rangachari's kothagiri residence 'Waltham Stoway' that the doctor stayed during his Ooty sojourn. I wonder whether it, still there. T.M. Rangachari was the friend who accompanied the doctor on his Europe tour. Both attended ... in a flying club in England, ... than the doctor. Misappointed, that there has no ... response from the progering of people who were closet to Dr. S. Rangachary like his daughter, close relatives, Dr. S. Rama Iyengar, Sankaran, Kanthamany and, the Hindu and Alladi families .....

Dr. P.S. Venkateswaran
B. Sc. M.S., M.Ch.,
(Vascular) F.I.C.S.
General & Vascular Surgeon
7/5, Gopalakrishna Iyer Street
T. Nagar
Chennai 600 017

Last minute picture

Your article in MM, May 16th brought back many memories of the first Ranji Trophy victory, Madras (Tamil Nadu) achieved. I particularly want to share the somewhat amusing circumstances under which the picture of the team published by you was taken.

As many of the old timers are aware, this match was quite memorable and even on the fifth day, it was anybody's game. Fortunes on that day kept swinging from one session to the next and sometime between lunch and tea they were much in favour of Holkar. It would appear that at that point of time Holkar were quite confident of winning and made all arrangements for their photograph to be taken with the Ranji Trophy. However, this was not to be and they were all out soon after tea. Their disappointment apparently made them pack the photographer of home.

It was in the nick of time that we accidentally discovered that all the chairs were being removed and the photographer was leaving. We quickly took the opportunity of calling him back and getting him to take a picture of the Madras Team.

C.D. Gopinath
DFC Services,
36 (44/45), Rajaji Salai,
Chennai 600 001

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No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

THE EDITOR

Of parks... and paintings

It is a very happy augury that the city Municipal Corporation has taken a real interest to refurbishing the parks in the city. And the colour transparencies in *MM*, June 15 of the renovated Independence Day Park to ..... in the 1950s and late 1960s these parks were the only place for the citizens to spend their evenings pleasantly. The Corporation Band used to play in all these Parks by turn after ... announcements in the ... of Band programmes. Those days even radios were luxury to the middle class so many ... good music programmes on AIR between 5 and 6 p.m. at the Marina (Radiostand) as well as these parks. Even now, at San Thome, Beach, the Radio-stand can be seen. Ah! How times have changed!

* * *

'A camera that captures art' captured our hearts too. Especially for one like me who has enjoyed these paintings and Bharatasnatyam sculptures in the Big Temple, Thanjavur. The corridor above the sanctum sanctorum, houses besides these paintings, massive monolithic idols of Sri Mahavishnu, Sri Mahalakshmi, Jwarahareswarar and from here you can look at the inside of the Vimanam of the Temple which is unique, and learn how it differs from other temple towers and what sort of engineering marvel it. It is a study in itself. But, alas, access to these precincts is very limited, but detailed photographs of these can be seen in the Art-gallery inside the Temple.

Mention has now been made in this a... about its Sittannavasal paintings. Since these paintings has faded in the lower half, 'Kalki' had skillfully used his imagination in narrating their history in his magnum opus *Sivakaamiyin sabatham* King Mahendra Varman as well as his Chief sculptor Aayana Sirpi were interested to know the secret of the long – lasting paints used in the Ajanta Fresco paintings by the Buddhist monks and this was Adigal (who was the twin brother of Pulakesin but turned a Buddhist monk to ... the throne to his brother) knew the secret and he gave the colour to Ayana Sirpi and asked him to use them colours for the torso of these paintings and asked him to use his conventional paints for the lower portions. That is how the lower portions, painted with the plant-based colours, have faded due to efflux of time the torso portions remain fairly bright. Finally, its secret was extracted by Paranjothi from the Naaganandhi Adigal to escape from certain death at his hands. It would appear that these colour were naturally coloured rocks and mixed with specially prepared compounds and, hence, stand the test of time.

T.M. Sundararaman
No.19, Nallappan Street
Mylapore
Chennai 600 004

'At home in Madras'

I had the opportunity of reading Chennai latie – A Madras Brew written by Ranjitha Ashok and Biswajit Balasubramanian Though I am away from home, I felt at home having gone through the wonderful book in distant America! The authors' 'Oru vakhi' – A beaker of the warm south-11 'Hellow Machi' 'Dhool Saleha'! The konjum miying, chennai beak hours trafic, the problem plus II students faces at entrance examination's worms in chocolate, habits of Madras house wires wishing to have dinner a various eat outs, the dangers of travelling in share Autos, the problem of water, made me feel that I was in our very own Chennai though for from it! Really it was a treat to go through the book. I hope it will find many what will enjoy it as I did.

P.A. Ranganathan
(old 16) 24, Vedachala garden
Mandavalli Street
Chennai 600 0028
Camp At: Sannay vale, CA.
U.S.A.

Caste names

Reader N. Dharmeshawaran's plea (MM, 1st May) that the original name of Dr. Rangachari Road should be resorted and the present 'Dr. Ranga Road' is a valid one. Along with it, the present names of roads and places have the caste names of persons in whose in whose honour they were named should also give place to the original one.

The former Dr. Nair Road in T' Nagar is presently Dr. Road. Not funny.

Why the names of Gandhi Park and Nehru Park still remain. Should they not be altered as 'Nagar' and 'Park' after the deletion of caste names?

In former most Hindus named their children with caste suffixes many prominent persons were known only with caste suffixes in their names. Some where famous with only caste names with initials before them like M.K. Gandhi, J.L. Nehru, V.B. Patel, A.B. Vajpayee and down south V.K.R.V. Rao, K.V. Reddy, G.D. Naidu and G.K. Moopanaar. They were popular with these names and many do not know their personal names.

Casteism and not caste is the villain.

