



SABHA NEWS

Published by Samyukta Gowda Saraswata Sabha, 55, Habibullah Road,
T.Nagar, Chennai 600 017. For circulation only among the members.
Telegrams: "SAMSAR" E.mail: sgssabhachennai@airtelmail.in
Telephone: 2834 3804 Website: www.sgssabhachennai.com

No.29

January 2007

Greetings to all our Members

The Sabha wishes all Members a very happy and prosperous New Year

EDITORS SPEAK:

We have great pleasure in placing before you this January 2007 issue. Thanks to our new contributors you have more reading material. It is a privilege to publish articles from budding and new writers.

This time too we have a varied fare. Apart from the usual items, you can read how one can bear with a sense of humour the travails of living in a flat, and also how our women-folk manage the multi-dimensional job of running a house-hold like Ashta-bhuja Devis! You can know more about three of our young persons who have made a mark in their field. There is that little-known anecdote showing how Sage Suka came to learn Srimad Bhagavata. The picturesqueness of Konkani expressions is revealed by a fresh selection of proverbs. Another article speaks about the legend associated with our famous Moolky Temple; and the same writer presents a small cameo showing the twists and turns of what is in store in our lives. Then there is a sage advice to show how all conflicts due to generation gap can end. There are many more famous temples of ours which have interesting 'sthala purana'. We shall be happy to include them in our future issues if our readers take the trouble of writing to us.

Wishing you all happy reading.

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

Mr. K.K. Pai of Manipal, a very respected elder of our community has, after retiring from Syndicate Bank, been doing yeomen service to the cause of Konkani language and the united Saraswath community. He has made the following observations on our last Newsletter of July 2006.

"I have gone through its pages with keen interest. I have no hesitation to state that it is one of the best Newsletters ever published by a GSB Association in our Country containing a wealth of information on our Konkani language, culture, special characteristics of our people, their ways of life, heritage, wisdom and so on. I congratulate you heartily for your splendid efforts in publishing such a valuable Newsletter"

He has also made some very useful suggestions, the more important of these are given below:

1. Various publications by the Konkani speaking people are being brought out from several places. There is a need for each other to co-ordinate their efforts and incorporate good and useful aspects of each others news gathering on various aspects of our culture etc. as also activities and achievements of GSBs in different cities.

2. There is need to publicise information on social welfare projects and programmes undertaken such as the distribution of Health Cards to poor families in Udupi Dist. and South Kanara Dist. Others can emulate such examples.

3. Information on Saraswath Sammelans held periodically should be published.

Thank you Mr. K.K. Pai for your generous words of praise and valuable suggestions. We will try to implement them to the best of our abilities.

NEIGHBOURLY NUISANCE

- K.P. Ramesh Rao, Bangalore

I am a pensioner living in an apartment on the second floor with my wife. Being retired, I have the luxury of observing and writing about our neighbours who occupy the flat above ours. They are quite a handful and hardly care about the inconvenience they cause to the people living below. A typical day starts like this. If they cannot open their drawing room window, they start banging the iron frame of the window with a hammer continuously till the window glass breaks and the glass scatters over our verandah and one of them gets hurt. There are three types of noises out of this viz. the hammering, cracking of the window glass and falling of the glass pieces. This is followed by a lull (a rare event) during which interval – they borrow some antiseptic cream from us. Then their kids take over by starting to play with their toys – mostly metallic. If this noise is inadequate, their elders join them and start moving the furniture viz. cots, chairs and tables (partly wooden/partly steel) for the noble purpose of making more space for the kids to play more vigorously. The resultant noise is of a rare variety defying description.

When the men and kids leave home by 10 a.m., the womenfolk take over. They start with drying the freshly washed clothes from their balcony, wet and dripping, at 11 a.m. as my wife watches in despair. My wife would have washed and wrung the clothes out (much like an Income Tax Officer squeezing the tax out of hapless assesseees) at 7 a.m. only to have them soaked as if in a sudden cloud burst. Not to be left out, their maid joins the proceedings by starting to empty the garbage can on our balcony. The entire activity however is noise-free! The women's noise-making capabilities manifest only during their daily routine of singing loud, un-musical bhajans – in chorus every morning and evening, presumably begging the Lord Almighty forgiveness for their trespasses!

At about 10 p.m., fortified by dinner, the women get into action again pounding red chillies and spices in steel containers using steel pestles for preparing fresh pickles for summer! At 11 p.m., having had enough for the day, I march upstairs with a request for mercy and liberation from noise. Touched by my state, they considerately stop the spice pounding, only to revert to their favourite activity of moving the furniture one last time before retiring for the day.

