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MADRAS MUSINGS

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

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Why can't ASI tend the Fort better?

• by The Editor

Going to Fort St. George has become an increasingly depressing experience. The maintenance of the place leaves much to be desired and it is really a surprise that the various Government departments that operate from here should be so blind to their shabby surroundings. Paper cups (we are now a no-plastics State) abound, as does general litter. Several heritage buildings that are now mere hollow shells, serve as convenient places to throw garbage into and it is also a familiar sight to see men zipping their trousers and emerging from these hallowed structures. And so they double up as toilets as well. The Archaeological Survey of India, which, ideally speaking, ought to be maintaining much of the space remains content with taking care of its headquarters, located at the Great House aka Admiralty House on Charles Street in the Fort. Why is it not able to take care of the rest of the precinct?

Elsewhere in the country, it is quite evident that the ASI does a perfectly good job of maintaining heritage precincts. The Thanjavur Brihadeeswarar Temple, the Mamallapuram complex, Badami, Aihole, Patadakkal and Hampi are all instances of very clean spaces that are welcoming to visitors. Of course, it may be argued that all of these are monuments that fall under UNESCO's world heritage sites and so there has to be maintenance of a high standard. How then are we to explain the fact that the Residency complex in Lucknow too is kept in the best possible condition?

A recent visit to Lucknow by our Associate Editor had revealed a beautifully main-

tained area. The space is not only walker-friendly but also has wheelchair facility, albeit just one, for those who cannot move around by themselves. The toilets are extremely clean and there is not a single scrap of paper lying around. A group of sweepers and gardeners is forever on the move, clearing up whatever little makes its way into the place. There are explanatory plaques put up by

the side of each building and as for the museum that occupies the Residency building itself, it is a model of what such a facility ought to be – in terms of cleanliness, the courtesy of the staff and the information provided. And all of this provided by the ASI!

There are, of course, certain advantages that locations such as Mamallapuram, the Residency and the Karnataka sites



The Baillie Ground Gate to The Residency, Lucknow, demonstrates the care the ASI had taken with preservation of heritage here.

have – they are solely under the control of the ASI and so the organisation does not have to contend with conflicting interests. But what holds good for Fort St George is true for the Big Temple at Thanjavur as

well. The shrine is one that sees active worship and is therefore subject to massive numbers of pilgrim footfalls. Yet is maintained very well indeed and is a joy to go around. The Fort
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Issues to resolve in war against plastics

The Tamil Nadu Government which did not even provide information to the Central Pollution Control Board, for the latter's Annual Report for 2017-18, on the action taken to implement the provisions of the Plastic Waste Management Rules of 2016, has jumped into action.

The features are: ban on forms of plastic that are not easy to dispose, punitive measures to deal with non-compliance, and charging local bodies with responsibility for collection, appropriate disposal and law enforcement.

The definition of "waste generator" includes individuals, groups, residential establishments, etc., punishable for failure to comply and "extended producer responsibility" (EPR) making producers responsible for environmentally sound management of their plastic products till the end of their life. These arrangements, presently on paper, will be put to severe test in practice.

A simplified material

balance helps to uncover the dimensions of the problem and indicate areas critical for success. Plastic waste can be contained by a combination of the following measures – reduce usage by finding substitutes,

recycle the waste of the rest so that fresh production is correspondingly reduced, wherever possible put waste to alternate use (in road construction and as alternate fuel/raw material (AFR) in cement units) and, failing these, burn or dump. The last one is not environmentally desirable and, hopefully, the quantity would be nil or negligible.

The quantity of plastic waste to be managed in Chennai is about 430 tpd. Collection efficiency is claimed to be 40 per cent but that is consid-

ered an over-estimate. What is uncollected is what we see everywhere, including sewage and drainage lines and overflowing bins. From the collected waste, registered recycling units in Chennai get only

about 50 tpd whereas they need a minimum 100 tpd, according to the Tamil Nadu Pandy Plastic Association. If there is as much as 430 tpd of scrap, why are the recycling units not getting all they want? Therefore, it is doubtful if collection ratio is the claimed 40 per cent. It is probably much less. The surrounding omnipresence of plastic waste also lends basis to doubt the 40 per cent. The foremost challenge, therefore, is to raise the present abysmal collection efficiency to 90 per cent or more.

It is estimated that nearly 50 per cent of plastic usage is for single use or disposable products – plastic bags, plates, throw-away cutlery, bottles. This presents the opportunity to reduce usage substantially, within a very short time, by switching to substitutes and repeatedly usable cotton/jute bags. The waste could come down to half of 430 tpd i.e. 215 tpd. Time taken to enforce this practice is short – say, a month or two. This is the second challenge.

If most of the 215 tpd is collected, the recycling units could have the full 100 tpd that they have been denied all along. Recycling would be important for plastic waste management for quite some time to come and therefore, it is necessary that policies are conducive to sustain the operation of these units. They are allies in the fight against plastic and not intruders.

(Continued on page 2)

• by A Special Correspondent

War against plastics

(Continued from page 1)

The next question is whether road construction and cement units can absorb the remaining 115 tpd. Taking road construction first, 2 tons can be used for one km of road. So, to absorb, say, 100 tons, 50 km of roads in Chennai should be constructed per day or in a 250 working day year 12,500 km of roads need to be constructed, which is outright unrealistic. Therefore, road construction cannot be a significant option. Can cement units absorb the remaining 115 tpd? The remaining 115 tpd is about 42,000 tons per year of plastic scrap (115x365). Based on the successful experience of Ambuja Cements and other cement units in Gujarat, it seems possible for cement plants to take 20-30,000 tons of plastic scrap each. In summary, recycling and cement units have a very useful role to play in plastic waste management.

It is necessary to place the recycling units in a position to take 100 tpd or even more, if necessary. Recyclers and plastic article manufacturing units have greeted the new discipline on plastic use with protests. Confusion prevails on the definition of what plastic articles are allowed and what are not. They feel that indiscriminate ban on articles would adversely affect their production range and, consequently, viability. In the GST regime, these units have been denied the advantage they had over virgin plastic raw material. Before GST, VAT was 5 per cent on recycled granules and the same on virgin granules, but the latter had to pay, additionally, an excise duty of 12.5 per cent. This differential advantage has been removed with the 18 per cent GST equally on both and the abolition of excise duty. Although this problem is not a repercussion of the plastic war, it has affected the viability of recycling units at a time when their full operation is essential to absorb a substantial portion of the daily collection of waste. Admittedly, it is difficult to levy different GST rates of recycled and virgin material because of risk of tax evasion – one can be easily passed off for the other – some other way must be found to restore the advantage to these units which they rightly had in the pre-GST era. One suggestion is that the price of plastic waste to recyclers should be subsidised to the extent of the 12.5 per cent advantage they enjoyed earlier. Recycling units are already exposed to another disadvantage compared

to virgin raw material. When oil prices fall, virgin material cost falls making recycled material unattractive, as, after all, plastic is derived from petroleum. Making recyclers viable enough to absorb the scrap is the third issue to be tackled in the plastic war.