M.R. Pillai
H 64/5, Central Avenue
Korattur
Chennai 600 080

Madras Amusings

Over the years the standard of English and general knowledge has fallen alarmingly in Chennai, erstwhile Madras. SSLC or an 'Intermediate' of some decades ago is streets ahead of a post-graduate of today. The present day youth seem to know nothing and no one beyond the world of tamil cinema and local politics. Ask them about Lal Bahadur Shastri and they seen to know only Ravi Shastri. Or ask them who 'Sister Nirmala' is. They don't know that she is the Kolkata Missionaries of Charity Superior General and one time assistant of Mother Teresa. They are more likely to reply that she is Manickam's Sister in *Metti Oli*.

* * *

As for English, I find that over the years we in Madras have sort of harnessed English into a more vibrant language.

An ad for a TV says it guarantees 'clarity' of sound. A stone engraver of monuments styles himself a 'monumental builder'. A bank recommends its tax savings schemes for a 'save and secure' future. A signboard on a tyre shop says 'Pehelwaan Mamaji ka Balwaan Tyre'. And a travel agency advertises its Shirdi tour as 'Sai Baba Packaging Tour'!

There are many other practitioners of this derivative of the Queen's English.

C.G. Prasad
9, C.S. Mudali street
Kondithope
Chennai 600 079

What do we mean?

An 'A-musing brew' (MM, April 16th). Can 'Caffee-latte' be – rephrased as 'Chennai-latte'. A Madras Brew' making it only milk? Where is the brew?!

I also wonder about the following reference in the concluding sentence of reader Prasad's letter (MM, April 16th).

'Quality circles' is a Japanese practice of assembling a small group of all concerned to discuss and evolve a solution to a shopfloor problem or to arrive at a needed improvement. I do not understand what exactly is meant by 'pockets of excellence' in management parlance. I see no connection between 'quality circles' and 'pockets of excellence'!

I was a facilitator for a number of quality circles during my years in Ordnance Factories.

N. Dharmeshwaran
'Aparanji', 14, 10th Cross
Maruthi Extension
Vyalikaval
Bangalore 560 003

READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **handwritten** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i-s' and crossing the 't-s'.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

THE EDITOR

The successes & failures of self-help groups

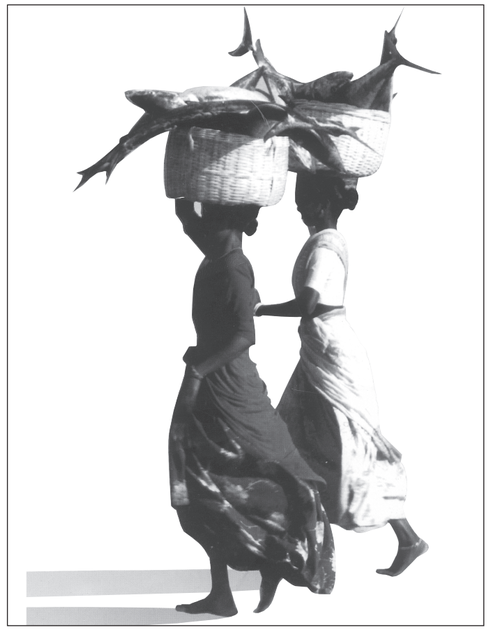
Women in most countries account for the majority of informal sector activity. In the fisheries sector, they play a vital role in post-harvest activities, which provide income and protein for the communities. However, the paradox is that despite strong resourcefulness and capacity, women's contributions are hardly recognised by governments, industry, and banks, states Yugraj Singh Yadava, Director of the Chennai-based Bay of Bengal Programme, an inter-governmental organisation.

The Women in Fisheries Programme (WFP), initiated by the BOBP–IGO in September 2003, is a response to low-income fisherwomen's need for improved livelihood opportunities and a way to enrich the fields of human services and community development. To enable better understanding of the needs of the fisherwomen, a review was conducted during October 2003 to March 2004 in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal.

The review brings to light the problems of women from fishing communities who have become marginalised due to various changes that have taken place within and outside the fisheries sector during the last 2-3 decades. Their participation in the workforce has been reduced and the general lack of awareness on alternate livelihood opportunities and access to credit have contributed to an intergenerational cycle of poverty and deprivation. Further, fisherwomen entering the self-help groups are ill-prepared for facing the challenges of market forces and mostly end up in unsuitable and un-remunerative activities.

The review by GITANJALI CHATURVEDI, however, emphasises that fisherwomen can succeed in increased livelihood opportunities, if they are trained in a market-oriented business approach, which will lead to enterprise development and significantly increase their earnings and self-confidence. The excerpts from the review published here focus on some projects in the Chennai area.

Improving the lot of fisherman



Rural Educational and Economic Development Association (REEDA) is an NGO working with fisherwomen in Royapuram to provide them with additional livelihood opportunities. About 120 fisherwomen have been organised into six SHGs of 20 members each. They meet weekly and save Rs.50 per month. They have been imparted skills to make sweets, candles, incense sticks, dry fish, garlic pickle, fish cutlets, cleaning powder, washing powder, phenyl, and fabric whitener. They also supply textiles (sarees and readymade items). They have also been initiated into small businesses such as ration stores and agencies. Many of them are educated and aware of their environment: social and physical.

Within a year of being organised into SHGs, they have become aware of the necessity to augment their household income (which does not exceed Rs.2,500). The NGO has helped them explore possibilities of earning more money by running public telephone booths (Tata Indicom has offered subsidised rates to individuals willing to provide premises to install their equipment) and supplying fish items to hotels.

During a discussion with members of the SHGs, it became obvious that they were unable to do any marketing themselves. The NGO is not equipped to look fo avenues where the produce can be supplied.

It was found that candle-making was the one skill they had perfected; that dry fish was the best product they could market (since their methods of dry fish preparation are elaborate and hygienic); and that selling fresh fish was the most profitable. They are trained to fillet the fish, pack, refrigerate, and sell to suppliers. They expressed a desire to supply crabs, prawns, seer fish, and pomfret to hotels in the city. While they consume most items produced within their groups, they are keen to take up candle-making and dry/fresh fish selling as a collective, large-scale business venture. They approached a local five star hotel for the supply of fresh fish. The hotel offered them a contract to supply fish, but changed it in favour of another SHG in a neighbouring area.

