

A RELUCTANT POLICEMAN

BY

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A VIDYA VRIKSHAH PUBLICATION



DEDICATION

**DEDICATED TO OFFICERS
OF THE INDIAN POLICE SERVICE
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
WHO HAVE GIVEN, ARE GIVING AND MAY GIVE
MEANING, DIRECTION AND PURPOSE
IN SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE**

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PREFACE

A RELUCTANT POLICEMAN ? This seemingly self- contradictory title calls for an explanation. This title came to me from the memory of an old Walt Disney film called The Reluctant Dragon. This film depicted a gentle and friendly dragon that was unwilling to follow the violent and cruel traditions of dragons.

When I joined the Indian Police Service in 1948 I thought my temperament and upbringing might not be suited to a police job. Nevertheless, I joined in the hope that it might be an opportunity to build new traditions of cordial police-public relations that would depart from the harsh traditions of the earlier British colonial rule. The culture and idealism of the new political leadership of free India did indeed give room for such hopes.

But after the first few decades of Independence, the rapid escalation of Crime, Disorder, Corruption and poor Governance triggered by the decline of morality of the public services and the political class, led to harsh injustices and inequalities in public life. By 1979 I was finally convinced that decencies in public life and professionalism in police life would not return in my lifetime. I opted out of the IPS that year, prematurely, to devote the next 30 years to pursue direct social service in a more fruitful and rewarding way. Yet the 30 years that I did spend in the IPS were not entirely barren. I was able nevertheless, to make a few contributions that would improve several aspects of operational performance of the police, though it remained far from attaining the status of a competent service that rested on public respect and support. The 30 years of fruitless Police Service was later more than compensated by the satisfactions of fruitful Social Service.

This book is an adaptation to the formats of a print and electronic version, of a good part of the Internet website bearing my name www.nkrishnaswamy.org. This website is a companion website bearing the name of my dear friend service colleague, C.V.Narasimhan. (www.cvnarasimhan.org). A viewing of both these websites provides an interesting composite view of two of us whose careers and lives are so closely and incredibly inter-twined. We shared an unusual parallelism in our values, ideals, methods and experiences in our police careers and also in post-retirement, in our involvement in a substantial manner in the area of education.

Both of us had steadfastly resisted to write our autobiographies, as we considered these mostly to be exercises of inflated egos. This was until Narasiman's son, Krishnan, finally insisted that our narratives could still serve to guide the younger generation in different areas of public service. Krishnan would not take no for an answer and then clinched his proposal by indicating that he

would set up two websites that could be with little effort and expense, and where our narratives could have a world-wide reach, beyond the reach of local petty prejudices.

Now I have felt the necessity to prepare a book in a print version at least in limited quantities to reach and serve senior officials and policy advisers who are not comfortable with reading material in the electronic form. My hope is that they may draw on our experiences and continue to maintain the public pressure for Police Reform that continues to cry for attention.

Both Narasimhan and I had the good fortune of close association and friendship with David Bayley, a scholar and authority of world repute on police and criminal justice systems around the world. He had studied our police work and readily provided a joint Foreword to our two websites. I have adopted the same without change as appropriate to serve this book version as well. I remain deeply grateful to David for this gracious contribution.

FOREWORD
by
David H. Bayley
Distinguished Professor, School of Criminal Justice,
State University of New York at Albany, New York, USA.

I am delighted to have been asked to write a foreword to the websites created to honor the accomplishments of C.V. Narasimhan and N. Krishnaswamy. They are legendary figures in the modern Indian police. Although I will comment on some of their history, I will write largely as a friend, colleague, and admirer. It has been my enormous good fortune not only to be associated with the Indian police, but to have been facilitated in my work by insightful, dedicated, and far-sighted IPS officers such as C.V. and N.K. Like them I have enjoyed the beauty of the old IPS training academy at Mt. Abu. From them I have learned a great deal about the evolution of the Indian police since Independence. And with them I have shared the joys of friendship.

N.K. was the first of the two that I met. It was in 1972, or possibly 1973, at the United Nations and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Fuchu, Japan, a suburb of Tokyo. This training facility, more familiarly known as UNAFEI, is run by the Japanese Ministry of Justice and draws scholars and practitioners to seminars from all over Asia and sometimes as far away as the Middle East and Africa. N.K. was an invited participant from India and I was a lecturer from the United States. I remember him not only for his thoughtful and insightful comments about the role of police in democratic societies, but also for the lovely sound of his flute as he practiced in quiet corners of the UNAFEI grounds.

I met C.V. in the late 1970s when he was Member Secretary of the National Police Commission (1977-1981). The Commission, under the able leadership of Dharma Vera, retired Governor of West Bengal, had asked me contribute to its deliberations as a consultant. My task was to explore the proper relationship between operational police officers and elected political leaders. Not to be too cynical, but it would appear that my efforts have made the situation worse rather than better. When Mr Rustumji, Member of NPC, later visited the United States, my wife and I had the great pleasure of having him for dinner at our home in Denver, Colorado. When I returned to India as the NPC was winding down, C.V. gave me an extensive personal briefing on its main findings at the Commission's office in New Delhi.

In the ensuing years I have been kept up-to-date about C.V. and N.K. through the good offices of R.K. Raghavan, another close IPS friend, who tries to bring us together whenever I am in Chennai and C.V. and N.K. are not off doing good work somewhere else in India or the world. Rest is not something that either of them practices very much. What is remarkable for me is that I have had the

opportunity to knowing personally two of the men who integrated the IPS after Independence. Theirs was the generation of officers who assumed responsibility for administering government in India after the British relinquished control. This was a daunting task after the agony of Partition, the rigors of World War II, the recriminations of the Independence struggle, and the need to nurture and accommodate a new political class. India has justly celebrated several of these gifted administrators, including Vallabhbhai Patel, after whom the National Police Academy in Hyderabad is named. Because C.V. Narasimhan and N.Krishnaswamy are of that venerable generation, we have a unique opportunity to learn what it was like to “Indianize” the vaunted steel-frame government during that momentous period.

Like C.V. and N.K. I have been associated with the Indian police almost all of my professional life. They, of course, as leaders and me only as an observing scholar. I have been distressed by what I perceive as a decline in the standards of Indian policing during my lifetime. Perhaps my judgment romanticizes the past, but I know that C.V. and N.K. share this concern. Unlike me, however, they have tried to do something about it, by leadership, by personal example, and by advocacy. Both have worked to implement the reforms recommended by the Indian National Police Commission. As evidence of their continued concern with policing, C.V. has recently written a short paper about direct recruitment to the IPS, setting the issue within the historical sweep of Indian policing since Independence and stipulating the principles that should guide IPS leadership. Among his recommendations, C.V. calls correctly for political neutrality of the police. He has been too diplomatic, in my opinion, in not adding that Indian politicians must learn to respect the operational and managerial integrity of the IPS. C.V. knows this issue full well, having wrestled with it throughout his career.

N.K. has added an insightful annexure to C.V.’s paper about the importance of intelligence, in the technical sense, in police work. Intelligence gathering, he argues, has not utilized enough face-to-face interactions with the public and has relied too much on specialized units, often operating covertly. Police must learn to encourage cooperative relations with the public in order to obtain more timely and focused intelligence. He stresses the importance of developing the analytic capability of police control rooms, which has remained “rudimentary” in India. Writing such as these indicate why C.V. and N.K. are role models indeed for young IPS officers.

One of the great privileges of my life has been to know these two great police professionals. Our association has not only been rewarding in terms of what I have learned about the Indian Police, but has been fun. What more could I have asked for?

INTRODUCTION

A PERSONAL MEMOIR

I was born on 15-07-1925, the second of four children, to V.Natesan and Sivakamu, an orthodox Brahmin couple in Nemam village, Thanjavur District in Tamilnadu. My parents belonged to a traditional family of Vedic scholars. My maternal grandfather, Natesa Sastry, was a Vedic teacher of such considerable repute for his scholarship, that his pupils included one who was to become the Paramacharya of the Kanchipuram Mutt.

My father was the first in the family to break out of the Vedic scholarly tradition of the family lineage. Taking to a western style education, first at the local High School at Tirukattupalli, he went on for higher studies to the St. Joseph's College at Tiruchirapalli, where he took his MA degree in Economics, with the first rank in the University. His desire to get into the Indian Civil Service, like a few of his contemporaries, was scotched by his father, because of the prevailing religious taboo against going overseas. He had therefore to content himself with qualifying for the next best public service that was then available, viz. the Financial Civil Service. After a brief stint as a Lecturer in Economics in the Government College, Kumbakonam, he got selected to the FCS, and this led him to a meteoric rise in the service of the Government of India. His career was capped by the prestigious British award of the OBE in 1941, when, a year later, at the age of 42, his life was tragically cut short by cancer.

In 1925, when I was a baby 40 days old, my mother took me with my elder brother all the way from Nemam village to Peshawar, the northern-most tip of what was then an undivided India and what is now in Pakistan. We were to join my father who was then posted as the Deputy Controller of the Military Finance Department at Peshawar. My early years till 1936, were largely spent in places like Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi, all now in Pakistan. Thereafter till 1942, my father held senior positions in the Military Finance Department of the Government of India. This meant living in New Delhi, with a summer time shift to Simla, by the Government of India, for four months every year to avoid the heat of the Delhi summer. These postings meant my schooling alternated between N.Delhi and Simla. After doing my Intermediate Examination in the Hindu College, following my father's death in 1942, I had to return to Madras to be with my mother, and finish my BSc at Loyola College, Madras. But my love for Delhi remained so strong that I returned thereafter to take my MSc from Delhi University in 1946.

Soon after finishing my MSc, I went to Bangalore to seek an entry into the Institute of Science, Bangalore to pursue a research career on which i had set my heart. But I failed to get admission, and was wondering what to do next. I was staying at Bangalore with my classmate M.R.Raman who had by then joined as a

Lecturer in Chemistry in the newly started Vijaya College. Raman took me one morning to visit his college, and introduced me to his Principal, Venkatesachar, who promptly asked me whether I would like to teach. When I said I wouldn't mind trying, Venkatesachar took me straight away to one of the classes which were then in session and asked me to hold the class period on any topic of my choice. Still fresh with my subjects from the MSc examinations, I lectured to the class on "Avogadro's Hypothesis". At the end of the class the clearly impressed Principal announced to me that I could now consider myself as part of the College faculty ! This stint as a Lecturer in Bangalore lasted one year, after which I decided to resign and return to Madras and take a shot at the first competitive Examination that had just then been announced by the Union Public Service Commission for the newly constituted All-India Services.

Success in that examination was what led me finally into the Indian Police Service in 1948. The 30 years that followed till I retired in 1979 were eventful years of personal and professional satisfaction. The first significant event on the personal front was of course, my marriage on the 30th April, 1950. My wife Meenakshi was the second of three daughters of Lakshmi and N. Padmanabha Ayyar who bore impressive family credentials. Lakshmi was the daughter of Ulloor Parameswara Ayyar, the literary giant of Malayalam literature, who was the Poet Laureate of the erstwhile Travancore State that merged after Independence into the new state of Kerala. Padmanabha Ayyar himself took the First rank in the BE Examination of the Madras University, by virtue of which he was automatically appointed to the Indian Service of Engineers, which was one of what was then called the Secretary of State Services of the British Government of India. In an eventful career he was associated with building the main Irrigation Dams of Madras Presidency and finally retired in 1956 as the Chief Engineer of Tamilnadu. After retirement he went on to become Civil Engineering Adviser to the Steel Ministry of the Government of India and in the five years that followed, he laid the foundations (literally) of the first three major Steel Plants of free India at Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur.

In emulation of her father, my wife Meenakshi had taken the first rank gold medal in the BA – Physics examination of Madras University in 1949. And after 20 years of marriage, she resumed studies to take her BL degree, and became a lawyer to acquire over the next 20 years, an impressive reputation as one of the first women lawyers in the field of Income Tax Law. All this, she accomplished all on her own, without the least interference with her meticulous attention to bringing up our two children and running the household. Our children, a son and a daughter were born in 1951 and 1955 respectively. My daughter Uma has today shaped into a top Breast Surgeon. My son, Natesan died in 2004 ending a life crippled by severe disability, a sad experience that became a driving force for my post-IPS life, devoted to social service for the welfare of the disabled, specially the blind.

The interesting details of my long career and personal experiences in the Police Service and in my retirement years thereafter, in Social Service, are narrated in the Chapters that follow. I did get substantial results from my approach of innovative utilization of existing resources and adapting police work to the state-of-art technologies and facilities of those times. This approach remains valid today, and I am sure that IPS officers of today can get far more impressive results with the vastly improved technologies and facilities of today.

CHAPTER 1 : THE INDIAN POLICE SERVICE

The Indian Police Service and Indian Administrative Service were created as All-India Services at Independence in 1947 as successors to the Indian Police and the Indian Civil Service that had served British rule. They were to be responsible respectively, as before, for Law & Order and Civil Administration of the country. A handful of Indian members of the old services continued in the new dispensation, and many of them served as great mentors to members of the new services.

The IAS inherited well-established administrative structures and had the benefit of guidance of many outstanding members of the ICS who were experts in all aspects of civil administration. The IPS on the other hand, inherited police forces, led by members of the IP. all groomed and steeped in the colonial tradition of the rule of force, and separated from the people by fear and distrust, Very few of the old IP had the skills or attitudes needed to shape all levels of the police forces to respond to the social, economic and political needs and aspirations thrown up by the new environment of a free democracy. Basically it was virtually a paradigm shift of the police from the rule of force to the rule of law. The new entrants to the IPS had therefore largely to fall back on their own resources to build a new police tradition.

