

Vigilance Awareness

The valedictory function of NAL's "Vigilance Awareness Week 2001" had a very distinguished guest: Mr H T Sangliana, IPS, who has just taken over as Bangalore's Police Commissioner.

Mr Sangliana has an enviable reputation for being an upright and capable police officer, and the S R Valluri Auditorium was packed with colleagues who perhaps expected a tough and no-nonsense speech from this highly respected officer. Instead, we heard a very charming (and witty) lecture from a gentleman who could perhaps have become an equally gifted evangelist,

Explaining how corruption was born out of greed ("usually of the people closest to us"), Mr Sangliana explained how the fear of God can help us conquer the evil of temptation. The Police Commissioner narrated several anecdotes from his professional life where he was exposed to temptations (from shopkeepers, civil engineers and even lorry drivers), and successfully fought them off. His experiences during Mrs Indira Gandhi's comeback election at Chickmagalur, and the occasion when he asked a Karnataka Chief Minister "to pay up Rs 75" were wonderfully recounted.

A scintillating lecture



The Vigilance Awareness Week at NAL ended with a truly scintillating lecture by Mr N Vittal, who stepped down about a year ago as India's Central Vigilance Commissioner, on 5 November 2002 at the S R Valluri Auditorium.

Mr Vittal appeared to be in sparkling form (we were later told that he's always in such fine fettle), as he spoke of corruption, vigilance and his abiding belief that truth and honesty must ultimately prevail.

The valedictory function to mark the end of the Vigilance Awareness Week opened with a welcome speech by Mr S V Samuel, Sr COA, in which he introduced the chief guest and spoke of his many innovative initiatives (e.g. creation of the CVC web site, preparation of the citizen's guide to fight corruption etc.). Before Mr Vittal began his lecture he was invited to distribute prizes to students of NAL's Kendriya Vidyalaya who had coined the best vigilance slogans.

Noticing that most of the prize winners were girls, Mr Vittal began his lecture by asking: "are women really less corrupt?..." - and even as the women in the audience applauded heartily in agreement - he completed: "...or do women get fewer opportunities to be corrupt?".

The lecture was characterised by many such instances of the Vittal wit. But we also met a gentleman truly concerned that the allure of the corrupt path, and society's apparent helplessness to correct this unfortunate trend, might one day overwhelm the truthful and righteous path.

Corruption, according to Mr Vittal, is wrong for at least three reasons: it is *anti-economic* (the speaker cited statistics which tellingly conveyed that the GDP of a nation rises as its corruption index falls ("we are currently placed at No. 72 in the corruption perception index; and there's no need to feel proud that we are ahead of Bangladesh placed No. 91! If we could even climb to No. 58 - on a par with China - things would be much much better!"). Next, corruption is *anti-poor* ("Rajiv Gandhi once said that out of every rupee that the government spends only 15 paise reach the poor. Even if we assume that the 'administrative overhead' is 40 paise, that still leaves 45 paise unaccounted! When our poor could get 60 paise, they end up getting only 15 paise because of the corrupt middlemen"). Finally, corruption is *anti-national* ("that's why we've chosen to start the National Vigilance Week on Sardar Patel's birthday; Patel was India's ultimate symbol of integrity" - this was followed by scathing criticism of today's politician: "just think about it: in today's political system yesterday's law breaker becomes today's law maker!").

Could corruption be really reduced? "It is certainly possible if only we convince ourselves that it can be done!", Mr Vittal said. In our official procedures we must resolve to "*eliminate*" (e.g. the corrupt practices of the Delhi hawker and his benefactors), "*combine*" (consider one integrated service counter instead of the many - in RTO's and elsewhere which breed corruption), "*re-sequence*" (which can improve efficiency and reduce corruption), "*substitute*" (offer the option to download routine forms from the web to finish off the nexus of the form peddlers) and finally "*modify*" (procedures).

One of the highlights of Mr Vittal's lecture was his great felicity in reeling off quotations in Sanskrit from the revered scriptures and (in English) from the philosophical utterances of Bertrand Russell, Victor Hugo, Bernard Shaw, de Tocqueville and Michelangelo and placing them in the context of the nature. "Russell said that if you articulate a point of view often enough it acquires respectability; I am reminded of this when people remark with such misplaced conviction that corruption cannot be defeated. But, as Hugo remarked, nothing is as powerful as an idea whose

time has come - so let's open our minds to the idea that corruption can indeed be defeated". Talking in the same vein Mr Vittal continued: "de Tocqueville has said that the inevitable can become intolerable as soon as it is no longer perceived to be inevitable - so let's reject the inevitability of corruption and we may soon find it to be truly intolerable! Or recall what Shaw said about success only coming to the unreasonable man who wants to change; so let's resolve to be unreasonable".

In this presidential address Dr B R Pai, Director, described Mr Vittal's lecture as truly exhilarating and inspiring. "It awakens our spirits", he said. The function ended with the vote of thanks by Mr M Prabhakaran, AO.

Srinivas Bhogle

The importance of probity



It would be an interesting exercise to enumerate the different "fortnights", "weeks" or "days" that are observed in publicly funded establishments: The Hindi Fortnight, The Quality Week, The Standards Week etc. A recent addition to this list is the Vigilance Awareness Week initiated by Mr N Vittal, when he was the country's Chief Vigilance Commissioner, four years ago. The Vigilance Awareness Week is observed in the week immediately succeeding

Sardar Vallabhbhai's birthday on 31 October.