While resorting to recycling and usage of waste to its extinction, the problem of the already accumulated landfill and dumps must be resolved. Experts have suggested gasification as an effective way of converting waste into energy. Such possibilities should be explored. Within the next few weeks the aim must be to avoid further accumulation at the landfill/dump.

The proposed arrangement under clause 15 of PWM Rules, for funding the cost of collection and disposal, provides for a minimum fee of Rs. 4000 per month from registered dealers authorised to sell recycled carry bags which would be sold to customers, the proceeds going to the local body. Rule 8(3) of Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 says that “waste generators” shall pay a fee. These provisions are still unclear. Fee collection from thousands would add to the administrative burden of the local bodies.

A New Zealand practice, with appropriate adaptation, may be considered. In that country, local authorities make multiply large paper bags stamped with the official logo available to retail outlets. Households and complexes buy as many bags as they need for the volume of waste they generate. The price of the bag is equivalent to the cost of collection and disposal of waste. Waste is collected only if it is in the bags carrying the official logo. Incidentally, should we not experiment with weekly or bi-weekly collection of solid waste to make collection more thorough and effective with available staff? Till the turn comes, the material can be held with the waste generators. Effective collection methods and easy way of charging for the cost of collection and disposal is the fourth issue.

The goal, within the next twelve months, should be to attain total control on plastic disposal, create a much cleaner environment and release the capacity of clogged sewerage and storm water drains. It is in our larger interest to participate pro-actively in this movement and watch its progress if Government would publish every month the score card of progress.

The National Awards

Up North, in the capital, the Beating the Retreat ceremony has just concluded and, along with it, the dust settles over the Republic Day celebrations. It is with considerable amusement that *The Man from Madras Musings* notes that denizens of Chennai's art world have also beaten the retreat from the capital. In the past few months, so MMM learns, many of them had practically laid siege to that seat of seven (or was it ten?) great empires of the past. This was not with any desire to conquer, plunder and pillage as many invaders did in the past to that great metro but mainly to lobby hard for one of the National Awards.

When our beloved first Prime Minister came up with these awards, he had cautioned against their misuse. He could not have foreseen that several of his family would precisely do that. He also expressed the fear that hierarchy in the awards – Lotus Wealth, Lotus Jewelled, Lotus Bejewelled and National Gem – would give rise to a caste system of sorts, leaving to an environment of one-upmanship. This apart, our first

hopes till the day he died, well into his nineties. Two others, now also with the morning stars, one singing and the other playing on an instrument, practically camped in Delhi in the hope of achieving Gem status but that was not to be.

In the past lobbying too had its hierarchy, from Government officials to ministers. These are tougher times and the fastest route appears to be using the social media. Come November and MMM notices that the number of laudatory posts from artistes on anything and everything that the powers-that-be do in Delhi, ranging from complex economic issues to defence deals, increases exponentially, reaching a climax of sorts a week before R(ewards) Day. And then there is the breathless wait till the actual announcement, followed by howls of disappointment, gnashing of teeth at those awarded, and the going away with a deep resolve to try better the next year.

This year, the Dispensers in Delhi gave short shrift to the lobbyists from the music world, awarded one dancer, a drummer of the non-classical variety

then it was the duty of the citizenry to go and collect it. Which is why, on the day the money was distributed, serpentine queues were to be seen at all the ration shops.

MMM, realising that this was where he could get some easy grist for this column's mill, decided to drive by a few of these outlets and he did note that while several of those who had turned up were clearly in need of the money, several more clearly were not in need of it. Prosperity was writ large on their visage, dress and deportment and you could see from a mile away that they were doing their best to make it clear to onlookers that ration shops were not places they visited on a regular basis.

Several others had been cleverer. They had got maids and chauffeurs to stand in for them in these queues. A phone call was made even as the stand-in inched closer to the counter and the actual cardholder then turned up, signed for the cash and walked away with it. Some pocketed the money while others distributed it as charity. Very few actually spurned the offer.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Prime Minister also said these titles ought not to be used as prefixes to names by the recipients. All of these wise maxims have been given the go by.

The art world lives in a state of perpetual upward mobility, or at least hopes of it. Early in their careers, singers, dancers, writers and painters begin to lobby hard for the National Awards. Thereafter, once one has been received, lobbying begins for the next stages. It has come to be firmly established that Lotus Wealth is but a stepping-stone and none in their right senses ought to stop until Bejewelled status is achieved.

MMM is aware of two bitter rivals where the one who is Jewelled has crowded over the fact that the other is a mere Wealth. He also understands that the latter takes umbrage if the term Lotus Wealth is not prefixed to the name in all media announcements. And ever since Melody Sublime got the National Gem, everyone assumes that this too is available for the asking, or at least for the lobbying. The Methuselah of Carnatic Music, brilliant singer that he was and God bless his memory, harboured

and a film actor who is better known for his terpsichorean abilities. Clearly making eyes at the powers-that-be via social media has come a cropper.

Money for the masses

Time was when rulers, when they felt like it, would set forth in procession, throwing fistfuls of gold and silver coins to the assembled crowds. In yonder capital city of a State that has since become two States, the erstwhile ruler would do this and his canny citizenry armed itself with upturned umbrellas so as to catch as much as it could of this money from up above. Now, our State too has done the same by distributing Rs. 1,000 to all ration cardholders. Clearly our State must be doing well and since we are a democracy, by inference, we too must be doing well.

The Man from Madras Musings is well aware that it was only in the last issue that our beloved Chief had written a piece lamenting over this largesse. Clearly the citizenry disagreed with the Chief and decided that if the Government was foolish enough to easily part with its money,

MMM made bold to ask an elderly lady of a prosperous family and who was not very steady on her feet as to why she took the trouble to stand in line and collect the cash. The answer was most impressive in terms of logic – she had always seen situations when the Government took money from her under various guises, such as penalties, taxes, statutory deductions and the like, apart from bribes she said. She had never ever envisaged a time would come when the Government would shower actual cash on the citizenry. And now that it had happened, she wanted to be a part of the celebration. Why not, MMM wondered. After all it is a poor heart that never rejoices.

Tailpiece

The following advertisement was noticed by *The Man from Madras Musings* and he passes it on with no comments: **76 years pensioner own house middle class Indpt. seeks Chennai and around Educated Service Minded Problemless Women to look after with him.**

–MMM

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



The faces that sing

Yet another Music Season has gone by giving ample indication of the fact that the Bhakthi-drenched tradition of Carnatic music is fully alive and kicking. While many of the veterans were seen fading into the sunset, a rich crop of youngsters from both within the country and from the USA has proved beyond doubt that they are here to carry the torch left behind by their illustrious past masters.

While music itself has been carefully packaged and expressed with great enthusiasm, risible nerves have been continuously tickled by a whole spectrum of gesticulations, calisthenics, acrobatics and mimic gestures to accentuate the vocal effect. Where they have failed to translate their vivid imagination into music, the artistes have tended to draw graphic designs in the air, cup the mike and do a Tai ichi act to virtually sustain the momentum. Sometimes arms are wildly swung flail-like, left and right, and the artiste almost jumps out of his seat!