When we, in the first 1948 batch of the IPS went through our one year of training, at the Central Police Training College, Mount Abu (later to become the National Police Academy at Hyderabad) we were groomed as if lathis and guns, and guts and muscles were our prime professional requirements. P.L. Mehta, the Commandant of the College, was a typical product of the old colonial IP tradition, and had nothing more to add to the above training inputs, beyond emphasizing social graces and table manners. There was of course, some attention in our instruction to law and forensic science. On how we should shape humanistic attitudes and methods of the large manpower forces that we would be leading there was no attention beyond emphasis on strict discipline. Some side-lights on the light side, of our first year at Mount Abu, are given at the end of this Chapter.

Has the IPS succeeded in building a new Police tradition ? Individually, many of its members have performed well, a few with distinction. But as a collective Service, the frank answer is that the IPS has not much to show for itself. Primarily, police leaders have failed to win public esteem and confidence. Part of the reason lies with its sister service, the IAS, which otherwise has been eminently successful in contributing to the remarkable socio-economic progress of the country. I feel that the IAS officers who led the Finance Departments failed the IPS in not recognizing and supporting those early timely financial investments that could have ensured its transformation from the start. This is not to exculpate the IPS from primary responsibility for the many critical areas of reforms which depended largely on its internal initiatives and did not require financial investments. The critical areas that did require large or systematic financial investments had to wait till 1971, till I pressed hard for the Reorganization and the Modernization Programmes through the recommendations of the Tamilnadu Police Commission.

Here I must pay humble tribute to that ICS giant, R.A.Gopalaswamy, who was the Chairman of the Commission, and with whom I had the privilege of working as Member-Secretary. He brought to bear an awesome mastery of the totality of the public administration and within it, the critical role of the police. But even with him, I had sometimes to express strong views, as for instance, on the status and emoluments of the Sub-Inspector, the rank that held charge of Police Stations. RAG wanted to fit this functionary into the old established equations of all functionaries within the pay structure of the public administration. On the other hand I pressed hard for raising the status of officers in charge of police stations, as their role was both unique and critical, empowered as they were by law, to intrude in the life and liberty of the citizen, and to preserve law and order. RAG finally conceded my plea by proposing a new higher rank of Deputy Inspector, which he could then equate with the Deputy Tahsildar.

It was no small honour for me, that in his confidential report on me at the end of the Commission's work, (which the then IGP, R.M.Mahadevan felt he should show me) that he rated me as in the same class as the best members of the IAS. But I have always felt that these ratings are ultimately of little consequence. My view was always that both the IAS and IPS, should look beyond their respective roles, individually and collectively, and integrate better to serve our people better. One can do no better than quote RAG's own telling words, clearly meant for both Services, in the Commission's Report :

A simple dichotomy between the growth of planned expenditure for development services and the static containment of expenditure on regulatory services is therefore a conceptual fallacy, which must be discarded as such. No State is or can be wholly a Police State or wholly a Welfare State. A State which ceases to perform Police functions efficiently will cease to be a Welfare State because it will cease to be a State.

Beyond the IAS and IPS, the ultimate blame for today's pervasive growth of crime, disorder and corruption, must surely lie with a political class that was in a sharp moral decline and contributed greatly to emasculating the central instruments of governance, namely, the IAS and IPS. But ultimately too, there remains the residual responsibility of these Services. The IPS itself cannot and should not escape blame for functions like training, for which there was no likelihood of external interference, or need for much added financial support. I shall, in the Chapters that follow, illustrate how indeed I was able to enhance several aspects of police performance on my own initiative and without such external supports in my early formative service years. In the Chapters that follow I also set out how we had to wait 20 years for a Police Commission to initiate the more critical financial investments needed to raise the performance of Tamilnad Police Force to levels that would really just begin to fulfill public need and expectation.

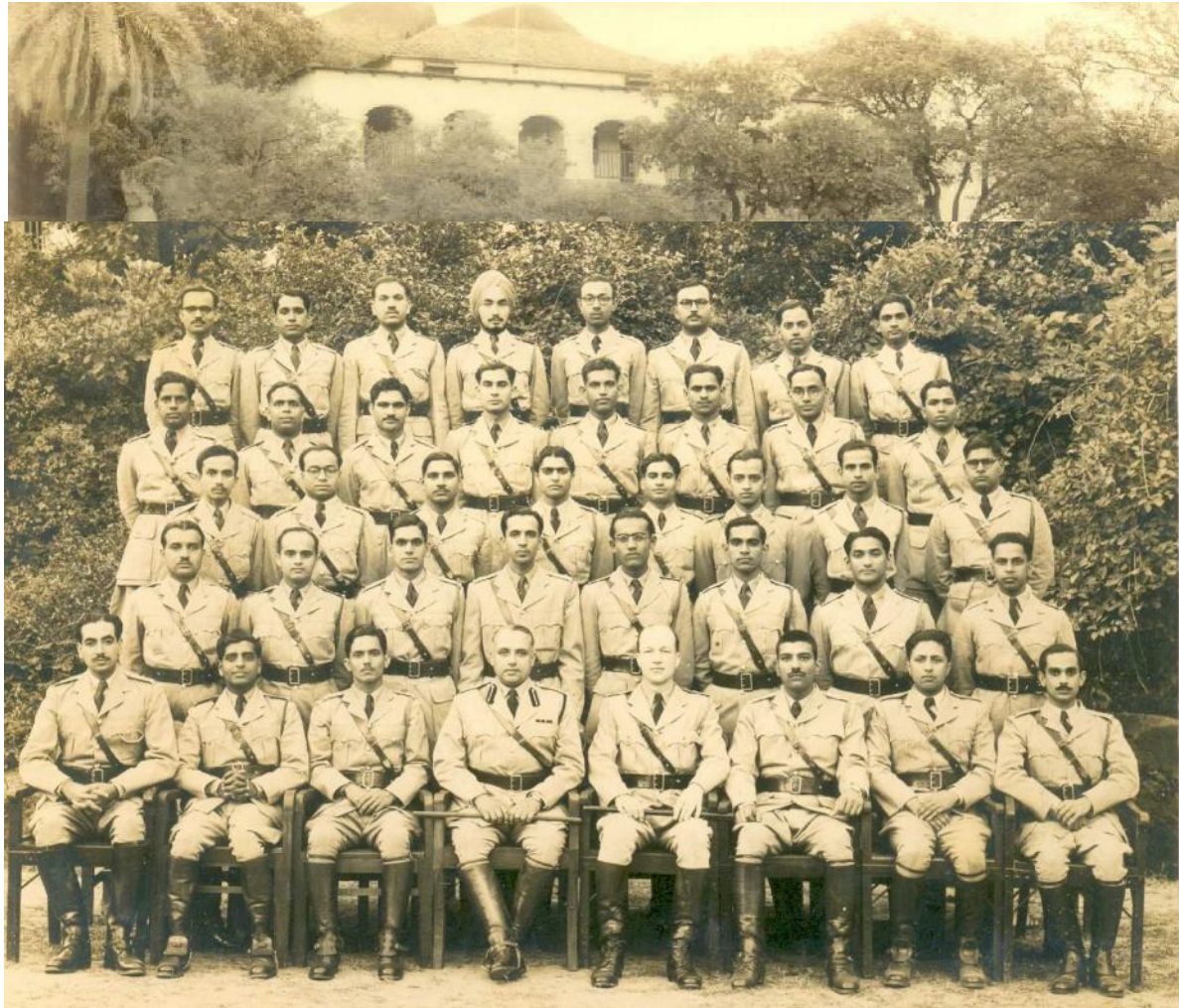
CHAPTER - 2 : THE FIRST YEAR IN THE IPS

We were a batch of 39 first entrants into the IPS in 1948. We were a motley lot from all parts of India, mostly from lower middle class families. We were fresh from the University, though some had later held brief jobs. We had no idea what the Service had in store for us and were in some trepidation of how we would fit into a profession that was founded on the use of force, and therefore admittedly did not enjoy public trust or esteem. Yet we still retained some of the youthful idealism and hope that we might be able to turn things around in the police in due course.

As our year of training unfolded we found we were being hammered into shape largely in the old colonial ways. There was a modicum of knowledge of law, jurisprudence and forensic science but the overwhelming emphasis was on physical activities designed to make us fit, tough and familiar with the use of lathis and guns. There was virtually no attention to how to change the police image, how to reorient the rank and file to humanistic attitudes and operational methods and how to build public relations appropriate to the expectations and needs of the people. All these we had to learn on our own, and in the hard way in the early years of our work in the field, with very little inputs from our seniors who were groomed in the old colonial police tradition.

We survived that tough one year at Mount Abu making new friends coming from all over the country to forge a pan-Indian professional identity. We had a lot of fun afforded by the many oddities of individuals among ourselves and our instructors, and comical situations that were plentiful. C.V. Narasimhan and I were room-mates and forged a great friendship that spanned the decades that have since passed. Years later, we documented much of the fun of the early

service years in a collection of recollections in a series we called Snippets. A few edited extracts from the early issues of Snippets are reproduced below, to end this Chapter on a lighter note and to illustrate how humour is a great way of softening the rigours of a tough police life.



SNIPPETS
(BITS & BYTES OF SHARED MEMORIES)
BY
C.V.Narasimhan & N.Krishnaswamy

March, 2007

We present here a brief documentary of our lifetimes, illustrated wherever possible or appropriate with pictures of the persons, places and events, specially those that were never-failing sources of laughter.

1948 – At Mount Abu

We may best begin with the following images of our campus and of our batchmates in Mount Abu who largely comprise the dramatis personae of this narrative and who provided the foundation on which many of our warm friendships were built.



Here we are, the members of our batch in the main group photo above, Above it is a glimpse of our hostel at the top, an ancient building reminiscent of the Cellular Jail in the Andamans, though originally intended as barracks for soldiers. This had about 10 rooms to a floor on two floors, and with two of us allotted to each room,. Facilities were primitive and included a cot, one bucket for water and one commode (the less finicky called it a shitpot) for each of us. The above photograph was taken on the day of our passing out from Mount Abu on completion of our training, or the day of our release from jail, if one might refer to it in the context of the rigour of the year that we spent there – yes, one year R.I.

Our batch had 39 members, drawn from all over the country, each different and unique in his own way. Some of them, of course had kinks and mannerisms, that drew our critical attention, as a constant and never-failing source of fun or occasion for leg-pulling, as will become apparent from much of the account that follows. In our references here, to oddities of individuals, of course, no offence is meant, and they do not detract from our warm affection for those whose legs we pulled.

Many of our batch-mates have passed on, and we miss them greatly. We have also presented here a few entries relating to the post-Mount Abu years, essentially to illustrate that personal kinks and oddities are quite universal. Identities of individuals are masked by using their initials or marked anonymous wherever the descriptions were striking but odd.

Three of us, CVN, NK and MSH, formed the Leg-Puller Triumvirate of the batch, who were bound by the same Wodehousian brand of humour. It was our eye for the odd, the unusual and the comical that threw up much of what we have documented.

PLM, the Commandant : An old timer of the Indian Police, brought up in the old British tradition, he had much concern that apart from old-time professional competence we should acquire all the social graces of an elite class, which did not come easily to the rabble of unsophisticated youngsters that came into his care.



Much of the rigour of our lives at Mount Abu derived from our outdoor activities, specially the physically exacting drills, that expected blind, unquestioning response to commands, which made for a traumatic transition for youngsters like us just out from the liberal easy-going environment of Universities. Here you see our squad at drill under the command of SP, our Chief Drill Instructor, the blast of whose stentorian voice could knock you off your feet; under the watchful eye of PLM, our Commandant (on a horse in the picture), making sure that no pains were spared to turn us into polished automatons



Our Mess : Where we were trained to match our skills in the use of rifle and lathi with skills in the use of knife and fork. The Mess was also the scene of many a record breaking eating performance, with OS setting high standards for a hearty meal.

PAR : Tall, fair and handsome, he had a striking personality that was the envy of our batch. Already with a good UPSC examination ranking, and with a good performance in all branches of training and all the social graces that made him popular with the local elite, he was expected to be the Commandant's choice for the best cadet prize. Finally, on overall performance, that prize went to CVN.

SNM : The only occasion when he let his hair down in our whole year at Mount Abu was when he joined in the revelry of a Holi celebration. CVN and NK were much disturbed in their sleep that night by the noise of the merry makers. But Mathur was the first to call the next morning to offer a profuse apology. Yes, without doubt, every inch a gentleman.

VVN : He used a very slow and deliberate way of speaking to make abundantly sure that he was clearly understood. However sometimes, the listener would get lost in the middle of his sentences, like the waiter-bearer at our Mess. By the time Naik had finished his ordering breakfast, "Do ----- ande --- ka ---- ek --- -- omelette ----- banao", the bearer was left undecided whether what was wanted was "Do ande ka ek omelette" or "Ek anda ka do omelette"

ABC : Our most unforgettable (or forgettable) experience was the day we were standing behind him watching him at target practice with a machine gun. When one of us called out to correct his posture, he turned around to check what we had said, with the machine gun now pointed at us and his finger still in the trigger. In a split second all of us dived like rabbits into the trench behind us to take cover. The shouting that Chief Drill Instructor Pratt later gave him, left ABC shivering for long afterwards.

RLB : One of our batchmates who set Olympic standards at the dining table. MSH, the chief wag of our batch, would always offer him a plate of biscuits with the words, "Have a biscuit or six".

RNS : Well remembered for his "absence of mind" at drill on the parade ground. At a point when our squad was standing, lined up facing a wall, and he had first to order "Squad, About Turn" and then order "Squad, Quick March", he reversed the order of the commands too late to realise that the squad was hitting the wall. His command and immediate exclamation were delivered together as a single unforgettable command "Squad, Quick March, OH HELL !".

KVS : Unforgettable for his total inability to keep step while marching. It was simply an inability to establish the alternating movements of the feet and arms into a natural synchronised rhythm, despite his conscious attempts every now and then to force a change of their rhythm, by a more rapid shuffling of the arms.

