

**AMMA, Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

# **A Beacon of Light**

**A compilation of Articles - In Appreciation**

**VOLUME- I**



**Published by**  
**Daughters of Saradalaya**

AMMA, Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS  
**A Beacon of Light**

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- In Appreciation

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VOLUME I



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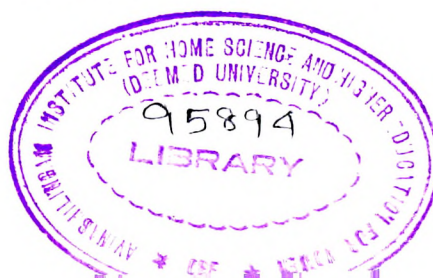
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## **PATRON'S FOREWORD**

I am indeed very happy that a biographical volume is being brought out to honour Dr. Rajamml P. Devadas, the architect behind the Avinashilingam Institutions. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, one of the distinguished Home Scientists and Nutrition Scientists of our country has been striving for the upliftment of women and children particularly those belonging to the poor sections. With her magnetic personality she has strived to bring together like-minded individuals towards the cause of her commitment to education-both in the field of higher education and particularly women's education.

Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam, one of the distinguished sons of India who was greatly influenced by the life and teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, gave up all his wealth for institution building, particularly for the group of institutions under Avinashilingam Trust devoted for the development of women and children. Following the footsteps of this great visionary, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was the chosen missionary to make all his dreams come true especially in the field of women's education and social welfare. Her indomitable courage, perseverance, vision and dedication, over the past forty years, has borne fruit in the shape of one of the leading institutions in our country - The Avinashilingam Trust Institutions.

Rajammal's dedicated service has placed the institutions on the world map. Her contribution in many important decision making committees for the welfare of

the nation, her innumerable contribution in the field of community oriented / application oriented research in Home Science and Nutrition and above all her commitment to nation building are some of the fine qualities of her head and heart. These along with her strong belief in prayers and devotion to Ayya avargal has given her a special place as “Amma” to many of her Saradalaya daughters and to all those who come in contact with her dynamic leadership and personality.

It is indeed the most befitting tribute to such an eminent woman that the daughters of Saradalaya have planned for a meaningful programme to celebrate the attainment of 80 years by her. I have great pleasure in associating myself with the year long celebrations which have been meticulously planned. She deserves all these honours in great abundance. Her life is an inspiration for the younger generation particularly women and youth who aspire to see a country our Mahatma dreamt about. I am particularly happy that this biographical sketch of her life and work as perceived through a network of leaders, professionals, scientists, former students, colleagues and relatives is an excellent compendium, will continue to inspire generations to come.

I congratulate the daughters of Saradalaya for taking the initiative to bring out this volume. I wish the efforts every success and may this volume inspire the younger generation to aspire for and pursue the ideals put forth by its great Founder and channelise all their efforts towards nation building.

  
(C. SUBRAMANIAM)

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## **CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD**

**I**t gives me immense pleasure to learn that a biographical volume is being brought out to felicitate Amma Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas on her attainment of 80 years - in the long saga of her selfless service to women's education and upliftment. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a well-known educationist and nutrition scientist of international repute who has spared no efforts, to place Avinashilingam Institutions on the world map. Her undivided attention, hard work and dedication to any work undertaken are rare qualities and the secret behind her success as an institution builder. With the humble beginnings, as a high school for women in 1955, Avinashilingam Institutions have grown to great heights - that today, we have a fullfledged University for women - which bears testimony to her leadership.

Avinashilingam Institutions, founded by Ayya late Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam - a great visionary, patriot and a true Gandhian in thoughts and deed, used all his wealth for the sake of building two great edifices of learning at Coimbatore. Ayya laid the foundation for value oriented education to women so as to preserve the best in Indian culture and enthuse the young women leaders to serve the country and the poor. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was the chosen architect to man the destiny of the women section. Today when the Avinashilingam Home Science College has become a University and completed ten years of its service to the community, it is a matter of pride for the citizens of Coimbatore to recall the step by step development of the institution and the current magnificent status of the University, as the only Women's University where a child can enter as a preschooler and come out with a Ph.D. Degree, with spirituality and Indian culture as the background. Behind this rare achievement in less than five decades lies the dedicated hard work, courage, willpower and above all the motherly nurture of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a woman with deep vision into the future - with her determination to have higher education even in the Forties, she went abroad sacrificing many things in life, specialised in the field of Home Science - particularly nutrition and returned to her motherland with added will power to help develop the country's teeming millions who suffer from ill health and malnutrition. She firmly believed that changes in life pattern and nutritional situation could be brought about only through proper education and participation of the masses themselves in the programmes for their own betterment. With this as an ideology, she helped to give a strong foundation for Home Science education in the country and fearlessly planned, got implemented and monitored many a developmental programme of the nation. In her own institution, she integrated Home Science education at all levels. She built all the related activities of the institution including training, research and community work around the theme of Home Science and Nutrition and brought about public awareness. Being a well read and widely travelled knowledgeable person, she went along with the current aspirations of the younger generation and trend in current higher education which paved the way to introduce disciplines like Computer Science, Life Science, Management Studies, Community College and Engineering especially Food Engineering, Biomedical Engineering and the like. It is difficult to concisely summarise the achievements of the University. Nevertheless, it is a fitting tribute to this great personality that her wards at Saradalaya are planning for a year long programme - both scientific and social to commemorate her eightieth birthday.

I am particularly happy to note that a biographical volume on her as seen through her associates from different walks of life and that of her own colleagues, former students and relatives is being attempted. I am sure this inspirational volume would be a treat to generations to come, for it would reflect the multifaceted personality of a great institution builder and social worker - a model to follow to build a true "Ramarajya" dreamt by our Father of the Nation. I wish the effort all success.

  
(N. MAHALINGAM)

## PREFACE

### A BOOK OF ALL TIMES

தெளிவு குருவின் திருமேனி கண்டல்

தெளிவு குருவின் திருநாமம் செப்பல்

தெளிவு குருவின் திருவார்த்தை கேட்டல்

தெளிவு குருஉருச் சிந்தித்தல் தானே

— திருமுலர்

**A** great Saint (Thirumular) said Life's purpose becomes clear when you see, say the name, talk about, listen to and keep thinking of your Teacher. The Great Teacher is God. His representative is the Teacher among people. Biographies have moulded life of great leaders. Gandhiji shaped his life through readings of great men. Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam Avargal through the Sacred Touch of his masters gained strength to fight for freedom and devote his life to mankind. So also, thousands of men and women have had the benefit of the Advice, Teaching, Training, Guidance, Counsel and Percept, of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, our Amma.

Amma's circle is wide and large. Her association has been with people of several strata and several interests.

Her association has been close with Spiritual Leaders, Administrators, Statesmen, Academicians, Scientists (National and International), Home Scientists (all over the world), Research workers, Scholars, Teachers, Workers in the field of Social work, Community Nutrition and Extension, Students, Friends, Well wishers, Kith and Kin. In fact all are her family members. Her sense of thankfulness to her teachers

and gratitude to those who guided her is one of high order. Amma cemented fellowship with people of many walks of life and many countries - specially USA, UK, Canada, Australia and Sweden. Amma's association are reflected in these volumes.

Hence when we made request for views of those close to Amma, articles poured in and are still coming. In all 259 responses were received. With Benediction from 9 members the volumes comprise, Appreciation from leaders-11, Views of Scientists and Professionals - 16, Friends from Abroad-28, Professionals from different walks of life-22, Home Scientists-19, Teachers and classmates-9, Former Pre and Primary schoolers-19, Friends and Well wishers-26, Kith and Kin-25 and the Avinashilingam Institutions' Family-75.

The multifaceted personality of Amma, has touched many at different stages of their lives. This volume has given a chance for such people to express their appreciation.

A compendium of the views of many would help to get a glimpse of the capacity and ability with which Amma has shaped people. We of this century have had the privilege of being with Amma. This benefit should transcend to future also. The experience of those of present will be a guidance to those of the future. A gem sparkles at every facet. So does the brilliance of Amma. It scintillates at different angles. Many have basked in that shine and wanted to express their thanks for the gifts received.

Amma was the eldest in the family and has been first in many ways all her life. Religion has been her guiding light. Her innovative genius, scientific approach, indomitable memory, accuracy, a flair for details, scientific integrity, capacity for sus-

tained and intelligent activities has earned her a name in the world of science. Her deep sympathy for the down trodden, a large hearted drive to help those in need are qualities which have touched many a heart most.

The academic ability, application of knowledge for progress of people, a genuine interest in the welfare of those around her and sustained efforts for progressive activities have been denoted by those who have met Amma.

Expressions of many would prove to be an inspiration for generations to come to activate them for better living.

This volume is envisaged as a 'Book of All Times'. Those of the next millennium will have an opportunity to read, imbibe and emulate the life of a scientist of renown, social worker and a savant of spirituality.

***“Make you complete in every good work to do His will,  
working in you what is well pleasing in His Sight, through  
Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

*The Bible*

*(Hebrews Chapter 13, verse 21)*



**(GODAVARI KAMALANATHAN)**

## **YEAR LONG PROGRAMME**

**W**e, the daughters of Saradalaya, are ever grateful to our mentor Amma Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for what Sri Avinashilingam Trust Institutions are today. Amma - the beacon of light as conceived by the large network of her fellow scientists, academicians, friends, wellwishers, colleagues from different walks of life and students is truly the spirit and action behind this unique set of institutions where one can enter as a toddler in the nursery school and come out with the Ph.D. degree. Her commitment to the cause of women's education and child welfare is manifested not only in this formal educational edifice but also through the varied non-formal channels opened up in and around Coimbatore and in the multitude of programmes for which she has been the singular force behind - like the state wide nutritious noon meal programme.

It is therefore a proud moment for us in Saradalaya to realize that our beloved Amma Avargal would be chronologically turning 80 in April 1999. We, her daughters, are eager to give a celebrational touch in a humble way to pay our reverential gratitude and tribute to what Amma has been for all of us. It is this soul prompted joyous thought to pay our tributes in a lasting way that has urged us to work out an year long programme currently and some of them would be a recurring event thus making a permanent impression for posterity. The year long programme consists of :

1. Special celebrations on April 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999 which include special bhajans, all religious meeting, alumni honouring Amma, public felicitation meeting and a special function honouring Amma by the All India Welfare Association for the Blind.

2. Creation of an Endowment fund for :
  - a. “Rajammal P. Devadas” - Annual Oration - a recurring feature for years to come. A renowned scientist expert in any area of specialization which the university curriculum offers will be invited as the Chief Speaker and honoured.
  - b) Special symposia during the year on thematic topics, of these some have been conducted and some are to follow.
  - c) Strengthening 80 school libraries.
  - d) Strengthening 80 grassroot women's groups in urban slums of Coimbatore and the three Panchayat Unions namely Karamadai, Perianaickenpalayam and Tondamuthur of Coimbatore District.
  - e) Honouring women leaders from adopted villages.
3. 80<sup>th</sup> year Commemoration publications. Significant among this is the series of biographical volumes brought out this year which is a compilation of appreciations from the worldwide network of connections of Amma Avargal.
4. Special commemoration issue of the Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics for which Amma Avargal is the Founder - Chief Editor.
5. Dedication of the Home Science Block under construction on campus in Amma Avargal's name.
6. Special programmes by Alumni

Some of the above efforts are well underway and others are being planned to spread over the year. In their execution, help and cooperation are being sought from the multitude of friends and well wishers of the institution and the Alumni. Notable among the efforts undertaken is the soul touching, excellent dance performance by one of the fine Bharathnatyam artists of our times “Dr. Padma Subramanyam” and her troupe from Nrithyodaya, Chennai on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1999. The theme was “Vande Madaram” and through this special choreography Dr. Padma Subramanyam brought to light the need for patriotism, national dignity and sacrifice arising the call to nation from among the future citizens of our great country. This has set the pace for all other activities to be followed and we invoke God's Blessings for all the ensuing activities.

  
(Dr. LAKSHMI SANTA RAJAGOPAL)

## **LIFE SKETCH OF Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor, Avinashilingam University, President, Avinashilingam University General Body, Chairman and Managing Trustee, The Avinashilingam Education Trust, affectionately addressed as 'Amma' made a humble beginning by her birth in Chengam, North Arcot District on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1919. Her parents belonged to Kallikulam and Mudavankulam, remote villages in Tirunelveli District. As her father was a Forest Range Officer in the Government of Tamil Nadu, he was posted in Chengam at the time of her birth. Her elder sister Chengamalam and brother Rajaratnam died before she was born. Therefore she was the third child, but because she was the eldest daughter of Sri Packianathan Michael, Forest Range Officer, and Tmt. Sornammal his wife, they brought her up like a Princess, naming her 'Rajammal'.

Amma had a natural aptitude for learning. She was admitted to a Christian Boarding School - All Saints Girls Middle School - in Trichy at the age of six in second standard. She excelled in all the stages of school and college education. As her father was in Forest service, which was a transferable job, and also worked and dwelled in forests, throughout her study she was in the boarding schools. Her mother, Tmt. Sornammal, fed her with golden qualities such as intense thinking, hardwork, simple living and above all strong faith in God. These virtues helped Amma to ascend to the peak of academic glory.

Amma, started her schooling at All Saints Middle School, Trichirapalli, where the Principal was an English woman - Miss A.F. Schubert, who taught her English and the good habits of prayer and meaningful living. The atmosphere prevailing in the home and school, had moulded Amma from early school life, to think high and aspire to study well, which is the permanent wealth one can possess in life.

Being the eldest of nine children, the family responsibilities forced her parents to get her married in 1935 to her maternal uncle Mr. Edward Devadas, Sub Inspector of Police. At that time, she was studying in the Northwick High School in class 10 (terminal for secondary education). She got a promise from her father and would-be husband, to let her complete the course in April, 1936, even after marriage. They promised accordingly and kept their promise. She came out very successfully in the public examinations with ranks, laurels, medals and prizes.

Amma secured highest marks in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination in the Church of Scotland Mission Northwick Girls High School, Madras and was awarded the Elizabeth Miller gold medal.

Unfortunately her father met with an accident in February, 1937 and passed away in Chengam. This news shattered Amma very much and she rushed to Chengam from Virudhachalam to pay her last homage to her adorable father. From that time, Mr. Devadas took care of the entire family.

In the year 1939 beloved son Mohan Devadas was born. Although she had entered family life, the goals and aspiration of her father for her to study higher were foremost in her mind. Understanding Amma's interest in higher studies, Mr. Devadas was finally persuaded to permit Amma to continue her studies in Queen Mary's College. When she left home for studies in June, 1940, her mother came to take care of young Mohan. Grandmother showered love, care and attention on Mohan in his childhood.

Unlike most students of her age, Amma was able to decide upon the subjects of study by virtue of her confidence. At the Intermediate she opted for Group I - Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. She took B.Sc. Home Science persuaded by her Principal Miss K.M. Myer, since the course was started for the first time in that particular year.

Amma was a diligent and promising student. She read voraciously and the amount of time she had devoted for studies was monumental. Amma's teacher's enthusiasm and encouragement helped her to increase her passion for Home Science, particularly Nutrition. She received her first degree B.Sc. (Home Science) in 1944 and was awarded The Todhunter Gold Medal and Aleyamma Chacko prizes for the first rank in B.Sc. Home Science by Queen Mary's College and University of Madras respectively.

Being brilliant, she was determined to do Post Graduate studies. She was appointed as the first Research Assistant in a Research Project sanctioned to Dr. Eleanor D. Mason, Professor of Nutrition, Women's Christian College by the Indian Research Fund Association (now ICMR) from 1944 to 1946. In 1946, she was appointed as the first Lecturer in Household Art in Queen Mary's College. In 1947, she was selected for the Government of India Overseas Scholarship for advanced studies in the USA in Nutrition and Home Science Education. In the Ohio State University, USA, she received the degrees, M.S. (Foods and Nutrition) in 1948, M.A. Home Science Education in 1949, and Ph.D. (Nutrition and Biochemistry) in 1950. She was conferred D.Sc. (Home Science, Nutrition) in 1978 by the University of Madras.

Amma returned to India from USA in June 1950. In the year 1951, Amma was appointed as a Dietitian and Professor, College of Nursing, Government of India, New Delhi. Her long and virtuous teaching career and education service began there. The next appointment was as Dean and Professor, Faculty of Home Science, M.S. University, Baroda (1953 - 1955). She was selected by the Union Public Service Commission as Chief Home Economist and Joint Director (Extension) Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India (1955 - 61).

Later she became the Assistant Director General (Nutrition), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi (1975 - 76).

When she was working in the Central Government, the call came to her from Dr. Avinashilingam Ayya to help in starting a Home Science College for Women in Coimbatore. Her thirst for establishing a Home Science College was quenched by this invitation. Amma willingly accepted this invitation, came to Coimbatore and started working towards building and nurturing the Avinashilingam Home Science College. Her hard work, sincere efforts and cooperation of her co-workers helped the college to grow from year to year. Amma became the first Principal of the College in the year 1960. For 20 years, she was the Principal and developed the College to reach great heights. Every stone of this Institute speaks volumes of Amma's selfless service rendered for the development of the College.

In her unique way Amma worked for procuring the autonomous status for the College. In 1978, under her able leadership, the College was conferred the autonomous status. Avinashilingam Home Science Autonomous College was the pioneer to introduce many innovations and reforms in curriculum and methods of teaching. The triple major pattern was one of the salient features of the autonomous college.

After ten years of fruitful service, in the autonomous status, the college was conferred the Deemed University status in the year 1988, by the Government of India under the advice of the University Grants Commission. Amma was the first Vice Chancellor of the University and brought many changes in the Higher Education system. Amma has been instrumental in recasting the existing departments and establishing new departments.

Double major system enables the undergraduate students to aspire for wider selection at the postgraduate level. All the undergraduate students are to learn computer

programming as one of the compulsory ancillaries to keep up with the modern computer world. To carry the knowledge to the community and serve the poor and needy, NCC / NSS / CSS are integrated into the curriculum.

Total internal assessment, modernised question papers, question banks, quick processing of results, issue of statement of marks and degree certificates are some of the marks of the university. All academic activities are computerised to facilitate easy and quick preparation and use.

Credit based grade system is used giving ample weightage to the contact hours for all theory and practical / field work/ thesis / project, etc. Students have the advantage of transparency in the continuous internal assessment by way of scrutinising their valued answer papers. These changes are fore - runners for others who want to follow them.

Amma has been responsible for establishing international linkages for the University. They include :

**i. The Oregon State University, USA**

The institutional agreement between Avinashilingam Institute and the Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, USA (OSU-USA) for exchange of Professors between the two Universities, six from each side operated between 1991 and 1993. Help was received from USIA of USA, the authorities of the Oregon State University, UGC, USEFI and the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resouce Development to materialise this project.

The focus of the project was on the contribution of women and household to national development in areas such as public health, nutrition, anthropology and family resource managment.

## **ii. University of Salford, Manchester, U.K.**

The British Council in Madras had sponsored the Indo-UK Higher Education Link Programme. Under this 7 Professors from each end participated in the programme between March 1992 and March 1997. This Indo-UK Higher Education Link Programme has helped in updating the curriculum, strengthening the library, keeping abreast of the scientific developments, and venturing into new fields of research. Three students from the University of Salford carried out research work on the use of coirpith - an agricultural waste to promote the soil fertility and legume productivity in collaboration with our Botany Department.

## **iii. Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, Canada**

A Memorandum of Understanding was arrived at between Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, Canada and Avinashilingam Deemed University to co-operate through activities such as : a. Exchange of faculty b. Exchange of students c. Joint research activities and publications d. Participation in seminars and academic meetings e. Exchange of academic material and other information f. Special short-term academic / training programmes and g. Projects aimed at improving the quality of learning.

## **iv. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia**

A Memorandum of Understanding was arrived at between Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia and Avinashilingam Deemed University for a collaborative programme - B.Sc. programme in Hospitality Management and Tourism. The close collaboration has the following objectives :

- a. To develop a need-based and balanced Bachelor of Applied Science course in Tourism and Hospitality Management availing the collaborative expertise

of Avinashilingam University and RMIT and to be delivered jointly by those institutions.

- b. To exchange faculty members to ensure shared teaching / learning experiences and to collaborate on research and other projects in Tourism and Hospitality. This will strengthen the foundation of the course and ensure on-going quality review and improvement.
- c. To encourage the exchange of students between the relevant faculties of the institutions.
- d. To establish a strong supportive network with industry in order to ensure that the course delivered is relevant and will meet the trained manpower needs.
- e. To utilise the expertise of RMIT to strengthen the existing laboratories and libraries of Avinashilingam Deemed University with a view to ensuring quality support for the programme.

**v. Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois**

A Memorandum of Understanding was arrived at between Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois and Avinashilingam University which has the following objectives :

- a. Mutual exchange of multi-disciplinary faculty to develop teaching materials and research methods and instruments to study household social and resource interactions and their linkages to national development policies and programs.
- b. Exchange of relevant published multi-disciplinary materials with focus on household social and resource interactions in these two countries that differ widely in cultural and economic situations.

- c. Develop long-term Indo-US multi-disciplinary academic networks between the two institutions.
- d. Broaden faculty experience with a second culture and bring their international awareness and knowledge into classroom teaching and to the local communities.

In the year 1994 Amma became the Chancellor of the University giving her guidance to the University for striving hard to reach excellence. Amma is always mindful of the welfare of the students. To enable the students who cannot join the regular collegiate courses, a Community College has been started in the academic year 1998 - 99 in the University.

Amma has written 57 books on Home Science and has published over 530 research papers and 350 popular articles. Amma is the Chief Editor for the monthly The Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics, Vignana Chudar and Patron for the quarterly Journal of Research Highlights. The Home Science world makes use of her books widely.

Amma's great contribution lies in Indianising Home Science. She changed Home Science taught in Indian Universities, to reflect Indian culture. Amma has taken active part in the academic and administrative bodies of several universities - Madras, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Bangalore, Delhi, Punjab, Calcutta and Assam. She has given valuable suggestions for the revamping and development of Home Science.

In 1976 Amma was selected by the University Grants Commission for the National Lectureship in Home Science and delivered lectures in seven university centres situated in different parts of India. Her lectures were appreciated by the Home Science

community. These have been published by the University of Madras under the title “Home Science and the Nation”.

The Home Science Association of India elected Amma for five terms as its President for ten years from 1961 - 1971. She was the only person who served the Association as the President for ten years. During her tenure as the President she made remarkable changes in the Association and helped to establish many state level units. Amma served as President of the Nutrition Society of India from 1986 - 1990. She was appointed as convenor of the Home Science Panel of the University Grants Commission from 1981 to 1994. In that capacity she had helped to reconstruct the Home Science courses for the Bachelors and Master's degrees in Indian Universities.

Amma has held many significant advisory positions in national and international organisations like FAO, UNICEF, WHO, ICAR, NCERT, State and Central Social Welfare Boards, State Planning Commission, UGC, NIPCCD and DWCRA.

Amma with her rich and varied experiences and intellectual participation in Home Science and Nutrition has represented India in about 60 international conferences and in 50 countries of the world in five continents.

Amma's dedication, selfless service, willingness to work towards the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden, empowering women in the villages, towns, cities and the state and nation have brought many coveted laurels. Some are :

Award of ‘Tamil Arignar’ by the Nannery Kazhagam, Coimbatore (1967). ‘For the Sake of Honour Award’ by Coimbatore West Rotary Club (1971), ‘Vignana Saraswathi’ by Delhi Sahithya Sammelan (1978), Honoured by the Mylapore Academy for valuable service for the cause of Education and Social Service (1978), the ‘Best Teacher’ Award for 1979 - 80 by the Government of Tamil Nadu, the National

Fellowship of the National Institute of Education (1986), the National Award for Child Welfare for 1987 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India on 17.3.1987, Sree Ratna Award in memory of Dr. Durgabai Deshmukh in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence by Dr. Subramaniam Trust, Padma Sri Award for Home Science in 1992 by the Government of India, Mahila Shiromani Award (1992) for Education from Shiromani Institute, New Delhi, Hari Om Ashram Trust Award in 1992 for Science from University Grants Commission, New Delhi, Mahaveer Jain Award for Excellence in the sphere of Education and Medicine (1998), G.D. Birla Award (1999) for relentless service towards the upliftment of the community, Smt. Janaki Devi Bajaj Award (1998) for outstanding contribution to the welfare and upliftment of Women and Children.

Thus starting as a teacher in a Home Science College, through her constant determination and hardwork, Amma has reached the position of the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam University. She is the role model for millions of younger generation. May God shower on Amma more strength and long life to serve the nation.

  
(Dr. SAROJA PRABHAKARAN)

## **EDITORIAL AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Invoking the Blessings from God Almighty, we the daughters of Saradalaya feel highly grateful and thankful that we are able to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our respected and beloved Chancellor Amma, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in our own humble way as a tribute to all that Amma has been to us, the mentor of Saradalaya and a Beacon of light for women, children and masses in general. Our Chancellor is a great academician, scientist, social reformer, philanthropist, teacher, guide, mentor, humane mother all in one and words fail to adequately express our tributes to her. She is affectionately called as “Amma” meaning ‘mother’ by the multitude of her colleagues, former students, community around and all those who have had the opportunity to meet her atleast once.

These biographical volumes are a compilation of appreciation expressed by her wide network of connections throughout the length and breadth of our country and across the seas over the nations as a tribute to her at this joyous occasion of her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Numerous leaders, swamijis, educationists, Tamil scholars, scientists, professionals, academicians, teachers, classmates, friends and well wishers, Home Scientists, relatives and her own colleagues and former students who had the privilege of moving closely with Amma avargal and working with her in her multitude of visions are the contributors of the chapters in these volumes in terms of their appreciation towards what she has been in their own fields and areas of contact.

On behalf of the daughters of Saradalaya, I take pride in expressing our profound gratitude to the patron of the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations committee Bharat Ratna Sri C. Subramaniam Ayya Avargal, the former Governor of Maharashtra and one of the Senior Trustees of the Avinashilingam Education Trust for readily agreeing

to be the patron of the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations, for giving the forword, write up and for readily agreeing to release these volumes on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1999. She gratefully acknowledges the gracious support and help of Arulselvar Dr. N. Mahalingam for readily accepting our invitation to be the Chairperson of the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations committee, for the foreword and write up. She acknowledges gratefully the messages received from Swami Ranganathanandaji, President, Ramakrishna Mutt who has been closely associated with the growth of our University over the four decades; Moderator Rev. William Moses, Pastor in Coimbatore and Moderator of CSI who has the singular honour of having close contacts with our Chancellor Amma Avargal in her pursuits related to church activities ; Kailai-Ma-Munivar Vidwan Santhalinga Ramasamy Adigalar, Peruratheenam, Perur, who again as a Tamil scholar and religious leader has had much to do with our institutions and amma academically; Brother Dr. D.G.S. Dinakaran, Ministry of Jesus Calls who has been closely associated with our Amma avargal in various academic and welfare pursuits; Rev. Dr. Job Gnanaprakasam, Founder President and Executive Director of Indian Penticostal Assemblies who had been a partner of Amma Avargal's work devoted to human welfare in Christian Missionary; Dr. A. Jawahar Samuel of the Call of Jesus Ministry who also have had the opportunity to associate with Amma Avargal in her welfare missions; Swami Atmarananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya founded by our Revered Founder Ayya Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam and a brother institution of ours ; and Annai Om Bhavatharini of Arulmigu Karumari Amman Sakthi Peetam who has known our Amma Avargal in her life's mission of women's education.

Appreciations from leaders particularly from Dr. (Thiru) R. Nedunchezian (Former Minister for Education), Thiru K. Anbazhagan (Education Minister), Thiru N. Pongalur Palaniswamy (Minister for Forestry), Professor M. Tamizh

Kudimagan (Minister for Official Language, Tamil Culture and Hindu Religious Endowment), Thiru C. Ponnaiyan (Former Minister for Law and Education), Thiru M. Velusamy (Deputy Mayor, Coimbatore Corporation) are gratefully acknowledged.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the distinguished authors who have reflected their thoughts of appreciation from their association and involvement as a co-fellow in the various assignments undertaken by Amma avargal. We are particularly thankful to scientists and professionals like Dr. C. Gopalan who has been associated with our Amma avargal in the pursuit of Scientific research with particular reference to Community Nutrition work; Dr. M.S. Swaminathan who worked in close association with Amma Avargal particularly in giving a rural slant to Home Science education in Agricultural Universities; Prof. V. Ramalingaswami, Dr. Kalyan Bagchi and others; Amma avargal's teachers and classmates particularly Dr. Eva. D. Wilson, Dr. Mary Eloise Green, Dr. Lucile Cornetet, Dr. Helen Strow, Dr. Stella Soundararaj, Dr. Moira Breen, Ms. C.S. Ratnam, Dr. Jessie Fischer Moinudeen and Dr. Bertha Mae Harthe Rose; Amma avargal's network of friends from abroad; Professionals from different walks of life; friends and well wishers and Home Scientists across the country.

We are specially grateful to Amma avargal's kith and kin for their invaluable contributions reflecting her family and childhood life. To the daughters of Saradalaya, that is, former and current colleagues / teachers, several alumni and former pre and primary schoolers who are currently well placed in various walks of life, we owe a special thanks for their promptness in responding as I am sure they would have enjoyed doing this as much as we have enjoyed it.

As a convenor of the publication committee, I gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance rendered by my beloved teachers Dr. Godavari Kamalanathan, Dr. Lakshmi Santa Rajagopal and Smt. Leila Diraviam, wife of late Chief Secretary Sri K. Diraviam, IAS, younger sister of our beloved Chancellor for their valuable

guidance and suggestions. I owe a special word of thanks and appreciation to our Registrar Dr. Saroja Prabhakaran for all the assistance, Dr. D. Lalitha for the timely help in editing the Tamil write ups, to my colleagues in the Food Science and Nutrition Department particularly Dr. S. Premakumari, Mrs. S. Radha Devi, Dr. N. Bhooma and Ms. S. Kowsalya for the help rendered towards the final proof, Ms. N. Malathi, Ms. Indumathi, B. and Ms. W. Jessie Sunitha, Guest lecturers, Ms. Hilda Sahaya Rani, Ms. M. Vimala Rani, Ms. Sophia Helen Ponmalar, Ms. N. Shanthi, Ms. Mary Jaya Prabha, Ms. T. Thangarathi and Ms. Thilagamani, Research Assistants, Ms. T.A. Kannamma, Office Assistant, Ms. Radhika Rani and Ms. Akila, Personal Assistant and Ms. T. Valliyamma, Typist for all their timely assistance in numerous ways. Last but not the least, I deeply appreciate Sri R. Iyam Perumal, Manager, Saradalaya Press and Sri. V. Raveendranath, Manager, Sri Avinashilingam Education Trust for all their willing help and assistance at all times in getting these volumes printed.

Life and teachings of great women is a life time inspiration for posterity. Life and service of our beloved Chancellor Amma avargal who is the true mentor of this great edifice of learning is a life of selfless sacrifice and lesson for emulation for generations to come. Amma avargal's multivarious contributions in varied fields particularly in the field of higher education, women's literacy, upliftment of women, community development and above all service to humanity will no doubt have an indelible impression in the minds of multitude of her admirers and followers.

It is our fervent hope that these volumes of compilation will remain as a wealth for action by younger generation to follow and emulate, and remain as posterity for the daughters who will be entering the portals of Saradalaya in the years to come.

  
(USHA CHANDRASEKHAR)

# **BENEDICTION**



## **BEST WISHES TO RAJAMMAL**

**SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA**

I know Rajammal from the days she was in the Government of India in 1950s, in New Delhi. Later on, when she took up the development of the Home Science College in Coimbatore under the guidance of Sri Avinashilingam, I visited her several times. What I see in her is practical knowledge, love for our people, tremendous energy, spiritual outlook, and motherly affection. And the result is the beautiful and extensive Avinashilingam Home Science University today.

Swami Vivekananda has said that what 100 men can do, can be achieved by 10 women. We are inaugurating the women's age in our modern period after centuries during which they were made to be mute.

I convey my love and best wishes to all of you and all the students of the University, and to Rajammal herself.

## **TRIBUTE TO A SELFMADE WOMAN**

**MOST REV. WILLIAM MOSES**

**W**ishing many happy returns of the day to a great person of international repute on the occasion of her eightieth birthday is a rare privilege indeed. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, the renowned Scientist and the distinguished educationalist of our country, the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Deemed University for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, dedicated her life for the empowerment of women through education from primary to the doctorate levels and also upliftment of poor children.

From a small beginning she could rise to a position of great eminence by dint of her hard work, pursuance and determination. Hailing from a rustic family of Kallikulam a remote and obscure village of Tirunelveli district she has become a world authority in Home Science. Her commitment to the cause of Home Science has been responsible for the remarkable spurt in the development of this Science in India neglected so long. Her achievement has been deservedly recognised all over the world. She has been the recipient of innumerable national and international awards and continues to be chairperson, member, advisor and consultant to a large number of scientific, social and educational bodies, committees and associations in India and world over connected with nutrition, women's education and upliftment of children. To be elected as the first Vice-President of the World Food Conference convened by the F.A.O. in 1970 at the Hague was a signal honour to her by the World Community.

The numerous research and development projects for nutrition and welfare of women and children successfully carried out in the University had produced results with tremendous impact. The pro-poor, low cost, tasty, dietary recipes with high composite nutritional value using cheap greens, vegetables and cereals have been a boon to pregnant women and children of the poor families. It may be mentioned that on the request of the former Chief Minister MGR, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas formulated a dietary regime in her University which is still adopted in the Midday Meal Programme of Tamil Nadu to provide wholesome and nutritious food to the poor schoolgoing children. These are just a few examples of her manifold achievements.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a multifaceted personality. Her academic brilliance with first ranks and gold medals throughout her career, erudite scholarship, scientific acumen and professional competency are matched only by her tremendous capacity for hard work, total dedication to the cause of women's education and nutrition and spotless devotion to duty.

As a person she is intensely humane and has all the Christian virtues in her, being a total committed Christian. The supreme of her virtues is her humility derived from her master Jesus Christ. This has drawn her far more closer to the people, the people of all faith and all communities particularly the poor and the suffering.

As the daughter of an honest and efficient Forest Officer of integrity bestowed with Christian love and kindness, Rajammal along with her brothers and sisters had the best of Christian nurture and education. She had her schooling at All Saints School, Trichy and Church of Scotland Mission, Northwick Girls's High School, Chennai.



The impact of the rigorous Christian upbringing at home and the schooling in Christian institutions left an indelible imprint on her later life. She is a practising Christian, a regular worshiper and whenever possible she has been involving herself and her talents in the ministries of the Church. She has served in the Pastorate Committee of All Souls' Church, Coimbatore and was a member of the CSI Diocesan Council.

Her faith in God is something contagious. She always attributes her every achievement to the sheer grace of God and the love of Jesus has sustained her throughout her chequered career. As a self-made woman she is never tired of saying that 'With the grace of our Lord everything is possible'. The secret of her great success in our pluralistic society can be surely attributed to her total commitment to Jesus Christ from whom she has received the gift of love, tolerance and above all the spirit of service for the upliftment of our marginalised section of society particularly women and children through education and nutritious food. Everyone should be proud of her. I wish her many more years of distinguished and useful service to our country.

May her radiant life continue to brighten many more as long as God extends her life span. ●

## வாழ்த்து

கயிலை மாமுனிவர்  
சாந்தலிங்க இராமசாமி அடிகள்

மாண்பமை பாரதத்தில் வளமிகு கொங்கு நாட்டில்  
ஆண்மையும் அன்புங்கொண்ட அவிநாசிலிங்கம் நாளும்  
வீண்படு இளைஞர் போக்கை வீறுசேர் கல்வியாலே  
மாண்புறச் செய் பண்பாளர் வளர்தமிழ் வளர்த்த சான்றோர்

காந்தியார் காட்டும் பாதை கருணைசேர் இராமகிருட்டிணர்  
சாந்தமும் அன்புமிக்க தாம் வித்யாலயத்தைத் தந்து  
தீந்தமிழ் நெறியில் அப்பரடிகள் தம்செஞ்சொல் தன்னை  
ஏந்திய கொள்கையாலே ஐயா என்றேத்தப் பெற்றார்

நாட்டுக்கு நலம்சேர் சேவைதனில் பெண்கள் நாட்டங்கொள்ள  
வீட்டுக்குள் இயலும் பண்பு விளைந்திட கல்வியாலே  
ஏட்டுக்குள் இருக்கும் செய்தி நடைமுறைக் கேற்றதாக  
காட்டும் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தைக் கவினுற அமைத்த வேந்தர்

பல்கலைக் கழகச்சிற்பி இராசம்மாள் பலர் பாராட்ட  
நல்லன பல செய்கின்றார் நாட்டினில் வீட்டில் சேர்ந்த  
அல்லலற்றிடவே கல்வி அளித்துலகெங்கும் சென்று  
சொல்திறன் உடையார் கல்விச்சுடர் என்று செயல் மேற்கொண்டார்

இளமையில் புலமைகாணும் ஏற்றத்தைப் பெற்றுக் கல்வி  
வளமைப் பல்பட்டம் பெற்று மதிப்புறு பாரதத்தின்  
உள உயர் பணிகளாலே உலகெங்கும் சென்று பெண்கள்  
தளர்வினை நீக்கும் ஆய்வுதனைச் செய்து முனைவரானார்

ஆற்றல் சேர்ந்திலகு சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழக ஆட்சி  
ஏற்றமாக் குழுவில் பல்லாண்டிருந்து பல்கலைகளுக்குத்  
தேற்றமும் தெளிவும் சேர்த்தெம் பணிமிகச் சிறக்க செய்தார்  
தோற்றத்தில் இளமை சேர்ந்தெண்பது நிறைசெல்வி வாழி

எண்பதின் மேல் இராசம்மாள் இன்னும் பல ஆண்டு வாழி  
உண்மைசேர் கலைகள் சேரும் அவிநாசிலிங்கம் ஓங்கும்  
வண்மைப்பல்கலைக்கழகவேந்தர் தமிழர் தம் மரபு போற்றி  
எண்ணமும் செயலும் தூயதாய் இனிது பல்லாண்டு வாழி.

# **A TRIBUTE TO Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**D.G.S. DHINAKARAN**

**I** have great pleasure in writing the following few lines about Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women-Deemed University, Coimbatore.

I have been closely associated with her for the past so many years. Her only aim in life is to serve the people and so she has dedicated her life to the service of the people through the medium of Education. She has never hesitated to help the deserving people. It is God who has placed her in the field of Education to help others according to the following Scripture Verse :

***“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you”.***

*(John 15 : 16)*

She has risen to this level in life through her hard work and sincere efforts. She is a strict disciplinarian. As such she has achieved greatness through honesty and sincerity.

The second great quality she possesses is compassion. She has lived true to the following Scripture Verse.

***“A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity”.***

*(Proverbs 17 : 17)*

Whenever I had approached her for any help either for the Jesus Calls ministry or for the Karunya Educational Trust, she never hesitated to come forward to help me. She has always stood solidly with me and fought for our needs as if they are her own. I can boldly say that, but for her strenuous and sincere efforts we will not be having the M.B.A. course in our Engineering College viz. Karunya Institute of Technology today. The College will be ever grateful to her for this great help.

I am also grateful to God for the good health that He has given to our Beloved Sister. Even at this age she travels around the world tirelessly for the cause of Education.

She is an embodiment of courage and she has always fought against favouritism and other evils which are spoiling the society today. The encouraging words that always flow from her mouth are like priceless diamonds. She has many a time lifted up my spirit from despair through her timely advice and concern.

It is my sincere prayer that our gracious Lord should grant her excellent health and long life so that she may continue to be a channel of blessing to the entire society.



# **Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A CHOSEN VESSEL OF GOD**

**REV. JOB GNANAPRAKASAM**

**I**t is indeed difficult to write about the life of our Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas or write a tribute to her in a few pages. When I was asked to write a contribution to the biographic volume of her life and work, I was feeling nervous and diffident since I know only of one facet or dimension of a multi-faceted personality. Further, to write about the manifold achievements of this great lady, who is at once a mother, a grandmother, a teacher, a professor, a vice-chancellor, Chancellor, church leader and a social reformer, is not an easy task. I am reminded of the famous song about the love of God, which says that if the sky were the parchment and the waters of the ocean ink, to write the love of God, would make the ocean dry.

So is to write the achievements of dear Amma.

However, I venture to write this short tribute to this lady.

As one scans through, the life of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, one cannot but be convinced that she is a chosen vessel of God. Coming from a traditional Hindu family, but chosen by God even at an early age, her life has been throughout one of devotion to God and unfaltering faith in God. I am reminded of what St. Paul writes in the Bible :-

***“But the Lord said to her ‘Go, for you are chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before kings and children of God’”.***

Three things are prominently seen in her life and cannot be missed by any one, who gets acquainted with her. One is her steadfast and unshakable faith in God and His guidance. Her life has not been smooth sailing all through, but nevertheless she has always swam against the current and won laurels. This has been possible only because of her faith. I may quote from the Bible :-

***“I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved”.***

***“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way”.***

***“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on you, Because he trusts in You”.***

The second characteristic of Dr. Devadas is her prayer-filled life. Throughout her life, among all other day-to-day work and activities, she spares time to be with the Lord and this is the secret of her strength. Bible has promised that those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength.

The third aspect which strikes one is the hard work of which she is capable. It is not by accident that she has gone to the top in the field of education. Her hard work has been an inspiration to many and it is only by her example she has built a devoted and equally hard working team to assist her in this institution. She had toiled upward to great heights and I am sure that the students of this renowned institution learn that it is only hard work that takes them up in their studies and in their lives.

My tribute to this lady would not be complete unless I make a reference to her achievements in the field of education. She has guided the destiny of Avinashiligam

Deemed University for over 40 years and this great institution is a living monument to this lady. She is well known and honoured Chancellor by all the universities of India. She has been invited by many famous universities from all around the world and was conferred many honourable degrees. Many dignitaries and leaders of various social organisations use to call her Mother (Amma). I am happy to join all others in paying my tribute and respects to Dr. Devadas on the happy occasion of her 80th birthday. May God bless her with long and healthy life for many more years to come. The Bible promises that the fear of the Lord prolongs days and I am sure that our dear Amma would over take Muthuselah, who according to the Bible, lived for 969 years and continue to be a blessing to this great country of ours.

*The Woods are lovely, dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep  
And miles to go before I sleep  
And miles to go before I sleep*

*Robert Frost*

*“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things  
and be in health, just as your soul prospers”.*

I wish you from the depth of my heart. Our beloved amma, “I pray that you may prosper in every way and keep well-as in deed your soul is keeping well”.

“The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden. And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail”.

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## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - SACRIFICIAL LIFE**

**J. SAM JEBADURAI**

I take it a great privilege to congratulate the Avinashilingam University family. When we think of the world famous Avinashilingam College, we cannot but marvel at the sacrificial life of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

The Chancellor of Avinashilingam College for Women being Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, the motto of this college is to reach the summit of excellence in bringing forth outstanding students.

In this day when we celebrate the 80th Birthday of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, we have before us the devoted students of Avinashilingam University. Since the time of starting the University, her main aim is to make it a Deemed University. She strongly believes in the power of God and she believes that with God she will be able to perfect everything.

Secondly she is devoted to her work. She sacrifices her time and energy for the welfare of the University. In her talk one can find that she is ever devoted to her work and she little minds the difficulties that come in the way. Her devotion to duty is the reason for her strictness.

Being perfect in all her works she wants others also to be perfect in their works. To make them perfect she tries her level best to teach them to make them walk in the way of perfectness.

This college also aims at building the character of a person. There is a proverb in Tamil which says; - “*பெண்களே நாட்டின் கண்கள்*”. Being the College for Women,

it brings forth women of good nature and they are trained in such a way that in their lives they are adaptable to any situation.

Her ability is the blessing bestowed upon her. She is an able Chancellor of Avinashilingam College who wrote books which are really beneficial to the students. One of her famous books being “மனையியல் மாண்பு” which she had mainly written for the Home Science students.

She has been awarded many awards. She is ever mindful of uplifting the downtrodden students. She is ever concerned that her students should emerge as gold.

We whole-heartedly wish and pray for our Lord to shower His richest blessings upon her, upon the University, upon the students and teachers of the Avinashilingam University. May our Lord bless her with good health and strength may the Lord meet all the needs of this University that in the near future, the Avinashilingam University will become a world famous University imparting knowledge to many students.

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# **A WOMAN WITH CROWNING QUALITIES**

**A. JAWAHAR SAMUEL**

*“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament :  
And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”.*

*Daniel 12 : 3*

**I** am inexplicably and immensely pleased to render a few words of unadulterated praise on the life of Dr. Rajammal Devadas, the Chancellor of Avinashilingam Deemed University.

I saw something breathtaking at London. The Kohinoor diamond of India bedecks the Crown of Queen Elizabeth, administering on it an unusual grace. This coveted stone is recorded as the world's best. Likewise an Indian shines as a lone diamond in the fraternity of educationalists. It is none but Dr. Rajammal Devadas who is endeared by everyone as ‘Amma’.

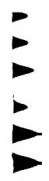
Even a plethora of adjectives put together will defy the purpose of describing this charismatic person. She is revered, virtuous, gracious, honourable, warm, lovable,.... The previous sentence would not come to conclusion if continued. She stands as a living testimony to the Biblical truths such as “Gracious woman retaineth honour” and “She is worth far more than rubies”. Such priceless and precious women had existed both in the realm of Biblical spirituality and materialistic world as well. They had been as blessings to the societies. They are prone to the sacrifice of their selves for the betterment of the masses. Our beloved Amma is one such selfless soul

who has left and leaves golden footprints in the sands of time. She has the sheer privilege of being loved, admired and respected by many a great personages of the world. Had she succumbed to materialistic intention, she would have thrived but single mindedly she had moulded countless young women as responsible citizens without any material expectation.

I had the opportunity to interact with Amma on various places under various circumstances for the past ten years. Each and every time I am amazed on seeing her unique qualities, particularly her godliness. My sphere of knowledge is so very limited to write about a woman who has consumed and digested a great deal of wisdom of this world. But I have the privilege to be her spiritual companion, who keeps praying for her well being. In toto she can be very well branded as a genius. At the same time, one has to acknowledge the fact that it is Lord Jesus who has given this wisdom to her. One remembers in this connection the verse from the Bible. "The wise woman builds homes". Avinashilingam University itself seems to be a home which houses hundreds of families. It was possible only because of her wisdom.

"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom" goes a verse in the Bible. So it is obvious that it is her fear of the Lord that accounts for her emancipation in life. She always humbles herself in front of the Lord as a prayerful woman. Whatever the endeavour might be, be it personal or organisational, I have seen her waiting on the feet of the Lord for His guidance.

Down the memory lane I have one unforgettable incident. Once I was invited to dine with Late Mr. Avinashilingam Chettiar, Amma and a few others of importance. After the dinner, I remember Amma saying, "All of us were waiting only for your prayer". What a privilege before great persons! I had also been summoned by her,



when her aged mother was sick, for prayer and later she gave her testimony about the miraculous intervention of the Lord by which her mother was cured.

Godliness and patriotism is a rare combination. Our Amma is a proud owner of this amalgam. Her patriotism is renowned that we can regard her as one of the faithful daughters of India. She had toiled a lot for the upliftment of our mother land. When Coimbatore was disturbed by the drastic and dreaded bombblast, both of us joined in prayer for peace in our country.

She always has a favourable eye on poor and downtrodden masses, for the Lord has moulded her as a compassionate woman. I had seen her helping the needy irrespective of communal, lingual, religious and regional differences. God's love is unbiased. It is His love which our Amma reflects.

This great and lovely soul who is a valuable asset to the society and a useful tool in the hands of the Lord has every right to be crowned by the Lord. I, as a servant of the Lord wish that Amma, who is, all goodness rolled into one, live longer with all the blessings for which I will keep praying as well. Glory be to God!



# **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A REMARKABLE WOMAN**

**SWAMI ATMARAMANANDA**

**S**ervice is a way of life. Only to a rare few is it the only way of life.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is one such rare person who is filled with the spirit of service. Her work bears the stamp not only of her dynamism but also of originality. Her untiring contribution to the welfare of others is all the more noticeably remarkable and far-reaching because of her scientific training in the field of nutrition, women's welfare, and Home Science. Her work has shown how the usual women's work of home keeping etc. can become a powerful instrument for transforming society and traditional social attitudes towards the girl-child, woman, wife, and mother.

Over the past hundred and fifty years, and even before, remarkable women with vision and inspiration have arisen in our country. They strove to restore the dignity and freedom of women that had been the hallmark of our nation before its social structure was rudely damaged from across the borders and the oceans. Those women were the personification of what they wanted to help other women too to achieve. Today also we have in the midst of our turbulent milieu one such noble and dynamic lady in the form of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

What is it that moves them to dedicate themselves to the upliftment of others? Most people's life remains confined within their mental shell of personal interests or formal professional demands. But why or how do some rare individuals break free from that shell and feel concerned for others, sacrificing their own comforts? The

fully satisfactory and comprehensive answer can only be that the divine within their hearts, which is the same and equally present in all the hearts becomes active, subordinating their ordinary selfish human demands. More ethical or social or political impulses cannot explain such praiseworthy conduct. Compassion, perseverance, service, self-transcendence, intelligence, simplicity, etc., are all gifts of the divine. No wonder Dr. Rajammal has these in plenty.

From a purely mundane point of view, the impulse of inspired dedication must have come largely from her association with Sri T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiar. He was himself a great educationist who championed the cause of educating and improving the lot of common masses. Not mere classroom education, but life-giving education, education that equipped individuals to take charge of their lives. He promoted an education that took all aspects of real life into consideration, an education that was down to earth. Education, as he correctly understood it, dealt with the basics of social life. Dr. Rajammal's work too bears a striking similarity.

To say the least, the impressively long list of her achievements and the recognition she has received, the last being the G.D. Birla Award in 1998, speaks volumes about her unobtrusive eminence. Still, the person is much greater than all that her biodata suggests. That the Lord has chosen to keep her so long with us is a sign of His compassion. May He please keep her longer with us is our prayer.

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# ஆசியுரை

அன்னை ஓம் பவதாரிணி

ஈமீப காலமாக இந்தியாவின் வியப்பூட்டும் சாதனைகளில் பெண்களின் முன்னேற்றமும் ஒன்று. இன்று பெண்கள் எல்லா துறைகளிலும் முன்னணியில் இருக்கின்றார்கள். கல்வி, சமூக, அரசியல் மற்றும் பொருளாதார நிலையில் பெண்கள் எண்ணிக்கையிலும், வலிமையிலும் அதிகரித்து வருகின்றனர். இதற்கு பெண்களுக்கு அளிக்கப்படும் கல்வி வாய்ப்பே மிக முக்கிய காரணம் என்றால் அது மிகையாகாது.

நம் நாட்டில் பெண் கல்விக்காகவும், பெண் சமூக முன்னேற்றத்திற்காகவும், குறிப்பாக கிராமப்புற மகளிர் மேம்பாட்டிற்காகவும், பொருளாதார சூழ்நிலையில் பின்தங்கியுள்ள குடும்பங்களைச் சேர்ந்த பெண்களின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்காகவும் பாடுபடும் கல்வி நிறுவனங்களில் முதன்மையான இடத்தை கோவை அவினாசிலிங்கம் பெண்கள் பல்கலைக்கழகம் பெற்றுள்ளது.

இத்தகைய சிறப்பை அப்பல்கலைக்கழகம் பெற்று உள்ளதற்கும், அது மேன்மேலும் பல துறைகளுடன் விரிவடைந்து அதிக அளவில் பெண்களுக்கு அடைக்கலமாய் விளங்குவதற்கும் மிக முக்கிய காரணமாக விளங்கி வருபவர் டாக்டர் திருமதி. இராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களே.

உலகப்புகழ் பெற்ற பெண்மணிகளில் ஒருவராகத் திகழும் நம் அம்மையார் பெண்களுக்காக சந்தடி இல்லாமல் ஒரு புரட்சியை தமது சேவை மூலம் செய்து வருகின்றார்கள்.

உயரிய ஞானம், தேசப்பற்று, கல்விப்பற்று, தாய்மை உணர்வு, நேர்மை, கண்டிப்பு, செயல்திறன் ஆகிய நற்குணங்களை இயல்பாகவே பெற்றுள்ள இராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தை உலகத் தரம் வாய்ந்த கல்வி நிறுவனமாக உருவாக்குவதில் பெரும் பங்காற்றியவர்.

பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் துணைவேந்தராகவும், பின்னர் வேந்தராக பதவி உயர்வும் பெற்ற திருமதி. இராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களுடன் பல ஆண்டுகளாக நெருங்கிய தொடர்பும், நட்பும் கொண்டுள்ள காரணத்தால் அடியேன் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு வருகை புரியும் வாய்ப்பும் பெற்றிருக்கிறேன். அதுபோன்ற சமயங்களில் அவர் தம்மிடம் பணிபுரியும் ஆசிரியைகளிடமும், மாணவிகளிடமும் மற்றும் ஊழியர்களிடமும் மிகவும் அன்பாகவும், கனிவாகவும் பழகுவதையும், அவர்களின் பிரச்சினைகளை அறிந்து கொண்டு அவர்களுக்கு நல்வழி காட்டுவதையும் கண்டு மகிழ்ந்துள்ளேன்.

இன்றைய சூழ்நிலையில் பெண்களுக்கு கல்வி முன்னேற்றத்துடன் சமுதாய விழிப்புணர்வும், தங்களுக்கு ஏற்படும் பிரச்சினைகளில் இருந்து தங்களை காப்பாற்றிக் கொள்ள உதவும் மனோதிடமும் எவ்வளவு அவசியம் என்பதை திருமதி. இராஜம்மாள் அவர்கள் புரிந்து கொண்டு செயல்படுவதில் வல்லவர். இதுவே உலகின் தலைசிறந்த பல்கலைக்கழகங்களில் ஒன்றான அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தைச் சேர்ந்த மாணவியர் சிறந்து திகழ்வதற்கு முக்கிய காரணங்களில் ஒன்றாக அடியேன் கருதுகிறேன்.

மேலும், அவருடைய பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் ஆண்டுதோறும் சிறப்பு பாடத் திட்டங்கள் புகுத்தப்படுவதும், மாணவிகளுக்கு அதில் சிறப்பு பயிற்சிகள் அளிக்கப்படுவதும், கல்வி சேவையில் மட்டும் நின்றுவிடாமல் கிராமங்களைத் தத்து எடுத்து அவற்றின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு பல்கலைக்கழகம் பாடுபடுவதும்

அதன் சிறப்பு அம்சம். இத்தகைய சேவைகளுக்கு, பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு மட்டும் வேந்தராக இல்லாமல் பெண் இனத்திற்கே வேந்தராகத் திகழ்கிறார்.

பெண்மை, தாய்மை, இறைமை ஆகிய மூன்று நிலையில் பரிணாமம் அடையும் போது தான் ஒரு பெண் பூரணத்துவம் அடைந்து சிருஷ்டிக்கும் ஆற்றலைப் பெறுகிறாள். தன்னலமற்ற சேவையின் மூலம் இந்நிலையை அடைந்துள்ள திருமதி. இராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் பெண்ணினத்தில் ஊடுருவி தமது சிருஷ்டி சக்தியின் மூலம் தனது பணியில் புதிய முத்திரையைப் பதிய வைத்துள்ளார்.

அவரது சீரிய தொண்டு சிறக்கவும், நீண்ட ஆயுளுடன் ஆரோக்கியமும் பெற்று அவர் தமது பணிகளில் சிறந்து விளங்கவும் அன்னை தேவி கருமாரியை வேண்டி எனது மனமுவந்த ஆசியையும் அவர்களுக்கு அளிக்கிறேன். ●

**APPRECIATION FROM  
LEADERS**

**USHA NARAYANAN**

RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN  
NEW DELHI - 110 004

March 30, 1999

## **MESSAGE**

I am immensely pleased to learn that the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, is celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of its multifaceted Chancellor, Dr. (Smt.) Rajammal P. Devadas, in a befitting manner.

Dr. (Smt.) Devadas has made seminal contributions in a variety of fields ranging from education and teacher training to nutrition and food research and social service. Her sustained efforts in Home Science and Nutrition through research, education and extension activities have helped in widening the scope and content of the subject and in integrating it with the larger frame work of women and child development and community service. The Engineering faculty of the Deemed University, exclusively for women, is probably the only one of its kind in the whole of India and is a brilliant testimony to Smt. Devadas's track record as an academician and administrator who has devoted her life to the cause of women's education in our country.

On this significant milestone of Smt. Devadas's life, I join her friends, well wishers and associates, in congratulating her for her contributions to society and in wishing her many more years in the service of the nation.

I also wish the Avinashilingam Institute continuing success.

*Usha Narayanan*  
(USHA NARAYANAN)

**Ms. JUSTICE M. FATHIMA BEEVI**  
(Former Judge, Supreme Court of India)  
GOVERNOR, TAMIL NADU



RAJ BHAVAN  
CHENNAI - 600 022

## **MESSAGE**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas has made a unique contribution to the cause of Women's development in her capacity as the Chancellor of the “Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women Deemed University”. It heartens to note that her associates and students have planned to celebrate her 80th birthday as a mark of their affection and respect for her. I am happy to send my greetings and good wishes for the successful celebration and many happy returns of her birthday.



