

## Veerappa Moiley

(Address at the release of Shri M Veerappa Moiley's book at India International Centre New Delhi on 09.12.2001)

I have a long association with Shri Veerappa Moiley, extending over three decades. He has held several Ministerial offices including that of the Finance Minister and ultimately the Chief Minister of Karnataka. His performance in office had always been of a high order. The secret of his success is that he works hard, studies his subject very carefully and presents them with modesty, very rare in the new brood of ministers. He is one of the successful politicians of our times.

The scholar in him did not find full scope for self-expression during the hectic days in office although the poet in him could not be suppressed even in office. I have heard that his abilities as a poet, novelist and writer in Kannada language are ranked with some of the top writers the times.

The articles he had written on current topics of public interest from 1997 till date collected and published in this volume under the heads Social, Political, Economic and general deal with matters of topical interest. I shall not take up your time by going through them after the brilliant introduction of the volume by Shri N Ram . I shall highlight a few items that bring out deep insight on some major issues that confront the nation today.

In his brilliant article entitled "*Journey from Katmandu to Kandahar*", the author deals with the growing menace of terrorism. He avers that the hijacking IC 184 was not a stray case or an accident but a thoughtfully pre planned, conscious design of the hijackers persons in Pakistan, Afghanistan and persons inside and outside the jails of Jammu and Kashmir. With a deep insight Shri Moiley states that Kandahar, not Kabul is the haven of international terrorism. With prophetic perception Moiley said in 1999 that "the United States which rejoiced with the disintegration of the Soviet Russia will have now to contend with the export of Kandahari terrorism to different corners of the globe, including the U S A .... It was Afghanistan and Kabul yesterday, Kashmir today (in 1999) and US next (Sept 2000). How true and how far sighted is the perception of Shri Moiley! Shri Veerappa Moiley points out that an ex Prime Minister Aldo Moro of Italy was not exchanged for terrorists and his killing by the Red Brigade turned the tide against terrorism in that country.

It appears to me that the world errs along with us that terrorism is a bilateral issue between terrorists and countries sponsoring it on one side and the country which is the victim of terrorism on the other. Shri Moiley is totally correct when he says the US and the international community should wake up to put up a united fight to uproot terrorism anywhere in the World.

I had earlier suggested that the United Nations may adopt a convention:

that the terrorist shall not be afforded asylum in any country including the country of his origin;

that the terrorists shall be handed over to the country where acts of terrorism were committed, irrespective of whether an extradition treaty exists or not between the countries;

that the state sponsoring, aiding or abetting terrorism shall declared a Terrorist State and

that anything state violating these covenants shall be expelled from the United Nations without prejudice to any punitive action by the Security Council against the offending state.

Unfortunately terrorism was not considered to be a global menace and no international action was seriously contemplated. The World has now wake up to the fact that terrorism knows neither boundaries nor moral restraints. Out of evil, cometh good. So may it be.

Shri Moiley's article on "*Reorienting Federalism*" is a logical presentation of the problems of the States under the Constitution of India. It is supported by incontrovertible figures regarding the ever increasing responsibilities of basic necessities of life like Water Supply, Education, Health Care, Low Cost Housing, etc., and ever dwindling resources. This is the consequence of a number of subjects being included in the concurrent list and the aggrandizement of central bureaucracy into spheres, which are basically State subjects. The duplication of departments at the Centre of primary concerns of that States has distorted the whole governance of the Country. In my school days elementary schools were under the management of Taluk Boards and Secondary education under District Boards. To day Government of India establishes Navodaya Secondary Schools! If the education, health, labour and similar departments confine themselves to Research and selected items, the departments may be reduced to one half their size. In my own experience, the bureaucracy at the centre will stall every proposal for reduction of shedding fat.

The centre has become a leviathan and it is impossible to reduce the size. In my view, the Constitution erred in stacking the concurrent list with every conceivable item. And yet the cliché runs wild that the Constitution has not failed but the people have failed!

It is a truism that the State comes into being for preservation of life and liberty but it exists for ensuring good life. In the much vaunted fundamental rights, there is no item ensuring adequate means of livelihood to the masses. Well may the starving man asks of what use is freedom to me, I cannot see it; I cannot eat it, I cannot drink it.

Through out the book, Shri Moiley's concern for the deprived, weak and under privileged sections of society runs like thread linking the topics.

Shri Moiley acknowledge that there should be a stray centre but a strong centre does not mean that it should usurp the powers of states and make them anemic and dependent on doles from the centre. A complete recast of the central, state and concurrent lists compiled with adequate resources for states to discharge their primary responsibilities in the least that should be undertaken immediately. I entirely agree with Shri Moiley that price meal tinkering with the Constitution will serve no purpose and that a comprehensive new constitution should be undertaken.

Musings in India is full of statistical data on particularly economic issues. It can serve as ready book of reference.

I am sure that the volume will be of immense use, for Parliamentarian, Public and Student community. I have great pleasure in releasing this book.