GVN : His effort to solve the “Case of the Missing Ten Rupee Note” was interesting. When the dhobi, Hiralal, declined to own up to taking the ten rupee note left in the pocket of the shirt given for wash, GVN decided to take matters in hand. Addressed to Hiralal in his fluent Anglo-Indian style of Hindi, GVN’s harangue ended thus : “Naam bada hai ya paisa bada hai ? Paisa nahin dega, tumara naam bloody well kharab ho jayega man !. GVN’s exhortation did not work, but a later strong arm intervention by SP, the Chief Drill Instructor did. The money was restored and the event gave us our first lesson on ground level realities in the detection of crime !!!

NKV : He rose suddenly in everyone’s estimate, from a low to a high profile, when his high connections became known, on the occasion of a visit to the College, of a senior Secretary to the Govt. of India, to whom he was related.

SNG : Remembered for sometimes making tall claims till one occasion when he was deflated. On one of the weekly guest nights at the Officer’s Mess, the Commandant recounted vividly how he took off his shirt and grappled successfully with a violent offender. Taking his cue from the end that narration, NK said in a deliberate measured tone “SNG here says he can also match that performance to the point of taking off his shirt, but on the later part, he has to think.” After a few moments of pregnant silence, the house came down in uncontrollable laughter.

ELS : Dearly loved by several later batches of IPS trainees who came into contact with him when he joined as Deputy Commandant at Mount Abu. He had a great sense of humour, often expressed with an unusual turn of phrase. Examples : his description of someone as “a gentleman, every other inch”; or his description of others as “crooked as a corkscrew” or “stinking against the wind”

MN : a master raconteur full of infectious laughter, who would always have his listeners in splits. There was, for instance, his description of an occasion when a VIP became suddely very uneasy in the midst of a discussion, due, it turned out, to one end of his native underwear (langote) having dropped loose, requiring him to adjourn to a corner to set matters right, in a process that MN, in his inimitable style, described as “restoration of order”

Anonymous State Civil Service officer on his first posting as Collector in Tamil Nadu, dealing with a law and order situation for the first time, felt it necessary to start by reading out the provisions of Section 144 from the Cr.P.C to his Tahsildar and then asking him to frame a notification under that Section to meet that situation. The Tahsildar produced a draft which made the Collector go red in the face, when he found that it’s opening sentence read “Whereas a situation has arisen, as per instructions of the Collector, that is likely to lead to a breach of peace.....”

ANONYMOUS Bureaucrat : At a public police function, he waxed eloquent on the undertaking of major programmes of “modernizing, humanizing and womanizing in the Tamil Nadu Police Force”. He was, of course, referring to the expansion of the Women Police setup

ANONYMOUS officer in Tamil Nadu whose peculiar mode of walking was described as “walking sideways in order to go forward”

Inspector of Police : Reporting after a spell of leave for celebrating his daughter’s marriage, and asked how the function went off, his reply was “it went off peacefully Sir” Clearly the effect of years of conditioning by law and order situations !

ANONYMOUS representative of that large class of persons with a glad eye for girls. Learning of this officer’s frequent application for leave on compassionate grounds, but really for having a gay time, an old-time officer recorded his order as “Leave sanctioned on passionate grounds”

ANONYMOUS officer : His squint prompted the comment that he could not see eye to eye with his colleagues and that puzzled his listeners by “looking here but seeing there”.

ANONYMOUS officer : His body had the huge dimensions worthy of a landmark : leading to the unforgettable expression that he “was suffering from good health”

CHAPTER - 3 : TWO LOST DECADES

My field experiences in the 20 years from 1949 to 1969 in the IPS were in-depth and wide-ranging. My first three subdivisions gave me my first taste of harsh ground realities. As Assistant Superintendent of Police of Kurnool Subdivision, I got my first direct taste in 1950 of Communist Terrorism. Tracking a band of armed guerillas in the Nallamalai Forests with the support of 10 policeman armed with old rifles, with no notion of the techniques and risks of such operations was simply a rash venture. In retrospect, I think we survived because the guerillas and police were equally inexperienced, and the guerillas carefully avoided encounters.

Next as Superintendent of Police, I handled three districts with reasonable success : Madurai, South Kanara, and Tirunelveli. In between these I had an enormously productive five years as Deputy Commissioner of the Crime Branch of Madras City. In 1965 I spent one year assisting R.M. Mahadevan in setting up the new Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Department of the State and get it running smoothly. Next, as DIG, I held charge of the Railway Police and the Armed Police, which gave me an opportunity to experience the work of the Armed Police in Nagaland and NEFA (now Arunacha Pradesh), Thereafter I held charge of the Coimbatore Police Range covering six huge districts. And in a brief one year in 1967-68 a posting at New Delhi in the Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India, gave me a national perspective of the interface between politics and security and law and order. It would seem that I was getting equipped now for a major assignment on Police Reform. But how this came to pass is a little known but interesting story of the next Chapter.

The experiences of these long years shared one common characteristic. The police had to manage largely with existing resources of manpower and equipment. Accretions to these resources were very slow in coming because the highest priorities for allocation of finances were for Development objectives. My approach therefore was to extract as much performance enhancements as possible from existing resources. In this, my five years from 1957 to 1962 in Madras City proved that a lot could be achieved. My first important finding was

that the potential of the constabulary was not recognized and not effectively utilized. They were indeed the most critical of all police resources by virtue of their large numbers working and living amongst the common people across the City which enabled them to have their finger on the pulse of the City. First information relating crime and Law and Order came largely through them, but credit was largely appropriated by the supervisory ranks.

The City had the great advantage of every police station being connected by a telephone network. I made it a habit to ring many of them first thing every morning and engage in conversation with whoever was present – usually the Station Writer or just the Station Sentry. Supervisory officers soon found I was always ahead of them on crimes reported, arrests made and whatever was happening in their Police Stations. This had the Supervisory officers always on their toes. Free and informal contact across the hierarchy, made for great team spirit and camaraderie, something new to the rigid boundaries between ranks of the old tradition.

The second great resource enjoyed was the Control Room and the City-wide VHF wireless equipped fleet of patrol vehicles, that provided had constant real-time contact with every part of the City. At the level of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners, we had the boon of good imported staff cars (which had become available at throw-away prices from the State Trading Corporation, which had acquired them from the Foreign Consulates which were getting newer replacements). These vehicles enabled us to be frequently on the move around the City, to establish a state of constant alertness of all ranks down the line. An occasional use by an officer with his family to attend a wedding or private function raised the cockles of some members of the bureaucracy, and prompted them to call for the logs of vehicular use. Perhaps they were not aware that the Police Act stipulates that every police Officer is to be considered as always on duty.

A senior Deputy Commissioner with a puckish sense of humour sent up a proposal saying we were short-handed on office staff and would need additional staff to make copies of the logs. Astonishingly, the Finance Department sanctioned a clerk's post, enabling copies of the logs to be made and submitted. The copies, occupied several reams of paper, filled with hourly entries day after day for the previous 6 months with a repetition of just one sentence, "Continuing on patrol". The bureaucrats became wiser thereafter but it was a typical example of their nit-picking in those days. In my later years in Tirunelveli District, I thought better sense would prevail on a proposal I had sent. It was for closure of a Police Outpost, not needed any longer in the local area, and proposed adding its staff to the mother Police Station which needed more manpower. The Government order closed the Outpost and rejected the need of the Police Station. The frequent disposal in those days even for sensible proposals was "The Government sees no need for the proposal!"

I was surprised when first joining Madras City to see that Police Stations did not have a set of Station Crime History records such as existed in all police stations in the Districts. My early effort in the City was therefore to get these important records compiled from the FIR Register in which all complaints were registered. It was an odd experience for Stations to send me day after day a rickshaw load of these old and new records, for me to ensure that the significant data got captured in the new records. This was a first step that ensured that Police Stations got a grip on their crime work. Yet another area where better utilization of existing resources yielded results was in respect of the City's small Finger Print Section. Providing a vehicle to take a Finger Print Expert to the scene of a crime as soon as it was reported, resulted in a dramatic increase detection of crimes through identification of finger prints lifted from the scenes of crime. Similar results came from sending Police Dogs from the City's Dog Squad to scenes of crime not only in the City, but also in the Districts which had no such facility.

These were but some examples of the types of services and patterns of using them that needed to be sharply expanded in the City, but more importantly, to be extended to the rest of the State, where such facilities did not exist. This required massive financial investments and called for a basic recognition with change in Government's financial priorities. The stage was set in 1969 to bring about this change. But sadly 20 years had been lost during which attitudes and methods of governance and more effective policing could have been established which could have resisted the onset of the forces of crime, disorder, corruption and decline of governance.

CHAPTER – 4 : POLICE REFORM - BACKGROUND

In the year 1969, I returned to Madras (now Chennai) from a posting in the Intelligence Bureau at New Delhi and was posted as DIG in charge of the Railways & Armed Police. Over the recent years I had studied the reports of Police Commissions that had been set up in several States. They had all left me quite unimpressed, as being high in homilies on improvement of the Police Image, and short on hard specifics for improving police performance. Could we do better than this, I thought, if we had a Police Commission for Tamilnadu. The more I thought about this, the more I was convinced that the idea would find a ready appeal to the sharp political instincts of M. Karunanidhi who was then the State Chief Minister. It was his first stint as Chief Minister and he clearly wanted to make a mark as a progressive administrator. I put down the idea in a short note, in both English and Tamil that could be readily read by him, and handed it over to R.M.Mahadevan who was then the State IGP to be passed on to the CM. In my years under him in the Madras City Police, RMM had deep trust in my judgement, and saw sense in my arguments.

It often happened in my service that whenever I offered any solution, I was invariably commissioned to implement it. And the following narrative would provide a striking illustration. Sure enough the Police Commission idea registered with the CM like a shot. And soon enough I had a call from RMM asking me to meet him with a draft of the Terms of Reference of the proposed Commission. A few days later word came that the Terms I formulated had been approved in toto and I was now asked to formulate proposals on who should head the Commission. My task was now to find someone who would make a good Chairman. I suggested to RMM that HVR Iengar, ICS (Retd) who had retired as Home Secretary in the Government of India and had settled in Madras might be a good choice. RMM promptly agreed and asked me to meet HVR and prevail upon him to accept the assignment. When I met him, HVR was all courtesy and kindness but said he did not feel up to it. But, he added, there could be no better man for the job than his old friend and ICS colleague, R.A.Gopalaswami, also now retired and settled in Madras. That is how I met RAG and gained his consent to be the Chairman of the Commission. Finally, Government approved the names of RAG as Chairman, and Sivagnana Gramani, a well respected scholar-politician of Tamilnadu, Govind Swaminadhan, a retired Advocate-General and M.Chandrasekaran, a retired Civil Servant to be Members of the Commission. Predictably I landed up as the Member-Secretary of the Commission.

The Commission sat and deliberated for the period of one year that I had proposed as the time-frame for completing its work. Working with RAG who had a mind of sheer brilliance and was possessed of a fantastic range of knowledge and experience in public administration, proved to one of the most enjoyable and fulfilling experiences of my service life. Together we worked out the knitty gritty of the revised pay structure, and the strength and rank structure of the Tamilnadu Police Force and the mechanisms for the insulation of the force from the forces of political Intervention and Interference. The Commission left it to me to work out the knitty gritty of the Modernization strategies, which I was convinced, held the answers to the critical issues of improvement of Police performance that affected the public most intimately from day to day. To my mind these ideas to which I gave shape and which were fully endorsed in the Commission are what made its Report as perhaps the first, most unique and most far-reaching documents of its kind in the field of Police Modernization in India. What the Report lacked in respect of other perspectives were more than offset years later in the Report of the National Police Commission, where it was left to my batchmate and life-long friend, CV Narasimhan, to produce what remains to this day, the most comprehensive and far-reaching report on Police Reform.

I shall reserve details of my work on Police Modernization for the Chapters to follow, because they need to be told in their different respective operational settings. At this point, however I need to end this story with some more details of the background of this story on the Police Commission. Its Report was produced in four Volumes, the first being the main narrative and the other three, data to support the Report's 133 Recommendations

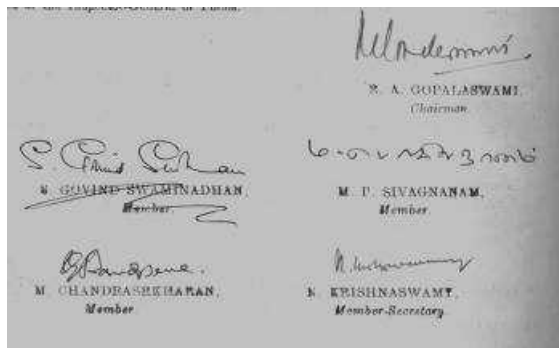
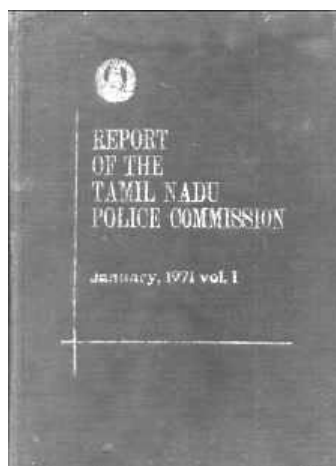
One very interesting development arising out of the Commission's formulations on Police Modernization was how it helped to shape the Government of India's thinking on this subject. The Home Ministry had begun playing with the modernization strategy and had set aside a budget of Rs 5 Crores to provide a 50 percent share to support Modernization schemes formulated by the States. Our proposal for Tamilnadu envisaged a holistic approach, spelt out in full working detail, and covering all the areas critical to the modernization process (Transport, Communications, Forensic Services, Training etc) at a cost of Rs 5 crores to be spread over a 5 year period. On behalf of the Commission, RAG and I made a trip to N.Delhi and placed our proposal before L.P.Singh, that awesome administrator of the ICS, who then headed the Home Ministry. But then RAG had an equally awesome reputation within the ICS fraternity and LPS listened to him with profound respect. Our simple point was that we had a comprehensive programme where each State would need not less than Rs 5 crores, and therefore there was a strong case for the Government of India to raise their funding support ten fold. It is to the credit of LPS that he saw the point at once and arranged for such a hike in their funding programme from that point onwards. The result was that in the years that followed, funding for the Tamilnadu programme got guaranteed and enabled Tamilnadu to forge ahead and lead the country in the field of Police Modernization. In many ways that is an impetus that is maintained by both the Government of India and Tamilnadu to the present day. Thus it was that Governments at both the Centre and State were drawn for the first time into recognition of the need for substantial investments in the Modernization and Reorganization of the Police in the country

The Reports, produced in both English and Tamil, were presented to Chief Minister Karunanidhi on the 2nd January, 1971, as may be seen in the photograph below :



(L to R) R.M.Mahadevan, E.P.Royappa, R.Nedunchezian, M.Karunanidhi, R.A.opalaswami M.P.Sivagnana Gramani, and M.Chandrasekaran and outside the picture as usual N.Krishnaswamy.