The contemporary and upcoming artistes are to be richly commended for their musical abilities, but they need to see their own video recordings to realise how their miming gestures distract audience who had come to appreciate their music and not to gaze with amusement at their exaggerated contortions and facial angularities which are made even more grotesque by unimaginative lensmen with highly sensitive lenses doing unnecessary close-ups!

Advances in sound technology and sophisticated voice amplification systems have already caused musicians not to tax their lazy vocal chords these days! Moreover, the

heavy scheduling of concerts already takes a toll on their vocal chords (you can see artistes attending other concerts with woollen scarves fully protecting their throat!). The inadequacy in certain vocal exercises is made up through humming, falsetto and wistful glances into the heavens!

In earlier times, the main artiste alone gesticulated to the sound engineer to adjust the errant mikes; today every accompanist is seen desperately pointing out to his mike and monitors for redressal, leaving the confused engineer in a quandary! The result? A whistling piccolo sound pierces the system, indicating flaws in the balancing of the console!!

It is hoped that soon enough the Seniors will wake up and exhort their disciples to give up the "Punch and Judy show" and concentrate their energies on delivering good music.

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Concerts and combos

Yet another lively music sea-son has come to an end, with moments of ecstasy and disappointment depending on a discerning listener's expectations, mood and form of the musician, ambience, behavioural pattern of the sound system, active support of the accompanists and so forth. In as much as one felt elated after the conclusion of the season, drawing up a balance sheet of the plus and minuses in the concerts, the epicurean among them also would have done a similar exercise of his experiences in the canteens attached to almost all sabhas.

Talking concerts and canteens as two sides of the same coin, you would recall the good old days when Carnatic music was patronised by bigwigs like zamindars, miradsars and such who organised grand music concerts of the vidwans in the limelight in those days, before a select, invited audience. Such katcheris had no rigid rules or format, a musician who had specialised in a particular raga would render it, with such elaboration as far as upto his manodharma would permit him to. This would go for seemingly interminable long periods, at times deep into the night.

Many musicians, who were blessed with a sense of humour embellished their conversations with puckish wit,

Improving quality of nursing

I welcome timely article by T. Rajagopalan (MM, January 1st). There is mixed appreciation from a particular section of the public as well as complaints made in several instances by senior citizens on the nursing services provided in the ordinary as well as speciality hospitals in Chennai and other places in Tamil Nadu. It is pointed out pertinently that in the case of 100-bed teaching hospitals, there should be a minimum of 20 nurses. This is not only in the case of nurse-teaching hospitals attached to a medical college but generally applicable to all functioning hospitals. The low ratio of nurses attending on patients in several hospitals is seen in Chennai as well as in other districts.

I have a personal experience. When I was attending on an advanced aged relative, who needed to be looked after during nights also, I admitted him in one of the renowned hospitals in Trichy. I noticed there was no nurse to attend on him after 9 at night. When I brought this to the notice of the chief doctor, he said there was shortage of nurses and this was the case in all other hospitals in Trichy and I should admit him in a hospital in Chennai.

Regarding the training of students taking up nursing as a profession, it is necessary they should be taught hospital rules, technicalities in the procedures adopted in the hospital and other methods on attending to patients. I was in Vellore with my family for a long period. I was life member of the Vellore branch of Indian Red Cross Society and also served as the Honorary Secretary for three different terms. The Dean of the College of Nursing of Christian Medical College Hospital (CMC Hospital), Mrs Achamma John, was the Joint Honorary Secretary serving with me and she told me that there were 420 beds in the hospital and nearly 300 nurses were students of the Nursing College attached to the hospital. She said lectures relating to laws on adoption, marriage, road accidents claims, rehabilitation of the discharged patients who needed further care and attention were arranged once in ten days by inviting senior lawyers to the college. Apart from this refresher courses were arranged making them visit different wards with the senior nurses.

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at times wry humour. No other reported incident than that of Ariyakudi's repartee would serve as a shining example. At the conclusion of one such scintillating concert of his, his host proffering a salver heaped with gifts said, "Sami sang very well today. In fact it was better than last year's." The razor sharp Ariyakudi, ostensibly cut to the quick, shot back tongue in cheek, "I am singing as usual every year. May be your appreciating faculty has increased since then." (*Naan eppodhum polaththan padindu irukken. Avvidaththile dhan rasanai adhigamyirukku* or words to that effect.)

Doyen Ariyakkudi is referred to as the formulator of the present katcheri pattern, harnessing the unbridled enthusiasm of the performer, having no concern for time or the taste of the listeners. And so, as per his design, we have a lightning fast *varnam* and a quickie to begin with – both meant for the accompanists to interface and coalesce, then an *alapana*, a *kriti* with the concomitant trimmings like *swaraprasthara*, *niraval* and so forth, a *ragam thanam* and *pallavi*, that may include a *ragamalika* towards the end, a *thani* to showcase the virtuosity of the percussionists, and one or two *thukkadas* from his repertoire.

Like the music concerts which have come into a pattern long back, the *sabha* canteens are yet to catch up with the other eateries. The combo has come into vogue. One who has taken *idlis* and *vada*, may not go in for *dosa* or *pongol*, unless they are very young and are blessed with zinc-lined stomachs that permit trouble-free digestion. The combo, invented by the culinary craftsman whose name is not surfacing, like the true in-

ventor of Ashoka Halwa mired in controversy, is a blessing in disguise. Served in a circular stainless steel plate, it includes *Rava Kesari* or *Pineapple/chikku* pudding, rice *pongol*, a small *medhu vada*, a companion of *pongol*, one piece of *idli*, a mini *rava dosa* in the shape of a crescent, coconut, onion chutney and *sambar* as accompaniments that give outside support. Last but not the least filter coffee served in a mini tumbler-dabara set.

Will the *sabha* canteens go for such convenient combos or others of futuristic innovation so that customers coming from the auditorium will have something of many things, like they have in a present concert, unlike their counterparts of the distant past who had an earful of only a select few?

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Freebie suggestion

The reference to freebies offered to the public by the Tamil Nadu Government

(MM, January 16th) took me back to the free cycle scheme launched by the then Chief Minister Jayalalitha. I wrote a letter to her pointing out that cycles were being given even to those who had no need for cycles. As I found that it was not well-received, I again wrote to her how the scheme could be a job-providing one. As one million cycles were being given every year, I suggested that ten assembly units might be started in districts, each of them manufacturing about 400 cycle a day. We could get the frames from Madras's T.I.Cycles, the premier manufacturer of cycle frames. (Now, most of the freebies are obtained from other States at exorbitant costs.) In every school, a service centre could have been opened to attend to minor repairs. Similarly other freebies also can result in some production and service centres. If such actions are taken, no fault can be attributed to freebie schemes.

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Relief for the dog

A tidbit for typewriters enthusiasts from Deepak Mukerjee (deepak.mukerjee@gmail.com) forwarded by Geeta Doctor (geeta.doctor@gmail.com):

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog – has for long been the sentence with all 26 letters of the alphabet.

No longer. Here's the new replacement; and it is shorter (dipsomaniac's delight too!):

Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.
What a relief for the dog!

Why can't ASI tend the Fort better?

(Continued from page 1)

similarly sees numerous people coming and going and you just need to see what filth is generated on a daily basis. The ASI here appears to have simply given up.