(M. FATHIMA BEEVI)

## **GOOD WISHES AND BLESSINGS**

**C. SUBRAMANIAM**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas occupies a unique position in the field of women's education and nutritional research. Hailing from a remote village in the southern-most part of India, by her own merit, she has risen upto international recognition through her commitment to human and spiritual values for the upliftment of humanity.

Her leadership quality was evident even when she was a student in the Queen Mary's College as Chairman of the Students Union. Even though she could have taken any subject for graduate studies, she took B.Sc. Home Science as she saw that it would give her the capacity to serve India's womanhood.

Rajammal Devadas's distinguished academic qualifications : B.Sc. (Home Science) from Madras University, M.Sc. (Foods & Nutrition) from the Ohio State University, USA., M.A. (Home Science Education) and Ph.D. (Nutrition and Bio-Chemistry) from the same university. She also took D.Sc. (Home Science Nutrition) from the University of Madras. She had always the record of First rank throughout. The merit has been recognised by many international institutions and she holds the Membership in the National Honour Societies of : Sigma XI (Scientific Research), Sigma Delta Epsilon (Graduate Science Women), Omicron NU (Home Economics Research) and Phi Upsilon Omicron (Home Economics Professional Interest and Scholarship).

Many Honorary Degrees were conferred on her :

## **National**

The Chandra Shekar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur conferred Hon. Degree of D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) on December 1994.

## **International**

The Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, USA.

The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA

The University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

She has immense faith in the Gandhian philosophy and always chose to use her knowledge and experience to promote the welfare of Indian womanhood. She gave up her government service and joined Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women in 1960, as Post-Graduate Professor and Principal and Assistant Managing Trustee in the Avinashilingam Educational Trust Institutions. Later on she became the Managing Trustee.

When Avinashilingam Home Science College became the Deemed University, she became the Vice Chancellor and now currently she is the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University.

Avinashilingam Institute has become an internationally recognised institution for women's education particularly in the field of Home Science. It is the untiring effort of Rajammal P. Devadas which has built up this institution. Nearly 4500 children are studying in this institution from LKG to Ph.D.

Even at the age of 80, Rajammal Devadas is very active in the national and international fora. Rajammal Devadas will be remembered for her contribution in the field of nutrition. Through her research, she has shown the way how indigenously available food materials could be nutritionally improved. Thus she has made possible for the rural folk also to get nutritious diet. It is because of her research, the Tamil Nadu Nutrition Programme has become a success story.

Even though she is a Christian by birth, she is greatly devoted to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda.

On the occasion of the 80th birthday of Rajammal Devadas, I give my good wishes and blessings for a long life to serve humanity. ●

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## வாழ்த்து

இரா. நெடுஞ்செழியன்

டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பி. தேவதாச அவர்கள், அண்மையில் 80வது பிறந்தநாள் விழாவைக் கொண்டாடும் பேறு பெற்று விளங்குவது அறிந்து, நான் மட்டற்ற மகிழ்ச்சி கொண்டேன்.

டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பி. தேவதாச அவர்களை, நான் நாற்பது ஆண்டுக் காலத்திற்கு மேலாக நன்கு அறிவேன். அவர்கள் கல்வி மேம்பாட்டுத்துறையிலும், அறிவியல் வளர்ச்சித் துறையிலும், சமூக நலத் துறையிலும், ஊட்டச்சத்து உணவியல் துறையிலும், பெண்கள் முன்னேற்றத் துறையிலும், தமிழக வளர்ச்சித் துறையிலும் மிகவும் ஈடுபாடு கொண்டு, ஆற்றி வந்துள்ள அரும்பெரும் பணிகள், அனைத்தும் போற்றிப் புகழ்வதற்குரியனவாகும்.

அவர்கள் அறிவுத்திறனும், ஆற்றல் திறனும், பண்பாட்டுத் திறனும், செயலாற்றத் திறனும், செய்துமுடிக்கும் திறனும் ஒருங்கே பெற்றுப், புதுமைப் பெண்ணாகத் திகழ்ந்து, தமிழ் வளரவும், தமிழர் மேம்பாடு எய்தவும், தமிழ்நாடு ஏற்றம் பெறவும் செய்துள்ள பணிகள் அளப்பரியனவாகும்.

“பெருமை உடையவர் ஆற்றுவார் ஆற்றின்  
அருமை உடைய செயல்”

பெருமைப் பண்பு உடையவர் மட்டுமே, செய்வதற்கு அருமையான செயலைச் செய்வதற்கு உரிய நெறியில் நின்று, செய்து முடித்து வல்லவர் ஆவார் என்ற வள்ளுவப் பெருந்தகையாளர் வகுத்த இலக்கணத்திற்கு ஏற்ப, சிறந்த இலக்கியமாய்த் திகழ்ந்து வருபவர், டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் தேவதாச அவர்கள் ஆவார்.

அவர்கள் பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு காலம் இனிதே வாழ என் உளங்கனிந்த வாழ்த்துக்களை உவகைப் பெருக்கோடு தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். ●

## ஆயிரம் பிறை கண்ட அம்மா

நா. மகாலிங்கம்

அவிநாசிலிங்கம் நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் வேந்தர், அம்மா டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் பாக்கியநாதன் தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் ஏப்ரல் மாதம் தமது 80 ஆண்டு நிறைவை அடைகிறார்கள். நமது இந்திய தேசம் சுதந்திரம் பெற்று 50 ஆண்டுகள் ஆகின்றன. 50 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பு இந்திய தேசம் அடிமை மக்களின் தேசமாக அன்னிய ஆட்சியின் அடக்குமுறைக்கு ஆட்பட்டிருந்தது. அடக்குமுறை ஆட்சியை எதிர்த்து விடுதலைப் போராட்டத்திற்கான சுதந்திரதாகமுள்ள தலைவர்கள் ஒவ்வொரு வராகத் தோன்றி இந்திய மக்களை அணிதிரட்டி வந்தார்கள்.

கடைசியாக, காந்திஜியின் தலைமையில் இந்திய சுதந்திரம் உலகத்துக்கே ஒரு புதுமையாக முதன்முதலாக அகிம்சை வழியில் பெறப்பட்டது. இந்த சுதந்திரப் போராட்டக் களத்திற்கு வந்த தலைவர்கள் ஏராளம். அவர்களில் ஒருவராக உருவானவர்தான் கல்வித் தந்தை அய்யா அவினாசிலிங்கம் அவர்கள்.

அவருடைய திருப்பெயரில் அமைந்த பல்கலைக்கழகம் தியாகத்திற்கும் தேசியத்திற்கும் சின்னமாக விளங்குகிறது.

ஐயா அவர்களுக்கும் எனது தந்தையாருக்கும் மிக நெருங்கிய தொடர்புண்டு, காங்கிரஸ் கட்சிக்காக பொள்ளாச்சிக்கு வருகிற போதெல்லாம் எனது தந்தையாரை ஐயா அவர்கள் எங்கள் இல்லத்தில் சந்திக்கத் தவறமாட்டார்.

அம்மா டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் பள்ளிச் சிறுமியாக இருந்த காலத்தை எண்ணிப் பார்த்தால், 65 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பு இந்திய தேசம்

ஒரு இருண்ட தேசமாகத்தான் அன்றைக்கு இருந்தது. கல்வி வெளிச்சம் எங்கும் பரவ வில்லை. அதிலும் குறிப்பாக 'அடுப்பூதும் பெண்களுக்குப் படிப்பெதற்கு' என்ற பழமொழி தோன்றிய தேசமாக தமிழ்நாடு அன்றைக்கு விளங்கியது.

அன்றைக்கு சென்னை ராஜதானி என்று அழைக்கப்பட்ட நமது மாநிலத்தில் கேரளத்தின் மலபார் பகுதியும், ஆந்திரத்தில் நெல்லூர், திருப்பதி பகுதிகளும், கர்நாடகத்தில் மைசூர் வரை உள்ள பகுதிகளும் இணைந்திருந்தன. சென்னை ராஜதானியில் ஒரேயொரு சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் மட்டும் இருந்தது. இன்றைக்கு 14 பல்கலைக்கழகங்கள் உள்ளன.

கிராமங்களில் அன்றைக்குப் பள்ளிக்கூட வசதி கிடையாது. பேரூராட்சிகளில் கூட அன்றைக்கு பள்ளிக்கூட வசதி இல்லை. நகராட்சிகளில் ஓரளவு கல்வி வசதிகள் இருந்தன.

இந்த வரலாற்றுச் சூழலைக் கணக்கில் எடுத்துக் கொண்டால்தான் டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் எத்தனைப் பெரிய புரட்சியைச் செய்திருக்கிறார்கள் என்பது தெரியும். ஆண்களுக்கே கல்வி அறிவு குறைவாக இருந்த காலத்தில் பெண்ணாகப் பிறந்த ராஜம்மாள் இன்றைக்கு ஒரு வேந்தராக மாறி இருக்கிறார் என்றால் அது ஒரு சாதாரண சாதனை அல்ல.

1934-ல் அவர்கள் எஸ்.எஸ்.எல்.சி படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தபோதே திருமணம் நிகழ்ந்துவிட்டது. இன்றைக்கு உள்ளதைப்போல பெண்கள் உரிமையோடு அன்றைக்குப் பேசமுடியாது. சமுதாய பழக்க வழக்கங்களுக்குக் கட்டுப்பட்டு தங்களின் அந்தரங்க ஆசைகளை எல்லாம் ஒதுக்கி வைத்துவிட்டு வாழ வேண்டிய சூழ்நிலைதான் பெண்களுக்கு மத்தியில் நிலவி வந்தது.

இதன் காரணமாகத்தான் 1918-ல் மகாகவி பாரதி பெண் கல்வி பற்றியும், பெண் விடுதலை பற்றியும், புரட்சிப் பெண் பற்றியும் கவிதைகள் எழுதினார்.

“பட்டங்கள் ஆள்வதும்  
சட்டங்கள் செய்வதும்  
பாரினில் பெண்கள் நடத்த வந்தோம்”

என்று மகாகவி பாரதி பேசினார்.

மகாகவி பாரதியின் வீர முழக்கப் பின்னணி அம்மா இராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் போன்ற துணிச்சல் உள்ள பெண்களுக்கு ஆதரவாக அமைந்தது. அதன் காரணமாகத் தான் கல்யாணம் ஆன பிறகும் கூட கல்வியைத் தொடர்ந்தார். அதற்குக் கணவரும் சம்மதித்தார். சிதம்பரம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் இன்டர் மீடியட்டில் ஐந்து பாடங்களிலும் முதல் மாணவியாக வெற்றி பெற்று தன்னுடைய கள்ளிகுளத்து கிராம மக்கள் அனைவருமே வியக்கும்படி செய்தார்.

அறிவு மட்டும் இருந்தால் போதாது, அதற்குச் சமமாகத் துணிச்சலும் வேண்டும். இந்த இரண்டையும் ஒரு சேர பெற்ற காரணத்தால்தான் இன்றைக்கு பிரகாசமாக அவர் ஒளி வீசுகிறார்.

கல்வி அறிவு பரவாத அன்றைய இருண்ட இந்தியாவில் இப்படி ஒளி வீசிய பெண்கள் சிலராகத்தான் இருந்தார்கள். அந்த சிலர் குடும்பப் பெண்களாக குறுகிப் போகாமல், அம்மாவைப் போல பல்கலைக் கழக வேந்தர்களாக பரிமளித்ததால்தான், ஒரு தீபம் ஓராயிரம் தீபங்களை ஏற்றி வைத்துள்ளது.

தான் படித்த சென்னை இராணிமேரி கல்லூரியிலேயே பேராசிரியராகவும் பணி செய்தார். தங்கப் பதக்கம் பெற்ற மாணவியாக இருந்ததால் இவருக்கு வேலை கிடைப்பதில் அன்றைக்குச் சிக்கல் இல்லை.

பல மாணவிகளைப் போல, இயற்பியல், இரசாயனவியல், தாவரவியல் போன்ற அறிவியல் பாடங்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுக்காமல், ஒரு புதுமையாக 60 ஆண்டு களுக்கு முன்பு அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்ட (ஹோம் சையின்ஸ்) மனையியல் என்ற ஒரு புதிய அறிவியலைப் படிக்க ஆர்வம் கொண்டார். கல்லூரி அளவில் மட்டும் அந்தப் படிப்பை நிறுத்திக் கொள்ளாமல், வெளிநாடு சென்று அதில் டாக்டர் பட்டமும் பெறும் முயற்சியில் ஈடுபட்டார்.

மத்திய அரசின் உதவியால், அமெரிக்காவிலுள்ள ஓஹையோ பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் மனையியல் துறையில் டாக்டர் பட்டம் பெற்று வெற்றிகரமாகத் தாயகம் திரும்பினார்.

மத்திய அரசின் சுகாதாரத்துறை நடத்திய நர்சுக் கல்லூரியில் உணவியல் பேராசிரியராக சிறிது காலம் பணியாற்றிக் கொண்டிருந்தபோதுதான் கல்வி அமைச்சராக அன்றைக்கு இருந்த ஐயா அவிநாசிலிங்கம் அவர்களைச் சந்திக்கின்ற பேறு பெற்றார்.

ஐயா அவர்கள் சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத் தியாகி. காந்திஜியின் பக்தர். வசதியான குடும்பத்தில் பிறந்தவர். வக்கீலுக்குப் படித்தவர். சுயநலமிக்க சொந்த வாழ்க்கையை உதறித்தள்ளிவிட்டு, தேச சுதந்திரத்திற்காகத் தன்னை அர்ப்பணித்துக் கொண்டவர். சிறை சென்றவர். ஒரே ஒருமுறை இரண்டு ஆண்டுக் காலம் மட்டுமே அமைச்சராக இருந்து, அதற்குப் பிறகு தன்னுடைய மொத்த வாழ்வையும் கல்விக்காகவே சமர்ப்பித்தவர்.

அதிலும் குறிப்பாகப் பெண் கல்வியை வளர்ப்பதில் அவருக்கு மிகப் பெரிய பேராசை இருந்தது.

இத்தகைய எண்ணப்போக்கோடு ஐயா அவர்கள் இருந்த சூழலில்தான் அம்மா இராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவரைச் சந்திக்க நேர்ந்தது. 1955-ல் கோவையில் பெண்களுக்காக ஒரு பள்ளியைத் தொடங்கி அதற்குரிய

ஆலோசனைகளை அம்மா மூலம் பெற்றார். அதுதான் அவிநாசிலிங்கம் மணையியல் கல்லூரியாகப் பின்னர் வளர்ந்தது. அம்மா அவர்கள் அந்தக் கல்லூரியின் முதல் முதல்வராக (பிரின்ஸ்பால்) பொறுப் பேற்றார்.

மத்திய அரசின் வேலையை ராஜினாமா செய்துவிட்டு, பெண் கல்விக்கான புரட்சி யுகத்தைத் தொடங்கும் ஐயா அவர்களின் சேனையில் ஒரு தளபதியாகச் சேர்ந்தார். இந்தக் காலகட்டத்திற்குள் மகன் மோகன் வெளிநாடு சென்று படித்து டாக்டராகப் பணி செய்யத் தொடங்கிவிட்டார். கணவரும் காவல்துறையிலிருந்து ஓய்வு பெற்றுவிட்டார். மிகப் பெரிய குடும்பத்தில் பிறந்த அம்மா அவர்கள், தன் சகோதரிகளைத் தான்பெற்ற பிள்ளைகளாகக் கருதி அவர்களின் முன்னேற்றத்திலும் அக்கறை செலுத்தி அவர்களையும் வளர்த்தார்.

அம்மா அவர்களின் தாயார் 100 ஆண்டுகள் வாழ்ந்தவர். நூற்றாண்டு கண்ட தாயாரைப் பெற்ற அம்மா அவர்கள், ஐயா அவர்களின் பாதையில் சென்று, பெண் கல்வி முன்னேற்றத்தில் தன்னை முழுமையாக ஈடுபடுத்திக் கொண்டுள்ளார்.

அம்மா அவர்களின் அரிய ஆராய்ச்சியின் விளைவாக உருவான திட்டம் தான் நமது மாநில அரசின் சத்துணவுத் திட்டம். மறைந்த தமிழக முதல்வர் மாண்புமிகு எம்.ஜி.ஆர். அவர்களிடம் அம்மா அவர்கள் சத்துணவுத் திட்டத்தை விளக்கி, மாணவர்களுக்கு மத்தியில் குறிப்பாக கிராமப்புற மாணவர்களுக்கு மத்தியில் இத்திட்டத்தை அமல்படுத்தினால், மிகப் பெரிய சமுதாய மாற்றம் ஏற்படும் என்று விளக்கினார்.

ஏனெனில், பள்ளிக்கு வரும் மாணவர்கள் – குறிப்பாக கிராமப்புற – மாணவர்கள் மதிய உணவு இல்லாமல் துன்பப்படுவதால், கல்வியையே அவர்கள் இழந்துவிடுகிற அவலம் ஏற்படுகிறது. ஆகவே, மதிய உணவாக மட்டும் இதைத் தராமல், சிந்தனை வளர்ச்சிக்கு ஏற்ற வகையில் ஆரோக்கியம் தருகின்ற

சத்துணவாகத் தர வேண்டும் என்று அம்மா அவர்கள் இத்திட்டத்தை உருவாக்கி மாண்புமிகு எம்.ஜி.ஆர். அவர்களிடம் சமர்ப்பித்தார்.

இத்திட்டத்தை முழுமையாக ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட முதல்வர், அதன் பலனை நன்றாகக் கண்டார். அவருடைய ஆட்சிக்கு இத்திட்டம் சிறப்புச் சேர்த்தது. அவருக்குப் பிறகு வந்த ஆட்சிகள் கூட, இந்தச் சத்துணவுத் திட்டத்தைத் தொடர்ந்து அமல்படுத்தியே வருகின்றன.

உலக நாடுகள் பலவற்றுக்கும் பலமுறை சென்று வந்தவர். அந்நாடுகளில் பல்கலைக் கழகங்களில் நிகழ்ந்த கருத்தரங்குகளில், ஆய்வரங்குகளில் அம்மா அவர்கள் கலந்துகொண்டு தனது புதிய சிந்தனைகளைக் கட்டுரைகளாக சமர்ப்பித்தார். ஏராளமான கௌரவ பட்டங்களைப் பெற்றிருக்கிறார். மத்திய அரசு 'பத்மஸ்ரீ' பட்டம் வழங்கி சிறப்பித்தது. அண்மையில் கூட 'ஜம்னாலால் பஜாஜ்' விருது முன்பையில் அம்மா அவர்களுக்கு வழங்கப்பட்டது.

கல்லூரியாக செயல்பட்டுவந்த அவிநாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரி, பல்கலைக் கழகமாக வளர்ந்து, இன்றைக்குப் பெண்களுக்கான பொறியியல் கல்லூரியையும், சட்டக் கல்லூரியையும், ஆசிரியைக் கல்லூரியையும் தன்னகத்தே கொண்டு வளர்ந்து வருகிறது. சுற்றுலாப் பிரிவுக்குத் தனிப்பாடத் திட்டம் சென்ற ஆண்டு முதல் இப்பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் செயல்பட்டு வருகிறது. அதுமட்டுமல்ல, வெளிநாட்டுப் பல்கலைக் கழகங்களோடு அவிநாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகம் ஒப்பந்த அடிப்படையில் ஆசிரியர் பரிமாற்ற பணியை மேற்கொண்டு ஆசிரியப் பெருமக்களுக்கு புதிய அனுபவங்களை ஏற்படுத்தி வருகிறது.

இப்பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் சிறப்பு, இங்குப் பயிலும் மாணவிகள் ஆசிரியைகளின் தலைமையில் கிராம சேவையில் கட்டாயம் ஈடுபட்டாக வேண்டும். ஆண்டுக்கு இரண்டு அல்லது மூன்று முறை பத்து நாட்களுக்குக்

குறையாமல், கிராம மக்களோடு தங்கி, உண்டு, உறங்கி கிராம வாழ்க்கையை முழுமையாக அனுபவிக்க வேண்டும்.

இவ்வாறெல்லாம் இப்பல்கலைக் கழகம் மிகப் பயனுள்ள வகையில் பெண்களுக்கு மத்தியில் கல்வியைப் பரப்பி வருவதற்கு அம்மா அவர்களின் தலைமைதான் மூல காரணமாக அமைந்துள்ளது.

அம்மா அவர்கள் தமது 80 ஆண்டுக் காலத்தில் ஏறக்குறைய 60 ஆண்டுக் காலம் கல்விக்காகவே அர்ப்பணித்திருக்கிறார். அகில உலகமும் தெரிந்த மனையியல் விஞ்ஞானியாக விளங்குகிறார்.

கோவை மாநகரத்திற்குப் பெருமை சேர்த்த பெரியவர்கள் பலர் உண்டு ஆனால், பெண் மக்கள் என்று எண்ணினால், அம்மா அவர்கள்தான் முதன்மையாக நிற்கிறார்கள்.

என் மகள் கருணாம்பாளை அவிநாசிலிங்கம் பள்ளியில்தான் படிக்க வைத்தேன். எனது மனைவியும் அம்மா இராஜம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்களும் நெருங்கிப் பழகக் கூடியவர்கள். எங்கள் குடும்பத்தோடு ஐயா அவர்கள் நெருங்கிப் பழகி வந்ததைப் போல, அவருடைய கல்வி நிறுவனங்களும் அதன் மூலமாக அம்மா அவர்களிடம் நட்பும் கடந்த 40 ஆண்டுகளாகத் தொடர்கின்றன.

அம்மா அவர்கள் மாணவப் பருவத்திலிருந்து இன்று வரை கதாராடையை விரும்பி அணிந்து வருபவர். காரணம், கதர் நூற்பு லட்சோப லட்ச மக்களுக்கு வாழ்வளிக்கிறது. அதுமட்டுமல்ல, பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் நடக்கும் பட்டமளிப்பு விழா, கலைவிழா மற்றும் பல்வேறு விழாக்களில் கலந்து கொள்கிற ஆசிரியைகளும், மாணவிகளும் கதராடையையே அணிந்துகொள்ள வேண்டும் என்று வேண்டிக் கொள்வார்.

தமிழ் மொழியின் மீதும், தமிழ் பக்திப் பாடல்களின் மீதும் தணியாத ஆர்வம் கொண்டவர். அம்மா அவர்களின் தலைமையில் ஆண்டுதோறும் நடைபெறும் கலை விழா பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் ஒரு சிறப்பு அம்சமாகும்.

எப்போதும் எளிய தோற்றத்திலும் சிரித்த முகத்தோடும் காணப்படுபவர். சிரமங்களோடு உள்ள மாணவிகள் அம்மா அவர்களை அணுகி தங்களுடைய தேவைகளை நிறைவு செய்து கொள்வது விளம்பரம் இல்லாமல் நடைபெறுகின்ற சம்பவங்களாகும்.

ஏனெனில், எப்போதும் உதவிகள் என்பது ரகசியமாகச் செய்யப்பட வேண்டும். பாராட்டுக்கள் என்பது பகிரங்கமாகத் தரப்பட வேண்டும் என்பார் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

ஆங்கிலத்திலும், தமிழிலும் தேர்ந்த சொற்களைக் கையாண்டு தெளிவாகவும், அழகாகவும், சுருக்கமாகவும் பேசி, முத்திரை பதிக்கக் கூடியவர். விழாவாக இருந்தாலும், அது விவாதமாக இருந்தாலும், அவருடைய பேச்சில் எப்போதும் வெப்பம் இருக்காது. ஆனால், அதே சமயம் பிரகாசம் இருக்கும்.

தாய்ப் பாசத்தோடு அம்மா அவர்கள் தருகிற ஆலோசனைகளைப் பெற்றுக் கொள்கிற மாணவிகள், அம்மா அவர்களைத் தங்களுக்குக் கிடைத்த மற்றும் ஒரு தாயாகவே கருதுகிறார்கள்.

80 ஆண்டு நிறைவிலும் 40-வது வயதிலிருந்த அதே சுறுசுறுப்பும், ஓயாத உழைப்பும் அம்மா அவர்களிடம் தொடர்கிறது.

அம்மாவின் “அம்மா” இருந்ததைப்போல 100 ஆண்டுகள் வரை அம்மாவின் கல்விப் பணி இன்று போல் தொடர்ந்திட எல்லாம்வல்ல அருட்பெருஞ்சோதி ஆண்டவர் துணையிருப்பார். ●

## வாழ்த்து

க. அன்பழகன்

**மு**திப்பிற்குரிய முனைவர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களின் 80-வது பிறந்த நாளைக் கொண்டாவிருப்பதும், அதனைச் சிறப்பிக்கும் வகையில் மலர் ஒன்று வெளியிடவிருப்பதும் அறிந்து மகிழ்ச்சி அடைகிறேன்.

அம்மையார் அவர்கள் கடந்த அரை நூற்றாண்டுக்கு மேலாக கல்வித் துறையில் முழு ஈடுபாட்டுடன் பணியாற்றியவர் மூலம் கல்வித் தரம் உயரவும், குறிப்பாக மகளிர் கல்வியில் முன்னேற்றம் விளையவும், மகளிர்கட்கான சிறப்புக் கல்வி மேம்படவும் வழிகண்ட பெருமைக்குரியவர் ஆவார். பல்வேறு பல்கலைக்கழகங்களின் ஆட்சிக்குழு, கல்விக்குழு முதலானவற்றில் இடம் பெற்று அரும்பணி ஆற்றியவர் அவர். கல்வித்திட்டம் குறித்து மைய அரசும், மாநில அரசும் அமைத்த பல ஆய்வுக் குழுக்களில் இடம் பெற்று நல்ல பல ஆலோசனைகளை வழங்கியவர் அவர்.

குறிப்பாக அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரியின் வளர்ச்சியும் மகளிர் உயர்கல்வியின் முன்னேற்றமும் அம்மையாரின் ஆர்வம் மிக்க தொண்டினால் உருவாகி, அருகுபோல் வேரூன்றி வளர்ந்து – ஆல் போல் தழைத்து இன்று பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான மகளிருக்குச் சிறந்த கல்வியும் சீரிய பண்பாட்டுப் பயிற்சியும் வழங்கும் ஒரு நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகமாக உயர்ந்துள்ளதைக் காண்போர் எவரும் அம்மையாரின் தொண்டுக்குப் பாராட்டும் நன்றியும் தெரிவிப்பர். அம்மையார் நலமுடன் பல்லாண்டு வாழ்ந்து, நாட்டின் முன்னேற்றத்துக்கு அடிப்படையாகும் கல்வித் தொண்டைத் தொடர வேண்டும் எனும் விருப்பத்துடன் அவர்கட்கு என் உளமார்ந்த வாழ்த்துக்களைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். ●

## வாழ்த்துச் செய்தி

பொங்கலூர் நா. பழனிசாமி

**ம**திப்பிற்குரிய டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் தமிழகம், இந்தியத் துணைக்கண்டம் என்று மட்டுமல்லாமல் உலக நாடுகள் அனைத்துக்கும் அறிமுகமானவர். உலகின் பல்வேறு நாடுகளுக்குச் சென்று அங்குள்ள மக்களனைவரையும் தம் அறிவுத் திறத்தால் கவர்ந்தவர், சத்துணவு விஞ்ஞானி என்னும் முறையில் இவர் புகழ் உலகளாவியது. எனவே, இவரைத் தேடி வந்த விருதுகள் பற்பலவாகும். உலகளாவிய புகழைப் பெற்றுள்ள இவர் கல்விப்பணி கோவை மாநகர் மூலமாக விரிந்து பரந்து விளங்குவது கண்டு உண்மையிலேயே பெருமகிழ்ச்சியடைகிறேன்.

கல்வியாளராய், அக்கல்வியை முறையாகக் கற்றுத் தரும் நல்லாசானாய் பல பதவிகளை வகித்தவராய், அப்பதவிகளுக்க அழகு சேர்ப்பவராய், சொல்லாற்றல், செயலாற்றல், எழுத்தாற்றல் மிக்கவராய், சமூக சீர்திருத்தவாதியாய், சாதி சமய வேறுபாடு கருதாது எல்லோரும் ஓர் குலம்; எல்லோரும் ஓர் இனம்; எல்லோரும் இந்நாட்டு மக்கள் என்று அன்பால் அனைவரையும் அரவணைத்துக் கொள்பவராய் 'அம்மா' என்று அனைவராலும் உரிமையோடும், பாசத்தோடும் அழைக்கப்படுபவராய்த் திகழும் இவருக்கு இணையாக இன்னொருவரைக் குறிப்பிட்டுக் கூறுவது மிகவும் கடினம். தென்பாண்டிச் சீமையில் தோன்றி, இங்குள்ள கல்வி நிலையங்களில் கல்வி கற்று, வடபுலத்தில் அரசுப் பணியை மேற்கொண்டிருந்தபோது அமரர் அய்யா கண்டெடுத்த நன்முத்து இவர்.

'கிராமங்களே இந்தியாவின் முதுகெலும்பு' என்றார் காந்தியடிகள். பேரறிஞர் அண்ணா அவர்களின் கருத்தும் இத்தகையதே, இவர்கள் வழியில்

அம்மையார் அவர்கள் கிராமப்புற மக்களுக்கு உதவும் வகையில் பல்வேறு திட்டங்களைத் தீட்டி அவற்றுக்குச் செயல் வடிவம் தந்து வருகிறார். ஒருங்கிணைந்த மகளிர் சேவைப் பணி, மாணவர் நாட்டு நலப்பணி ஆகியன வாயிலாக கிராமப்புற மக்களுக்கு சத்துணவு பற்றிய கருத்துக்களை எடுத்துரைத்து அவற்றை அவர்தம் நெஞ்சில் ஆழப் பதித்தவர் என்ற முத்திரையும் இவருக்கு உண்டு. தமிழகம், இந்தியத் திருநாடு ஏன் அகில உலகமே வியந்து பாராட்டும் அம்மா அவர்களின் வழிகாட்டுதலால் தமிழக அரசு தீட்டிவரும் திட்டங்கள் மக்களைச் சென்றடையும் என்பது உறுதி.

பல்வகையிலான விருதுகளையும், பெருமைகளையும் பெற்று விளங்கும் அம்மையாரைப் பற்றி, பத்துறைப் பெருமக்களும் பற்பல கோணங்களில் எழுதிய எழுத்தோவியங்களைத் தாங்கி நிற்கும் இந்நூல் பயனுள்ளதும் படிக்கச் சுவையூட்டுவதுமாகும். குறிப்பாக வளரத் துடிக்கும் இளைய சமுதாயத்தினருக்க மிக்கப் பயனளிப்பது.

‘பூக்கடைக்கு விளம்பரம் தேவையில்லை’ என்னும் கருத்தே அவர்களைப் பற்றி எழுதும் போது என்னுள் எழுகிறது. நாடறிந்த நல்லறிஞராம் அவர் நீடுழி வாழ்க என வாழ்த்துகிறேன். ●

## வாழ்த்துரை

மு. தமிழ்க்குடிமகன்

யுதிப்புமிகு முனைவர் இராஜம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் பெண்கள் உலகிலும், கல்வி உலகிலும், எந்த அளவுக்குப் பெயர் பெற்றிருக்கிறார்கள் என்பதை நாடு அறியும். அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகம் நிறுவப்பட்டு இன்று தன் கட்டுக்கோப்பாலும், இந்திய அளவிலான கல்வி மேம்பாட்டாலும் மிகப் பெரிய அளவில் புகழ் ஏற்பட்டுள்ளது. ஒரு நிறுவனத்துக்கு நல்ல தலைமை இருந்தால் எந்த அளவுக்கு அதைச் சிறப்புறக் கொண்டு செல்ல முடியும் என்பதை நமது முனைவர் இராஜம்மாள் அவர்கள் மெய்ப்பித்துள்ளார்கள். ●

## வாழ்த்துரை

சி. பொன்னையன்

அய்யா திரு அவினாசிலிங்கம் அவர்கள் வழிநின்று, மகளிர் மற்றும் குழந்தைகள் நலன் கருதி, இரவு-பகலெனப் பாராமல் தாங்கள் ஆற்றி வரும் பலனளிக்கும் கல்விப் பணிகளையும், தாய்க்குலம் போற்றும் சமூக நலப் பணிகளையும், நமது சமுதாயம் என்றும் போற்றி மகிழ்கின்றது ; தங்களின் புகழ் பொலிவுடன் திகழ்கின்றது.

### *“Utility Oriented Education for The Upliftment of Women*

எனும் தங்களது அறிவார்ந்த கல்வி நெறி, வரலாற்றில் நிரந்தர இடத்தப் பெற்று விட்டது.

80-வது பிறந்த தினத்தை அடையும் தாங்கள், நல்ல உடல் நலத்துடனும், உளமகிழ்வுடனும், புகழ்வளத்துடனும் பல்லாண்டு நீழி வாழ்ந்திட எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனை வேண்டி வாழ்த்துகிறேன். ●

## **AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE FOR THE WOMANKIND**

**G. SANTHANAM**

**I** am glad to note that Chancellor Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas would be entering her 80th birthday very shortly.

As everyone is aware, her contributions to the field of education and especially to Avinashilingam Institutions is historical and monumental and she stands as an inspiring example for the womankind.

Further, the growth of the University was due to her untiring efforts in all respects.

Her participation in many conferences held in various countries and her experience gained there has been very effectively utilised for the upliftment of the University.

I wish the function every success.

## குன்றிலிட்ட வீளக்கு குன்றாது ஒளிரட்டும்

எம். வேலுச்சாமி

**கோ**வை அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் வேந்தர் அம்மா டாக்டர் ராஜம்மாள் பி. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களின் 80வது பிறந்த நாள் குறித்த ஒரு மலர் வெளியிடுவது பொருட்டு நான் பெரு மகிழ்ச்சி அடைகிறேன்.

அம்மா அவர்களின் கடந்த 55 ஆண்டு காலமாக பெண்கள் கல்விக்கு ஆற்றிய தூய்மையான பணி குறித்து நமது பாரத நாட்டில் உள்ள கல்வி-யாளர்களில் அறியாதவர்கள் யாருமில்லை. அம்மா அவர்களின் கல்விப்பணி ஆரம்ப காலத்தில், கோவை மாநகரத்திலும் அதைச் சுற்றியுள்ள பகுதிகளுக்கு மட்டும் கிடைத்து வந்தது. பிறகு அவர்களது சேவை இந்தியா முழுமைக்கும், அதன் பின்னர் அவர் ஐக்கிய நாடுகள் சபையில் பணியாற்றிய கால கட்டத்தில் உலக அரங்கிலும் பரிணமித்தது. இது நமது கோவைக்கு மட்டுமல்லாமல் மொத்த பாரதத்திற்கும் பெருமையைத் தேடிக் கொடுத்தது.

### வள்ளுவன் வழியில்

ஈராயிரம் ஆண்டுகட்கு முன்னால் திருவள்ளுவர் கல்வியைப் பற்றிக் குறிப் பிட்டதாவது.

“கேடுஇல் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி ஒருவர்க்கு  
மாடு அல்ல மற்றை யவை”

ஒருவருக்கு கல்வி என்ற செல்வமே அழிவில்லாதது, மீதி செல்வம் என்னும் அனைத்தும் அழிவுடையதாகும் என்பதே இதன் பொருளாகும். இத்தகைய கல்வியைத் தானும் கற்றும், மேலும் வருடந்தோறும் பல ஆயிரம்

மகளிருக்கும் அவ்விளக்கை ஏற்றுவதே தங்களின் “என் கடன் பணி செய்து கிடப்பதே” எனக் கொண்டுள்ளது, பெண்ணினத்திற்கு பெருமை சேர்ப்பதாகும்.

## கல்வியும் செல்வமும்

எந்த ஒரு காலத்திலும் கல்விக்கும் செல்வத்திற்கும் எதிரும் புதிருமான கருத்துக்கள் நிலவி வந்தன.

ஒரு பழம்பாடல், ஒரு காலத்தில் இசைக்கப்பட்டது. அதாவது,

“கல்லானே ஆனாலும் கைப்பொருள் ஒன்றுண்டாயின்  
எல்லோரும் சென்று அங்கு அவனை எதிர் கொள்வர்  
இல்லானை இல்லாளும் வேண்டாள்  
ஈன்றெடுத்த தாயும் வேண்டாள்  
செல்லாது அவள் வாயின் சொல்”

இப்பாட்டின் பொருள் செல்வமே அதிக மதிப்புடையது என்பதாகும். இத்தகைய ஒரு காலகட்டத்தில்தான் திரைகடல் ஓடியும் திரவியம் தேடு என்ற பழமொழி உருவானது.

இத்தகைய கருத்துக்கள் நமது நாடு விடுதலை அடைவதற்கு முன் தழைத் தோங்கி இருந்தன. நம் இந்தியர்கள் லட்சக்கணக்கில் ஸ்ரீலங்கா, பர்மா, மலேயா, சிங்கப்பூர் மற்றும் மொரீசியஸ் போன்ற நாடுகளுக்கு பொருள் வேண்டி சென்றனர்.

இந்த கால கட்டத்தில் அம்மா அவர்கள் பொருளை நினைக்கவில்லை. வள்ளுவர் வாக்கின்படி கல்விக்கு முக்கியத்துவம் கொடுத்தார். மகளிர் கல்வியில் தன்னை அர்ப்பணித்துக் கொண்டார். இது சிறந்த தியாகம் ஆகும்.

## ஆன்மீகமும் மகளிர் கல்வியும்

அம்மா அவர்கள் வேற்று மதத்தைச் சார்ந்தவரானாலும், இந்து மதம், பண்பாடு, கலாச்சாரம் ஆகியவற்றில் மிகுந்த ஈடுபாடு உள்ளவர்கள். அன்னை கஸ்தூரிபாய், சாரதா தேவி அவர்களின் கருத்துக்களையும் வாழ்க்கை நெறிமுறைகளையும் ஏற்று அதன்படி வாழ்பவர்.

அத்தகைய ஆன்மீக நெறியைப் போதித்து ஆன்மீக வாழ்க்கையை தமது மாணவிகளுக்கும் போதித்ததால், அம்மாணவிகள் நல்ல குல விளக்குகளாய் பல்வேறு குடும்பங்களில் பரிணமிக்கின்றார்கள். இவரது மாணவிகள் தமது நற்பண்புகளால் ஒவ்வொரு குடும்பத்தையும் ஒரு பல்கலைக் கழகமாக நடத்தி வருவது கண்கூடு.

## அம்மாவின் உலகளாவிய சேவை

கோவையில் ஒரு மனையியல் கல்லூரியில் முதல்வராகத் தொடங்கிய அம்மாவின் சேவை, அவரது கடுமையான உழைப்பு, சேவை, தியாகம், ஆராய்ச்சி ஆகிய நற்பண்புகளால் இந்தியா முழுமைக்கும் பரவியது. இதைப் பார்த்து வியந்த இந்திய அரசு இவரது சேவை அகில உலகுக்கும் கிட்ட வேண்டி ஐக்கிய நாடுகள் சபைக்கு அனுப்பியது.

ஐக்கிய நாடுகள் சபையில் அவர் ஆற்றிய பணி இந்தியாவுக்கு பெருமை தேடிக் கொடுத்தது. இவருடைய பேச்சும், எழுத்தும் ஆராய்ச்சி அறிவும் பல்வேறு வளரும் நாடுகளுக்கும் பயன்பட்டது. இதனால் இன்றும் அவர் பல்வேறு அகில உலக அமைப்புகளில் தலைவராகவும், ஆராய்ச்சியாளராகவும், சேவை புரிந்து வருவது நமது இந்திய தேசத்திற்குப் பெருமை சேர்ப்பதாகும்.

## உலக அரங்கில் மகளிரின் பங்கும், அம்மாவின் சேவையும்

மருத்துவமனையிலும், உலக சேவை ஸ்தாபனமான செஞ்சிலுவை சங்கத்திலும் ஒரு பிளாரன்ஸ் நைட்டிங்கேலையும், அன்னை தெரசாவையும் யாரும் மறக்க முடியாது. ஆன்மீக அரசியல் அரங்கில் அன்னை கஸ்தூரி-பாயையும், சாரதா தேவியையும், சகோதரி நிவேதிதாவையும் மறக்க இயலாது.

அதேபோல் இந்திய அரசியல் வரலாற்றில் அன்னை இந்திராவையும், கவிக்குயில் சரோஜினி தேவியையும், பத்மஜா நாயுடுவையும், விஜயலட்சுமி பண்டிட் அவர்களையும் மறக்க முடியாது. அவ்வாறு சிந்திக்கின்ற வகையில் மகளிர் கல்வி, மகளிர் மேம்பாடு மனையியல் என்ற வகையில் அம்மாவின் சேவை மகத்தானது.

## ஒளவையின் வழி நின்றலால் உலகம் போற்றும்

ஒரு கல்வியாளரைப் பற்றி ஒளவைப் பிராட்டியார் குறிப்பிடுவதாவது.

“மரம் பழுத்தால் வெளவாலை  
வாவென்று கூறி இரந்தழைப்பார்  
யாவரும் இங்கில்லை  
சுரந்தமுதம் கற்றா  
தரல் போல் கரவாது அளிப்பரேல்  
உற்றார் உலகத்தவர்”

ஒரு பழமுடைய மரத்தில் வெளவால்கள் எவ்வாறு யாரும் அழைக்காமல் சென்று உணவு பெறுகின்றனவோ, அவ்வாறு யாவரும் பயன்பெறும் வண்ணம் கல்வியை தான் சென்று புகட்டுவோர் உலகத்தால் புகழப்படுபவர் என்பதே இப்பாட்டின் பொருள்.

அம்மா இத்தகைய நற்பண்புகளுடன், இந்தியா மற்றும் உலகம் முழுமைக்கும் தானே சென்று கல்விச் சேவை செய்ததால் உலகளந்தவரானார் என்பது நாம் பெருமைப்பட வேண்டியதாகும்.

## வாழ்த்தும் வணக்கமும்

மேலே குறிப்பிட்டவாறு நமது இந்தியத் திருநாட்டிற்கும் உலக நாடுகளுக்கும் அம்மா அவர்கள் ஆற்றிய சேவையைப் பாராட்டியும், வாழ்த்தியும் இக்கட்டுரையைச் சமர்ப்பிக்கும் வாய்ப்பிற்கு எனது நன்றியைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

அம்மா அவர்களின் 80-வது பிறந்த நாளில் அவரது சேவை ஆல் போல் தழைத்து, அருகு போல் வேரூன்றி அவர்கள் எல்லா வளமும் பெற்று, நிறைந்த ஆயுளுடன் இன்னும் பல ஆண்டுகள் வாழ, எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனை வேண்டுவதுடன் இந்த வாழ்த்துக்களையும் எனது வணக்கங்களையும் மட்டுமின்றி, வணக்கத்திற்குரிய கோவை மாநகரத் தந்தை, எனது சக மாமன்ற உறுப்பினர்கள் மற்றும் கோவை மாநகர மக்கள் அவர்கள் சார்பாக எனது வாழ்த்துக்களையும் உரித்தாக்குகிறேன்.



# **SCIENTISTS AND PROFESSIONALS**

## **A TRIBUTE TO Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**C. GOPALAN**

I have had the privilege of close association with Dr. Rajammal Devadas in her professional work for over four decades. I have admired her dedication and missionary zeal in the pursuit of her noble objectives. She has not only been a scientist in her own right she has also been the undoubted leader of the Home Science movement in this country. She is an educationist and institution builder. In particular, she has worked for the promotion of Women's education. Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women-Deemed University stands today as a shining and lasting tribute to her tireless work in the cause of women's education. Her contribution in the field of Applied Nutrition, specially towards upliftment of the undernourished have been widely recognised. She has contributed greatly to the success of the meal programmes in Tamil Nadu.

Apart from her professional achievement, I have admired Rajammal Devadas's personal integrity and simplicity. Unlike many senior professionals, she has always taken keen interest in her students and staff. She strives hard to provide them opportunities for participation in national and international conferences. It was always a heartwarming experience to see her come to national and international conferences with a flock of her own students.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas's contribution to women's education, to the Home Science movement and to Nutrition will remain unparalleled. I wish her many more years of active life. We need her continued leadership. Dr. Rajammal Devadas has been very much in the forefront of National movements for the upliftment and empowerment of women in this country. The several programmes initiated in by

Dr. Rajammal Devadas, for empowerment of women in this country must be continued and must gather strength in the years ahead. We must build on the strong foundations laid by her and continue the movement for the betterment of women in the country. By doing so we will be paying our true tribute to her.

I may now briefly highlight the significance of her major contributions :

### **The Home Science Movement :**

The Home Science colleges in our country were originally patterned on the lines of the land grant institutions of America. The colleges served the purpose of training young women in scientific methods of Home management. It is to the credit of Dr. Rajammal Devadas that over the years, the Home Science movement in our country has greatly expanded in scope, and the Home Science colleges of the present day are playing roles, very much in keeping with our national requirements.

The objective of Home Science colleges is now to equip women not only in making good homes, but also to contribute, in significant measure, to the *improvement* of the quality of life in millions of homes across the country. Thus, the Home Science college in Coimbatore, for example, has been involved in providing the right direction to the massive Mid-Day Meal Scheme initiated by the late Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramachandaran. More recently, the college has been involved in identifying simple, inexpensive and practical ways of preventing post-harvest losses of food-grains, which must be viewed as a major contribution towards improvement of diets in millions of households in the country. The major part of the food produced in the country is being stored, not in warehouses and depots but in millions of homes in the country side. A considerable part of this food is now being lost due to bad storage ; and this is what Dr. Rajammal Devadas and students seek to prevent.

Students of Home Science are now increasingly helping to spearhead a Youth Movement aimed at improving the health, nutritional status and overall quality of life of the common folk in the countryside. Home Science graduates are increasingly coming forward to help in the creation of community volunteer groups in villages, which could act in the interface between the “provider” and the “consumer” and help in the better training of health, child care and nutrition personnel for the benefit of the public.

Such enlargement of the concept of the Home Science movement in the country, brought about without much fanfare by Dr. Rajammal Devadas, has contributed greatly to the elevation of the relevance of Home Science colleges to current National needs. Thanks to her efforts, Home Science colleges which had started as no more than finishing schools for girls from privileged families, fifty years ago, have now become centres for the propagation of scientific knowledge and its benefit for the public at large.

### **Contribution to the Nutrition Movement :**

Training in **Food and Nutrition** has always been on the top of the agenda of Home Science colleges. The Home Science colleges have concentrated largely on the *application* of nutrition knowledge for the benefit of the public and to a smaller extent, to the *generation of basic knowledge* in the field of Nutrition. Home Science colleges are making successful contributions in the field of nutrition research by the adaptation of the knowledge gained from basic research to the prevailing conditions in the country. The credit for this again goes to Dr. Rajammal Devadas and her colleagues and to Home Science colleges in the country. It was the recognition of her contributions in this area that led to her elevation to the Presidentship of the **Nutrition Society of India**. Dr. Rajammal Devadas is looked upon today as not only the head

of the Home Science movement, but also an important contributor to the Nutrition movement in the country.

### **Contribution to Women's Education**

As an important member of the Syndicate of the Madras University, as Vice Chancellor and more recently as the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Dr. Rajammal Devadas has played an important role in the promotion of education programmes in the country, especially those beamed towards women. The growth of the Avinashilingam Institute in the last few decades is a standing testimony of Dr. Rajammal Devadas's dedicated efforts to the cause of women's education. The products of her institute are now doing good work in many other institutions in India, and indeed in many other parts of the world. Her efforts in the field of education have been confined not only to college education, but also education at the primary and high school levels. In recognition of the fact that the quality of human resource in our country is directly related to female literacy, Dr. Rajammal Devadas has striven not only to promote education among the well-to-do, but also non-formal education among the rural poor. Her contribution to the cause of education and social upliftment of women have been well recognised and have earned her several awards.

These are very formidable and outstanding achievements of which not only students of Home Science and Nutrition, but the entire country should feel proud. We ardently wish that her leadership continues to be available to us for many more years. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS AND BUILDING A NATIONAL NUTRITION SECURITY SYSTEM**

**M.S. SWAMINATHAN**

I have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for the past 40 years. Her multifaceted contributions to the eradication of undernutrition and malnutrition, the technological and skill empowerment of women and the nutritional security of children are almost without parallel in our country. Brick by brick she built the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women in association with the late Shri T.S. Avinashilingam. No wonder this Institution was considered worthy of being given a Deemed University status by the University Grants Commission. The students of the Avinashilingam Institute are now occupying important positions in Home Science colleges all over the country and are spearheading a “better life for all” movement.

When I was Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Rajammal Devadas who joined ICAR to lead a new division relating to nutrition and home science as Assistant Director General. In this capacity, she helped agricultural universities to develop curricula on nutrition. She thus brought agriculture and nutrition together thereby giving meaning and content to the term *Food Security*. Her tireless striving for excellence and relevance in nutrition, home science and agriculture and education has led to remarkable results. India is today regarded as a world leader in home science education. Much of the credit for this situation should go to Dr. Rajammal Devadas.

She is not only a great teacher but also an outstanding leader in Human Resource Development in the broad sense. In 1974, I initiated the concept of Krishi

Vigyan Kendra (KVK) to convert my concept of technocracy into a pedagogic methodology. Dr. Devadas was one of the earliest to establish an outstanding KVK. This KVK became a model for all the others in the country. Her contributions to societies like the Nutrition Society of India, the Home Science Association and the Indian Science Congress and different Science Academies have been significant. In fact she was responsible for the Indian Science Congress developing a Special Group on Home Science.

Dr Devadas leads others by example. Thus she is a role model for the younger generation. In a volume intended to felicitate her on her 80th birthday, it would be appropriate to refer to some of the unfinished tasks which we should complete as a tribute to her leadership.

## **Achieving Sustainable Nutrition Security**

### **1. The background**

At the outset, it may be useful to draw attention to the prevailing conditions under which the goal of sustainable food security has to be achieved.

**First**, *the rich-poor divide* in economic well-being is continuously getting worse. While in the beginning of this decade, about a billion persons survived on a per capita daily income equivalent to one US dollar or less, today over 1.3 billion fall under this category. Another 2 billion persons live on a per capita daily income of US dollars two.

**Second**, *jobless economic growth* is increasing globally and the position is particularly acute in developing countries. Strengthening the livelihood security of the economically underprivileged families has become the defining focus of the current food security challenge. For this purpose, a job-led growth strategy is essential.

**Third**, the growing *feminisation of poverty* necessitates viewing food security at the level of the individual and not merely of a household.

**Four**, *emerging demographic trends* post the following nutritional challenges.

- a. Between 1990 and 2030, the global population is projected to grow by 3.7 billion persons, of whom over 90% will be in developing countries. Population increase of the order of about a billion once in 12 years will make it necessary to increase the global annual production of food grains alone by about 250 million tonnes once in ten years to meet the needs of the human and farm animal population.
- b. Increased purchasing power on the part of the economically and socially under-privileged sections of the human society will increase food demand both in quantitative and qualitative terms.
- c. Ninety per cent of the additional population between 1990 and 2030 will be living in the urban areas of developing countries. Such rapid urbanization of population, will enhance the demand for processed food and also for animal products. There will be opportunities for the diversification of food habits.
- d. Inadequacy of micronutrients like iron, iodine, as well as vitamin A in the diet is becoming a major nutritional problem, leading to hidden hunger.
- e. Increasing poverty and deprivation and the spread of urban slums leads to non-food factors like sanitation, environmental hygiene and water pollution becoming critical in determining the efficiency of the biological absorption and retention of food in the body. This leads to a situation where adequate calorie intake and malnutrition co-exist.

**Five**, non-availability of *safe drinking water* increase the incidence of intestinal infection, which in turn aggravates the problems of malnutrition.

**Six**, the growing damage to *the ecological foundations* essential for sustainable advances in agricultural productivity is threatening further progress in improving the productivity of crop and animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry. Compounding the short term problems of damage to soil, water, forests, biodiversity, oceans and the atmosphere, are the long term prospects for adverse changes in temperature, precipitation, ultraviolet-B radiation and sea levels, as a result of anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, deforestation and depletion of the ozone layer.

**Seven**, the growing *debt and debt-servicing burden* and other economic difficulties are leading to a deceleration in investment in rural infrastructure, such as irrigation, electrification, communication and storage and marketing facilities.

**Eight**, *decreased investment in research* designed for public good and the expanding intellectual property rights regulations are leading to a situation where “orphans remain as orphans” with reference to research priorities. Considerations of commercial profit are tending to take precedence over public good in the determination of scientific priorities and strategies, and this will diminish prospects for ecologically handicapped regions like arid and semi-arid areas and economically underprivileged sections of the farming communities to derive benefits from technological progress.

**Nine**, *Trade liberalisation and compulsory reduction in the Aggregate Measurement of support* stipulated under the World Trade Agreement may lead to a further deterioration in the livelihood security of resource poor families as well as in the terms of trade between industry and agriculture in developing countries.

**Ten**, there is as yet no serious effort to attend to *the social and ecological challenges* arising from the unsustainable lifestyles on the part of about a billion of the human population who receive over 84% of the global annual income and the unacceptable level of poverty experienced by another billion, who hardly earn about 1.4% of the world's annual income. Social disintegration is threatening peace and security in several developing countries and this in turn will retard all economic progress.

## **II. Vision and Mission**

From the foregoing, it will be clear that we need a definition of food security which can help to formulate strategies and fix priorities for achieving the sustainable end of hunger. The following mission statement could serve as an operational definition for setting priorities for science and public policy.

National policies for sustainable food security should ensure :

- a. that every individual has physical, economic, social and environmental access to balanced diets, including the needed micronutrients and safe drinking water and to primary health care and education so as to lead a healthy and productive life, and
- b. that food originates from efficient, effective and environmentally benign production technologies that conserve and enhance the natural resource base of crops and animal husbandry, forestry and inland and marine fisheries.\*

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\* This definition was adopted at the Science Academies' Summit on Food Security held at Madras in July 1996

The principal operational implications of the above mission statement are the following :

**First**, sustained *physical access* to food will involve a transition from chemical and machinery intensive to ecological farming technologies.

**Second**, the emphasis on *economic access* underlines the need for promoting sustainable livelihoods through multiple income-earning opportunities.

**Third**, *social access* involves paying particular attention to women and girl children and to under-privileged ethnic community.

**Fourth**, *environmental access* involves on the one hand attention to soil health care, water harvesting management and the conservation of forests and biodiversity, and on the other to sanitation, environmental hygiene, primary health care and primary education.

If the political vision to implement this mission is forthcoming, population stabilisation can be more readily achieved. The prediction of Marquis de Condorcet made in 1795 that population will stabilise itself, if children are born for happiness and not just for existence, will then come true.

### **III. Science and Technology for Public Good :**

#### **Need for a human-centred scientific culture**

With the growing spread of a free-market and trade-related intellectual property rights culture, it is essential that science and technology designed for public good receives adequate political and financial support. New skills and technologies which can help to add value to the time of the poor are essential for helping them to end

their hunger. Scientists should regard themselves as trustees of their intellectual property. *The concept of trusteeship should not be restricted to money but should extend to knowledge and skills.* The following exhortation of Albert Einstein should serve as the guiding principle of the scientific enterprise.

“Concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavours in order that the creation of our minds shall be a blessing and not a curse”.

The new human-centred scientific culture should address issues relating to neglected region and ecologically and economically handicapped communities. Participatory research with farm families and anticipatory research to overcome future problems arising from climate change and sea level rise should receive equal attention. Small islands, coastal, mountain and desert agriculture and dry land farming should all receive vastly increased scientific attention. All this will be possible only if the needed support for research for international and national public goal is forthcoming.

## **Conclusion**

Science and technology for public good has been the motto of Dr. Rajammal Devadas. **Food, drinking water, health and education for all** is the goal for which Dr. Devadas has dedicated her life. On the occasion of her 80th birthday, we should redouble our efforts to achieve this goal. ●

## **TRIBUTE TO RAJAMMAL**

**V. RAMALINGASWAMI**

**O**n the occasion of the 80th birthday of Rajammal, I send my sincere greetings and all good wishes to her. Hers was a life of total and selfless devotion to the cause of women and children of India through research and service. The institution she has built from almost a scratch to the level of the Deemed University and the number of persons she has trained for the service of women and children will be a lasting tribute to her work. I remember meeting her for the first time at Oxford, UK where I was working in the Laboratory of Human Nutrition of Oxford University. The year was either 1949 or 1950. After her return to India it has been a fascinating story of her many contributions to India's development. The message of Prof. Amartya Sen has been brought home to us recently during his visit to India. Post Nobel : Health and Education are the signatures of Human development. Her's has been a life-long dedication to the cause of women and children in India. I send my good wishes for her continued work for uplifting the status of women in our country. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - THE FOREMOST NUTRITION EDUCATIONIST**

**KALYAN BAGCHI**

**I**t gives me very great pleasure in putting down on paper my feelings about my association with Dr. Rajammal Devadas, Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Deemed University, spreading over almost four decades. When I think about this long friendship, I regard this as a bright spectrum of life during which comradeship, positive interaction, technical collaboration and above all feeling of mutual support pervaded all through this long period.