The picture of the Commission's Report (Vol 1) and its signatories are as below :



I come now to the last point of this narrative. How about the implementation of the Commission's Report ? Recommendation No. 132 proposed that a high level Committee be constituted by Government, comprised of the Chief Secretary, IGP, Home Secretary and the Finance Secretary to process and have Government orders issued on the Recommendations. And again, predictably I became the Member Secretary of this Committee. It was fortuitous that I enjoyed the personal regard and trust of both the Home Secretary S.P.Ambrose, and the Finance Secretary, S.Venkitaramanan, both of them, IAS officers of great ability and vision, and so we were able to finish processing all the recommendations in six sittings, and approve the consequent financial sanctions and the phasing of the sanctions over a 5 year period, in toto, exactly as I proposed. One final critical task remained – framing the Government order reflecting these decisions. Would you be good enough, said Ambrose to me at the end of these deliberations, to draft the GO for me ? I did accordingly frame the GO, and interestingly, in a form that required no fresh administrative sanctions to issue from year to year, beyond making provision in the Departmental Annual Budget. Thus it was that my idea of over a year ago, of a Police Commission for Tamilnadu finally caught up with me for implementing it at every step, until and including the final step for its final sanction by the Government.

CHAPTER – 5 : POLICE REFORM – COMMUNICATIONS

During my five year spell as Deputy Commissioner of the Crime Branch of the Madras City Police I got completely taken up by the phenomenal power of wired and wireless Communications to raise the speed and quality of police response to public problems. It was something where I found police officers around me were taking Communication facilities for granted without giving any serious thought to its potential for a powerful impact on the public.

There were two facilities then available in Madras City. One was the wired telephone network connecting the Police Control Room and all Police Stations in the City, to which access could be had either through the public P&T Telephone Exchanges or through the dedicated City Police Exchange. The latter had the additional facility for broadcast messages to be flashed to all Police Stations on lookout notices or crime or law and order situations. Personally I had made it part of my daily early morning routine to call up police stations and engage the Station Writer or Sentry or whoever was available, in an informal chat on what was happening around them. This enabled me to later in the day catch supervisory officers by surprise by what I knew and they did not, on whatever was happening in their jurisdictions. I found this a great way of keeping supervisory officers on their toes and their antennae up to catch signals of events around them. For this is the real basis on which the speed and quality of Police response turns.

The wireless network was an perhaps an even more powerful facility. For, whether you were in the office or at home or on the road in a vehicle, and had a ear cocked to listen in, you were bound to pick up something of interest or significant or even called for a quick response. I remember one occasion moving around in my staff car, when I heard the Control Room directing a patrol vehicle to a scene where a burglar had been caught by the inmates. At once I changed course and headed for that location, reaching there before the patrol vehicle did. I took charge of the culprit, and found him ready to come clean on his activities. So I put him in my staff car and set out on an epic journey, where he pointed everyone of the 27 houses he had burgled in the last few weeks. The 27th location was the residence of the American Consul-General, who then discovered for the first time, that many silverware items in the sideboard of their dining room were indeed missing, and here was the culprit explaining how he managed to make off with them just a couple of days ago ! While this event led to the detection of a string of burglaries that was plaguing the City, my visiting all the scenes along with the burglar certainly did a lot of good to the alertness of the Crime staff but also the public image of the City Police.

These memories stayed with me in my later years when I continued to strive to demonstrate the power of Communications wherever I served till the end of the Sixties when wider vistas of state-wide possibilities started to open up before me with my assignment in the Tamilnadu Police Commission. At that time I started to establish a fruitful link with M.K.Sarangapani, a man of great creative ability, who was in charge of the State Police Radio Branch. That Branch was basically rooted in a network of old wartime HF wireless sets, working on the Morse Code. It was now opening up with the new avenues of VHF radio telephony, to serve the Control Rooms of Madras City, and four Range Headquarter Districts. Sarangapani had already demonstrated the feasibility of long distance VHF communication using a chain of Repeater stations to connect State Headquarters with the Headquarters of several districts. I now started to work on securing a regular flow of modernization funding from the Government

of India with which I encouraged Sarangapani to we start to work within a larger perspective on two approaches : (a) Expanding the VHF reach in the districts beyond their Headquarter Control Rooms, to reach all Police Stations in each District; and (b) Formulate a full-fledged technical plan for a Microwave Trunk-line spanning the State through a chain of hill-top Repeater Stations, to provide the band-width needed to integrate all the emerging District networks into a single State network, where any police officer could talk at any time to any other police officer from wherever they might be – in a police station, a police office, a residence, or a vehicle. I thought we should settle for nothing else. And when this plan was ready I got the Police Commission's endorsement for including it as one of its recommendations.

Of course I had not reckoned with the severe opposition of the P & T Department to releasing the wireless frequencies in the microwave band for our Microwave Project as they saw it as a severe threat to their revenue. It was a long battle I had to fight almost single-handed before I finally secured the P & T clearance. Getting Government's financial sanction after that for the Project became simple as it was one of the recommendations of the Commission, which had been accepted by the Government.

I had nevertheless a final glitch I had to overcome in implementing the Project. The Government's sanction of the cost was for Rs 96 Lakhs as quoted earlier by M/s Bharat Electronics, Ghaziabad. As soon as I received the sanction order, towards the end of March, 1974. I rushed to N.Delhi for a meeting with C.P.Joshi, the Director of Coordination – Police Wireless, Govt. of India, who summoned the officials of Bharat Electronics, Ghaziabad, for finalizing the contract. At these discussions, the BEL representatives threw a bombshell. There was to be a large escalation in cost beyond what they had been quoted earlier, We did some pruning which brought the cost down to around Rs 120 lakhs. And then they threw another bombshell, With the end of the financial year a few days away, they would have to enter into new sub-contracts for the new financial year which would mean a further 10 percent increase in the cost unless I could give them a letter of intent immediately accepting the price now arrived at. With Joshi advising acceptance, and in anticipation of Government approval, I issued a letter of intent on the spot, signing it on behalf of the IGP, realising that I was exceeding my authority. My action was approved by Arul, but not by Government which called for my explanation. I submitted an explanation setting out the circumstances of my action, and pleading that I acted in good faith and in the interests of our State. I added that if my explanation was not accepted, I would offer my resignation from the Service. Firm in his support to me, Arul took the matter up personally with Sabanayagam, the Chief Secretary to Government, and finally the matter was quietly dropped. Government issued a revised sanction and I had the satisfaction of getting the final contract agreement with Bharat Electronics signed the 7th. September, 1974 as seen in the photo below.

(L to R in top picture : Wing Commander K.V.Lakshninarayanan of BEL, Brigadier P.Madan, General Manager, of BEL. Myself, F.V,Arul and C.P.Joshi)



I shall cut a long story short at this point with an interesting account of our first live testing of the Microwave Project. Sarangapani and I were driving along the Madras Marina that evening in my staff car, when he asked me who in the State I would like to talk to now. I said, let me speak to the Station Writer of Theni Police Station in Madurai District. A few moment later, Sarangapani handed over the car's wireless telephone to me and I heard a cheery voice announcing himself "Theni Station Writer Sir !!" And when I responded that I was the DIG Planning speaking to him from my car on the Madras Marina, he could not stop asking "Really Sir, really Sir".

Is there a point in this narrative from the past that has relevance for the present day ?. The answer is yes, simply because, even while the world has vastly changed, police perspectives and approaches lag behind. And the point is simply that in the environment of that earlier day, I attempted to create a new system with newly emerging technologies where information would move instantaneously across the State and between all levels of the police hierarchy and enable them to respond speedily to the problems of the day. Today, we have a vastly changed world where, thanks to the cell phone, information is moving instantaneously and putting everyone in touch across the world. This vast communication network of today certainly offers enormous opportunities to police leaders, if only they want to raise the speed of Police - Public to a far higher level than obtains at present. Cannot police and public join together to

explore the enormous power that the cell phone is unleashing in possibilities such as are being demonstrated today by the new generation of Citizen Journalists ? We see these agencies today turning in on-the-spot messages from trouble spots, along with images of the trouble makers and of the trouble that they are creating. This is just one example from a vast range of newly emerging possibilities. And if these possibilities are not explored and utilized by the police, then police leaders must surely take the blame.

CHAPTER – 6 : POLICE REFORM – COMPUTERIZATION

One of my earliest essays into the field of computerization was an experiment I tried as early as 1961 to see whether a scheme I formulated for encoding single digit finger prints could be computerized. I first studied the Battely system of print identification used by the Single Finger Print Unit in Madras City, I then designed and got made an interesting small transparent plastic disk inscribed with a series of concentric circles. Positioning the disk over a single finger impression, one could map certain fixed features in its pattern and reduce these to a unique code. With a sample collection of finger prints so encoded, I got their codes analysed on the computer of the Southern Railway with the help of Narasimhan, a senior Railway Officer. The experiment yielded promising results for computerization of finger print identification. Unfortunately I did not have the time and staff resources to continue and complete this effort. But it was interesting that this early interest re-surfaced nearly 10 years later in my developing a fully operational computerized fingerprint record system.

In 1969, as I have mentioned elsewhere, on my return from a N.Delhi assignment, I was posted as DIG, Railways & Armed Police. This was a posting which left me a lot of spare time to pursue new areas of interest, and one of them was the newly emerging area of computers which were then beginning to make their early appearance in India. It was propitious that at that time S.Venkitaramanan, a dynamic and forward looking IAS officer, who was then the Finance Secretary, decided to computerize the Tamilnadu State Budget. For this he decided to acquire an IBM 1440 computer and train a team of engineers to handle its operations. When I asked him if I could join this initiative and participate in the training programme in order to study possible police applications, he readily agreed. That is how I joined a IBM training course and made my first serious entry into the world of computers.

After the course got over, I continued some studies on my own and started to design a system to build a computerized crime-criminal record system that would aid the police in their primary area of responsibility, viz. the prevention and detection of crime. This was, of course, an area where I had acquired considerable ground level experience in my earlier years in the Crime Branch of

the Madras City Police. My starting point for this new project was now to design a coding system that would accurately and adequately present standardized, coded data profiles of crimes and criminals, on which an effective computerized system could be built for recording and retrieval of operational information.

When I had completed this first task and compiled it into a Coding Manual, (this was printed as a Departmental reference book) I went again to Venkitaramanan to ask whether I could participate in use of the Government Computer. He said he would say No if I was thinking of housekeeping applications like Payroll or Inventory, but yes to anything that was professionally relevant. I told him that my interest was not on administrative housekeeping tasks but in operational tasks of prevention and detection of crime. He sat up quite surprised, but immediately said yes, you can go ahead. He also readily conceded my request for a sanction of a battery of Punch Card machines for building my data base, though on condition that I would draw on existing staff resources for operating them. By the end of 1971, our Data Centre was up and running with a team of constables whom I picked and trained in handling the Punch Card machines. I placed this unit under the command of S.Sathyanarayanan, then an Inspector, and one of the finest and most outstanding police officers I have known.

While these operations got under way, I was also aware that it would be of great importance to ensure that the coding system that I had developed was approved and supported by the Government of India, if indeed police computerization should become a national programme. It was fortuitous that just then the annual All India Conference of DIGs-CID was announced. This was the national forum where police forces of the country met to forge common national objectives and methods. One of the subjects on their agenda was to consider their approach to computerizing crime records. I therefore sent my formulations to S.Venugopala Rao, who was the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Police Research & Development, Government of India, and was also the Conference Convenor. It turned out that my formulations was not only approved but largely adopted as the National standard to be followed by all State Police Forces.

Meanwhile our data in respect of over 3 lakh crimes had to be extracted from 10 years' records of 850 Police Stations of the State. We got this done by organizing an extraordinary effort of training one hand-picked constable from each Police Station, formally designating him as a Collator and training him to extract the data from Police Station records, and entering them in coded form in a set of standard Input forms that I had designed. We set a schedule of each Police Station submitting one year's back data at monthly intervals, so that the collection of 10 years' data from all Police Stations would be completed within a year. At the same time at the Data Centre, the data coming in the Input forms would concurrently be punched in Punch Cards to get ready for the computer processing stage. This awesome exercise was conducted and completely with astonishing efficiency and perfection by Sathyanarayanan. It remains a matter of

pride for me that I was able to create the first batch of computer literates in the Police force from the rank of constables, and it is perhaps true even today. that they retain their primacy in this regard. It fulfilled one of my treasured professional beliefs, that the greatest resource of the police force is the constable who comprises nearly 90 percent of its manpower, and that the power of these men lies, not in their muscle but in their brain. The failure to recognize and build on this resource, to my mind, constitutes the most critical failures of the Indian Police Service to this day.