It is true that the Fort suffers from multiple ownership – the Legislature, the TN Government, the Army, the Navy and the ASI are all responsible for

its upkeep and collectively there appears to be none. But even locations that the ASI is solely in charge of, such as the *Last House on Snob's Alley* and the ruin that was *Wellesley's House*, are in a sorry state. There is an enormous amount of vegetation where the Post Office Square was till recently. Can the organisation at least pay attention to these pockets and make them more presentable?

A pharmacy that helped found a Society

Pharmacies are now dime a dozen in Madras that is Chennai but in the early years of the last century that was not so. The trade was restricted to a few very well known names of the city. Mount Road had an enclave of sorts where no fewer than four leading members of the trade functioned from. This was near the entrance to Ritchie Street, close to where the Madras Mahajana Sabha is. These were R. Maclure's (1894), J.F. Letoille's (1928) and Allbutt's (1881). There is no information on what happened to Maclure's but Letoille's, now under Indian management, survives after a fashion. The third, contrary to its Western-sounding name, was founded and run by Dr. Vurdappah Naidu, scion of a prominent family of Madras. Founded in Broadway, it later functioned from G. Venkatapathi Naidu Building on Mount Road, once the offices of the photographers Wiele and Klein, and now demolished. A fourth company to occupy this area was E.C. Barnes, opticians. The founder drowned himself in the sea following business losses post-Independence.

Another hallowed name in the pharma trade was Appah & Co, founded in 1894 by the brothers Bhashyam and Narayanappah Naidus, descendants of Beri

Thimmappa, the *dubash* who accompanied Francis Day when he came to Madras in 1639. The company does not exist but the family now runs Narayanappah Pharmacy in Anna Nagar.

Wilfred Pereira & Co., Chemists and Druggists, is of a later vintage when compared to most of the above. The name does not feature in trade journals before 1925. There is not much information available on the founder beyond the fact that he was a qualified chemist, the son

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI — SRIRAM V

of Joseph Alexander Pereira and born on July 23, 1896 in Bombay. The family was of Anglo-Indian descent. Wilfred Pereira studied at the St Joseph's College, Coonoor. Thereafter, it is quite likely that he enrolled in the Chemists and Druggists course at the Madras Medical College, then the only institution in India to offer this discipline. Having qualified, he set up business as Wilfred Pereira & Co, at No. 25 Mount Road, Madras 2. The pin code indicates that this was near Chintadripet and therefore

not far from where the other big names were located.

In 1925, three years after founding the firm, Wilfred Pereira was instrumental in getting fellow members of his profession to form a representative body. Attempts had been made earlier to get this going and one of several such was in 1923 when the Pharmaceutical Association was formed. In 1925, Wilfred Pereira, along with another qualified pharmacist – A.N. Lazarus of Spencer & Co – took over this body and renamed

it The Pharmaceutical Society of India. He remained its Vice President till the organisation was dissolved in 1949. In the interim, with membership never going beyond 60 or so, it manfully did much for the cause of the pharmaceutical industry. Members of the Indian Medical Service served as its Presidents, as did leading doctors such as Dr. Sir A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and Dr. P.V. Cherian. The Society also briefly brought out a journal – *The Pharmacist*. This was published by

K. Venkatapathi Naidu, Councillor of the Madras Corporation and later a Mayor.

Pereira did not neglect his business and it prospered. Realising that if he had to expand he needed capital, he approached the well-known business family of the Dadhas, who were also into the same business. Founded by the brothers Lakshmi Chand, Sobhag Mull and Lal Chand in 1914, the store of Dadha & Co in George Town had built up a steady clientele and also a powerful set of international pharmaceutical brands. The two senior partners passed away soon thereafter leaving it to Lal Chand to take the business to new heights. In 1926, he joined the Pharmaceutical Association too.

It was in 1934 that Wilfred Pereira approached the Dadhas with an invitation to invest and they did so gladly. The firm became Wilfred Pereira & Co Pvt Limited and with the money the new investors brought in, soon had branches in Coimbatore, Kotagiri, Ootacamund, Bangalore and Secunderabad. The company had also branched out into manufacturing and had several in-house brands such as Gripend, Phalex, Malto Bitters, Glow Liniment, Phelobalm and

Shemar (Family Cough Remedy). A chain of outlets and a manufacturing facility meant a head office was needed and this was at 2, Hunters Road, Vepery. Business prospered through the 1940s and 1950s. In 1950, the firm acquired land near Ayanavaram for growing medicinal plants and herbs, and also building a godown. The Government however nixed the plan, acquiring the property for the Integral Coach Factory. This setback does not appear to have impacted the business. Through the 1950s Wilfred Pereira & Co Limited was a frequent advertiser in all the leading magazines in India.

P. Anantanarayanan, father of Dr. A. Raman, a frequent contributor to *Madras Musings*, was for long manager of the outlet at Vepery where according to his son, he "established himself as one of the few pharmaceutical chemists of Madras, who could correctly read the other otherwise decipherable handwritten scripts of Madras doctors." In 1962, Anantanarayanan was transferred to Kotagiri. More details are available in Dr. Raman's article on his father in *Madras Musings* Vol XXVIII, No 2, May 1-15, 2018.

Wilfred Pereira's son, Wilfred E. Pereira Jr, in a letter to *Madras Musings* in 2009 remembered that the family initially lived at Ennore and later moved to Perambur and Kilpauk where they resided at Rao Bahadur Venkatapathi Naidu Street. He studied at the Madras Christian College and later graduated with a B Pharm degree from the Madras Medical College. Having done his masters

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WILFRED
PEREIRA

A
Trusted
Pharmaceutical
House
in the City

Head Office :

2, Hunters Road
VEPERY

Branch :
25, MOUNT ROAD

A retail chain that's different

Mylapore is home to many iconic shops. One of them near the main entrance to the Kapaliswarar Temple is the Giri Trading Agency, popularly known as Giri Stores – a "one stop shop for all religious products". Interestingly, Giri Stores had its origins not in Chennai but in Matunga, known in the past as the 'Little Madras' of Bombay, where Maamis in *madisar* (9 yard) sarees and Maamas in their *veshtis* were a common sight. One such Tam Brahm from Tirupunithura in Kerala, V.K. Swarna Gireeshwaran alias Giri, an employee in a business house, decided to quit a well-paying job in 1951 to start a shop near Matunga Central Station using a bakda (push cart) to sell religious books. As a spokesman for the Giri family, T.S. Ranganathan, the youngest son of Giri, whom I interviewed for this article told me, "There is a story behind why my father chose to sell religious books. Early in his life he was invited to an *Upanayanam* (Sacred Thread) ceremony of a friend's son. He wanted to present the boy with a book on *Sandhyavandanam* (a Brahmin ritual). He could not find a copy anywhere in Bombay. The non-availability of such religious books in the City gave him the idea to start a business selling religious books."

Within a couple of years, the shop moved from push cart to a small 200 sq.ft. space opposite the Matunga Post Office near an Irani restaurant. In 1990, when the owner of the restaurant decided to close shop, he sold the 500 sq.ft space to Giri. Subsequently, Giri Trading Agency began selling puja items, curios, handicrafts, temple jewellery, and CDs of religious songs besides religious, spiritual and self-help books in a number of languages.

