

Knowledge and Creativity

- A discussion

- **A.V. Balakrishnan**

It was a salubrious morning in Bangalore. Dark and grey clouds were floating on the sky above. Drizzles of monsoon were kissing the ground softly, as I was entering the Indiranagar house of Mr. T. S. Nagarajan, with my palms over my head.

As I entered and seated in front of him, he asked “what is the latest news on professional ethics?, subject of the journal that I edit.

The hot news with me, I said, is the recent seminar held at Gandhi Bhavan (Bangalore) on Knowledge and Creativity. It was organised in commemoration of the thousandth birthday of Ramanujacharya. I gave him a detailed account of the seminar conducted at the initiative of K.S.Madhavan, CEO, Shingo Institute of Japanese Management (Bangalore), with a large number of college students as prime audience (covered under ‘News & Views’ column – page nos.5-7 in this journal).

“Any human achievement becomes progressive and purposeful when its outcome turns beneficial to the society at large,” said Mr. Nagarajan (former Managing Director, Brooke Bond India and former Guest Faculty at IIM, Ahmedabad and IIM, Calcutta.)

After listening to a brief report on the Seminar, Mr. Nagarajan opened up the topic seriously. “Knowledge, he said, is acquiring information. Creativity is converting that information for the joy of mankind. Whether it is music, dance, science, technology, social work, public governance, business or industry, the bottom line of its success is the net benefit or joy that the doer and the receiver gets.

“Let us keep the big word ETHICS away for the time being. Take a simple creative event that enters even to the heart of the illiterate – music. There is knowledge involved here. In fact it is the knowledge that makes the musician perfect. That perfect performance is Creativity. That is where a Chempai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, M S Subbalakshmi, Bismillahkhan, Bhimsen Joshi, Latha Mangeshkar, Balamuralikrishna, Yesudas, Jakir Hussain to speak a few of the great galaxy of our musicians, get to the heart of the masses. It brings joy to the listeners’ hearts.

“Speaking on a larger social context, the more deep the benefit of the creativity generated with knowledge acquired, the more it turns monumental. In a nutshell this can be given a distant comparison to the ‘Yogakshemam Vahamyaham’ concept of Bhagavad Gita or

Mahatma Gandhi's favourite 'Daridranarayana Seva' in social context.

"This is where Saint Ramanujachar stands out. His dynamic initiative to share knowledge with the downtrodden in society is just one of many examples.

"Here is one famous anecdote of Ramanuchachar defying his Master's instruction not to share the 'mantradeeksha' given to him for salvation. The Master had warned the disciple that if he shared the *mantra* to others, particularly to the downtrodden, he will turn a sinner and go to hell instead of Heaven.

"One day Ramanuja called people of all walks of life, including the downtrodden, and taught the *mantra* to them. When the Master questioned Ramanuja's defying the instruction given to him, the disciple's cool reply was "if my teaching of the *Mantra* to thousands of downtrodden will take them to Heaven, I will enjoy that more even if I am in the hell."

"The message is clear. The fountain of knowledge should be spread to one and all which includes those who are considered born in the lowest category in the caste hierarchy. Only then the benefactor will receive real joy. As a corollary, it also implies that the knowledgeable persons should apply their creativity to uplift the downtrodden.

"If this happens, Gandhiji's 'Ramarajya' concept will automatically come without any govt. or political efforts. And the objective of the Constitution of India, to make life enjoyable for man, animal and nature in the country, will be a perennial corollary to this.

After about an hour long discussion on the subject and of course personal pleasantries, I left his house. The sky was bright now with morning sun rays bathing the trees on the road in front of the house.



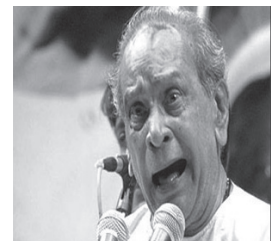
Chempai Vaidyanatha
Bhagavathar,



M S Subbalakshmi



Bismillahkhan



Bhimsen Joshi



Latha Mangeshkar,



Balamuralikrishna



Yesudas,



Jakir Hussain