Nutrition was to both of us an obsession and possibly that was one strong link between us, but more than that was her brilliance as a human being endowed with superb qualities. During recent past, we did not meet each other frequently, but I always considered Rajammal was there to help me out if there was any need.

I came in close contact with Dr. Devadas when she was the Principal of Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women, Coimbatore. Her brilliance as an orator, spreading the messages of nutrition in a practical way and always for the “have-nots” of the rural community, always charmed me. She was for a long period associated with various government departments and agencies where she was always regarded with great esteem.

When I visited for the first time her Institution in Coimbatore, I was astounded by her supernatural gift as an educator, administrator and champion of female

education. I distinctly remember the summer schools in Nutrition which she conducted under the auspices of University Grants Commission during 60s.

Her special expertise in the field of nutrition education is internationally acclaimed and one has to see to believe what she actually achieved in reality. I would never forget an evening function in a small village near Coimbatore where the students of primary school displayed nutrition messages through skilled theatrical acts.

Several years later, when I was at the WHO/HQ in Geneva, I had to formulate a global strategy for nutrition education through primary health care with the assistance of a few internationally recognized experts in that field. Naturally, I requested Rajammal to be in that group. Even now, after two decades, I remember her superb contribution during that consultation. I met her in different parts of the world in a number of meetings and conferences which we participated where Rajammal was a key figure. During my short tenure in the Indian Council of Medical Research in Delhi, Dr. Rajammal Devadas provided unique support through field and community oriented research in Coimbatore.

She was a major architect in the development of Home Science in India from scratch to its present height. Her unique contribution in nutrition and Home Science has been appropriately recognized in India and in the international field through a large number of national and international academic honours and awards. Her elevation to the status of Chancellor of Deemed University is eloquent proof of the brilliance of Dr. Rajammal Devadas. ●

# **DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - TRIBUTE TO A PATRIOT AND EDUCATIONIST PAR EXCELLENCE**

CAROLYN AND H.A.B. PARPIA

No history of Home Science as well of Food and Nutrition in India can be written without acknowledging the outstanding contributions of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. In fact she has been largely responsible for bringing the global concepts of Home Science down to earth and making them relevant to the Indian conditions. Her published contributions run into hundreds of papers in reputed journals all over the world but what she has done to educate many Indian home scientists, educationists and leaders is something for which one can never express adequate appreciation and gratitude to her.

Starting as a secular thinker to serve the cause of human development she became Professor and Dean of Home Science at the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University at Baroda. As a teacher, research worker and administrator she excelled there and then came even greater recognition of her abilities as the builder of the Avinashilingam College of Home Science as well as holding charge as the Deputy Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Taking early retirement from ICAR she devoted full time to her first love of converting the former into a centre of excellence and ultimately into a Deemed Women's University, of which she is now the distinguished Chancellor.

To see her accomplishments as a builder of institutions of human capabilities one has to visit and see the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher

Education for Women - Deemed University - to believe what she has achieved in creating the best for women whose capabilities all over the country and even abroad have brought laurels to her and her students.

Her growth in the field of education has inspired a large number of women who lead programmes of research and training in the areas of food science, nutrition, home making and institutional management all over the country and in many other developing countries, with an emphasis on rich tradition combined with modernity. This has contributed to liberation of women and their empowerment to handle national responsibilities. If today the Government of India has a Department of Women and Child Welfare, a unique development, its seeds were sown by Prof. Rajammal P. Devadas. It was our pleasure to meet this dynamic person first in Baroda in 1951. She is just as dynamic and effective today in her work at 80 years of age as she was 50 years ago. She continues to contribute with imagination, courage and deep human understanding to the development of the country and particularly to that of Indian women.

All of us who have associated with her have every reason to be proud of her achievements and wish her many more years of life to provide leadership for India's progress. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A PIONEER IN COMMUNITY NUTRITION**

**SHANTI GHOSH**

**I**t is with great pleasure that I write these few lines to honour Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas on her 80th birthday. Many people will honour her for her various achievements, but I would just say that she is a pioneer in bringing the issues of community nutrition, particularly women and children to the centre stage with the involvement of the community rather than thrusting something on the community from outside. She is equally at home with social and nutrition activities, non-government organizations and government, each of them holding her in the highest respect and regard. Her contribution to the development of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, of which she is the Chancellor at present, is legion. A large number of excellent researchers, who lovingly call her Amma, have been nurtured by this Institution, and they in their own turn have contributed a great deal to the various issues concerning women and nutrition. The emphasis always has been to keep the community centre stage and build the programme around that which is no mean achievement. Dr. Devadas has received numerous honours and awards the latest of which are the Mahaveer Jain Award and G.D. Birla Award.

May she live long and continue to contribute to alleviate illiteracy, malnutrition and further empowerment of women and the community. It has been a rare privilege to know her and count her among my friends.

## **DR. RAJAMMAL, THE SCIENTIST, “HOME MAKER” : FRONTIER OF HER CONCERNS**

**BHAVANI BELAVADY**

I begin my article with warm felicitations to Dr. Rajammal Devadas on the occasion of her 80th Birthday Celebrations. Today, she is known not only in India, but all over the world as a distinguished Home Scientist and a Nutritionist of well established fame. More basic than these attributes, I would like to stress upon her humane nature which responds to any cry for help from any quarter. In the present day when professional yard sticks and achievements get the prime of place, we sometimes forget the humane qualities of the individual which shape her (him). I wish Dr. Devadas a long life, success in all her endeavours and peace within herself.

The first time I met her I was struck with the bubbling joy that she radiated around her and her circle of equally joyful young women. Even this day whenever I recall her, it is this joyful face that comes to my mind. Whenever I see her without a smile I realise that there is something which is bothering her. “I hope Rajammal will continue to share this joy with all who come in contact with her”.

She started her career as a teacher and she has remained a teacher inspite of the various high positions she has held. A person in the teacher's profession is associated with certain unique characteristics which makes the teacher a role model for the student community. The pleasant atmosphere and the air we breathe in the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science University campus is a reflection of this quality of hers. The members of the publication committee and many among the University staff have been her students; students who have imbibed the enthusiasm

and sympathy for the community in need and women who receive special attention. This is no mean achievement. For those who are prepared to see invisible behind visible, this enthusiasm speaks volumes of the personality of Dr. Rajammal Devadas.

This campus caters to children studying nursery, L.K.G., U.K.G. upto women working for their Ph.D. degree in various faculties. Building up an educational complex of this enormity goes to reflect the courage, perseverance of the people behind it. Dr. Rajammal is the flag-bearer of the group which has toiled to make it possible in the course of a couple of decades. I do not wish thereby to belittle the staff who have worked with her to make this dream of hers a fact. She has made it possible for NSS programmes to be integrated in the curriculum of the University and has thus conferred an academic credit and status to the service. This reflects the unusual leadership qualities of Dr. Devadas.

The formal system of education which I have just now referred to, is itself formidable. But it does not give the entire picture of the activities that go on in the campus. They have various training programmes meant for women living and working among the community, programmes which the Institute has been following vigorously over the years. It includes training of Anganwadi workers, village level animators of community programmes which have been instituted in response to demands of the time. Workers of the World Bank aided nutrition projects, teachers of nutrition in rural and urban schools have also been trained here. She directed the interstate project to make nutrition, health and environment teaching a part of the curriculum in primary schools in five states of the country. These programmes are the windows through which one can get an idea of the great interest Rajammal has in bettering the lives of people of all categories around her. This is an unique character which distinguishes her from other academicians who are great in their field of choice. We, of the present age talk of academic freedom to sit in ivory towers and get furious when the community

expects us to be accountable for our scientific work. This is in striking contrast to Rajammal Devadas who is herself an academician, but seems to enjoy being surrounded by the community with its various problems.

The Institute is not entirely residential, but even then the number residing in the hostel is not insignificant and is big enough to create problems of administration. There appears to be an “in-built mechanism” for supervision of all these activities minutely and at close quarters without making it obvious. When one enters the gate of the University there is such calmness and quietude that one does not suspect the beehive of activities within the campus. The only time when this is changed is the interval which schools and college sections get during their class hours. At such times it becomes a sea of joyous, romping children - a happy sight indeed.

At this stage, it is relevant and necessary to recognise the person whose name the Institute bears. Sri T.S. Avinashilingam was a Gandhian freedom fighter who had the vision of building future independent India. His entire property was bequeathed to the Nation. He was the founder of Avinashilingam Education Trust in 1955 which runs Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College, College of Education, Primary and Secondary Schools, Nursery Schools and two Balwadies. At present this institute has become Deemed University. Besides this trust, he has founded a number of institutes for education and vocational training in Coimbatore. Some of them were founded as early as in 1930 and are well accredited leading organisations in their respective fields even to this day. Dr. Rajammal Devadas came under the influence of this great visionary and enjoyed his confidence. Her achievements have justified the confidence reposed in her.

I do not wish to list the various official positions she has occupied in Universities, Home-Science Colleges, Departments of Agriculture, Science and Medical teaching and Research Institutions. She has been the Charter member and

President of the Home Science Association of India, Founder Member and President of Nutrition Society of India, the Dietetic Association of India and various other academic bodies. She holds the distinction of having discharged her obligations as an important office bearer of many academic and professional bodies and is a pleasant colleague to work on any project with a positive approach. Her words receive attention at all levels of State and Central Governments, apex bodies like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research and other similar organisations.

I would now like to briefly review the contributions of Dr. Rajammal and her close associates in the field of nutrition, in all its aspects. Nutrition policy of Tamil Nadu has been acclaimed not only by the other states in the country, but also has received world wide recognition. Production of appropriate text books on nutrition at various levels of formal educational system is one of her major contributions. Other educational materials for informal courses and trainings have received the keen attention of Dr. Devadas and her colleagues. The now well known nutrition project of Tamil Nadu received support from the World Bank because of its inherent strength and pragmatism. Many students of this university have held positions not only in the Avinashilingam University but are spread all over the Country. Deans, Principals of Home Science institutes in the country are headed and guided by students of this University. Agencies like UNICEF, DANIDA, FAO and various other important international funding agencies have relied upon the services of her students. These reflect the relevance of Avinashilingam Deemed University for Women in the development of nutrition and other “Home” related subjects in the broadest sense.

The courses in the campus itself lead to doctorate degree in all branches of Home Science and a few related subjects. The library has a good collection of books and current journals in the field of nutrition and associated subjects. The computer

section, fully equipped research laboratories, well maintained animal house for experimental work on animals, identification and development of many areas in and around Coimbatore as suitable centres for community nutrition research work have made the Avinashilingam Home Science University the best equipped for higher studies in all branches of Home Science and related subjects. These facilities enable staff of the university to play a prominent and important role in activities directly or indirectly related to development of nutrition science and implementation of nutrition projects in the country. Students of the university can face competition from all over the world.

It goes to the credit of the founder and the present day management that these excellent facilities are made available not only to their students and staff, but are also open to members of other Home Science colleges in other parts of the country.

Dr. Rajammal's field of interests in research is wide. Studies on nutritional status of women and children and efforts meant to improve it are her forte. Her contributions to innovative methods of communication of the subject of nutrition to students at various levels, have and continue to have a prominent place in education systems. She is a voracious reader and writer. Her scientific contributions number more than 350 research papers. In addition, she has to her credit a number of books both in English and Tamil on nutrition and related subjects. In spite of her intense activity in the professional field, she finds time to jot down her travel records and maintain a diary of the places she visits. I look forward to publication of these memoirs as I had the unique privilege of having tested it.

I have enjoyed putting down these strands of thoughts, which have made me keenly aware and appreciate the person and personality of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.



# **RAJAMMAL DEVADAS AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO APPLIED NUTRITION AND DIETETICS IN INDIA**

**B.S. NARASINGA RAO**

**D**r. Rajammal Devadas, 'Amma' to a host of her students and her close colleagues and admirers, is considered as a leading nutritionist, social worker and an educationist in our country. She has now reached eighty, with nearly 45 years of tireless and devoted work and valuable contributions in the area of applied nutrition and dietetics, women's education, child welfare and women's empowerment. She has been particularly concerned with nutrition extension for the welfare of the mother and the child in our country.

I have known Dr. Rajammal Devadas since mid-sixties when the Nutrition Society of India (NSI) was founded by Dr. C. Gopalan at the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN). She has been a Founder-Member of the NSI and has contributed to its development over the past three decades. I have been meeting her at the NSI Annual Meetings which she has never missed to attend. She has served NSI as a Life Member, Member of the Executive Committee, Vice-President and President. She has also been a regular visitor to the NIN of which she is a friend and an admirer. These visits of her to NIN also have given me an opportunity to meet and interact with her. She and I have worked together in several committees setup by the ICMR, Ministry of Health (CCFS), ICAR and other agencies like UNICEF. I have always admired her commitment to the cause of diet and nutrition in the country and her

devotion and tireless work towards the cause of the welfare of women and children in our country.

She has been active in several socially useful activities like applied nutrition, social work among the rural poor, women's education, the status of women in our society and welfare of the mother and the child. She has been a scientist, teacher and has been instrumental in training a host of students in nutrition, dietetics and home science. She has also been one of the leading protagonists of women's education, and she has demonstrated her commitment to it by developing the Avinashilingam College of Home Science to an excellent and a leading institute of higher education in Home Science and a deemed university which now occupies a pride of place among Home Science institutions in the country. She has served this institute as a Professor, Principal and now she is serving this institution as its Chancellor. This institution has an active post-graduate department of Food and Nutrition. Significant amount of applied nutrition research, carried out under Dr. Rajammal's guidance, has emerged from the Food and Nutrition Department of this Institution. Dr. Rajammal's expertise has not been confined to research and development of nutrition and home science at her institute. Her expertise has been utilised as a member of numerous committees on Food and Nutrition, and women education, by governmental and non-governmental agencies like UGC, ICAR, ICMR, DGHS (CCFS), Human Resource Development Ministry, Planning Commission and International Agencies like UNICEF, FAO and WHO etc. Further she has also been participating in numerous seminars, symposia and workshops related to nutrition, agriculture, social science and education where she has shared her experience and concern with other nutritionists and educationists of the country.

Although Dr. Rajammal's activity has spread over several areas of human welfare as indicated above, I am quite familiar with her work and contribution in the field of nutrition and dietetics. I shall highlight some of her important contributions in this area.

Dr. Rajammal has been largely responsible for translating the nutrition knowledge generated in the country by various institutes and centres including her own into its practical application in the community to improve the nutrition of rural population and the urban poor. In such applications, she has adopted the available scientific knowledge into a form most appropriate for and in tune with the lifestyles and habits of the rural folk with which she is familiar by closely working amongst them. She has articulated her concern and the need for appropriate intervention for improving the nutrition and welfare of the women and children at many a scientific fora both at the national and the international level. She has recently elaborated her working and concepts on women's empowerment towards improving family nutrition in her Srikantia Memorial Lecture at the 1997 NSI Annual Conference.

Dr. Rajammal's scientific contributions in the area of nutrition and dietetics have been in three distinct areas, which are most pertinent to our country. These are : protein-energy malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency among children; iron deficiency anaemia among women and children and nutrition education particularly directed to women and children.

Her main contribution in the field of protein energy malnutrition has been formulation of a wide range of nutritious weaning and supplement foods based on

low cost and locally available foods which are within the reach of most of the rural poor families. One of her principal objectives in formulating these practical recipes is to enable the rural mothers to prepare them at home to feed their infant and children. Before suggesting these formulations for use by the mothers, these formulations were extensively tested under her guidance by a team of research workers at her Institute, for their nutritional qualities, acceptability and biological impact in the community. These studies were later followed up by appropriate education of the rural mothers on the use of these recipes by them to improve the nutrition of their wards. Dr. Rajammal's expertise in this field has been amply utilised by the State Government of Tamil Nadu, in formulating, launching, supervising and evaluating the supplementary feeding programme for the toddlers, preschool children and the mothers and the mid-day meal programme for the school children of low-income group in urban and rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

She has also been active in tackling the problem of vitamin A deficiency and anaemia among preschool children and anaemia among women and pregnant women. She and her team are quite active in propagating the use of green leafy vegetables (GLV) as a rich source of beta-carotene (provitamin A) in combating vitamin A deficiency and anaemia with the necessary research inputs for formulating recipes containing several sources of GLV and their evaluation and required nutrition education efforts. In recent years, she has also tried to use red palm oil as a source of beta-carotene to improve vitamin A status of children in the rural community.

In all her efforts to improve the nutritional state of the underprivileged rural families and the urban poor, she has always devised successful practical and down to

earth approaches through dietary means using locally available low cost foods with which the rural community is quite familiar. It must be recognised that such efforts to translate the theoretical nutrition knowledge into a practical and acceptable form is as difficult a task as generating the knowledge itself, requiring ingenuity, foresight and practical experience. Dr. Rajammal has always measured upto this task of practical application of knowledge on nutrition to human welfare.

She has also been quite active in the area of nutrition education by devising various educational aids to impart nutrition education to rural folk with no or low educational levels. She is not one of those who just rest after imparting nutrition education to the target population. She has always thrived to see that nutrition knowledge imparted is actually made use of by the rural women, to improve the nutrition of their children and their's through appropriate practical demonstrations.

Another area of nutrition where Dr. Rajammal has been active is in the formulation of low cost balanced diets to provide nutrients at the recommended levels to the Indian population of different age groups and in formulating dietary guidelines for maintaining good health by them. Her expertise in this area has been well utilised in formulating the recommended dietary allowances for Indians by the Expert Groups constituted by the ICMR in 1968, 1978 and 1988. I have served as the Secretary of all the three Expert Groups and she has served as a Member. I have had the good fortune of closely working and interacting with her in all these meetings of the RDA Expert Groups. She has actively participated in these committees and made her expertise available to the group in devising dietary guidelines and recommending low cost balanced diets to different age groups and different categories of workers.

Yet another service she has rendered to the cause of nutrition research in our country is the starting of a scientific journal 'Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics'. As the Chief Editor of this widely patronised journal by the nutrition researchers in the country, she has strived to maintain a good standard and its sustained publication for over three decades. This journal is still going strong.

What I have attempted to describe above is only a small part of Dr. Rajammal's diverse activities spanning over more than four decades. I have always admired her selfless devotion for the cause of human nutrition and its improvement and women's education and her empowerment in our country. Naturally she has been bestowed upon with numerous well deserved awards and honours in recognition of her contributions in the field of nutrition and social welfare activities, the latest being the Bajaj Award.

I convey my best regards and best wishes on her 80th year and I wish that she may continue to enjoy good health so that she will continue to be active for many years to come and contribute to our people's welfare. I also fondly hope that many among the younger generation may emulate her sense of devotion and commitment, selfless service to the welfare of the society, a quality which in recent years is fast disappearing in our country. ●

## **A TRIBUTE TO DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**MAHTAB S. BAMJI**

**A**s the world moves towards the 21st century and India completes its 51st year of Independence, it is time to ponder, and do some stock taking. India is among the few nations of the world with advanced nuclear and space technologies. Killer infectious diseases like small pox have been eradicated, and severe forms of nutritional deficiency disorders like beriberi and scurvy are no longer seen or seen only occasionally as clinical novelties. Mortality among all age groups has come down and life expectancy has gone up. Percentage of illiterates has come down but thanks to the population increase the total number of illiterates has gone up. India is believed to have one of the largest reservoirs of scientific and technological human resource. Yet today India ranks among the most underdeveloped countries, particularly when indices of human and social development such as health, education and women's development are applied.

The prevalence of malnutrition among children in India is higher than even the Sub-Saharan Africa. This has been referred to as the 'Asian enigma' by Ramalingaswamy, Johnson and Rhode in an UNICEF report. After analysing a variety of factors the authors attribute this difference between the two underdeveloped regions of the world to the higher incidence of low birth weight in South Asian countries of which India is the largest. While practically every third child in South Asia is born with low body weight, the incidence of low-birth weight in Sub-Saharan Africa is half this number. This then points a menacing finger at the neglect of the mother to be and in fact neglect of and discrimination against females at all stages in life. Low birth

weight is one consequence of such neglect. A child born with low birth weight (small for date) begins with a handicap and often fails to catchup thanks to the social and environmental milieu in which it grows up. This neglect is also reflected in the sex ratio in India.

India is a large country in which some Southern states, particularly Kerala and Tamil Nadu have performed much better in social sectors like health, nutrition, education and consequently family planning, than even some more affluent states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Punjab. The most remarkable achievement of Kerala and now Tamilnadu is the demographic transition. Today, in both these states, the birth rates have fallen to replacement levels. Obviously, India can draw some lessons from its own success stories. These model states are still not ideal in terms of eradication of malnutrition and poverty. Both very much exist. Noteworthy however is the fact that despite lesser economic prosperity (GDP) and food security (percapita food intake) malnutrition in these states is of lesser magnitude than some other states which have higher GDP and better food security.

The question therefore is, how have these states achieved this miracle. Demographers are of the opinion that the two models are different. Kerala with its traditional matriarchal culture, has since many years had higher levels of female literacy (though much was done to make it almost 100% in recent years) and tradition of late marriage. These two factors can contribute significantly to reduce the birth rate. Tamil Nadu model is referred to as a welfare model and many feel that it is this welfare model of Tamil Nadu which is more relevant for the other states to emulate.

Readers who know Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas may guess why I am giving this **preamble**. While I am not trying to **say** that Rajammal Devadas has been the saviour

of Tamil Nadu, she has in her own way contributed to some of its policies and programmes, by providing the right type of vision and technical advice to the state government. She was perhaps heard because she had built a model institution for women's development and was speaking from expertise, experience, commitment and confidence. Of course Tamil Nadu was fortunate to have political leadership which shrugged away the criticism of erudite bureaucrats and economists who generally denounce a welfare model.

I recall a discussion that was held at the National Institute of Nutrition many years ago to debate the wisdom of supplementary feeding programmes like the Mid-day-meal programme. All male nutrition scientists (except a few from the National Institute of Nutrition) spoke against such schemes, as being unprofitable. One very senior scientist even said that feeding children is the responsibility of the parents and not that of the government. Most women, intuitively supported some welfare schemes for the weaker sections of the society till a more enabling environment is created for the parents to feed their children adequately. But it was left to dear 'Amma' to put forth the most compelling arguments in support of the mid-day meal and other nutrition programmes. In her very cool and matter of fact way she pointed out the hidden benefits which cannot be assessed in a simplified cost-benefit analysis which economists and bureaucrats do. Even the best programmes can fail because of lack of will and human failure. Today, the demographic transition seen in Tamil Nadu is at least partly attributed to the welfare programmes which have improved health care outreach (particularly for women), nutrition and school enrolment. Nobody denies that thoughtless subsidies and doles for political expediency cannot be sustained and would ruin the nation. But specific programmes which are aimed at improving health and educational status, have to be viewed in the right perspective.

Rajammal's youthfulness, and smile are infectious. Her capacity for hard work, courage of conviction, vision and down to earth approach to institution building are admirable. Girls at the Avinashilingam University may not win a contest for fashion and make-up, but they have a better feel of the problems of the poor including the rural poor, than students of many other institutions. The courses offered at this university, go a long way in building the type of human resource the country needs. Today, Dr. Devadas is best recognised as a nutrition scientist. But in reality, her vision and contributions extend far beyond, and India should recognise her for what she has done in the area of women's development. India needs today more Rajammal's than erudite scientists, who refuse to come down from their ivory towers and look with disdain on those who do.

I heard about Dr. Devadas way back in 1964, when I was looking for a job in India after a stint as post-doctoral fellow in the USA. I wrote to (late) Prof. P.S. Sharma, who was at that time Professor and head of the department of Biochemistry at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore for suggestions. In his reply he mentioned Dr. Gopalan and NIN as one possibility, CSIR pool fellowship and placement at IISC as second and Dr. Rajammal Devadas and the Avinashilingam Home Science College at Coimbatore as the third possibility. In his letter Prof. Sharma, spoke highly of the principal of the Avinashilingam Home Science College who was trying to build an institution of excellence and who was trying to inject good science into it. Distance of Coimbatore from Bombay, my home town and lack of home science back ground prompted me to opt for NIN. A decision I certainly don't regret. Soon after joining NIN I got to meet Dr. Devadas. She was the lone flag bearer of the female tribe in the vocal group of nutrition scientists who met to found the Nutrition Society of India,

and indeed though the society has far more female members, than male members, she has been its only woman President.

For her, causes in which she believes brook no excuse for truancy. Human nutrition is one such cause, and the Nutrition Society of India (NSI) an important forum for discussion. So, attendance at the NSI meetings, is not - 'if I can I will attend', but, 'I will attend' - Thus her attendance record at these annual meetings is as good as that of Dr. C. Gopalan, the founder president. Both of course share many attributes including completion of 8 decades of useful life. Not only does 'Amma' herself attend these meetings, but she sees to it that her students also attend. The fact that Coimbatore is not on the air map of India, does not interfere with her travelling, because she can manage with very little sleep and is blessed with boundless energy and enthusiasm to cope with the long hours of work and travel. Behind the smiling gentle diminutive exterior, is a strong will, and a compassionate heart. A disciplinarian she is, but ever willing to help genuine seekers of her help, even if it means cutting some red-tape.

Let me end this tribute to Dr. Rajammal Devadas by wishing her many more happy, healthy and useful years. I admire her (not without envy), for her abilities and achievements. As a woman, a scientist and above all an Indian, I thank her for what she has done for the nutrition, health and development of women and children.

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## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A PENCHANT FOR PERFECTION AND EXCELLENCE**

**KAMALA KRISHNASWAMY**

**I**t is my pleasure and privilege to pen these few words in appreciation of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas popularly known as 'Amma' to all of us.

Dr. Devadas graduated in US, but like a true nationalist, she returned to this country, to translate into action what all knowledge she had acquired, for the benefit of her countymen. Amma is one person who has always believed that service to man is service to God. With a missionary zeal, she has gone to the grassroots, to the lowest of lowly, poverty stricken countrymen, sat with them, spent endless hours trying to understand their problems in their home environment and suggest ways and means of overcoming their misery in their own set up. Her solutions were not fashioned in some air conditioned ambience ; her ideas for overcoming the maladies of malnutrition were not some impracticable flights of fancy. They are all earthy and pithy virtues and values. All her efforts were directed to put a little smile on the faces of those hapless human beings and being a little more cheer in the lives of the downtrodden. In the field of nutrition education and extension activities, she has very few peers in this country. Her shining example has motivated a legion of students, scholars and volunteers to take up nutrition and food science as their life's mission and make it meaningful in practical terms of conferring benefits to the humanity. She is teacher, social worker, scientist and above all a humanist all rolled into one.

I have known her very intimately. Her penchant for perfection and excellence in everything she does has appealed to me greatly. Her simplicitiy and vision for future

are some sterling qualities which have put her on a high pedestal of personal achievement. One of the most striking qualities of Dr. Rajammal Devadas's personality is her ability to think differently. She loves experimenting and in the process, invariably bumps into something fresh, novel and unexpected. She then refines her innovations further and gives a practical form. Then she implements it to reap the best harvest. Whether it is integration of NSS into college curriculum or providing income generating activities to downtrodden women, the indelible stamp of Dr. Rajammal Devadas is always there. It has an uplifting effect on the entire community. Above all her sense and self discipline is something all of us need to emulate.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to express my great admiration and feelings for Amma. The very fact that Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is fondly referred to as “Amma” reveals everything about her. Is there anything more sublime than mother's instinct? She is an epitome of love, kindness and keen intellect.

I wish Amma many more productive years so that we can look up to her for guidance and blessings and on her 100th birthday, we will still be expecting her to lend her helping hand to all of us and the humanity at large. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - THE RELENTLESS FIGHTER OF THE UNDERNOURISHED**

M.V. RAO

I have been associated with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas ever since she joined the ICAR as Assistant Director General (Nutrition). When she moved back to Coimbatore I have been a regular visitor to the institution which she headed and guided for a long time, to learn of the inputs needed for meeting the food, nutrition and household security of our people in India. Her fund of knowledge and infectious enthusiasm always appealed to me. By interacting with her regularly I could upgrade my knowledge on the needs of our under privileged sections of the society, in terms of calorie requirements, nutrition, household food and nutrition security etc.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is not only a teacher, scientist, builder of institutions, policy maker and administrator but also a humanist with good heart and head. She has been a crusader for the betterment of women, children and the rural and urban poor. While others are talking, she was acting in developing and implementing programmes. She is true “Karma Yogini” following the footprints of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Holy Mother Saradamani Devi and Gandhiji. The Mid day meal programme, supplementary nutrition programme and nutrition support programme are her brain children. The Tamil Nadu model of mid day meal programme for school children which she helped to develop and implement, has been adopted by many states of India. Her emphasis on implementing the supplementary nutrition programmes for pre school children with low cost locally available foods, was very

pragmatic and practical. This programme not only helped to improve the nutrition of the school children at their most vulnerable stage, but also helped to reduce the number of school dropouts. This has indirectly helped to reduce the abominable child labour and also the induction of the first and second born female children in the family to labour force.

Dr. Devadas's tireless crusade has always been to uplift the rural women and make them more informed of the various social and nutritional issues, through massive transfer of technology and nutrition education programmes and materials.

As a teacher she played a very important role in the development and revision of the Home Science curriculum. She is an ardent, devoted and committed teacher inspiring the young students and her colleagues. Her enthusiasm and commitment are always infectious. She was the builder of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women and was instrumental to get the Deemed University status. As its Vice Chancellor and later as Chancellor, she set high standards of education, research, transfer of technology with social relevance.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has been a friend, philosopher and guide to her fraternity of Home Science colleagues all over the country. She served ably as chair person and as member of several committees and organisations not only in India but also abroad. She received, at national and international levels, several honours, medals, certificates of honour including Padmashri, Jamnalal Bajaj and GD Birla Award for her significant contributions for the cause of better and nutritionally strong Indian society.

I admire her for her indomitable will, persuasive skills, commitment and dogged determination to achieve the goal. She was always bold to fight for what she thought is right - a quality which very few people possess. It was always a pleasure for me to work and interact with her, because there is one thing common between us two : while I was involved in producing more food to feed the people, she was involved in giving them better and more nutritious food!

On the happy occasion of 80th birthday of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas I once again greet and congratulate her and wish her many happy returns of the day.



# **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - THE TEACHER OF TEACHERS**

**G. VENKATASWAMY**

I had known Ayya Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar from 1937. I was studying in American college, Madurai and my father asked me to take my younger brother to Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpalayam for admission. Later I developed contact with other Gandhian workers like K. Arunachalam, N.M.R. Subbaraman, G. Venkatachalapathy, Dr. Soundaram Ramachandran and others. Dr. Soundaram was busy planning for starting the Gandhigram after the Independence. Ramakrishna Vidyalaya was growing rapidly. The Avinashilingam Home Science College was started in 1957 in Coimbatore. I was posted to Madurai Medical college in 1956. In the Eye department of the Govt. Erskine hospital (now called Rajaji hospital) I observed enormous number of eye diseases caused by Vitamin A and B deficiencies. I started a research project with a small grant for deficiency diseases caused by Vitamin B2 deficiency. We saw many children going blind due to Vitamin A deficiency. We started a Nutrition Rehabilitation centre at the Govt. Rajaji hospital with support from the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (now called Sight Savers International), England. For nutrition work I got nutrition graduates from the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science. My career as an eye surgeon started in 1950 and it might be Dr. Rajammal Devdas started her career also at this time.

Ayya Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar had a vision and had immense capacity to implement it. He was able to motivate Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas to come to Coimbatore

to start the Home Science College. She had great vision about women's education and the need for development of Home Science in India. All people with vision do not get opportunities to build institutions. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas had full time commitment to build the institutions and her family life became less important. She has several sisters and brothers. All of them are highly educated. I know one of her brothers and one sister intimately well. The brother is an able organiser and he represented an International Blindness Organization in India. He was able to improve the performance of many eye hospitals. He started the Blind Rehabilitation program all over India. In the Avinashilingam Home Science College and in Ramakrishna Vidyalaya he helped to start training of teachers for handicapped. One of the staff in Ramakrishna Vidyalaya is an international expert in the problem of Low Vision.

One of the sisters of Dr. Rajammal Devadas is a doctor and she is a well known children's specialist. She was committed to community work to prevent malnutrition and diseases in children. Another sister has settled in USA and has worked in organizing Community colleges there. Recently she was here with a group of experts to promote community colleges in India. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in her commitment to build the Avinashilingam Home Science college got full support of her family members also. Normally people working in teaching institutions retire at a specified age. But Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has been able to continue to build in her capacity as Vice Chancellor and Chancellor. It is a life commitment for her. She stays in the campus and all the twenty four hours of the day she works. She has started Engineering college, Education college and new Community college. For the Govt. projects she started training of Mukya Sevikas.

She has extensive international contact with the universities in Ireland, USA, Australia and Canada. With these contacts she has built and improved the different departments in the Deemed University. She is working closely with the local Agricultural University on several projects. I wonder how it is possible for one person to work in various areas at the same time. But Ayya Avinashilingam also had this immense capacity to build institutions with help from all Govt. departments and private bodies. Ayya started the Sri Avinashilingam Shramik Vidyapeeth with help from Ministry of Human Resource Development and Department of Education, Govt. of India. Both Ayya and Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas had capacity to attract capable and committed people to work in their institutions. In recent days there is a feeling in the public that the universities in India have lost their academic strength. Politics and commercialism appears to influence the academic institutions. We hope that this trend is transitory and the good old tradition of our ancient institutions like Nalanda, Pataliputra, Nagarjuna and Tamil Sangams will prevail. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has maintained very high standards in this Deemed University. ●

# **RAJAMMAL - MY FRIEND, PHILOSOPHER AND GUIDE**

**D. PAUL CHOWDHRY**

I have known Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for around four decades since the time she joined the Indian Council of Agriculture Research and the Directorate of Extension. She was the first home scientist who found a place in the prestigious Council under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. It was during these years that I went to her for guidance for preparation of the scheme of Family and Child Welfare which was heavily biased in favour of child development and home management. Thereafter, my contacts with Dr. Devadas not only continued but got strengthened on professional level.

I also found that although Dr. Devadas is the most distinguished Home Scientist, yet she is more of a social scientist with multi-disciplinary approach to social development. She diversified her background of home science academics and successfully applied this body of knowledge to different and varied fields such as agriculture, environment, ecology, social welfare, public co-operation, rural development, family welfare and population education. This not only enriched several social development projects and organizations, but it also helped in her own professional development.

I have been visiting Sri Avinashilingam College of Home Science as representative of Central Social Welfare Board, the Ministry of Rural Development and the National Institute of Public Co-Operation and Child Development. You name a government scheme or programme sponsored by the Central or State Government

you will find an experimental project developed at her institute. Dr. Devadas, provided a practical base for home science teaching and thereby a new leadership of academics in enriching government programmes of social development. It was in this context that Dr. Devadas came to be associated with a large number of government, non-government and international organizations working in allied fields of human activity such as social welfare, rural development, mother and child institutions, agriculture, environment etc. In fact I saw Sri Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Education, the biggest laboratory in development, non-existent in any other Home Science college. She and her colleagues provided an innovative approach and able leadership in a wider field of social development.

It was because of her valuable contribution that took her to international level, holding consultative positions with U N and international agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, FAO etc. The fact that she was seen in Delhi and other global cities so frequently indicated that she was the most sought after professional in a field like Home Science which had very little appeal and glamour in the beginning.

I personally was greatly benefitted through her contacts. She is humble, warm and true friend. As Director of the National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development she very actively guided and supported my efforts in the fields of research and training with her very positive and innovative approach to social issues. I am personally indebted to her for contribution as Chairman of Programme Development Committee of the institute, with her practical, positive and fresh approach. I would, therefore, like to place on record my humble appreciations of her contribution to the building up of NIPCCD as a national forum of child development at which professionals from different branches of human and social sciences converged.

Through my visits to Sri Avinashilingam Institute I found the commitment of students and teachers and a high level of devotion to studies. This was further confirmed through their answer books which I went through as an examiner for three terms. It was really a pleasure to read their answer books. I could see the reflection of hard work and discipline behind these for which I congratulate Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas and her colleagues who contributed a great deal for high level of academics in the college. At this occasion I cannot help mentioning the leadership of Dr. Avinashilingam, a great educationist, social worker and political personality in the development of work done by Dr. Devadas and her colleagues.

Sri Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science and Education is the only institution of Home Science which has the status of a Deemed University. This would not have been possible but for the devoted and sincere efforts of Dr. Devadas who is now the Chancellor of this university. Let us pray to God-that coming generations will on the one hand try to maintain the level of efficiency of the college through their hard work and always remember and honour their great "Amma". On the other, we also pray and hope that she will live longer in good health to see her successors handling the affairs of the college with the same commitment and efficiency as Dr. Devadas did.

Needless for us to say that awards which Dr. Devadas received from prestigious institutions and agencies in India and abroad manifest their recognition for her work not only as a home scientist but as an educationist, social worker, and social scientist in her own right. She thus stands tallest and head and shoulder above all other members of her tribe-the home scientists. Though she was praised by academics, co-professionals, educationists, administrators alike throughout India and abroad,

unfortunately one could sense an air of jealousy around her, which though a human weakness, yet was unfortunate.

One of the least known facts at the national level but the most important and thoughtful contribution made by Dr. Devadas as Principal of the Home Science College is establishing laboratories for the teachers and students to try and see the application of theory in field situations. Very few other colleges of Home Science have ventured into this area. You could watch the working of Balwadis, nutrition centres, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Mahila Mandals (Madar Sangam), destitute children homes and others either at the College campus or out in the rural areas.

Another feature of the Sri Avinashilingam College is that on the one hand it admits girls from pre-primary level onwards, and on the other take girls from poor and modest homes who ultimately join MSc. Home Science. Unlike many other such colleges in the country, Avinashilingam College caters not to the girls from elite families but every girl whatever her socio-economic background, is given an opportunity of higher education. For this, it was the vision of Dr. Devadas supported by Dr. Avinashilingam, who made their dream a reality.

In terms of implementary government schemes and being on several committees at the national level, left an impression on some of her friends that as an aggressive person, Dr. Devadas knew the art of grabbing. This may initially create a negative impression about her personality but it had very positive aspects. Coimbatore being away from capitals of the state and Central Government that provided leadership in social development, Dr. Devadas did a yeoman service to Southern India in establishing close contacts with national agencies such as Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development Environments on the one hand and institutions like the Indian Council

of Agricultural Research, the Directorate of Extension, the Central Social Welfare Board, the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, the National Council for Educational Research and Training, the University Grants Commission and many others. This not only helped her college but she in turn also contributed for the development of these agencies.

I could never imagine that Dr. Devadas who looks much younger than her age would now be crossing her 80th birthday, because the amount of travel she did and work she has been putting in indicates that she has some special strength and energy mental and physical bestowed on her by the Lord. She has no other contemporary who can match her contributions even at the close of twentieth century. Dr. Devadas would, therefore be entering the twenty first century with no other member of her tribe standing taller than her. Dr. Devadas has therefore left all others behind.

People generally mistake this phenomenon as of personal advancement of Dr. Devadas, but this helped not only in advancement of Sri Avinashilingam College of Home Science but profession of Home Science has been put on stronger footing than that it was in the sixties because of contributions of persons like Dr. Devadas.

Now I turn to the hero of this story - my friend, philosopher and guide Rajammal, Do not be proud of your own contribution as much as the opportunities which came your way through friends and colleagues sent by the Lord. Thank Him more than any one else as He managed all this to be able to show your worth. Now let others inherit and handle your great task and you bless and guide them. Enjoy rest of your life in the sunshine of honour and recognition Almighty managed for you as ultimately, we are puppets in His hands. We get carried away by our ego which need to be shed at least when we have played our role successfully. ●

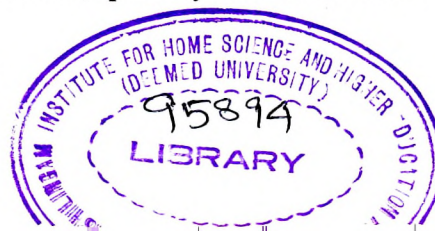
# **RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - A MULTIFACETED PERSONALITY**

JYOTI H. TRIVEDI

**I**t is a pleasure to write about my friend Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in volume commemorating her 80th birthday. Where can I begin? May be at the beginning of our first meeting. Long back, a short, beautifully dressed lady with a gajara in her bun, with a broad smile and full of energy stepped into my chamber for a Selection Committee meeting at the SNDT Women's University. This was the first time I met her and immediately felt the power of her personality and decided to make her a friend of mine.

Over the years, she came for many Selection Committee meetings, was never demanding and accepted whatever hospitality we could give. At the meetings, she was pleasant and made the candidate feel at peace, at the same time putting searching questions from which she could critically assess the candidate's suitability. This is a difficult task as candidates have been only interviewed for a short time. In spite of her very busy schedules she never refused to come. This was a gesture of her goodwill.

The other memory I have is of working with her on the committee to consider the proposal of a Women's University in Tamil Nadu made by the late Shri M..G.R. under the able Chairmanship of Adisheshaya. During these deliberations I came to know her much better and formed a lasting friendship. During our deliberations we had the same perceptions of Women's University that it should be one of the resource centres for women's problems, studies, researches, specially as it was earlier to be a



residential University for post-graduate scholars. However, later on this University was made into a normal University.

We, at the SNTD, were lucky to have her as one of the experts on the Visiting Committee for granting DRS status to our Home Science department of Nutrition. With a keen understanding of the problems of Home Science and the lack of general awareness of its significance in the public she willingly heard our view point and deliberated on it and agreed to recommend not one but two departments should be given this status and they should help the other departments and develop the expertise of this status also. A decade and a half back Home Science for its professional disciplines as under its umbrella there are many specializations. A student can be a Nutritionist, can be a Institutional Manager, can do community work through extension and also be a child and women's counsellor, educator and also be an expert in textiles including design. It gives opportunity to entrepreneurship, thus women can be employed and self-employed. This was one of her laudable goals in life.

It is here that one has to admire the perseverance and the patience in organizing through the Home Science Association with its various branches and getting recognized and affiliated by the International Associations. The bi-annual conferences of this Association always had three aspects, one was educating the society and the community of its potential. The other was high-lighting the change in needs of the curriculum and the standards of efficiency. The third was its scientific sessions dealing with researches done in the field and the need of future ones.

I find that she is a person who could accept challenges and do justice. I am reminded of her setting up “Annapurna” at the instance of the Tamil Nadu Government,

who found that their departments could not establish snacks and meals for their meal projects for the poor within the financial budget sanctioned. She and her team took up the challenge and made a model organization for preparation of economically priced, nutritious and tasty meals and snacks in a clean and hygienic set up.

It is also interesting that her vision for research did not limit to basic research but also applied and field research. It required a lot of organization to evaluate the impact of mid-day meals on children, on their health and cognitive ability and continuation of academics in schools and their achievement. While talking of research, one must say that her field is nutrition and she has done fundamental research in proteins available in natural food stuffs, leafy vegetables etc.

As we were in many Committees together we had the same understanding of the problems and had on more or less similar view points and suggestions for implementing the proposals of these Committees.

I have a pride in being part of the Committee and greatly responsible for persuading the UGC to give Avinashilingam Institute of Home Science a Deemed University status. I have a great satisfaction in having done this as this was one institution that had excellence under the dynamic leadership of Rajamma.

I have been associated with the institute and the University for many decades. I have appreciated and admired the vision for an all round development of the University, and especially in the field of Home Science, and Extension Education and updating knowledge with the march of technology. The social and developmental work in the rural areas for skill generation, economic betterment and agricultural

field work has borne good results giving self-respect and empowerment to women. It has been recognized as an institution for giving refresher courses for updating and for need based continuing education, for professionals, whether they be in Government, in private, in hospitals etc. Because of this expertise it has been given a lot of projects by the UGC, government, national and international organizations. She has the courage to create innovative courses for students either in collaboration nationally or internationally, like the course on hospitality management and establishing community colleges.

Rajammal Devadas is never satisfied with status quo. She believes in exploring new avenues and new disciplines for women's development. For this she has successfully interlinked with foreign universities and organizations. This has resulted in exposure to the academics of international institutions and universities through its exchange programmes and participation in conferences and seminars. She has been one of the respected nutrition experts and has contributed meaningfully and realistically to the deliberations to the national, international organizations like the UNICEF, FAO, etc.

She is a very hospitable host and I have had the pleasure of staying with her whenever I visited the institute and I also have found her to be a most accommodating guest when she stayed with us.

I remember that on her way to some conference in London she had to catch a plane to enable her to reach the next day to give an interview to the BBC. Unfortunately, the plane got cancelled. She would not rest till she made us go round the airlines and

got her a seat on a plane, which left immediately. In spite of tiredness and weariness she took the flight and fulfilled the commitment. This is her sense of duty.

I have not written anything about her various awards, conferment of degrees and details of researches etc., because all these will be highlighted in the chapter of her bio-data and by others who have worked with her.

I would like to end by expressing my appreciation for the intelligent, pragmatic, progressive, perseverant, patient, ambitious endeavour in building an Institute of her dreams, for catering to all aspects of women's development. No institutions are built without a team work. She has been able to get co-operation, love and affection of her faculty, both as a Director, Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor and therefore she is known as “Amma”.

Lastly, she is a person of family. She was a devoted daughter, a caring wife and dutiful mother and grand mother and stalwart for her relatives. She is a very good human being and I am proud to be her friend. I wish her good health in many more years of active work for the institution which she loves. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A SAGA OF SERVICE**

T.C. RAGHU RAM

*“The heights by great men reached and kept  
were not attained by sudden flight.  
But, they while their companions slept,  
were toiling upward in the night”.*

The above lines beautifully penned by H.W.Longfellow are particularly true in the case of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. She reached the present pinnacle with her indomitable spirit, hard work, and determination and persistence, no matter what the odds were. Dr. Rajammal Devadas, who is fondly and aptly referred by every one as “Amma”, is known to me since 1961, when she was holding the post of Chief Home Economist and Joint Director, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India in New Delhi through my sister Ms.T.C. Kamala, a Home Economist. She is not only our family friend, but she was also instrumental in initiating me into the world of nutrition. She was treating my sister as her own daughter. On the death of my sister, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in her letter dated 26th May, 1991 wrote to me “Kamala is part of my life. My love for her is deeper than the ocean. Now, for me you are the only relative in Hyderabad”. Her words truly reflect her sentiments and affection for my family and particularly, the close and cordial association she had with my sister.

I am very happy to be associated with the 80 years' celebrations of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. I am quite aware of her notable scientific achievements in the field of applied nutrition as well as her concerted efforts in the upliftment of the poorer segments of our population. I am sure that others will write on her significant contributions in all these areas in detail. Therefore, in this my brief write up, I shall only attempt to highlight some aspects of her towering personality, her contributions in the field of education and extension as well as in the development of Nutrition Society of India - with all of which I am closely connected.

During my close association with her for the last nearly four decades, I observed that she has been a source of inspiration, a wise counsellor and a pillar of strength to her colleagues and co-workers, always willing to help, to give and to guide. A great teacher and an eminent educationist, Dr. Devadas has also made an indelible mark in the field of nutrition and home science as a successful scientist. Besides these noble qualities, she has beyond doubt proved that she is also an able administrator. Utilising the unstinted support extended by great philanthropist and educationist, Thiru. Avinashilingam, "Ayya", she was instrumental in establishing the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, at Coimbatore. Under her dynamic stewardship, the organization attained unprecedented growth. She transformed the organization into a dynamic and vibrant force imbued with the spirit of service to women. With a vision to perceive the emerging changes in the environment, she prepared the organization to remain 'relevant' in the changed circumstances. With her untiring efforts, the organization has transformed into a premier institute par excellence for women's education. Avinashilingam Institute owes a great deal to Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for its present strength and stature.

Her multifaceted activities have put her in limelight, bringing to her many well-deserved national and international honours and awards. Neither she has rested on her laurels nor contented with winning awards and honours for herself. I believe sincerely that as a teacher, few can surpass Dr. Devadas. In the course of her long teaching career, she has generated a team of devoted and dedicated teachers, now holding responsibility of teaching and conducting research all over the country. As a teacher, not merely in the classroom sense, she has always taken great pains to expose her students to the latest developments in nutrition and home science. Be it at the Annual meeting of the NSI or any seminar or conference on any speciality related to their field, any where in the country, you always see her with the students, ever ready to bring home the latest developments in their area. I am glad to see that this culture nurtured by her is being continued with equal vigour by the other faculty who have taken the reins.

Her public life spanning six decades, is a saga of courage and conviction and determination to contribute towards enrichment and empowerment of women's education. She believed in the dictum "Give us good women, we will have a great civilization ; give us good mothers, we will have a great nation". She not only tried to transform our women into good women but also to good mothers.

While I have always appreciated and admired Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas and her great personality, my association with her has been closer particularly after I assumed the post of Joint Secretary of the Nutrition Society of India. During the last 4 years, I have had the opportunity of knowing the serious consideration she gives to the growth of the Society and its welfare. As the President of NSI earlier and in various capacities that she has ever been serving the Society, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas

has provided dynamic guidance and creative thinking to always vitalise and rejuvenate its functioning.

As one in the field of extension and publications, I feel it is pertinent to mention about yet another dimension in the work of Dr. Devadas. One can easily appreciate the enormous academic versatility, communication capabilities and managerial prowess that are needed to launch and successfully run a journal particularly, a professional one. The Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics is now not only a familiar but is well respected by peer groups in all the allied fields. Dr. Devadas has nurtured and sustained the journal with great competence.

Yet another aspect, also of my professional interest is Nutrition Extension - an area to which Dr. Devadas has given almost undivided attention for several decades now. All of us in the nutrition and home science specially are aware of the innumerable good studies on nutrition education and extension that she has undertaken and guided and the several pilot projects that she has conducted. She has introduced many novel and innovative dimensions to extension education, including the use of traditional and folk media for propagation of health and nutrition messages.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas has ably provided her professional expertise to many international and national organizations in various key capacities. Her penchant for social work and her humanist characteristics are too well known to need special mention. She is religious without being superstitious. She used to visit Ramakrishna Ashram and meet Sri Ranganathanandaji during her visits to Hyderabad, whenever time permitted. Hers is a personality full of vigour, enthusiasm, energy and vision. Unlike others, she practises what she preaches. During her visits to my house, always

she preferred simple diet, consisting mostly of vegetables and fruits, which may be the secret of her success in leading a healthy life.

She is an accomplished speaker, a prolific writer and also an attentive listener. More than anything, she has a great zeal and enthusiasm to learn good from any source. She has a child-like curiosity for anything new. She has a sharp memory and deductive skills of a very high degree. With her sterling qualities of head and heart, she endears herself to everyone who comes into contact with her. I am particularly impressed with the characteristic humane and warm manner with which she deals with others. She can easily put the most ordinary person at ease in her company. In spite of her multifaceted expertise and experience, she is always humble, gentle and ever smiling. Particularly, she is a host par excellence, looking after the comfort and needs of every guest.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere regards to Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas and pray that she maintains good health and continues her mission with new inspiration, climbing to even greater heights in the years to come. Her life, a saga of service, is an example for others to emulate. ●

# **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - THE SPEARHEADER OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

**S. RAJAGOPALAN**

**T**o start with a proverb

“If you educate a man, you educate a person,

If you educate a woman, you educate a family”.

..... An African Proverb

Rajammal P. Devadas has the blessings of million families for spearheading the cause of women's education. She has lived a life of dedication under the blessing of Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar, who laid the foundation for women's education and she has taken it to the heights of deemed university.

I am one of the many admirers and well-wishers who have watched the milestones in making Home Science as a scientific discipline. Dr. C. Gopalan took Nutrition Science to pinnacle of glory while it is given to her to take nutrition to every household through Home Science. Like a lab to land programme of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, she has worked hard in operationalizing the concept of nutrition in every household to ensure healthy human development. Women's education is a seed for human development. Her job has been to sow the seed for the future of human development. Kindly accept my warm greetings on her 80th birthday.



**TEACHERS AND  
CLASSMATES**

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

EVA D. WILSON

**R**ajammal P. Devadas entered the school of Home Economics, The Ohio State University as a graduate student. Her goal was to achieve her doctorate, with a major in the area of nutrition. She graduated, earning the Ph.D. degree, with the degree, she departed / returned to her country. She left behind an incomparable reputation as a graduate student.

She entered as an ordinary graduate student, soon, however, it became apparent that she was not an ordinary student, but in fact, a most unusual one. Her excellence was recognized before she had completed any of the courses required in her area of study. Her conversation demonstrated the extraordinary competence which she possessed. Furthermore, her remarkable foresight was early apparant, she saw the need of higher education for women, thinking particularly of her own country but also in general. She expressed her views, with an understanding of the challenges that would need to be met in that pursuit. She knew in advance the importance of making known those policies that were relevant to her belief, in education. She had the courage and ability to address group, including the State Legislature of the State of Ohio.

We would be expected and as it was, her course work and research were accomplishments of excellence. Her research was a study using small animals. The

daily tasks involved in this kind of study did not dount Rajammal. Her research plan, management skills and determination brought success to the study.

Rajammal was a friendly, outgoing student, she was congenial with both faculty and fellow students. As busy as she was, she would take time to entertain in her dormitory room. That was not an easy task. She would serve food characteristic of her country. The kindly gesture of being hostess to guests was most unusual among graduate students.

As an alumna of The Ohio State University, School of Home Economics (now College of Human Ecology), she has brought honor to the institution. Her achievements as a student and those after graduation have given recognition to her and to her *alma mater*. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - THE GRADUATE STUDENT I KNOW AT OHIO STATE**

**MARY ELOISE GREEN**

**R**ajammal P. Devadas was enrolled as a student at The Ohio State University in 1947 to study for the Master of Science degree in human nutrition in the School of Home Economics. Among her advisers was Dr. Gladys Branegan (later Dr. Gladys Branegan Chalkley), Director of the School, who served as a capable and caring mentor. After obtaining the Master's degree in 1948, Mrs. Devadas went ahead with her studies in nutrition and was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1950.

Dr. Devadas was not registered in any course that I taught but as a faculty member in the Division of Food and Nutrition I observed her to be a highly talented and dedicated person. She wanted to learn about the subject matter of Home Economics and also about the principles of successful administration in formal education.

After graduation from the Ohio State University, Dr. Devadas returned to her native country and has led the way in the development of educational opportunities for the women of India. She has gained international recognition as a leader in education. In 1995 The Ohio State University granted her a Doctorate of Humane Letters. A year later the College of Human Ecology bestowed on her one of the Helen Strow Awards for outstanding International Service.

The program in Home Economics at The Ohio State University was 100 years old in 1997. As part of the celebration of that birthday, the College of Human Ecology Alumni Society selected 100 graduates from the College of Human Ecology as Outstanding Alumni. Dr. Devadas was one of the graduates who received that honor. She has made a remarkable record of achievements in her long career in Home Science in India and far beyond the borders of her homeland. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A GRACIOUS KNOWLEDGEABLE LADY**

REBECCA LUCILE CORNETET

**G**reetings to the Avinashilingam University Family. I wish to be a part of the 80th birthday of Chancellor Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

I met Dr. Devadas one day for lunch here at Friendship Village where I live. My good friend Dr. Dorothy Scott was entertaining her as her guest and invited me to join them since I was a world traveller and had toured India. Dorothy and I had mutual friends in the field of Home Economics. Miss Helen Strow, a recipient of your letter too, is one of those as well as Dr. Julia Dalrymple. Dr. Scott was a Professor of the School of Home Economics at The Ohio State University and was the Director from 1955 - 1959.

Dr. Scott was Dr. Devadas's mentor when she attended Ohio State to obtain her Doctoral Degree in the field of Home Economics. After receiving her doctorate, she returned to India and with seven interested young women began School of Home Economics. She is now the Chancellor of that Deemed University in Coimbatore, India.

I became interested in helping the university financially and therefore came in close contact with Dr. Devadas. We have corresponded at Christmas for several years, and she has contacted us at Friendship Village whenever she comes to Columbus.

I toured India in the year 1983 with my tour leader Dr. Newton Fritchley, my minister at that time. Dr. Fritchley was born in Calcutta of missionary parents and was interested in visiting the place of his birth.

I was fortunate to meet Rajammal at my hotel in Madras for a short time because she was heading for the airport to board a plane for the United States. Dr. Julia Dalrymple was on that tour and we both went to the airport with her to see her leave. She is such a gracious lady and so knowledgeable that it was easy to become acquainted with her.

Rajammal always gets in touch with us when she is here in the city. We are on her list when she schedules her routine abroad. Helen Strow and I are in the 90's now and we find it harder to get around. Dr. Devadas's contacts are many as she works for financial help for her Deemed University.

Time marches on for us all. Dr. Scott died in 1993 at the age of 90. Dr. Dalrymple is gone too. I've forgotten the year, and Helen and I are in the waning years of our lives.

Dr. Devadas has my utmost admiration for all she has accomplished during her lifetime. She has made monumental contributions in many fields of endeavor, not only in the field of Home Economics but in that of education. She has brought a higher quality of life to the generations of young people of India during her lifetime which will continue on and on in the years ahead.