Right from the beginning, Giri decided to take the help of his family in running the shop. Not only his wife Lakshmi who was a pillar of strength, but his growing children were also encouraged to help out during their spare time. This exposure would ensure that all his nine children were totally committed to their father's dream of taking the *Sanathana Dharma* idea forward.

Giri, however, knew the real big market was in Madras. So, in 1971, even while running the shop in Bombay, he decided to open Giri Stores, occupying 300 sq ft space on the ground floor of

a building close to Kapaliswarar temple in Mylapore, where the shop is even today. A few years after the start of the Madras shop, Giri moved his wife and younger children to Madras leaving behind his elder children to look after the Bombay shop.

Giri was a great believer in Ayyappa (one of his sons was called Ayyappan) and never failed to make the trip to Sabarimala every year. He decided to sell items required by pilgrims visiting Sabarimala, like the black dhoti and other related ritual paraphernalia. Simultaneously, the shop also began stocking items required for various other South Indian festivals, besides a whole range of traditional gift items, curios, handicrafts, temple jewellery and dance jewellery. Today, the shop inventory covers 1,50,000 products.

In 1986, the group established an audio recording studio to produce religious and Bhakthi music, in-house. Ayyappan was in

● by R.V. Rajan
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charge of the unit. Ranganathan says, "I used to sing inside Kapaliswarar temple and sell cassettes. Then, I sang on All India Radio. My family thought it was a good idea for me to record for our own business. My first recording, a *Shiva Stuti*, was released on Shivratri day. From then till now we must have sold about 50,000 copies."

The shop was by now on a fast growth track. Luckily another 2500 square feet in the same building became available in 1991 and was acquired. A small shop had transformed into a big "organised religious retail store", paving the way for many more such stores in India. Today, Giri Stores has six branches in Mumbai, seven in Chennai and a branch each in Kanchipuram, Madurai, Coimbatore, Secunderabad, Bangalore and Delhi. There is a dealer representing the group in Australia and an office in Texas, U.S.A. There are over 400 employees working in these units. It also has a big warehouse occupying 15,000 sq.ft area in Mangadu, on the outskirts of Chennai.

As a step towards backward integration, the group started a publication division with a printing press attached, to produce a number of religious books in

different languages, again in-house. While Meenakshi, one of the sisters based in Chennai, looks after the printing aspect, Raman, elder to Ranganathan takes care of the entire publishing business. In 1990, the shop had already started bringing out a monthly religious magazine in Tamil called *Kamakoti* with the blessings of Kanchi Paramacharya. It continues to be published.

Giri passed away in 1998 followed by his elder son Ayyappan in 1999. Ayyappan was a driving force and considered a man of ideas in the family. Though the double loss did affect the group, the surviving children of Giri, who were already involved in the business took charge and decided to take the legacy of their father forward.

In 2000, the company converted itself into a private limited company, known as Giri Trading Agency P.Ltd., with all the siblings owning shares and each in charge of specific area of activity. Mrs Sharada Prakash, the eldest daughter of Giri, is now the Managing Director of the company.

One of the most popular items marketed by the group is the 'KOLUPADI' – specially assembled racks looking like steps on which idols of various gods and goddesses are displayed during the Navaratri festival in Tamil Nadu. Kasi Viswanathan, the only non-graduate in the family but who is an engineer by instinct, designed a multipurpose product made of plastic which can be assembled as Kolupadis or as storage racks. This popular item accounts for almost five per cent of the total sales of the shop.

Ranganathan says, "Earlier we were known for selling only religious *stotra* books and now we are a brand – Giri – identified with Hindu culture and tradition."

How is the company facing the impact of technology on both their publishing and audio/video business? Ranganathan, who has a flair for technology, has an answer "Yes, when the digital technology came in, our remunerative audio-cassette business collapsed and we were in trouble. We took an early decision to go digital with our audio business by taking a number of initiatives. One of them is the concept of aggregating music and offering it to customers through an app. This allows them to download any song of their choice classified under a singer, music director, raga or even thalam. Special kiosks have been established in all



Giri stores, Mylapore.

the Giri shops where customers can do this and get the collection transferred to their thumb drives, for a fee. We have aggregated over 5,00,000 songs in our portfolio, covering religious, Carnatic and even film music. As available on other platforms like Youtube, I Tunes, Saavn, Spotify etc., besides providing the 'ringtone' facility. Though our products are available through online sites like Amazon, Flip Kart or Big Basket, they account for only five per cent of our sales.

"Our major business continues to be at our retail stores. Though there are web portals trying to sell similar religious products, the Giri brand has the credibility in the market."

The company started using computerised billing from as early as 2000 and a few years ago it also introduced 'bar coding' of its products for better inventory control. The Company has regular training programmes for not only the staff at all levels but also the family members who attend special programmes to keep pace with the latest developments.

Srinivasan, another sibling, is in charge of the sales of the entire group. Every year, he takes a group of selected staff on a trip abroad to participate in a festival at the Kamakshi Temple in Hum, Germany. He was instrumental in installing in this temple a 15 ft high statue of Lord Krishna.

The group runs a family trust called 'Lakshmi Giri Trust'

encouraging first-time singers in classical and devotional music and dance. The Trust also supports a few Veda Patashalas in the city.

Very recently, the Company acquired the rear portion of the building where the shop is currently located in Mylapore – increasing the floor space from 6,000 sq ft to 11,000 sq ft. A big leap forward! Giri Stores has now entrances to the shop from both the Kapaliswarar Temple side and from North Mada Street.

Though it has taken over six decades for Giri Stores to reach the enviable position it has reached today, the Giri family is confident that the long process has only helped to lay a solid foundation for the business because, 'We are not here to just make money. The whole family believes in carrying the message of *Sanathana Dharma* to the people. We also believe in giving a contemporary outlook to our culture and tradition. I am sure that this steadfast belief will help us to take the Company to greater heights in the years to come. "We are not a fly-by-night operation. It has taken us many years to set here. We are looking at expanding, but spiritualism is not the place where you say he made more money than me. We don't sell something just for the sake of selling. We are serving God here."

While many multinational retail groups are biting the dust in India, it is good to see a local, religious retail chain doing well.

● The Digital Library of India (DLI) project, an initiative of the Central Government, aims at digitising significant artistic, literary and scientific works and making them available over the Internet for education and research. Begun in 2000 by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India and later taken over by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, it has to date scanned nearly 5.5 lakh books, predominantly in Indian languages.

The diaries of a *dubash*

From India's Digital Archives
— Karthik Bhatt

where he was to make his name was a familial one, for his uncle Nainiya Pillai had been appointed the Chief Agent of the French East India Company in 1704. His father, Tiruvenkata Pillai, settled in Pondicherry along with several other merchants at the behest of Nainiya Pillai and became a successful businessman. While Nainiya Pillai fell out of favour with the French and died a prisoner, Tiruvenkata Pillai went from strength to strength and earned himself a respectable position. On his death in 1726, Ananda Ranga Pillai joined the government and in a span of a decade rose to become its *Dubash*.