Furniture movement can produce a range of noises depending on the strength of

the mover, type of furniture and velocity of the movement. Variety is the spice of life! Next morning, before resuming their routine, they throw away all the remaining spices and the old pickles on our balcony. Now I understand why the previous flat owner sold us the flat situated in a central locality at such a competitive price!

I have not been able to solve this problem. However, the following quotation of a famous scientist which I came across recently has opened up my mind "You cannot solve a problem on the same level on which it was created. You have to rise above it to the next level"! I may shift to the 4th floor which is the top floor of our building

PICTURESQUE KONKANI

Our younger readers particularly have appreciated the various Konkani proverbs and idiomatic expressions given in our last Newsletter. Here are a few more culled from the list sent from Mangalore by Nalini and her sisters, as referred to in our last Newsletter of July 2006.

Hoddaani Khelleri rucheeka, durbaleni khelleri bhookkeka: This implies that simplicity should be the hall-mark of our life-style and we should not be ostentatious. It also means that what a poor person does has not the same "appreciation" as in the case of the rich.

Haavan Gori Aakkaa Gori, haladi vaattitaleen kona? An obvious reference to shirking work needed to be done.

Paapeena gellele kade paavula bhari udaaka: An expression borrowed from Kannada referring to a series of misfortunes or set-backs faced by one dogged with ill-luck.

Vindraaka maarlaalo baanu Vigneshwaraaka: An unintentional damage caused by action without taking into account the entire consequences, the result being quite contrary to what was needed.

Aarthi ghetleri garmee, teertha ghetheri thandi: Refers to a fuss-pot who is over fastidious about any thing and everything.

Aambe upkareeka taambyaa daayi: Using an unsuitable thing for doing any job. The copper ladle (without proper tinning or kalayi) spoils the aambe upkari.

Kimsaa maamsa khaavnu jaathi bhaatli: The serious consequences of even a minor lapse are highlighted. Often used to indirectly say that one could have as well gone for a bigger “kill”.

Haattaa taalvati polochaaka kaannadi jaayhive: No further efforts or arguments needed to understand or recognize something so obvious.

Sakdaani paallakentu basleri hovntale kona: An obvious reference to a situation where no one wants to work but still wants the results. See also the earlier expression “Haavan gori ...”

Vaesu ghaalnu naanchanaa mhaleri jaattave?: Once you have taken on a responsibility, there is no choice but to fulfill its responsibilities.

Vaarae aani ujjaka ekde solle vari: A deadly combination of two things – it can do good or evil since each complements the other.

Ghaayu ekde, vakkada ekde: Refers to a not so well-directed effort. Almost similar to the “vindraaka maarlalo baanu” mentioned earlier.

Doni doniyeri paaya: The reference is to the one standing on two stools without making up his mind which way to go. The consequence is dangerous.

Loniyaantaanu aaggolu kallevari: This refers to a job done very easily without leaving even a trace of harmful consequence.

We are again requesting our readers for interesting and idiomatic expressions prevailing in Kochi, Kozhikode, North Kanara, Bengalooru etc. with the special flavour of these areas.

THE SPRING (BASANT) THAT WAS TOO SHORT

- Premi Shenoy

She came and ere long ...she was gone. Basanti was her name. A rugged woman of the hills, with disheveled hair and ragged clothes, she looked the epitome of sadness.

Having just shifted to Delhi, I decided to take a risk and keep this unknown stranger as my live-in-maid for better or for worse. To her great chagrin, our dog did not take kindly to her scruffy looks. A clean bath and a new set of clothes did wonders to her and she also was

very proud of her ‘new’ look. Many a time I saw her slip into my bedroom taking a quick self-admiring glance in the full-length dressing table mirror. Our dog, however, did not appreciate it and let her know so with his incessant barking and growls.

Having lost her husband and two children within a short span of six months, Basanti felt she was destined to lead a lonely life in her twilight years. She agreed to stay with us through thick and thin, no matter where we went in the course of our official transfers during our service in the Bank. She took to the daily household chores with relative ease and was ever ready to learn. With great difficulty she would repeat and even manage to pronounce the names of the fruits and vegetables in English. I thanked my stars for having got a sincere, cheerful, hardworking maid and an honest one too!