To resume this story, when we were ready for the processing stage, we came up against an insuperable technical difficulty. The Government's IBM 1440 Computer had hard disk drives of very low capacity that simply could not support the essential random data retrieval operations that we needed for the Crime record system. People today will laugh if I say that those hard disks had a capacity of 2 Megabytes, where today we talk of Gigabyte and Terabyte capacities. Again it was one of our strokes of luck, that the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras had just then acquired and commissioned the latest IBM 370 System which had the operational capacity that we needed. When I went back to Venkitaramanan and explained this, he decided at once to let us hire whatever usage time we needed on the IIT computer. By 1975 I had also adapted the computer coding system being used in Scotland Yard, and integrated the State Finger Print's records into our system.

Thus it was that Tamilnadu became the first State in the country to establish its first Computerized Crime-Criminal-Fingerprint Record System, providing everyday advice to police investigations all over the State. It was a matter of both surprise and delight to us when Jean Nepote, the Secretary-General of Interpol, who visited our Computer Centre on the 20th. April, 1975, - vide photograph below - confessed that the Interpol had still not such a system for their operations !



Visit of Jean Nepote to our Computer Centre on 20-04-1975, with my explaining and a constable working on the Punch card machine

A far more important event however, followed. This was a visit by K.F.Rustamji, one of the few creative and productive officers of the old Indian Police stock of the British days. Rustamji was then Special Secretary at the Home Ministry of the Government of India. He had heard about our work and wanted to see before believing what he had heard. He came, saw and was conquered, and declared at once, that what we had done was what all States in the country should be doing. True to his mettle, two weeks later I had a call from Rustamji to meet him at the Electronics Corporation of India at Hyderabad to discuss and help him decide on a proposal for them to make and supply computers to the 10 largest State Police Forces in the country, including one for Tamilnadu that would remove our dependence on the IIT computer. We met at ECIL and after a day of hard bargaining a deal was struck for ECIL to supply 10 Computers at a cost of Rs 10 crores !! A year later when ECIL was ready to deliver the computers, Rustamji came down to Madras to take the IGP and myself to meet the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary and Finance Secretary who were still hesitating over the accord of sanctions for the State's share in the expenditure. And sure enough Rustamji had his way and the formal sanctions came through soon after. The Tamilnadu Police thus became the first force in the country to receive and commission its own computer with an already established Crime-Criminal-Fingerprint Record System.

The national spread of the Police Computerization programme was slow and halting largely because State Police Forces were professionally and technically not quite ready to step into the age of technology. It took the formation of a new Directorate of Police Computers under the Government of India and the dynamism and driving force of its first Director, T.Anantachari, to initiate the big national impetus that was needed. In this process, my role continued by way of training and guiding implementation teams that kept coming to Madras from all the States over the next few years.

After I opted out of service in 1979, my police connections continued through some interesting Consultancy assignments. In 1982, my batch-mate Shiv Narain Mathur who was then the Director of the Intelligence Bureau asked me to be a Consultant for the IB, in view of my experience in both the IB, and in Police Computerization. In this capacity from 1982 to 1987, working with V.G,Vaidya, a dedicated and dynamic officer who later became Director of the IB, I contributed to the design and implementation of computerization of two important operations of the IB. One was computerization of the IB's data base, and the other was the Immigration Control System in the country's airports. These were important and very satisfying experiences.

In Tamilnadu however there was an unfortunate steady backslide into its old fashioned preference for physical force over technical power and I was greatly saddened to see an erosion of the primacy of the Tamilnadu Police Force in the field of technical modernization to which I had given so much of my life and

energies. It seemed to be confession of this backslide, when in 1993 the Tamilnadu Police obtained the sanction of Government to invoke my services for 2 years as a Consultant to get the State back on the rails of progress in the field of Modernization. I was still distressed how ill-informed senior officers were on the new vistas of science and technology that were opening up, and specially the enormous promise of computers to transform the speed and quality of police responses to people's pressing problems in every facet of public life. One of my first steps was to refurbish an old neglected building of the Police Radio Branch and start a Training Centre to update the knowledge and attitudes of the Senior officers. I named this "The Police Computer-Communications Centre" to symbolize the emerging power of these two converging technologies.

I designed and equipped the main training hall of the Centre with around 30 trainee desks, each with a computer terminal on which the trainees could interact online with each other or with the instructor (usually myself) with all the interactions appearing at the same time on a wall screen through a computer-controlled projector. We got started with a series of 8 three-day training sessions, with 20 participants each, covering all the 160 senior police officers of the State from the SP level upwards, right up to and including the DGP. Most of these officers were handling a computer keyboard for the first time, and all I think I achieved was to enable them to start talking about computers with less disdain. Most of my time outside formal training sessions was spent in discussions and brainstorming sessions with individual visiting officers and pushing a number of pilot projects to get computer usage going in a small way at the district and police station level.

Towards the end of this assignment I guided a small Government Committee, and on its behalf prepared a comprehensive blueprint for the total computerization of the Tamilnadu Police Force. The concept that I proposed was that Computers should be provided at every level down to the Police Station and be linked into the State's Microwave facility to constitute an online Statewide network. I had the satisfaction seeing acceptance of this Report by Government, with sanction of initial implementation of a pilot project providing computers for 2 Subdivisions, two Circles and 20 Police Stations in a selected district, which could then be extended to the rest of the State in the light of the experience gained. Luckily, at that point of time, this process got a great impetus from the modernization programme of the Government of India, implemented by its National Crime Records Bureau.

Since then, yet another decade has passed, and today I Imagine that police officers today have largely submitted to the larger revolution of computers and communications that has overtaken large segments of society. Many police officers are perhaps still diffident in sitting at a PC, but when they see their subordinates even at the constable level, and much more, when they see their own children mastering the use of these new tools of technology, they do perhaps see the writing on the wall, which says, Computerize or Perish !

CHAPTER – 7 : POLICE REFORM - LAW & ORDER, - INTELLIGENCE

Nowhere have police functions in India suffered greater distortions than in the areas of Law & Order and Intelligence. The Fundamental Rights of the citizen, adopted in the Indian Constitution provided the setting for the Rule of Law. The Indian Police Service was set up in 1948 to run Central and State Police Forces. The latter were under the control of the State Governments and were subject to the Central and State Police Acts and the Criminal Laws established during British rule. The State Police Forces which were responsible for Law and Order thus inherited Laws, Organizations and Methods of the pre-Independence colonial tradition. To these were now added the provisions of the new Constitution and with having to answer to a new political dispensation which was yet to develop a new tradition of ideals, disciplines and values of the emerging free democracy.

The IPS on the other hand inherited police forces, led by members of the IP. all groomed and steeped in the colonial tradition of the rule of force, and separated from the people by fear and distrust, From the very start, the Police continued to function on the basis that force and enforcement were the keys to effective policing of the country. This may have been true up to a point, but surely there was need to create a new environment of policing by consent, by public cooperation to support all police functions. This would have required a sea change in retraining of the police at all levels to inculcate service as the hallmark of police attitudes towards the public. But this simply did not happen. Instead we simply strengthened the earlier organization and methods and the Indian Police has largely remained colonial in its mindset and policing methods. In our first batch of the Indian Police Service we were trained not to think and improvise, but were drilled to function as automatons on the parade ground, and in table manners at the Officers Mess.

Let us get into some more intimate detail of today's Police organization and methods, starting with the Law and Order function. The only concession that we have made to the changed environment is by a shift from a massive use of armed force to a massive show of armed force in dealing with large crowds, a situation that readily escalates into a use of force by both sides, the crowds using stones and the police having the options of a full range of weapons, from lathis, water cannons, and teargas right up to firearms. Yet it is clear that many of these developments can be foreseen and even pre-empted, if there are effective Intelligence arrangements, which were really intelligent. Clearly there is a wide range of Intelligent strategies that are available to anticipate any type of event, whether a civil disturbance or a terrorist outrage. Clearly what we needed was to write these strategies into our Law and Order responses.

My own experiences in directly handling regular Law and Order situations provided several insights in this regard. I was the Deputy Commissioner of the Crime Branch of Madras City from 1957 till 1962. Yet during the Central Government Employees strike in 1962, the Commissioner of Police, R.M.Mahadevan decided to put me in charge of the Perambur area which was a leftist hot spot with major Railway establishments like the ICF, Loco Works and Carriage Works. I managed to maintain order through the day, till a crowd of several hundreds got unruly outside the entrance gates of the ICF and sought to storm the Factory. With just 10 armed policemen at that place, I indicated to the men that firing should not be used, but that they should follow me, simulating a lathi charge, brandishing raised lathis accompanied by wild war cries. Our approach avoided actual inflicting physical hurt but was sufficiently threatening to make the crowd run away in sheer fright, Later in the evening at Headquarters RMM commented that I obviously had an L&O streak to my gentle personality.

Years later in 1969, RMM who was the the IGP, once again pulled me out of my quiet life in a staff job to handle a potentially explosive bye-election in Nagercoil where the great leader, Kamaraj, was seeking a return to Parliament. The ruling DMK party mounted an aggressive challenge aimed at defeating him once again as in the last general election. Here again, my firmness with the trouble makers resulted in a peaceful election with Kamaraj winning. In an interesting sequel, RMM took me along when he was summoned by Chief Minister Annadurai. DMK party functionaries at the meeting complained bitterly that the police had acted against them in a partisan manner in the Nagarcoil election. Addressing the CM In a firm voice, RMM said that as IGP he was personally responsible for the election, and he would not have any of his officers blamed for its conduct its outcome. The shrewd Chief Minister silenced his agitated party men and gently replied to RMM that we need be exercised over the matter any longer, and let bygones be bygones, and that the time had come to simply move on.

The main lesson emerging from these and many other examples simply showed that the Police must make their own decisions in Law and Order situations and not let anyone else make or influence these decisions. Yet over the years, It is a Police departure from this lesson that led to politicians, interfering in making decisions on registering cases, making arrests and launching prosecutions, all for the wrong reasons.. Over the years this has led to an unfettered growth all over the country, of a permissive political system that has grown deep roots into a culture of violence, crime and corruption, subverting the rule of law and making a mockery of law and order. Dissent and freedom of expression are critical and essential ingredients of any democracy, but what we have been seeing in India is an intolerance to these by ruling political parties to the point of suppressing them through misuse of the structures of Law and Order and Intelligence, resulting in, not spontaneous, but conscious escalation of violence by opposition parties. Soon enough an environment of violence

inevitably brought muscle power and money, the engines of crime and corruption, into play, to a point that they subvert all segments of governance. Nowhere is this degeneration more tragic, than the failure of governance in large tribal areas of several States which have taken to Naxalite activity. And no Government response could be more tragic than reliance on police repression rather than genuine humane governance.

A nexus of Politics, Violence and Corruption prevails, and professionalism in the police becomes a first casualty, an impasse from which recovery would seem difficult, if not impossible. It was this sad conclusion that the system set no value and had no place for professionalism, that decided me to prematurely opt out of the Indian Police Service in 1979. Four years later, this conclusion had striking confirmation in the denial of the leadership of the Tamilnadu Police to C.V.Narasimhan who, as the architect of the far-reaching Reform proposals of the National Police Commission, widely known and respected as the most outstanding professional police officer to adorn the Indian Police Service till this day.

If we are ever to get out of this impasse, it has to be with a Reform that recasts the entire organization and methods of Law and Order and Intelligence as they exist today. Ultimately if a genuine rule of law is to be established, accountability and control of the investigation machinery needs to be shifted from the Executive to the Judiciary. But that may mean a long wait for basic reforms.

Can we consider a few changes that can be adopted in spite of the legal and systemic constraints of today. Ultimately we need basically to begin with winning public esteem and support. One idea was to side-step the constraints arising from the Cr.P.C excluding non-cognizable crime from the reach of the police. The vast bulk of day-to-day problems besting the poor are non-cognizable and refusal to interfere in them is a major reason for public alienation from the police. Yet there is nothing that needs stop them from adopting the "May I Help You" methodology. In 1993, Sripall, the DGP Tamilnadu implemented a suggestion I made of requiring Police Stations to explore whatever help at a humane level could be rendered to any person coming to them with any problem, non-cognizable or otherwise, under record in a special register to record such services where the effort could be reviewed. This approach sadly was not sustained, though it could have provided a good starting point for improved police-public relations

In the ultimate analysis again, it is not the instruments of law and those controlling them, but public vigilance and opinion that can enforce the rule of law. It is here we will have to find creative ways of strengthening public opinion and linking them into the Intelligence function of the police. The new communication technologies have opened up new possibilities that could dramatically enhance the power of public vigilance and opinion. One specific mechanism of immense potential is currently taking shape in the vast coverage of the population by the

cell phone revolution. This possibility is being vividly demonstrated by the new phenomenon of the Citizen Journalist who uses his camera-equipped cell phone to turn in messages and images on events right at the points of their origin in time and place. This is a mechanism that can provide not only information but hard incontrovertible evidence, for detection and prosecution, and hard intelligence for prevention of crime and disorder. With the universal acceptance of the need for public cooperation, there is nothing that should stop police forces from tapping into this resource. With actionable recorded information flowing in from the public, there can be no excuses for police inaction nor a possibility of political interference or suppression. Clearly, here is an area where, not only police forces, but independent public interest groups can find common cause and take up this challenge. The electronic media, in the hands of both organizations and individuals, are today, luckily beginning to show promise of these new possibilities

CHAPTER – 8 : POLICE REFORM – TRAINING & WELFARE

Policing that is at once efficient, effective and humane can and must rest on a policeman who lives in reasonable comfort, who is in good physical and mental health and is well trained in inter-acting courteously with most people who abide by the law, and with firmness with those few who do not. This is specially important for the constable who forms the bulk of the strength of police forces and therefore constitutes the primary and widest point of contact of the police with the public. At a personal level the constable is by and large, a decent individual with the same instincts for honesty, order and fairplay as any average citizen. Yet as a member of the system, he becomes an object of fear and distrust. Why does the uniform change, not only his appearance, but apparently his personality as well ? What is it in the system that makes for this terrible change ? Is it at all possible to remedy this by any reform in the system. This is one of the great challenges of Police Reform for which none of the attempts at reform have so far provided an adequate answer or result.