As *Dubash*, he was a close confidant of Francois Dupleix, the Governor General, and often

his personal adviser. In addition to assisting the French with their trade, he carried on private trade himself and became extremely wealthy, becoming master of several villages, such as Acharapakam, Tindivanam, Bhuvanagiri etc. That he wielded tremendous power was evidenced by the fact that he was the pivot of all negotiations between the French and Indian princes. Today, he is chiefly remembered for his seminal work, the diaries he maintained which chronicle the political and other developments that shaped the history of South India in the 18th Century. These were translated from Tamil in the early 20th Century and published as the *Private Diaries of Ananda Ranga Pillai* in several volumes. He was, however, not a pioneer in this regard, for he had only inherited the habit from his cousin, Chevalier Gुरुva Pillai, the son of Nainiya Pillai. Gुरुva Pillai's diaries have not been recovered.



Ananda Ranga Pillai.

Like several other *dubashes*, Ananda Ranga Pillai was a patron of several musicians, dancers and poets. Dr. V. Raghavan says that he possessed some musical knowledge too, which Francois Dupleix seems to have noted when informed by Pillai that his (Dupleix's) glories had been

(Continued on page 8)

The shootout with political recoil

In several superhit Tamil movies of the 1960s, M.G. Ramachandran, or MGR as the 50-year old matinee idol was popularly known, played the role of the hero, and M.R. Radha, aged 57, acted as the villain. (MGR later became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1977 and headed the government till his death in 1987.) Unfortunately, their real life started imitating the reel one and they developed serious differences. Their Tamil movie *Petral Than Pillaiya*, produced by Vasu, was a superhit in which MGR was the hero and M.R. Radha was the villain. However, by this time, the rift between them on several issues had further widened.

This was the time when the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was seriously challenging the supremacy of the Congress Party that had been ruling the State since Independence. MGR was the star campaigner for the DMK Party during the 1967 General Elections to the State Legislature. He also contested as a DMK candidate from the St. Thomas' Mount Assembly Constituency.

On January 12, 1967, M.R. Radha, at around 4.00 p.m. went to MGR's house at St. Thomas' Mount accompanied by Vasu. They were warmly received by MGR. However, soon after the exchange of pleasantries, a heated argument broke out between Radha and MGR over some film-related matters. Accusing MGR of deliberately destroying his acting career, Radha got up angrily and walked towards the exit. Suddenly, he turned around, whipped out a revolver tucked into his dhoti and fired at MGR at point-blank range. MGR sustained a bullet injury on his neck and lower portion of his left ear. Shocked by this sudden incident, Vasu pounced on Radha and restrained him from shooting again. However, M.R. Radha wriggled out and shot at himself.

Both the actors were rushed to the Government Hospital, Royapettah, for immediate treatment for their bleeding injuries and later to the General Hospital, Madras. The doctors performed emergency operations, and both were reported out of danger.

On hearing this news, a big crowd gathered in no time near the hospital, anxious to know the health condition of their popular hero. Very soon, the crowd became massive and violent. Some of them

started pelting stones at the policemen on crowd control duty, besides damaging street lights and public properties. The unruly mob also barged into the garden of M.R. Radha at St. Thomas' Mount and set a shed on fire. To bring the situation under control, the police had to resort to a lathi charge followed by teargas to chase the crowd away. In the melee, many policemen sustained injuries.

A case in connection with this use of a firearm was registered in the St. Thomas' Mount Police Station. Subsequently, this was transferred to the Crime Branch CID and the investigation was entrusted to G.K. Ranganathan, DSP, CB-CID. The investigation revealed that both MGR and M.R. Radha were each in possession of a 420 calibre Webley & Scott revolver and both had purchased these revolvers on the same day from P.Orr and Sons, Madras, in the

● The first in some famous crimes recorded in various Tamil Nadu police journals.

early 1950s. Both weapons had cylinders that were identical. The seven broad grooves and seven narrow 'lands' inside their barrels had a right-hand twist and their triggers needed a 15-to-20-pound pressure.

MGR renewed his revolver licence periodically, whereas Radha failed to do so, and his arm licence had expired in 1964 itself. He had even failed to deposit the revolver with the authority concerned after expiry of his licence and, thus, he was in possession of a revolver without a valid licence on that fateful day.

As per the sequence of events that unfolded during the CB-CID probe, Radha had gone to MGR's house at Nandambakkam, near St. Thomas' Mount, on January 12, 1967, with the intention of committing murder and fired one round with his revolver at him from a close range. The bullet pierced through MGR's left ear and lodged in the pre-vertebral region. MGR had a miraculous escape. Thereafter, Radha attempted to commit suicide by shooting at himself twice with the same revolver, once in the temporal region and then on his neck.

M.R. Radha was arrested on January 12, 1967, and remanded. He was charge sheeted by the CB-CID for several offences. But during the trial, he alleged that it was MGR who had shot at him! Howev-

er, the prosecution witnesses, including C.K. Ranganathan, DSP, CB-CID and A.V. Subramaniam, firearms expert, convinced the court that the allegation of the accused was false and that the crime bullets had come only from M.R. Radha's revolver. There was no evidence against MGR and the report of the Director, State Forensic Science Laboratory, clearly stated that the bullets removed from Radha's neck and head had been fired from Radha's own revolver. The firearms expert deposed that the revolver used in the shooting incident on January belonged to Radha. The revolver was in good condition and had a 25-year effective lethal range. The expert also found three unused British-made cartridges of 420 gauge with the "Kynoch" trade mark in the revolver. The three cartridges were shaky, indicating a loose fit due to defective ammunition. The expert also opined that this revolver could be concealed in the waist by a person wearing a dhoti.

Vasu had stated that he and Radha visited MGR on January 12 because a "party" from Coimbatore that was staying at Hotel Ashok was keen on producing a film, with MGR playing the title role. However, the investigating officer checked with the hotel register and found that no one from Coimbatore connected with the film business had stayed at the hotel during that period.

On completion of the trial, the accused Radha was convicted by P. Lakshmanan, Sessions Judge, Madras on November 4, 1967, and sentenced to 7 years' RI for having attempted to murder MGR. In addition, he was sentenced 2 years' RI each for keeping an unlicensed revolver without surrendering it to the police after expiry of the licenced period and using it to commit an offence. He was also awarded 6 months' simple imprisonment for attempt to commit suicide. All the sentences were to run concurrently.

Many people, including MGR himself, were curious to know as to why the shot from a powerful 420 Webley & Scott revolver at a close range did not prove a fatal one. In an article for a newspaper, Dr. P. Chandrasekaran, a noted forensic expert, explained: "There could be only one reason for both having escaped from death. I guessed the bullets emanated from the revolver did not have enough muscle velocity to cause lethal damage". (Source: Crime Branch CID, Tamil Nadu, A Retrospect (1906-2010).



The injured MGR signing his nomination papers for elections from his hospital bed.

The judge sums up

While finding Radha guilty of all abuses, the judge Lakshmanan stated:

The accused, though not a member of DK, was an ardent supporter of that Party and a follower of the Party leader, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. Before the last general elections, the DK supported the Congress Party in Madras State. Professional jealousy had been proved by evidence that MGR was a well-known film star and a matinee idol and drama actor. Radha was also a prominent film and drama actor, but his 'market' was falling, according to evidence.