Alas, my luck did not hold for long. It was all over within five weeks as fate had something different in store for Basanti. Her aging father came and forcibly whisked her away to be married to a widower (almost twice her age) who was on the look-out for somebody to mother his little daughter. She clutched my feet - and bade a tearful good bye – little knowing what the future held in store for her. Apart from giving her some clothes etc. all I could do was to pray for her happiness in a new set-up where one never knew whether she would be reigning as a queen or slogging as an unpaid maid.

THE ORIGIN OF SRIMAD BHAGAVATA PURANA

Among the eighteen Puranas which Bhagavan Veda Vyasa has bequeathed to us, the most famous is Srimad Bhagavatam; in fact, that is the only one among them that has the pre-fix Srimad. Srimad means “endowed with auspiciousness and prosperity”. The knowledge of the Supreme Truth as the only means to free mankind from the “taapatrayas” – the three-fold afflictions of worldly life, the manner of gaining this knowledge through satsangha and listening to the glories of Bhagavan, and living one’s life in accordance with the values and truths laid down in scriptures – these are the central theme of this great composition.

Most of us know that Bhagavata was related by Sukadeva (son of Veda Vyasa) to King Parikshit (the descendant of Pandavas) over a period of eight days which was the life

span available to the king who was cursed by a Rishikumar. However, the Purana mentions also other instances where Bhagavata was related e.g. by Brahma to Narada, by Sage Maitreya to Vidura etc.

There is a very interesting story how Suka came to know this Bhagavat Purana. As usual with all spicy Pauranic incidents, it starts with Narada who once resolved that some thing needs to be done for the lasting benefit of humanity. And what better could it be than to bring Bhagavata Purana to the world. The text was then known only to Shiva who treasured it in his heart like a priceless gem. So Narada had to resort to his tricks.

He went to Kailas, making sure that Shiva was not there, and met Parvati (Shiva's wife). Although it was just what he wanted, he pulled a long face and said "Mother, it is unfortunate that I am not able to have darshan and blessings of Mahadeva. I really wanted to get His advice on some thing which has been bothering me. Now, please permit me to go, Mother." Parvati asked, "Why are you so sad, Narada? Is there any way I can help you?" Narada mumbled, "Mother, I am sad because righteousness is lacking every where; perhaps even in Kailas. Now permit me to leave, Mother."

What woman, her curiosity so roused, will let go an opportunity to dig deeper? "What makes you say so, Narada?" She asked. Narada replied, "Mother, Lord Shiva has been professing His love to you. But, in fact, He may not be loving you as much as He says. Please do not ask me for the reasons as Shiva may get angry on me. Now, let me go, Mother."

This touched the innermost core of Parvati who now decided to get to the bottom of things – just what Narada had intended. Her curiosity fully aroused, she said, "No, Narada, you cannot go until you tell me why you feel my Lord does not love me fully. I think what you have said is not correct because I have full faith in my Lord." Narada ruefully replied, "I too wish it was so, Mother. But let me not say anything more lest a misunderstanding arise between you two. I do not want to create any controversy. Let me go, Mother."

This was indeed too tempting for any woman to pass over lightly. Parvati insisted that Narada tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and threatened him "Or else". Then a conversation followed:

Narada: Shiva wears a garland of skulls. Whose skulls are they, Mother?

Parvati: Mine, of course. He loves me so much that He has collected them from all my previous lives after I cast away my physical body.

Narada: That is it, Mother. You had several lives while Shiva is eternal. How did He get this immortality?

Parvati: I do not know. You are the one who has all knowledge – past, present and future. You tell me.

Narada: Shiva knows the secret of immortality which he has been guarding as a secret in his heart. He loves it much more than He loves you. Otherwise, He would have revealed it to you.

Parvati: What is that secret, Narada, which Shiva is not sharing with me?

Narada: Mother, it is the great scripture called Bhagavata Puraana. Anyone who relates it and anyone who hears it will gain immortality.

Parvati: Is it so, child? Thank you. Now you have my permission to leave.

Narada, now fully satisfied that the first half of his plan went off well, left post-haste lest he meet Shiva any where on the way.

Shiva, who had gone to Vaikunta to meet Vishnu, came back and saw Parvati with a glum, downcast face. After persistent requests, to let him know what the matter was, Parvati tearfully said "I was a fool to believe that You love me above everything else." Shiva replied, "Why should there be any doubt about it?" Parvati replied, "I know Your love for me is quite hollow. You know Bhagavata Purana but have not cared to relate it to me so far" and tears flowed freely from her eyes. When this ultimate weapon of women was unleashed, Shiva was helpless and silent for a minute. Then He asked, "Did Narada come here? What all has he told you?" Parvati then related to Shiva all that had happened.