I have treasured the contacts I've had with Dr. Devadas and wish her happiness and much success in the future.

Happy birthday, Rajammal!

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A WELL WISHER OF DOWNTRODDEN WOMEN**

HELEN STROW

**T**his is to wish you a happy birthday and many more. It has been a pleasure to know you over the years. It has been a great help to me in my work with international visitors. You helped me to understand the needs of the people in rural areas in countries all over the world. We both know that women of the villages are often ignored by people who are providing assistance. You were very helpful to me in understanding the customs of India, and I'm sure you helped me avoid making mistakes that might offend someone.

Let me join with your many friends in wishing you a happy birthday.



## **MY GOOD FRIEND RAJAMMAL**

**STELLA SOUNDARARAJ**

**M**any many happy returns dear Rajammal. May God bless you on your 80th Birthday and may God grant you a healthy and blessed long life to enable you to see your 100th birthday.

The year 1942, I was one of the three students in Women's Christian College for Home Science and Rajammal was among the six students admitted in Queen Mary's College for Home Science. We were the first batch of students doing the Home Science course started by Madras University in 1942. Needless to say that I have known Rajammal since 1942 and we became good friends. I was always first in my college and Rajammal first in her college. In those days, Women's Christian College and Queen Mary's College had combined classes for Nutrition in Women's Christian College and combined classes in Biochemistry in Queen Mary's College and combined classes in Hygiene in Madras Medical College. Rajammal was first in the combined classes and obtained the first rank in the University B.Sc. examination. Queen Mary's College being a rich college sent its six students in their big college bus for all the combined classes ; while in Women's Christian College we were sent by jutka (a cart) driven by a horse. I still remember how we young girls from Women's Christian College did not wish to be seen arriving by jutka in Madras Medical College and we always made the jutka man stop the vehicle near the bridge near the central station and walk the distance to Madras Medical College ; while Queen Mary's College students along with Rajammal arrived grandly in their college bus!

My friend Rajammal was a brilliant orator even in her student days and could speak fluently both in English and in Tamil. She was a very loving friend, kind and generous and very hard working and very dedicated to her work.

In the year 1946, I got a Government of India scholarship to go to United Kingdom to do post graduate studies in Nutrition in Kings College, London. My friend Rajammal went to America for higher studies. When I came back from London I was appointed as Professor of Nutrition in Queen Mary's College while Rajammal was incharge of the Dietetics Department of the Central Government College of Nursing now Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur College in New Delhi. We met fairly often as both of us were in various Home Science Boards of Studies and Committees and Home Science Examination Boards of Madras University and other universities in near by states such as Andhra and Karnataka.

There was a certain amount of rivalry between us as both of us wanted our college to be first in rank. I was extremely fortunate in getting very bright students for doing Home Science in Queen Mary's College in those days as all top government officers including IAS, IPS officers sent their daughters to do Home Science in Queen Mary's College.

I retired from government service in 1982 and went abroad to USA along with my husband. My husband fell very ill and had a by pass heart surgery. Rajammal who happened to come to USA at that time came all the way to my house and prayed fervently for my husband's recovery. By God's immense grace and all the dedicated prayers of our friends and well wishers like Rajammal my husband recovered beautifully at that time.

One thing to be admired in Rajammal was her absolute selfless devotion and respect she had for Dr. Avinashilingam Chettiar, who was the Founder of Avinashilingam College. Dr. Avinashilingam Chettiar at an early age recognised the brilliance and capacity of Rajammal and when he founded the college, he gave Rajammal the sole responsibility of running the college and bringing it to greater heights.

In the year 1967, I was promoted as Principal of Government Training College, Coimbatore and once again I came in close contact with my good friend Rajammal. We met often, had dinners together and would chat for hours. I knew all her family members and loved her mother very much. Her mother was truly a grand lady. Rajammal's younger sister Leila was my room mate in Women's Christian College who later married Mr. Diraviam, Mr. Diraviam was an IAS Officer of the highest calibre and held the post as Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately for Tamil Nadu he died fairly young while still in government service.

In the year 1972, I had the opportunity to become the first lady Deputy Director of Collegiate Education. It was then, that I was able to help Rajammal whenever there was any problem in Avinashilingam College. Rajammal used to fight for the rights of her staff and saw to it that her staff in Avinashilingam College got the UGC scale of pay at an early date.

Whoever has been loyal to the college has come up very well in the college. Rajammal was always very fair and kind to both staff and students. Their students were expected to lead a Gandhian way of life. For example sitting down on the floor

in the dining hall for having their meals, sweeping their own hostel rooms and cleaning their bath rooms etc.

Both Dr. Avinashilingam Chettiar and Dr. Rajammal had one dream in common to make their College 'Deemed University'. They both (Dr. Avinashilingam Chettiar and Rajammal) used all their wisdom, influence and might to make the college a Deemed University. Due to their tireless efforts, their dreams came true. Rajammal became the first Vice Chancellor and Dr. Avinashilingam became the first Chancellor of the same Deemed University.

Some years ago our beloved Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar passed away much to the sorrow of Rajammal, staff and students of the college. Rajammal with her abundant intelligence is carrying on the work of the University as the present Chancellor of the University. She is fortunate to have an able Vice Chancellor, Deans and staff for her university.

In conclusion, I would like to say : Whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praise worthy that was our Rajammal.

May God bless Rajammal and Avinashilingam Deemed University.



## **CELEBRATION OF DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY**

**MOIRA BREEN**

**I**t is a great honor and it gives me great pleasure to write about Dr. Rajammal Devadas, Rajam who is one of my oldest friends. We met for the first time, almost 59 years ago ; in July 1940 as freshmen in Queen Mary's College, (QMC) Madras. At that time, the principal of QMC was an English woman, Miss Kate Myers; but all the other professors were Indian women. They were the pioneers in the Indian educational system as they were the first generation of Indian women with advanced university degrees. For the next four years, with the exception of the language classes Rajam and I were always in the same class. In the first two years, our elective courses were: Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. I first remember seeing Rajam in the Mathematics class as it was one of the smallest - only 16 students - taught by Miss Arulanatham who was highly competent and who took a great interest in her students. The number of students in the Physics and Chemistry classes were larger as they were the prerequisites for medicine. The laboratories were very well equipped. Miss Ammani, the Physics Professor was also very good in her subject and taught us well. I enjoyed the Physics laboratory very much. Chemistry was taught by Miss Rangacharlu and Miss Mehta and English by Miss Myers and Miss Seethamma. All our Professors were excellent in their field and interested in their students.

After two years of study we took the Intermediate examination in March 1942. In July 1942, QMC in collaboration with Women's Christian College (WCC)

initiated the study of "Home Science". At that time, the teaching of Home Science at the University level was controversial. Before 1942, the curriculum in QMC was the same as in the men's colleges. It was believed that this should continue, but that in addition young Indian women should be given the opportunity of studying subjects that had a direct bearing on their lives, their families and the people around them. To ensure that this new program would be successful, great care was taken to select the best professors and the top students. Rajam, of course was selected because she was an outstanding student in the first two years with good leadership qualities. Initially, there were nine students in this Home Science class, six in QMC and three in WCC; the QMC students were Rajam, C.S. Ratnam, Patricia Hotchkiss, Chandra and myself (one dropped out early in the first year). The WCC students came to QMC for Physics and Chemistry and we went to WCC for Nutrition. We had Miss Ammani again for more Physics. We studied Physiology with Miss Kausalya and Miss Joshua. Another instructor was Dr. Viswanathan who was a Professor in the Madras Medical College and who taught us Hygiene and Public Health. He was a superb lecturer and very modern in his approach. We went on field trips with him to the Madras water filtration plants, a soft drink facility and, one of the most memorable, to the small pox ward in the Isolation Hospital. We were a little apprehensive, but Dr. Viswanathan assured us that once we had all been immunized against small pox we were quite safe. We put on the white coats and masks and followed Dr. Viswanathan into the small pox ward - a large room filled with small pox patients - where he explained the essentials of the disease. Later he took us out into the garden, and when we were out of earshot of the hospital staff and patients, he described the organizational structure, source of funding and salary scales of the faculty. It was clear to all of us that the funding was woefully inadequate. Nutrition was taught by Eleanor Mason Ph.D (Radcliffe / Harvard) in

WCC. She was a gifted research worker. We fed rats diets representative of the peoples of India. For example, one group of rats were given a “poor rice diet”, deficient in many essential elements while another group was fed a “whole wheat diet”, nutritionally adequate diet. Again we had a visible example of the effect of diet on body size and shape. We also had an excellent course in Rural Economics given by Mrs. Cleatus. We learnt about the problems of the farmers in India; small farms, perennial indebtedness and lack of a good banking system. She had mastered the difficult task of presenting complicated facts in a systematic and lucid manner. She also discussed the causes of the Bengal Famine that was raging at that time (1944). Within this past year the Nobel Prize in Economics was given to an Indian for his work on poverty in which the Bengal Famine was cited. In his opinion it was “man-made”. I was delighted to know that the causes of poverty are now getting international attention and even more pleased to realize that our Economics Professor was more than 50 years ahead of her time. We had been well taught. In conclusion Rajam, C.S. Ratnam and I were very fortunate to have received a superb education. Our Professors were really enthusiastic about their subjects and interested in teaching us. Out of that first class only three of us are left as both Patricia Hotchkiss and Chandra have died.

The location of QMC - facing the ocean was lovely. At night we slept on the open verandah on the second floor. No matter how hot it was, the cool sea breezes made us comfortable. The college was very well run and we had a strong student government. Even in her early years Rajam showed qualities of leadership and in our fourth and final years she was elected President of the student government. Rajam often spoke of her baby son, Mohan whom she missed very much. She had left him in the care of her mother while she was studying in Madras. Since there were only 5 of

us in that first Home Science class we got to know each other very well. Both Rajam and CS Ratnam have visited me in the USA and I have visited Patricia Hotchkiss in England many times until she died in 1990.

After we got our Home Science degree from QMC our lives took different turns. The next time I met Rajam was when we travelled together by train in 1947 from Madras to New Delhi to be interviewed for an overseas scholarship. Rajam was a most solicitous travelling companion. She arranged for sleeping accommodation in the Women's Dormitory in the University in New Delhi. On our way back, we stopped over in Agra for a few hours and visited the Taj Mahal. We practically had the Taj to ourselves, as there were only two other tourists. Shortly afterwards Rajam left for the USA to study for the Ph.D. degree at the Ohio State University of Columbus, in Ohio. I left India two years later. I have followed Rajam's brilliant career with interest. She has visited me in the USA and presented her work and that of her colleagues to an American audience. On occasions I have been one of the external examiners of Ph.D. theses of students in her university. The theses from her university are the equal or better than anywhere else. The research studies are well designed and analyzed statistically and all raw data is presented in the appendix.

As a student in QMC Rajam often told me that the problems of India must have Indian solutions and be solved by Indians. She had the amazing foresight to see this at a very young age and she has acted on this philosophy her whole life. She has made a tremendous contribution to her country. I am greatly honoured that I had the privilege of studying with her in QMC and getting to know her and to claim her as one of my life long friends. May she continue to have every success. ●

# MY CLASSMATE RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS

C.S. RATHNAM

I am restricting the brief account to our student days in Queen Mary's College, Madras, as the first batch of B.Sc., Home Science students in 1942 - 1944.

Those were the war years - the second world war was raging in all fronts. In Madras city, black outs and troop movements were an everyday occurrence. Things that are taken for granted today, like food, transport and electricity were not available. Rice and cloth were rationed.

It was at such a time, the new B.Sc. Degree course in Home Science was started in Queen Mary's College, Madras in 1942. All credit should go to Miss K. Myers, Principal of Q.M.C. for starting such a practical course, collaborating with the Women's Christian College, with the sanction of the State Government and the Madras University. In all India, this was the first B.Sc. Degree course in Home Science. Other Universities were to follow this at a later date.

The first batch of students in 1942 - 1944.

## At QMC

1. Rajammal P. Devadas
2. C.S. Rathnam
3. Chandravadhana
4. Moira Breen
5. Patricia Hotchkiss

## At WCC

1. Stella Doraisamy (now Soundararaj)
2. Saraswathi Doraiswamy
3. Esther John

There were 5 students in QMC and 3 in W.C.C. who completed their degree in 1944.

The subjects taught were Nutrition, Physiology, Hygiene and Bacteriology, Applied Physical Sciences (Chemistry and Physics) and Economics. All subjects excepting Economics had practical work. Combined classes were held for Nutrition in W.C.C. by Prof. Dr. Eleanor D. Mason, while combined classes for Applied Physical Science and Hygiene were held in Q.M.C. Dr. K. Viswanathan from Madras Medical College Hospital helped with the Hygiene class. Other subjects were handled independently by each college. Since the course was very heavily laboratory oriented, the students were together most of the time and got to know each other well.

There were no text books as such. We had to depend only on the teachings done in the class which were very good and also the reference books, which we had to share. In Nutrition, we were exposed to Research Journals to understand the scientific ways of collecting data.

Though we the students were deeply involved in work, it was not all work and no play. We certainly took part in games. Rajammal enjoyed playing tennis and I went to the net ball court to shoot.

Another important event that took place when we were in first B.Sc., was the freedom struggle gathering momentum with Quit India Movement. National leaders were arrested. This brought about student agitation. We the students, Rajam and I included, showed our support to the freedom struggle in our own ways, staying within the bounds of the college campus. Our Principal, Miss Myers was quite tactful in tackling the situation, giving freedom to the students within the college campus.

The Social Service League of Q.M.C. was running an elementary school for the nearby slum children. The students of the college contributed funds for providing school lunch to those children. We, the Home Science students helped in making the lunch more nutritious without increasing the cost. We also helped the college doctor

in the health check up and maintenance of health charts. This gave us ample opportunity to assess the state of health and nutrition of these children. The students also volunteered to stitch a set of uniform for these children during Pongal holidays.

Rajammal is a versatile, talented and capable individual, who can work with the same alertness even without sleep. I used to call her 'atom-powered' Rajam. With her winning ways, Rajam was elected as the Student Leader, the Senior Student during 1943 - 44. The Senior Student was the Chairman of the Students Union. Rajam always wore Khadi. She made it a point to spin the Khadi yarn in her hand chakra everyday, as Gandhiji himself did. This was almost a ritual with her.

Credit must be given to Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar, the former Education Minister of Madras State, for identifying the talented individual early enough and giving her the responsibility with adequate support to bring out the best in her. This has benefited the community at large immensely. The support and encouragement had enabled Rajammal build up the monumental institution of Sri Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University in Coimbatore, catering to all types of education from the Pre-school to the Post-Doctoral research - education (both Formal and Non-formal) and Extension work in the urban and rural areas.

Rajammal's dedicated work at all levels has earned her several awards both national and international. But she deserves the highest award, considering the quality of work, she has done for the upliftment of women and children for the past five decades, almost starting form scratch.

It would be appropriate to quote from the Thesis entitled, "Contribution to Economic Development by the Educated Working Women of Tamil Nadu" submitted

to the University of Madras for the Ph.D. Degree by Dr. Kothai Susheila Rhenius, the following statements.

“Work experience and the mature thinking that goes with it, specially when combined with the innate talents of the individual and the right attitudes, can go a long way to foster a capacity for developmental work in diverse areas of productive activity. This fact is too well demonstrated by the career of another prominent working woman of Tamil Nadu, Mrs. Rajammal Devadas, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D. (Ohio State), D.Sc. (Madras). This versatile genius is no intellectual living in an ivory tower. On the contrary, during a chequered career stretching over nearly four decades, she has worked for the development of not just her own state or even country, but for the benefit of the rest of the world too. Her contributions to development cover diverse fields, including Nutrition, Health, Child Development, Dietetics, Nursing, Pre-school Education, Social Welfare, Home and Rural Industries, Legal Aid and Integrated Rural Development”. When asked to specify the factors responsible for her unique career, her reply was :

***“Faith in God, faith in people, steadfast will, strong sense of commitment and involvement, ceaseless effort, depth in scholarship, relevant research, service to the poor and good rapport with all concerned, have contributed to the success and fulfillment I have attained”.***

*(P. 77 - 78)*

Dr. Devadas secured first class in B.Sc. (Home Science), Madras, in M.Sc. (Foods and Nutrition) Ohio State University in M.A. (Home Science Extension) Ohio State and Ph.D. (Nutrition and Biochemistry) Ohio State.

She received five Awards for Academic Merit including Gold Medals, Government of India Overseas Merit Scholarship for Higher studies in U.S.A., Prize

for First Rank in B.Sc. and the American Home Economics Association International Scholarship for doctoral work. She was given special recognition at least six times, election as Vice President of World Food Conference, Holland, award for Original Research in Human Nutrition by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research etc.; she has held several positions including Professor, Principal and Director of Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, Assistant Director General (Nutrition) Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation, New Delhi, Chief Home Economist and Joint Director (Home Science), Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Govt. of India, Director and Professor of Home Science, College of Nursing, Govt. of India, New Delhi, Office bearer or member in 38 committees and Associations; published at least 29 books in English / Tamil, 200 research papers in India/abroad, also 200 popular articles in India / abroad. Her "National contributions" include being Member, Nutrition Expert group of the Indian Council of Medical Research, Member - Task Force on Health, Advisor for Nutrition Projects of the National Council for Education, Research and Training. Her "International Experiences and Contributions" between 1947 and 1978 number 33, taking her right across the world. NB : The latest 'contribution' made by Dr. Devadas is of special relevance to this thesis - she is member of expert committee whose recommendations for the establishment of a Women's University in Tamil Nadu has been accepted by the Central and State Govts. The University will concentrate on research connected with women, including discrimination. (The Hindu, 28.9.82).

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# **PERSONAL MEMORIES OF DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS ON THE OCCASION OF HER 80TH BIRTHDAY**

JESSIE FISCHER MOINUDDIN

I first met Dr. Devadas in the 1940's, before either she or I could put the title of “Dr” before our names, or the degree designation of Ph.D. after them. We were then graduate students at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA. We both had lodgings on campus in the graduate corridor of an otherwise undergraduate dormitory, Baker Hall.

If memory serves, “Raj” Devadas was in the first contingent of Indian women graduate students to arrive on our campus. (It is a peculiarity of Americans to assign nicknames or short names to almost everyone, so Rajammal had very quickly been given the appellation of “Raj”). I recall that her saris were of particular interest and wonderment to us American women. When Raj asked me for a game of tennis on the University courts, I did not really believe that she really could play tennis in one of those, but play she did, despite my initial skepticism!

Although we were both students of nutrition, we were in different departments of the University. However, the time came when Raj needed to do some rat feeding experiments. My department had a rat breeding colony and facilities for feeding experiments, whereas her department did not. Therefore, it was arranged that she would do that part of her research in our rat room and laboratory.

Then it was that I saw her for the first time in a scientific work situation. Both of us were serious and hard-working students ; still, there is a certain camaraderie

and innocent joking that develops among the “grad” students in the same laboratory, which helps to lighten the long days of work. So it was in our “lab”.

Once, I recall, when Raj had, for about the tenth time, asked me to hand down from a shelf a bottle of a certain reagent, a bottle that she was too short to reach for herself, I found a sturdy box or stool, pushed it over to her, and said, “Here, try getting it down yourself!” I tried to be very stern, pretending that her asking was a terrible imposition on my time, but it was of no use. She laughed and then we all had to laugh. And we went on with our work in joy and companionship.

In time, we received our advanced degrees. Dr. Devadas returned to India and I spent two years in post-doctoral work, then returned as an employee of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station to The Ohio State campus, where I established my own laboratory. In 1954, while I was touring about India, I visited Dr. Devadas, who was then at Baroda. She recalled the incident of the unreachable (for her) reagent bottle, and we laughed together once again. A few years later, Dr. Devadas was back in the States on a tight schedule, but she graciously made the time to drop in at my laboratory for a chat. I believe that was the last time we met in person. Since then, both of us have moved on to different institutions and different positions, and I have retired from academic life.

It all seems so long ago “it was long ago” when we two young graduate students met at Baker Hall in Columbus, Ohio, USA. We might now be considered to be two rather old women, though who knows what is old in the present times? Certainly not Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, still going strong at eighty!

I, your old friend and fellow student, salute you, Raj. Many happy returns.

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## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - MY THOUGHTS**

**BERTHA MAE HARTLE ROSE**

**M**y introduction to Rajammal was in Baker Hall dormitory for women. I'm certain it was the first year that she attended The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA. I believe it was the fall of 1947. She will know.

Rajammal was a quiet, dark-haired attractive young woman with a delightful accent that took a bit of time and careful listening to understand at first. She did not hesitate to converse about her country and her purpose at Ohio State. I marvelled that she had such dedication to Home Economics Education and Nutrition and to serving her country. I couldn't imagine someone leaving her home, husband and small child for several years.

Rajammal was assigned to a room in my corridor at Baker. If that had not been the case I probably would not have known her well. As the student assistant it was my job to counsel and advise students. Although I don't recall specifics, I remember that Rajammal spent most of her time in Campbell Hall's nutrition laboratories. I always felt that I helped introduce Rajammal to the United States. We became well acquainted in the process.

I did not live in the dormitory the next (my senior) year, but as we were both in the School of Home Economics (now the College of Human Ecology) our paths crossed often. When Rajammal was initiated into Omicron Nu honorary I was privileged to be its president. I have a large photograph showing members at that time.

One time, Rajammal mentioned to me that she could not buy the short tops such as she wore with her sari. My mother and I both made many of our own clothes so I volunteered my mother to make several tops for her. She came to our farm home to visit once, so that we could get the close-fitted sleeves just right. Sleeves in our clothes then, had fullness at the top.

While at our home she spoke to the women's group at our church. They were quite interested in hearing her tell about the primitive living conditions in most homes in India at that time. She told about the lack of electricity, running water, the simplest forms of household equipment and the extreme poverty in the late 1940's.

After Rajammal finished her doctorate and returned to India we corresponded and occasionally exchanged small gifts. It was difficult sending and receiving parcels as they were sometimes intercepted. The only thing that always came through was printed material as those handling the mail often could not read, so were not interested in written material. This was in India. Once in the United States I was sure of receiving it. I treasure those mementos from far away India.

We continued to correspond, and I have a pair of small brass vases Rajammal sent for my wedding. I always looked forward to receiving her annual Christmas letters telling of her world travels to make presentations, her continuing research in the field of nutrition and other interests. She was especially proud of the progress of the Home Science Institute.

I was fortunate enough to meet Rajammal in Columbus twice since my graduation from Ohio State. We talked by phone once. She always had so many new and exciting things to tell about and we shared news about our families.

My last visit with her was in 1994 when she received an honorary degree at Ohio State's fall commencement. While there she gave an enlightening and most interesting slide presentation on the program and activities at the Avinashilingam Institute.

I have always been amazed by the accomplishments of this tiny, but most ambitious woman who always had time to remember me and my family.

My Mother, 93, who resides in a nursing home still remembers Rajammal. While Mother lived in the State of Georgia in the 1960's she met a young girl from India who was attending a university in Tennessee. My Mother told the girl that her daughter had gone to Ohio state with a woman from India. When she told her the woman's name was Rajammal Devadas the girl replied, "She is my sister". My Mother was quite surprised. It really is a small world.

It has always been a wish of mine that my husband and I might visit Rajammal some day. I don't know that it ever will come about, but it has been my privilege and pleasure to have Rajammal as a dear and cherished friend. I consider myself most fortunate that we have been able to continue our friendship for fifty one years. Her tremendous talent and abilities have certainly made an impact in the world. We wish her a happy and memorable 80th birthday. ●

**FRIENDS FROM  
ABROAD**

# **IMPRESSIONS ABOUT A GREAT LEADER DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**GEORGE H. AXINN**

**M**y first meeting with Dr. Devadas was the type of memorable occasion which stayed with me for the rest of my life and significantly influenced it.

We met in Coimbatore, on a bright morning in 1973. I was on a few months assignment with a team from the British Inter-University Council seeking potential investment opportunities for the World Bank in Tamil Nadu. None of us had ever met Dr. Devadas before, when we were led into a classroom where she was busy doing some writing. She greeted us cordially, and asked us to sit near the front of the room.

On the chalk board were the words,

*“A lamp cannot light another lamp unless it, itself, is also lit.  
A teacher cannot truly teach unless he himself is also learning”.*

*Rabindranath Tagore*

I had heard of Tagore before, but had never seen that couplet. It fit so well my own beliefs of what a teacher ought to be that I couldn't resist opening a discussion with Dr. Devadas on the subject. Her insights added to the illumination and were the root of many further stimulating discussions with her over the years since then. And when I returned to my home university in the USA, I sought out several books by or about Rabindranath Tagore and those have also influenced the rest of my life.

But that was only the first of many lessons I learned from Rajammal Devadas. I had been working some in both Africa and Asia on the problems of hunger and

malnutrition. Dr. Devadas was an outstanding nutritionist. My actual involvement had been much more on the public policy side of food security, dealing with the economic, political and social causes of famine and hungry children. But with my smattering knowledge of human nutrition I had been concerned with proteins and carbohydrates, as well as minerals and vitamins. That made analysis of human hunger complex and difficult to explain to policy makers.

Dr. Devadas understood all of that much better than I ever will, but she also understood that children who have enough calories in their bellies are not likely to have the other nutritional diseases usually found among the starving – Kwashiorkor and Marasmus. And the root cause of hunger is poverty. Even in places having a famine, the children of wealthy families are not the hungry ones.

Dr. Devadas gave me one of her books during that first visit. It is entitled “Nutrition in Tamil Nadu” and was published in 1972 by Sangam Publishers, Madras, for the Madras Institute of Development Studies. Her handwritten inscription to me is dated 21 May 1973. Among her words of wisdom in that volume are the following :

*“Human nutrition is not simply availability and intake of food. Good nutrition and malnutrition are the end results of many interacting factors operating simultaneously and concurrently on the individual in the physical, ecological and cultural environment of the community. The amount of various foods and nutrients reaching the different segments of the population depend on food production, availability, logistics of distribution, cultural and economic systems, educational levels and food habits of people. All these factors contribute towards the total health status. Nutrition is thus closely related to several aspects of human life” (Page 1).*

Few nutritionists anywhere in the world have understood and expressed the issues this well!

In my own later professional work on food security, as a representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Nepal and later in India and Bhutan, those words had a profound influence on my strategies. I became convinced that there were three essentials in food security : (1) the *production of food* (if the farming people do not produce it, everyone will be hungry); (2) the *marketing of food* (this includes transportation, storage, processing, wholesaling, retailing, etc.), and (3) the *entitlement to food* (ways that people become entitled to have food, like money to buy it, or food stamps, or food-for-work programs, or ration shops, etc.).

Those who have applied science to agriculture around this globe have done fairly well on the first two of those three. *Production* and productivity can be increased, as farmers in India have demonstrated dramatically in the last five decades. And *marketing* efficiencies have also increased, as India's National Dairy Development Board has demonstrated to the world. But *entitlement*, as Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen has so well described, has not improved. Millions of people in today's world are hungry because they do not have the *entitlement* to the available food. And sadly, around two hundred million of those hungry people are here in India today.

Dr. Devadas put her finger on this most critical aspect of human nutrition when she listed four major causes of malnutrition in Tamil Nadu in 1972. The first item on her list was “Low income and consequent low purchasing power”.

Her insights into human nutrition and her bold identification of the complexity and seriousness of the problem, has provided guidance to scholars and practitioners,

like myself, on every continent. The problems are not going away. They are actually getting worse. But the world is better off today than it would have been without the research, the creative thinking, and the written words of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas!

On another, different but related front, she has also been a leader, a fighter, and a successful administrator, in the serious matter of gender issues. It is not by chance that the name of the institution where she is Chancellor is the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University. Early in her illustrious career, Dr. Devadas recognized the global need for more education for women. She has been a leader in the struggle for the empowerment of women. This struggle has been going on for generations. It had its beginnings long before she was born. And like malnutrition, it is found throughout the globe. But gradually, perhaps too slowly, the world is changing.

But different from some activists who organize demonstrations and carry banners, Dr. Devadas has gotten to the root of the problem, and has worked quietly and patiently for years. The fact that so many women have passed through this Institute over the years and have moved into positions of greater influence and responsibility is testimony to her achievements.

The world needs more women like Rajammal P. Devadas! I am proud, personally and professionally to have been greatly influenced by her. And I am delighted to join others in wishing her all the best on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her positive impact on the status of women and the problems of malnutrition in children will continue for much more than another 80 years. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS : TRIBUTE TO A SPECIAL LADY**

**GUY B. BAIRD**

**M**y wife, Betty, and I met Dr. Devadas (From this point I will take the liberty of referring to her as “Rajammal”, since we became such close friends) a few weeks after we arrived in India in late 1959. I was the Assistant Field Director of the Rockefeller Foundation's cooperative agricultural research program in the country. Dr. Ralph W. Cummings was the Director. This program provided for collaboration with the Government of India (through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the State Agricultural Universities). We participated with our counterpart Indian scientists in development of technology needed to increase production of the basic food crops.

We also assisted in the establishment of a Post-Graduate School as an integral part of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. This PG School, like the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, became a “Deemed University”.

But our contact with Rajammal in late 1959 had an important precedent : Betty (nee Betty Brooks) had met her when both were at Ohio State University. Rajammal was working towards her Ph.D. I believe Betty had gotten her degree in Home Economics, and was on the staff of the OSU Agricultural Extension Service. They must have become good friends, because when we knew that we were going to India, Betty made it a point of contacting Rajammal.

It was my good fortune to be able to meet Rajammal early on during our twelve-year stay in her country. She became a close personal and family friend, and a scientist and administrator admired by all of us. It is an honor to be invited to contribute to her biography, and a pleasure to recall and record these reminiscences.

Before commenting on her professional achievements, I would like to mention a few things of a more personal and family nature. One of them was the trips Betty made with her in India. What better way for Betty to experience Indian life and culture? The fact that both had the same professional focus (home science) added to the significance of their travel together.

Another matter of importance to Betty and me was that of getting to know, through Rajammal, Mr. Avinashilingam Chettiar as a friend and great benefactor. At least three events stick in my mind. Once when we were visiting the then “Home Science College”, Mr. Avinashilingam and Rajammal arranged a typical South India breakfast, served under the trees on the campus. A very special occasion.

On another occasion Mr. Avinashilingam, during one of his visits to Delhi, joined us at home, either for tea or a meal. It was a special time for all of our family to have him to ourselves. He was very gracious, and the children found him to be an interesting conversationalist.

During one Christmas season we and our friends, Bob and Nell Worrall and their children, decided to try to arrange a trip to South India. Naturally we contacted Rajammal, asking if she might be willing to assist us. We never anticipated what she would do. Not only were we hosted at the College, but she and Mr. Avinashilingam fixed up a rail trip for us from Coimbatore to Kerala. As I recall, one of

Mr. Avinashilingam's relatives, or close friend, was an important railway official there. The result was that we and the Worralls had a memorable overnight trip on a coach only for us! The trip evokes so many pleasant memories, and reminds us of the kindness and consideration of Rajammal and Mr. Avinashilingam.

In retrospect, I can now see much better how effectively Rajammal and Mr. Avinashilingam worked together to realize her dream of a local institution that could educate and improve the future of young women, and his vision of a better life for everyone in the region. They had the same general goal with similar objectives, and a mutual recognition that much was to be gained by working together, each contributing his or her relative strengths. They made a great team, and the country has ample reason to be thankful.

I had the opportunity to watch the Home Science College grow in size, breadth and recognition. Both within India and abroad Rajammal had the ability to project herself to a wide audience on the importance and future of the institution. She involved professionals from all over the world in the furtherance of her mission. We in the Rockefeller Foundation were privileged to be among them, however modest our contribution. We recognised the importance of her work, and her ability to provide effective leadership.

After twelve years in India, we returned to the USA in late 1971. We kept in touch with Rajammal through her periodic visits to the Washington area where we were living, and through correspondence. Clearly her efforts to promote the development of the Institute continued unabated.

I was privileged to have the opportunity to return to India on a three-year assignment in the latter part of 1985. However, this time Betty was not with me. She had succumbed to cancer in 1981. Meanwhile, in 1983 I had the good fortune of meeting Ingrid Edick who was to become my wife. Thus she was able to share my stay in India, and to get to know Rajammal. She visited us in Delhi, and we saw her in Washington. Now we both reminisce and talk about her frequently.

Rajammal has received well-deserved local, national and international recognition for her long and fruitful work. On this occasion, celebrating her 80th birthday, I am happy to join her many friends in saying ; a job well done ; may your years ahead be happy in the knowledge that you have fully utilized your time and talents for the betterment of mankind. You have played a key role in the establishment of an institution that will continue your aims and objectives. Those who you have so effectively trained will see that it is realized. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - PROMOTER OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES**

**PETER de BEUZEVILLE**

I first met Dr. Devadas in 1984 at a very stimulating conference in Brisbane, Australia. At that conference entitled “Third International Symposium on World Trends in Science and Technology Education” Dr. Devadas presented a joint paper entitled “Facilitating Women's Work through Science and Technology Education in Rural India”. In her paper she outlined rural women's participation in agricultural activities and domestic work. The conference participants were then told about some of the very effective work of the Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College in developing educational programs for rural women focussing on nutrition and health.

I have vivid memories of Dr. Devadas's slides of smoky kitchens with soot covered walls and in contrast, comfortable cooking areas with very well designed but cheaply produced fuel efficient stoves. I was impressed with the college's educational programs and technologies and their close meshing to the women's lifestyle and needs.

Previous to the conference I had developed a strong interest in technologies that were appropriate to users. I was, and still am, a member of Apace, a Sydney based group dedicated to fostering appropriate technological solutions to human needs within environmental constraints.

The year before I had helped organise the E.F. Schumacher Memorial Conference at Macquarie University. At this conference there were a wide variety of presentations and displays on applications of appropriate technology for both industrialised and traditional social contexts, including fuel efficient stoves developed by one of the Apace members.

One of the major interests of Apace has been the development and installation of micro-hydroelectric power systems in the islands of the southwest Pacific Ocean. Over the years Apace has been able to channel considerable Australian Government aid through its management expertise developed in association with Pacific Islanders trained by Apace with the assistance of the University of Technology, Sydney.

I came to the Brisbane conference with these interests and concerns and very much enjoyed pursuing these with Dr. Devadas. Over the last thirteen years my wife and I have enjoyed meeting with Dr. Devadas when she visits her family in Sydney. We very much appreciate keeping in touch with “Amma” as she became known to some of us at the Conference. ●

## **A TRIBUTE FROM SOLAR COOKERS INTERNATIONAL, SACRAMENTO**

**BEVERLY L. BLUM**

**O**n the occasion of the celebration of Chancellor Devadas's eightieth birthday, we wish to give our heartfelt tribute to a sainted woman who has devoted her considerable energies to building and improving strong educational opportunities for many thousands.

Many of us at Solar Cookers International (SCI) have had the privilege and pleasure to know Chancellor Dr. Rajammal Devadas for six years.

For several years prior to that SCI corresponded with Avinashilingam Institute regarding its pioneer research, under the direction of Dr. Devadas, on nutritional and social aspects of solar cooking.

She is deeply revered by countless people including us. It was a particular honour and joy to work with Chancellor Devadas and her superb staff for the Third International Conference on Solar Cooker Use and Technology hosted by Avinashilingam University. They provided most gracious hospitality for 120 delegates and 42 foreign guests from 19 other countries, after which they produced an excellent 400 page Conference Proceedings.

Chancellor Devadas's leadership has blessed many fortunate educational causes. To help spread solar cooking to all parts of the world that can benefit, Chancellor

Devadas has served as an Honorary Advisor to Solar Cookers International, also on the steering committee for an International Solar Cooking Network, and has helped lay the foundation for an Asian Region Network, headquartered in India, the world's premier pioneers in solar cooking promotion.

We wish to add our thanks to Chancellor Devadas for all she has done to make this a better world, and our heartiest best wishes for many more years of health and energy to pursue her many visionary dreams. ●

# **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A GLOBE TROTTERING INTELLECTUAL**

**SUNDAR CLARKE**

**I**t gives me great pleasure and I consider it a privilege to write about Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. In this article, I shall be referring to her as Acca because she has meant that, and more to me and our family.

## **Family Background**

There will be many from her family writing about her from the family perspective, but she was my Periappa and Periamma's daughter and so I shall reflect on her life from this angle. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she comes from one of the most distinguished Christian families in South India. From her childhood until now, she was a model of brilliance. She hails from the illustrious Packianathan family. This family have their abode in the Brindavan Gardens of Tirupathur in North Arcot District. Their sheltered home with fields, orchards and greenery is rather symbolic of their family. Their 'Thotam' offers shade, shelter and a culture unique to South India. They neighbour the Christu Kula Ashram which breezes spirituality into their home and into their family.

## **Parentage**

Acca had a typical Indian Christian parentage. Though from a rural background, she grew up in a city environment. While in Madras, she was our neighbour, and I know

that her neighbourliness is that of a Good Samaritan. As little boy, she expressed compassion which is love till it hurts to love and concern about our physical and intellectual growth. She lived with her father's brother, Mr. C.P. Micheal who married my mother's elder sister. This had strong physical bonds for she and her sisters came to Zion Church. And as a little boy, I used to run across their home which was right opposite to Zion Church. Those frequent crossing in less dangerous road conditions were a delight and Acca and her sisters always welcomed me and my sister, Mano with gleeful smiles and cheering words. Brilliance was written in the family, and so she and her sisters were educational props in my childhood.

It was rather unfortunate that Acca's father died fairly young in an accident. However, Acca's mother had a glorious innings of hundred and four. She was a chronological centurion in her age and a lady of love and charisma. The loss of her father did not deter Acca or the rest of the family from excelling in their educational careers. It is rare to find that their schooling in Northwick, Royapuram Madras has had an unbeatable record among the four sisters. They were all gold medalists. Her four brothers were also outstanding students, intelligent, industrious and brilliant. Intellectual brilliance should have been a strong genetical factor in the family. Two of her brothers were my "Thambi's" and two my 'Anna's'. The senior brothers excelled in agriculture and accountancy. The junior brothers, one of whom was in college with me (Chelladurai), had a good sport man's build and got in as a Professor of Sports Management in USA. Gnanadurai, affectionately called Babu, came out with great distinction as a person with great social concerns. He worked for the blind and was administrator par excellence. The sister younger than Acca married the outstanding

Chief Secretary and she herself was no lesser intellectual giant. We have not met Kamala for years, but we hear that she is a greatly skilled Professor in Florida. Her younger sister, Chandra has been an outstanding doctor full of compassion and concern for the weaker section of society. So, the entire family has made a mark in various dimensions of life and a stamp that will always be recognised for intellectual brilliance and humanitarian service. In a sense, Acca and her family were unique. I am proud to be a close relation of Acca.

### **Acca's Home**

Acca married a very close relation of hers and her husband was a Police Officer of eminence. She proved the Indian tradition in marrying a very close relation. Their life was one, but their interests had considerable variations. Annan as a Police officer had constant transfers and Acca's interest were in education in the specific field of nutrition. They were blessed with a lovely son called Mohan, who studied in Madras with high political influences. He was a good friend of the late Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai, M.G. Ramachandran and presently, a good friend of M. Karunanithi. All these Chief ministers and many other ministers greatly admired Acca's leadership. Mohan then went to America for higher studies in Medicine and is currently our wonderful neighbour in Sydney. We have great admiration for Mohan and his work, his wife Mary, and his three children. Mohan has imbibed many of the virtues of his mother and overflows with love, kindness and generosity. Any little appeal from the church is readily met by Mohan and Mary. Mohan was deeply attached to Acca's Mother (his grandmother) and to the other members of the family.

## **Acca in the Academic Field**

I am a church worker and I will be treading on dangerous ground if I started enumerating Acca's academic distinctions. We used to often hear of her contribution to nutrition science from my sisters-in-law, Dr. Florence Theophilus and Dr. Jubilee Prathapkumar. I would call her, not in a light sense but in all seriousness, a globe trotting intellectual. She was always in demand to present papers in the field of nutrition all over the world. I am sure there will be others to comment on her contributions as an administrator`.

I cannot gloss over the fact that she was intellectually brilliant and spiritually strong. She built up the Avinashilingam College and University with moral fiber and Christian commitment. Her base in Coimbatore was a source of strength to the Moderator, William Moses and the Church. She offered much to the Church and was a disciplined leader.

In conclusion, I would like to add my loving personal greetings to Acca on her eightieth birthday. She is eighty in age but sixty in looks and still flies around the world. As her nephew and as a Christian I believe that she draws her strength from Jesus Christ. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A LIFE DEDICATED TO THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE**

**EVA DABASY**

**M**y first meeting with Chancellor Amma Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was at the Nutrition, Pharmacology and Toxicology Symposium held in Melbourne in 1988. I remember very clearly sitting next to her throughout the morning session and sharing thoughts on the papers presented. Amma was to present a paper '*Food culture and therapies among selected Nilgiri tribes*' which was jointly researched with Dr. Usha Chandrasekhar. The paper generated much interest in tribal diets in general and pointed to the need for future work to establish dietary practices of Nilgiri tribals.

I was to find out a few years later, that this paper was presented under an immense burden, as her husband had died only 10 days prior.

From then on Amma and I exchanged Christmas greetings.

The substantial part of my role in post secondary education has been in the nutrition and food science education of manpower relevant to the hospitality and food processing industries as Head, Food Science Department, at William Angliss Institute. Since then I have been active in the management of curriculum design projects such as those offering graduates dual awards of Advanced Diplomas nested in degrees in both tourism and hospitality at the Institute.

Amma came to Melbourne through her interest in introducing degrees in tourism and hospitality to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher

Education for Women-Deemed University. I was collaborating on joint projects with RMIT University at that time.

The period was indeed a very exciting time, as new possibilities were being developed for the education of staff capable of taking up positions in newly expanding industry in India. Amma was very quickly able to ascertain the relevance of such an industry need to the degrees offered by Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Deemed University. Course development, and later, implementation proceeded with great enthusiasm.

On her visits to Melbourne, Amma would stay with us. This was indeed a very great pleasure. Amma was a wonderful guest. Her sense of humour intermixed with great seriousness was a regular surprise!

We spent many days together, and in doing so it became evident to me that in spirit, Amma was never far away from her vocation. Her mission was obviously on her mind through her humour, and was intrinsic in the seriousness of her temperament. Thoughts about how her various meetings will produce the optimum outcomes for her cherished university and the wider impact for India were always consciously with her.

Amma's spirituality is integrated into her daily life. At night in Melbourne, for example, she would retreat to read the Bible and to pray. By the next morning, no matter how demanding her previous day had been, she would present for breakfast as fresh as a teenager! She testified that the outcomes of the events of these days could only occur due to a far greater force, as she could not possibly have accomplished such things alone.

Chancellor Amma Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is deeply committed to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University and to health and wellbeing of rural communities in India. This was evidenced by the fact that she had not yet fully recovered from an indeed very sensitive eye operation to establish contacts in Melbourne to further the possibility of the establishment of hospitality and tourism courses in Coimbatore. The task involved the stress of being in a new environment, meeting new people and living in new surroundings and giving media interviews...all of which are much easier to do without post surgery stress (and being over 75 years old)!

Life for Amma is dedication to the welfare of the people she serves, both in Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University and the community. The fruits of her labour are indeed great!

May our beloved Amma Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas continue to be an inspiration to those around her for many years to come. ●

## **A TRIBUTE TO DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**FRANCILLE M. FIREBAUGH**

**I**t is both an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, a leader in Home Science, and accomplished researcher, and a longstanding associate. Dr. Devadas has devoted her life to improving the human condition through education. My first contact with Dr. Devadas was through the Ohio State University. She completed her degree there before I arrived, and I found she had left her mark on the program. A nutrition scholar of international reknown, Dr. Devadas received a scholarship from the Government of India to study at Ohio State where she became the first Indian citizen to receive a doctorate in nutrition and home science (The Ohio State University 330<sup>th</sup> Commencement, December 1994). Only recently has she been further recognised by the Ohio State University as an honorary doctorate recipient in 1994. The sheer magnitude of Dr. Devadas's achievements reveal her incredible energy, her determination, and the driving force she has been in Home Science and particularly in areas related to nutritional sciences. Her efforts have included sustained conduct, encouragement, and recognition of research in nutritional sciences, nutrition education, and the development of Home Science in India. To this end, she was the force behind the establishment, growth, and development of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University. She has published countless papers in support of her research, and is respected as one of the leaders in her field. I would like to highlight a few key areas in which Dr. Devadas has contributed so much, where she personifies the idea that one person truly can make a difference.

## **Establishment of Sri Avinashilingam Institute**

In order to establish Home Science as a curriculum and tool for outreach, it was necessary to found an institution for study and outreach programming. To this end, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) was founded under the leadership and guidance of Dr. Devadas.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas gained inspiration for her mission from the leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi and the First Minister of Education, Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam. She recognized a need to develop a college where Home Science could be offered as a field of study. She convinced Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam, Minister for Education in Independent India, native son of Coimbatore, and former freedom fighter under Gandhi, to fund the establishment of such an institution-one that would make a difference in the lives of the people of India. Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) was founded in 1957 as Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women. Under the leadership of Devadas, the college developed rapidly into the largest in the country for Home Science Education, housing undergraduate, Masters of Philosophy, Masters of Science, Masters of Arts and Ph.D. programs. The educational complex also offered programs from kindergarten to Ph.D., serving the local and global community both as an educational institution and a laboratory for educational innovations.

Several outreach programs are unique to the college and have allowed successful integration of the instruction and research results into communities and industries in India. Cooperation and collaboration with institutions worldwide have

enabled the college to become recognized not only nationally, but also internationally as an active force working towards the improvement of the human condition.

## **Home Science**

Devadas was concerned with the changing roles of women and their potential as leaders in society. “Higher education should ultimately lead to those social, economic and political changes that are indispensable to an improvement in the position of women in society and the world” (*Report of the Commission on Higher Education for Women, 1979, xii*).

Home Science is based on the fundamental principle of “the creation and cultivation of values, in the people, in the home and in the community, among the masses in all aspects of human life” (*Management of Development Programmes for Women and Children, 1988, 5:1*). Again, it was this recognition of a need to raise the quality of life and the standard of living of the people of India that led Devadas to action.

Home Science emerged as a field of study which was critical to meet the needs of a developing society. Eradication of poverty and equality for women were major objectives to be considered during implementation of the program. If the unrealized potential of human resources could be tapped, the society would be well on its way to an increased standard of living. To meet this objective, criteria were developed for Home Science curriculum to include not only classroom training, but also requirements for community involvement, internship experiences, extension work, and volunteer experiences to provide a link to the community to further promote

improvement in the quality of life. Thus, Home Science would not only educate students on the basis of theoretical or “book” knowledge, but would provide opportunities for application of principles toward the betterment of society. When visiting Coimbatore and Avinashilingam, Dr. Devadas took pride in having my husband and me see the work of undergraduates in villages, she firmly believes in the value of experiential learning.

### **Nutrition and Nutrition Education**

Dr. Devadas's interest and research in basic nutrition and health and her belief in the potential of Home Science matched her devotion to the people of India, her awareness of the need for change, and her recognition of an opportunity to improve their quality of life. Her many studies involving children and pregnant or nursing women provided insight into the dietary requirements necessary for good health, and her discoveries were applied to whole communities through the initiation of nutrition education programs.

“The ultimate aim of nutrition education is to help countries, families and individuals to understand the simple principles of nutrition, select the right kind of food and provide adequate diets for all members of the family within the limits of local production and purchasing power : apply hygienic methods in the handling of food and preserving surplus food” (*Prospects* 1981, 11 : 4). According to Devadas, a major reason for the prevalence of malnutrition in India stems not only from “economic poverty” but also from “poverty of knowledge” of the nutritional needs of the people, particularly children. Furthermore, “good nutrition in childhood and throughout the life span is of paramount importance in fostering the physical, mental,

emotional, and social growth of populations”. (*Journal of Home Economics* 1970, 62 : 164). Nutrition, so often taken for granted in modern society, is basic to survival; survival not only of individuals, but of whole communities. Knowledge of how to obtain good health is not inherent, but must be learned. Dr. Devadas took it on as her mission to educate the people of Coimbatore, and, indeed, through her students and research, to educate as many as possible in India.

Work in community nutrition has helped identify important social and cultural factors that influence nutrition. Among others, Dr. Devadas made key contributions to the formulation and implementation of Applied Nutrition programs in India in the early 1950s and later in the 1980s as key advisor to the Tamil Nadu School Lunch program. Over the decades since 1950, her work in the area of nutrition education has illustrated the need for a multifaceted approach. Instruction through different channels, reiteration, repetition and living examples are essential to effect permanent and lasting results. Her work in the rural communities to improve the nutritional status of children in the developing region has been recognized by the United States Dairy Association, World Nutrition Congress, Government of India, and other governments in the developing world. She was accorded Padma Shri, an honor bestowed by the President of India for outstanding service to the nation, recognizing her work in improving nutrition of the Indians.

Dr. Devadas has been instrumental in adopting policies to promote far-reaching nutrition education. She helped develop training programmes for community workers in India using mobile education. Once trained, the workers could bring education to the surrounding villages and rural communities. Information included nutritive value

of different foods, food supplements for the various groups, supplementation of the diets with low-cost and local foods, deficiency diseases, desirable cooking methods, good food habits, prevention of food waste, increasing the food production with a kitchen garden, food budgeting, feeding programs in the locality, food sanitation, personal hygiene and health aspects. (*Prospects* 1981, 11:5). Emphasis was placed on the importance of practical application and experiential teaching practices, rather than theoretical classroom sessions. Thus, the people could easily relate to the lessons and could comprehend and utilize the information to apply it to their everyday lives.

### **Concluding Comment**

The accomplishments of Dr. Devadas speak for themselves--she has made a difference as one person, but she has generated interest and support from others to help accomplish her dreams. Gandhi wrote, "By living a purposeful life and taking care to be unmindful of our own interests and to work for others, we can achieve much with little effort" (Cited in Ahluwalia, B.K., 1969, 101). Dr. Devadas epitomizes that statement for she has devoted her life and career unselfishly for the benefit of others.

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## **WORKING WITH RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

**ALICE MCKINNEY FISHER**

**F**orty years ago, I was sent by the United States Government to assist in the development of India's program similar to the Home Economics Extension Program which had been so successful in the US. Some forty centers in India had been set up and staffed. Each center had been given equipment and supplies to further their work with the rural women. A jeep was provided for travel to locations convenient for the rural women. Four Home Economists from various areas of the US had been assigned to the four districts that would cover all the centers to help the workers in subject matter and methods of extension teaching. Dr. Devadas and my predecessor, Levice Allen had worked together to set up these centers. My assignment included assistance to Home Science in the schools. US colleges had sent teams of workers to various places in India to help in the development of Home Science in schools and one state leader of Home Economics Extension to a college for the training of workers for centers in India. Dr. Devadas was selected to head a new college being set up in Coimbatore by that time and I was able to view that college when it was just beginning construction. Dr. Devadas has been very dynamic in her world wide work to spread interest in the values of Home Science especially to developing countries. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - SYNONYM TO “HOME SCIENCE”**

**ALICE M. FORMAN**

**I**t has been a great privilege to have had Dr. Rajammal Devadas as a friend and colleague for so many years, even though we lived and worked in different continents most of the time. Her steadfast dedication to higher education for women in India, to preparation of women for leadership in the development of community, social programs focussed on improvement of children's lives and to research in home science relevant to promoting better nutrition have been an inspiration to many.

For me, it started when we were young colleagues on the faculty of the College of Nursing, Delhi University. This college was a very new venture sponsored by the Government of India shortly before Independence Day. Both of us were eager to develop innovative programmes in our fields - Rajammal in nutrition and I in public health nursing - in order to enrich the education of nurses for public service in the new India. We had to start from “scratch” on several fronts - in the classroom, in the laboratory and in the community. I drew inspiration from Rajammal's wonderful energy, talents and imagination in making the most of a pioneering situation : creating something significant from scarce resources ; using research skills to find answers to questions relevant to Indian health problems of every day life. This meant using the latest science and technology in adopting to local needs and resources.

With this same spirit and vision Rajammal co-founded the unique Home Science Institute for Women which has grown phenomenally into a University, widely

recognised and supported. She is always “on the move”, net working for her “cause” while travelling and participating in conferences on several continents. Her remarkable talents and energy have attracted and retained enthusiastic support from all corners of the world.

Rajammal's frequent participation in international conferences and academic symposia in Canada and U.S.A. afforded opportunities for brief visits in our home. Always impressive to me were her achievements in expanding the programs at her University, in conducting innovative research projects relating to Home Science and in publishing a large body of valuable scientific literature. She has given new meaning to the term “Home Science” and its importance to the improvement of family life in India. Her crowning success is the education and inspiration she has passed along to her staff and students in preparing them to continue her vision of limitless opportunities for higher education, useful research and public service to the people of India. She epitomizes total dedication to professional work while continuing to be a key member of a distinguished family of professional leaders in several generations.

While Dr. Devadas has contributed frequently to international scientific meetings her participation has had an additional dimension - advancing the leadership role of India in the field of women and development in the whole world. I am looking forward to the day when she will be awarded a nobel prize - a “first” one in Home Science!

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# WITH LOVE TO RAJAMMAL

RUTH AND DOUGLAS FORMAN

Dear Rajammal,

Those were exciting times in Delhi when we first met you not long after our arrival in June 1950. Doug was assigned to work as an economics officer under the liberal idealist Ambassador Chester Bowles. You were a Professor at the Fledgling College of Nursing with Doug's sister Alice.

All over India individuals and groups, inspired by Gandhi and empowered by independence, were building community organizations, working for women's rights and education, throwing off the restrictions of caste and many traditional taboos.

We remember our delight when Alice brought you to our apartment in Karol Bagh and you talked about your work at the college and your dreams for the future. Years later, when you had achieved prominence as an educator, we learned that you had been greatly tempted to go into politics, but Nehru persuaded you that you could serve your country more directly and best by sharing your knowledge of the scientific basis for good nutrition. We suspect Nehru recognized your great enthusiasm for helping women to transform their roles at home and to become leaders in education and in their communities.

The years since then have been punctuated by your memorable visits--frequent while we were in Delhi, then seven years later in Nepal, and every two or three years after we moved to Washington in 1963. For almost half a century it has been a great privilege and deep joy that you have continued to share with us a few of your burdens and many of your hopes and accomplishments. As we have shared our lives over

these many years and usually half a world away, you have been to us a treasured inspiration and a very dear friend.

It is always exciting when we receive your letter telling of your planned arrival in Washington and your reason for coming. One time you came to deliver the major address on World Food Day sponsored here by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We were impressed and delighted that you were flown half way around the world to point out to some of the world's most senior agricultural civil servants that women produced most of the food for more than half the world's population and therefore should receive at least as much training with development assistance funds as men!

Another time we took you to your luncheon appointment with the food research professionals at the U.S. Government Agricultural Research Center at Greenbelt, Maryland. You had worked with them as a partner for many years, helping to discover that sunflower seeds (not soy beans) are the best source of vegetable protein and much more. The research you promoted at the Avinashilingam Institute was particularly helpful, since it showed that vegetable protein is sufficient for a healthy diet and that it even rivals our expensive meat protein. You have always worked to persuade villagers to use local, less expensively produced protein in innovative processes and recipes.

We were proud when you stopped off on your trip to Ohio State University to receive an honorary doctorate for your work in nutrition and women's education. We know how prestigious an honorary degree from Ohio State University is. You may remember that Doug and I both graduated from Wooster College in Ohio. Perhaps our first bond with you was knowing that the three of us were doing our undergraduate work in the same state at about the same time.

One visit you brought with you three of the top administrators in the Avinashilingam Institute. They were charming, with strong personalities. It gave us an insight into your ability to find and then work as a colleague with exceptional women.

The list could go on : a morning coffee with Institute graduates and American co-workers here as you promoted an alumni association; your recent work to raise money for an engineering college (a tremendous endeavor, we think); a stop-off on your way to a huge International Nutrition Congress in Montreal, Canada, where you chaired a symposium on women's health and nutrition with almost 700 persons attending.

One of the visits we cherish most was the time Edward, your quiet, charming husband, came with you. We had not met him in India and were glad for the opportunity to see how he was such a source of support and encouragement as you pursued your professional goals. We remember your telling us that he was finally able to adjust to the fact that his bride preferred gifts of books to saris!

Another time your son Mohan visited while in transit to a career as a doctor in Australia. It was good to see him again a couple of years ago when he and his wife Mary joined you here for a brief visit. From our conversation and a book he had written, it was evident that he was following your example of devoted service inspired by deeply religious convictions.

Happy fellowship with members of your family continues. In 1997 we were able to share the excitement of our presidential inauguration with your talented sister Kamala and to discover how much you and your sister share in the delight of exploring new places, experiences and ideas. Recently we watched the video Kamala sent us of the ceremonies at the Institute when you both, with others, vividly extolled the

advantages of a community college -- your latest endeavor to broaden educational opportunities for less advantaged women. We hope that Kamala's dream can come true, and that she can return to Coimbatore to help develop the use of computers for instruction and research which she has perfected at one of our most successful and impressive community colleges, Miami-Dade in Florida.