The recruitment, training, working and living conditions of the constable still remain far from ensuring the critical changes that are needed. Most changes that have been made have related to increased pay, dearness allowances, food allowances, housing or house rent allowances, off duty days or off duty allowances to offset arduous working hours, all addressing the physical well-being of the constable. These contributions are important, though still far from adequate. They leave a lot to be desired specially in respect of personnel of paramilitary forces, which involve long spells of duty in distant and inhospitable places, and long periods of separation from families, without predictable turns of duty that bring them home after reasonable periods of being away.

But more importantly, we have not done enough or anything at all to improve the mind, morals and ethics of the constable, indeed of all ranks of the police, so that they gain the respect, trust and confidence of the public. This is an area of activity and responsibility where no financial supports are needed from the Government, and where there is and can be no political interference. Yet leaders of police forces have constantly cited these two factors as an alibi for their inaction.

In 1976, when President's Rule was promulgated in Tamilnadu, I was posted as the Commissioner of Police, Madras City, amidst widespread apprehension that the Central intervention would provoke widespread disorder. When the City remained calm and peace and tranquillity prevailed, the Presidential Advisers who were in charge of the administration thought I had accomplished a miracle. When Adviser P.K.Dave, who was in charge of Law & Order, asked me how I managed to accomplish this, I had a simple answer : the people here are basically law-abiding and if they know that the Police Force is free to enforce the law, without interference, peace will prevail; all that I did was to indicate to the Police Force that I expected them to enforce the law, and that I would be hard on anyone who did not. Perhaps, Dave's surprise indicated that, despite his long experience in public administration, he was experiencing this truth for the first time. But what surprised me was that in appreciation of my approach, he said he would like to know what he could do for the Police Force.

I had two suggestions to offer, which he promptly accepted and sanctioned. The first was that the State Police Training College, now located in Tipu Sultan's stables in the Fort at Vellore, dating back to the 18th century, should be moved out into a more civilized setting at Madras where a new modern complex was nearing completion to house the Armed Police formations deployed for duty in the City. I said it was important to have police officers, not only housed decently, but get exposed to the latest technical advances and academic supports available in the City and thereby get civilized and modernized. The Home Secretary was despatched to inspect and report on the facilities at Vellore so that the administrative decision to shift the College rested on a solid evidence. It was an unusual instruction that I gave to the Principal (C.Thangayyan) to be in readiness for the visit of the Home Secretary : which was to refrain from sprucing the campus, but present the campus in its normal run-down state. Of course, this did not call for any effort on the part of the Principal, and the campus had the Home Secretary in a state of shock, which resulted in the College moving out to its new campus two months later.

The second suggestion that I offered and was accepted was something that I had set my heart on over several years. This was an In-Service Training Cell in each of the five Police Ranges of the State, where over a period of five years,

each constable of the Force would undergo a week's inservice training, more accurately describable as brain-washing. The idea was to make him see his work in more human terms of building personal rapport with the common people. The course itself was built around a series of public survey questionnaires, to each of which each constable was to be required to personally collect a set of responses from members of the public. The questionnaires were carefully structured so that public responses would throw light on what positive and negative points the public saw in the police in their areas, what they expected of the police and what they would recommend for improving the police image in the eyes of the public. Each day's training would end in a group discussion and brain storm involving all the trainees of the group. As these training courses progressed, the feedbacks that came from the participants was that it was a rewarding experience for a constable to put himself in the shoes of the common member of the public and recognize how much the constables needed to do to change the adverse public perception of the police. Having retired from service soon thereafter, I lost touch with this process, but the general impression I gained was that the process was not pushed with the sense of commitment to it that I had hoped, would get established in the supervisory ranks and leadership of the force. On the other hand, around 1978, the State witnessed a widespread agitation by the rank and file that clearly pointed to a absence of rapport between them and the supervisory ranks. The supervisors were clearly out of touch with the ranks, and the need for the human touch to reach across to them. How could one expect the human touch from the rank and file in their onward relations with the public ?. Here then was a huge failure of the police leadership to build an ethos of good human relations both within and outside the police force.

CHAPTER - 9 : CULTURAL INTERESTS

One of the reasons which made me think of myself as a Reluctant Policeman was the fear that there was no place in the police for Culture which was so much part of my upbringing. An Indian upbringing automatically meant having strong roots in Culture. Would the Indian Police Service be sufficiently Indian to retain Culture or remain a Police without Culture ? In my days in the IPS, happily, I was able to remain true to the traditions of Indian Culture and even import it into the rough and tumble of police life.

From an early age I was drawn into a deep interest in music, particularly South India Classical Music. I was so fascinated by the Flute that I would cut sections of the bamboo clothes line set up by my mother, to make my own flutes. She was puzzled by the progressive shortening of the clothes line till she discovered it was my work. She thus let me buy a regular flute and go to a flute teacher for formal training. I maintained this interest in my service years, when on social occasions, my colleagues were surprised that I could retain an interest in music where the norm was facing the music of another kind !.

My literary Interests

Another interest was in books which I have retained to the present day. During my IPS days I organized book clubs during my postings in Madras, Tirunelveli and Cimbatore. This was for friends to assemble on one evening every month to review and discuss books. The first meeting of the Book Club at Madras proved memorable and is presented below as a story, named after my friend Monica Felton, a British writer well known for her charming biography of Rajaji, which was discussed at that meeting.

THE MONICA FELTON STORY

Some time around the middle of September, 1969, I convened the first meeting of a Book Club at my home in Chennai as a forum where like-minded friends could meet once a month to review and discuss interesting books. I decided to do the first review myself to set a pattern for the Club's activity. For my review, I chose the book "I meet Rajaji" by Monica Felton. A few days before the meeting I visited my friends, the Bhanumurthys, in order to see their new adopted baby, and also invite them to the meeting. And there, whom should I meet but Monica Felton herself !. Could I also come along for your meeting, she asked. Of course yes, I answered.

The meeting went off as planned, with Monica's participation. As she was going to be there, I did not want to take any chances with an extempore review, so I prepared a written review and read it out at the meeting. A lot of interesting discussions followed and at the end of the meeting, when everyone started to leave, Monica said she was very happy to have come and asked me whether I would let her have the copy of my review. I readily gave her the script and she left. In the days that followed that event, we met occasionally and became good friends. Monica said that since the review showed that I could write well, I should myself seriously take to writing. My response was to pull her leg by saying that when I do, my first effort would be a biography bearing the title "I meet Monica"!

The above meeting had an interesting sequel in the form of two letters, which are self-explanatory and are reproduced below :

Image of letter dated 18-09-1969 from Dr Monica Felton :

MONICA FELTON, 1-B, SOUTH BANK ROAD, MADRAS-28. PHONE: 71312

September 18, 1969

Dear N.K.,

You may find it hard to believe me, but you must. When I asked for a copy of the review I had absolutely no thought of sending it to anyone but Merrill Stalter. But when I read it in cold blood (well, not really cold with all that blush-making praise) it seemed to me so much the most beautiful thing that had ever been written about the book that I simply couldn't resist sending it to Rajaji. All I told him was that you are in government service and might be embarrassed if I were to disclose your identity, so I did not. Anyway, you seem to have done him more good even than I anticipated - but I didn't need his opinion to realise what a real writer you are.

Don't be mad at me for having done this without your permission - I'm writing this with trembling fingers in case you take it as evidence of my natural delinquency!

Monica

Image of letter dated 17-09-1969 from Rajaji

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

NAOJJI ROAD
CHETPUT
MADRAS - 31

17th September 68

My dear Monica,

Your letter (15-8-68) was a great tonic in my present continual state of pessimism.

I heard the review read for me from beginning to end. (I can't read these days (more than a couple of lines)) The review is extraordinarily good. I did not believe that people were now in Government service who could understand and write so well. After going through this review I feel more hopeful about things in India.

I am returning the review. Please tell the author how greatly I liked it.

Yours affectionately,

C Rajagopalachari

encl:

Dr. Monica Felton
1-B, South Bank Road
Madras-28

Stage Ventures

Few, if any, would have associated me with an involvement with the stage. But my involvement centred always (with one exception by way of direct participation) around organizing children in dance and drama activity. This was as much for the joy it gave me, as for making them powerful and joyous learning experiences for the children. My first venture was a dance drama woven around the Ramayana story of Lava and Kusa, which I produced for being presented at the All-India Police Cultural Meet at Ootacamund in 1960. It meant personally mobilizing and training children of constables of the Madras City Police where I was then working as Deputy Commissioner in the Crime Branch. For training the children for the dances, I took the help of C.N.Dandayudhapani Pillai one of the great dance masters of that time. And for composing the lyrics and musical scores for the dance sequences, he enlisted the help of the team of K.V.Mahadevan, one of the stalwarts in the field of cine-music. A pair of little girls, identical twin children of a constable, filled in the role of Lava and Kusa beautifully and they danced through their roles with relish, while other kids, performing as animals in the forest scenes contributed several other delightful dance numbers. The picture below taken on that occasion, shows all the members of that team. The event simply captivated the audience, who found it hard to believe that it could be produced by a police officer ! The picture also shows the famous actor Sivaji Ganesan – evidence of the support that we had from the film world, organized largely by my great assistant in these activities,

V.G.Manoharan.



In 1962 again, when I was stationed as Superintendent of Police in Tirunelveli District, I organized a children's troupe from among constable families, to present Rabindranath Tagore's Bisarjan. My next effort was in 1967 when I was DIG at Coimbatore, and when I trained the six talented children of S.M.A.Aslam, the Conservator of Forests to put on boards the hilarious comedy, "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife" by Anatole France, which had the audience in splits. And finally around 1969, soon after I returned to Chennai (then Madras) from a posting at N.Delhi, I was able to resume a number of cultural interests. My last fling at the stage was with Naveen, a drama troupe that I organized with children of friends of mine, also friends of my daughter Uma. Two programmes with this group stood out. One was an ambitious reproduction of the scene of Satan's War Council from Milton's Paradise Lost. Here the children dressed as devils – with University Convocation Gowns for costumes delivered the tough lines of Satan and his devil advisers so faultlessly and with such panache that the knowledgeable audience were astounded. But what was really important was that it was a great learning experience for the children in the evocative power of the English language which no school experience would ever be able to give them.

My last essay in this activity was with a presentation of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Ernest". Here the masterly diction with which the delivery of the lines came through in this hilarious situational play, with its phenomenal play on words, drew repeated rounds of applause. The children were themselves so overtaken by the experience that a few days after the event, they trooped into my

A last word on the experience of my direct participation in stage activity that I have hinted at above. This was the occasion of a State Police Cultural Meet in 1961, when I and my staff drawn from all ranks in the Madras City Crime Branch donned the grease paint and full fledged Naga costumes to perform a vigorous Naga dance, true to the Naga tradition. P.Kuppuswamy, the DIG Armed Police, who was running the entire programme came backstage to congratulate the Naga Chief whom led the dance, and he then asked for me so that he could congratulate me as well. He could not contain his astonishment when he was told that the Naga Chief was no other than myself as one may see in the picture below! Also in the picture is V.G Manoharan, my indefatigable assistant.



NK

V.G.Manoharan

P.Kuppuswamy

Those were great days, even till the Sixties, when a moral ethos still prevailed in public life, and some of us of the post-Independence generation of the Indian Police Service tried our best to bring decency, culture and sophistication into the Police, But alas, the decades that have followed have demonstrated that the new generation of powers-that-be will have none of this. Their attention would appear to be exclusively concentrated on getting into and remaining in power – by hook or crook, for which they needed police forces that would be party to protecting their freedom to function outside the law – one of the prices we have paid for Freedom with a Government by the people, but not quite of the people or for the people !

My writings

During my service years, my writing was largely work-related, some it basic, such as new Departmental Manuals. I wrote Manuals for the Finger Print Sections, the Dog Squad and contributed several articles for Newspapers and Magazines on various aspects of Police work. Last but not least I wrote the the Report of the Tamilnadu Police Commission running into 4 large Volumes. In my post-retirement years of social work, I wrote on problems of the Disabled, particularly the blind, and with large reports on two National Seminars covering Disability that I had helped to organize.

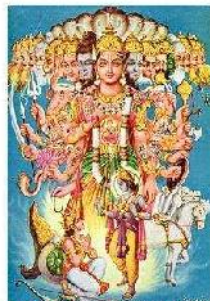
From the years 2009 onwards I started to engage in some serious writing. I recalled the appreciative comment of Monica Felton and even Rajaji himself on my writing and decided to try. I had earlier mobilized effort to present some of our

ancient scriptural works, in the website that I had started in www.vidyavrikshah.org. I started now to build on that base and over the following years authored a series of books with titles shown in the images below. They present selections from ancient Vedic works with simple explanations and perspectives, shorn of complex and esoteric aspects. I reproduce below images of their titles. Apart from reflecting my spiritual interests, I have designed them to specially benefit the First Time Readers, as comprising the final services of my life.