Shiva said," Dear Parvati, Bhagavata Purana is a very sacred scripture which has originated from Lord Brahma. It should not be revealed to any one who does not have the required faith, devotion etc. I can reveal it to you only when we are alone and no other living

creature can listen to it. I will certainly impart this Bhagavata Purana to you when we are absolutely alone as doubtless you are a fit recipient and thereafter you too will be immortal."

Now Narada had to devise the second part of his plan – to find some one who could be present when Shiva related Bhagavata to Parvati and face possible wrath of Shiva. He met Suka Deva and entreated him to go and hide in Kailash when Shiva related Bhagavata to Parvati. Suka politely declined saying "Why are you wanting me to be slain by Siva?" Narada assured him that he would ensure that no harm came to him. Suka went to Kailasa and hid himself in a parrot's egg between some rocks and waited for Siva to start relating the Purana.

On an auspicious day, Shiva started relating the Bhagavata Purana to Parvati who, listening attentively, was responding "Umm, wonderful" occasionally. But towards the end, when two more skandhas were yet to be related, she fell asleep. Fearing that if there was no response from her, Siva might stop relating the story, Suka started responding in the same way as Parvati. After the entire narration was over, Shiva asked Parvati "Dear, have you heard it attentively and treasured it in your memory?" Parvati replied truthfully, "No, my Lord, I fell asleep after the tenth Skandha." Siva frowned and asked "Then who was it that was responding when you dozed off. Some one must have heard this disobeying me. I will kill him." Siva hurled his trishul to kill the guilty person.

By then the parrot's egg had hatched and the trishul went after the hapless Suka who was in the form of a parrot. The parrot chased by the trishul flew to Vaikunta and fell at the feet of Lord Narayana, crying, "O, Lord save me from Shiva's trishul". The Lord said that he was powerless against Siva's weapon and told Suka that the only way his life could be saved was to place a Brahma Rishi between himself and the trishul.

Narada then guided Suka to Vyasa's ashrama. Vyasa's wife who had a head-bath was standing outside the hut in the sun and drying her hair. Vyasa was lovingly looking at her. When Vyasa's wife was yawning, Suka entered her body through the mouth and started shouting from within, "O, father save me, save me from the trishul chasing me." Realising his duty as a father of this child within the body of

his wife, Vyasa stood in front of the trishul shielding Suka.

Just at that point, Vishnu, Shiva and Narada appeared. Narada asked Shiva, "O, Mahadeva, how can You ask Your trishul to kill Suka who, in Your own words, has become immortal by listening to Bhagavata. Shiva chuckled – "O, you Narada, I love your mischief and more so when it has the potentiality of saving in future the afflicted world of human beings."

Thus, thanks to Narada's penchant for creating complications, mankind has been blessed with a celestial scripture enabling all of us to attain liberation with mere devotion to the Lord.

(Based on the series of talks given by K.R. Baliga on Bhagavata, now under way in the Old Age Home.)

YOUNG ACHIEVERS 2007

This year the Sabha will be honouring three young amchis - Ajay Kini, Ramnath Rao and K. Sangeetha who have made a mark in their respective fields.

K. Ajay Kini ,(Born on 13-2-1989), son of our Member K. Ganesh Kini took up Go-Kart Racing as a sport in 2003 even when he was just 14 years old and has participated in a number of national and international events. His talents have been recognized by JK Tyre and Volvoline who have sponsored him in quite a few events. Because of his karting experience, he was able to easily make a mark in the single seater Formula Maruti Category too. To recount a few of the events which he won:-

- a) JK. Tyre National Karting Championship 2003
- b) MRF Karting Championship 2003
- c) 800cc Formula Maruti Champion 2006
- d) JK Tyre Junior Racing Cup 2006.
- e) Formula Swift 1300 C/C and Formula Hyundai 1500 C/C. 2nd place in 2006.

Based on his past records and achievements, the ace Indian car-racing champion Narayan Kartikeyan has included Ajay Kini as a reserve for his four-member team in the JK Tyre National Racing Championship.

To the best of our knowledge this young lad of 17 who is now studying in XI class in Jaigopal

Garodia Vivekananda Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Anna Nagar, is the only amchi who has made a mark in Motor Racing. Telecasting of motor racing featuring Ajay can be seen on DD1 at 6.30 p.m. on Sundays. The Sabha is very happy to honour him with the Young Achiever Award for 2007 and wish him a very successful career during which he earns many more prestigious awards and laurels for himself and our country.