We appreciate how graciously you have received relatives and friends we have sent your way. We knew that they would be delighted to meet you and see some of your work. But we are particularly impressed by the way you immediately incorporated them into the life of the Institute : relatives helping in the awarding of prizes at a Sports Day and a friend sharing with students her teaching techniques for gifted children.

Throughout the years you have brought us many cherished gifts : a lovely carved ivory Nataraja, a small brass Ganesh and beautiful hand-woven saris and stoles. We know how important "homespun" is to you, an ardent follower of Gandhi. But we have marvelled at your practice of taking time daily for spinning when you have so many demanding duties. You have explained that this is for you a deeply spiritual time for meditating and planning and we recognize that this is part of the discipline that makes it possible for you to achieve so much.

We were particularly honored when we received your Silver Jubilee plaque celebrating twenty-five years of growth and fulfillment of the "Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women, Coimbatore, 1982". It hangs in our living room-lit by a lamp with a Chinese figure symbolizing long life and wisdom -- where we and our friends can enjoy the impressive design and message : that the home, the arts and enlightenment through education are at the center of the University's work and accomplishments.

We are always impressed by your loving concern for all the people you know, particularly staff members, colleagues and students. We remember your search while here a year ago last August for a very elderly lady who was an American co-worker at the very beginning of the Home Science College.

We never were able to travel to Coimbatore and so we never had the privilege of seeing the Institute or of meeting Sri Avinashilingam, its founder. We regret this very much, because we know that he was a gentleman you deeply admire and honor, that without his generosity, leadership and support, the University and all its achievements would not exist. You were concerned about his health in the last years, and so we hunted for the best ginseng roots to make the tea that he believed would be invigorating -- and found them at the Korean Korner. You were so pleased!

One of our most vivid memories is our visit to your apartment in 1950 and the sight of two delicate ivory earings on your mantelpiece -- one of Jesus and the other of Shiva. We asked how and why you honored both and as I recall, you replied, "Jesus symbolizes my faith and the Nataraja symbolizes my culture". Your words have had a profound effect on our thinking and our understanding of the diversity and unity of world-wide worship. You so often say or write, "with God's grace". Your belief in God's love and grace has surely given you the freedom and creativity to help shape the aspirations and ideals of thousands of young Indian women.

We are grateful your colleagues are organizing a biographic publication to recognize and celebrate your many decades of pioneering leadership. We are flattered to be asked to add our testimony and are glad for this opportunity to express our love for you.

With great respect and much love. ●

## **FOR DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS IN HONOR OF HER EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

HELENE N. GUTTMAN

I first met Rajammal at a significant time. She was one of four women, selected from the entire world, to be honored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) at a ceremony at its Headquarters, in Washington, DC during the USDA's celebration of the International Year of the Women. Dr. Devadas phoned the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center (BHNRC) to arrange a visit to former colleagues and friends she met during an earlier research sabbatical at Beltsville. BHNRC is a part of the USDA's research agency, the Agricultural Research Service, located in a Maryland suburb of Washington, DC.

Since, at the time of her call, I was the Associate Director of BHNRC, I arranged a time for the visit and also for Dr. Devadas to give a seminar on her most recent research. As the saying goes, there was excellent chemistry between us and we have been friends and colleagues ever since. I particularly remember the seminar - or as I would prefer to say *the seminar*.

Shortly before the seminar was to begin, Dr. Devadas realized that she did not have her slides (that were to be used to show data from her experiments). We discussed other, more preliminary studies, then underway in Coimbatore, that she might wish to discuss. That led to the unforgettable delivery of the most moving discourse I have ever heard - and prefer here to call it *the seminar*. For me, as well as the others in attendance, it was a memorable event that demonstrated how a single person of strong and pure intent could make enormous positive changes - peacefully! It is a lesson for

the world that I hope some day soon will be made into a video production so that others - worldwide - can learn by example *and replicate in their own localities*.

For those who have not yet had the honor to know Rajammal in person, I introduce her as a person small in stature - less than five feet tall - but enormous in presence and sincerity - who keeps an audience in rapt attention. Those same traits were, and are, important for the success of her *Healthy Child Program* - the subject of her seminar. When Rajammal joined the Institute for Home Science (it had not yet grown into a Deemed University), illiteracy among women was common as was inadequate family income, malnutrition among families and production of more children than the family could support. The children who did survive, frequently lacked sufficient balanced nutrition to assure adequate development of the neurological components necessary for proper cognitive abilities. Furthermore, lack of good nutritional practices in families led to a high incidence of early demise of these malnourished children and cyclical production of still more children who had the same problems.

Rajammal's *Healthy Child Program* was underway for about five to six years at the time of her seminar in Beltsville. This was long enough to see results and to evaluate her very different approach. When she joined the Institute for Home Science, she noticed that there were highly nutritional vegetables that were abundant in the area - but not used as food. She changed that practice - not by giving "orders" about what to eat, but by eating these vegetables and other more nutritional combinations herself during meals with the women. Thus they had an opportunity to sample the foods, judge their tastiness for themselves and notice that Professor Devadas herself was eating them.

The *Healthy Child Program* began very differently than most nutritional enhancement programmes. First of all, there were *prizes* for the families of *healthy*

*children*. However, to participate, a family had to keep records of their children's weight, height and the foods the children (and family members) ate. Childhood sickness and mortality also was to be recorded. The cognitive ability of surviving children was measured both pre-school and as they entered formal schooling. The formal schooling aspect of the program was just beginning when the Beltsville seminar was given.

As the program was about to begin, mothers who wished to participate approached Rajammal with a problem. How were they to keep records (since most were illiterate) and how were they to assure their supply of good vegetables (since many were too poor to purchase them)! These *problems* really were *opportunities for Rajammal's gentle approach to invoking positive changes* ! The women were given literacy lessons as well as lessons in gardening the vegetables. These women proved to be marvelous students. They learned to read and write, kept good records and grew so much in their gardens that they had more than needed for their families. This excess foodstuff led to another opportunity for Rajammal! She suggested that they could consider selling the excess in neighbouring towns. They did! A new group of entrepreneurs had been created.

Now both the family's nutritional health was improving - as the records showed - and *so did the family income!* These two facts were not lost on the men of the family. As they noticed that their children were enjoying better health and, indeed, child mortality was falling, there was a desire to begin family planning. The men then requested that Dr. Devadas arrange for the Home Science Institute to give lessons in family planning i.e. various ways to limit the number and timing for having children (since their children were surviving and in good health) there was no need for production of almost annual replacements. Finally, children from the *Healthy Child Program* who were in the first grades of school were clearly identifiable as such :

they were almost a head taller than their non-program classmates, were in better health and were more intellectually alert.

When Rajammal concluded her presentation, there was momentary silence followed by thundering applause. As I looked around the room, I noticed that almost everyone had tears in their eyes, myself included. The period of silence had been for wiping the tears away!

I have written in detail about my first exposure to the *Healthy Child Program* in the hope that this celebratory volume will reach others who will emulate it!

Dr. Devadas's influence is truly worldwide. Since our initial meeting, we visit almost annually, sometimes more often, during her trips to the US, to discuss nutritional policy and progress towards utilizing nutrition and nutrition education as tools for peaceful means of improving the human experience. I am proud to be a friend and colleague of this remarkable woman! Others will record, in this volume, her scientific reports. It is most important, from my perspective, to emphasize her role as a *Humanitarian and revered teacher whose messages are not confined to classrooms and scientific journals*.

Over the years, I have watched the Home Science Institute grow into a Deemed University, now with Rajammal as Chancellor. Our visits have continued. I look forward to the implementation of the new Engineering School and an opportunity to work with this, newest part of the University, in the development of an “artificial intelligence” computerized program for both professionals and families, tentatively named “*The Healthy Vegetarian*”.

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## **MY DEAR MRS. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

**SHIRLEY HODGES**

**O**n behalf of my family and myself, I wish to pay my loving tribute to you on the occasion of your 80th birthday celebrations.

I have tried to evaluate what my thoughts and impressions of you have been over the 20 year period that I have known you. My first impression was of a very tiny, confident, charismatic world traveller. I found a very gentle, kind and thoughtful lady with a Rock solid Christian faith, very proud and adoring of her wonderful family.

No need to remind you that we first met when your dear son Mohan was a Resident Medical Officer at Lithgow Hospital and my late husband Henny and our family shared a warm friendship with Mohan, Mary and their family.

Over the years there have been many changes in both our families but the first impressions made by you have not altered but rather I remain in awe of the amount of world travelling you do to improve the lives of your fellow Indian citizens as well as the lives of your family and friends.

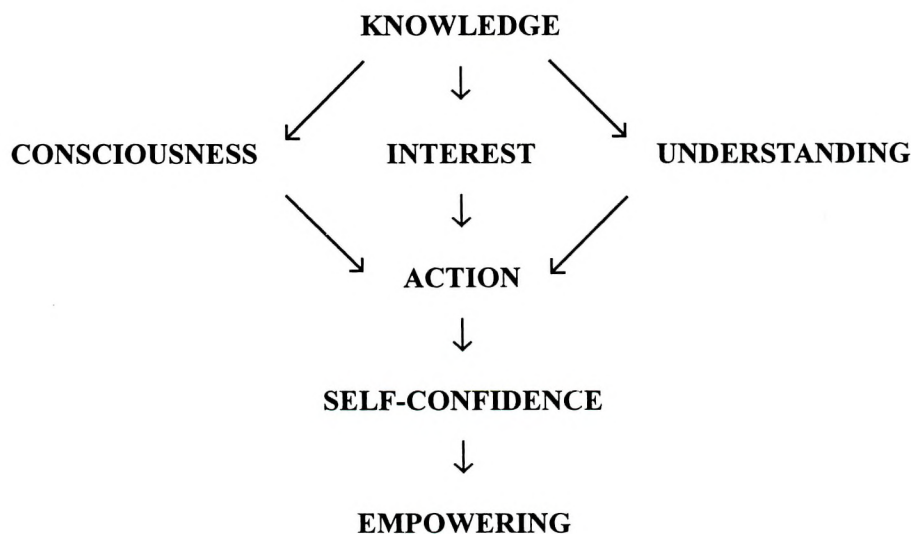
I thank you Mrs. Devadas, I call you that out of deep respect, for the friendship you and your family have shared with us both in good times and in bad as you celebrate your 80th birthday, I say thank you to God for your wonderful inspiration and your dedication to your duties and thank Him for the great influence you have in so many lives.

I pray that with God's Grace you will continue to share many more years of friendship with us.

# **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - THE GREAT PEDAGOGUE**

**GUNNAR JACKS AND BIRGITTA JACKS**

**O**ur chapter is a thank to Amma for her guidance in Life. Her deep understanding of the human nature has given us a scheme which could be used both for mobilising ourselves as well as to instil enthusiasm when lecturing. Amma guides us in this way.



Already in a paper in 1986 Amma is using the word Empowering, created by Mahatma Gandhi. Amma's heritage from Mahatma Gandhi is very direct through Shri Avinashilingam, the Founder who as a freedom fighter was so close to the Mahatma. The word empowering has only recently entered our vocabulary in Sweden. In the following text you will see several examples of the word connected with Amma.

Dr. Devadas has always been the pioneer and a strong will to struggle and philanthropy have characterized the work of Dr. Devadas.

The way Amma is working bears witness of a very humble human being so full of respect for others and so positive. Yes, I have never heard any negative comment from Amma.

Amma is the source of knowledge. She is the great pedagogue. Read here what Dr. Devadas lectured on among us, when Dr. Devadas visited Sweden and The Swedish Nutrition Society. *“After the introduction of the nutrition and health programmes the mortality among children went down and when fewer children die, mothers don't want to have more children. In order to create understanding for new things, both social and religious, which are met by resistance, you have to devise educational programmes which use religion, society and other parameters to introduce the programme. We have been engaged with this for the last twenty years and now we find that many of our efforts have led to improvement. We have used religious examples for nutrition education from the mythology and from the Tamil literature where there has been so much reference about using good food”*.

Dr. Devadas gave a lecture on *Nutrition and Knowledge Communication* in Tamil Nadu in The Swedish Nutrition Society in 1984. What we learnt from that lecture has influenced our understanding for the important role of nutrition in the society. India has the oldest education in nutrition in the world so every time we have the opportunity to learn from somebody from India we are thankful. Dr. Devadas spoke about the programme of her college, how they had realized the need for introducing into the curriculum nutrition education and health education. Amma looks at the need of the whole human being. When the feeding programme was in operation the mothers were helped to see the benefits of the programmes, they were taught

some fundamentals of nutrition and they were also organized to strengthen their economy through some income generating production. When the women understand the importance of nutrition and get some income they are able to do something to improve the health of their children even when help from outside, for instance from NGO's, was withdrawn. Then Dr. Devadas told us about the unique "Nutritious Noon Meal Program", which was decided in 1982 by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu but initiated by Dr. Devadas. This programme had been conceived not just as a feeding programme but as an education, social awareness and social uplift programme. Women were given education and employed in the preparation of the meals. Two years after the Noon Meal Programme had started another two million children had joined the school because of the meal programme.

How did we meet Dr. Devadas? In 1976 - 78 we lived in Coimbatore where Gunnar worked in a water project. On Sundays we joined the service in All Souls Church, Amma's church. One day somebody knocked at our door and Amma came. When I look at this happening afterwards I understand that somebody - God - was behind our meeting. Ever since we have experienced how God unites us every time we are happy to be together again in All Souls Church in India, in Sweden, in Finland or in Egypt. The same feelings, that God unites us, do come when we talk to each other by our letters or by telephone.

During our two years in Coimbatore Dr. Devadas invited me to join the students in their community and social service and share their experiences. The objectives should enable the students to get exposed to the needs and problems of the community with special reference to women, understand the programmes in operation for women's uplift and develop skills in organising women into groups for collective action. The

syllabus involved sections like status of women in India, problems encountered by women, global efforts to empower women and national efforts to uplift women. All these objectives and the course content are created completely in Amma's spirit, focused on the education of the oppressed, the poor and the needy of the world. We who are thankful to have got to know Amma, we have learnt from Amma about life, we want to be Amma's disciples. It is thanks to Amma's inspiration that I got a great fascination in the field of nutrition and finally received my licentiate degree in nutrition in Sweden. Amma, which means Mother, is really a very appropriate name of Dr. Devadas, who is like a mother for people and known and loved by people everywhere. To travel with Amma in India, by train or by flight, means open doors! The chief of the railway station in Coimbatore comes to the train to wish Amma a happy journey!

With this chapter I want to express my sincere thanks - but it is difficult to find words which are able to express my thankfulness to Amma. Amma has made it possible for me to spend several periods in her home in Coimbatore. Living close to Amma means to learn how to respect people and feel solidarity with the poor. Paulo Freire, describes in his book "Pedagogy of the oppressed" how to create consciousness with the help of education. This is exactly how Dr. Devadas works among the oppressed and the poor, especially among women on women's education and literacy. In the end this will create well-being for the whole family. The results have been noticed for more than twenty years now : higher literacy among women gives lower infant mortality rate and higher attendance of children in school.

One of Amma's main interests is breast feeding. Amma has been the Regional Coordinator for World Alliance for Breast Feeding Actions (WABA) for the Eastern

Regions, Asia and the Pacific. In March 1995 Dr. Devadas arranged a “Breast feeding seminar” in Coimbatore, to which nuns from Bishop Lawrence Mar Ephraem's project “Health for one million” in Tiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari were invited. In February 1997 Dr. Devadas had arranged a fantastic seminar on “Empowering women” where breast feeding again was on the agenda.

But we have also met outside India, Amma and me! We have attended two times together IVACG (International Vitamin A Consultative Group) meetings, in Arusha, Tanzania and in Cairo, Egypt and I was thankful to have the opportunities to learn more and more from Amma.

In March, 1996, Amma wrote us a letter : *“I will be in the Leaf Protein Conference in Russia June 16-21, 1996. From there with your help, I want to visit Finland, Sweden and reach Ulster in Ireland on 30th of June. For this visit I need visas for Finland and Sweden and an invitation letter from you, stating that you will take care of my stay in Sweden. Can you kindly meet me in Finland?”* Gunnar immediately told me to go to Finland and meet Amma at the Helsinki airport. A funny story : When Amma arrived at the Helsinki airport on June 23, 1996, suddenly we, the driver Pekka at the Indian Embassy and me, got to see Amma coming running like a young girl behind her pile of suitcases! Wonderful! Then we spent one day there. This gave us the chance to meet people at the famous North Karelia Project, where Dr Erkki Vartiainen gave us a private lecture about the successful health project in northeastern Finland. The distance Helsinki - Stockholm we enjoyed on board the bid Silja Line ship, Silja Symphony, which Amma appreciated very much. To travel slowly through the Stockholm archipelago in a “white” night in June gives peace and is really something to remember.

But again to India! Coming to the university campus is always a wonderful experience. The spirit of the Founder is there. The temple with room for every confession is just across the yard when entering. For us who have grown up in a society that was quite homogenous some fifty years ago, the encounter with other cultures and religions was quite tumultous. Meeting the Founder and Amma and recognizing their spirit in the college convinced us that behind all differences humans are closely related and that unity is possible, but achieving it requires both hard work in daily life and a vision. Amma works extremely hard but she has also the ability to lift her eyes and see the goal. Amma has been an extraordinary manager of the Gandhian heritage, realizing the intentions of the Founder and instilling his spirit in her co-workers.

Amma and me we have got to know each other very well during these more than twenty years. We feel very much united and we know that we include each other in our daily prayers. For all our family Amma means Life. Dr. O.P. Singh, Haryana Agriculture University taught me once : *"We speak with our eyes"* and this is also what I experience in my communication with Amma. ●

## **WHAT IMPRESSES MOST WHEN MEETING DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS ?**

COEN G.A. de JONG

**I**s it her warm interest in people? Her pedagogical and social concern for others? Her unerring “sixth sense” for people's abilities, either students or staff members?

Is it her unlimited interest in the world? Her eagerness to know, her continuous search for the truth, both in academic and in ethical matters?

Is it her bright intelligence? Her ability to see through the most complex matters, the heart of which she sees at once?

Is it her ability to find the right words? Her transparent wording in the academic discourse, her warm and well chosen talk in social relationships, her unmistakable terms in management?

Is it the enormous energy she radiates? Her ceaseless efforts for her university, her ongoing role in her scientific discipline, her many social and societal responsibilities?

Is it the genuine friendship and love she knows to give?

The only answer that hits the nail on the head is that all these characteristics together and simultaneously do bridge between Dr. Devadas and persons who are happy enough to meet her.

It happened to me ten years ago. Up to today I am thankful to have had that opportunity and to have had the chance to further develop our professional and friendly relationship. I hope that many others will get this possibility in the years to come. ●

## **AMMA - OUR FAMILY MENTOR**

**K.J. JOSEPH AND ANNIE JOSEPH**

**W**e rejoice to learn about the celebrations of the 80th birthday of our revered guru, friend, philosopher and guide, Chancellor Amma, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, scheduled for early 1999.

My wife, Annie Joseph had the privilege of being associated with the faculty of the Home Science College as Lecturer in Physics during 1967 - 69. We have very happy memories of that association and I recall how reluctant we were to leave Coimbatore.

Our relationship with Amma encompassed our whole family. Amma was mentor not only to us but godparent to our three children as well. Our children benefited immensely from their early education and training at the kindergarten and primary school levels of the school which was also a training centre for the teachers trained by the Home Science College. In particular, our second son, who is a very successful Vice President of Foot Action in USA, had the maximum benefit from the excellent training methods adopted in the Home Science Nursery School. He was heart-broken when he was wrenched out of his happy school environment and it took a long time before he could be consoled! We believe that a lot of his development was due to the two progressive years he spent at the school during the formative years of his life. Under the able guidance of Amma, the school and its teachers adopted modern

psychological techniques of child development. We rate the school as one of the most progressive schools in the country.

My wife looks back on the two years that she spent as Lecturer in the Home Science College as a very productive period in her life. She would often remark that the Head of the institution inspired the staff to work as a happy team. In keeping with the spirit of the noble founder, the late Thiru Avinashilingam Chettiar, Dr. Devadas always believed in imparting the best education and training to her students. In fact, whenever I referred to them as “students”, Amma would correct me and say “My children”. This truly epitomizes the spirit in which she runs the Institute.

Our early meetings with Amma in the All Souls Church, Coimbatore, reminds us of Amma's deep spiritual faith. Interestingly, her faith integrates Eastern mysticism with Western philosophy. Moreover, the windows of her mind have always been open to the fresh winds of thought and beliefs from several directions.

More recently, when we were stationed in Delhi, we had the privilege of several brief meetings with Amma during her whirlwind tour of the capital, usually to address some international gathering. But we could never get the same time as we did in Coimbatore. The only time we would get was during her arrival at the airport or travel to the airport!

Amma's contribution to the fields of nutrition and women's development are well known and require no additional description. Her participation in International seminars is one indicator of her professional achievements. But, in our estimation,

her greatest contribution lies in her ability to nurture and inspire individuals. Indeed, she has nourished vast and splendid gardens of blossoming humans. Today, her former students and understudies are in several positions of responsibility. I know that many look back on her as the chief mentor in their lives.

Amma's orientation is best reflected in the lines of Rabindranath Tagore :

**“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;**

**Where knowledge is free;**

**Where the world has not been broken up into fragments**

**by narrow domestic walls**

**Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening**

**thought and action**

**Into that haven of freedom,**

**my Father, let my country awake”.**

Amma would be happy to see this awakening in all of us. She has provided the inspiration. Let us complete the task. We hope to return to India next year and renew our association with this inspiring leader. We wish the committee success in organizing a befitting celebration of the 80th birthday of this great and venerable soul.

God bless you all. ●

## **A FEW WORDS COMMEMORATING THE 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY OF CHANCELLOR DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

**F. JAMES LEVINSON**

**D**r. Rajammal Devadas will always be my “Ammaji”. She has been, over the past 34 years, a devoted friend, a most respected professional colleague and a valuable mentor.

As early as 1965, I used to visit the Institute in Coimbatore and I have the fondest memories of seeing Dr. Devadas together with the revered Sri Avinashilingam himself. I was at the time fresh out of the University, quite eager but still green behind the years and newly employed by USAID in its first international nutrition program. Ammaji would share my passion and energy but would steer me along paths that were likely to me more fruitful.

From those earliest days, I remember Ammaji as a person who was always open to new ideas. As a result, her institute was always on the cutting edge of nutrition, always innovating, ever creative. Indeed, along with the University of Baroda, the Avinashilingam Institute has provided a model for the pursuit of nutrition in a home science college, not only in India, but internationally.

Also, from those earliest days, my overriding memory of Coimbatore had to do with the devotion Ammaji's students had for her. She was their teacher but she also was their confident, their guide and their role model. I have often held the image of Ammaji in my mind as I have pursued my own teaching here at Tufts and earlier at MIT.

My warmest greetings to Ammaji on her birthday, My biggest namaskar and hug. She is a dear dear friend and I hold much love for her in my heart. ●

## **“AMMA I HAVE KNOWN”**

**KUNJAMMA MATHAI**

**I**t is a privilege and a pleasure for me to write this testimony about our beloved Amma. I have known her for 22 years, we met through her daughter in law Mrs. Mary Devadas. Mary's husband Dr. Mohan Devadas is also a great friend of mine.

As soon as I met Amma, I felt a great admiration for her which then developed into a wonderful friendship. I can clearly remember her saying to me once that when she thinks of Sydney she thinks of me. Every time she comes to Sydney she never fails to visit us. Amma was always ready to assist me in helping my family members, friends and I especially appreciate her invaluable assistance in placing my brother's twin boys for higher education.

We have enjoyed shopping expeditions together in Sydney and we would spend pleasant hours on discussing and deciding what she would take back to India for presents. Amma also brings us lovely gifts from India each time she visits us.

Amma is always mindful of her great interest, that is, the feeding and assisting of the poor. Amma appeals to her friends to support her in this worthy cause while she is visiting here and we are always happy to help.

Amma's other great mission in her life is supporting Avinashilingam University. Amma is always keen to talk about the work done at the university and discusses

ways in which it can be improved. Amma is also anxious to find ways to fund the projects run by the university.

Even though Amma is highly intelligent and well educated, she is a very down to earth person. I have always found her fun to be with and good company. She is able to converse with my elderly parents and young children with equal ease. Indeed, Amma is at home with people from all walks of life. Amma is truly a great friend and a wonderful human being. ●

## **OUR LONG ASSOCIATION WITH DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

LOUISE. H. MORRISON

I first met Rajammal fifty-one years ago, when she was a student at Ohio State University. One of my friends, with whom I lived, saw her on the campus and invited her to come to our house for dinner. To know Rajammal is to love her and immediately she became a member of our family. My friend was a librarian at the University, so we often had Rajammal join us at the Faculty Club for meals. When she was hungry for food from her beloved India, she would prepare a meal at our house. After filling the plates for our two friends, with an impish grin she would add more curry to the food for me and herself.

She was very humble and didn't want to talk about her accomplishments. However, she finally admitted that she had published her first book, "Secrets of Food" when she was twenty-seven years old. Also, prior to coming to Ohio State, she had been a research assistant in nutrition at Women's Christian College, Madras and assistant lecturer at Queen Mary's College, also in Madras.

We were very proud of her when she received her Master of Science in Foods and Nutrition degree in 1948, a Master of Arts degree in Home Economics Education in 1949 and the following year a Ph.D in Food and Nutrition. All of these degrees were conferred on her at Ohio State University.

We were very sorry to bid her farewell as she returned to India to be Dean of Faculty of Home Science, Baroda University.

We kept in touch during the years and were happy when she became the Chief Home Economist for Food and Agriculture for the Government of India. At that time, she was only thirty-six years old.

In 1955, I received a note from her saying that she was coming to New York city to speak at the New York Herald Tribune Forum. I was then working in New York as a staff member of the Board of Global Ministries of the Methodist Church. Most of the time I was travelling. However, I arranged my schedule so I could be in the city when she arrived.

She was introduced as a “vibrant, small woman”. She was vibrant, enthusiastic and gave a very fine speech at the Forum. Nobody there will ever forget her story of her work in India. She said that the India Extension Program, which she headed, aimed at establishing twenty-four centers throughout India, appointing and supervising the training of chief instructors, each to teach a corps of village level and thus pull up the living standards of the entire country.

Her picture and speech, with the headlines “Dr. Devadas Outlines Progress Being Made in India”, appeared in the October 19, issue of the New York Herald Tribune newspaper. Another picture and article were published the next day.

In spite of her busy schedule, she took time out to come to my office and meet my friends. My co-workers were very impressed that I knew such an outstanding person!

When I went with her to the airport that night, she told me that she had left a package for me at the hotel. I found that it contained the pink colored sari which she had worn when speaking at the Forum. This was another example of her thoughtfulness

and desire to share with others. I shall never forget her sad face as she looked out the window of the plane as it taxied down the runway. I had a hard time keeping back the tears too, for we never expected to see each other again.

After getting back home, she became very involved with the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science. All of us are familiar with the fine work she has done and is doing at the school. She is vitally interested in each student and very proud of the graduates. She also maintained a happy home with her husband and mother, both now deceased and her son, now a medical doctor of whom she is very proud.

About five years ago, I had a telephone call from Rajammal, who was visiting her brother in Columbus, Ohio, where he is a faculty member at The Ohio State University. She and her brother came to visit me and oh what a reunion we had! They came again two years later and this made me very happy! The first time they visited I asked Rajammal what subjects she was teaching at the Institute. She smiled and said meekly "I am the President". The second time they came to visit I remarked "I am not going to make the same mistake again. You are the President of your college". "Oh no", she replied with a shy look and smile I am the President of a University, for it is no longer an Institute, but a University".

Dr. Devadas is an intelligent, sincere, warm hearted, fine Christian woman. Most of all, she is my cherished friend. I love her dearly and extend Happy Birthday greetings to a wonderful woman, my friend. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - EDUCATIONIST AND LEADER**

CATHERINE R. MUMAW

The first meeting I had with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was in 1990 while she was visiting Oregon State University in the USA. The purpose of her visit was to complete the arrangements for a scholar exchange program between Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, USA and the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. The grant support for the endeavor was to be provided by the United States information Agency in cooperation with the two educational institutions. In the initial planning stage Dr. Devadas displayed a keen insight as to what could be done in a scholar exchange program and how it could be managed. These perceptions were essential to the formulation of a project that was to be beneficial to professors in both institutions -- Oregon State University and Avinashilingam Deemed University.

The Scholar Exchange Programme commenced in 1990. Throughout the three year project, six OSU professors exchanged "classrooms". My 2-month exchange visit commenced on August 21, 1991. My arrival in Coimbatore was graced by the warm welcome of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. Already on the second day she arranged for me to be one of the guests of honor at a special function in the community. This was indicative of what I would experience throughout my stay in Tamil Nadu. Indeed, I was given the most generous hospitality one could ever imagine.

From the first day of meeting Dr. Devadas, I had opportunity to observe her leadership style. It soon became apparent that Dr. Devadas was a woman of courage

who was leading the development of a significant women's educational institution. One could easily see that she had a spirit of tenacity in her manner of administration. New ideas were never viewed as insurmountable problems; rather, they were the challenges that made hard work purposeful and worthwhile as dreams were transposed into initiatives which evolved into events and programs.

As time went on, the trademark(s) of her administration became more and more evident to me. First, the University was a place where the issue of the status of women in Indian society was being addressed. It was a place where girls and women could be educated, beginning at the kindergarten level and continuing through the Ph.D. level.

Second, the University was a place where the Government's National Service Scheme was being integrated into the University curriculum. This feature was a unique "trademark" of the institution. This involved cooperative efforts of both teachers and students in practical activities in villages near the University. Thus, education was seen as more than classroom theory ; it was also seen as an integrative activity for the development of human resources in the community.

Third, the University was a catalyst for literacy efforts in Tamil Nadu. These initiatives involved women students in teaching literacy to young women and older ones. Thus, the literacy rates in the areas in and around Coimbatore were higher than the national averages and were steadily rising through these efforts.

Fourth, the University was an institution which offered programs beyond the traditional home science areas. As new programs and technologies were introduced, young women could find vocational opportunities in new areas. Eventually this forward-looking administrative style led to the introduction of engineering and business management programs.

Fifth, the University gave strong evidence of efforts in scholarly research and publication. Faculty were encouraged to be involved with relevant research issues and then to publish findings in as many ways as were possible. The on-campus “press” facilitated these ventures.

Dr. Devadas cultivated a special interest in the promotion of solar cooking. She encouraged her faculty to conduct research studies that yielded useful results in this area. As a consequence of the research on solar box cookers, she became involved in the first International Solar Cooking Conference held in 1992 in California, USA. There she presented papers reporting research findings regarding benefits of solar cooking. She then volunteered to serve on the planning committee for the second Solar Cooking Conference which was convened in Costa Rica in 1994. Dr. Devadas then hosted the third Solar Cooking Conference on the Avinashilingam Deemed University campus in January 1997. Here, there was a showcase of the research and development in solar cooking devices from many countries.

As Chancellor, Dr. Devadas continues to demonstrate that her energy is boundless, her ideas are endless and her efforts are exemplary. The University is strong and her alumni are making significant contributions in building communities in India and in many other countries. These are the praise-worthy and lasting legacies of a unique educationist and leader. ●

## **DR. DEVADAS AS AN ADMINISTRATOR**

**SHYAM S. NANDWANI**

I am glad to know that Avinashilingam University is celebrating the 80th birthday of most revered and beloved Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor of the University, in early 1999. It is a wise decision taken by the Committee to pay her glorious tribute through the publication of biographic volumes of her life and work in various fields especially related with the health of the human being, in India and abroad. I feel honored to be asked to contribute some remarks in the volumes being proposed.

Being working on Solar Energy and especially on Solar cooking, I had the opportunity to participate in First World Conference on Solar Cookers, organised by Solar Cookers International (SCI) held at Stockton, CA, USA, in 1992 and had the privilege to meet for the first time, Dr. Devadas.

Listening her interesting and useful talk on nutritional and social aspects of Solar Cooking, I decided to invite her to the Second World Conference on Solar Cookers, organised in Costa Rica in July 1994. One hundred and fifty persons from 30 countries attended the conference and Dr. Devadas shared her experience with all these delegates.

Once again I had an opportunity to be invited by Solar Cookers International, at Third World Conference on Solar Cookers organised by Dr. Devadas and her many collaborators. I was really surprised to see big gathering and interested audience of 200 participants and Government (State and Central) authorities including from India and 20 foreign countries from all the continents. In many cases the participation of the policy makers is always important and necessary so that solar cookers are

manufactured and tested satisfactorily with the chances of better acceptance. The active presence of the Ministry of Non Conventional Sources of Energy (probably the only one in the world of this type) in the conference, showed their confidence in the work of Dr. Devadas and her team and the need for Solar Cooking.

The excellent realisation of the conference (general organisation, lectures, cultural programmes, exhibition / delicious food although only vegetarian), showed clearly her administrative qualities and more than that the faith / confidence of all the staff and students in her. Under no circumstances I did not see her losing patience or shouting. She could gather researchers, environmentalists, educationalists, health officials, industrialists and policy makers to share their experience on solar cooking. It is in Coimbatore I could realise that Dr. Devadas and her team members have worked not only on the nutritional aspects but also on other aspects of solar cooking.

After talking to various participants coming from other cities and other parts of the world, I could feel that the delegates had productive and enjoyable stay in Coimbatore, India.

### **Importance of Energy for Development and Cooking**

Energy is a vital input for economic and social development with increasing industrial and agricultural activities and is recognised as an index of a country's development on the basis of the per capita consumption of energy whether in rural or urban household. The world energy scenario projects the deepening of the fuel energy crisis, the implications of which could be equally serious for both the developed and developing nations. This necessitates the search for efficient and appropriate technologies utilising renewable sources of energy.

Intensive efforts are being made to find ways of overcoming the energy crisis by rational utilization and saving conventional energy, tracing new methods or producing and transforming energy and utilising alternative energy sources. Solar energy is considered as a major source of energy because of its non polluting ecological nature, abundance and availability at the point of use. In the special case of cooking, solar cooking has turned out to be a sustainable technology that offers tremendous potential for addressing the growing problems of fuel shortage for food preparation. Solar cooking technology should not be considered only for the poor people and the developing countries as is normally said. No doubt most of the developing countries are situated in the latitude of +/- 30 degrees, thus have a better climate in most time of the year, however other countries also have the appropriate climate may be for 4-5 months in a year, who may not for the economic needs, but for the environment.

### **Work done by Dr. Devadas and her collaborators**

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women had focussed its attention in the field of Solar Energy with special emphasis on Solar Cooking since 1975 and on different aspects.

#### **A. Technical Aspects**

The research team headed by Dr. Devadas, have studied different varieties of cookers / ovens. Some of these are : Solar ovens with reflectors ; Large size solar cooker for noon meal centre ; Indigenous low cost solar cooker ; Solar basket ; Low cost solar box cooker ; Pejack's low cost solar cooker ; Murigu model solar cooker, Chennai ; Universal Model, Indian Institute of Technolgy ; Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) model and Proper designed Avinashilingam Model. Experiments were

conducted with different food preparations using cereals, pulses, vegetables, milk and milk products and fleshy foods.

### **B. Economic Aspects**

Unlike most of the authors, (where they study the thermal performance just by heating water), Dr. Devadas had studied by real cooking of different vegetables, beans/pulses, cereals, and even tea and measured the time taken (and the corresponding useful energy) and solar intensity and wind velocity etc. They also studied cost, weight, time to cook different meals, energy savings and pay back period.

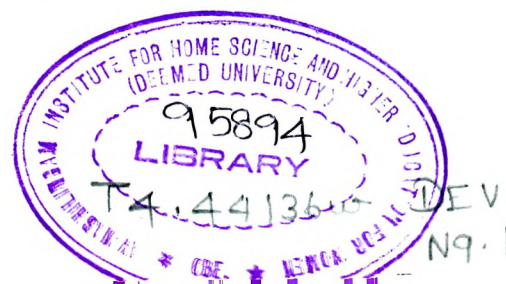
### **C. Social aspects**

The social acceptance or the reasons for not accepting solar cookers were also analysed extensively by Dr. Devadas and her group. These include aspects like viability in fabrication, cost effectiveness, adaptability and word.

### **D. Nutritional aspects**

Dr. Devadas and coworkers have also studied the nutrient profile (retention) for meals cooked in conventional methods of cooking and solar cookers. Nutrient contents like, protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, carotene, thiamine, riboflavin and vitamin C were studied in different types of food. In addition, other variables like taste, appearance, texture, consistency, doneness, flavour and colour too were analysed.

Based on the data provided by households, they concluded while 84% graded the appearance, texture, consistency, doneness, flavour and color of solar cooked food items as good, only 76 per cent graded these quantities of foods cooked on LPG stove as good. It is heart warming to note that none stated the foods cooked in solar cooker as poor.



## **Conclusions**

Although the microlevel study had helped to identify the use of simple, compact and convenient cookers, continuous motivations and constant encouragement is necessary to popularise the solar cooker among rural women. Some of the recommendations from their long year studies are : (1) The women should be oriented towards the need for using alternate fuel such as solar energy in place of firewood for cooking ; (2) The low cost solar cookers should be made available to the public through the consumer cooperative stores ; (3) The universities and colleges must incorporate the solar cooker concept into the curriculum to bring an awareness among youth ; (4) Mass communication medias such as radio, television, film shows, newspapers and exhibition must give wider publicity to the solar cookers through popular artists. If this could be achieved our women will be freed from the drudgery of working in the smoky kitchen.

I am sure that her deliberations and findings will promote the use of solar cooker, world wide. I wish her all the best on this special day, long and healthy life to see the growing use of Solar Cookers for the health of the USERS and our PLANET.



## **A TRIBUTE TO RAJAMMAL**

**GERALDINE I. OLSON**

**I**t is a great pleasure to contribute well deserved congratulations and felicitations to a most worthy professional on the occasion of her 80th year - Dr. Rajammal Devadas. I had the honor of meeting and working with Dr. Devadas in 1992, as I participated in a United States Office of Information Faculty Affiliations Program, and have had a number of occasions since then to be continually impressed with her work, commitment, dedication and vision on behalf of all women as a World Citizen, and especially for the women, children and families of India. It is difficult for me to imagine anyone in India who has worked so consistently and tirelessly over a lifetime to motivate and inspire her colleagues, and to improve the lives of the citizens of India. A celebration at this time is well deserved, and will - I am sure - also become a time to rededicate and mobilize resources to move ever forward to achieve the professional vision so well articulated by Dr. Devadas.

I have visited a number of institutes of Home Science in India and in a number of other countries in the United States, Europe and Asia, and nowhere have I seen or felt the high level of professional excitement which exists at Avinashilingam Deemed University, among the faculty, professional colleagues and students of this rare and outstanding institution. I believe this is the highest tribute which can be paid to Dr. Rajammal Devadas, since it reflects an understanding and appreciation of the total dedication which she has made of her life and talents toward reaching for the very highest ideals of professional attainment - not for herself but for the betterment of womankind and mankind. In her efforts to attain these ideals, she has worked

tirelessly with unbelievable energy and has served as a role model for many who strive to follow in her footsteps. The celebration of her 80 years is not the end of her inspired leadership, since she continually gives every living breath to her cause. Beyond that, her many carefully trained students and followers do and will carry her causes forward. Thus, this celebration is a way to recognize the importance of a great leader in giving direction, life and energy to great causes on behalf of the profession of Home Science and the Education of Women, and to give impetus to these causes now and in the future.

The remainder of my tribute will focus on my understandings and experiences with Dr. Rajammal Devadas in several of her many roles. While others will document her multitudinous and esteemed honours, positions, publications, and achievements, it seems useful to speak from a more personal set of observations as a way to document the contributions to date of this remarkable woman.

### **As a leader**

Dr. Devadas is recognized all over India and the World as a scientist and an articulate spokesperson for her past and present work at Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University (ADU). I was with her as she received an award from the University Grants Commission in Delhi in fall, 1992, and was constantly impressed with the network of professionals whom she knew personally and who knew her. On this occasion I was introduced to many from various agencies and disciplines whom she considered colleagues, and it was clear that they regarded her as a leader – an articulate professional who could and did speak out on behalf of her causes and her profession. This broad level of recognition was also visible as I accompanied her on visits to villages. One I particularly remember

was to a dedication of an elementary school, where she was part of the dedication ceremony and was able to make important linkages between the necessity of high quality village schools and the need for meaningful higher education for women. Other venues for observing her leadership qualities included her participation in International Federation of Home Economics Conferences, held in all parts of the world, and in her multiple travels across the United States and Canada. The granting of honorary doctoral degrees to her by Oregon State University and her alumna institution, The Ohio State University, also attest to the broad level of recognition of her leadership status.

### **As a Role Model**

On a more personal level, when one works directly with her it soon becomes clear that she holds herself to the highest level of performance standards. She dedicates long hours of her day to professional work on behalf of the institution she currently represents, and cherishes. It is also clear that she holds others to the same standards of excellence toward which she strives. This included all who might become representatives of ADU - students, staff, faculty and even visitors. Each was expected to give her or his best and, indeed, challenged to go beyond. It was possible to witness both the frustration and the previously unimagined successes which resulted from the expectations of the, then, Vice Chancellor of ADU. The fact that Dr. Devadas lived every expectation which she had for others provided the spirit which I observed every day I was present on the ADU campus in 1992.

### **As a Visionary**

I don't believe I have ever met anyone as open to new ideas as Dr. Devadas. She has a specially tuned ear for words, ideas, acts, and programs that carry one to the next

level - often expressed as the “cutting edge”. I often observed the transformation of “old” ideas, phrases, programs into “new”, in a time frame that others sometimes believed to be impossible. This could be observed in the development of Extension Programs emanating from the campus, the addition of computer-based instruction on campus, the renovation and re-conceptualization of the campus library, the addition of much needed buildings and space for the program, and so on. Thus, the mission and program and ADU was (and is) constantly being rearticulated while the solid principles and values on which it was founded remain in place. The growth and current impact of ADU is, in large part, an expression of both the dreams and positive action of Dr. Devadas as Vice Chancellor and Chancellor, brought to realization by her hard work but also through the trust, dedication, and hard work of her exceptional faculty, plus the students and alumni of ADU.

### **As a Dedicated Professional**

Dr. Devadas is fully aware of what it takes to build respect for a profession : its mission, its code of ethics, its integrity and its ability to make a positive change in the world. Thus Dr. Rajammal Devadas has always presented herself as a professional, and encouraged everyone within her hearing to be an active participant. Thus it is possible for visitors to see the excitement for ideas which is embodied in the students and faculty of ADU, the stretching and growing it takes to move forward, the commitment to research that is necessary to carry the profession to ever higher levels, and the willingness to extend the learning of the University to villagers, to inner-city dwellers, and to all who may benefit from the academic grounding of home science professionals.

### **As a Friend**

Finally, I wish to thank Dr. Devadas for her friendship. It is because of her that my experience in South India was as rich and rewarding as it was. She connected with me and others of our faculty affiliations team on a human level, and gave of her precious time to be sure that we could partake of every professional and cultural experience that was available. She arranged for us to visit villages, meet with active professionals in related disciplines, come to know families in India, and generally feel welcome and accepted into Indian society. While all of my professional colleagues on the ADU campus played a large role in my acclimation to ADU and India (and I am continually grateful for their lasting friendship and concern) it must be said that Dr. Devadas set the tone. That she is able to function effectively in all critical areas of life - family, friendship, religious, professional, community, state, nation and international - is truly a mark of a great woman, Dr. Rajammal Devadas.

With sincere admiration and regards. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - OUR GOOD FRIEND**

MARGARET AND ALLAN PORTER

**D**ear Rajammal,

It must be about 18 years since Allan and I were introduced to you by Mohan and Mary. Mohan had been our family G.P. for sometime then and thankfully still is. We live in an age when it is instant this and instant that. Here we were with 'Instant! friendship'. We feel we have known you all of our lives and even though your visits are not many - the friendship lasts. I'm sure this kind of friendship is given to only a few - God given. Your time in visiting your own family here is so precious to you and yet you have found time in sharing some with us. The memory of the times you gave visiting my aged mother with me!. She enjoyed your company. We both were enriched by those visits and meant so much to us to share with the staff and fellow patients in the nursing home. We were very thankful and you made us happy.

Having our daughter Elizabeth - a practising and fully qualified Dietitian - Nutritionist has also been a strong link with you and Mohan. We have read with great interest your letters and bulletins telling us of your travels to many countries for conferences and the people you have met abroad. Elizabeth attends many conferences within Australia but did visit China this year with a group researching Parkinson's disease. The incidence of that disease is less there than in Australia. Do you remember our visit to orange with you and your friend from the Avinashilingam Institute? We did so want to show you both the Blue mountains at Katoomba but alas the "Three Sisters were covered in a heavy fog and vision was nil. It was a long but enjoyable day and the weather improved as we went along. That day you dressed Megan, Elizabeth's elder daughter in a sari.

Our Church had an outreach last Saturday - International night and many helped us to dress two young friends in sarees. I was able to supply a skirt, scarves, beads, shawls and table clothes which over the years have been gifts to us from you. Lots of people heard about you and your work on the night and where Coimbatore is - it was my pleasure to speak of you and our friendship and also the fact that we serve the same master Jesus our Lord and are 'One in Christ'. Thank you also Raj for the beautiful Alexandrian stones. They are valued very much and valued more so because you gave of your time to look for them.

We love your family dearly. In knowing them and you, God has blessed us truly. Mohan and Mary care for us in every way and they are friends indeed - which reminds me I must make some more "Cheese Cookies". I started cooking them because they contain no eggs - my little grand daughter could not tolerate eggs at the time - and that was the start of the production of eggless recipes. I shall be cooking them again. Allan never tires of them and I really do not get tired of producing same - especially for you to take home to India.

May the Lord bless you in every way and we hope to see you shortly again.



## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - AN UNPARALLEL SUPPORTER OF “CRUSADES OF COMPANIAN”**

LEONARD S REID

**I**t gives me a great deal of pleasure to congratulate Dr. Rajammal Devadas, Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University - on the occasion of her 80th Birthday.

The life and work of this great lady would surely make one of the most interesting and outstanding biographies of our century. Her outstanding achievements in so many fields of human endeavour as well as the scientific and international linkage between her own country and other nations which she has personally created, has been quite remarkable.

During my 30 years as Director of an Overseas Aid Agency working throughout the Indian sub-continent in assisting the underprivileged in developing countries, mainly through gift consignments of good breeds of livestock and welfare projects, I visited the Sri Avinashilingam Home Science Trust at the personal invitation of Dr. Devadas on very many occasions and during this period it has been my privilege and pleasure to come to personally know and appreciate the depth and breadth of her many interests.

In 1978 our organisation donated a consignment of some 60 top dairy cattle to the Sri Avinashilingam Home Science Trust in Tamil Nadu, as India's then Prime Minister Morarji Desai had spoken out strongly in favour of rural development to raise the living standards of the village people and good breeds of dairy cattle played

a significant part in helping the weaker section of the community. These cattle did exceptionally well under the supervision of Dr. Devadas and her excellent staff and many other smaller projects were undertaken following the lead provided by the Home Science Trust at Coimbatore.

At that time I took the opportunity to introduce the English organisation “Find Your Feet” who were currently experimenting with the use of Leaf Protein into the village children's food as a supplementary measure for extra vitamins. As always it was Dr. Devadas who quickly implemented the necessary measures to put into place a large program in her own area in order to feed the nearby village children which also acted as a “forerunner” of many other such projects in surrounding areas into the wider world.

Not only is our organisation indebted to Dr. Devadas for her guidance, co-operation and implementation of Livestock projects but she provided unparalleled support for our “Crusades of Compassion” across India, which were promoted to focus attention and activity to children's needs in developing countries, 48,000 of whom died everyday from hunger and neglect. We considered this to be by far the greatest moral and political issue confronting the world, as a child died every five seconds - or every five steps the walkers took on these Crusades of Compassion which included :-

1979	India	–	Kanyakumari to Delhi (International Year of the Child)	3800 kms
1986	India	–	Calcutta to Delhi (International Year of Peace)	1600 kms
1988	India	–	Hyderabad / Madras / Cochin / Coimbatore / Bangalore	2500 kms



## **A TRIBUTE TO DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**BETTY J. SKRDLA , WILLIS H. SKRDLA**

**W**hile in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, South India with her husband, Dr. Skrdla, Betty had a most unexpected, interesting, rewarding, and memorable experience. Dr. Skrdla was attending a national pulses workshop at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University while on assignment as Director of the Plant Genetic Resources Unit for ICRISAT, International Center for Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics, headquartered in Patancheru near Hyderabad, India.

It was four<sup>o</sup> clock on a warm May afternoon in 1985 when Betty received a phone call from the office of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women asking her to come immediately for a visit and dinner. As Betty's driver approached the tree shaded college walls and gate, a tiny lady with a glorious smile met her with hugs and "Namaste". She's a love! This dear lady was Dr. Rajammal Devadas.

Betty was ushered into her administrative office to have tea and to meet the founder of the college Sri T.S. Avinashilingam, a saintly elderly man with whom Betty was left to chat privately for an hour. His experiences as a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Freedom fighter, educator and humanitarian were unbelievable. What a charming and intelligent man!

When Dr. Don Faris and Dr. Skrdla arrived, we were served a delicious Indian dinner in Dr. Devadas' fragrant, quiet garden beneath lovely old trees. Her grand daughter, a student from Australia, Dr. Kamalanathan and Sri Avinashilingam were also guests.

Since Sri Avinashilingam and Dr. Devadas were going to leave later in the evening by train to Madras and on to New Delhi to assist in drawing up the Seventh Five Year plan for India with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, we bid goodbye to our precious hostess and others. After dinner we were taken on a tour of the campus, an amazing example of what a single awesome woman with a dream and determination can accomplish, all done to rescue young girl children and women from lives of misery, illiteracy, abuse, and others, just wasting their many talents. There were roof top solar collectors, an inexpensive clean, well built house, nursery, primary and secondary schools, dormitories, college classrooms and offices, gardens, orchard, bio-mass gas collector piped into kitchen for cooking fuel, prize chickens and cows, paper making shop, bindery, print shop, garden, child development labs, furniture making shop, foundry, and a shop for repairs and electrical work, plus a Temple for all faiths. Thus began what has been our close friendship with this amazing lady!.

Dr. Kamalanathan met us at the college the next day to take us on a driving tour through several larger villages, which the college had adopted. The villages reflected the applied teachings of these saintly people and their students doing community service. We were shown clean bore wells, permanent roofs and concrete siding on houses, food stored safely, women depositing earnings in Postal Savings in order to keep it safe from alcoholic spouses squandering it. One saw colorful family planning posters, sanitation being practiced, food preservation, health care and other practices being brought into everyday practice. Travelling in rural Tamil Nadu is a joy. Never had we seen such lush, healthy crops in neat, beautiful fields of sesame, curry, millet, bananas, sorghum, coconut, sugar cane, cotton and vegetables. All attest to the successful application and teaching of the Avinashilingam Agricultural College (KVK) and the joint Rural Development programs initiated under Dr. Devadas' guidance. In one small village a crowd watched fascinated as a recovering village

alcoholic man, trained by Dr. Devadas to rehabilitate him, fashioned a smokeless terra cotta chola cookstove with a chimney to prevent smoke damaging eyes and lungs of women accustomed to cooking over open fires. Women could buy these stoves for Rs.40/- and, after convincing five others to buy, could have the Rs.40/- refunded. It was our pleasure a few weeks later to meet Dr. Kamalanathan, friend of Dr. Devadas, at the Hyderabad railway station and to spend time further strengthening our admiration for this close associate / assistant to Dr. Devadas.

After our seventeen month stay at ICRISAT, we returned to the USA via South Asia and Hawaii. Four months later we were recalled to India for Dr. Skrdla's assignment with USAID and the Indo-US Plant Genetic Resources Project, as team leader. This time we were headquartered in New Delhi and travelled throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent to visit Plant Institutes, Universities, and research areas in thirty eight locations, all within the time frame of twenty two days. Reflecting back, we recall our correspondence via mail, FAX and telephone, plus Dr. Devadas' visit to our hotel when we were in Coimbatore in 1986 for a brief tour of the plant work at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Since our time was so limited, Dr. Devadas graciously elected to visit us at our hotel carrying gifts and smiles. We felt so humble to have her unselfish giving of her precious time and energy to have, for us, such a memorable and special chat.

It was during our busy travel time that Dr. Devadas invited Betty to participate with her in New Delhi as volunteer delegate to the SAARC-UNICEF Conference on the "Conditions and Needs of Women and Children", a United Nations sponsored Conference. This proved to be a "Mountain Top" experience in Betty's life. It brought together issues common to all the nations involved as well as urgent needs to improve the status of women's health, safety, environment, education, and other important related topics. The status of women and children was described as shocking in most

of the countries participating in the conference. Closing this momentous conference was a mass of colorful happy children of all nations marching through the huge assembly hall. They were singing “We are the Children of the World”, led by a child from India carrying the United Nations torch. This torch was passed from country to country around the globe. Spending those days together, October 26-29, 1986 at the SAARC Conference, eating meals together, shopping and visiting, meanwhile meeting colleagues and cultivating new friends, was like a dream come true. Every moment was filled with learning, and thus mind boggling for all attendees. We realized we must not dodge reality or turn our backs on situations which must be faced. Only an affirmative approach inspires progress in solving Women's Issues. No outstanding work is done alone but by joining hands in peace, and with commitment to goals approved by the delegates.

Dr. Devadas is the eldest of nine born to an illiterate mother and an educated father who taught his wife to read and write and travelled a great deal of time for the Indian Forest Service. Left alone, the mother instilled this work ethic and values, including honesty, unselfishness, caring, clean morals, self esteem, love of God, respect for all levels of society, and reaching out to others less fortunate.

Not only does Dr. Devadas have the dynamic expertise of a world class Research Scientist and Educator, she exudes warmth, caring and compassion sensing the needs and feeling of others. She accepts each day as a gift from God. Time is not to be wasted, believing”.... if it is to be, it's up to me”. She forges doggedly ahead in pursuit of her lofty goals. In spite of her super busy schedule she lovingly helped care for her elderly mother until she died at an age of 103.

Dr. Devadas epitomizes the Renaissance Woman. During her eight decades of life she has worked tirelessly, sleeping only four hours per night, to improve the nutrition and health of India's population of millions as well as reaching out to other disadvantaged masses across our world. It was our pleasure to help nominate and endorse the name of Dr. Rajammal Devadas for the World Food Prize on three different years. It was a great disappointment to have her name passed over and the award given to a male philanthropist scientist. We contended that researching and developing a life sustaining diet to restore and maintain millions of humans, training ten thousand teachers and outreach workers to distribute the foods and educate the underprivileged can affect lives of countless people worldwide. Cambodia is testing her plan. Emerging nations need this. Anyone who has toured the Avinashilingam Insititute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) cannot help but be awestruck by the ability and far reaching impact of this powerful University Chancellor. Under her direction, thousands of rural and village development workers distribute a daily, inexpensive nutritious and life sustaining meal to ten million young people at centers staffed by her graduates. Because of her belief in the need for a well rounded education through a Ph.D. if possible, students are prepared scientifically, academically, and practically to hold excellent positions of responsibility, influencing others of their values and abilities.

“Time is not measured by the years we live but by the deeds we do and the joy we give”.

In June 1993, we met Dr. Devadas at the Des Moines Iowa airport and brought her to our home in Ames where she spent about five days as our guest. A crowded schedule kept her busy touring various Research and Home Science laboratories on the ISU campus and Des Moines, visits with college administrators, professors, scientists, former students, World Food Prize Coordinator, and others. She was taken

to a Retirement Center, a Senior Citizen Center, to church where people clapped for her comments after being introduced and again at a Kiwanis Club meeting where she unexpectedly substituted for the scheduled speaker who was unable to attend. She did a beautiful job on both occasions, telling a bit about her work, dreams for the future and the world.

We could never have had a more delightful guest with the fresh enthusiasm of a child or young person, gracious, observing every detail, quick to lend a helping hand--so refreshing. It was a rare treat to share common interests in family, human relations, education, research, women's issues, religious beliefs and our mutual love of India with knowledge of its ancient, colorful past, excitement with the current advances there, plus dreams for a secure future, self-sufficiency for all--health, adequate food, housing, financial security, food sanitation and markets for their marvellous products / goods. A public reception was held in her honor at the City Auditorium at which time she showed slides of her program in India, of Avinashilingam College, and other points of interest. She left her audience entranced.

Dr. and Mrs. Skrdla were called back to India in October 1986 for the dedication of the new National Plant Germplasm Center, Dr. Skrdla had helped plan and develop ten years before. While in New Delhi they attended the International Crop Science Congress at which time our esteemed friend, Dr. Devadas, travelled to meet us at Le Meridian Hotel where we stayed as Government guests. We had a quiet dinner with Dr. Devadas and a friend who had driven her to the hotel. Always cognizant of needs of others, she gave Betty a lovely wool shawl, a very useful item because it was cold in Delhi after sunset, and a strand of beautiful white beads. To have travelled such a long distance for friends was just incredible. How humble we felt. No accolades are adequate for her. As long as she lives, she unselfishly gives.