* * *

The Presentation community Service Centre is an NGO affiliated to the church and has organised 10 groups over the last five years in the fishing community of Royapuram. The NGO imparts training in preparing sweets, snacks, chilli powder, phenyl, and washing powder. These products are marketed among the members of the SHGs and in petty shops run by women in the locality. Regular supplies of snacks are also made for hospitals; catering is undertaken from time to time; and sweets are prepared for seasonal occasions. These provide the SHGs with an income of Rs.4000-6000 per month. Currently, group savings amount to Rs.1000 per group; each woman is encouraged to save Rs.50 a month.

The SHGs face a problem common to other SHGs in the area: that of marketing their products. A provision shop that they opened, shut down recently. The NGO has identified four groups that will start shops offering different services: canteen, stationery, ration and general provisions.

But in a city like Chennai, marketing the articles manufactured by SHGs is not profitable. NGOs also fail to notice that the biggest asset of women in fishing communities lies in the fact that they are ideal for the work they are traditionally suited to: marketing fish. Training in value-added fish products should be facilitated by NGOs.

* * *

Kolathur (a suburb of Chennai) is synonymous with ornamental fish culture, an activity that started thirty years ago. Today, every house in the locality breeds and rears ornamental fish of every description. Commonly bred varieties are: goldfish, guppies, zebra fish, angelfish and Siamese fish.

Many people have prospered through ornamental fish breeding, as *vastu shastra pundits* proclaim that it is auspicious to have fish in the house.

Rearing fish is not too expensive: a person who has been in the business for over 35 years claimed that an investment of Rs. 5000 was sufficient. Some low-income group families admit that the only investment required for fish breeding was to procure feed and install concrete tanks. The fish are fed blood worms procured from local worm collectors who forage swampy areas near sewers for worms and earn as much as Rs.200 a day (each collector can harvest 2 kg of worms in a day). Blood worms, however, have not been cultured. There are 10 worm collectors in the area who have a fixed clientele of 10-15 customers. Thus, regular income is assured.

Kolathur prospered in ornamental fish trade since it provided adequate water and sufficient land for the construction of tanks where fish could breed. However, there are allegations that ornamental fish culture has depleted the water table and also contaminated groundwater.

It has been suggested that a few women belonging to fishing communities close to Chennai could be selected from some SHGs to undergo training in ornamental fish culture. Fish breeders in Kolathur express interest in the proposal .

* * *

The Besant Nagar Fish Market was developed 14 years ago through a BOBP-Corporation of Madras (now Chennai) partnership, to prevent fisherwomen from selling their fish in unhygienic conditions. The market has found it difficult to attract clients, particularly due to the presence of other women fish sellers at a popular junction nearby who take potential business away from the market.

Of the 44 members of the Oorur-Olcott Fisherwomen's Cooperative Society, only 15 women sold fish in the market. The others preferred to sell fish by head load in neighbouring localities. Listing their problems they faced the fish vendors said that women fish vendors from Odaimahanagar village were selling fish on the roadside at Seventh Avenue and taking away all the customers.

What had initially started as twenty women selling fish on the street had risen to forty. Attempts to remove them were met with resistance and the women acquired a stay order from the court preventing them from being evicted from the street. The women of Odaimahanagar also petitioned the Corporation of Chennai for new fish market premises. However, this request was not entertained since the Corporation had already earmarked the Besant Nagar fish market as the established market for selling fish. The women of Odaimahanagar were told to occupy the empty stalls in the market, but they refused. The Oorur and Olcott fish vendors have also pleaded with the women to occupy the empty stalls in the Besant Nagar fish market, to no avail. The Odaimahanagar women believe that fish sales will plummet if they moved to the fish market. They also fear that other squatters will take over the space they vacate and that the market at Besant Nagar bus stand is not large enough to accommodate the hundred fisherwomen who sell fish on a regular basis in Besant Nagar area.

It is noteworthy that hygiene standards are not a consideration for buyers who come from all classes. The Odaimahanagar women do not have any storage facilities, the catch is exposed to dust and fumes from the road, there is no fresh water or electricity, and mounds of refuse collect beside each vendor.

Alternatives such as renting the vacant stalls in the market to vegetable vendors or meat/poultry shops, do not find much enthusiasm since people in the neighbouring areas will not buy vegetables in the proximity of the fish market.

* * *

The Neelankarai Fish Market was constructed by the Deparment of Fisheries (DOF) two years ago. Today, it is managed by fisherwomen belonging to 12 SHGs. The management practices established by the group demonstrate their efficiency and unity. These are some of the highlights of group management initiatives:

a) Twelve SHGs (consisting fo 16-20 members each) elect a representative to manage the market;

b) The elected group manages the market for a month. This includes cleaning, security, maintenance, pricing;

c) The Panchayat has appointed a cleaner. Two watchmen have also been employed: one is paid by the SHG (Rs.500 per month) and the other by the Panchayat;

d) The market is well-ventilated, has stalls for 60 women, and a cold storge room with a capacity of 2 tonnes. The SHG pays the electricity bills that amount to a maximum of Rs.2000 per month;

e) Each fisherwoman pays Rs. 5 per day to use the market. An average of 15-20 women sell fish regularly. Hence, the daily income of the market is about Rs.100;

f) Women also maintain the market: the property was whitewashed recently with the daily earnings. Some generous donors also paid towards maintenance and celebrations of the market anniversary;

g) Women from neighbouring areas, Chemmencheri, Injambakkam, Mahabalipuram, Chinnadikuppam and Kovalamkuppam, also sell fish in the market;

h) Uniform prices are ensured through pricing at the time of auction; and

i) The DOF is now constructing a drying platform behind the market.

Women managing the market have noticed an improvement in their status. Prior to their rehabilitation in the market, they would vend fish on the roadside. They maintain that they have had more customers since the market was inaugurated. Prior to managing the market, the WDC organised them into groups and instructed them on hygienic handling of fish. They have also been trained to save money and give loans to people within and outside the group at a nominal rate of two per cent interest per annum.