**THE BHAGAVAD GITA
FOR THE FIRST TIME READER**

by

N.Krishnaswamy



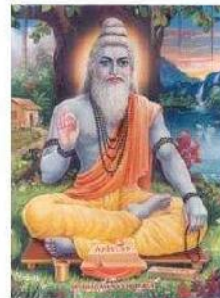
Krishna in his Universal Manifestation

A Vidya Vrikshah Publication

**THE RIG VEDA
FOR THE FIRST TIME READER**

BY

N.KRISHNASWAMY



Veda Vyasa

A Vidya Vrikshah Publication

**THE VEDANGAS
FOR
THE FIRST TIME READER
BY
N. KRISHNASWAMY**



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A VIDYA VRIKSHAH PUBLICATION

THE LALITHA SAHASRANAMA

FOR THE FIRST TIME READE

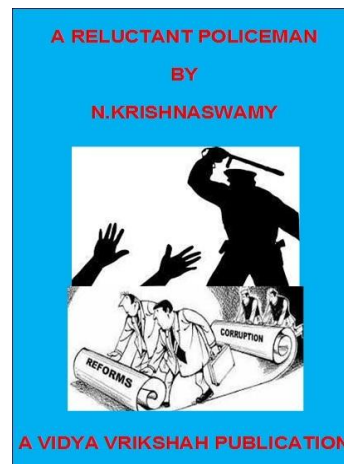
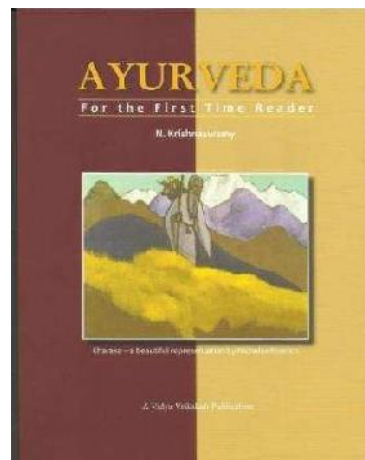
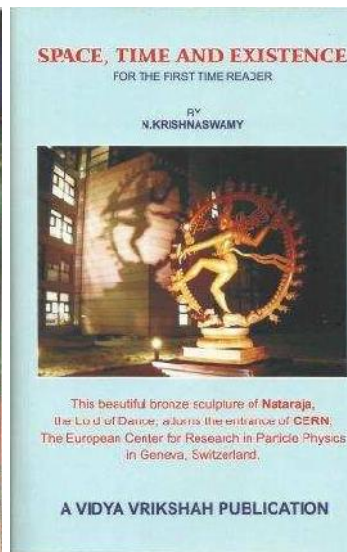
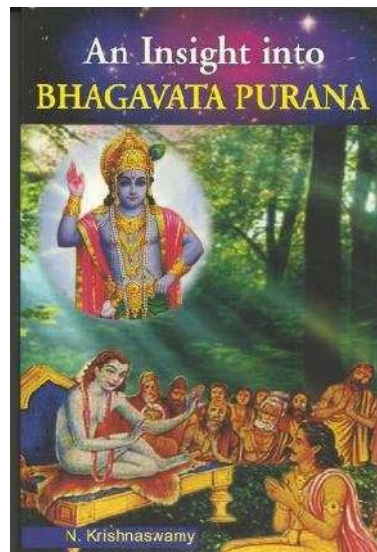
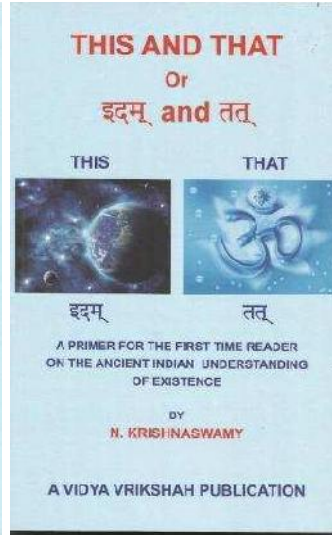
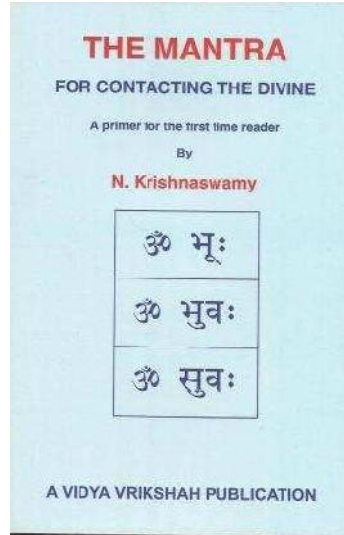
BY

**N.KRISHNASWAMY
&
RAMA VENKATARAMAH**



LALITHA DEVI

A Vidya Vrikshah Publication



CHAPTER – 10 : POST-RETIREMENT – SOCIAL WORK

It often surprises me that when people retire from an active service career they should find themselves at a loss as to what to do next. For some it is a daunting climbdown to adjusting to living on half the salary that one was accustomed to for 30 years or more. For others it is the problem of nothing to do for all their waking hours, beyond eating, sleeping and at best, reading every line of the day's newspaper. For still others, especially policemen, it is a loss of face, a loss of power, where people were so deferential till yesterday, now start ignoring them in the street making for a feeling of having been psychological downsized. All these problems come from having lived life without any wider interests, like a frog in a well which thinks that the well is the whole world.

Luckily I had lived a larger life, taking in everything the world had to offer and so when I retired from the IPS in 1979, I knew there was so much to do, and it was only a matter of choosing what I wanted to do or was reasonably good at doing. Way back in 1946 I had started my working life as a teacher, and through all my IPS years, the teacher remained in me and much of my professional success came from my readiness to teach those who worked under me to learn whatever I knew and they did not. And this also meant that I had to keep ahead and abreast of the latest developments to remain a good teacher. Now on retirement, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher once again, this time full time.

Apart from Consultancy or other assignments related to my police experience, I spent almost twenty of my first retirement years teaching computers to young people just coming out of college, some of them nephews and nieces, some of them friends, or children of friends – resulting in many many new friendships and many of the younger ones getting established in successful IT careers in the USA. Towards the end of the 1990s, however, my urge to teach got more focussed on the poor and disabled who were being largely denied opportunities for literacy and education. Could these be imparted through and combined with computer skills, the field of my special interests and strengths? The more I thought of this, the more I was drawn to the idea. It was at this point that serendipity stepped in.

My old friend, Dr R.Kalyanakrishnan, (RKK) Professor of Computer Science at the IIT Madras had just finished developing a software package that would enable anyone to use a PC in any Indian language, which meant the mother tongue of everyone in the country. The software was easy to learn and use, as the assignment of letters on the keyboard was on a common phonetic basis for all languages. Thus typing the letters k-m-l-A would produce the word Kamala on the screen in whatever Indian script was chosen. RKK was very particular that the software and its teaching should be offered free of cost to all schools and students or anyone asking for it. The package was a real path-breaking achievement, and it tragic, yet typical, that Governments at the Centre and States,

did not see fit to introduce computers, using local languages in schools.

Putting this new tool in the service of education meant first, training of trainers and then making training courses available. RKK and I therefore decided to form for this purpose, a voluntary service organization to be, appropriately called Vidya Vrikshah, meaning Tree of Knowledge. I set up a battery of 6 Personal Computers in my garage and mobilized a team of housewife-volunteers to be trained as trainers. The typical housewife was young, educated, often knew many languages, and often had enough spare time that she was keen to utilize in social service. For first training them and later occupying them when they were not training others, I got the Volunteers to use the software to create an archive of our ancient scriptures. Thus it was that while they went on training school teachers and students in large numbers, I got them to make a wide range of computerized versions of our vast traditional knowledge resources: scriptures, literature, the arts, and also the contemporary resources for our imparting literacy, education and skills to our children. Soon these resources accumulated as a huge archive, which we placed in our own website so as to be readily available to all. Indeed our resources of traditional knowledge, were seen to be of such authenticity and quality that our website became a reference point, specially for Sanskritic studies. A Google search on the word “Sanskrit”, even today brings up the name of Vidya Vrikshah in the first few search responses.

Soon after, RKK announced another breakthrough in his software package. He introduced dramatic enhancements of the software that provided voice and braille support to computer usage in all Indian languages, which would enable even the blind to use computers with the same ease and facility as the sighted, with the added benefit of getting braille output wherever a braille embosser was available. It was an exciting day on the 9th January, 1999 when RKK and I went to the St Louis Institute for the Blind in Madras to request the Headmaster, Brother Devassy, to let us use their Braille Embosser to try out the braille enhancement of the software. RKK had brought a text passage, partly in English and partly in Tamil, recorded by this software on a floppy disk. Soon enough the school computer read this text and produced it in braille on their embosser. We then asked for someone who could read the sheet carrying the braille output. The Headmaster sent for a student from the adjacent classroom. The student was Vikas, a handsome little blind boy of the 9th standard.



Vikas passed his hand over our braille sheet, paused and said “This looks like a mix of English and Tamil braille”. We were already tingling with excitement, and RKK said,, “Yes that is so, go ahead and read it” Vikas the read out the text fluently and flawlessly. RKK and I all but hit the roof in excitement because it was the first time in India, perhaps the world, where a single software package could handle multiple languages in both their normal and braille version at the same time. A part of the braille output of that day is reproduced with a partial normal rendering of the first two lines below:

That evening RKK and I decided to launch our training of the blind in the use of computers. And in the five years that followed we trained over 500 blind students and teachers from Blind Schools from all over the country, and we provided computers also free, to over 50 schools, including all the blind schools of Tamilnadu. A fine gift of a small personal Braille Embosser contributed in 1999 by Krish Narasimhan, enabled our Volunteers to understand and master braille and the techniques of braille printing. In 2004 we had a heavy duty Braille Embosser gifted to us by ASHA for Education of USA, which enabled our Volunteers to produce Dhrushti, a Children’s Monthly Braille Magazine in Tamil, which was sent to all Blind Schools in Tamilnadu. Later we made a start with a Telugu braille version while one of our trainees from Bangalore started a Kannada version as well.

In 2001, I teamed up with my friends Major-General (Retd) A.Balasubramanian and Air Vice-Marshel (Retd) V.Krishnaswamy to organize a National Conference on Information Technology Enablers for Persons with Disabilities (INTEND—2001) under the auspices of the Institution of Electronics & Telecommunication Engineers (IETE) and with the support of the Rehabilitation Council of India. This was pperhaps the first national event of its kind that brought together all related technical disciplines to formulate a national, holistic strategy to enable the disable the disabled to be integrated as equal partners in the socio-economic mainstream of the country. I handled the drafting of the final

Report of the Conference, which became a landmark reference document for people working in this field at that time.

By 2004 our work for the blind had led us to the conclusion that working for them through computer based solutions was just touching the fringe of the problems of the blind, and there were many harsh realities that needed to be addressed . The number of the blind ran into lakhs,, and they lived in lakhs of villages all over the country. The number of blind schools in the country were few and far between, a few hundred in number, and their total intake, a few thousands. The larger number of nearby regular schools would also not admit blind children, as they pleaded that their teachers did not know braille or how to teach blind children. All these factors together meant that access to education was virtually closed to them and they were condemned to a life of illiteracy, and consequent unemployment and poverty.

It is a realization of this harsh reality that drove me into a relentless search for solutions of these problems. The key seemed to lie in finding an easy way of teaching braille, and indeed imparting all the basic literacy skills, which could find ready and widespread adoption. This led me to designing the first of a series of easy teaching devices : the Vasantha Cube.





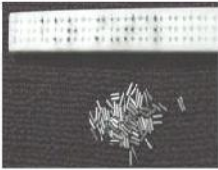


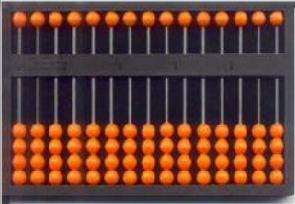
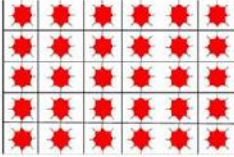

Turning the three disks mounted on a common spindle, which comprised the Cube, would then present the raised dots on their edges in 2 columns and 3 rows to make any of the 63 possible patterns that constitute the braille coding system. I had 5000 cubes made and sent to all Blind schools in the country for evaluation. Accompanying each cube was a ready reckoner card showing the braille code for each of the letters of the alphabet from which anyone could form the codes for the letters on the cube. The enthusiastic feedback I received from the blind schools, was heart-warming. Now any literate person, possibly the mother could use it to quickly and easily learn braille and teach a blind child at home even at the pre-school age. But far more importantly, it knocked the bottom of the resistance of the regular school system to admit blind children. I soon learnt the Cube could provide braille representations of any of the alphabet of any language of India and indeed of the world. We launched the Cube at a public function in Chennai in December 2004, where the Ramamohana Rao, the Governor of Tamilnadu, who presided, praised and described it as a truly revolutionary solution. As a device it is simple enough and I imagine anyone could have made it, but it is the way I pressed it into widespread service of the blind, who were languishing in neglect, that perhaps deserved this commendation.

The Vasantha Cube became the starting point of my preoccupation since then, with design of a number of additional devices to help bring literacy to the blind. Eight of these devices, some already existing standard devices, and some that I designed, that would help a child to read and write (in braille), count and calculate and draw and measure, what would constitute the basics of functional literacy.

The UBK is comprised of 8 devices as in the images below:

OUR SOLUTION FOR LITERACY : THE UNIVERSAL BRAILLE KIT (UBK)

The UBK is comprised of 8 devices as in the images below

VASANTHA CUBE  TO FORM BRAILLE LETTERS	NATESAN BLOCK  TO FORM BRAILLE WORDS	VIKAS COMPOSER  TO FORM BRAILLE SENTENCES	ALPHABET PLATE  TO LEARN HAND WRITING
SLATE & STYLUS  TO WRITE IN BRAILLE	ABACUS  TO LEARN TO COUNT AND CACULATE	TAYLOR FRAME  WITH INSERTS TO ADVANCE INTO MATHEMATICS	GEOMETRY BOX AND DRAWING TOOL  TO LEARN TO DRAW AND MEASURE

These devices we put together to make a Kit which I called the Universal Braille Kit, which was then mass produced and offered at a no-profit price of Rs 450 or US\$10, by Worth Trust, Katpadi, a partner organization of Vidya Vrkshah. We then mobilized public donations to underwrite the entirety of the unit price so as to be able to distribute the Kit free to children. It may surprise many to know how a small organization like ours has been able, in the last five years, to mobilize public donations to reach this Kit free to nearly 25000 blind children in India and nearly 5000 blind children in Afro-Asian countries. (Subsequently with Government support subsidy, the Kit has been supplied by Worth Trust to more than 50000 more children) The above image shows all the devices of the UBK :

Reaching the UBK to the hands of blind children and training them in its use has been accomplished so far through blind schools and blind training institutions. Seeing that this procedure still left large numbers of blind children out of reach, I developed a new concept for reaching them. This was the Mobile Blind School resting on the principle : If the child cannot come to the school, the school must go to the child. I arranged through Vidya Vrikshah to raise donations to enable a free supply of a 3-wheeler motor vehicle to institutions that were willing to implement this idea in their districts. We were able to implement this approach through 6 institutions in India and 2 in Africa. An innovation was adopted in a mountainous district of Nepal where motor vehicles could not ply, and where instead, we proved three horses instead of a three wheeler ! The photos below show examples of both approaches.