Ramnath V. Rao (Born on 2-7-1982), the son of our member Mr. A.N. Viswanatha Rao, has secured the first rank in First Class of the B.L. Degree Examination conducted in 2005 by Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University. Besides two gold medals he has won for his outstanding performance in the B.L. Degree Examination, he has also won a Certificate of Merit and Cash Award from the prestigious Mylapore Academy for his sterling achievement. He has been enrolled as an Advocate in November 2005. With a high sense of social commitment he has been a regular voluntary blood donor thereby saving many precious lives. In addition to his high academic achievements, he has also won in 2004 a Certificate of Appreciation from the Lions Club of Central Madras for his outstanding performance in the Inter Collegiate Quiz Competition.

Young Ramnath is now studying M.B.A. at P.S.G. Technology, Coimbatore.

The Sabha is very happy to recognize Ramnath V. Rao as a Young Achiever 2007 and wish him a very brilliant future in the service of the country.

Miss K. Sangeetha (Born on 6-10-1982), the daughter of our Life Members Mr. M. Kamalakar Shenoy and Mrs. Leela Shenoy, has secured the First Rank in the M.Com. Degree examination conducted in April 2005 by the University of Madras scoring 72% marks. She studied M.Com. in Anna Adarsh College for Women, Anna Nagar. In recognition of her achievement, she has been awarded with the "Best Post Graduate Student of Commerce of the Madras University" by the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry during their Annual General Meeting held on 7th October 2005.

The Sabha is happy to recognize Miss Sangeetha as a Young Achiever 2007 and wish her a bright future marked with many academic laurels.

GANESHA AARATI IN KONKANI

Each year during Ganesha Chaturthi festival conducted in our Sabha, our members sing Konkani Aarati songs specially composed by them. We reproduce below one such song by our Member, Smt. Meena Gopal Shanbhag. This can be sung to the tune of the popular Aarati song "Jaya Jaya Aarati Raama Tumhaare".

Jaya Jaya Aarati Ganapati Raayaaka
Shiva Paarvatile Shakti Kumaaraa ka II

Maathiyeche Baalaku Paarvatina baandhlen
Tiggele Shakteena taakkaa jeevu dillen II Jaya

Paarvatile dwaara paalaku jaallo
Ishwarrathayi taane bhaayira raabbailo II Jaya

Karunaamaya taakka Aavsuna kellen
Ganaanche Adhikaaru baapsoona dillen II Jaya

Sarvaanle bhojana eklana khellen
Kuberaalo ahamkaaru naashu kellen II Jaya

Vyaasamuneeka taane sahaayu kellen
Mahaabhaarataache lekhana jallen II Jaya

Sundara roopa ten visarjana jaattaa
Niraakara Nirguna hridayaantu bastaa II Jaya

Mukta Shaambhavi Sharanu yetta
Sadaa sarva kaala anugraha maagta II Jaya

Some more such Aarati songs in Konkani composed by Smt. Meena Gopal Shanbhag have been sent for publication in the Konkani monthly "Panchakadaayi" published from Manipal, and two have appeared in its November 2006 issue.

UTSAV - HINDUSTANI SANGEET SAMMELAN

The Sabha has been conducting each year a Hindustani Classical Music Concert to commemorate the memory of Parabmam and Koppimai. This year the function was celebrated on Sunday, the 6th August 2006 with a scintillating vocal recital by Pandit K. Upendra Bhat, a well known exponent of the Kirana gharana and a senior disciple of the legendary Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. His music was marked by the same vitality that distinguishes his guru's style and captivated the attention of the audience of the fully packed Music Hall. He was

ably accompanied by Sri Jayaram Kilpadi on the Harmonium and Sri Ram Jadhav on the tabla. The recital was well reviewed by the Press.

In order to meet one of the objects of the Sabha i.e. social and cultural advancement of the united Gowda Saraswat community, the Sabha took this opportunity to organise a week-long Hindustani Sangeet Sammelan inviting some other organizations in Chennai promoting Hindustani classical music. The organizations which participated in the week-long Sangeet Sammelan were Viswakala Sangama, Gana Yogi Panchakshara Sangeet Yogashram Trust, Pandit Krishnanand Music Circle and Aalap. Prominent artistes like Pt. M. Janardan, Kumardas, Saniya Patankar, Bhagwant Walokar, Padmini Rao, to name a few, participated in this week long UTSAV which received rave reviews in the Press.