Apart from saving money and marketing fish, SHGs have also enabled women to meet their daily household requirements. They procure food, grain, and other commodities wholesale from Parry's Corner and sell them among each other. They also run petty businesses such as tailoring to augment their income.Though the SHG consists of women from fishing communities, many families are moving away from fishing and have taken up jobs in the city. The women practise family planning, and send their children to school. Their village is neat; most houses have toilets and electricity. Ever since they have been initiated into SHGs, they have minimised their expenditure.

There is seldom any conflict among the members and, in case of any dissatisfaction, problem-solving is done by discussion within the group. This eases tension and brings about group harmony. — (Courtesy : *BOBP-IGO.*)

'Meals ready'

— *and there are more meals than ever before in Chennai, says* PADMINI NATARAJAN.

'*Saapadu tayaar*' or 'Meals Ready' is a common board found all over Chennai from 7 a.m. to late in the night. These signboards are very often a small blackboard with the day's menu scribbled in chalk to let the consumer know what he can eat at the particular hotel. This custom of eating a full blown meal at the beginning of the work-day is uniquely a Chennai habit that its citizens carry wherever they go.

Eating is a serious business in India. Eating out is a phenomenon more urban in practice than universal. In Chennai, even the orthodox would be willing to drink a cup of coffee outside their homes as milk has no *dosham,* according to dogma. So, little coffee shops were the first public eating places that appeared.

The woman selling *idli* or *aapam* on the pavement was an early morning feature. Many families boast of their hotel businesses beginning that way. It was always more economical to buy a couple of *idlis* with coconut chutney or an *aapam* with coconut milk or *paaya kari* (trotters curry) and begin the day, than for a household to cook the dish at home. The physical and strenuous process of grinding the dough, letting it ferment and then making the *idlis* on firewood was a time-consuming affair for women who had to be at work early in the morning to decorate the frontyards of houses where they worked for a living.

The elite would patronise the Connemara Hotel or the dining rooms of the Gymkhana, the Madras Club or Cosmopolitan Club. That old lady in Luz, the Mylapore Club (their *dosai* and *badam halwa* are still Number One in the city) was the hang out for the law fraternity. The common man went to "messes" and even today the Karpagambal Mess in Mylapore retains its old world atmosphere, with banana leaf meals and no-frills tiffin.

The two kinds of small eateries that came into being in the years between the two World Wars were the *suddha saivam* or vegetarian 'hotels' and the Muniandi 'hotels' that served non-vegetarian food. The latter began to be called 'military hotels' because men from the Armed Services used to non-vegetarian food patronised these establishments when they visited home on leave.

On arriving at a restaurant, the 'server' would serve water and the customer's first question usually was, and is, *Sooda ennappa irukku?* The server's talent at reciting the menu, some twenty, thirty items all in one breath, could set the epicure's saliva flowing and take your breath away at the same time. He used to be dressed in white or beige with a cap on his head. Today, the server quietly places a menu card and whispers "Mineral water, Sir?" Many restaurants boast of having well-dressed stewards or hostesses to seat you, take the orders and finally give you the bill. Theme restaurants, with their employees in matching clothes, the cutlery and plates fitting the décor and ambience, have become a common phenomenon.

Some of the earliest restaurants in Chennai and still with us are Woodlands, Geetha Café (which boasts of introducing *parotta* to Madras) and the gateway to Broadway, Ramakrishna Lunch Home. There were no menu cards and the specials were listed on the blackboard. *Sambar, rasam, poriyal, aviyal, kootu,* potato roast were the common lunch items. *Dosai, idli, rava dosai, uppuma, vadai, bonda* and *pongal* were standard breakfast and tiffin items. The Mysore and Bangalore influence of Woodlands' Krishna Rao and the Dasaprakash chain popularised the *masala dosai* and the *puri.* The Bombay influence brought the *puri/potato* combination and the Andhras introduced the *pesarattu.* As the name suggests, Mysore *bonda* came from Karnataka. The Muslims introduced the Biryani and it has become a common item even in the vegetarian establishments.

Chennai began to spread its wings. The inter-state bus and rail connections brought in many other tourist and commercial travellers. Lorry drivers from far North wanted their *roti, dhal, sabji, panneer* and *chana.* The *pulao* too entered the scene with *basmati* rice brought in by the truck drivers themselves. *Batura* too was introduced and appeared at tables filling the whole plate. The Punjabi *samosa* was not long in appearing and occupying centre stage.

Buhari's on Mount Road was famous for its pastries. It also established a name for crisp *samosas.* Bosotto Bros and McRennet's were the places for baked goods. In the end 60s brown bread was introduced by doctors returning to the city from the UK as the food for diabetics and hypertension patients. Both these bakeries started making this speciality and vendors with tin boxes placed on their cycle pillions marketed the cakes and bread to the city. Today, Hot Breads is the most popular chain for baked goods, with the common man opting for Iyengar Bakeries spread all over the city.

Chinese community had moved in from Calcutta. The first restaurants were established on Mount Road, near Buhari's, Chungking, still with us, the oldest. Waldorf, near IIT in Adyar, is still a popular Chinese restaurant. Two-minute Maggi introduced the public to noodles and today even little eateries advertise 'chow mein' spelt imaginatively in various *avatars.* The Kwality was a chain of famous restaurants all over India. In Chennai too it was a popular venue for North Indian food and, today, the one on Montieth Road continues to remain popular. Gradually, over more recent years, many restaurants catering to varied tastes, sometimes serving multiple specialties like Chinese, North Indian, Chettinadu, have opened all over the town. The upmarket restaurants, the speciality ones and the common day-to-day eateries run their businesses cheek by jowl all over the city.

"Fast Food was a concept that was not new to Chennai. It was only renamed and presented innovatively by chains like Saravana's, Sangeetha's and now the imported Komala's of Singapore. In the last few years, the pizza has gained popularity. International chains like Pizza Deli and Dominos have entered the scene with their distinctively uniformed lads whizzing around on the two-wheelers delivering the hot pizzas 'within 39 minutes'. The ubiquitous pizza has been Southis-ised with even *dosai* chilli powder aka 'gunpowder' being offered as seasoning in little eateries.