The prosecution had also proved that Radha was "financially frustrated" at the time of the shooting incident by showing that he was indebted to the tune of about Rs. 7 lakh. If it was true that Radha earned about Rs. 50,000 a month by acting in dramas alone, as claimed by him, he could not have incurred so much debts.

In a case depending on circumstantial evidence, the question of motive was of great importance. If no motive was adduced, it was a circumstance in favour of the accused. But where there was direct testimony of the evidence of an eye-witness, it was well settled that it was needless to adduce motive. Radha harboured a grudge against MGR because he was under the impression that MGR was conspiring to murder the Congress leader Kamaraj by engaging 'goondas' offering them Rs. 2 lakh from his "superfluous money" and his earnings. This impression was entirely wrong as MGR had participated in the birthday celebrations of Kamaraj and he was in fact taken to task by his Party (DMK) for praising an opposition party leader. He was therefore satisfied that there was ample proof of motive for the accused to murder MGR.

He did not rely on the defence theory that the two cartridges found in Radha's bag were planted there by MGR's men. If there was really a struggle between MGR and Radha for the gun and if Radha had wrested it from MGR, MGR should have attempted to get hold of the accused once again to wrest the revolver from him or run away a considerable distance from Radha or at any rate could have ducked; and if he had done so, he would not have been injured near the ear by a gun held at point blank range. The version of the accused did not fit in with the nature of the injury on MGR. He also accepted the prosecution theory that the two injuries on Radha were self-inflicted. It was impossible for any third party to cause such a wound where, according to his (Radha's) own version, he fell face down.

Referring to "severe criticisms" about the washing of MGR's clothes before they were handed over to the police, he said that as there was no struggle between the accused and MGR, it would follow that there was no scope for MGR's clothes being stained with Radha's blood. Referring to the defence arguments on Vasu, Chakkrapani and others seeking legal advice before handing over Radha's revolver to the police, he said that it was quite understandable for Vasu to do so because he was the only eye-witness of the incident and being in possession of the crime revolver, he was in a 'fix' and was nervous and feared that he would be implicated in the crime.

He had come to the conclusion that the accused had personal jealousy and political animosity and had the intention to kill MGR and become a 'martyr' of the DK. MGR's injury was not due to an accident, not was there any scope for Radha's plea for self-defence. It was a well planned plot to commit a dastardly crime in a sneaky manner and which, but for his old age 57, would call for severe punishment.



M.R. Radha.

Indo-Anglians

– The newest and fastest growing Indian community

Sometime around 2012 or 2013, my daughters stopped speaking in Konkani, our mother tongue. It isn't entirely clear what provoked it. Perhaps it was a teacher at their Mumbai school encouraging students to speak more English at home. Or perhaps it was something else. It didn't matter. What did matter was that our home became an almost exclusively English-speaking household, with the occasional Konkani conversation.

by Sajith Pai

We were not alone. Clustered throughout the affluent sections of urban India are many families such as ours, predominantly speaking English and not the tongues they grew up with.

Some of these families, or at least parents in these English-speaking households, do make an attempt to speak their mother tongue as much as they speak in English. But even in these bilingual households, English still dominates. It takes an effort for the children to speak in the Indian tongues, beyond a few simple phrases. English, on the other hand, comes naturally to them; the larger vocabulary they possess in English helping them express complex thoughts and propositions far more easily.

I have been looking for a term, an acronym or a phrase that describes these families who speak English predominantly at home. These constitute an influential demographic, or rather a psychographic, in India – affluent, urban, highly educated, usually in intercaste or inter-religious unions. I propose to call them Indo-Anglians.

Unlike Anglo-Indians, one of the original English-speaking communities in India, who were Christians, Indo-Anglians comprise all religions, though Hindus dominate. Indo-Anglians are also a highly urban lot; concentrated in the top seven large cities of India (Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad and Kolkata) with a smattering across the smaller towns in the hills and in Goa.

Within these cities, they are clustered in certain pockets: Gurgaon and parts of South Delhi; South Bombay and western suburbs from Bandra to Andheri; Indiranagar and Koramangala and gated communities in Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road – Sarjapur, Koregaon Park – Kalyaninagar, Gachibowli and HiTech City, etc. They fall well within the top one per cent of India economically, and have a consumption basket that is comparable to their middle class counterparts abroad. Their children go to international schools and have "first-world yoga names" such

as Aryan, Kabir, Kyra, Shanaya, Tia.

I estimate the number of Indo-Anglian households in India at about 400,000. This is of course a guesstimate. No studies exist; the closest we come to official data is the 2001 census which says 226,000 Indians speak English as their first language.

These 400,000 Indo-Anglian households account for ~1.4

There are two distinct ways to look at Indo-Anglians. One is to see them as casteless, or even as an example of a post-caste community, where the traditional caste identity is subsumed under the new Indo-Anglian identity. The alternate approach, which I prefer, is to look at them as a distinct 'caste' parallel to the upper castes, with its own unique cultural norms and practices. The key criteria for caste inclusion and endogamy being advanced English language skills.

million people (400,000x3.5, as family sizes are smaller in these households). This is about one per cent or so of the 130-140 million that claims to speak English as a second language in India – who I refer to as the English Comfortables, and about ~5 per cent of the 25-30 million for whom I reckon English is a primary language, whom I term English First.

A large majority of these Indo-Anglian households have emerged over the past decade, such as in my case. And over the next 5-7 years, we are likely to see a spike, perhaps even a doubling in these numbers as well, on the back of growing Westernisation, demand for English education and more critically, rising intercaste or intercommunity marriages, the single biggest cause of Indo-Anglian households (when parents have different mother tongues the child usually ends up speaking English). The rapid emergence and continuing growth of Indo-Anglian households has important implications for society, business and governance. Let us traverse through these.

* * *

A considerable proportion of Indo-Anglians households

see marriages between members of different communities (and castes). On the basis of anecdotal data I would hazard that a majority of the Indo-Anglian marriages are between the traditional upper castes. But they also have members from some dominant/upwardly mobile but historically lower castes. Once accepted into the Indo-Anglian fold, members fold their traditional caste identity into Indo-Anglian culture. Caste is rarely discussed amongst Indo-Anglians and few caste or religious conventions are followed.

Let us take vegetarianism, a core caste precept for most Brahmins and Banias. There are a substantial number of Indo-Anglians who are vegetarian, but they are not opposed to marrying a partner who eats meat, even beef. They are also not opposed to the partner cooking meat at home or ordering it in. It is also unlikely that different vessels are used for non-vegetarian cooking at their home. In fact, in one such household, I have even seen the vegetarian partner occasionally digging into the gravy, avoiding the meat. The concept of ritual pollution, manifested in separate utensils for vegetarian and non-veg food rarely holds for such Indo-Anglian households. Vegetarianism is a moral choice for Indo-Anglians and not a religious norm.