THE MOBILE BLIND SCHOOL – NASHIK, MAHARASHTRA



THE MOBILE BLIND SCHOOL – HUMLA - NEPAL

In 2005, I made a four week trip to the USA at the invitation of Viji Dilip at San Jose, to promote the UBK. I took the opportunity to make a presentation entitled “The International Initiative For the Blind” at a meeting at San Jose. (Linkk to Section on Presentations). I also took the opportunity to visit and spend time with some leading persons and institutions serving the blind in the USA : Lawrence Campbell, President of the International Council for Education of the Visually Impaired (ICEVI) at the Overbrook School For the Blind at Philadelphia; William Raeder, President of the National Braille Press, at Boston and David Morgan of Perkins School For the Blind at Boston; (and on my way back to India, with Philip Hoare of Sight Savers International in the UK). All of them were full of appreciation for the UBK and promised to help in its international distribution. As it happened, in the course of this visit to the USA, I received donations totalling US\$ 10,000/- for distribution of the UBK.

One other contact in the USA opened up for me a new area of activity for the blind. Viji Dilip took me to meet Jim Fruchterman, the head of Bookshare, a non-profit organization in San jose, running one of the largest digital libraries of the world, serving the blind across several countries. I suggested to Jim that he should extend the reach of Bookshare services beyond the English speaking world to the Non-English speaking world and he could consider making a beginning with a Bookshare India operation. He responded that this was very much in his thoughts, but there were constraints in respect of funding the operation and also of computer support for Indian and other local languages, not to speak of the constraints of copyright and related legal issues. I told them that in anticipation of these difficulties getting resolved in due course, I would get some activity started even now with creating e-versions of English language books, by employing a workforce of disabled persons. I also added that I would also create a platform to address and evolve quick solutions on the copyright, language software and other related issues.

On my return home I talked to our partners in Worth Trust and got this activity started. I got a few local publishers to their books with an exemption from their copyright restrictions, to enable to get started on ebook production. Soon enough Bookshare saw Bookshare – India as being a viable operation and stepped in to support a full-fledged e-book production centre under Worth Trust at Chennai with books also being outsourced by them from their US resources. I also fulfilled my other promise to Jim Fruchterman and on the 19th April, 2008, organized the National Seminar at Chennai under the title “Print Access For All” where I brought together every significant and relevant interest group to participate, viz. Publishing, Information Technology, and Governmental and Non-Governmental Support Services

The development of more and better teaching devices is now occupying much of my time. Here is an example of one of my current projects, taking off from the design of the Natesan Block, presented in a picture earlier.



Here then you have a device where you can form a line of braille text by manually rotating the individual disks to form the component letters. What I am now working on is a motorized version where the rotation of individual disks can be effected under computer control to form the line of braille text to correspond to regular text coming line by line from the computer. In other words this will become the Natesan Refreshable Braille Unit. An image of the prototype is set out below :



A YouTube presentation of a prototype that was entered for the Touch-Of-Genius competition of USA may also be seen at our website www.vidyavrikshah.org. I am hoping that this can be further developed and be made available for downwards of US\$ 200 as an affordable alternative to the commercial Refreshable Braille Units offered in the advanced countries for upwards of US\$ 2000.

Looking back in retrospect over the last 30 years in social service, after my first 30 years in the police service, I have found an interesting sense of continuity in the two forms of service that the two periods entailed. I found it to be therefore most interesting to be invited a few years ago to be invited to the National Police Academy at Hyderabad, to give a talk on Police Service and Social Service to a batch of senior police officers in an advanced refresher course being conducted for them. I pointed out that it was unfortunate that many officers not only found thought that Police Service was a social service, and formal Social Service was but a continuation where they were giving back to society something in return for what society had given them. On a lighter note I quoted to them the verse from the Gita that says that he who lives, always receiving but never giving anything in return was no more than a thief. I reminded them that on the final Judgement Day in the Highest Court, they may indeed themselves face a charge of theft !!, If they received a salary for Police Service, they should regard their pension as a salary for performing Social Service.

CHAPTER – 11 : AWARDS FOR PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The receipt of awards and rewards are occurrences that are few and far between in a police career. The brickbats so far out-number the bouquets that one receives, that it is little surprise that the policeman generally ends up at best an incurable cynic and at worst a person who is insensitive to the point of being inhuman. A fortunate few tide over these ups and downs thanks to being blessed with a sense of humour that makes them accept success and failure not only with the same equanimity, but comic interludes in the drama of life. I must consider myself as one of these fortunate, and set out below some of the more pleasant awards and rewards that came my way. A sustained effort to maintain a clean record of average performance has been seen to be enough to bring an IPS officer the President's Medal for Meritorious Service after around 15 years of service and the Presidents Medal for Distinguished Service after around 20 years. The fact that many officers with less than average records also get these awards, would therefore seem to be a recognition that mere survival in the higher echelons of the Police for over 15 or 20 years have in themselves come to be considered meritorious and distinguished enough to win these awards. I myself received these Medals from the Governor of Tamilnadu, after the passage of these periods of time with the usual public fanfare of Police Medal Parades as evidenced in the photographs below :



Another award which I received many tears later and value much more than the above ones is the For The Sake Of Honour Award I received in 2004 from Rotary for my post-retirement work for the blind. The following is the Citation that accompanied this award :

President and the members
of
ROTARY CLUB OF CHENNAI EAST R.A. PURAM RI Dist.: 3230
Confer 'FOR THE SAKE HONOUR' AWARD
on
Mr.N.Krishnaswamy IPS (Retd.) on 2nd May 2004

The Man with a Vision for the Blind :This is perhaps the best way to describe the modest Mr.N Krishnaswamy, IPS (Retd), who is the Managing Trustee, Vidya Vrikshah. His obsession to make the blind "see" letters and numbers using a unique method is evident whenever you got him to speak about his service to the blind. His commitment and enthusiasm to work remains the same in the Indian Blind Service (IBS) as it was when he was with the Indian Police Service (IPS).

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it". This is a famous quote by Edith Wharton, American novelist. This great man decided to be the mirror and reflect his vision on the computer screen towards the blind so that they may also see what the rest of the world sees everyday.

His years of working with the computers while in the police service, (incidentally he was the first Police Officer in India to launch a computer software that helped in tracking down criminals) came in as a great advantage. He keeps telling anyone he meets, "...there are around 4 million blind persons in India. To cater to their educational and training needs, there are just 400 institutions. Most are under-funded, poorly organised, lack initiative and a progressive outlook. So how are we going to help our blind brothers and sisters"?

His idea of using the Multilingual Editor for the disabled which is available free of cost to all users - individuals, associations, institutions, schools and training centers has actually speeded up the process and now has the potential of reaching every house in the nation that gives shelter to a blind person. This new development should demolish numerous misconceptions about disabled persons in general, and the blind in particular. Computer literacy has become a window to new job opportunities so far denied to people with visual impairment.

When this author met him, he showed him how easy it was to type a document in any language and to get a Braille print out for the same. When the author saw the printout he said "we are blind to this, but this the blind can see". While he is glad that his idea has been implemented in 30 schools in Tamil Nadu out of which 8 are the regular school for the blind, he is sad when he says, "...but there are more blind people waiting to be educated out there in the whole of India. My dreams will be fulfilled only when each one of them is benefited by this project. "He that does good for good's sake, seeks neither praise nor reward, but he is sure of both in the end." - William Penn.

We at Rotary Club of Chennai East R.A Puram are not only glad to have honored you Sir with this "For the Sake of Honor Award" but also promise to help your dreams come true in whatever ways we can. Your Vision is also our Vision now.

Rtn. N.Ramanathan Rtn
President

PL Lakshmanan Rtn.
Director, Vocational Service

Muthu Viswanathan
Secretary

In 2007, my work similarly received the Nina Sibal Award carrying a prize money of Rs One lakh. The award was instituted by Kapil Sibal, now the Minister of the Government of India , in memory of his late wife, Nina, who was member of the Indian Foreign Service, and died young, and who had a passion for helping the disabled. I received the prize at an impressive function at the prestigious Habitat Centre, New Delhi, from Sheila Dixit, the Chief Minister of Delhi, in the presence dignitaries like Dr. Karan Singh, and Kapil Sibal and a large gathering as may seen in the picture below. I made a 10 minute Power Point presentation of our work, which resulted in my being mobbed by the appreciative audience at the end of the function.



An award of special value again was the Kanthari Award of 2013 for Lifetime Achievement for Service to the Blind as seen in the pictures below. This award came from Kanthari International, Tiruvananthapuram founded by that couple of world repute, Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg, for training Blind persons mainly from Third World countries to become Social Entrepreneurs.





CHAPTER 12 : EPILOGUE

What do I make of these 60 years of my work, 30 in the Police Service and 30 in Social Service. In the Police Service I endeavoured to set better service performance standards by improving systems of organization and method. While there were a few improvements, there were far too many basic things yet to be achieved. Today, as a private citizen, I see the performance of the IPS remaining nowhere near fulfilling the hopes with which it was founded. The founding fathers who created the All-India Services, hoped that they would become effective instruments for building a modern India where its people would have the blessings of an equitable society that assured justice, peace and prosperity to all. However much some IPS officers may protest, many others possessed of an honest conscience will concede that, as a Service, the IPS remains today bereft of a shared guiding philosophy and a driving passion for promoting the public good. We see IPS officers today jockeying for top posts across seniority or performance records, and for plum postings, and perquisites. Their emerging guiding principle seemed to be Self before Service.

The rank and file of police forces, already alienated from the public, now felt alienated from their own leadership. The most striking tragic evidence of this decline was the nation-wide unrest of Police Forces witnessed in 1980.

What is the central failure of the IPS ? It is clearly their failure to establish styles of functioning that generate public support and confidence. Their handling of Information and Intelligence provides a telling example. This could have been consciously organized around vast spread of the public telephone network in the past and expanded through the massive mobile telephone network of today largely in the hands of the common man. But this could work if the leadership consciously built a rank and file resting on human values, and thereby building friendly, helpful and prompt response as the norm of one-to-one interaction between the policeman and the citizen. If intelligence and information coming from such interaction were further automatically recorded in real time, it would surely have ensured not only onward follow up police action, but also largely pre-empted external interference from any quarter. But the IPS leadership never addressed the possibilities and mechanisms of building close police-public relations through their own manpower, even from the earliest days when political interference was more restrained. Absence of such mechanisms provided a great starting point for the growth of political interference. This inevitably led to development of a political vested interest in the emerging forces of Disorder, Violence, Crime, Corruption, Terrorism, and Naxalite ideology. The concurrent and consequent emasculation of all the public services, led to an all-round decline in Governance. The later massive police investments in increased manpower and firepower, or other equipment simply did not touch the more basic need for improving police-public relations.

Has the IPS done enough, or anything at all to improve the minds, morals and ethics of the constable, indeed of all ranks of the police, so that they gain the respect, trust and confidence of the public ? The loss of numerous police lives may be cited as great acts of bravery and dedication in the service of the country, but the simple question remains, who were the beneficiaries of their sacrifices ? Truthful history is certainly going to say that these police officers largely lived and died in vain. Meanwhile what has happened to the many efforts of the few to bring some law and order into this chaos ? All efforts to bring about genuine Police Reform remain on paper with the political class resolutely resisting these efforts or at best conceding cosmetic responses. The last effort of some of the best minds in the country produced some of the most comprehensive and effective ideas on Police Reform and set them in the Reports of the National Police Commission. Yet thirty years after those ideas were put forward, those Reports languish in the archives of the Central and State Governments. The Political System does not seem to even respect the directives of the Supreme Court to implement the Reports within a specific time frame.

My later 30 years in Social Service, specially services to the blind, have led me to similar experiences and conclusions in respect to what society and the public administration is doing to serve them. The World has a population of 39 million blind and 246 million with Low Vision; 90 percent of them live in the Third world, 15 million in India alone, and living in conditions of abject poverty. Large numbers of blind children are not able to come to blind or mainstream schools by reasons of distance, expense, safety or even of the schools not accepting them on the plea that they do not have the skills or equipment to teach them. My experiences in the field of Social Work have led to one simple conclusion : that Governmental and non-Governmental institutions for teaching blind children have been few and far and between and were reaching very small numbers of children with training and providing them with few or no learning devices. In the earlier Chapter on my Social Work, I have detailed the several training methods and devices and more importantly the concept of a Mobile Blind School that I developed and made available free of cost, with the aid of public donations. These solutions have not been adopted for wide implementation by Governmental and non-Governmental Institutions and this speaks of a serious failure on their part.

The same story of failure appears across the country, across all sectors of the public administration and even across all our socio-economic institutions, making for a pervasive failure of Governance. More than sixty years have passed since Independence, How many more years will it take for the people to realize its real socio-economic fruits ? It looks as if we will have to wait until the people finally reject the methods of today's political class and administrative structures. One hopes this will be by peaceful means, not by violent revolution. Our hope lies in the ballot, not the bullet.