There was a time when people went to Mumbai regularly to feed up on *pani puri, bhel puri* and *pav bhaji.* The Fountain Plaza in Montieth Road introduced a typical Mumbai market to Chennai. *Salwar kameez* from the commerce capital and many Sindhi establishments opened shop. Ajnabi with North Indian *namkeen,* sweets and savouries and 'Thank God for *bhel*' became a popular hang out for college students and re-migrated Southies from Mumbai and Delhi. The taste buds once tickled by the salty/sweet taste of these items began to spread and restaurants all over the city started including *pel puri* on their menu. The ultimate acceptance of the dish can be seen with the *redhiwallahs* carrying the pot of *pani* and the plastic packets of *puri* and serving it on the main thoroughfares.

Sweets in Chennai meant Mysore *pak*, *laddu*, *badurshah* and a range of sweets made with *gur.* That too has changed as many sweet shops with *halwais* as cooks sell Bengali sweets and every other speciality of the country. Gangotri, Shree Mithai, Archana Sweets sell every kind of sweet and *samosas, kachoris* etc. Grand Sweets is an institution, unmatched in popularity, variety and a solid reputation for quality savouries and sweets. Suswaad has also come into the business combining home delivery meals of South India with *roti sabji* meals.

The way the Madrasi took to coffee drinking is a tale often told with reference to the colonisation of India. This city is famous for coffee-by-the-yard. Gourmets are known to prefer their coffee beans and powder to be bought from specific shops in Mylapore or Mambalam. The exact blend of Peaberry and Plantation A, in the proportion of 50/50, 60/40 and for some a rupee's worth of chicory is the reflection of experts and epicures who know their coffee. Today, coffee pubs, speciality coffee shops like Qwiky's are the rage and the hang-outs for the young. The coffee out of the boiler in tea shops and on carriers of bikes doing the rounds, however, continue to do business fo the common man.

Juice shops have been popular since the 'juicer revolution'

(*Continued on Page 7*)

• **Remembering TTV**

A life-long involvement with music

He would have been amused to see this. Then his eyes would have twinkled, he would have given his trousers a hitch, laughed and said something irreverent in the Academy lobby. Then he would have bounded out to ward off a car that was being parked on the carriageway.

TT Vasu came from a family that prided itself on music appreciation. Grandfather Rangachari was a great fan of Veena Dhanammal and father TT Krishnamachari had the proud privilege of being rocked to sleep as an infant to the strains of her music. TTK loved music as much as he loved business, politics and life in general. Vasu inherited these traits from his father. From infancy he was witness to the comings and goings of several top notch musicians at *Shanti,* the family home on Cathedral Road and thus could count many of them as his friends.

The early years saw Vasu getting involved in Chennai's music scene by becoming president of fledgling *sabhas* such as the Kartik Fine Arts. In 1983, he was elected President of the Music Academy and that was when he really came into his own. It became clear to everyone that the Academy would acquire a high profile from the time he stepped on board. Vasu's personality and his wide-ranging contacts ensured that a steady stream of donations, advertisements and sponsorships began coming in to support the Academy, making it the most high-profile among the city's institutions for the arts. In the words of the eminent music scholar and historian T.S. Parthasarathy, who worked with Vasu as a secretary of the Academy, "Vasu's election was a switch over to a new leadership to face challenges of a new phase of activities calling for vision, dynamism and practical sense". He ran it just as he would have a business enterprise. Seats were reupholstered periodically, toilets were clean and the stage decor was a sight for sore eyes year after year. The VIP foyer was built during his tenure, the air-conditioning system was upgraded, the annexe building was improved, and elevators were installed in the main block and in the annexe.



The music-loving Vasus.

Punctuality was his mantra and he brought his greatest influence to bear on this aspect at the Academy. Concerts started and ended on time. In case they did not, he would think nothing of going into the side wings and wagging fingers at the artiste concerned. Many carped about it. But he was firm. He felt that prolonging a concert not only upset the entire day's schedule but was also a sign of disrespect to other artistes and audiences. Considering that by 2002 there were 85 programmes involving over 350 artistes each season at the Academy, it says much for the respect that he commanded that he got schedules adhered to.

Vasu's friendship with musicians was legendary. In 1958, when he was working for the *Indian Express* in Delhi, Vasu was asked by his father to be Semmangudi's escort when he visited Delhi. A close friendship resulted, with Vasu offering to teach Semmangudi English and the maestro offering to teach Vasu music. In Vasu's own words, "the arrangement broke down miserably", but they continued calling each other Guruji for the rest of their lives. The Semmangudi-Vasu combine was a powerful one at the Academy, with the grand old man of music putting it to considerable use in ensuring that several favourites were duly recognised and awarded. Yet another powerful supported was C.V. Narasimhan, the former chef de cabinet at the United Nations. The big three were last seen on stage at the Academy together in 2003 when a stamp was released in TTK's honour.

Vasu was one of the few who could unite musicians for various causes. In the 1980s, he got Veena Balachander to end his 14-year boycott of the Academy and perform for it. Balachander, who was then carrying on a tirade against what he believed was a fictitious composer called Swati Tirunal created by the Royal Family of Travancore, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Semmangudi and the Academy, readily agreed in response to Vasu's "brotherly and affectionate" invitation (they had been classmates in school). But by the next year Balachander had once again resumed his boycott. The shadow of Semmangudi loomed between him and Vasu. When the Ariyakkudi centenary was celebrated in 1990, Vasu ironed out differences between the maestros' disciples and got them to act in unison. The centenary committee functioned from Vasu's home and he took considerable pride in the fact that it was at the same place that Ariyakkudi had sung so often.

Young artistes always had a special place in Vasu's heart and when the Youth Association for Classical Music was founded in the 1980s, he was most encouraging. He not only offered the YACM the TTK library at home for practice sessions, but also gave the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall at the Academy at reduced rates for performances. The 'Spirit of Youth' concert series at the Academy was his brainchild and this gave many an upcoming star an opportunity to perform at the Academy.