Leadership means getting people to work for you when they are under no obligation to do so. Getting people to work together, efficiently and effectively is the purpose of leadership, intelligence, courage and empathy. A great leader never sets himself above his followers except in carrying out responsibilities. Our dear Rajammal Devadas is a true leader in every sense of the word. Remaining the eternal optimist, she knows that with God, all things are possible; is aware of problems but recognizes there are solutions; knows about difficulties but believes they can be overcome; sees the negative but accentuates the positive; is exposed to the worse, but expects the best; has reason to complain but prefers to smile. Such is Dr. Devadas.

When one thinks of a saint, India's Mother Teresa comes to mind. Another Indian lady in the forefront of modern India deserving as saintly is our dear friend, Dr. Rajammal Devadas - a great leader and Humanitarian.

Today India is becoming modernized rapidly. A phenomenal increase in agricultural production enables India to export grains wherebefore, they had to import. Massive literacy and health programs are emerging as are modern transportation and tourism, increased educational opportunities for all, better communication technology and a growing attitude that a female human being is fully capable of having an impact in raising India to total greatness. Tolerance and recognition of all humanity as precious and blessed should be everyone's aim.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas was born to be a blessing to her country and the world. How very blessed we are to honor her as our friend. We think she is a lady with class.

## CLASS

Class never runs scared. It is sure-footed and confident. It can handle whatever comes along.

Class has a sense of humor. It knows that a good laugh is the best lubricant for oiling the machinery of human relations.

Class never makes excuses. It takes its lumps and learns from past mistakes.

Class knows that good manners are nothing more than a series of small, inconsequential sacrifices.

Class bespeaks an aristocracy that has nothing to do with ancestors or money. Some wealthy “blue bloods” have no class, while some individuals who are struggling to make ends meet are loaded with it.

Class is real. It can't be faked.

Class is comfortable in its own skin. It never puts on airs.

Class never tries to build itself up by tearing others down. Class is already up and need not strive to look better by making others look worse.

Class can “walk with kings and keep its virtue and talk with crowds and keep the common touch”.

*(Thank you, Rudyard Kipling).*

Everyone is comfortable with the person who has class because that person is comfortable with himself.

If you have class, you've got it made. If you don't have class, no matter what else you have, it doesn't make any difference.

Devoted to the teachings of the founder of modern India, Dr. Devadas knows the Seven Sins are : 1) Wealth without work, 2) Pleasure without conscience, 3)

Knowledge without character, 4) Commerce without morality, 5) Science without humanity, 6) Worship without sacrifice, 7) Politics without principle.... teaching and living the kind of life advocated by Gandhi.

As a volunteer in India, as well as in the USA, Betty aspires to live by the following Volunteer Creed :

The more you give, the more you get ;  
The more you laugh, the less you fret;  
The more you do unselfishly;  
The more you live abundantly;  
The more of everything you share,  
The more you'll always have to spare;  
The more you love, the more you'll find  
That life is good and friends are kind;  
For only what you give away  
Enriches you from day to day,  
So, don't be shocked to find  
When the day of judgement nears,  
There's a special place in Heaven  
Set aside for volunteers.

One of the great mandates by which humanity proceeds across the centuries is that the future is in a large part determined by our memory of the past. Our tomorrows to a great extent are fashioned by our memory of all our yesterdays.

May Dr. Devadas look back on her many prestigious honors and awards, successes as an educator, humanitarian, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, a motivator and what we in the USA call a “Shaker and Mover” of ideas, people and governments. She's a marvel.

Thank you for letting us express our love for this dearest of ladies.

## **LOVE**

Love is friendship that has caught fire. It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is a loyalty through good and bad. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses.

Love is content with the present, it hopes for the future and it doesn't brood over the past. It's the day-in and day-out chronicle of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories, and working toward common goals.

If you have love in your life, it can make up for many things you lack. If you don't have it, no matter what else there is, it's not enough.

Dr. Devadas has endless love in her life and can be venerated as a role model for all women and girls. Success and tragedy shaped her life.. but God gave her the talent and compassion to touch millions of lives! May God continue to Bless her throughout her twilight years. Happy eightieth birthday, Rajammal, from your Ames friends.

## **PEACE**

PEACE will come when people live  
In friendship, side by side,  
And cherish understanding  
More than hatred, greed, and pride.


PEACE will come when people see  
All people as the same,  
And no one has to live in fear,  
In ignorance, or shame.

PEACE will come when people  
who are needy can reach out  
For shelter, food, or love,  
And no one has to do without.

PEACE will come when people  
Learn to listen and to care  
About the rights and dignity  
Of people everywhere.

PEACE will come when love and trust  
And kindness know rebirth,  
And on that day all people  
Will rejoice in peace on earth.

*(Amanda Bradley)*



## **RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED NUTRITION EDUCATOR**

**SHEILA TURNER**

I feel particularly honoured to be invited to contribute to the collection of papers to celebrate Dr. Rajammal Devadas's 80th birthday and her valuable contribution to the field of education, particularly nutrition education, over a period of many decades.

I first met Dr. Rajammal Devadas in London in 1983 when she participated in an International Conference on New Developments in Nutrition Education that I organised with a colleague, Dr. Richard Ingle. However, I was already acquainted with her work and her enormous contribution to school feeding programmes and nutrition education. So the meeting in London was a particular pleasure as it enabled me to work with and learn from Rajammal. Her contribution to the meeting was of tremendous value, as is evident from the papers in the conference proceedings that were subsequently published by UNESCO. This first meeting was of particular significance for me as it signalled the beginning of an ongoing professional dialogue and, more importantly, a long standing friendship.

Our next meeting was in Ciombatore at the Sri Avinashilingam College in December 1983. Rajammal has been instrumental in organising an important and significant meeting on School Feeding Programmes and Education under the auspices of WFP/UNESCO and other organisations including CARE. Rajammal Devadas worked tirelessly with the late Richard Loewald and J.S. Nanda from WFP / UNESCO and colleagues in Coimbatore to ensure the success of this very important meeting. All of us who attended regarded the meeting as a significant milestone for both SFP and education. The outcomes can be seen not just in the quality of the publication

from that meeting, including a UNESCO Digest devoted to the topic, but also in initiatives in countries as far afield as South America and Africa in the decade that followed. More recent initiatives, for example the Health Promoting Schools in Europe initiatives (WHO, 1993), embody many of the principles agreed at the Coimbatore meeting. On a personal level the meeting has led to a continuing involvement in Education and School Meals Programmes and determination to implement that shared vision of nutrition education. I still think about my visits to schools in Coimbatore whenever I visit schools to see School Meals Programmes in action - as I have done recently in Brazil.

Coimbatore also conjures up memories of wonderful friendships, hospitality and social events - including impressive dinners and dancing, to say nothing of a lively participants' evening when unknown talents were revealed. However, for me the highlight of all these celebrations was the nativity play presented by pupils at the College school. No one, of whatever faith, could have failed to have been moved by the simplicity and sincerity of the young people who participated.

Since the Coimbatore meeting I have continued to meet and speak to Rajammal Devadas on a regular basis, often on the telephone as she rushes from one international gathering to another. I continue to be amazed by her enormous vitality - intellectual and physical - which enables her to pursue such a busy schedule and to make such a vital and important contribution to nutrition education at an international level.

I send my greetings and best wishes to Rajammal as she celebrates her eightieth birthday and wish I could be there to share what will, I am sure, be a very wonderful and memorable occasion. ●

## LITTLE BITS OF OSU

RICHARD G. (DICK) WARNER

I sincerely appreciate the honor of being asked to provide a letter recognizing the eightieth birthday of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas as well as her contributions to her university, her country, the world, to nutrition, to women and to all humanity. I am in somewhat of a unique circumstance. I am an animal nutritionist and not completely conversant with the field of human nutrition. I am a long time friend. Our paths have not crossed in over fifty years, though we do exchange Christmas cards. Nonetheless she was a sparkle in my life as a young graduate student at Ohio State I appreciate very much the opportunity to be included with those who congratulate her and wish her well.

Dr. Devadas and I were part of a graduate student group that studied under Dr. T. Scott Sutton, the Department of Animal Husbandry at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio in the late forties. The others were Dr. Jessie Fischer and Gopes Chandra Esh (also from India). Dr. Devadas was not always headquartered in our lab. Thus we were not always in daily contact. Because of her diminutive stature, I, in typical American fashion, gave her the affectionate nickname of “Little Bits”. Probably my most singular contribution to her scientific progress was my ability to get chemicals for her from the top shelf in the laboratory. Our conversations were jovial, provocative and informative. Because of her, I came to respect the importance of women in the nutrition field and also to learn about India. She was from Madras and that gave me a cornerstone of that country from which to launch intelligent

discussions about India. In recent years I had the occasion to visit with Dr. and Mrs. Sutton (now both deceased) and we talked of “Little Bits” with much enthusiasm. She was a pleasant addition to the ambience of that time.

As she becomes eighty years young, I send to her all the best wishes for a pleasant life down the road. As connoted by her Chancellorship and her Editorship, she is a credit to her country and to the field of nutrition. I am proud to be her friend. Congratulations!!!

●

## **RAJAMMAL - A WONDERFUL LADY ONE OF WHOM INDIA SHOULD BE PROUD**

DOROTHY WISE

**M**y first meeting with Rajammal was back in the 1950's. At that time I was working for "The farmers weekly" and was a member of a Farm Woman's Club belonging to that paper. They asked me if I would entertain an Indian lady who would be visiting the Annual Agricultural Show, that year held in Oxfordshire where we farmed. I was delighted to do so. She was to arrive late afternoon and I could not meet her as my children were due home from school, but I sent my dear husband to meet her at Witney our nearest town.

I heard the car returning with our guest, so rushed out to meet her. I shall never forget my first sight of her potit figure dressed in a beautiful sari (which my children admired, especially Sarah my five year old daughter). She was tired but soon revived and I remember her saying "My mother would be horrified at me travelling with a man un-chaparoned!". This had never occurred to me! However both Rajammal and Jim, my husband got on very well.

I had a lot to learn. I prepared a curry, I remember a curried rabbit, only to learn that my lovely guest was a vegetarian! However I had prepared several vegetables and pudding so all was well. I remember that we took her down to see the infant river Thames at Radcot Bridge. I have a snap of her and Sarah taken by the riverside. Later she sent Sarah a beautiful yellow saree which Sarah still has. We visited the Agricultural

Show and all too soon her visit came to an end, But our friendship *did not* and we have corresponded *ever since*. So I have been able to follow her illustrious career. We left the farm in 1963 and ran a Welsh Craft Shop in the beautiful old town of Burford in the Cotswolds and it was here in the late sixties or early seventies that Rajammal and her sister and her sister's husband Ernest came to stay. Rajammal was due to give a lecture in London to promote a machine that could turn alfafa into edible balls of good protein food. She arranged her slides on my kitchen table. Then we both travelled upto London and I attended her lecture and was very impressed. I often wondered what happened about that machine? We also managed a visit to Stratford on Avon so that Rajammal could see Shakespeares birthplace and the theatre. We did some shopping I remember and we both bought a small wine coloured goblet with the Queen's head on it in Wedgewood blue. I still have mine. I hope that Dr. Rajammal has a wonderful 80th year. She is a wonderful lady, one of whom India should be proud. ●

## **RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LEADER**

**MARGY WOODBURN**

**I**t is great honor to be invited to join with Dr. Devadas's many colleagues and friends to honor her eightieth birthday. Others will recount her accomplishments in her distinguished career as a nutrition researcher; educator and leader in women's education ; advocate for literacy and for food and nutrition for infants and children; and visionary, especially for what is now the excellent and comprehensive Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women-Deemed University. In recognition of her achievements, Oregon State University awarded Rajammal Devadas an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters on June 13, 1993.

I first met Dr. Devadas at an international Women in Development Conference in Washington, D.C. She was always in the center of groups discussing shared needs and collaboration. We met to plan a proposal for collaboration between our two universities. The facilitator, as she was to remain, was my colleague and A.D.U. alumni, Revathi Balakrishnan.

From that beginning, Dr. Devadas has been a source of professional inspiration for me.

The U.S. Information Agency Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs approved and funded our proposal for cooperation between Avinashilingam Deemed University and Oregon State University. With each of us the project director on our own campus, we travelled to orient faculty participants. Dr. Devadas came to our campus and effectively oriented the six of us as to India, Coimbatore and the University.

The concept of involving each student in an outreach, volunteer literacy program in the community and later in efforts related to their own majors was one that caused us to rethink our limited involvement of students.

I then went to A.D.U both to orient the faculty participants and for two months as one. Although she was extremely busy as vice-chancellor, Dr. Devadas included me in many university and community events. I learned to admire the efforts being made to improve family life, nutrition, education and health of all ages in Tamil Nadu. Under Dr. Devadas's leadership, the University had been a leader in programs to achieve these goals, including those of school foods, health of pregnant women and their babies, and, more recently, the education of those with special needs (the handicapped).

Our grant from 1990-1993 facilitated the stay on the O.S.U. campus of eight faculty from A.D.U. and on the A.D.U. campus, of eight faculty from O.S.U. This included an exchange of librarians as Dr. Devadas recognized that a critical need for any university is a high quality library.

She also introduced me to the late Chancellor, Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam, for whom she felt the greatest respect. A highlight of my campus stay was a meeting with him.

Since then, I have returned to campus for a short visit and continued to keep in touch. Dr. Devadas's vision of A.D.U. as a comprehensive university glows brightly. New majors, such as engineering, have succeeded. There is a vigor on campus.

It was a proud occasion for all of us who had participated in the project to have Dr. Devadas honored with a Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1993. To quote from the citation for the honorary degree ;

“Dr. Rajammal Devadas.... leading advocate for families and for health ; nutritionist ; political leader ; visionary.

Dr. Devadas has educated more than 10,000 teachers and articulated her ideas for improving the quality of life for families in the developing world through 40 books and 360 research papers. She has received many awards for her revolutionary work in child welfare, literacy and the rights of women. Dr. Devadas is a pioneer Home Scientist of international reputation”.

Again in a major speech on campus, she challenged us to involve students to make a difference in the larger community. Not content with things as they are but striving to reach ever higher goals. Dr. Devadas continues to lead.

Happy Birthday to an internationally recognized leader. ●

**PROFESSIONALS FROM  
DIFFERENT WALKS  
OF LIFE**

## **RAJAMMAL : A FOUNTAIN OF LOVE**

**J.B. BHATTACHARJEE**

**W**hen the Govt. of India decided to establish a Central University at Silchar and called upon me to be its first Vice-Chancellor, I was aware of the challenge and immediately made a census of the resource persons in the country whom I can approach to guide me in my this new assignment. I enlisted Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for her expertise in home science and her experience in institution building. I did assume charge on 21 January 1994 and then the Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, inaugurated the Assam University on the same day. The day one told me how difficult was the task ahead of me. Fortunately, the first Executive Council, first Planning Board and the first Academic Council nominated by the President of India, in his capacity as the Visitor of Central University, included a galaxy of personalities from far and near in the country, who were renowned scholars in their fields and who had earned great experience in higher education planning and management as heads of Universities and Institutes and from various other activities. They opened up their hard-earned store of knowledge and vision, and ungrudgingly showered these in defining the goal and designing the policies and programmes of the new University. We worked as a team with one goal. I call this team as real founder of the Assam University. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is one of them.

The magnificent work of this team is the Assam University as it is now. In five years, it has emerged as a full-fledged major University. It has 24 academic departments and three centres of studies, besides 54 affiliated colleges (only 20 of which were inherited from Gauhati University on the date of establishment). The courses offered are a mix of traditional and non-traditional professional sets. Some of the innovative

and job-oriented courses introduced in this university are for the first time in the North East. These are aimed at socio-economic and cultural development of the region in the 21st century. The traditional concept that the university departments are for the post-graduate education and research has been partially modified to accommodate five-year integrated courses to admit the students after +2 level. This format is also innovative for the North-East. The progress in infrastructure development is also remarkable. From the hired and borrowed accommodations where the university started functioning and which were scattered in and outside the city, the entire university has been shifted within five years to its permanent site (20 kms from Silchar). The Assam University Campus of 600 acres of green mounts and valleys is a busy bubbling scenic hamlet with modern facilities and electronic network of communication. This rapid growth has been possible due to vision and drive of those who were associated with policy-making at the initial stage. Dr. Devadas is one of them.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was a member of the first Executive Council and first Academic Council and some important committees constituted by these authorities. The meetings of these authorities and committees were mostly held at Silchar, barring a few in Calcutta and Delhi. Silchar is very far from Coimbatore. It is one of the farthest points in India's North-East, very close to where India, Bangladesh and Burma would meet. Dr. Devadas did not miss a single meeting, either at Silchar or elsewhere. She participated in every meeting actively and directed the discussions to decisions. She supported the proposals for modernisation of courses and the introduction of non-conventional professional courses to suit the national and global changes in economy and the human resource requirement, but insisted that the universities should continue to be the centres of ideas and value-oriented education. She shared her experience in the Avinashilingam Institute, and it was due to her suggestion that we introduced the five-year integrated courses in subjects like computer

science, social work and fine arts. She submitted a proposal for women studies, and we have now a Women's Studies Centre in Assam University, Silchar:

The most important aspect of the personality of Dr. Devadas is that she is the gem of a person - a great human being. She loves and she is loved. In her, there is an extra-ordinary power of love which binds everyone who come into her contact. I have noticed this throughout her association with the Assam University. In the meetings sometimes she was tough on her position, but ultimately every one felt persuaded. She would put her point across in such a soft and gentle tenor that no one is hurt or vindicated. She befriended everyone in the University. Before every meeting, the officers and staff would keep enquiring in the V.C.'s office whether Madam's confirmation has been received. Sometimes it happened that the confirmation did not reach on time due to postal difficulty (though she is always particular about it), but a vehicle with staff was sent to the airport to receive her, for it was sure that she will arrive and this anticipation always came true. My wife and daughters met her only twice or thrice, but she is now one among the nearest and dearest. Infact, Dr. Devadas is the eldest member of this family. This is the power of her love which begets love. She is indeed a fountain of love. As I said, we are known not for a long time, considering the number of years we have already lived, but within this short period she has created an indelible impression which stresses and strains of time and circumstances can hardly obliterate. To know her is to love her. ●

## தீருமதி டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்களுக்கு வாழ்த்து

லெ.ப.கரு. இராமநாதன் செட்டியார்

**தி**ரு டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்களுடன் அறுபது ஆண்டுகளுக்கு மேலாக நான் நன்கு பழகியுள்ளேன்.

இவர்கள், அறுபது ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன், அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் INTERMEDIATE வகுப்பில் கல்வி பயின்றபோது அவர்களுக்குத் தமிழாசிரியராக இருக்கும் பேற்றினை நான் பெற்றேன். நூற்றைம்பது மாணவர்கள் சேர்ந்து படித்த அந்த வகுப்பில், நடந்த தேர்வுகள் அனைத்திலும் முதல் மாணவியாகவே மதிப்புஎண் பெற்றார்கள். இவர்களுக்கு அடுத்து மதிப்புஎண் பெறும் மாணவரின் மதிப்புஎண்; இவர்கள் பெறும் மதிப்பு எண்களை விட பத்து மதிப்புஎண்களுக்கு மேல் குறைவாகவே இருக்கும்.

டாக்டர். நாவலர் சோமசுந்தர பாரதியார் அவர்கள் இயற்றிய ‘மாரிவாயில்’ என்னும் நூலினை இவர்கள் வகுப்பில் நான் கற்பித்தேன். இந்நூலின் செய்யுட்கள், எளிய நடையினவாக இல்லாததுடன், இந்தப் பாடல்கள், அந்த பெரிய வகுப்பில் முழு விளக்கம் கூற முடியானவாகவும் இருந்ததனால் அந்தப் பாடல்களின் சொற்சுவை, பொருட்சுவைகளை விளக்கமாக அறியவேண்டும் என்று இவர்கள் விரும்பி, அந்த வகுப்பில் இவர்களுடன் சேர்ந்து படித்த மாணவியர் ஐவருக்கும் ஓய்வு நேரத்தில் தனியாகவும் நான் இப்பாடல்களைக் கற்பிக்க வேண்டும் என்று குறிப்பிட்டு எனக்கு இவர்கள் கடிதம் எழுதினார்கள். அப்போது, தமிழ்த்துறைத் தலைவராக இருந்த டாக்டர் நாவலர் சோமசுந்தர பாரதியார் அவர்களின் உடன்பாட்டினை நான் பெற்று, இவர்களுக்குத் தனிவகுப்பும் நடத்தினேன்.

இவ்வாறு தமிழ் கற்பதில் ஆர்வமும், அறிவுக் கூர்மையும் உடைய இவர்களின் கல்வி, எதிர்பாராத வகையில், இண்டர்மீடியட் இரண்டாம் ஆண்டிற்குத் தொடர இயலாமல் முதலாண்டிலேயே நின்றுவிட்டது. இவர்கள், பல்கலைக்கழகத்திலிருந்து விலகினாலும் இவர்கள் தமிழ் ஆர்வமும், கூர்மையான அறிவும், உயர்ந்த பண்புகளும் என் உள்ளத்திலும், என் குடும்பத்தினர் உள்ளத்திலும் ஆழப் பதிந்திருந்தன. இவர்களும், நாங்களும் ஒருவரையொருவர் மறக்க இயலாமல் குடும்ப நண்பர்களாகத் தொடர்ந்து பழகி வருகின்றோம்.

இவர்களின் அருமைத் தாயார் அவர்களும், அன்புத் தம்பியர்களும், தங்கையர்களும், நெருங்கிய உறவினர் சிலரும், எங்கள் குடும்பத்தினரும் நெருங்கிய நண்பர்களாகப் பழகி வருகின்றோம்.

இவர்கள் குடும்பத்தில், மூத்த பிள்ளையாகிய இவர்கள், தம் மாமனாகிய காவல்துறையில் பணியாற்றிய திரு. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களைத் திருமணம் செய்து கொண்டார்கள். இவர்களின் சிறிய தந்தையாரும் காவல்துறையில் பணியாற்றியவர்கள். இவர்களின் தாயார் அவர்கள் ஓர் உயர்ந்த அன்புத் தாய்க்கு எடுத்துக்காட்டானவர்கள். இவர்களுடைய தம்பிகளும், தங்கைகளும் எல்லோருடனும் இனிமையாகப் பழகும் பண்பும், உயர்ந்த ஒழுக்கமும், உடையவர்கள். இவர்கள் எல்லோரும் கல்லூரிகளில் பயின்று பட்டம் பெற்றவர்கள். திரு. இராசத்துரை, திரு. சின்னத்துரை ஆகிய இருவரும் அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் பயின்று பட்டம் பெற்றார்கள்.

டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழக கல்வியை ஓராண்டில் நிறுத்த நேர்ந்தாலும், பின்பு சென்னை அரசு மேரி கல்லூரியில் சேர்ந்து படித்துப் பட்டம் பெற்றுப் பின்பு அமெரிக்க நாட்டுக்கும் சென்று படித்துப் பற்பல பட்டங்கள் பெற்ற செய்திகளை இவர்களின் வரலாறு கூறும்.

இவர்கள் அரசு மேரி கல்லூரியில் படித்தபோது அங்கு மாணவியர் சங்கத்தின் செயலாளராக இருந்தார்கள். அப்போது என்னையும், அப்போது மாநிலக். கல்லூரிப் பேராசிரியராக இருந்த தெ.பொ. மீனாட்சிசுந்தரம் அவர்களையும் கல்லூரி தமிழ்ப் பேரவை ஆண்டு விழாவிற்கு சிறப்பு விருந்தினராக அழைத்தார்கள். அக்கல்லூரி முதல்வராக அப்போது இருந்த மிஸ். மயேஸ் என்ற ஆங்கிலப் பெண்மணி அவர்களின் தலைமையில் நாங்கள் இருவரும் ஆண்டு விழாச் சொற்பொழிவு நிகழ்த்த ஏற்பாடு செய்தார்கள். இவர்கள், என் விருப்பத்தினை ஏற்று நூல்களைப் பயின்று சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழக வித்துவான் தேர்வில் முதல் வகுப்பில் தேர்ச்சி பெற்றார்கள். இவ்வாறு தொடர்ந்து தமிழ்க்கல்வியில் நான் ஈடுபடுத்த நினைத்தாலும்; இவர்களின் குறிக்கோள், மனையியல் கல்வியில் ஈடுபட்டிருந்தது. ஆதலால், அத்துறையில் மேலும் மேலும் படித்தும், ஆராய்ச்சி செய்தும் உலகப் புகழ் பெற்றவர்களாக இப்பொழுது இவர்கள் திகழ்கின்றார்கள்.

இவர்களின் இந்த மனையியல் கல்வி ஆராய்ச்சி வன்மையையும், செயல் திறனையும் கண்ட கோவைப் பெரியவர் திரு. டி.எஸ். அவினாசிலிங்கம் செட்டியார் அவர்கள், இவர்களின் பணி மக்களுக்கு மிகவும் பயன்படும் என்று முடிவு செய்து இவர்களுக்காகவே, அவர்கள் பெயரில் அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரி நிறுவி இவர்களை அக்கல்லூரியின் முதல்வர் ஆக்கினார்கள். இப்போது அக்கல்லூரி ஆல்போல் தழைத்து, அவினாசிலிங்கம் நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகமாக உயர்ந்து வளர்ந்து வருகின்றது. இந்திய அரசின் உதவியைப் பெற்ற பல்கலைக்கழகங்களில் ஒன்றான இதற்கு அவினாசிலிங்கம் செட்டியார் அவர்கள் முதல் வேந்தராகவும், இவர்கள் முதல் துணை வேந்தராகவும் இருந்தார்கள். அவினாசிலிங்கம் செட்டியார் அவர்களுக்குப் பின், இப்பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தராக இருந்து வருகிறார்கள். இந்த நிறுவனத்தின் தோற்றமும் வளர்ச்சியும் இதற்கு டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் தொடக்க முதல் ஆற்றிவரும் பணிகளும், தனி நூலாக எழுதும் அளவிற்கு விரிவானவை.

இதற்கு முன் இவர்கள், சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழக ஆட்சிக்குழு உறுப்பினராகப் பலமுறை தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப் பெற்றும், திருநெல்வேலி மனோன் மணியம் சுந்தரனார் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்குத் துணைவேந்தரை நியமிப்பதற்குப் பரிந்துரை செய்ய அமைந்த மூவர் குழுவிற்கு அமைப்பாளராக (கன்வினராக) தமிழக அரசினால் இவர்கள் நியமிக்கப்பெற்றும் பணியாற்றியுள்ளார்கள்.

இவர்கள் எங்கள் அழைப்பினை ஏற்று நான்கு முறை அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு வந்து, அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத் தமிழ்ப் பேரவை ஆண்டு விழாச் சொற்பொழிவும், என் பெயரில் அங்கு நிறுவப் பெற்றுள்ள பேராசிரியர் லெ.ப.கரு. இராமநாதன் செட்டியார் அறக்கட்டளைச் சொற்பொழிவும், நிகழ்த்தியதும், இவர்களின் சொற்பொழிவுகளை ஆயிரத் துக்கு மேற்பட்ட மாணவர்களும், ஆசிரியர்களும் கேட்டு இன்புற்றதும்; அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் இந்திய மொழிப்புலத்தின் உறுப்பினராகவும், வல்லுநர் குழு உறுப்பினராகவும் இருந்து பணியாற்றியதும் என் நினைவிற்கு வருகின்றன.

இவர்கள் என்னை ஒருமுறை கோவைக்கு அழைத்து, அவர்களது மனையியல் கல்லூரியிலும், அவினாசிலிங்கம் செட்டியார் அவர்கள் நேர் பார்வையில் வளர்ந்து வந்த இராமகிருஷ்ணா மிஷன் நிறுவனங்களிலும் நான் சொற்பொழிவு நிகழ்த்த ஆவன செய்தார்கள். இச் சொற்பொழிவுகளில் கல்லூரியில் இவர்கள் தலைமையில் நடந்த சொற்பொழிவு ஒன்றை ஆயிரத்துக்கும் மேற்பட்ட மாணவியர்கள் அமைதியாக இருந்து கேட்டதனையும் இங்கே குறிப்பிட விரும்புகிறேன். இவ்வாறே, மேற்குறிப்பிட்டவாறு அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத் தமிழ்ப் பேரவையில், அப்போது துணைவேந்தராக இருந்த சென்னை உயர்நீதிமன்ற முன்னாள் நீதிபதி சுப்பிரமணிய நாடார் அவர்கள் தலைமையில், இவர்கள் நிகழ்த்திய சொற்பொழிவினை ஆயிரத்துக்கும் மேற்பட்ட மாணவர்கள் கூடியிருந்து அமைதியாகக் கேட்டதனையும் இங்கே நான் குறிப்பிட வேண்டும்.

இவர்கள், என் பணிகளுக்கு ஒத்துழைத்துப் பெருமை சேர்க்கும் உயர்ந்த பண்புடையவர்கள். அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் என் பெயரில் நிறுவப்பட்ட அறக்கட்டளைக்கு நன்கொடையும் வழங்கியுள்ளார்கள். கோவை விவசாயப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் முதல் துணை வேந்தரான டாக்டர் திரு. கிருட்டிணமூர்த்தி அவர்கள், அப்பல்கலைக்கழகம் துவங்குவதற்கு முன்பு, அங்கே விவசாயக் கல்லூரியின் முதல்வராக இருந்தார்கள். விவசாயக் கல்லூரி என்ற நிலைமாறி பல்கலைக்கழகமாக உருவெடுப்பதற்கு இடைக்காலத்தில் நிகழ்ந்த பெரியதொரு விழாவில் அப்போது தமிழக அரசின் விவசாயத்துறைச் செயலராகவும், பின்பு, தமிழக ஆளுநரின் ஆலோசனையாளராகவும் இருந்த திரு. கார்த்திகேயன், இ.ஆ.ப., அவர்கள் தலைமையில் சிறப்புச் சொற்பொழிவு ஆற்ற என்னை அழைத்திருந்தார்கள். டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் எனக்குப் பெருமை சேர்க்க வேண்டும் என்று அவ்விழாவிற்கு வந்து, முன் வரிசையில் அமர்ந்து சிறப்பித்ததை நினைவு கூர்கிறேன். தமிழக அரசின் உயர்நிலைப் பள்ளி வகுப்புகளுக்காக நான் தொகுத்த பாடநூலில் டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் எழுதிய மனையியல் கட்டுரை ஒன்றினை நான் சேர்த்து, அந்த நூல் அரசாங்க உடன்பாடு (APPROVAL) பெற்றுப் பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான மாணவர்களால் படிக்கப்பெற்றுப் பயன் விளைத்தது.

இவர்கள் குடும்பத்திற்கு வடஆற்காடு மாவட்டம் திருப்பத்தூரில் பெரிய தொரு தோட்டம் இருந்தது. அந்தத் தோட்டத்தில் இல்லாத மரங்கள் இல்லை என்று சொல்லலாம்; அந்தத் தோட்டத்தில் இருந்த வீட்டில் இவர்களின் தாயார் சொர்ணம்மாள் அவர்கள் தங்கியிருந்தார்கள். அந்தத் தோட்டத்திற்கு இவர்களும், இவர்களின் உடன்பிறப்பாளர்களும், இவர்களின் மாமன்(கணவர்) அவர்களும், சென்று விடுமுறை நாட்களில் அங்கே தங்குவதுண்டு. ஓராண்டில் அங்கு நானும் சென்றிருந்தேன். அந்தக்காலம், ஒரு திருவிழாவினைப் போலவே எல்லோருக்கும் மகிழ்ச்சி அளிக்கும் எல்லோரும் ஒரு சேர அமர்ந்து உணவு அருந்துவதும், உயர்ந்த கருத்துக்களைப் பரிமாறிக் கொள்வதும், ஆடுவதும்,

பாடுவதும்; இவர்களின் அன்புத் தாயார் அவர்களின் உபசரிப்பினைப் பெறுவதும்; மறக்க இயலாதவை.

அக்காலத்தில் டாக்டர். ராஜா. சர். அண்ணாமலைச் செட்டியார் அவர்கள், தமிழ் இசை இயக்கத்தினைத் தொடங்கித் தமிழிசைக்குப் புத்துயிர் அளித்து வெற்றிகண்டு பல ஊர்களில் தமிழிசைச் சங்கங்களும், தமிழிசைக் கல்லூரி களும் நிறுவினார்கள். அப்போது, திருப்பத்தூரில் ஓர் தமிழிசைச் சங்கம் நிறுவ வேண்டுமென்று, நானும் டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்களும் சிந்தித்துச் செயற்படத் தொடங்கினோம். எங்களுடன் இன்னும் சிலரும் சேர்ந்து அவரவர் வீட்டுக்குச் சென்று, கலந்துபேசி எல்லோரையும் ஒன்று சேர்த்து அங்கே தமிழிசைச் சங்கம் நிறுவப் பெற ஆவன செய்தோம். அப்போது, அங்குள்ளவர்கள், அந்தத் தமிழிசைச் சங்கத் தொடக்க விழாவில் இசையரசு தண்டபாணி தேசிகர் அவர்களின் இசையரங்கு நிகழ ஏற்பாடு செய்ய வேண்டுமென விரும்பினார்கள். அதற்கு நான் உடன்பட்டு, ராஜா அவர்களிடம் சொல்லி தண்டபாணி தேசிகர் இசையரங்கு நிகழ ஏற்பாடு செய்தோம். அச்சங்கத்திற்கு அண்ணாமலை அரசர் அவர்கள் அப்போது, வழங்கிய தக்கதொரு நன்கொடைத் தொகையினையும் மற்றவர்கள் வழங்கிய நன்கொடைத் தொகையினையும் சேர்த்து திருப்பத்தூர் தமிழிசைச் சங்கத்திற்கு நல்ல இடம் வாங்கப்பெற்றது.

பொள்ளாச்சி திரு. மகாலிங்கம் அவர்கள், ஏற்பாடு செய்த தேவாரம், திவ்வியப் பிரபந்தம், இசைஅரங்கு நிகழ்ச்சி விழா, டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்களின் முன்னிலையில், அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக்கழக மண்டபத்தில் இரண்டு ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன் நடைபெற்றதை இப்போது நான் நினைக்கிறேன்.

டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்களுக்கு மோகன் என்னும் பெயருடைய மகன் உள்ளார். அவர் அழகானத் தோற்றம் உடையவர் இங்கு மருத்துவக் கல்வி பட்டம் பெற்று இப்போது ஆஸ்திரேலியா நாட்டில் பணியாற்றி வருகின்றார். அவருடைய மகளும் இங்கே மருத்துவக் கல்வி பட்டம் பெற்று இப்பொழுது ஆஸ்திரேலியாவில் இருக்கின்றார். டாக்டர் மோகனின் திருமணத்தினை, டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள்

அவர்கள் அப்போது நிதியமைச்சராக இருந்த மதியழகன் அவர்கள் தலைமையில் சிறப்பாக நடத்தினார்கள். அத்திருமணத்திற்கு வந்த பெருமக்கள், அனைவரையும் கோவைத் தொழில் மன்னர் ஜி.டி. நாயுடு அவர்கள், தமது கல்வி நிறுவனங்களைச் சேர்ந்த மாணவர் இல்லத்து அறைகளில் தங்க வைத்து, வேண்டிய வசதிகளைச் செய்தார்கள். அத் திருமண விழாவில் நான் கலந்து கொண்டேன். அன்று காலையில் டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் ஒவ்வொரு அறைக்கும் வந்து அங்கே தங்கியிருந்தவர்களைப் பார்த்து வரவேற்று; எல்லோருக்கும் எல்லா வசதிகளும் அமைந்திருப்பதை அறிந்து கொண்டார்கள்.

என் சொந்த ஊராகிய நெற்குப்பை என்ற ஊரில் என் மகள் புலவர். தெய்வயானை திருமணம் நடைபெற்றபோது டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் கோவையிலிருந்து முதல் நாளே வந்திருந்து திருமணத்தில் கலந்துகொண்டு சிறப்பித்தார்கள்.

மேலும் இவர்கள் சென்னையில் கல்வி பயின்ற காலத்திலும், அண்ணாமலை நகருக்குத் தம் நண்பர்களாகிய மாணவியர் சிலருடன் எங்கள் இல்லத்திற்கு வந்து இரண்டொரு நாள் தங்கிச் செல்வதுண்டு. அப்போது சென்னை மகளிர் கிறித்துவக் கல்லூரி தமிழ்த்துறைத் தலைவராக இருந்தவர் எங்கள் இருவரிடமும் பேரன்பு கொண்டவர்களுமாகிய மேரி மாசிலாமணி அம்மையார் அவர்களும், டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்களுடன் எங்கள் இல்லத்திற்கு வந்திருந்தார்கள். அங்கிருந்து நாங்கள் எல்லோரும் டாக்டர். இராசம்மாளின் கணவர் திரு. தேவதாஸ் பணியாற்றிய செஞ்சி நகரத்திற்குச் சென்றோம். அங்கே இரண்டொரு நாள் தங்கி அந்தப் பகுதியில் பார்க்க வேண்டி செஞ்சிக்கோட்டை முதலிய இடங்களைப் பார்த்து மகிழ் திரு. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் உதவினார்கள். பின்பு நாகைப்பட்டினத்தில் திரு. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் பணியாற்றியபோது நானும் என் மனைவி திருமதி. மீனாட்சியும் டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்களுடன் நாகைக்குச் சென்று அவர்கள் இல்லத்தில் தங்கி அங்கு பார்க்க வேண்டிய நாகூர் முதலிய இடங்களுக்கெல்லாம் சென்று வந்தோம்.

இவ்வாறே எங்கள் குடும்பங்களின் தொடர்பு தொடர்ந்து இருந்ததை ஓரளவு அறிந்த திரு. அவினாசிலிங்கம் செட்டியார் அவர்கள், டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் உங்கள் உறவினர் ஆயிற்றே! என்று கோவையில் கூறியது என் நினைவிற்கு வருகின்றது.

டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள்,

“மெய்வருத்தம் பாரார்  
பசிநோக்கார் கண்துஞ்சார்  
கருமமே கண்ணாயினார்”

என்ற ஆன்றோர் வாக்கிற்கு எடுத்துக்காட்டானவர்கள். இவர்கள், மாணவியர்களின் கல்வித்திறனும், நல்லொழுக்கமும் வளரவேண்டும் என்பதில் கண்டிப்பானவர்கள் என்பது அனைவருக்கும் தெரியும். ஆயினும் மாணவியரிடத்தும், ஆசிரியைகளிடத்தும் டாக்டர். இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள் காட்டும் அன்பும், அருளும் எல்லை கடந்தவை என்பதையும் அனைவரும் அறிவர். படிப்பதில் இவர்களுக்கு ஆர்வமும், முயற்சியும், எந்த அளவு உச்ச நிலையில் இருந்தனவோ, அந்த அளவிற்குப் பொதுநலப் பணிகள் புரிவதிலும் இவர்களுக்கு ஆழ்ந்த ஈடுபாடு இருப்பதை நாம் அறிவோம்.

எங்களைப் பொறுத்த அளவில் நான் அவர்களுக்குச் செய்துள்ள உதவிகள் திணையளவு என்றால்; அவர்கள் எனக்குச் செய்துள்ள உதவிகள் பணையளவு என்று கூறலாம்.

இவர்களின் இந்த எண்பதாம் ஆண்டு நிறைவு விழா நேரத்தில் திருமதி சானகி தேவி பஜாஜ் விருது இவர்களுக்கு வந்து சேர்ந்திருப்பது (இந்த விருது இரண்டு லட்சம் ரூபாய் ரொக்கப் பரிசும் அடங்கியது) நல்லதோர் அறிகுறியாகும்.

இச்செய்திகளை வெளியிட்ட 25.9.98-ஆம் நாள் 'இந்து' பத்திரிக்கையில் "1960-ஆம் ஆண்டில் இவர்களின் நிறுவன குழந்தைகளுக்கு வழங்கிய மதிய உணவுத் திட்டம், தமிழக அரசின் தொடக்கப்பள்ளி மாணவர் களுக்கு மதிய உணவு வழங்கும் திட்டத்திற்கு முன்னோடி ஆயிற்று" என்று குறிப்பிட்டிருப்பது இவர்களது பெரியதோர் அரும்பணியை நினைவூட்டி நம்மை மகிழ்விக்கும் நற்செய்தியாகும்.

இவ்வாறே இவர்களின் ஆராய்ச்சிகளும், பணிகளும் மேலும் மேலும் வளரப்பெற்று, இவர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விழாவினையும் கண்டு அதன் மேலும் பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு நல்வாழ்வு வாழ எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனை வேண்டுகிறேன். ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - AN ACHIEVER PAR EXCELLENCE**

**S.V. CHITTIBABU**

**D**r. (Mrs.) Rajammal P. Devadas, the present Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) is undoubtedly one of the remarkable personalities of our times. To know her is to view the human spirit's radiance through the coarse crust of the 'workaday' world. We have to understand and realise the power that lies behind her admirable life - the intellect, the heart, the bright insight and creative ability. What impresses me most is that she is at once a profound thinker, an intelligent planner, a persuasive speaker and a dynamic achiever. Hers is a life of total dedication to the cause of women's Education and their empowerment. It bears the imprint of a magnificent sweep of womanly devotion.

The Avinashilingam Institute which stands out as a splendid monument to the greatness and glory of its visionary founder and architect is singularly fortunate to have secured the services of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, who literally and metaphorically deserves to be regarded as its co-architect. Both formed a formidable combination in imaginatively and innovatively concretising all plans, schemes and programmes which accelerated the pace - setting growth and development of the Institute from being a Home Science College to the enviable status of a Deemed University. The secret of their success, I should say, lay in the fact that both were on the same wavelength, with a unison of mind and spirit and with their sights set on the one lofty goal of making the Institute a paradigm of academic excellence in the domain of women's education at the tertiary level. The landmark outcome of their symbiotic endeavours is what we

see today - The eventful transformation of the Institution into one which imparts education from the basics upto the Ph.D. level in all the seven specialities of Home Science namely Family Resource Management, Food Service Management and Dietetics, Food Science and Nutrition, Textiles and Clothing, Human Development, Home Science Extension and Rural Development and Family and Community Science. Be it remembered that it is the only one of its kind to have earned high and enviable recognition as a Deemed University.

Ayya Avargal's vision on Women's education continues to inspire the University under the stewardship of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas who even, to this day is respectfully, accorded as 'Amma' meaning the Mother who heads the academic community of teachers and students. I had on many an occasion seen how the young girls in the nursery, elementary and high schools looked Amma in the eyes with emotional warmth, felt the nice touch of her gentle hand and listened to her pleasing voice. I should say that Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is fully aware that the training of children is a profession where one must know how to lose time in order to gain it and that harsh and hard words should at all times be scrupulously avoided as they would bruise the tender heart of a child. As an 'amma' she is a beacon of inspiration to the teaching faculty who strive to emulate her, who is a role-model to them as a seasoned teacher who can not only communicate but also stir the imagination of the students and motivate their urge to explore, adventure forth and create the new. As an erudite scholar and exponent in her field of speciality viz Home Science in all its dimensions she is in, incessant pursuit of knowledge and practical skill without getting hamstrung by convention, obscurant concepts and stupid superstitions, which is why she is today a Nutrition Scientist of international repute, holding many positions in national and international commissions and committees, organisations and councils such as UNICEF, WHO, FAO, ICMR, NCERT, UGC and ICMR and bagging several

prestigious awards like R & D Linker Award, Hari OM Ashram Award of UGC, Dr. V.C. Guha Memorial Lecture Award, Padmashri and Jamnalal Bajaj Award. Her output in terms of research papers, articles and books is simply phenomenal. Her total commitment, large scale mobilisation institutional invention, unprecedented release of human energy and intellectual concentration - these constitute what one might as well as call the moral equivalent of war.

‘Anatomy is destiny’ declared Sigmund Freud in 1933. He found women to be the imperfect man and blamed the fatality of the feminine situation on her anatomical defectiveness. But Dr. Rajammal, in the context of several Psychometric tests, feels convinced and quite rightly too, that masculinity and femininity are matters of degree rather than of contrasting traits at two opposite poles. I guess she is of the same opinion as Virginia Woolf who in one of her works says, “For any one who writes creatively it is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple, one must be womanly, manly or manly womanly”. Like Ayya Avargal she is needed to the cause of women's emancipation through education and in a sense she is an ‘activist’ in today's parlance. The canvas and spectrum of her vision and concerns for the status of women in India is reflected in the path breaking task that she has taken on herself in moulding the University as a paradigm of excellence in respect of the academic offerings and professional skills that young aspiring women are after. It may be noted that one of the declared objectives of the University interalia is to serve as a centre for “providing opportunities for the all round development of the students and excellence in higher education, research and extension in different disciplines”.

In undertaking the task of curriculam restructuration Dr. Rajammal struck new ground by introducing the double Major pattern for the Bachelor's degree, integrated community oriented projects and new techniques in teaching, evaluation, research and outreach programmes. Semesterisation of the academic year, 100 per

cent internal assessment with in-built checks and balances, transparency in evaluation, accent on research activities, to mention a few, are some of notable initiatives taken by the University under the direction and guidance of Dr. Rajammal who is intent on making higher education relevant, meaningful and purposeful. To her credit it must be mentioned that it was she who worked out the Tamil Nadu Nutritious Noon Meal Programme named after Dr. M.G.R. Thanks to her the Home Science Departments involve young scientists in the dissemination of their research findings to the community through the Coimbatore chapter of Nutrition Society of India and the Indian Dietetic Association.

Knowing fully well that administration is not merely the enforcement of rules and regulations Dr. Rajammal Devadas has proved herself to be an administrator, at once human and humane, who sees in her work not the occasion to lord it over others but the occasion to inspire, coordinate, encourage and harmonise. She trusts her staff and willingly shares her interests and responsibilities with them in an atmosphere which is at the same time relaxed and challenging.

Bertrand Russell believed the World could be transformed if the basis of education is “knowledge wedded by love”. Ayya Avargal said “Let healthy ideas and values be radiated all round, the rest can be left to the inherent goodness and educability of man, to the divinity ever present in the human heart”. Noble thoughts such as these have never been lost sight of by Dr. Rajammal whose crusading fervour is against borrowing standards and criteria from the political arena at the bustling stockmarket and protects the University from the sinister trends which are vibrating human life socially and morally. For her, degrees are not cash and carry market goals. They are to be acquired after passing through strenuous intellectual discipline and holding stimulating discourses with teachers, individuals and groups. She is quite concerned about corruption poisoning the campus atmosphere in Universities and Colleges and

hence she is straining every nerve of hers to sustain her University as a centre unaffected by student indiscipline, teacher apathy and mismanagement but edified by ethical and cultural values like reason, freedom from prejudice, regard for truth, tolerance, honesty, justice and humanism. These values are supremely in conformity with social renewal. Our problem is not to find better values but to be faithful to those that we profess. Such values cannot be said to be alive unless they are lived in action, what enlivens values is an attitude in the individual - a commitment, a readiness to act, a willingness to work in tandem with others, a genuine enthusiasm for serving, caring and sharing. This is the heart of a living faith. And Dr. Rajammal has that heart, I would say.

In sum, the rise of Dr. Rajammal from being a research scholar to the highly eminent Chancellorship of a Deemed University is a marvellous feat achieved by sheer resolution and determination, diligence and intelligence, faith and hope, reflection and action. It was her rare good fortune to have come under the magnificently dynamic influence of Ayya Avargal to whom she owe an irredeemable debt of gratitude. To quote her words, "I could not have achieved the professional heights I have but for God's grace and Ayya's unrelenting faith in me and his abiding love. "She is undisputedly a leader of exceptional calibre one who sees an opportunity in every challenge, one who has the courage to do and dare, one whose mission for the liberation and uplift of Indian womanhood is unstoppable and one whose positive attitude towards the renewal of academic, social, moral and cultural values is exemplary.

May Dr. Rajammal Devadas see during her very life time, the realisation of all her fond hopes and noble dreams. ●

## **A TRIBUTE TO DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**SARALA GOPALAN**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas surprised every one recently at a special oration at the Lady Irwin Colle in December last year. Dr. C. Gopalan, the eminent nutritionist could not help remarking ‘only Rajamma could have achieved this!’.

What Dr. Rajammal Devadas did not very special in many ways.

She presented a unique study undertaken by her team under her leadership for an FAO Project. This was introduction of a very simple technology for saving grains from rodents in the fields. The device was a rat-trap. It was so intelligently designed that even the clever mice would not be able to dodge. It would slip down if it tried to climb.

The surprise to all was not only the ingenious technology, but the way it was presented. The application of the latest modes of presentation which most sophisticated management wizards use was really breathtaking.

I was awestricken, as I had spent the major part of the day with her, and witnessed the many negative replies she received from several sources about the non availability of the equipment, the software and the hardware to project the material she had on her floppy. It was her sheer perseverance and the tenacity to achieve what she desired that searched the Institutions in Delhi to line up the equipment in just a few hours and made a high-tech presentation possible.

The most important lesson I have learned from Dr. Rajammal Devadas is a positive attitude to life and never to accept defeat. I have never heard her say “no”

*“I will not be able to do it”.*

*With her it is always*

*“We will do it”*

*“It can be tried”*

*“Best efforts will be made“.*

In all the forty years I have known her, she has done everything she took up with dedication and really well. She has been absolutely successful. She plans all the details and anticipates all the contingencies and prepares to face them.

The real secret of this success is her untiring work. Nothing is too small for her. Nothing will miss her attention. She plans very diligently identifying and using the strengths in her colleagues.

She has put at her strength to build the Avinashilingam Institute from a small college to a Major University offering the latest subjects. She has done this taking very calculated small steps with her able learn, to cover the large strides that an effort like this would require.

Even with the Institution having grown so big, she is aware of the smallest detail. I was aghast when I asked her about the ‘fireless cooker’ for my research, and she personally went down to the archives in the library to get the original publication in a journal from the United States early in this Century.

She reeled off data from the theses her students took up and would remember the minutest details.

The research work under her team is unique. They are always very practical, touching on real issues of life. They have good scientific advice for policy formulation based on real data.

The honours and decorations she has received are very well deserved. The make every one associated with her proud.

With the recognition she has won from many quarters, she has not only attracted attention to good work, but she has established that grassroots matters are the most serious, and if attention is paid to them, major problems of the people and the nation can be solved.

She has done this for education and particularly girl's education.

She has done this to Home Science and put it on the map of the world for international attention.

She has fought malnutrition through her cost-effective, local foods and proved that the most powerful weapon to conquer hunger is knowledge of the local materials and the ways to use them.

Rightly, she stresses on training and has dedicated her institution for training every kind of worker, from every part of the country.

Truly, Dr. Rajammal Devadas is an Institution, not a mere individual.

May God give her long life and health to serve humanity in many ways and bring scientific knowledge to the people in every strata of society. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**K. JEGATHAMBAL**

I came across Mrs. Rajammal P. Devadas as a student of Queen Mary's College, Madras in the year 1942. She was already married and had a 2 year old son. She was very simple and simple she is even today.

She is a self made person. Her hard work and perseverance raised her to the highest position which very few of us can achieve. Devoted to the cause of education and to the institution in which she worked, she developed a newly started college to a Deemed University. Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar could not have selected a better person to be the Head of his College of Home Science.

Till the year 1973-74, Professors in the colleges could not register for the Ph.D. Degree in Madras University unless their guide was in the same college. Alas! the women were backward and there was no Ph.D. Degree holders even in the reputed Queen Mary's College and in many other Women's Colleges. It was Dr. (Mrs.) Rajammal P. Devadas who fought for us a member of the Syndicate of the University of Madras and got the rule amended so that Professors could register for Ph.D. Degree even if their guide was in another college. Then and only then was it possible for me Principal of Queen Mary's College, to persuade at least one professor in each Department to register for Ph.D.

Rajammal's dynamism is unparalleled. She takes little rest and moves about in the world as if the world were her home. Indeed she is an international figure. Her

destiny worked personality influences every one who meets her, students, staff and the public. I have never known her to put an airs and behave snobbishly even when she was in the Vice chancellor of the University. To me she was and is always a dear friend.

Her far-sightedness in developing the institution is praise worthy. I have worked with her in several committees in the University of Madras. She would never leave a stones unturned in everything she did. If course she was and is proud of her institution but never of her achievement or abilities.

Her cooperation with the management was also been unique. There was seldown any difference of opinion with Mr. Chettiar. She understood the principles of Sri Ramakrishna Mission fully an evidences for which was the christearising of her ground daughter as Saradamani.

I understand that she will be celebrating her 80th Birthday on 7th April 1999. May God bless her with many more years of health and happy life so that her selfless service to the nation and women's education can continue.

May God bless her. ●

# **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A TORCH BEARER FOR ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY AND MALNUTRITION AMONG WOMEN**

A. ABDUL KAREEM

I am heartily pleased to learn that one of our crusading nutrition scientist is maturing to be a healthy octogenarian. It is extremely fitting that a biographic volume of her glorious life is being brought out. As a fellow academician let me share my sincere thoughts in the following lines.

The development of a community, society or nation in any field be it social, economic, political or spiritual depends equally on women as on men. By ignoring women, no nation can ever reach the stage of development at which it ought to be or could be. In order to awaken the society, it is the women who have to be awakened first. In spite of the fact that development of women has been the centre stage of our planning, the women literacy rate remains only at 39 per cent as per 1991 census.

This scenario calls for the services of dedicated scientists, apart from the efforts of the government, who could not only offer solutions but also demonstrate the results through large scale action research. There are few individuals who could combine the qualities of an objective researcher and a motivated constructive activist. It could be said without any reservation that Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas tops the list of these few rare individuals.

Her intellectual brilliance could be seen from her early academic career when she was ranked first in the B.Sc. (Home Science) in Queen Mary's College, Madras in

1944. Later, she pursued her post-graduate education in Ohio State University, USA. She secured two post graduate degrees M.Sc. (Food and Nutrition) and M.A. (Home Science Education) and culminated her studies in USA with a Ph.D. She also received the single honour of addressing the Ohio State Legislature (House of Representatives) in 1950.

The history of her professional career shows that there were many milestones and she climbed the ladder in service of humanity step by step, with unmatched steadfastness. Starting her career as a humble research assistant at the Women's Christian College, Madras, she moved to the Directorate of Extension Education in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India after completing her higher studies. Perhaps at this time Revered Ayya Thiru T.S. Avinashilingam was looking for somebody who could carry the task of women's education with the same missionary zeal as he had. He rightly spotted Dr. R.P. Devadas.

Taking Ayya as her “Guru”, she started building the Institute of Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women and nurtured it carefully to the level of a Deemed University. Perhaps this is the only University in India which offers education from pre-school to Ph.D. Today she is not only the official Chancellor of the University but more regarded and respected as Amma for the larger family of Saradalaya.

She was equally successful in carrying the results of the research either to the policy makers or to the respective clientele group. Some of her major pioneering achievements include integrating the nutrition education in the primary school curriculum, evolving a blue print for nutritional improvement for next decade etc. She took active efforts in organising large scale training programmes for the nutrition

workers. This institute was recognised as the principal centre by the Government of Tamil Nadu for training thousands of personnel for the various nutrition programmes like Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project, CARE Nutrition Project, DANIDA Primary Health Care Project and Nutritional Meal Programme for Children.

Adult education is dearer to her heart next in importance. Adult education centres initiated by this institute, function in far off interior villages of this district and successfully produced large number of neoliterates and she was solely responsible for bringing out a premier in Tamil for them. This zeal for community service made her to take efforts successfully to introduce National Service Scheme as a part of the curricula in all the colleges in Tamil Nadu.

All these efforts spread over four decades were well recognised by the various sections of the society. The decade of nineties was a decade of awards for her including the Padma Sri Award for Home Science in 1992.

I could only give a sketchy picture of her active glorious life. I hope the younger generation would be greatly inspired by the contribution of various eminent persons to this volume.

May I pray for her long healthy life. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL - AN INSTITUTION**

**SAROJINI MAHISHI**

**I**f Dr. Rajammal Devadas goes alone with a bag, it is very difficult for anybody to recognise her as an international authority on nutrition in India. Clad in a Khaddar Saree, she would be moving about among the people, rural as well as urban. The people who meet her include students, guardians, social workers, educationists, women in distress, Indian as well as foreigners :

It is in-built in the personality of Dr. Rajammal that she would travel with a big suitcase and bag even if she were to leave Coimbatore in the morning only to come back to the same place by evening. I was wondering what the suit-case would contain! It would be containing two Ph.D. theses in the script form for being examined in the air by the Guide.

The pilot of the air-craft would be doing his duty and the guide for Ph.D. in Nutrition programmes would be doing her duty.

On Sunday morning she would be attending the prayer at the Church : on other days she would be attending to the work of the Ramakrishna Mission. Her drawing room and study room would be inviting you to meditate on all the teachings of the saints belonging to different religions. The photos and idols of all saintly people would be seen in the rooms.