OUR MOOLKY TEMPLE

Premi Shenoy

Nature is at its most bountiful, luxurious best in South Kanara more popularly known as Dakshina Kannada in Karnataka which is a part of the legendary Parashurama Kshetra. The District has now been bifurcated.

A number of renowned, beautiful temples sanctified over centuries by sages dot the coast line as one travels from Mangalore to Goa. Each of these temples has its own hoary legend.

One of the popular temples is the Moolky Sri Venkatramana Temple. Moolky is situated on the banks of the river Shambhavi and the temple is about a kilometer off the Kanyakumari-Mumbai National Highway roughly 40 km north of Mangalore. It was originally a small shrine built and dedicated to Lord Vitala by the Jains.

It is believed that a King of Vijayanagar, an ardent devotee of Lord Narasimha had installed this idol of his ishta devata in a temple in his Kingdom. However, during the frequent Muslim invasions of this coastal area, fearing that harm would befall his beloved idol, the King had it thrown into a well. Several years later, His Holiness Sri Yadavendra Theertha Swamiji of Kashi Math who was passing by saw a cobra guarding the well. Sensing that there must be something precious in the well, he ordered a thorough search. On finding the submerged idol he was mesmerized by its resplendent beauty and started worshipping this idol of Lord Narasimha along with the other idols of the

Math. Lord Narasimha appeared in Swamiji's dream and suggested that the idol be installed in Moolky. Swamiji implicitly obeyed the Divine command and started the long journey to Moolky by foot. After several days he reached Padupanambur, the shifted capital of the rulers of Moolky. Swamiji requested the King to provide some light for the remaining part of his journey but was refused. With firm faith in his Ishta Devata Lord Narasimha, Swamiji proceeded further on his journey. No sooner had he come out, the King's palace caught fire and remained ablaze till Swamiji reached his destination Moolky. The King later begged pardon of the Swamiji and also undertook construction of the temple complex. The idol of Lord Narasimha was installed by His Holiness Yadavendra Thirtha in the Moolky Temple in 1565 AD.

The idol of Sri Venkatramana with Sri Devi and Bhoo Devi as consorts was brought from Karkala and installed in Moolky because of the political disturbances in the district during the 18th Century. Thus the original Vitala Shrine was changed as Sri Venkatramana Temple. The "Utsava Moorthi" of this temple is Lord Bindu Madhava. The idol was found by His Holiness Sri Madhavendra Thirtha Swamiji of Sri Kashi Math while bathing in the Ganges in Banaras (Varanasi). This temple in Moolky is one of the many temples in South Kanara which has a "Darshan" (Oracle) for more than 200 years and attracts a large number of devotees. The temple has been financially assisting many students of our community in pursuing their studies. The temple also sponsored a Yakshagana Troupe for quite some years.

My mother's grandfather was a priest in the Moolky Temple and, among all priests, he had the longest tenure by turn called "Paryaya" as the official Head Priest of the temple. The Moolky Temple thus is very close to the psyche of our family. It has been our practice to seek the blessings from this temple for any auspicious work planned by any one in the family.

ELDERS, THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

Mrs. Prafulla Shenoy

Elders are those who are older to us by age or through relation. They have vast experience in life. We can benefit from their experience and succeed in life by setting them as role models. But it is rather sad that now-a-

days the elders are not being given the status and importance which they deserve.

When elders expressing their views and give advice, we should listen patiently and not rush to interrupt them with our impatience. We should not show anger or disrespect to our elders before others. If we give respect to our elders, our children too will learn to respect us. Usually, we lose interest in old things in our houses – like furniture, pictures etc. and dispose them off. It is not at all correct to treat our elders in a similar manner. We may be paid in the same coin.

It is our mind which is solely responsible for all that we do. If we can adjust ourselves with elders it will be possible for all to live in peace. Where there is a will, there is a way.

Just as an old tree with strong roots and young shoots looks pretty, similarly, elders surrounded by the youngsters will provide a good and strong foundation to the family.

In today's society where both parents go to work so many small children are put to crèches or left with servant maids where they are prone to infection and depression due to lack of parental love. It is here that the elderly grandparents have a big role to play by filling the vacuum created by busy working parents and external unhealthy atmosphere.