Besides the Academy, Vasu was also involved with the Sangeet Natak Akademi for a few years and also the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams where he took an active interest in the Annamacharya project. In 2002, much to his own delight, Vasu was named the Artiste of the Year by the Bangalore Gayana Samaj, a 100-year-old music organisation. Though it was given in recognition of his talents in organising and promoting the fine arts, Vasu was really an artiste at heart, taking time off to learn music off and on from renowned scholar Seetarama Sarma.

It was his dearest wish to remain president till the 75th annual conference of the Academy. He did continue and ensure that the conference that year was one of the Academy's best, with the President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam, coming down to inaugurate the sessions. The inaugural session also witnessed the recital of a Sanskrit hymn praising Vasu by co-committee member Nandini Ramani. It appeared that this

The Errol Flynn fan



From Errol Flynn… … to Vasu.



TT Vasu – Madras's Errol Flynn look-alike.

Irrepressible T.T Vasu had friends in places high, and low, among ministers and mail carriers, princes and paupers, the mighty and small. He knew them all on first-name basis, always ready with a smile, wisecrack, on an off-colour joke of many hues! I was one of them from 1954.

We used to greet each other in a language which was close to what is known as 'Madras Tamil'. He never said "Hi!" or "Hello!" but would say Ennamma Kannu, eppidikkirey...?" If I greeted him first in such fashion, he would reply 'Ikkirenbhaaa...!" Onlookers were more than shocked when they heard this 'Senthamizh' (pure classical Tamil!) we spoke, but neither of us cared! He hated hypocrisy in any form and delighted in punching holes in it..

Some of Vasu's varied interests which remembered in his later years were Hollywood cinema, movie magazines, journalism and advertising. During the 1940s, he published the movie magazine, *U and The Movies* which was extremely popular in it, he published authographed photos of famous Hollywood stars and through this venture became a friend of the macho star of the day Errol Flynn.

Vasu formed a 'Flynn Fans Club in Madras and when, in 1949 an Errol Flynn period costume movie, *The Adventures of Don Juan*, was released at the now sadly vanished 'New Globe' cinema, he had expensive art paper fliers on the movie produced and distributed them himself to moviegoers at the entrance to the cinema. Errol Flynn came to Madras for the shoot of *Kim* (1950), based on a novel by Rudyard Kipling, and Vasu hosted a reception in his honour, which was much appreciated by the Hollywood star.

In later years, he took over G.A. Natesan's intellectual monthly *Movie Review* which he ran for some years.

Not many are aware that he was really the founder of 'Adyar Gate Hotel', now 'Park Sheraton', teaming with a Malaysian friend. I was working for Efficient Publicities Private Limited (EP) one of the first Indian advertising agencies and one in which Vasu had an interest. Looking at the letterhead design, which had a spoon, fork and knife, as its logo, I wondered if the project was for a restaurant or hotel, Vasu replied "Kannu, let this chap start at least a restaurant and then we'll see about a hotel!'. Later, the Malaysian walked out of the project and then it became Park Sheraton. Vasu continued to be Chairman for years.

I brought him on board of EP as Chairman. He had already got to know the directors well when he was running U and The Movies. With his 'puckish' sense of humour, whenever he sent letter or messages to the agency he deliberately wrote the word 'Publicities' omitting the letter 'L'! That was vasu!.

Few recall that Vasu once promoted an experimental project to produce the soft drink 'Seven Up'. He had a laboratory-office on Mount Road. Much to his disappointment, the drink would disintegrate and a precipitate would settle at the bottom of the bottle. Then it came to light that the gimmick was in the characteristic green glass bottle which wont with the drink! Understandably, Vasu gave up the project.

His interest in advertising as a medium of creative expression was immense. He acquired an almost defunct ad agency based in Calcutta and brought it down to Madras. Soon, he gave it to another friend who built it up into one of the most successful agencies of the time in India. That was F.D. Stewarts!

Many have wondered why, in spite of his background, drive, dynamism, charisma and charm, Vasu did not meet with success in the world of business and industry. Many (including me) feel Vasu's attention span was sadly, short and he quickly lost interest in what he was doing and looked around for new avenues.

The Music Academy is the one institution he devoted himself to for years. Sadly, that hurt him most in the end.

Randor Guy

Community gets together

(Continued from page 2)

this; why don't you start doing it?" And so began the HRRA, now 420 member – strong and a resounding success!

HRRA's basic philosophy in all its efforts is 'Unity and Harmony between Community and Environment', its chief objective 'a responsible, mature citizenry that sheds its indifferent, apathetic attitude and takes pride in this city, its people and the environment'. The work of the Association has been divided into sections with different focal points – environmental, civic and community service activities. A manager and three staff members assist the overall coordination of the work of the Association and its host of actively involved members. Their motto is, 'Think Globally – Act Locally-Respond Personally".

The first activity, traffic regulation, required the cooperation of the schools on the road, the students and their families. Parking bays had to be created, speed breakers built and conditions created for the safe and speedy movement of vehicles and people. The Association coordinated and worked with the schools, Citizens for Safe Roads (CSR) and the traffic police to improve traffic flow. Says a member who looks after the Traffic Management function for the Association, "We've always received unstinting support from the officials of the Chennai Corporation, the Police and even from the much-maligned auto drivers of Chennai."

A garbage dump soon metamorphosed into a popular park with a walking track. Another was converted into a parking lot for school vans. Garbage disposal was streamlined, using composting bins in all streets to dispose of garden waste. A door-to-door campaign was undertaken to popularise the concept of waste management. HRRA is now working towards zero waste through segregation and composting. A cart shed is provided to house garbage pickup carts.

Community welfare programme initiated for slumdwellers – with volunteers even spending up to eight hours a day – include medical camps, creating a census database, complete tiling and providing water outlets for 30 toilets in the slum. The Lady Andal School, meanwhile, has adopted the Corporation school located next door, and makes available its computer, science lab and sports facilities for two hours every afternoon to the latter's students, besides giving teacher training.