Dr. Rajammal is a Karmayogi. Happy events or otherwise, she continues to work in the same way. In the family life, one is bound to meet with a variety of problems, she did meet!

In the social life again the problems would be facing her in different parts of the country. In rural areas where a number of villages were taken up by the Institution, The children below the age of six were attended to for curative remedies in mal-

nutrition. Thousands of children were being attended to. Naturally the parents of the children and the Head man of the village would be contacting her for the problems. The machinery and equipment for giving protein food to the children would come from Czechoslovakia as donation. The children were supposed to show a concrete progress within a period of six months.

At the international hostel in the Avinashilingam Home Science College distinguished guests from abroad would be staying and they will have to be attended to and their study tours and lectures organised.

Going up and down to Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and back to Coimbatore has become a routine matter for Dr. Rajammal.

She had a doctorate from Ohio State University in America by right as she studied there for her post-graduation. But when the same university honoured her with an honorary doctorate that was an honour done by the University to its pupil of India. It was a great honour conferred on her. Recently when she got at the Birla Award along with Dr. Dandekar a Vedic expert nearly all the people interested in ancient Vedic culture and people interested in social service and nutrition values were extremely happy.

Dr. Rajammal's house is within the premises of the Deemed university but it is difficult to say whether the whole premises is her house or her house is a part of whole premises.

Long back her work for the institutions and society at large increased tremendously by geometrical proportion. As a result the attachment for self and self-interest got reduced rapidly ;

‘Do your duty with all the maximum capacity but leave the result unto divine Will’. This was actually brought into practice by Dr. Rajammal.

May she enjoy the divine grace for many more years to come. ●

# **RAJAMMAL - MY COUNTERPART IN THE SERVICE OF THE VILLAGES**

**K. MUNIANDI**

## **An authority in H.Sc.**

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a byword in the realm of Home Science in India and abroad. Her flair for research in her chosen field has been Phenomenal leading to the success of her undertakings. She is not a mere theoretician but she derives her findings through experiments undertaken in her presence or in the situations she creates. Naturally she announces the result of her practical-oriented study with authority. Especially her research in the diets of the Indian villages and of those below the poverty line has a stamp of its own. Her contributions to the success of the Nutritious meal scheme of our State Government are indeed encouraging and applaudable.

## **My acquaintance with her**

I had been to Sanosra in Gujarat in 1955 to attend the All India Nai Talim Conference. Maharishi K. Arunachalam and I while returning home alighted at Baroda where the youthful Dr. Rajammal was the Dean of the Faculty of Home Science. When we visited her institution, she took us around pointing to the novel practices she had introduced there in observing the Pre-Basic Children in their natural setting quite unnoticed by them. Her enthusiasm in describing her various experiments with the little children and their mothers was quite revealing and catchy. I was then able to gauge the latent potential in her.

## **Her scientific attitude**

In 1950's Gandhi Niketan Ashram was responsible for running the Government Rural Extension Training Centre at Kallupatti, its secretary being the Honorary Principal of

that institution. We had a Home Science wing attached to it to train Gram Sevikas and other Women Development Officers. Dr. Rajammal used to visit our centre periodically and deliver lectures to the trainees. They were of the opinion that she was ultra practical in her approach to the problems faced in the field. Indeed she was attracted by our Kallupatti Chulah manufactured here and got a few specimens from us for her experiments and propagation in the villages round about Coimbatore. In fact she has the knack of locating the importance of any rural articles of use and spreading the same in her areas of operation. This trait in her has made her a scientist of universal fame.

### **Her grateful nature**

Dr. Rajammal is a woman of great calibre. Her devotion to her mentor, Sri. Ayya of Perianaickenpalayam is well known. I have seen her enlogising the services of Ayya in all the meetings, seminars etc. organised in various parts of our country. It is a good augury to all the young aspirants for the hall of fame that she is setting a fine example of gratitude to her elders and benefactors. This thankful outlook of hers is worth emulating by one and all.

### **A nationalist to the core**

Dr. Rajammal is out and out a nationalist. Her patriotism and high regard for the Father of our Nation were such that she took to Khadi wearing even in her younger days of service as a Government Servant. That she still continues it with vigour and fervour is worth our appreciation. In spite of the fact that she is conspicuous by her absence from India very often and most of the year she is typically an Indian. In her addresses to the international audiences she seldom forgets to pinpoint the village culture and civilisation of India. Besides all her dietetic experiments have been towards fulfilling the needs of the rural gentry of our nation. That all our scientists

should be village-minded and humanitarian is a felt need of the hour and they should be ready to take a leaf out of her book.

### **A Sensible Speaker**

Dr. Rajammal is a meritorious speaker in Tamil and English. As she is clearcut in her ideas, she is able to express herself comfortably in a diction of her own. She chooses simple and apt words and illustrations from life situations and posts the audiences with appropriate information and message. She is very concise, crisp and methodic in delivering her speeches gladdening the hearts of her listeners.

### **My wish**

Such a lady is now the Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Deemed University at Coimbatore. As an administrator she might have incurred the wrath of some due to her external appearance. But she is a woman engulfed in love for the poor and the needy. May she live long and serve this ancient land of ours by enlightening its devotion to rural arts and crafts and simple living and high thinking to the novices and global visitors.

Jai Jagat!



# AN INSPIRING PERSONALITY

RATNA NATARAJAN

'Some are born great ; Greatness is thrust on some ; Some achieve greatness' said Shakespeare.

Indomitable will, untiring work, insatiable thirst for knowledge, concern for the poor and the needy, lofty ideals, abundant energy, profound commitment, deep involvement, and a host of other noble qualities of head and heart are wonderfully woven into one great soul and that is "**Amma**".

Amma is an inspiring personality. Tens and thousands of persons like me got inspiration from 'Amma'. 'Amma' is like a Adayar Banyan tree under whom many received education, training etc. Indeed Amma is a great teacher. Half a century ago, 'Home Science' is not known to many but now several institutions have introduced Home Science and allied subjects. The credit undoubtedly goes to Amma.

Way back in 1951-52, when I was studying in Islamiah College, Vaniyambadi Mr. P. Chelladurai, Amma's brother was studying for B.Com., in the same college, Vaniyanbadi. Amma delivered a lecture after returning from USA and we listened to the lecture which was packed with information and indeed it was thought-provoking.

In 1976, when Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras, he introduced co-curricular activities as a part of the curriculum. With a view to ascertaining opinions and suggestions, a meeting of the Principals and CSS Coordinators of all the colleges was convened. The hospitality, the planning, the

entertainment, the arrangement, etc. were excellent and everybody enjoyed their stay. 'Amma' was everywhere at the dining hall, at the entertainment auditorium, at the lecture Hall, at the discussions group and at the leader's meeting. Above all, the day's proceedings dictated by 'Amma' were circulated daily along with coffee in the morning. The participants felt so happy and that they wanted to emulate in their life.

While I was NSS Coordinator of the University of Madras, once Amma and I were to travel from Madras to Coimbatore by the Blue Mountain Express. After getting into the Compartment 'Amma' opened a box which was full of letters and started reading and replying. After sometime I slept, When I got up at 1 a.m. at Jolarpettai, I found 'Amma' still writing and reading. I do not know when 'Amma' slept but appeared fresh at Coimbatore when we got down. Amma participated in all the activities from morning till night. Indeed all cannot act this way.

'A great person must always be active and that he must attend to every minutest business, big or small' - I find this great quality in Amma. I had attended a number of meetings, seminars, workshops and training programmes in this illustrious 'institute' since 1975.

Once there was an All India Workshop on NSS. About 25 persons participated and Prof. L.R. Shah, then Programme Advisor - NSS, Government of India was also one. The group was taken to "Amaravathi" and we spent a night there. Every one of us, either individually or in group must present an item in the open air. To our surprise, 'Amma' and Dr. Godavari Kamalanathan presented a short skit with full of jokes and messages. Everybody admired the simplicity and the friendliness of Amma.

Vivekananda advocates about the man-making education. Amma would always give equal importance to extra-curricular activities. Several National Integration camps were organised here. Prof. Sitalakshmi and Dr. Thangamani were incharge of it. Normally people at the top would participate either in the inaugural or valedictory function but Amma participated in several activities and offered valuable suggestions. One of the participants remarked, “Here is a barrier-broker between the high and the low”.

Dr. Radhakrishnan once said that an Educational institution should be a miniature world and this Institution is indeed a small world by itself in the sense that it caters to the needs and aspirations of the students. Games and sports, NCC, NSS, CSS, Adult Education Programmes and welfare activities are undertaken to shape and mould the students into useful and responsible citizens.

In 1975, Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah formed an organisation called Tamil Nadu Board of Continuing Education. Amma has been associating herself in all the activities and gave useful suggestions for the promotion of non-formal and adult-education. Amma has contributed in no small measure for the spread of adult education.

‘A single wheel can never move’ says Asoka. Amma has trained a band of devoted and dedicated workers who stand through stress and strain to make even impossible to possible. Another noble quality I have observed in Amma is her profound knowledge in various subjects. Amma will come with full preparation for any meeting and would never fail to make valuable contribution. Amma has been decorated with innumerable Awards, National and International levels.

Amma has also adorned with distinction several positions leaving indelible impression in all. Every stone in the institution will tell us a tale of the earnest endeavours part in by Amma assisted by a team of sincere workers.

The magnificent edifices built over the years speak volumes about the pains Amma has taken also with late 'Ayya'. A small college started in 1956 has grown by leaps and bounds spreading its wings of service for the cause of education and today it is an enviable Deemed University dedicated solely for the upliftment of women with Amma as the Chancellor.

Indeed the long cherished dream of Amma has become a reality.

'Give a brick to Amma and she would turn it into a diamond'.

May the Almighty shower his choicest blessings on Amma to live longer, so that many more generations are benefited. ●

## **MY ASSOCIATION WITH DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

**K.S. NATESAN**

I had the good fortune of working with Amma Dr. Rajammal Devadas, in the Directorate of Extension, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, New Delhi during 1959 - 68. The Directorate was at the formative stage and had several matters and we had Amma to guide us in the Home Science Wing. We have to start with scrap with no material to organise, programme and to start projects on Home Science.

The Primary object of the Directorate of Extension was to establish Home Science Wings attached to the block development in the State with a view to uplift, the poor and uneducated women in villages by giving proper education, improve the conditions of living etc. This was possible only if trained lady workers went into the field after proper training in the methodology. Amma was entrusted with the herculean task of selecting and training the women trainees in various states. She had to travel, discuss with development commissioners of the state and finally establish Home Science Wings in different suitable places. These village level workers had to be properly trained and sent to the field for educating the women in village to improve the level of their conditions. Amma with a batch of dedicated officers rose up to the occasion and trained all the village level workers and put them in the field. But for her energetic work, guidance and initiative the project could not have come up to the

expectations. She won the approbation of the then Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Punjab Rao Deshmukh, for this excellent piece of dedicated work.

Amma is to arrange seminars on subjects like nutrition, home management etc. She used to phone up and write to the principals of Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore and Lady Irwin College, New Delhi and ask us to follow them up. On getting materials, she would study both the literature and compile a new one taking out the useful material. Before the days are fixed, copies of materials will be circulated in advance for the participants to study, examine and offer the comments at the Seminar. During the seminar conducted by her, at the state level all the participants admired the meticulous way in which each subject was treated, explained and guidance given for the follow up. There had never been any adverse criticism about the material given out by Amma for study and was accepted universally by one and all. One good quality about Amma is that any good suggestion offered by any one, will be immediately accepted and appreciated. She had openly asked them to suggest for the improvement of the methods which will ultimately be useful to women in general and poor village women in particular.

Though an expert in Home Science programme. Amma's ability as an administrator cannot be under estimated. A check list in duplicate will be prepared by her in respect of materials required and one copy will be handed over to me for collection of the materials. One day before, all the collected materials will be checked by her personally, leaving no chance of missing the required material. If anything could not be secured she will take it personally to collect them or make alternate arrangements. At no time the preparations will be defective which will retard the

progress of the seminar or programme. All the statements, graphs etc. prepared for the programme should have a heading duly numbered and arranged in the order of the presentation at the seminar. In spite of the heavy work, in which she is engaged she will squeeze in some time to check the details of things, that are required for presentation in the seminars, meetings, programmes etc. She is a great administrator.

Amma is keen on understanding on any activities or giving out her considered views with some objects in mind. To cite an instance, wheat was sent to India, by U.S.A. under the auspices of Ford Foundations for distribution to poor villagers as a staple food. One of the technical assistant was asked to write a recipe for the villagers to prepare nutritious food. This had to be circulated to all the State Governments, for approval before distribution of wheat to the villages, with the assistance of the block development officers. This assistant prepared a recipe for wheat halwa for the poor villagers. Amma saw the recipe, called us and told us that the wheat was not sent to the affluent people, but to the villagers who could not afford to buy sugar. She advised us that when any work is undertaken we should know the object with which, it was undertaken and not merely a routine affair. She then revised the recipe, for the preparation of porridge with the help of wheat, salt and butter milk which are cheap and easily available and within the means of the poor villagers. We then realised our mistake that the work undertaken by us, should not be treated light heartedly but seriously, with the ultimate object of benefiting the poor people.

Amma's pet subject is teaching and always took special care in designing, teaching and following it. She prepared the syllabi with an eye on utility, practical application and simplicity to follow. Under the extension programme, organised by

the Directorate of Extension, the village women are to be educated about the conditions of living, bringing up children in healthy atmosphere, and also live within the means. The gramsevikas selected by the Government for the purpose have to visit villages and train the village folk and also demonstrate what they are expected to do, arrange visual publicities like showing films, prepare charts for various items, for balance diet, clean clothing etc. These gramsevikas in turn have to be selected and trained by instructors with good educational background, with zeal to work in pasterol atmosphere. This huge task of selection of personnel, preparation of syllabi, implementation of the sheme fell on the shoulders of Amma, who collected teaching materials from various home science colleges, prepared syllabi to suit the gramsevikas with the sole aim of uplifting the village women from poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition. She visited places personally before selecting the place of training which will have all the facilities with a natural environment. It is needless for me to confirm that the entire training scheme formulated by and successfully operated by her in the Home Science wing of the Directorate of Extension had the approbation of one and all in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

To sum up there is no end to describe Amma's ability and capability. She is an erudite person. She had spent her entire life for the uplift of women in general and village women from poverty and illiteracy.

Let us pray to God to give her long life to serve the Humanity. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS, A VISIONARY**

**D. PADMANABAN**

**I**t gives me great pleasure to associate myself with the 80th birthday celebrations of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in 1999. I am very happy that a biographic volume is being published during the occasion. The dedicated services rendered by her to the cause of education and more particularly to Home Science education in India by the veteran educationist and administrator, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has been widely appreciated and applauded. A prolific writer and a speaker, her admirers, well wishers and students affectionately call her 'Amma'. She is recognised not merely as a theoretical academician and an educationist but also a practical and pragmatic administrator with vision and foresight for whom change is as it should be an integral part of the continuum of life. She successfully transformed her blue prints on the drawing board to the ground in a fertile environment, vastly changing the outward scenario. Yet, remaining true to healthy traditions, her ideas once merely dreams are today tangible realities in the shape of attractive institutional edifices sub serving human needs and the aspirations of the youth especially women in Tamil Nadu and India.

After her brilliant academic studies, she joined the Womens Christian College, Madras in the Home Science Department and later on completed her Ph.D. studies at Ohio State University in the US. Perhaps she may be the first Ph.D. degree holder in Home Science in India. She was appointed as the Chief Home Economist and Director of Home Science in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India in which capacity she had carried out many progressive things for the development of India particularly in the food front.

‘Some people are great educationists, Some good administrators, yet others management specialists and versatile few an amalgom of all these talents glorified by deep humility and greatness’. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas belongs to the last category in a society where it is a rarity. This masterpiece of a lady distinguished herself in many facets of life. Indeed by her effective performance during her eventful academic life all these years, she touched nothing which she did not adore.

When Sri T.S. Avinashilingam was a Member of the Parliament he had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Rajammal Devadas at Delhi. Sri Avinashilingam was a great visionary and took up education, research and extension as his mission and had started a girls’ high school at Coimbatore. Sri Avinashilingam and Dr. Rajammal Devadas discussed many thrust areas in education and finally Sri Avinashilingam decided to start a Home Science college exclusively for women at Coimbatore. Dr. Rajammal Devadas encouraged him in this noble venture and she became the first Principal of the Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women at Coimbatore. Due to the untiring efforts of Dr. Rajammal Devadas, the College was upgraded as a PG College and the masters courses in Home Science were offered to the girls. Dr. Rajammal Devadas collaborated with many national and international institutions and the Home Science college became an internationally renowned institution specialising in Home Science and particularly nutrition. Because of her efforts many new courses were started and the Home Science college claimed a prominent place in the map of international institutions. Dr. Rajammal Devadas combined research and extension (Community service) along with the academic learning.

The institution had highly qualified staff with all infrastructural facilities for academic learning and research in the form of buildings, laboratories, apparatus and

equipments. Because of all these the Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College was the first women's college to be upgraded as an autonomous one in 1978.

As Social Scientist, she had many innovative ideas with regard to women's education. She introduced Community and Social Service as a curricular part in the academic system. She had also introduced the triple major system at the degree level *on an experimental* basis. She was an advocate of the semester system which lessened the student's burden. As the quality of education imparted and the infrastructural facilities were of a high standard with highly qualified and scholarly staff and equipment, the College was granted the Deemed University status in 1988. These are all laurels and feathers in the cap of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. Recognising the academic as well as social activities of the college under the directorship of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas she was awarded the Padmashri by the Government of India.

Today, most of her students are scattered all over the world occupying coveted positions and are leaders in their own fields. Development of India was very dear to her heart. She felt that all the scientific research findings should reach the people. Dr. Rajammal Devadas firmly believed that knowledge of Science should reach the community people in Tamil. Dr. Rajammal Devadas had served in various capacities in several national committees. She was the Deputy Director General of ICAR in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India and she was also a member of the State Planning Commission.

There were only a few handful of Tamil magazines containing innovative Science findings and articles as reading materials for the Tamil readers. She started 'Vignana Chudar' the Tamil magazine devoted to Science and humanities. This magazine was printed at Saradalaya Press in the Campus sponsored by the CSWB,

Delhi which provided employment opportunities for poor women. The magazine contained articles contributed by scientists and experienced persons and is one of the many firsts achieved by Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in her long career spanning over a period of six decades.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas's contribution to adult education was one of the significant aspects in her career. She had introduced community and social service as part of the curriculum in the college. She had been carrying out many of the developmental programmes in the evillages around Coimbatore through the students. Under her able direction, Sri Avinashilingam Deemed University did significant achievements for the cause of education of the rural adults in the age groups of 15-35, under the National Adult Education Programme and the National Literacy Mission, Dr. Rajammal Devadas was in the habit of moving round the institution campus as well as the hostel in a routine manner almost everyday. The evening prayers held under the shrine when all the hostel students of the school and college attended, helped to discipline the young minds. Many of the students of Avinashilingam Deemed University used to say that Amma used to know every one of the students by her name. Dr. Rajammal Devadas and the staff have been taking part in most of the functions held in the institution. Avinashilingam Deemed University campus involves the students in the Corporate life of the college which is the key for the improvement in the quality of the individual's education and programmes. The students were nurtured in qualities like social skills, maturity, confidence and ability to assume and handle the responsibilities.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas's entire life has been dedicated to the cause of education and women's welfare in India particularly in the state of Tamilnadu. She had been

...  
serving the cause of education as a Syndicate member of the Madras University where she used to put forward many of the innovative ideas in education to be introduced in the University. Her appointment as the first Vice Chancellor of the Avinashilingam Deemed University was a fitting culmination to a successful meritorious academic career. During the tenure of her service as Vice Chancellor, she had helped the University to make great strides in the enrichment of higher education. Now, the University is privileged and blessed for having her as the Chancellor. Her interest in the promotion of education for all was evident in that she became the Founder Director of the Avinashilingam Education Trust Institutions. Her dream of achieving academic excellence in these institutions has been proved by the fact that the institution has gained the status of a Deemed University in recognition of their progressive programmes, their innovative schemes and the socio-economic developmental activities.

The subjects in the curriculum of the University were almost directly related to the day-to-day life of the human beings. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas recognised that best education is that which integrates practical work with knowledge and she appreciated the fact that practical and theoretical knowledge must not be separated. She had held the view that separation of learning from labour results in social injustice. She had always felt that teaching, research and extension should go hand in hand for fostering a sound educational system.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas had visited almost all the countries of the world. She is an internationally renowned, nutritionist and had helped the Kampuchean Government in drawing up nutritional programmes. She is often invited by the countries of the

world and UN to present papers and chair sessions. She was in the committee which initiated the Chief Minister's Noon Meal Programme in Tamil Nadu. It is Dr. Rajammal Devadas who had created a status for the subject of Home Science in India through her untiring efforts. Whenever we talk of Home Science, the only person who comes to our mind is Dr. Rajammal Devadas. She believes that women's education is very important for the nation and is of the view that “when you educate a man, you educate an individual; when you educate a woman, you educate a family”. We all feel highly privileged and proud of having a vissionary, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas hailing from the Texcity, Coimbatore. We, the budding educationists derive inspiration from her.

I pray to Almighty, the God to give Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas a long and a healthy life for her to serve the country for many more years. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - A RENOWNED EDUATIONIST**

**KUNTI PAUL**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas is a renowned educationist. After completing her studies in Home Science in India, she went to Ohio University, USA to do her Ph.D. in Nutrition and Bio-Chemistry. She has won many prizes and scholarships, the Elizabeth Miller God Medal, the Aleyama Chacko prize 1944, Lord Pentel and Prize 1944, Govt. of India Overseas Merit Scholarship 1947, the American Home Economics Association International Scholarship 1949, the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai National award for Original Research in Human Nutrition 1976 are a few to mention.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has held many important posts in India in her own field. She was a Research Assistant under the Indian Food Research Association at Women's Christian College, Madras 1944-46; Lecturer in Household Arts, Queen Mary's College, Madras 1946-47; Dietitian and Prof., College of Nursing New Delhi, 1951-52; Dean and Prof. of Home Science, Faculty of Home Science, M.S. University Baroda, 1953-55; Chief Home Economists and Joint Director (Home Science), Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 1955-61; Principal & Director, Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College and related Institutions since 1960; selected by UGC as National Lecturer for Home Science for 1976-77. She was a member of the British Dietetics Association; the Nutrition Society of India and the Indian National Committee for the International Union of Nutritional Sciences.

She has written books in Tamil and English on Home Science, Women's Education and Vivekananda. She has published over 150 research papers and 200

articles in technical journals in India and abroad. She has been Hon. Chief Editor of “Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics” and the Hon. Editor of “Vignana Chudar”, a scientific monthly in Tamil.

She has visited a number of countries as a leader of study tours. She delivered lectures and participated in several conferences on Home Science and Nutrition Programmes. She has received a number of Honours from USA by invitation.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas has been associated with the All India women's Conference for a long time. She held an important portfolio of “Rural Upliftment” and was also a Standing Committee member in 1978.

Unfortunately, my association with Dr. Rajammal Devadas is very short. I have known her personally when we arrived at Avinashilingam Instituion at Coimbatore to conduct our Annual Conference in December, 1996. I was astonished to see the vast area of the University, which had everything including a gigantic hall with a beautiful stage where the main functions of the annual conference were held. The place is neatly kept and I appreciate the way a staff of 1000 workers performed their duties with discipline.

The conference was a great success and the credit goes to the leadership of Dr. Rajammal Devadas. The complete arrangements of the conference with more than 200 delegates was made within a month's time. I admire her immense courage and capabilities and I am sure, there is lot to learn from her. ●

ஊக்கம், உழைப்பு, உயர்வு இவற்றின் சின்னமே இன்று 80ஆம் ஆண்டு காணும்  
**திருமதி டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ்**  
**அவர்கள்**

— ஏ. பொன்னம்மாள்

### பொது

தமிழ் நாட்டிலேயே ஏன் நம் நாட்டிலேயே கூட மனையியல் கல்வியின் ஆணிவேராக இருந்து கொண்டு, தேசிய முன்னேற்றப் பாதை என்ற அடிமரத்தின் மூலம் பெண்கல்வி, உயர்கல்வி, இந்திய கலாச்சாரத்தின் மகிமை, காந்தியக் கொள்கைபரப்பு, ஆடம்பரமற்ற எளிய வாழ்க்கை, குடும்ப பொருளாதாரம், கிராமிய அரவணைப்பு, மனிதநேய ஒருமைப்பாடு, பிற நாடுகளுடன் கல்வித்தொடர்பு போன்ற பல உயர்வான துறைகளைச் செழிப்பான கிளைகளாகக் கொண்டு, அக்கிளைகளில் பல மகளிர் பசுமையான பலன் தரும் இலைகளாக வளர்ந்து, எல்லோரும் மெச்சும் மாணவ மலர்கள் மூலம் நாடெங்கும் சேவை மணம் வீசி, பல கனிகளைத் தந்திருக்கும் ஓங்கி உயர்ந்த தரு தான் நமது அன்பிற்கும், பாராட்டுகளுக்கும் உரிய திருமதி இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள். இவ்விருட்சம் இவ்வாறு வளர்ந்து ஓங்க வித்திட்ட, நீவார்த்த, காத்து கருத்து எரு ஊட்டிய அமரர் அவினாசிலிங்கம் ஐயா அவர்களுக்கு விழா நாயகியின் 80ம் ஆண்டு விழாவில் நம் நன்றிக்கடனை உரித்தாக்குகின்றோம்.

### சந்திப்பு

“நல்லாரைக் காண்பதுவும் நன்றே”

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நான் கண்டேன் இந்த நல்லம்மையை 1941ல். சென்னையில் பட்டப்படிப்புக்காக மேரி ராணி கல்லூரியில் நான் 1941ல் சேர்ந்த போது அம்மையார் அக்கல்லூரியில் இண்டர் மீடியட் இரண்டாம் ஆண்டில் படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். இவரது இளைய சகோதரி திருமதி லீலா திரவியம் அவர்கள் என்னுடன் பட்டப் படிப்பில் சேர்ந்திருந்தார். ஆகவே அவர் மூலம் இவரது தொடர்பு ஏற்பட்டது. அப்போதே இவரிடம் காலந்தவறாமை, காலம் கண்போன்றது, இன்சொல், முக மலர்ச்சி, அரவணைப்பு, புத்திக்கூர்மை, நூல்பலகற்றல், சொல்லாற்றல், முயற்சி ஆகிய சிறந்த குணங்கள் நிரந்தரமாக மிளிர்வதை நான் மிகவும் இரசித்தேன்.

“நலமிக்க நல்லார் சொல் கேட்பதுவும் நன்றே” – ஆகவே அடிக்கடி அவரைச் சந்தித்து, அளவளாவி மகிழ்ந்ததுண்டு. கண்ட குணநலன்களைப் பெற ஆர்வத் துடன் நான் முயன்றதும் உண்டு. 1941 முதல் இன்றுவரை நாங்கள் சகோதரிகள் போலவே அன்புடன் பழகிவருகிறோம். தற்போது “நல்லார் குணங்கள் உரைப்பதுவும் அவரோடு இணங்கி இருப்பதுவும் நன்று” என்ற முதுமொழிப்படி எனக்கு அம்மாவின் குணங்களை உரைக்கவும், மேலும் அவருடன் நெருங்கிப் பழகவும், வாழவும் வாய்ப்பு கிட்டியமைக்கு நான் பெரிதும் மகிழ்ச்சியடைகிறேன்.

## கல்வியும், சாதனைகளும்

1942ல் அம்மையார் மிகச் சிறந்த முறையில் இண்டர்மீடியட் தேர்வில் வெற்றி பெற்றார். அப்போது சென்னை அமைச்சரவையில் கல்வி அமைச்சராக பொறுப் பேற்றிருந்த நம் அவினாசிலிங்கம் ஐயா அவர்கள் தொடக்கக் கல்வி, உயர்கல்வி, கல்லூரிக்கல்வி ஆகிய துறைகளில் நம் நாட்டின் சிறப்பு உயர்பல சீர்திருத்தங்களைச் செய்தார். அதில் ஒன்று தான் பட்டப்படிப்பிலும், பள்ளிக்கல்வியிலும், மனையியல் படிப்பை கல்வித்திட்டத்தில் சேர்த்து, அதற்கு அங்கீகாரம் வழங்கியதாகும். சென்னை ராணி மேரி கல்லூரி, விமன் கிறிஸ்டியன் கல்லூரி இவற்றில் இண்டர்மீடியட் தேர்வில் தேறிய மாணவிகளில்

சிறந்த மாணவிகள் சிலரை மட்டும் தேர்ந்தெடுத்து அவர்களுக்கு மனையியல் பட்டப்படிப்பின் சிறப்பினை, தேவையைக் கூறி அவர்களின் மேற்படிப்புக்கு அமெரிக்கா அனுப்பும் திட்டத்தையும் கூறி எண்ணியதை எண்ணியாங்கு துவக்கிவிட்டார். இப்புதுத் திட்டத்தில் முதல் மாணவியாக சேர்க்கப் பட்டவர் தான் நம் அன்பிற்குரிய திருமதி இராசம்மாள் பா தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள். பெற்ற வாய்ப்பை, சலுகைகளை நன்முறையில் செயலாற்றி 1944ல் தன் புத்தி கூர்மையாலும், ஓயா உழைப்பாலும், படிக்கும் காலத்திலும், முடிவுத் தேர்விலும் அரசே பாராட்டும் வண்ணம் சீரிய முறையில் உயர்மதிப்பெண்கள் பெற்றார். மேல் படிப்புக்காக அரசே இவரை வெளிநாட்டிற்கு அனுப்பி வைத்தது. அங்கும் பல ஆராய்ச்சிகள், செய்தித்தாள்கள் மூலம் மனையியலின் முக்கியத்துவத்தை பலரும் மெச்சும் வண்ணம் சாதித்தமை இவரது சாதனைகளுக்கு அஸ்திவாரமாக அமைந்ததெனில் அது மிகையாகாது.

இதன்பின் இவர் மனையியல் துறையில் எங்கெங்கு யார்யார் இருப்பினும் அவர்களுடன் தொடர்பு கொண்டு இத்துறையினை விரிவுபடுத்தி, புதுப்புது திட்டங்களை இதில் ஏற்படுத்திய பெருமை இவரையே சாரும். மத்திய அரசே இவரது திறமையைக் கண்டு இவருக்கு மத்திய அரசின்-----துறையில் ----பதவியில் சேர்த்துக் கொண்டமை பெருமைமிக்க ஒரு சாதனையாகும்.

இதன் நடுவே அமரர் அவினாசிலிங்கம் ஐயா அவர்கள் தான் ஆண்களுக்கு காந்தியக் கொள்கை, உழைப்பின் உயர்வு, எளிய வாழ்க்கை, உயர்கல்வி, மனித நேயம், பக்தி, இந்தியக் கலாச்சாரம் ஆகிய இவற்றில் பயிற்சி பெற்று நாட்டில் பாராட்டும் முறையில் வாழ இராமகிருஷ்ணாமிஷன் வித்யாலயத்தை துவக்கி சிறப்படைந்துள்ளது போல, பெண்களுக்கும் இதே போல சிறந்த பண்புகளைப் பெற்று மிளிர் ஒரு நிறுவனம் துவக்க முயன்றார். அதன் விளைவுதான் அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரியின் தோற்றம். இக்கல்லூரி நன்முறையில் இயங்கி, தீட்டப்பட்ட குறிக்கோள்களை நிறைவேற்றி, ஆல்போல் தழைத்தோங்க ஒரு சிறந்த தலைவர் (முதல்வர்) தேவை என்பதை உணர்ந்தார்.

அதற்கேற்றவர் திருமதி இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் தான் என்று தேர்ந்து 1958ல் அவரை மத்திய அரசு பணியிலிருந்து இப்பணிக்கு ஈர்த்துக் கொண்டார். அன்று முதல் இன்றுவரை அவர் தனக்கிட்ட பணியை எவ்வளவு செவ்விய முறையில் ஆற்றி, பல விருதுகளைப் பலநாடுகளிலிருந்தும் பெற்றும் இந்த நிறுவனத்திற்கு உலகில் உயர்வு, கீர்த்தி உண்டாகவும், இங்கு கற்று வெளிச்சென்றோர் பல நாடுகளில் பல பதவிகளில் பாராட்டத்தக்க முறையில் பணியாற்றி வாழ்ந்து வருவதும் கண்கூடு.

“யான் பெற்ற இன்பம் பெறுக இவ்வையகம்” என்ற கூற்றுக்கிணங்க விழா நாயகி அவர்கள் தான் முதல்வர் பதவியில் இருந்து தற்போது மனையியல் பல்கலைக் கழக வேந்தராக உயர்ந்தமைக்குக் காரணம் அவரது ஆராய்ச்சிகள், வெளியீடுகள், கல்லூரிக்கு இத்துறையில் சிறந்தோரின் வருகை, சிறப்புரைகள் போன்றவையே என மனதில் கொண்டு ஆவன செய்துள்ளமையும், தன்னுடன் தோளோடு தோள் கொடுத்து கல்லூரியின் உயர்வுக்கு உதவிய தனது சகாக்களையும் உயர்வடையச் செய்ததுமாகும். விஞ்ஞான அறிவை எளிய முறையில் கிராம மக்களும் பெற்று வாழ்க்கையில் உயர தமிழில் ‘விஞ்ஞானச் சுடர்’ என்ற வெளியீடும், புதிதான விஞ்ஞான ஆராய்ச்சிகள் மூலம் வெளிவரும் நூல்களில் உள்ள விஞ்ஞான விஷயங்களைத் தன் குறிப்புகள் மூலமும் பல சஞ்சிகைகளுக்கு அனுப்பி பலகற்றோரும் தெரிந்து கொள்ள உதவி வருவதும் இவரது மக்கள் சேவையைக் குறிப்பவையாகும்.

இவர் எளிய முறையில் சிக்கனமாக சத்துணவு தயாரிப்பது எப்படி, அதன் மூலம் நாம் பெறும் மகத்தான சுகவாழ்வு என்ன என்பது குறித்தும் அடிக்கடி பெற்றோருக்கும், பொதுமக்களுக்கும், ஆசிரியர்களுக்கும் குறுகிய காலப்பயிற்சி, பணியிடைப்பயிற்சி, கருத்தரங்குகள் நடத்தி, சீராக குழந்தைகளை வளர்க்க, மகிழ்ச்சியடைய வாய்ப்புகள் ஏற்படுத்தி வருவது பாராட்டத்தக்க ஒரு சாதனையாகும்.

இவ்வளவு பெரிய பொறுப்பிலிருந்து கொண்டும் இப்போது 80 வயதை எட்டியபோதிலும் சுற்றும் ஓயாது, உழைத்து வருவது, நகருக்கு வரும் முக்கிய மானவர்களை தன் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு அழைத்து பெருமைப்படுத்துவது, தன் கீழ் பணிபுரியும் பலரையும் புரிந்து கொண்டு இன்முகத்துடன் இயங்கிவருவது, மேலும் பல கல்லூரிகள் இப்பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் கீழ் இயங்க நடவடிக்கை எடுத்து வெற்றி பெற்றுள்ளது ஆகிய அனைத்தும் இவரது அரிய சாதனைகளேயாகும்.

## முடிவுரை

நம் விழா நாயகி அவர்கள் பெற்ற விருதுகள் எண்ணிலடங்கா. அவ்வப்போது மானசீகமாக நான் எனது மகிழ்ச்சிமாலைகளை அணிவித்ததுண்டு. இவர் மேலும் பல விருதுகளைப் பெற வாழ்த்துகிறேன். இவர் கீழ் இயங்கி வரும் இம்மனையியல் பல்கலைக்கழகமானது ஆல்போல தழைத்து, அருகுபோல் வேர்விட்டு, மூங்கில் போல் சுற்றம் (பல துறைகள்) சூழ வளர்ந்து மக்களுக்கு சேவை புரிய இறையருள் வேண்டுகிறேன். இதற்கு ஆணிவேராக அமைந்த அம்மா அவர்களும், உடன் பணிபுரிவோரும், கற்கும் மாணவியரும் பல நலன்களைப் பெற்று மேலும் மேலும் கல்வியில், பண்பில் உயர்ந்து பல்லாண்டு வாழ ஆண்டவன் அருள் புரிவாராக என வேண்டி இவ்வரிய வாய்ப்பினை எனக்கு அளித்த சகோதரிகள் அனைவருக்கும் நன்றி கூறி முடிக்கிறேன். ●

## **RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - AN INSPIRING LEADER**

V. PRAKASH

**I**t is a great pleasure for me and my colleagues at CRTRI to convey our best wishes for the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday of **Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas**. It is important to recollect what role Dr. Rajammal has played in the family of **Avinashilingam University** and in a larger sense, the family of women students whom she has trained and dispersed around the world. Her important qualities which have made the difference are '**humaneness**' and '**societal mission**'. With these two important qualities, she has been able to guide, change and be an inspiring leader for many of the scientists to reach Society and Programmes oriented towards it. It may be important that unless and until we have that zeal built into our qualities right from the first day upon entering the college, it is difficult to achieve the success. She is a model role for that commitment. With her unique way of **gentle smile**, she has been able to imbibe modern methods of teaching and touch students' heart. She has built up an **excellent rapport** with the University and other Institutions and I am very sure CRTRI has a very special place for her. Recently I understand that she has started even **Food Engineering Courses** which is highly appreciative. Tomorrow's societal mission on food processing can emerge together with commitment largely belonging to the inputs from the students across the country. I am sure she will be very active even after her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday and in wishing all the best in her very active life after the 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday, we at CRTRI also **love, cherish and nurture** the association with **Avinashilingam University family**.

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A PROFESSIONAL PAR EXCELLENCE**

C. PRASAD

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women - Deemed University, has been a senior colleague of mine. My close professional association with her gives me some latitude to write or talk about her. My association with her has been over three decades. No doubt, my interactions with her has been always pleasant, professional and productive. Since she has been a positive personality all the way, it is relatively easier to reflect on her rich professional career and humble personal life. The former was always preferred by her over the latter like any career and achievement minded person. Let me first congratulate her on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. May God grant her many more returns of the day in the interest of the Home Science profession and women's education on one hand and the poorer sections of the society, where she was always concerned, on the other. She has always dedicated herself for the poor and downtrodden. Her contributions for mothers and children by way of research and development in the fields of health and nutrition have been no doubt monumental.

Nothing succeeds like success as normally people say. But frankly speaking, success embraces those who are a committed lot and combine brain and brawn in right proportions. Dr. Rajammal is a rare combination of these basic ingredients. She has been very sharp and kept her ears and eyes always open. She has been a real driving force in her professional arena - the Home Science. She has been a self-made person. Generally speaking, there are six basic characteristics of a successful personality which always function in some kind of combination with particular individuals : (i)

good health, (ii) high Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.), (iii) quality education, (iv) regular training, (v) sincerity and hard work, (v) leadership drive, and (vi) good luck. Any individual can be studied on these personality traits. If one can score Dr. Rajammal on these parameters on a five point scale ranging from below average to excellent, I can bet, she would always score excellent or near excellent.

She has been a friend, philosopher and guide to many, but her friendship with Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar led to many great contributions - both they had been positive thinkers and promoters of education and training - human resource builders as a base for the national growth. She did not allow any weakness to surface in the Institution which they built and loved. In absence of Sri Chettiar jee - a great nationalist indeed and a staunch follower of Ramakrishna Mission and Vivekananda, she saw to it that things improved for the better. Mr. Chettiar was a great Gandhian in his values and thinking as well as in his style of living and working.

### **Institution Builder**

Any body who is devoted to education and training, I would consider him or her as a great person with foresight and insight into futurology of people and the nation. Human resource development should be our number one priority, for it is people who make or break institutions and the quality and commitment of population ultimately speaks for his or her country. Dr. Rajammal's life has been a symbol of institution-builder. Let us see the monumental work - the growth of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women. Now it is a deemed to be University - a real feat for her. Besides, she has been associated with many more schools and institutions in the country. It takes a committed life time and continued persistent work to achieve such distinction. Institutions are not made of bricks, mortars and buildings (inorganic part), rather are fruits of life and blood of people and the

professionals (organic dimension) with a dynamic foresighted leadership. Dr. Rajammal has become immortal; Avinashilingam Institute/University will keep reminding people that Rome was not built in a day; it takes life time work of people and even greater that of the leaders. Dr. Rajammal did not leave any thing unturned in favour of her mission - raising the height of the Institute to the highest peak in terms of quality of education, horizontal and vertical expansion and professional discipline. Educational and training institutions are nothing if they do not strive for quality education including positive values ; a lot comes in this respect from the teachers'/scientists' working style, and putting up good examples before the students. When one visits Avinashilingam Institute, one is reminded of discipline - disciplined teachers, professors, workers, administrators and students. What a serene atmosphere in an institution where Vice-chancellor to all levels of teachers assemble every morning in a hall before starting their professional chores. This is unique; should be contagious. This keeps on reminding people and the teachers the God's presence in their work the whole day. The quality and committed work partly stems from here and repetitions and hammering of these values every day become internalized and the very part of their life systems. Discipline and character building is number one task of any good institution. And in absence of this, unlike Avinashilingam Institute, many institutions are functioning like commercial mills - manufacturing goods, not people. This is why a lot of degeneration in institutions have taken place and what you ultimately get is the products for jobs. And when they get it, they don't want to work; their aspirations have been so limited. What a mockery? What an education? Institutions like Avinashilingam Deemed University, based on their consistent good work and experience, should take a regular "Summer School" for teachers and trainers on quality teaching and education including positive valued in its serene environment including positive values and discipline. I am reminded of the "Summer School" which is run by Sri Satya Sai Baba Sansthan where Shri Satya Sai Baba himself functions as a regular teacher. He is convinced of

the merit of the teachers as personality builders - creating worthwhile human resources. The work of Ramakrishna Mission and Vivekanand's preaching have direct influence on this deemed University through Dr. Rajammal and late Sri Chettiar jee. This approach is worth emulating elsewhere in the country and abroad. There is a dearth of good people everywhere and more so in developing countries. A lot of investment is required in this context.

I remember Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas working as a Joint Director with the Directorate of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India as well as with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) as the Asst. Director General (Home Science), New Delhi. As her colleague as the Asst. Director General (Agril. Education), ICAR, I watched her work and her working style. She was a restless woman always thinking how to promote Home Science everywhere as also how to associate and contribute in allied disciplines. She is in fact aggressive at that ; her energy for work appeared unlimited. She made positive contribution in advising us to let Home Science figure in the State Agricultural Universities, Training Centres and Krishi Vigyan Kendras in a big way; for it was important for farm/rural women. She attempted very sincerely to create a Division of Home Science, like any other subject-matter Divisions (8) in the ICAR system headed by a Deputy Director General (Home Science), but unfortunately, she did not make it. Finding her faculty not getting the rightful place in the ICAR system (as I thought), she left ICAR, perhaps, in frustration. But alas! how she could have stayed there when she was to create an University out of the Avinashilingam Institute? God bless her!

I was dealing with the promotion of KVKs and the TTCs (Trainers Training Centres) of the Education Division of the ICAR then; later they become a part of the Division of Extension Education which was created in 1984 and I got the first opportunity to head it as the Deputy Director General. While giving a KVK under

Avinashilingam Institute by the ICAR was not a problem, getting a TTC in Home Science under this Institute was the most difficult task. The TTC by design was being given by the ICAR to the ICAR Research Institutes only. But, she as a strong motivator and persuader, managed a TTC through me. My personal motivation was that the TTC was being allotted to an excellent institution and in the ICAR system there was no Home Science except in the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs). In the natural course, it could have gone to one of the SAUs, but for strong management skill of Dr. Rajammal. She was a member of the Governing Body of the ICAR then. Mind it, I was always her fan and follower in many respects. I am still is!

### **An Able Administrator**

A good administrator manager is a combination of several traits. Academically speaking, an administrator could be 80% democratic manager - handling things politely and democratically; 10% educator - improving things by persuasion, motivation and education; and 10% authoritarian - in circumstances when all logic and education fail. Dr. Rajammal would very much fair on this scale. She rightly gets harsh at occasions with her co-workers, but in the next moment, she was so soft and decent. Her only worry has been to succeed and never fail in all her missions and adventures in research and development including institution-building. And I tell you she has achieved that.

A.V. Birla wrote in one of his observations on management of his business empire in 1990. He believed in paternalistic style of management with a sort of native touch by promoting managers from the account assistants and management trainers of his own system unless the expansion (of his business empire) was faster than the creation of their own people. He believed in investment in people, i.e. more in-house

training, and delegation of responsibility and authority among own employees even at the cost of risk and losses. Dr. Rajammal fully functions on this style of management and today she has created capable women scientists and administrators who can manage their affairs of the University or other institutions efficiently, and luckily she is proud of seeing them succeed. This is what she is doing as the Chancellor; no body could be more happier than her - seeing her empire / institutions run for the good of the people so efficiently and always looking ahead.

I talk of universal theory of management (which I have introduced) even promotes management on one-to-one basis : students manage their time budgeting : mother trains daughter to maintain kitchen even at her young age; captain manages this team, and the like. Dr. Rajammal promoted such habits of management among the young students right from the prayers to productive classes, no doubt, unmindful of this theory perhaps. She is a symbol of training people for perfection - great human resource builder and a lucky lady at that. To the surprise of many, I have used 'Lucky' as one of the six basic traits of a successful individual, for I know and have seen professionally mediocre people getting coveted positions whereas brilliant professionals could not get such opportunities - indeed the luck factor. I thought, Dr. Rajammal had even worked in heaven to get this trait added to her qualification list.

Dr. Rajammal, by virtue of her polite manner of approaching and working with people, did not create enemies, though there might be some jealous people here and there. If one looks at her long career, this ability is extra-ordinary. She always believed in personal approaches and this is why she has been a great linker. Linkage process is a social mechanism, and she has exploited this to the maximum for her institutions. I personally saw to it that she gets "Linker Award" of the Indian Society of Extension Education (ISEE); I was the President of ISEE.

## **A Restless Professional**

Have you seen Rajammal ever resting without showing burning concern for her institutions, profession, projects or programmes? At least I have not. I have been on many occasions with her in different interactions and forums including travelling, and I could see that she is always pondering over something next to be done. She is a learner all the way. One can see her in all interactions to make a serious attempt to learn as well as contribute - she is never a passive listener. In exhibitions / fairs, I have seen her showing keen interest in all stalls and asking so many searching questions as well as collecting literature everywhere. She has been a voracious reader and a prolific writer as well.

She, like any other good professionals, likes to attend professional meetings, conferences and seminars everywhere - she is a great traveller within the country or abroad. She has been rather aggressive in this respect. Even at this stage of her career at 80 plus she never stops. Perhaps, in view of the management of her institutions on one hand and promotion of the professional colleagues for interactions with the outside world on the other, I thought, there was some scope for moderation in this particular trait.

Besides being a good administrator and manager, she has been a first rate professional. See her work in the field of food and nutrition including allied areas of Home Science - it is voluminous. She has been a keen observer and quality writer. Some of her publications are historical.

## **Recognitions and Awards**

She is an internationally known and recognized professional. Her professional affiliations, distinctions and recognitions are innumerable and beyond citation here and there speak volume for her.

## **Conclusion**

Let Rajammal continue serving the cause of science, education, training and extension for a long time to come God willing! Her rich experience are bound to make even larger contributions in future. For her health, her aggressive tours and travels and outside interactions should be rather minimized now in the larger interest of her own built deemed University - Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women. May God grant her excellent health and sharp mind for many many years to come. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**B.P. RAJAN**

I had an opportunity for acquaintance with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas through her son, Dr. Mohan Devadas when he made a visit to our house in Mylapore in the year 1972. Since I had known about her interest in the field of education and her position as Principal of Sri Avinashilingam College of Coimbatore, I considered it as a great fortune for having met her and my acquaintance with her was very valuable. She made our house as a temporary residence whenever she visited Madras to attend the syndicate meeting of the Madras University as a Member. The confidential files were received in the box and she used to use carefully study in detail even at late hours before attending the meeting. I used to enquire about her role in the University and slowly learnt the importance of syndicate member in the educational field and contribution in the University. This prompted me to become a syndicate member of Madras University and with her guidance and support I was elected as Syndicate Member with vast majority of votes which made me to serve the University for nearly 6 years in the syndicate till the Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University has been formed and Medical and Dental colleges were separated and affiliated to the New University.

During the above period, she had given valuable suggestions and when I was in great difficult to buy the present house at Mylapore, she had suggested me to collect money through the chit funds organized among the close friends and immediately hundred over Rs. 1,000/- as her share. This prompted me to buy the house with

confidence and at every time she gave a correct advice to overcome the difficulties. Today I am living in the present house means that I love a lot for her contribution and encouragement.

Madam Rajammal is a hard worker and strict eater. She just takes very little food selecting the correct balanced diet which will give just the necessary calories for the subsistence of her life. One has to learn a lot from this great Nutritionist who has a healthy and brisk life. When she get even 5 minutes free, she will be reading some files or correcting the theses of some students. Even while travelling in the train she always carried files and was doing the paper work. She is a busy personality and the telephone calls will start coming from the early hours on the date of arrival in Madras. She used to have only a very few audience and discuss the matters precisely and dispose them off.

She never misses her church visits whenever she happens to stay in Madras on Sundays.

I had never seen her wearing costly and attractive dresses and she is to live a simple life following Gandhian ideals and principles. I had never seen her getting angry on anybody and even when her feelings were hurt by someone she used to keep silence. She has seen many Vice Chancellors during her tenure and I have seen her to have a lot of restraints when provoked by the co-workers and even when abusive words are used at her.

She is a strict disciplinarian and she is to tell me as to how to guide the students in the correct way and uphold their moral behavior. She is to frequently visit other

countries on invitations and share thoughts on the educational aspects particularly on subjects pertaining to Nutrition.

I consider my association with her a fortunate one and always look forward for her association and guidance. When I had been appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, I considered her solely responsible for the same and I am ever grateful for her.

On her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, I pray Almighty to give her enough. ●

# **RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - A CRUSADER FOR WOMEN'S LITERACY**

**RAVINDER NATH TALWAR**

**I**t is an honour and a pleasure to be asked to write about one of eminent educationist and a crusader for women's literacy and empowerment.

She had proved to be Karam Yogi in the real sense : and the path of selfless work, which she wows with her enlightened soul may illuminate and guide the world for generations.

Whatever action a greatman performs, common man follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursue.

The great philosopher, educationist and freedom fighter late Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam founded the Avinashilingam Education Trust for Women and the credibility of this trust is great. The credit goes to the founder for picking up Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for putting his dreams into reality. Dr. Rajammal has been nurturing the growth of the institution since its inception. With all the degrees, awards, honours, national and International and high positions she has committed herself to the growth of Avinashilingam Institutions.

Under her able selfless efforts and guidance the preschool has come to post doctoral level. It is an excellent achievement and an inspiring academic miracle. She has been instrumental to introduce all what one sees in Avinashilingam Deemed **University** of which she is the Chancellor now. Through her dynamism NSS, NCC and Adult Education have become curricular components.

I had met Dr. Devadas first in Bhopal where she had come to receive the Tagore Literacy Award. She addressed the audience in English which was resented by the gathering and they wanted her to speak in Hindi, It was a wonder to see her not to show any annoyance, but very calmly she told the audience, that I shall speak in Tamil, my mother tongue. A translator was arranged and she spoke in Tamil. That was one of the unique and quoted experience.

Late Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon founder chairman of AICEIW a crusader against female illiteracy always had a word of praise for Dr. Devadas and she had nominated her as the Zonal Chairman of AICEIW of South Zone. AICEIW had the honour of having Dr. Devadas in its conference and general body meeting at Agra where she was honoured for her work for eradication of illiteracy among women and making more than 20,000 women literate in and around Coimbatore. In Agra she suggested that AICEIW should have a conference at Coimbatore her suggestion was welcomed at the National Conference of AICEIW and the Lakshmi Menon Literacy Award Ceremony was hosted by her on 18 and 19th July 1998.

Most of us go to religious places for visits, yes, visits not pilgrimage to hollowed shrines. I now know the difference between a pilgrimage and visits. The truth of this I learnt from a woman who combines modesty, humility and wisdom effortlessly to convert her own life into a pilgrimage. A three days stay at Avinashilingam Deemed University and a few hours spent in the company of Dr. Devadas became a point of pilgrimage.

Looking at her, not just seeing her, listening to her just not hearing her, I could see how the slums and the near by villages of Coimbatore have become literate. A

team of farsighted, learned and self less dedicated workers with a dynamic Chancellor are working hard for making people literate and Dr. Devadas in her modest way says that Tamil Nadu will be next to Kerala in literacy. That is why it has become the pilgrimage for me and hope to go for that again.

On behalf of AICEIW and my self I send my greetings to Avinashilingam University family and wish success for celebrating the 80th birthday of our most revered Amma, the Chancellor, Dr. Rajammal Devadas.

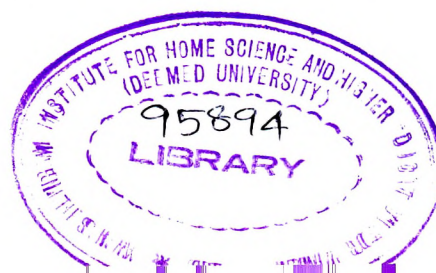
Wishing her a long healthy and useful life for the benefit of all. ●

## **DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS - A SOCIAL WORKER**

**SAROJINI VARADAPPAN**

I am happy to learn that Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas will be completing her 80th birthday and the Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) will be bringing out biographic volumes of her life and work as perceived by her world wise network of connections. As a close associate and well wisher of Dr. Rajammal Devadas I consider it my privilege and pleasure to make a small contribution to your biographic volumes as I have known her.

At the outset I would like to pay my humble tributes to the late Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar for his great vision, philanthropy and to find the right person in Dr. Rajammal Devadas to man this great institution. She had grown with the institute and I am sure every stone of this great institution will speak of her achievement. Dr. Rajammal Devadas was inspired by Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar. She is a concrete example of how faith can move mountains. She works untiringly even at this age with both inspiration and perspiration. Her interest in the welfare of women and children is amazing. Recently I met her at the World Women's Conference at Beijing, China. I was struck by the way she used to walk miles every day in the huge campus, collecting materials from each country. She believes in life long education. No wonder she has a fund of knowledge and information. She has not only built the institution at Coimbatore but she has helped so many women to receive higher education. For example, I am one of those who gained the degree through her sound advice. I did not have the opportunity of college education. This was a great disappointment in my life.



While Dr. Rajammal was in Delhi, I happened to be there as Chairman, Central Social Welfare Board. We used to meet often. One day I expressed my feelings to her. Immediately Dr. Rajammal advised me to apply to the Mysore University, Manasagangotri, where one can receive correspondence course in B.A., M.A., etc. She told me that there is no need for any school certificate. One should be fluent in English and above 35 years. I jumped over this wonderful idea and I applied for M.A. Political Science and I was able to get the degree in two years at the age of 60. This gave me the confidence to again appear for M.A. in Vaishnavism in Madras University and then to proceed to Ph.D. also. Thus I give the entire credit to Dr. Rajammal for making me a degree holder and fulfill my life's ambition.

It is surprising to note that goddess Saraswathi and Lakshmi who do not normally go together rarely joined hands to help the dreams, hopes and aspirations of this adventure. It is easy to dream but it requires tremendous courage and robust optimism to work against heavy odds, face ordeals and attains success. She had toiled hard all along with a single minded devotion, a spirit of detachment and inflexibility, will and unshakable faith in Gandhian ideals. God is always kind to his faithful devotees. She was extremely lucky to be inspired by Sri. Avinashilingam Chettiar, we are delighted to find that throughout her career, she is blessed with a galaxy of sincere and dedicated workers. She is a symbol of sacrifice, purity, compassion, nobility of character, courage and conviction.

She has also evolved excellent principles to guide the functioning of the institution which has the motto from the beginning "to dedicate to the service of education and welfare of women and children in the tasks of the nation building".

They are born out of her convictions rooted in Gandhian ideology. She must also be congratulated for her specialising in free school education, the noon meal scheme which can be a shining example to other states. Her interest in adult education and empowering the rural women will speak volumes.

She was fortunate to get guidance and encouragement from great leaders like late Smt. Lakshmi Menon and others. The All Indian Women's Conference feels proud to have a branch in Coimbatore under her leadership. She organised the annual session of the AIWC at a very short notice and did it so well I had the pleasure of being her guest many times. She is an excellent hostess and her hospitality is so great.

Dr. Rajammal has every reason to look back with contentment and joy upon her busy and fruitful years of service to the motherland. Her zeal, fortitude and spirit of service have created successive band of well educated and trained social workers. Her plan of creating a second line of workers requires to be followed by all spheres of public life. The India of Gandhiji's dreams can be built on solid and constructive work as is being done by institutions like Avinashilingam Institute. It is our good fortune that we have some selfless Gandhian disciples working with devotion and dedication. We must support them whole heartedly so that India of Bapuji's dreams can be built. We must face the challenges of poverty, social injustice and economic strife valiantly with a spirit of service.