Today the western life style to which our young generation is exposed through the print and visual media, has eroded the cultural values and traditions of our society. It is here that the elders play an important role in inculcating in the next generation the healthy traditions and good values. Like the Banyan tree they strengthen the family and through it the society.

Elders will earn virtue (Punya) by their good deeds. We get a part of their "punya" when we seek their blessings.

Generally, when people reach a very advanced age, they lose interest in worldly affairs. Yet they resent if they are kept out of decision-making or no one bothers to seek their advice or even to keep them informed. It is the duty of the younger generation to see that there is no such scope for resentment.

Since elders are considered in our shastra to be next only to God, if their advice is spurned, it results in all sorts of difficulties.

If the present generation tries to keep their elders happy during their life-time, they will also get the same type of treatment from their successors, when elders are disrespected and ill-treated, definitely their curse will fall on us.

People who respect their elders will get some mental satisfaction and happiness in life. Even today in some of the joint families nobody will dare to disobey the elders.

In many religions, elders are respected and remembered. Even after their death, every year their death anniversary ceremony is performed by conducting "shraddha". In "Pitru Paksha", these ancestors were honoured by giving them "tarpan" (Til, water).

The elders are facing a lot of problems these days. Their children holding "green cards" in foreign countries are not in a position to stay back in India with them and look after them in the old age. The aged parents themselves who are not too happy to live in an alien setting are mentally depressed. A feeling of emptiness creeps into their lives. Countless Old Age Homes have sprung up. Some old people will not be able to mentally adjust to a life in these places where filial love is lacking. Society will be in a better position indeed when it is possible for all elders to live with their families.

For these elderly people who have struggled throughout their life time for the benefit of their children, the present generation should show gratitude and should try to reciprocate their love and affection.

The older generation also should try to understand the present day problems of their youngsters and sincerely try to adjust with them without interfering with the way in which the younger generation manages their affairs. It is better if they realize that they have had their day. The children have grown up, have matured and can be trusted to take responsible decisions. So it is better to let the younger generation know that we trust in their capacity to manage the affairs and that the older generation is available for seeking any advice if asked for.

It is better to avoid clash of egos and substitute this with love and affection, thereby enabling all to live better and happier life.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS....

Anita Praveen Kamath

Day in and out, I wield the ladle with deftness and delight. It has, however, been a while since I have wielded the pen! I had resigned myself to the fact that I'm far more competent in the kitchen and would rather whip up a new recipe in a jiffy with much more gusto and pleasure rather than juggle with an interplay of words. My literary skills had germinated in my daughter's genes and I had considered them redundant in me. But out of the blue, the Editor caught me off guard, when he suggested I write an article and would not take no for an answer. It rekindled my literary flames that had been reduced to a mere smoulder.

And after much ado, here I am finally putting pen to paper! My children scoff at me when I say that I have had little time to set aside for this endeavour. *Amma* is at home practically all day and this is equated to having all the time in the world! Little do they know of the multifarious roles one has to assume as a homemaker. The crack of dawn sees me don the chef's hat and make a beeline for the kitchen. Early mornings give a new dimension to the term 'rush hour' and chaos reigns supreme! Lost books and stationery, the seemingly incessant calling bell, lunch boxes to be packed, children to be shepherd around are just a few contributors to the avalanche that descends upon a homemaker each morning! One would expect that the chaos would give way to a few hours of peace and quiet. But chores seem to expand to take all morning, also spent in fending off salesmen and supervising the servant and before you have had the time to look at the clock, it's already past noon. Then it is time for the luxury nap that is the privilege of a homemaker and the envy of her working counterparts.

A homemaker has to be on her toes at all times and to ensure this, an active fitness regime is now an integral part of the modern homemaker's life, be it a brisk walk, an hour at the gym or plain and simple yoga at home. After all she has to be fit as a fiddle to hold fort against all odds! Today's homemaker is computer-savvy and has graduated from gardening and baking to negotiating bulls and bears at the share market. She can also squeeze into her schedules a whole host of activities depending on her interests be it a religious discourse, a bhajan class or a regular women's day out, not to mention the vast array of soaps on TV that the average homemaker is

glued to, though children vehemently criticize these, but end up watching nevertheless!

To be an efficient homemaker, one must know to adapt to a wide range of professions! Countless are the times when I've steered the children around, dropping one off and picking up the other and presto! Here's a chauffeur in the making! Every mother is a serious contender in the rat-race of exams and results and inevitably turns teacher. Disaster-management is another of her fortes and she has to effortlessly deal with ink bottles that have toppled over or car keys that have been misplaced without batting an eyelid. The 'Sound of Music' in her life is the constant shout '*Amma*', where is this and where is that or simply where are you?