This leads me to think of two distinct ways to look at Indo-Anglians. One is to see them as casteless, or even as an example of a post-caste community, where the traditional caste identity is subsumed under the new Indo-Anglian identity. The alternate approach, which I prefer, is to look at them as a distinct 'caste' parallel to the upper castes, with its own unique cultural norms and practices. The key criteria for caste inclusion and endogamy being advanced English language skills.

Members of Indo-Anglian households will happily marry members from non-Indo-Anglian households, provided the potential partner speaks good English and can fit into Indo-Anglian circles. Seen in this light, Indo-Anglians are India's newest and fastest growing caste; and the only one where birth is not a necessary condition for inclusion. This is, in my view, hugely important, for this keeps the Indo-Anglian caste open to expansion from traditionally oppressed communities – OBCs, Dalits who have benefited from English education and exposure to Westernised culture.

Are Indo-Anglian religious? In the traditional sense, no. They are not frequenters of temples, nor do they perform religious ceremonies. That said, they are what I call "FabIndia religious", following soft cultural traditions, such as dressing up on occasions. They do have spiritual needs though, for they are a far lonelier and more emotionally overwrought community than many other Indian communities, thanks to their rootlessness, limited interaction with relatives, and dependence on their careers to derive their identity.

To meet these needs they turn to new-age gurus of the likes of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev – whose rise has paralleled the emergence of Indo-Anglians (and the English First segment) – or even take to practices outside the Hindu fold such as Soka Gakkai. And as their numbers grow, we are likely to see more new-age gurus and practices emerge to tap these affluent spiritual consumers. – (Courtesy: scroll.in).

This article first appeared on the writer's Medium page. His Twitter handle is @sajithpai.

(To be concluded)

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A pharmacy that helped found a Society

(Continued from page 4)

in pharmacology from the Saugar University in MP, he went to the University of California for his PhD. Perhaps it was his decision not to return that prompted his father to sell the business. He approached the Dadhas once again and they agreed to buy him over.

Mohanchand Dadha, who today is the head of the eponymous business house, recalls that with this takeover, the company became Dadha Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Pvt Limited. The new owners were, however, more keen on manufacturing than retailing medicines and so decided to close down the outlets in 1967 or thereabouts.

They then focused on setting up a manufacturing facility and in 1973 invited the Tamil Nadu Government to invest in it. The new entity thus became Tamil Nadu Dadha Pharmaceuticals Limited. In the 1990s, the Tamil Nadu Government opted to divest its stake. The Company flourished under the Dadhas thereafter and in 2013, at a turnover of Rs 60 crores, merged with the Baroda-based Sun Pharmaceuticals India Limited.

Footnote: Your Editor learnt his Three R's and how to use a fork and spoon from Mrs. Smith who was the mother-in-law of Wilfred Pereira. She later was at the Vepery headquarters for many years.

Introduction to classical Jallikattu

Jallikattu, or Eruthazhuvuthal, the traditional bull taming event, dates back to the Tamil Classic period (400-100 CE). Jallikattu is an annual event where men try to tame and hug the bull and has been a part of the traditional celebrations of the four-day Tamil Nadu harvest festival, Pongal.

The word Jallikattu has two components, Jalli also known as salli or kasu, which translates into coins, and kattu which means bundle or pouch. This is a reference to a yellow pouch of coins, which is tied to the bull's horns. The sport is also called as Eruthazhuvuthal, which means 'hugging the bull'.

The sport, which is played on the third day of Pongal (Maattu Pongal), has a natively reared bull being left free in an arena. Groups of people enter this arena and try to tame the bull with their bare hands. The participants try to do this by holding the bull by its tail and horns. The bulls are specially prepared for this event by various farmers. Various measures are taken to make the bull strong and healthy. Bulls are bred specifically for the event.

The calves chosen to become Jallikattu bulls are fed a nutritious diet so that they develop into strong, sturdy animals. The bulls are made to

swim for exercise. The calves, once they reach adolescence, are taken to small Jallikattu events to familiarise them with the atmosphere. Specific training is given to vadam manju virattu bulls to understand the restraints of the rope. Apart from this, no other training is provided to Jallikattu bulls. Once the bulls are released, then instinct takes over.

There are three versions of Jallikattu:

Manju Virattu

This version takes place mostly in the districts of Madurai, Pudukottai, Theni,

● by A Special Correspondent

Thanjavur and Salem and has been popularised by television and movies. It involves the bull being released from an enclosure with an opening. As the bull comes out of the enclosure, one person clings to the hump of the bull. The bull in its attempt to shake him off will bolt (in most cases), but some will hook the man with their horns and throw him off. The rules specify that the person has to hold on to the running bull for a predetermined distance to win a prize.

In this version, only one person is supposed to attempt

catching the bull. But this rule being strictly enforced depends on the village where the event is conducted and, more importantly, the bull itself. Some bulls acquire a reputation that alone is enough for them to be given an unhindered passage out of the enclosure and arena.

Vaeli Virattu

This version is more popular in the districts of Sivagangai, Manamadurai, and Madurai. The bulls are released into open ground without any restrictions (no rope or determined path). The bulls once released run in any direction. Most don't even come close to any human. But there are a few bulls that don't run but stand their ground and attack anyone who tries to come near them. These bulls



will "play" for some time, providing a spectacle for viewers, players and owners alike. The magnificence of such bulls cannot be described.

Vadam Manju Virattu

Vadam means rope in Tamil.

The bull is tied to a 50 ft long rope and is free to move within this space. A team of 7 or 9 members attempt to subdue the bull within 30 minutes. This version is very safe for spectators as the bull is tied and spectators are shielded by barricades. (Courtesy: Heritage Madurai.)

The diaries of a dubash

(Continued from page 4)

composed into songs. The diaries also record that, at the specific request of Dupleix, an enactment of French exploits with songs composed by Kavi Kasturi Rangayya, one of the poets patronised by Pillai, was performed when the English withdrew from the siege of Pondicherry. Some of the Tamil poets who sought Pillai's patronage were Sadasiva Desikar, Madhurakavi, Namachivayapulavar and Javvadhupulavar. A Sanskrit poet who was patronised by him was Srinivasa

Kavi, the author of this work. Nothing much is known about Kavi except that he was from the North Arcot district.

In his preface to the book, Dr V Raghavan explains the significance of this work on two specific counts. One, it describes the battle of Ambur in 1749 (led by Chanda Sahib in a bid to capture power at Arcot, backed by Dupleix) and the murder of Nasir Jung in 1750 (son of Nizam-Ul-Mulk of Hyderabad) and secondly, for the fact that it explains the origins of the name Chennapatnam (held to be an abbreviated

form of *Chennakesavapura*). Dr Raghavan notes that the pages mentioning the battles which were missing in the diaries were later recovered and published and were found to corroborate the *Champu*, which attests to its veracity.

It is interesting to note that the *Vijaya Champu* is only one of works in three different languages dedicated to Pillai, Kavi Kasturi Rangayya's *Ananda Rangaratchandamu* in Telugu (published by Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu and Sons (in 1922) and Sadasiva Desikar's *Anandarangak-kovai* in Tamil being the other two. With small stray verses dedicated to him in various Tamil anthologies by some poets in addition to the full-fledged eulogies, Ananda Ranga Pillai certainly is one of the most feted *dubashes* in the history of South India.

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