Rainwater harvesting pits on main roads to improve water drainage and recharge groundwater and eco-friendly alternatives like root zone treatment for cleaning up sewage water have been introduced. Among HRRA's projects for the future are those relating to water management, garbage composting and developing a civic infrastructure on Harrington Road where all services will be housed in easily accessible underground chambers, thereby preventing the road from being constantly dug up. A long-term plan includes setting up a gamut of emergency services aimed at disaster management.

A fortunate offshoot of these efforts has been the increased camaraderie among the residents. HRRA claims to be 'not an activist group but an active group', with community and institutional liaison being a very important function. There is a membership fee of Rs. 200 per annum, while institutional members like schools and other commercial organisations are required to pay Rs. 5000 per annum. "We do have our problem members, like one school that refuses to pay the membership amount, but harasses residents because they haven't provided car parking space within their area," says another member.

Other neighbourhoods in the city have been increasingly approaching HRRA for ideas to replicate! Undoubtedly this indicates promise of a bright future for the community movement in the city. But will all be as successful as these two model associations.



June 2005-April 2006: The Madras Craft Foundation is offering an opportunity to get hands-on experience in pursuing a creative career. It's a 10-month course on Arts Management and Education. This programme will help in learning arts and crafts, culture, management and event planning, graphics, writing and publicity skills. The course will run from June 2005 to April 2006. It is open to graduates of any stream. Selected candidates will be paid a stipend of Rs.3,000/- a month. Hostel facilities are also available. Limited seats only. (At Dakshina Chitra).

June 13-25: Photographic exhibition. V. Vinoth on Varanasi. A portrait of the city by a young photographer, born in Thiruvannamalai and educated in the science of Visual Communication in the New College (at Alliance Francaise).

June 19: *Balloon* by Pareeksha. A transcreation Tamil play written by Gnani and performed by Pareeksha in 1981. It is inspired by the courtroom trials against anti-Vietnam peacenik protestors. The Tamil play discusses the attitude of the establishment, police, judiciary and the media towards a small non-violent group of protestors opposing increase in city bus fare. The script is laced with poetry from Tamil poets of the 20th Century and with humour (Alliance Francaise).

June 22-26: Masquerade present *Olenna,* by David Mamet and directed by Krishna Kumar. A fascinating character study, examining academia, language and the startling effect of bad communication. Can there really be interest in and cordiality between men and women, student and professor and how cruel humans can be to one another? (At Alliance Francaise).

Subscriptions and contributions

● As readers are already aware — and hundreds have responded positively — we have no other alternative but to price *Madras Musings*. From April 16th (Volume XIV, No.1), *Madras Musings* has been priced at Rs.5 a copy, ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/-. Please make out your cheque only to 'Chennai Heritage' and send it, together with the COUPON BELOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or C/O LOKAVANI-HALL MARK PRESS PVT. LTD., 122, GREAMES ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

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We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings,* and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

— The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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'Meals ready'

(Continued from page 5)

took the city by storm. The imported juicer machines helped to establish juice shops selling *mosambi* or *sathukuddi* juice and grape juice gradually all kinds of other fruit varieties have been added. The spicy buttermilk, known as *moru,* tetrapack juice choices and the cool coconut water quench the thirsty throat in this three-summer-season city. Cut fruits — papaya, watermelon, cucumber — in plastic bowls sold on the roadside have become a common sight in the pavement world.

Ice cream parlours are scattered all over the the city. Authentic *kulfi* has also made its appearance on TTK Road in Chennai. The *kulfi* seller also cries out his wares late in the night selling from a pot on a bicycle. You can get exotic varieties of ice creams like rum and raisin, cassata, *kesar pista,* butterscotch, softy from machines, pralines and gateaux from various manufacturers and parlours.

Korean, French, Continental, North West Frontier *pakhwan,* Calcutta meals, Punjabi *dabhas* are all in the business of catering to the eclectic tastes of the city. Home delivery meals, catering to parties and special offers like price per gram of cooked food are innovative offers by restaurants to catch the hungry tongue. Like any other city in India, Chennai caters to every pocket, taste and preference. You can eat the '*kalavai saapadu*' or mixed rice that the woman with a basket on her head takes to offices, the bus terminus, auto stands etc. You can stand in front of the corner tea shop and have a *porai* biscuit with your hot tea or *kapi.* You can eat at fast food outlets with a plate of food in your hand.

You can sit at laminated tables and plastic chairs in shops, on pavements, under tin roofs, in poky rooms. You can be seated in upholstered sofas in AC comfort and order gourmet food.

The number of eating places, the choices, the tastes catered to, the ambience of the Chennai restaurants are multifarious, offering a mind boggling choice. Burp! I think I have indigestion.

Senate House Conservation Fund

● The Senate House Restoration and Management Trust appeals to all alumni of the University of Madras and heritage lovers everywhere to contribute to the Senate House Conservation Fund which the Trust is managing for the purpose of restoring *Senate House* to its old glory by December 2005 and maintaining it thereafter in the same condition. Cheques should be made out to the Senate House Conservation Account and sent to the Registrar, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005. Contributions are eligible for benefits under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

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I am an alumnus/alumna/heritage lover and wish the project all success. My college was .....

Date: ..... Signature: .....

Chepauk's best 12 by Indians

● by
PARTAB RAMCHAND

An attractive 2005 calendar brought out by the Cricket Club of India, featuring 12 great innings played at the Brabourne Stadium, the home of cricket in Bombay for 35 years before Test matches were shifted to the nearby Wankhede Stadium in the mid-1970s, set me thinking about the greatest knocks played at Chepauk by Indian cricketers in Test matches. The following are the 12 I chose:

• **F.M. Engineer: 109 vs West Indies in January 1967**. In the face of an attack that had ground India into submission in the two previous Tests (the bowling line up included Hall, Griffith, Sobers and Gibbs), he played thrilling cricket to reach 94 by lunch on the first day. Opening the innings with Dilip Sardesai he dominated a stand of 129, with his partner being restricted to 28. He was third out at 145. Hard to beat for sheer audacious strokeplay Match drawn.