At NAL, the valedictory function of the Vigilance Awareness Week is proving to be rather successful, in large measure because we've had some truly good keynote speakers. Last year we had Mr Vittal himself to deliver the [lecture](#) (he articulated his concerns with passion and feeling, and there were the usual instances of the Vittal wit). Two years ago we had Mr Sangliana, then Bangalore's Police Commissioner (his [lecture](#) reminded me of the moral science teacher in my convent school).

This year's lecture, delivered on 7 November 2003 by Ms Teresa Bhattacharya (who retired last year as Karnataka's Chief Secretary), was not witty or moralistic; it was thoughtful and sage. Ms Bhattacharya impressed one as an exceptionally wise lady with a remarkable felicity with words. She talked of the importance of probity, about how the vast majority bitterly resents corruption ("they suffer in silence, sometimes even in fear"), about the need to protect honest officers, about how standards of morality are set at the top ("you must have read about there being three type of persons: those who are always honest, those who are always corrupt and those who sit on the fence, willing to join the business if their superiors are corrupt") and about how corruption can rarely continue in isolation. Ms Bhattacharya also talked, with some sadness about "the change that I have seen in my career" ("when I joined public service, the corrupt were shunned; now we fete them, offer them awards and want our children to marry into such families!").



Mr M Prabhakaran, COA, welcomed the gathering, Dr B R Pai, Director, in his presidential remarks indicated that reduced Government controls and the right economic policies might help in significantly reducing corruption and Ms M Vimala, Section Officer (Vigilance) conducted the meeting and proposed the vote of thanks. As always, there were cash prizes for students of NAL's Kendriya Vidyalaya coming up with the best slogan, cartoon or essay on how to be vigilant

Srinivas Bhogle

NAL celebrates the Vigilance Awareness Week 2004

The valedictory function of the 2004 Vigilance Awareness Week was held in NAL on 5 November 2004.



Mr S M Acharya, IAS, Principal Secretary to Government of Karnataka, Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms (AR) was the chief guest of the function and delivered the keynote lecture on Value of vigilance.

In his well-articulated lecture, Mr Acharya explained how vigilance is an institution that tries to keep the values and valuables of Government carefully in the public interest. "Truth must always prevail", he said, "and all our vigilance activities should be ensure that this principle is respected", he said.

The function opened with a welcome by Mr M S N Murthy, NAL's new Controller of Administration (COA). Dr R V Krishnan, Adviser (M&A), who presided over the function highlighted the virtues of vigilance. "We need vigilance to conquer corruption". Explaining why corruption is an infection and a disease, Dr Krishnan emphasized that "this scourge should not be allowed to come in. We must all understand the evils of corruption and imbibe the culture of honesty, integrity, transparency and probity", he said.

The Chief Guest distributed prizes for the winners of various competitions conducted for the students of Kendriya Vidyalaya, NAL and the employees of NAL.

The function was well attended by a host of administration staff besides a few Heads of Divisions and sections and concluded with the vote of thanks by Mr Rajashekara. Ms M Vimala, Section Officer (Vigilance), compered the function.

M Vimala



NAL Vigilance Awareness Week



NAL celebrated its Vigilance Awareness Week from 7 to 11 November 2005. The Week ended with the valedictory function at the S R Valluri Auditorium on 11 November 2005 at 11.00 a.m.

Even as I entered the auditorium, I was pleasantly surprised to see three little banners containing quotes like "No legacy is as rich as honesty - William Shakespeare", "On this earth there is enough for everyone's need, but not for their greed – Mahatma Gandhi", "Even when there is no law there is conscience – Publicius Syrus". These conveyed the mood of the function.

Mrs Rama Mahadev, Sr. COA, in her welcome address recalled how the idea of a vigilance awareness week was first mooted in 2000 by Mr N Vittal, then was the Central Vigilance Commissioner. The main focus on this vigilance observance week, she explained, was educating the citizens of the country about their rights and also the role that they need to play in fighting corruption. Talking about NAL's ongoing recruitment drive, she indicated how by declaring the results at the end of the same day there could be no manipulation. "Merit is the only consideration for the selection of the candidate at NAL", she said.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr P S Nair, Dy. Director, Mechanical Systems Area, ISRO Satellite Centre. In his address, Dr Nair said that while technology was very important for a country's progress, it was equally important that all our actions were fair and based on justice and equality. Dr Nair picked evocative examples to stress the importance of vigilance: The Tarampur Maharaja's surprise when an eminent subject made the apparently innocuous request to 'control' the sea. Dr Nair's own campaign against his teachers who encouraged exam malpractice and his many difficulties in the 1960's with the RTO touts of Jayamaharal while trying to obtain a driving licence. "We must not be cowards, because cowardice helps corruption survive and grow", he said.

Dr Nair expressed the hope that e-governance could offer the way out and mentioned that the e-governance report on the Bellandur lake which was "most encouraging". "We must also publicize information about land records via the electronic and web media", he advised. Dr Nair ended by saying: "Corruption can derail the whole nation's progress. It is anti-national, anti-social and most unpatriotic".

Dr M R Nayak (Adv(M&A) in his presidential address read out messages of the President of India, the Vice President and the Leader of the Opposition. "We rank 73 out of 99 in the corruption perception index", he said, "and this is unacceptable!". He added that fighting corruption is too important an activity to be left only to the Central Vigilance Commission. "We need a systematic campaign against corruption by involving all members of the civil society", he added. He also explained that vigilance was not a stand-alone activity, but had to be seen as part of an overall risk-management strategy of the organization.



Mr J Shankar Rao, AO Belur, proposed the vote of thanks. The function was ably compered by Ms. Vimala M, Section Officer (Vigilance).

R Guruprasad