To quote my mother-in-law, another avid homemaker like me, there is no such thing as retirement for a homemaker. It is a full-time job that encompasses every waking moment. At the end of the day, however, a homemaker can look back at the day with a sigh at tasks still unaccomplished, yet retire to bed with a smile for all her efforts make the house the proverbial 'Home, Sweet Home'. As each new day dawns, this adage would probably echo a homemaker's sentiments-

*'Tomorrow is not here for me to see, and
Yesterday with its sad mistakes is far away,
I think I shall be busy with today....'*

MATRIMONIAL WEBSITE

Most of our community members who have had to perform the wedding of their children (mainly daughters) have been hard put to search for suitable alliances because our community is very widely spread – both in India and abroad – and information cannot be readily gathered. News Bulletins like "Soirika" published from Bangalore have been of help. But it is high time we utilize the Internet and website for better dissemination of information.

Mr. Ajith Bhatt who had visited the Sabha's website has sent us the following information:

"On 09-06-2006 I have launched a matrimonial website www.konkanimangalya.com in which any interested Samajbandhav can register his/her or his son's/daughter's profiles, can upload photos etc. This website has many other modern features, but at the same time has many traditional features like Nakshatra, Gotra,

horoscope, food habits etc. I request your kindness to inform your Sabha members about this website, so that more and more community members can benefit through the website.”

SGS SABHA CHARITABLE TRUST

The main activity of the Trust so far is running the Old Age Home. As against its present capacity of 12, there are eleven residents. The plan is to increase the capacity to 40 in due course.

During the year 2005-06 the Trust received sponsorship donations for 190 days' expenses at Rs.1500 per day. All donations received of Rs.5000 or over are being credited to the Anna Poshana Fund Corpus of the Trust which stood at Rs.10,51,054 as on 31st March 2006.

There are plans to provide suitable modifications/additions to the first floor of the Old Age Home building so as to utilize the area for new activities including some which would pay for themselves. The Trust may have to spend about Rs.8 lakhs for this purpose and may have to approach the generous donors again to raise this amount.

Between 1st April and 31st October 2006, the Trust received donations for sponsoring 104 days' expenses and a Corpus contribution of Rs.2,48,372 to the Anna Poshana Fund.

The Trust hopes that at least 150 more readers of Sabha News will come forward to donate Rs.1500 each and sponsor a day's expenses of the Old Age Home before March 2007. It will be easy to remember this if you can time this donation with your Birthday, Wedding Anniversary etc.

Donations to the Trust are eligible for Income Tax concession under section 80G. Cheques drawn favouring “SGS Sabha Charitable Trust” may be sent to the Trust's Office which shares the Sabha's address.

Every Thursday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. talks are being given in the Old Age Home by Mr. K.R. Baliga, on Srimad Bhagavata, and these have been well-received by the residents. An article based on one of the talks is included in this edition of Sabha News. Similar programmes can be arranged on other days, if there are persons who can volunteer their services.

THE DEPARTED SOULS WE MISS THEM

Since the publication of the last Newsletter No.28 in July 2006 the Sabha has come to know about the sad demise of the following members:

K. Sadananda Pai, Chennai	17-08-05
G.M.Nadkarni, Chennai	13-03-06
Mrs.M.Prema Bai, Trichur	21-06-06
G. Venkat Rao, Chennai	25-07-06
G. Narasimha Mallan, Chennai	13-09-06
Mrs.Chitra S.Shenai, Manjeshwar	21-10-06
S. Ramanandan, Chennai	11-11-06
Mrs. Sunitha V. Shenoy, Chennai	08-12-06

PONDER A WHILE

What we have within us creates the circumstances outside.

Easy paths generally lead nowhere.

An attempt is a small thing, but it can be a promise for the future.

There is great strength in the power to keep silent, especially when you are angry.

SABHA WEBSITE

Our Sabha now has a Website from which you can get all details of our Sabha and its activities, as also of the Charitable Trust. It is updated from time to time. Please do visit it and give us your views and suggestions for improving its contents and scope.

The website number is www.sgssabhachennai.com and our Email address is sgssabha@vsnl.net

The Sabha is grateful to **Sri Vasant M. Shanbhag, Canara Traders & Printers Pvt. Ltd.** for the production of this issue free of charge. He is the Joint Secretary of our Sabha.