• **G.R. Viswanath: 97 not out vs West Indies in January 1975.** For grace and defiance it takes its place as one of the five greatest innings in the history of Indian Test cricket. It was made out of a total of 190 against Andy Roberts (7 for 64) bowling at his fastest. The next highest score was 19. He came in at 24 for two and despite the grim situation made effortless strokes that were an ideal blend of power and elegance. India won by 100 runs.

• **G.R. Viswanath: 124 vs West Indies in January 1979.** On a pitch of exaggerated bounce he displayed classy batsmanship against fast bowlers Sylvester Clarke and Norbert Philip to shape an Indian victory by three wickets. The next highest score was 33. It was the only decisive result in the six-match series. In the words of Gavaskar: "The fastest and bounciest pitch I ever played on". Gavaskar himself could make only 4 and 1, enhancing the quality of Viswanath's innings. He came in at 11 for two early on the second day and was last out with the total on 255 early on the third day after batting 346 minutes in his 50th Test.

• **S.M. Gavaskar: 166 vs Pakistan in January 1980.** A technically and tactically superb knock, with Gavaskar batting 593 minutes (373 balls). Opening the innings early on the second day he was seventh out at 339 late on the third day, successfully negotiating an attack that included Imran Khan, Sikhander Bakht and Iqbal Qasim. It was the longest innings played by an Indian in Tests and paved the way for a ten-wicket victory.

• **G.R. Viswanath: 222 vs England in January 1982**. The supreme artist at his glorious best. He came in at 51 for two shortly after lunch on the first day and was fourth out at 481 on the dot of lunch on the third day. The bowling was in the hands of Botham, Willis, Dilley, Allott and Underwood. Viswanath batted 638 minutes for the highest score by an Indian against England. Match drawn.

• **S.M. Gavaskar: 236 not out vs West Indies in December 1983.** Historically important as the highest score (till then) by an Indian in Test matches, surpassing Vinoo Mankad's record 231 that had stood since January 1956. He batted 644 minutes, faced 425 balls and compiled the innings with supreme ease against the bowling of Marshall, Holding and Roberts. Also historically important as Gavaskar's 30th hundred, taking him past Don Bradman's record of 29 standing since 1948. The master batsman came in on a hat trick at zero for two midway through the third day and was unconquered when the innings was declared at 451 for eight shortly after tea on the final day. Match drawn.

• **Kapil Dev: 119 vs Australia in September 1986**. Hard to beat on several counts. First and foremost for sheer razzle dazzle strokeplay in a thrilling counterattack. Came in at 206 for five (in the face of Aussie total of 574 for seven declared) in the post-tea session of the third day and was last out shortly after lunch on the fourth day. Made free-flowing shots against McDermott, Reid, Matthews and Bright in racing to a hundred off 109 balls, with 44 runs of his second fifty coming in boundaries. With only the tail for support he steered India past the follow-on mark when everything seemed lost. The match ended in a tie.

• **K. Srikkanth: 123 vs Pakistan in February 1987.** Outrageous strokeplay typical of his swashbuckling style that made the bowlers look as helpless as a butterfuly in a gale. Opening the innings with Gavaskar late on the second day in the face of a Pakistan total of 487 for nine declared, Srikkanth blossomed on the third day, giving 50,000 spectators full value for their money. The home crowd had come in the hope that Chepauk's favourite son would oblige them and Srikkanth sent them home ecstatic, hitting 123 off 149 balls. He picked Imran for special treatment hitting him for two fours and a six off successive balls. Imran shaking his head in disbelief and Gavaskar trying to suppress his laughter are sights that one cannot forget easily. For his second fifty, Srikkanth required only 32 balls. With Gavaskar, he raised 200 runs for the first wicket. Match drawn.

• **Kapil Dev: 109 vs West Indies in January 1988.** On an underprepared pitch on which debutant leg spinner Narendra Hirwani took 16 wickets, Kapil Dev hit a spectacular hundred, hitting Patrick Patterson and Courtney Walsh with astonishing power. Entering at 156 for five on the opening day, Kapil was seventh out at 313 after reaching his sixth Test hunded off 105 balls. India ultimately totalled 382, the initiative had slipped from the West Indies' grasp and India went on to register an emphatic 255-run victory with more than a day to spare.

• **Sachin Tendulkar: 155 not out vs Australia in March 1998**. Tendulkar vs Warne' was how the series was billed. At the end of the first Test, it was a no contest as India's champion simply blasted away at the outstanding contemporary spin bowler. Warne just did not know where to pitch the ball as Tendulkar outsmarted him time and again with belligerent strokeplay that was awesome and enthralling. Warne had dismissed him for four in the first innings, but in the second, with India 71 runs in arrears, Tendulkar entered at 115 for two early on the fourth morning and took no time in showing that he was the master. When the declaration was made late in the day he had hit his runs off ony 191 balls. His commanding display saw India regain the upper hand and they never surrendered it, winning by 179 runs.

• **Sachin Tendulkar: 136 vs Pakistan in January 1999**. For sheer courage, this ranks very high even in Tendulkar's long list of outstanding knocks. He had been dismissed for a duck in the first innings and in the second, he came in late on the third day at six for two as India made a stuttering start to their target of 271. In the face of an all-out onslaught from the two Ws, Wasim and Waqar, and some mesmeric bowling by Saqlain Mushtaq, Tendulkar carried all the India's hopes on the following day despite a top order collapse (82 for five) and a bothersome back. With Nayan Mongia (52), Tendulkar added 136 runs for the sixth wicket and steered India to within 17 runs for victory when he holed out to mid-off in trying to hit Saqulain. He batted 405 minutes. Bit India's last three wickets added just four more and Tendulkar's gallant effort was in vain.

• **Sachin Tendulkar: 126 vs Australia in March 2001**. This knock was not in vain, for India won by two wickets to wrap up the series – a triumph shaped largely by Harbhajan Singh's 15-wicket haul. But Tendulkar's timely hundred too played a part, for he guided the Indian innings through a crucial phase on the third and

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