The teacher's task is great, tremendous in his responsibility, verify he is an architect, an inspired architect who builds not brick and mortar structures which are soulless things, the agony of toil but who helps the evolution of perfect beings spiritual entities the crown of creation.

The hall mark of true culture is synthesis and balance, education is preparation for livelihood, leisure life and the life beyond. Dr. Rajammal Devadas is a rare contribution of being an educationist as well as a social worker. I regard her as a missionary architect, as one who realises that her God given mission in life is to rear with a rare skill of a spiritual architect a race of individuals, strong, wise, noble and Godly.

In this great and magnificent man making and nation building task, social worker like Dr. Rajammal Devadas has to play an important part. Women have to empower themselves. They have to understand the causes of the existing inequality of women in all sectors, economic, social, political, legal and educational and take the initiative to change their status empowerment in an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realise their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted, nor it be given away as alms. Power has to be acquired. It needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has shown how this empowerment can be achieved. Her vast contact at national and international level, her rich experience in social service and education and her keen interest and concern for the rural women, she had organised many international seminars on Energy Programmes. Introducing alternate energy like solar, biogas etc., had created great awareness among women. I wish her a very happy Birthday and pray the Almighty to give her long, healthy and fruitful life to continue her services in the field of education and social service. May she live for 100 years and let the Avinashilingam Institute celebrate her centenary, Jai Hind! ●

# **SINGLE MINDED DEDICATION TO PURPOSE - THE SECRET OF THE LIFE OF DR. RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

V.S. VIJAYAN

**M**y association with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is very short, only for four years. It was Sardar Vedaratinam Pillai's grandson, Mr. Appakutty Vedaratinam of Vadaranyam who introduced me to Dr. Devadas, whom he reverently referred to me as Amma Avargal. When I came down to Coimbatore in 1991 to establish the Salim Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Mr. Vedaratinam (fondly known as Ravi) had advised me to be in touch with two people for any possible help; one was Amma Avargal and the other Mr. N. Mahalingam.

It was one evening in May 1994 that I met Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for the first time. I had the appointment at 4.30 p.m. I along with my wife, Dr. Lalitha Vijayan, reached the official residence of Dr. Devadas on the dot of the time given and rang the calling bell. A female orderly ushered us into a room which looked like a drawing-cum-dining-cum study. Apparently, the dining table had been converted for reading and writing. Dr. Devadas was at one end of the table quite involved in writing; table untidy, papers and files strewn all around! Within minutes she joined us with a warm welcome and got into informal discussions covering a variety of subjects; nature conservation, education, women's role in conservation education, ethics, moral values and principles.

I had gone there essentially to invite her to be the Chief Guest at the World Environment Day celebrations to be presided over by the then District Collector,

Mr. Sankar. Seeing her immersed with her own work, I thought she would refuse to accept our invitation. I was wrong. When I explained to her the importance of the day, she readily accepted the invitation. And, she gave a real shock to the organisers as she appeared well 10 minutes before the commencement of the function. I thought it was accidental as she might have miscalculated the timings. Later I found I was again wrong. In a recent function organised by us at her next door, at the Forest College Campus, she reached again well 10 minutes before the commencement of the function and waited for other dignitaries who all happened to be much junior and below her rank. She had no ego problem and false prestige. It was one of her qualities; to be prompt and do not make others to wait for her; a quality rarely seen in many of the Indian VIPs. The only other person whom I know, who would never make others to wait for him is Dr. Salim Ali, my Guru.

An occasion which impressed me of Dr. Devadas's dynamism and initiative is related to my efforts to save the age old trees along the Thadagam road. I had been complaining to all the concerned authorities against removal of trees. In spite of tall promises to me nothing happened. Some of them even expressed their helplessness. The trees were continued to be removed from either side of the road, exposing the pedestrians to the scorching sun. One of the officials (name cannot be disclosed) suggested that "Dr. Vijayan, if you really want to save the trees from axe, you make a mass movement against it". It was untenable for a person like me, who work 16-18 hours a day for the office, to start such a movement. However, it was my strong resolve that the trees should be saved. It was mid noon I went straight to Amma. Explained the cruelty. She said she would like to visit the area and have look at it first and see what can be done. Night at 10.45, I got a call from Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

“Dr. Vijayan, a meeting has been called on the coming Saturday, we would work out a strategy, please do come”. There was only three days left for the meeting that she was proposing. I wondered. How quick is she in making decisions, how is she going to get the people. When I arrived at the venue on Saturday afternoon, I found I was wrong again. A sizable number of people were already there. And, again as if to prove her promptness, she was there well 10 minutes before the scheduled time. When we started the meeting, the hall was full! Hats off to Amma's organizing capabilities! Remarkably, more than 80% of the participants were ladies. It was not accidental. Amma had planned it that way. She was convinced that a save nature campaign would be more successful with the involvement of women; a fact accepted of late, by the world. The meeting was brief. An organization called “Pasumai Padukappu Iyakkam” was born. Delegates of the Iyakkam, mostly ladies, met the Collector on the next day morning which was followed by another meeting with the Executive Engineer on the next day. Not a single tree was felled since then!!

From my personal experiences mentioned above, one could easily find some of the finest qualities of Dr. Rajammal Devadas; promptness, hardworking, unassuming, non-egoistic, nonostentatious and simple life style, meticulousness, adherence to fact, capacity to take quick decision, dynamism, and love for nature.

It was unbelievable that she is turning to 80 in 1999. The secret of her health, I am sure is her singleness of purpose, hardworking nature and the simple life style rather than the possible popular belief that the secret is her strict adherence to the dietary habits dictated by the science of nutrition in which her expertise is recognised nationally and internationally.

I wish Dr. Rajammal Devadas, good health for many more years of purposeful and creative life. ●

# **AMMA - A VISIONARY TO PROFESSIONALS**

**SHEILA VIR**

**I** feel honoured that you would like me to write a few words on Prof. Devadas who will be 80 years this year.

Writing about Amma, my thoughts go back 18 years. I met Prof. Devadas in 1980 - after my return from the United Kingdom - following completion of Ph.D. I vividly recall, Prof. Devadas was the Chairperson of the interview committee and I was one of the interviewees who was not known at all to the interview panel. In Dr. Devadas's nationalist spirit, she asked me a number of probing questions pertaining to why I wanted to do Ph.D. in U.K. - did India not offer an opportunity? Well, I definitely felt harassed and highly disappointed. I lost hope! Needless to say I was not offered the position and wondered at her comments. (I have never discussed this with Amma - I don't think she would recall this). I was curious who this authoritative personality was - I did find out as I met her at several occasions and affectionately addressed her as "Amma". She is "Amma" to the present generations of nutritionists who believed in her vision.

Amma's contribution in the field of development is well known. I view her significant contribution in the following areas :

- a) Positioning "Women's Education and Empowerment" in the highest agenda of development.
- b) According high priority to address the problem of malnutrition in women and children in the country and ensuring that sustainable measure are addressed as a development issue by politicians and policy makers.

- c) Urging professionals to address the problem of malnutrition as an overall “development” issue and not merely related to “food and feeding”.
- d) Providing leadership to the country in making relevant changes in the curriculum of Home Science and Nutrition, degree and postgraduate courses.
- e) Mobilising the professionals of “Home Science” cadre to shift their focus from “Laboratory to community” and also changing the nomenclature of the degree course in “Home Science” to “Family and Community Sciences”.

Today, with Amma's leadership, a momentum has been created amongst the nutrition professionals to be actively involved in the development of community. She has led us all to believe that contribution of each one of us, however small, can make a remarkable difference in empowering the women of our country.

It has always been a very happy and enlightening experience meeting Amma professionally and informally. On Amma's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, I pray to God to give her all the strength to continue to lead us all in our work towards development of community, empowerment of women and in our mission to reduce malnutrition in the country and in the world. ●

## **MY SISTER RAJAMMAL DEVADAS**

**C. VISALAKSHI**

It was in 1933, the boycott of foreign goods started as I remember, I was in the V. Form a class below S.S.L.C. studying in the Government Secondary and Training School, Raja Street, Coimbatore. As far as possible. I always wore swadeshi dress. A Congress Homeopathic doctor by name Subramaniam pandey used to come home and speak about the boycott of foreign goods and Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha and the non-violence movement. Through Dr. Pandey, I had known our Revered Ayya, Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar who was very keen to inject the revolutionary ideas of independence into the younger generation. To that effect Ayya Avargal started Vidyalaya in a very modest way at Podanoor and Dr. Pandey's only son became an inmate of the School. The strength of the school improved and later the Vidyalaya was shifted to Perianaickenpalayam.

By that time I had gone to higher education to Queen Mary's College, Madras. But my association with Vidyalaya continued and whenever I came for Christmas Holidays when they had the Vidyalaya annual function I attended with my guardian, my uncle and Dr. Pandey.

After I completed my higher education, I served in the Presentation convent high school for one year and entered the Government Service in July, 1942. Everytime I came to Coimbatore I used to attend the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya annual function. It was Dec. 1948 I met Amma Avargal in the annual Vidyalaya functions in the Pandal along with Amma's mother, Smt. Sornammal. We sat together in the Pandal and from then onwards for every annual function of the Vidyalaya, we met. I was working as a

School Assistant in Government Sec. and Training School, Raja Street, Coimbatore and was deputed for Retraining in Basic Education by the Director of Public Instruction. We had to stay in Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpalayam for a period of six months. The trainees were many District Educational Officers, School Assistants and Secondary grade Teachers. It was then that I had closely associated with Ammar Ayya Avargal who had hosted the All India Basic Conference to which the time great leaders like Sri Muhammed Hussian, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Deshmuk, Mr. Kripalini, Dr. Hariyanayagamji and several others came and participated. I was put incharge of the conference office to help the staff. Amma also attended the conference. Ammar Ayya got to know me well as I worked in the office till the conference was over.

After the retraining in Basic Education in May 1949 we were relieved from the basic training institute to join our parent institutions. From then onwards every year for the Annual festival at Ramakrishna Vidyalaya I used to meet Amma Avargal, her mother and Mohan, Amma's only son who was a student of Vidyalaya. When I came to serve the Government Secondary Training School, I was given the subjects Psychology, School Administration, methods of teaching Natural Science to the Training students. I used to come to the Psychology Laboratory with my students. Ammar Dr. Aram was incharge of the Phychology lab. and so I was associated with the Training college. Amma's son's local guardian was Dr. Aram. Dr. Aram's mother was a very affectionate cultured lady who always treated me with great affection and in their house I have met Amma and Mohan. Our acquaintance developed into friendship. Amma was then Chief Home Economist to the Govt. of India, a great personality, but very simple, a Gandhian and full of ideas for the improvement of women. It was there that Ammar Ayya was thinking of having a Vidyalaya like parallel institution for girls, since he felt that the girls were not given proper education for

preparing them for a happy home life. So he had planned in consultation with Amma Avargal to start an institution for Girls Education and thus the Sri Avinashilingam Educational Trust for Girl's Education was founded. Ammarar Ayya Avargal in consultation with Amma wanted to start a 'Home Science High School for girls' in the city of Coimbatore itself. By that time I was transferred from the Govt. Secondary Training School, Coimbatore as Deputy Inspector of Schools, Pollachi. I was working there and because I was influenced by Sri Ramakrishna's disciple Swami Vivekananda, I used to attend religious lectures too and it was then I happened to meet our revered Bharatha Rathna C. Subramaniam Avargal. He was then practising as an Advocate in Coimbatore. At Pollachi, as I served as Deputy Inspector of Schools visiting village schools, I had the rare opportunity of meeting the important persons - agriculturists mostly in the villages. I felt Pollachi Taluk was an enlightened area. Though the women were not educated they were very cultured. I had occasion to meet the brother and sister of our revered Ayya, Subramaniam Avargal. By that time Ammarar Ayya had finalised the place to start the Girls' Home Science Institution. It was in the forest college campus. As usual I was attending the Vidyalaya annual function and visited Ayya to offer my pranams. He told me of his plan to open a girls' school for Home Science and asked me if I would take over charge of the school. I readily accepted and requested him to request the Government to relieve me to start the Institution. So it was in 1955 on 14th April I was relieved to start the Institution in the campus. I remember Amma telling me that our school should be different from other schools on Home Science.

From then onwards Amma became the Technical Adviser to the Institution. The foundation for the school was laid by a very humble land pooja with Swami Sarvakgnananda, the then Secretary of the Vidyalaya, Mr. Ramaswamy Mappilai Chettiar, Son-in-law of Ammarar Sivasubramaniam affectionately called as Periya Ayya.

A very humble building came up with four class rooms, an office room and a fairly big room for Science Lab. The building was designed as per the Technical advise of our Amma Avargal and furniture for the School also was bought according to her advise. Amma Avargal used to visit the place every three or four months to see to the proper growth of the institution. The School with four classes, I. form to IV. Form - VI. std. to IX. std. was opened on 1st June, 1955. I as Headmistress received Amma Avargal's first letter of blessings to the Instition which I had treasured till 1997 and handed over to Amma Avargal during the lighting ceremony of the school in 1997. From that time onwards my association with Amma Avargal was quite frequent.

As the first set of the High School students would attend college in 2 years, Amma Avargal planned the college affairs as early as 1956 and Smt. Lakshmi Unni from Baroda College of Home Science started planning for the college. She left because she was in the family way and Miss. Padmini Ramaseshiah took over to attend to the college work. By then I left the Sri Avinashilingam Trust Home Science School to join my parent department. It was during my service that the shrine and the first college building now housing the office, the Committee room etc., was built.

My association with Amma Avargal was very intimate and we met whenever we had an opportunity to meet. I think two years later Amma Avargal took leave and thereafter her services were lent by the Central Government to the Avinashilingam Home Science College and she started working for the college as Principal. The institution grew from day today under her affectionate care and her only thought as I could see was to bring this Institution as an All India Institution. To that effect she would work for the institution very hard. Within a very short period she saw that the institution was well equipped with staff. All her staff members were made enthusiastic and devoted by her example and most of the members acquired Doctorate under her

special motivation and guidance. Such a rare personality interested in the improvement of the qualification of her subordinates and co-workers is very rare to come across. Every staff member who came with a graduate or post graduate qualification was helped to attain the Doctorate degree. A lady with great dynamism and devotion to Home Science she served the whole of India in Home Science branch. She brought all the best she has seen in the universities of India and also from the universities of the United States of America where she had done her Doctorate. Her devotion to Home Science and improvement of women's education was her foremost qualification. She travelled wide and brought in all the best she observed wherever she had gone, not only to the college, but materials she found interesting even to the nursery babies of the institution.

Amma Avargal is a recipient of several awards, international, national and President's Awards. Yet she is very humble, simple and modest. This is a very rare trait. The students of the Institution have a living example to emulate. The awards she got are due to her very hard work. So if we work very hard, very sincerely and try to reach certain ideals we have in mind we are sure to be successful in life. Very many Institutions do not have such great leadership. It is a unique fortune for this Institution to have such a leadership to be copied by the students of the Institution so that in the days to come we will have a lot of leaders in several capacities.

Having seen the birth of the Institution and its growth day by day, I bless the students of this institution to be hardworking, religious, truthful and have all the qualities of our Indian women which revered Ayya Avargal aspired. Bless you All.

I wish Amma Avargal a long, healthy and energetic life.

## **WORK IS WORSHIP FOR RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**K. VISWANATHAN**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas - we fondly call her as Akka - the elder sister. Our Pranams. I mean the pranams from me, my family and also the entire Mitraniketan community to this Octogenarian elder sister and wish her long and full measure of healthy life to continue to serve the humanity.

My acquaintance with her started way back from the very inception of Mitraniketan i.e., 42 years ago. As a student in the US her closeness to late Dr. Arthur E. Morgan whom I consider as my mender, guide and philosopher, had made a reference about me and this was the beginning of my close contact of her along with the illustrious founder of Sri Avinashilingam Trust Institutions, late Sri. Avinashilingam Chettiar whom people respectfully and with reverence used to address as "Ayya".

She was also instrumental to bring me closer to late Smt. Lakshmi N. Menon, former State Minister for External Affairs, Govt. of India as both of them were very close and intimate. They were very close and intimate to one another all through the eventful life of Smt. Menon. On a number of occasions, I had the good fortune to be her guest and I am sure in future also I will have similar opportunities. In the early period of our efforts either alone or along with Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar she had visited Mitraniketan and encouraging words were spoken to all of us. In those initial days it was a real struggle and close association with them was indeed a great moral boost especially to me to carry on my work with firm conviction and confidence.

Dr. (Mrs.) Rajammal P. Devadas is a Doyen in the field of Women's emancipation especially through the vast field of Home Science. She is although in her 80's, I see her even to-day quite youthful in spirit as a great source of inspiration. She is always found enviously active and visiting different parts of the country and also abroad on different capacity as a guide or adviser or to deliver lectures at different universities in India and also in other countries. She is a classical example for “work is worship” for her. She is a singularly devoted scholar and very practical person with Christian background and a universal mind. Her noble way of living and working day and night for human well being has brought dignity and status to thousands of women both youth and adults. She is always found in search of new ideas. She is already the founder Director, the Vice Chancellor and now Chancellor of Sri Avinashilingam Institutions which is now a Deemed University to which her personality is closely knitted together inseparably. Now these Institutions mean Dr. (Mrs.) Rajammal P. Devadas a synonym with a dedicated and able team of teachers and a VC to support her cause. Everyone who knows this great institution knows this also. It has earned a name through her even in other Asian countries, as it attracts students also from many other countries. There are other sister institutions which are complementary to each other for their sharing ideas and experiences. Hundreds of eminent women in the field have been equipped and brought out periodically well disciplined with skill and knowledge to serve the nation to their full capacity. I cannot think of another individual like her goodself who love and be loved and live such a dedicated life as she is.

We also had a good fortune to work together for a period as a very active member in the Executive Committee of South Zone CAPART for a full term. She was always found championing to help the cause of voluntary organisations especially

of women folks. We are very grateful for all the support she was able to extend to us to spread the idea of voluntary action in Southern region. Whenever I am in Coimbatore, I cannot think of a better home than the Home Science college to relax under her warm care and most sisterly affection. I wish her to live amongst us many more active years and continue to serve humanity in this strife stricken world. We need many more such souls in the country and I am sure there will be a flow of leadership springing from among her very devoted and committed groups who I am sure will come up to serve the nation. Myself and the whole Mitraniketan community is with her in letter and spirit to wish her the best in life in the years to come. ●

**FRIENDS AND  
WELL WISHERS**

## வேந்தர் டாக்டர் ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களின் 80வது ஆண்டு பிறந்த நாள் வாழ்த்துச் செய்தி

ஹாஜி சி.வி. அபூபக்கர் பாகவி

**அ**றிவும் ஆன்மீகமும் ஒருங்கிணையப் பெற்ற அறிஞர் ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அம்மா அவர்களுக்கு 80வது பிறந்தநாள் விழா கண்டு மகிழ்ச்சியும் பெருமையும் அடைகின்றேன்.

அம்மா அவர்கள் கல்விப்பணி, ஆன்மீகப்பணி, சமுதாயப்பணி ஆற்றும் போது அவர்களோடு இணைந்து பணியாற்றும் வாய்ப்பைப் பெற்றுள்ளேன்.

பரந்த நோக்கத்தாலும், உயர்ந்த எண்ணத்தாலும், மனித நேயத்தாலும், அனைத்து சமுதாய மக்களிடமும் நல் அன்பையும், ஆதரவையும் அம்மா அவர்கள் என்றும் பெற்றுக் கொண்டிருப்பது என் உள்ளத்தில் பெரும் மகிழ்ச்சியைத் தருகிறது.

தமிழகத்திற்கு மட்டுமல்லாமல் இந்தியாவிற்கே பெருமை சேர்க்கும் வகையில் உலக நாடுகளில் அவரது கல்விப்பணியின் மூலம் சிறந்து விளங்கும் அம்மா அவர்கள் நீண்ட ஆயுளும், உடல் ஆரோக்கியமும் பெற்று இன்னும் பல்லாண்டு காலம் வாழ வாழ்த்துகிறேன். இறைவனை வேண்டுகிறேன்.

## சில நட்புகள் அழியா காவியமாகும்

க. தாமோதரசுவாமி நாயுடு

**பா**ரெங்கும் புகழ் பெற்ற பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தரிவர், பட்டங்கள் பலப்பல பெற்ற பல்கலைக்கழகமிவர், ஏட்டறிவோடு எண்ணற்ற அனுபவங்கள் பெற்றிட்ட என் அன்புச் சகோதரி டாக்டர் திருமதி. ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள். பவள விழா காணுகின்ற பண்பான சகோதரியைப் பார்த்த நாள் முதலாக இன்று வரை எண்ணிப் பார்க்கிறேன்.

சில சம்பவங்கள் சரித்திரமாகும்

சில சந்திப்புகள் நட்புகளாகும்

சில நட்புகள் அழியா காவியமாகும்

அருமைச் சகோதரியார் அவர்களுக்கும் எனக்கும் இப்படித்தான் நட்பு ஏற்பட்டது.

எங்கே? எப்படி அவரின் அறிமுகம் ஏற்பட்டது? திரும்பிப் பார்க்கிறேன். 1972-ஆம் ஆண்டு அன்னை இந்திராகாந்தி அம்மையார் பாரதப்பிரதமராக இருந்தபோது அவசரச் சட்டம் கொண்டு வந்து, இருபது அம்சத் திட்டத்தை இந்தியாவெங்கும் செயல்படுத்திய வேளை, பட்டி தொட்டிகளெங்கும் இத்திட்டம் பரவலாக்கப்பட்டு, வறுமைக் கோட்டின் கீழ் இருந்த மக்களுக்காக இயற்றப்பட்ட சட்டம் இது என பூபாளம் பாடிய வேளை அது.

ஏழை எளிய மக்கள் வாழ்வில் ஏற்றம் பெறக் கொண்டு வரப்பட்ட இச்சட்டம், இந்தியாவெங்கும் அமுல்படுத்தப்பட்ட அந்நாளில் உணவுத்துறை செயலராகப் பணியாற்றிய உயர் ஐ.ஏ.எஸ். அதிகாரி திரு. க. திரவியம் அவர்கள் மற்றும் இ.க.த.வே.க.பே.பி - திரு. சுப்பிரமணியம் போன்றவர்கள்

ஆலோசகர்களாக நியமிக்கப்பட்டநேரம். அந்நாளின் ஆளுநர் திரு. கி. சுகாரி டியர் அவர்கள்.

தமிழக மக்களுக்கு மிகவும் குறைந்த விலையில் 'ஜனதா சாப்பாடு' என்ற பெயரில் உணவளிக்க வேண்டும் என உத்தரவிட்டது அரசு. அத்தோடு நின்றார்களா? அத்துணை உணவுப் பொருட்களுக்கும் எடை நிர்ணயம் செய்தார்கள். இட்லி இத்தனை கிராம், வடை இவ்வளவு என்று ஒவ்வொன்றிற்கும் ஓர் அளவு கொடுத்து அந்த எடையில் குறைந்தால் எண்ண வேண்டும் கம்பியை எனச் சட்டம் போட்டு அலறவைத்தார்கள் ஓட்டல் உரிமையாளர்களை.

அவசரச் சட்டம் அமுலில் இருந்ததால் அடிப்படை உரிமைகட்காகக் கூடப் போராட முடியாத நிலை, சத்தியத்தைக் கூடச் சத்தம் போட்டுச் சொல்லவியலாத சூழ்நிலையில் ஓட்டல் உரிமையாளர்களாகிய நாங்கள் செய்வது அறியாது திகைத்து நின்றோம்.

மனிதனையே எடைபோட முடியாத மண்ணுலகில் இட்லியை எப்படி எடை போடுவது? மாலை எடைபோட்டு வார்ப்பதா? வார்த்தெடுத்த பின் இட்லியை எடை போடுவதா? என்ற வாக்கு வாதங்கள் வேறு எங்களுக்குள்ளே வேறுவழியின்றி "தங்கம் சாதிக்காததைச் சங்கம் சாதிக்கும்" என நம்பி ஒன்றுபட்ட நாங்கள் தமிழ்நாடு ஓட்டல் உரிமையாளர்கள் சங்கம் என்ற எங்கள் அமைப்பின் மூலம் உயர் அதிகாரியை அணுகி எங்கள் நிலைமையைத் தெளிவாக எடுத்துரைத்தோம். இன்னல்களை விவரித்து இயலாமையை விளக்கினோம்.

அந்த காலகட்டத்தில்தான் அவினாசிலிங்கம் மணையியல் கல்லூரியின் மாட்சிமை பொருந்திய முதல்வராகத் திகழ்ந்த டாக்டர் திருமதி. ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களின் அறிமுகம் ஏற்பட்டது.

நாங்கள் இயலாது என்றதைத் தான் செய்து காட்டினார்கள். ஜனதா சாப்பாட்டை அனைவருக்கும் குறைந்த விலையில் (ஒரு ரூபாய்) அளிக்க முன் வந்தார்கள் அம்மையார் அவர்கள். அதிசயித்தோம், ஆத்திரப்பட்டோம், ஆவேசப்பட்டோம், சாப்பாடு போட வேண்டிய எங்களுக்கு கூப்பாடு தான் போட முடிந்தது.

அதையெல்லாம் பொருட்படுத்தாத 'அன்னபூரணி' அம்மா ராசம்மாள் தேவதாஸ் மத்திய பேருந்து நிலையத்தில் இலவச இடம் பெற்று, மணையியல் மாணவிகளை வைத்து, வாய்க்கு ருசியாக வருபவர்கட்கெல்லாம் குறைந்த விலையில் ஜனதா சாப்பாடு போட்டு சரித்திரம் படைத்தார்கள். மற்றவர்கள் செய்ய முடியாதென்றதைத் தான் செய்து காட்டி சாதனை படைத்தார்கள், வெற்றிப் பாதையில் வேகமாகச் சென்றார்கள். வளமான உணவிட்டு வரலாற்றில் இடம் பெற்றார்கள்.

உழைத்துழைத்து ஓடாகிப் போன மக்கட்கு உபகாரம் செய்ய அன்னசத்திரம் அமைத்து உணவு கொடுத்தல் அறச் செயலாகும். ஆனால் அன்றாடம் மக்களை நம்பிப் பிழைப்பை நடத்தும் ஓட்டல்கள் தொழிலைப் பாதிக்கும் வகையில் ஓட்டல் உரிமையாளர்கள் வயிற்றில் அடிக்கும் வகையில் இப்படிக் குறைந்த விலையில் இந்த அம்மையார் சாப்பாடு போடுவது சரியானதா? தர்மமாகுமா? என்று நாங்களெல்லாம் கோபப்பட்டோம். எங்களுக்கும் இலவச இடம், மின்சாரம், தண்ணீர், வேலையாட்கள் என அனைத்தையும் இலவசமாகக் கொடுத்தால், நாங்களும் ஜனதா சாப்பாட்டைப் போடுகின்றோம் எனக் குரல் கொடுத்தோம். கல்லூரி முதல்வர் கொடுத்த உணவுப் பொருட்களின் கணக்கைக் காட்டி, அரசாங்கம் எங்களை அதட்டியது. கல்லூரி ஆராய்ச்சியைக் காட்டி 'ஏட்டுச் சுரைக்காய் கறிக்குதவாது' என்பதை எடுத்துரைத்தோம் ஏற்கவில்லை.

தமிழ்நாடு ஓட்டல் உரிமையாளர்கள் சங்கத் துணைத் தலைவராகப் பொறுப்பு வகித்த நான் அப்போது அம்மையாரை அணுகி நியாயம் கேட்டேன்.

அறிமுகமே ஆத்திரத்தில் ஆரம்பமே சண்டையில், ஆவேசத்தோடு பேசினேன். அவர்கள் செயல் அநியாயமானது என்று சுட்டிக் காட்டினேன். எங்கள் வியாபாரத்தை விரையமாக்கி விட்டதாக வெகுண்டேன்.

**‘குணமென்னும் குன்றேறி நின்றார் வெகுளி  
கணமேயும் காத்தல் அரிது’**

என் கோப தாபங்களை, கோரிக்கைகளை அமைதியாக கேட்டார் அம்மா ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள். பாய்வார் என எதிர்பார்த்திருந்த நான் சிரித்த முகத்துடன் கேட்ட அவர்களைப் பார்த்ததும் அசந்து போனேன். அன்பினை உள்ளடக்கிய அர்த்தத்தோடு கூடிய அந்தச் சிரிப்பில் என் சகோதரியின் பாசத்தைக் கண்டேன். கவனமாக என் கோரிக்கைகளைக் கேட்ட அவர்தம் பொறுமையில் தாய்மையின் பெருமை கண்டு பூரித்தேன். சிறிதும் கோபமின்றிச் சிரித்த முகத்துடன் சகோதரி பேசிய பேச்சுக்கள் சிந்திக்க வைத்தன.

சந்திப்புக்கள் சிந்தனைக்கு வழிவகுக்கும். சிந்தித்துச் செயல்பட்டால் சாதனைகள் செய்ய இயலும். சந்திப்போம், சிந்திப்போம், செயல்படுவோம், சாதிப்போம் இதை ஆங்கிலத்தில்

**Meet together,  
Stay together,  
Work together**

என்பார்கள்.

சோதனைகளை வென்று, வேதனைகளைக் கண்டு துவளாது சாதனைகளைச் சரித்திரமாக்கிய வரலாற்று நாயகி வணங்குவதற்குரிய வேந்தர் என்பதைப் புரிந்து கொண்டேன். உருவுகண்டு எள்ளாமை வேண்டும். அவர் மூர்த்தி சிறிதானாலும் கீர்த்தி பெரிதாகும். கடுகு சிறுத்தாலும் காரம்

குறையாதன்றோ? இந்தச் சிறிய உருவத்தில் மிகப் பெரிய இமயம் அனைய அறிவும் ஆற்றலும் அடங்கி உள்ளதெனத் தெரிந்து கொண்டேன்.

‘நல்லதொரு குடும்பம் பல்கலைக்கழகம்’ என்பார்கள். ஓர் ஆண் கல்வியறிவு பெற்றால் அவன் ஒருவன் மட்டுமே அறிவு பெறுகின்றான். ஆனால் ஒரு பெண் கல்வியறிவு பெற்றால் ஒரு குடும்பமே கல்வியறிவு பெறுகின்றது.

“If a male is educated, only an individual is educated, but if a female is educated the whole family is educated”.

என்பதோடு

‘பெண்களறிவு பெற்றால் வையம்  
பேதமையகற்றிடும் காணீர்’

‘கல்வியில் லாதபெண் களர்நிலம்  
அதில்புல் விளைந்தி டலாம்  
நல்லபுதல் வர்கள்விளை வதில்லை’

என்றெல்லாம் ஆன்றோர்கள் கூறிய அறிவுரைப்படி பெண்கல்விக்கு முதன்மை கொடுத்து மாதரறிவை வளர்க்கும் மகத்தான முதன்மைப் பெண்கள் பல்கலைக்கழகமாக, குடும்பத் தலைவிக்கு இன்றியமையா மனையியல் கற்பிக்கும் ஒப்பற்ற ஒரே பல்கலைக்கழகமாகத் திகழ்ந்து வரும் ஸ்ரீ அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் பல்கலையின் அகிலம் அளாவிய அத்துணை சிறப்புக்களுக்கும் முழு முதற்காரணமாக விளங்கும் வேந்தரின் அறிமுகம், வெற்றிப்பாதையில் நடைபோடும் வியத்தகு பெண்மணியின் சுடச்சுட ஒளிரும் பொன்னாகப் பொலியும் போற்றுதலுக்குரிய முதற்பெண் வேந்தரிவரை என் அன்புச் சகோதரி ஆக்கியது. ஆவேசத்தில் ஆரம்பித்த அறிமுகம், அன்பில் நிறைந்தது, ஆத்திரத்தில் தொடங்கிய பேச்சு பாசத்தில் பொலிந்தது.

அகில உலகின் சிறந்த பெண்மணி இவர். அனைத்து நாடுகளுக்கும் சென்று, கற்றோர்க்குச் சென்றவிடமெல்லாம் சிறப்பு என்பதற்கேற்ப இந்தியத் திருநாட்டின் இணையில்லாப் புகழைப் பரப்பியும், எண்ணற்ற பட்டங்களைப் பெற்றும் எல்லாரும் எண்ணி வியக்கும் வகையில் வானளாவிய சிறப்புக்கள் பல பெற்றவர்.

வெளிநாட்டார் இவர் திறம் கண்டு வியந்து போற்றிப் பயன்படுத்திக் கொண்டது போலவே வெளிநாட்டார் புலமை கண்டு வணங்கித் தம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்திற்கு அவர்களை அழைத்து மாணவிகளிடையே பேசச் செய்து 'யான் பெற்ற பயன் பெறுக இவ்வையகம்' எனப் பரந்த நோக்கோடு செயலாற்றும் செயற்கரிய பாரதப் பெண்மணியின் வந்தோரை வந்தனை செய்து விருந்தோம்பும் வேந்தரின் பண்பு கண்டும், பல்கலையின் சிறப்புக்கள் கண்டும், கேட்டும், அறிந்தும் வியக்காத, வாழ்த்தாத, வணங்காத நெஞ்சங்களே இல்லை எனலாம்.

ஈடிணையற்ற இம்மனையியல் பல்கலையின் அருகில் மேட்டுப்பாளையம் சாலையில் இயங்கிவரும் எங்கள் அன்னபூர்ணா மைய உணவகத்தில் நான் அதிகமாக இருப்பதாலும், அருகிலிருந்து பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் பல்வேறு வளர்ச்சிகளை, வேந்தரின் வியத்தகு சிறப்புக்களை, பேராசிரியர்களின் அறிவுமிகு ஆற்றல்களை, மாணவியர்களின் சீமிகு மாட்சிமைகளைக் காணும் வாய்ப்பும் எனக்குக் கிடைத்து உள்ளது.

அனைவருக்கும் கொடுப்பதும் குறை கொடாது, கொள்வதும் மிகை கொளாது அலை குன்றா உணவுகளைப் பூரணமாகத் தரவேண்டும் என்ற பேராவலில் அன்னபூரணியின் பக்தனாகிய நான் செயல்படுகின்றேன். அனைவருக்கும் அழிவிலாத கல்விச் செல்வத்தை நயமாகக் கொடுத்து

வாழ்க்கைக்குத் தேவையான மனையியல் கல்வியைப் புகட்டும் பல்கலைக் கழக வேந்தர் இவரே அன்னபூரணியாக, கலைமகளாகச் செயல்படுகின்றார்.

பட்டங்கள் ஆண்டு, சட்டங்கள் செய்து பாரினில் புகழ் பலபெற்று தன்னிகரற்றுத் திகழும் பல்கலைக்கழக வேந்தரிவர் பவளவிழாவினிலே பல்லாண்டு கூறி வாழ்த்தி வணங்கும் வாய்ப்பினை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொடுத்த அந்த அறிமுகத்தை நினைக்கின்றேன், ஆனந்தப்படுகின்றேன்.

அறிமுக நட்பு பரிவான பாசத்தைக் காட்டியது, அன்பான சகோதரியைப் பெற்றுக் கொடுத்தது, ஆவேசத் தொடக்கம் ஆழ்ந்த அன்பினை அடையாளம் காட்டியது. சிந்திக்க வைத்துச் செயலாற்றச் செய்த சீரிய ஆற்றலை அறிவுறுத்தியது. ஆண்டவனுக்கு நன்றி கூறுகின்றேன்.

யாம் வாழும் நாளும் இவர் பெற்று வாழட்டும், யாம் பெற்ற சிறப்பெல்லாம் இவர் சிறப்பு ஆகட்டும். இனியும் பல்வகைப் படிப்புக்கள் பாரினில் எவையெவை உண்டோ அனைத்தையும் தம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் புகுத்தி பெருமை வாய்ந்த பேராசிரியர்கட்கும், மாணவ சமுதாயத்திற்கும் நல்லிணக்கம் காட்டும் வழிகாட்டியாய் ஒளிமயமான எதிர்காலம் காட்டும் கல்விக்கோர் கலங்கரை விளக்கமாய்த் திகழும் திருமதி டாக்டர் ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விழா காணட்டும். நீடித்த ஆயுள் பெறட்டும். நிலைத்த புகழோடு திகழட்டும் என எல்லாம் வல்ல இறைவனை வணங்குகின்றேன்.

## அய்யா கண்டெடுத்த புதையல் - அம்மா

டி.எஸ்.பி. தனலட்சுமி அம்மாள்

கல்விக்காக தமது வாழ்க்கையை அர்ப்பணித்து, ஓயாத கடலலைபோல பணியாற்றி கல்விக்கடலான நமது அய்யா அவர்கள் கண்டெடுத்த புதையல்தான் அம்மா என்றால் மிகையாகாது. முத்துக்குள் முத்தாய் நமது அய்யாவின் மகுடத்தில் பட்டை தீட்டிய வைரமாக ஜொலித்துக் கொண்டு நமது அய்யாவின் கணவுகளை நனவாக்குபவர்தான் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

பாரதநாட்டின் சுதந்திரப் பிரகடனம் ஆனவுடன், 1947-ம் வருடம் ஆகஸ்ட் - 15ம் தேதி 'ராணிமேரி' கல்லூரியில் சுதந்திர நாட்டின் தாயின்மணிக் கொடியை தமிழகத்தின் அப்போதைய முதல் கல்வி அமைச்சராக இருந்த நமது அய்யா அவர்கள் பட்டொளி வீசிப் பறந்திடச் செய்ய சென்ற பொழுதுதான், நமது அம்மாவை சந்தித்த முதல் சந்திப்பு நிகழ்ச்சி. அய்யாவின் அன்பும், பண்பும், பரிவும், தியாக உணர்வும், நாட்டுப்பற்றும், அம்மாவை அன்றே மானசீகமாக ஆசானாக அய்யாவை ஏற்றுக் கொள்ள வைத்து விட்டது.

அமெரிக்காவின் ஒஹியோ மாநிலப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் அனைத்துக் கோணங்களிலும் முதலிடம் பெற்று, பல விருதுகளைப் பெற்று பாரதத்தின் பெருமையை முரசு கொட்டிப் பரப்பிய நமது அம்மா அவர்கள் 1950-ல் தாயகம் திரும்பி, டெல்லி, பரோடா மீண்டும் டெல்லியில் பல காலம் பணிபுரிந்தாலும், 1952-ல் விஜயதசமி அன்று அவிநாசிலிங்கம் அறக்கட்டளை உருவானவுடன்தான் அம்மாவின் பணியில் திருப்புமுனை ஏற்பட்டது.

எங்கிருந்தோ வந்தாலும், ஜாதிமத பேதமின்றி, தன் வாழ்நாள் முழுவதும் கல்விக்காக அர்ப்பணித்து, மெழுகுவர்த்தி போல தியாகமாகிக் கொண்டு இருப்பவர் நமது அம்மா. நம் இந்திய உபகண்டத்தில் ஜனாதிபதி, பிரதமர்

முதல் பல்வேறு நாடுகளின் ஜனாதிபதி, பிரதமர்களும் அம்மாவின் அரிய பணியைக் கண்டு மதிப்பு வைத்துள்ளனர்.

இருப்பினும் அவர்களின் வலிமை, தூய்மை, வாய்மை, பழகுவதில் இனிமை, விடாமுயற்சியின் திண்மை, யாராயினும் கண்டிப்பதில் வன்மை, சொல் மற்றும் நுண்ணறிவு ஆற்றலின் வலிமை, பழமையுடன் இணைக்கும் புதுமை, பணியில் அருமை, உள்ளுணர்வோடு பேசுவதில் வெண்மை, தொன்மையான கருத்துக்களை சேகரித்து மற்றவர்களுக்குப் புரியும்படி சொல்வதில் உள்ள அறிவுப்புலமை, விஷய ஞானங்களை சேகரிப்பதில் உள்ள கூர்மை, உறவினர்கள், நண்பர்களுடன் உரையாடும் மேன்மை போன்ற அருமையான குணங்கள் அம்மாவின் மகிமைக்குப் பெருமை சேர்ப்பவையாகும்.

இரவு பகலாக சோர்வின்றி பணியாற்றும் நமது அம்மா என்றுமே பணியின் காரணமாக டென்ஷன் ஆனதில்லை. மனஇறுக்கமும் ஆனதுமில்லை. வைராக்கியத்துடனும், மன உறுதியுடனும், விவேகத்துடனும் வேகமாக அவர் பணியாற்றும் பாங்கு வியக்க வைக்கக் கூடியதாகும். தினசரி அவர் செய்யும் தியானம், இறை வழிபாடு ஆகியவைதான் அவரது ஆற்றலுக்கு புத்துணர்ச்சி தருகிறது என எண்ணுகிறேன்.

அய்யா புள்ளி வைத்தால், அம்மா கோடு போட்டார்கள் என்று சொன்னால் மிகையாகாது. அவிநாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரியை நிகர் நிலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகமாக மேம்படுத்த அம்மா ஆற்றிய பணி அளப்பரியது.

“இதனை இதனால் இவன் முடிக்கும் என்றாய்ந்து  
அதனை அவன்கண் விடல்”

என்ற வள்ளுவரின் வாக்கிற்கேற்ப அய்யா கண்டெடுத்த புதையல் அம்மா அவர்கள். எந்தப் பணியையும் எந்தக் காலக் கட்டத்திலும் சிறப்பாக வெற்றிகரமாக முடித்துக் கொடுக்கும் ஆற்றல் பெற்றவர்.

பன்னாடுகளில் பல மாதங்கள் பயணம் செய்தாலும், பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் எந்தப் பணியும் இவருக்குத் தெரியாமல் நடக்காது, இயங்காது. ஞாபக சக்தியில் இவரது வலிமை சக்தி வாய்ந்தது. யார் வந்தாலும், எப்பொழுது பார்த்தாலும், எவ்வளவு காலம் கழித்து வந்தாலும் அவர்கள் பெயர் என்ன? எதற்காக வந்துள்ளார்கள்? என்பதைத் தெளிவாகக் கூறும் வகையில் ஞாபக சக்தி உள்ளவர்கள் அம்மா.

பல்கலைக்கழகப் பணிகளே அதிகமாக இருந்தாலும், பல பொது நிகழ்ச்சிகளிலும் கலந்து கொண்டு, அய்யாவின் கருத்துக்களைக் கூறுவதிலும், மணையியலின் சிறப்புகளைக் கூறுவதிலும் இவருக்கு நிகர் இவரே. படாடோபம் இல்லாமல் ஓடும் நதி போல தெளிவான கருத்துக்களைக் கூறி மங்கையரை நல் நங்கையராக மாற்றி அவர்கள் இல்லத்தின் பெருமைகளைப் புகுந்த வீட்டிலும் சிறப்பாக ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளும் வகையில் பயிற்சியினை வழங்குவதில் வல்லவரும் அம்மாவே தான்.

இத்தாலியில் இருந்த ஒரு பெரிய சர்ச் ஆலயத்திற்கு ஒரு பெரிய வெண்கல மணியை தயாரித்துக் கொடுக்க ஒரு பிரபல ஸ்தபதிக்கு ராஜா உத்திரவிட்டாராம். ஆனால், அவர் இட்ட ஒரு கட்டளை, மணியின் நாத ரீங்காரம் 10 மைல் தூரத்திற்கு அதை அடிக்கும் போது கேட்க வேண்டும் என்பதாம். கலைஞனும் பலமுறை உலோகக் கலவையை உருக்கி கொதிநிலையில் சரியான பதம் கிடைக்க கவனித்துக் கொண்டு இருந்தார். ஆனால் சரியான பதம் வராததால் தள்ளிப் போட்டுக் கொண்டே செல்கின்றார் வருத்தத்துடன். இதை கவனித்து வந்த, உடனிருந்து உதவி செய்து கொண்டிருந்த கலைஞனின் மகள், ஏனப்பா, இந்த பதத்திலேயே மணியைத் தயாரித்து விடலாமே என்று கேட்க, தந்தை கூறினார் – அம்மா சரியான பதம் இல்லையென்றால் 10 மைல் தொலைவிற்கு மணியின் நாதம் கேட்காது எனக் கூறினார். இன்னும் இரண்டு நாட்களில் எப்படி அடுத்த கொதியில் பதம் கிடைத்து மணியை வார்ப்பது என சஞ்சலத்துடன் கூறினார். அதைக் கேட்ட அவரது மகள் நாளை அடுத்த வார்ப்புக்கு

கொதியைத் தயார் செய்யுங்கள். நிச்சயம் பதம் கிடைக்கும் என ஆறுதல் கூறினார். சற்று தெம்படைந்த தந்தை அடுத்த நாள் பல்வேறு உலோகக் கலவைகளை கொதிகலத் தொட்டியில் போட்டு சரியான பதம் கிடைக்க கொதி நிலையைக் கண்காணித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். சரியான பதம் வராத நிலையில் வாட்டமுற்ற தந்தைக்கு ஆறுதல் கூறிய மகள் திடீரென கொதிநிலைத் தொட்டியில் விழுந்து விட்டாள். விழும் முன் சரியாகபதம் கிடைக்கும். நல்ல மணியை வார்ப்பு செய்யுங்கள் எனக் கூறினாள். தந்தை மகள் கொதிநிலைத் தொட்டியில் விழுந்த அதிர்ச்சியில் இருந்து மீள்வதற்குள், மகளின் உடல் கரைந்து, உலோகக் கலவை சரியான பதத்தில் வந்து சேர்ந்தது. உடன் மணியை வார்ப்பு செய்தார். அந்த மணியின் ரீங்கார நாதம் 10 மைல் என்ன, விண்ணையே எட்டும் அளவிற்கு வந்தது. தியாகத்தின் உருவமான அந்தப் பெண் போல, நமது அம்மாவும் பொறுமையின் இலக்கணம், தியாகத்தின் மொத்த உருவம், தன் வாழ்க்கையையே அய்யாவின் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்காக அர்ப்பணித்துக் கொண்டுள்ளார். அதனால்தான் பெண்மணி ஒரு கண்மணி என்ற பழமொழியே பிறந்து இருக்கும் என நினைக்கின்றேன்.

அன்புள்ளம் கொண்ட அய்யாவை பிரதிபலிக்கும் அம்மாவே  
ஆர்வத்துடன் அவர் வழியில், கனவுகளை நனவாக்குபவரே  
இனிமையுடன் பழகி இன்னல்களை அகற்றி அனைவர் இதயங்களிலும்  
இரண்டறக் கலந்தவரே  
ஈடில்லா பணியாற்றி அவினாசிலிங்கம் நிகர் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின்  
பெருமையை உலகெங்கும் பரப்பும் எங்கள் அம்மாவே  
பார் போற்றும் நீர் வளமோடு வாழ இறைவனை வேண்டுகிறோம்!  
உலகம் முழுவதும் சுற்றி, பயிற்சி தந்து சத்துணவின் மகிமையை  
மனையியல் மூலம் விளக்கிய ஒளிவிளக்கே  
ஊர்மெச்ச மங்கையரையும் செம்மைப்படுத்தி மனைமாட்சியை  
சிறப்பித்த மங்கையர் திலகமே

எதையும் தாங்கும் இதயத்துடன் எல்லோரும் உம்மை நல்லவரே என  
ஏகோபித்து பாராட்டி, பத்மஸ்ரீ விருது முதல் பன்னாட்டு விருதுகள்  
பெற்று சரித்திரம் படைத்த பாரதி கண்ட புதுமைப் பெண்ணாக  
பவனி வரும் அம்மாவே

எங்கள் இதயக் கணியே! இன்றுபோல் என்றும் வாழ்க!

பல்லாண்டு வாழ்க!

ஐங்கரனின் அருளோடு ஐயம் தீர்த்து

ஐயத்துடன் ஐகத்தில் பவனி வருபவரே

ஒன்று எங்கள் ஜாதியே, ஒன்று எங்கள் தீபமே என சாரதாலயத்தில்

தியானம், பஜனை மூலம்

ஓங்கிய குரலில் அனைவரையும் ஒருமுகப் படுத்தி தியானப் பயிற்சியும்;

தந்த தேவதையே

ஒளவையின் முருக சேவை போல மனையியல் கல்லூரியை

நிகர் பல்கலைக் கழகமாக மேம்படுத்திய மாதர் குல மாணிக்கமே

அய்யா கண்டெடுத்த புதையலே, எங்கள் அம்மாவே

மெழுகுவர்த்தி போல உருகி கல்விச் சேவை செய்யும் கோமகளே

பாமரன் முதல் பார் போற்றும் அறிஞர்கள் வரை மெச்சும்

எங்கள் அன்பு அம்மாவே

தனிமையிலும், சேவை மூலம் இனிமை காண முடியும் என எனக்கு

விளக்கி உரம் தந்து நெஞ்சறுதி தந்த வேந்தரே

எனது நெஞ்சில் ஓர் ஆலயம்

கனிவான என் அம்மாவிற்கு

வாழ்வில் நீர் சதம் காண இறைவனைப் பிரார்த்தித்து

சமர்ப்பிக்கின்றேன் வணக்கத்துடன்.

## **Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A COLOSSUS**

**S. AMARJIT SINGH CHANDHOKE**

One of the few luminaries of Coimbatore is Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, the Chancellor of Avinashilingam University in Coimbatore. It may not be an exaggeration if she is considered the Chief Architect of Women's education and the guardian of Home Science movements. It is she who has created the awareness among the men and women folk that a house well managed is imperative for the growth and development of children and the nation. Her dynamism coupled with perseverance and supported by her commitment and instituted effort had paid rich dividends to her activities. If today the Avinashilingam University complex occupies such a prestigious place nationwide and internationally, the one single factor behind is none other than Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

A woman of clear plans, vision and foresight, a leader among her colleagues and workers, an affectionate mother for all the educants in the campus, a task master (mistress) to the very core, a tireless worker can be an inadequate description of her personality traits.

Here is a colossus emerging from a humble beginning and rising to such high stature through a variety of service, social, ethical, educational, health, child welfare, women upliftment, illiteracy eradication, etc.

She knew what she is doing, why she is doing, how it has to be done, above all how best it can be done through her close association with a giant leader Sri. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar. She has an indomitable will, probably through a study of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Jesus Christ. She is a happy

blend of all religions and all her actions are controlled and conditioned by a harmonious compound of all religious and social thoughts.

No doubt she had won many awards and honours. She amply and richly deserves all these awards and it is an honour conferred on a daring lady, a representative of women. Women's education gained a boost after her entry into the educational field. She had spectacular success. She happens to be a member of so many associations, organisations and movements. She is a woman of international stature. She is not tired of travel and sharing her views in matters urgent and important.

Her success in life is a model for both men, women and children in all walks of life. She is a very good role model of all aspiring people. It is amazing how such a lady could accomplish so much in her life. The only answer can be hard, planned and sustained work. She has developed an unquenching thirst for people, study and write history, she has created history. She is not satisfied with what she has done so far. She has many more plans to execute. Such specimens are very rare. But her tribe should increase.

She believes in change, no change for change sake. Any change should be for the better. A quick scrutiny of the courses offered in the colleges and university under her care can prove the point. She always believed that the development of the individual and the community together will only yield results. She has created an awareness among the students that their survival depends on the well being of the community. Community consciousness is the core of all her activities.

She is multifaceted personality and such people are the salt of the earth. Her services are laudable and noble.

*“The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
I have promises to keep,  
Miles to go before I sleep,  
Miles to go before I sleep”.*

These words of Robert Frost can well describe the attitude and philosophy of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. She is a leader worthy of emulation by all of us.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is an epitome of these statements.

*With a heart for any fate  
Learning to labour and wait  
and  
Service and sacrifice with a smile ....*

*MAY GOD BESTOW HER WITH LONG LIFE,  
SO THAT THE COMMUNITY STANDS BENEFITTED.*

## **Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

CHRISTY GANAPATHY

**T**o meet Dr. Rajammal Devadas is an intensely rewarding experience. One is immediately conscious of her aura of simplicity and wisdom of a raging vitality of spirit and a deep fund of loving kindness.

I met her for the first time over twenty years ago in the seventies. I think she came in connection with the promotion and upliftment of Sri. Avinashilingam Educational Trust Institutions. I was immediately conscious of her great simplicity, direct and ardent appeal. I was very much impressed by her and her ways. I was then running my budding medical project called Sheela Clinic.

As Post graduate Professor and Principal of Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for Women in the late seventies - later the Vice - Chancellor and now the Chancellor, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas sparkles like some Irish sprite and many who marvel at her seemingly magical success in her different activities mistake her exactly for that. In fact she is a very dedicated, hardworking educationalist who happens to be attractive and very engaging, all at the same time. Her capacity for such dedication stems from her desire to excel. She has to feel that she had done her best - So she goes on researching even a tiny detail.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas' family lived in Tirupattur, North Arcot district. Her father was the head of a large family. He managed and controlled his family with affection and love. In fact he gave higher education to all his nine children including Rajammal. Dr. N. Mahalingam a great Industrialist of Coimbatore has mentioned that he had the opportunity to meet Dr. Rajammal's husband Mr. Devadas after he had retired from police service. Her son Dr. Mohan Devadas is now in Australia.

When Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was studying in Queen Mary's College in Madras, she was one of the best students of the college. After getting a Government of India scholarship for higher studies in Home Science, she left for the United States in 1947. As there was no university in India at that time which could offer a Master's Degree in Home Science, Rajammal P. Devadas had to move to U.S. for higher studies. In this she got the help of Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam who blessed her and exhorted her to complete her studies and return back to her motherland. Rajammal P. Devadas promised him that she would definitely return from the U.S. after completing her studies. She requested him to start a Home Science College which she would manage and build up after her return from the U.S.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas's acquaintance with Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam who was a former Education Minister in the Madras Presidency dates back to 1947 when she was working as first lecturer in Household Arts in Queen Mary's College, Madras. Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam, the Minister for Education had visited Queen Mary's College on August 15, 1947 to hoist the National Flag. Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam quickly assessed her merits and Rajammal P. Devadas explained to him of her plan to proceed to U.S.A. for higher studies on a Government of India scholarship.

When she was in Queen Mary's College the Independence Movement was at its highest. Mahatma Gandhi at that time announced an Eighteen Point Programme of action. He exhorted the young people to wear Khader (KADHI) dress woven and made by themselves. As desired by Mahathma Gandhi, Rajammal P. Devadas and her sister wore a saree each and they wore the saree on the Independence Day on 15th of August 1947. She safely preserved the saree and wore it every year on Independence day. Her steadfastness, dedication and love of her motherland is revealed in this.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was always intensely conscious of her duties and she performed them, small or big diligently. Such valour was found in Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas' life in abundance.

She used to attend the church every Sunday and her love for simplicity made her usually wear cotton sarees in preference to silk and other costly sarees.

She cultivated the finer qualities of punctuality, time - sense and there was thus absolutely no incompatibility between what she spoke and what she did.

Whether, it be holding of a seminar, or revising a curriculum, Dr. Rajammal Devadas used to deliberate deeply with her colleagues, plan meticulously and make all arrangements very carefully and then only organise it or undertake it.

When she had just returned from U.S.A. with Ph.D. degree in Home Science, she had taken up the position of Chief Home Economist, with the Govt. of India at New Delhi. At that juncture, a very important member of the Legislative Assembly approached her and urged her to stand for Election to the Lok Sabha. She politely rejected the advice saying that she wanted to serve on a job which would give full justification to her studies and research.

Dr. Rajammal Devadas' academic record has been superior with first classes and first ranks throughout. In Northwick Girls High School, Madras, she secured highest marks and was awarded the Elizabeth Miller Gold Medal. She also secured the Todhunter Gold Medal for the first rank in B.Sc Home Science.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has received hundreds of awards during her career. She obtained her Ph.D., (Nutrition and Bio-Chemistry) in 1950 from The Ohio State University in U.S.A. and her D.Sc (Home Science, Nutrition) in 1978 from the Madras University.

She is the regional Vice-President, International Federation for Women in Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

She is a member of the Association of Women in Development, U.S.A. She is a member of the British Dietetic Association.

She has published over 530 research papers in renowned Scientific and Technological Journals in India and abroad. She has published over 57 books. She is the Chief Editor of the Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics. She has published over 350 scientific articles in India and abroad. She was given the signal honour of addressing The Ohio State Legislature (House of Representatives).

She was elected First Vice President of the World Food Conference convened by the FAO in the Hague (Holland).

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has held the position of Vice Chancellor of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women-Deemed University till June 1994 and has been Chancellor of the same University from 1st July 1994.

The curriculum vitae of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas spreads over eight pages and what I have mentioned above are but a few.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is such a talented lady. I have known her for over 20 years and what surprises me over her great achievements, is her simplicity, her dynamic and tireless activity and her diligent duty consciousness.

These qualities raise her far above others and I am grateful that I am given the privilege of knowing her and moving with her for the past twenty years. ●

## **A LIFE OF GOOD WILL FOR HUMANITY**

**R. GANDHI**

**D**r. Rajammal P. Devadas's life is not an ordinary one. It is a life full of sacrifice, devotion, service, simplicity, learning and spreading message of goodwill to thousands and thousands of young children in this country. James M. Barrie would tell "Life is a long lesson in humility". Every man's life is the plan of God. It is He who decides your destiny to serve the humanity with unstained enthusiasm, divinity and service. Likewise, her knowledge is not one that is kept in a golden gasket. Her knowledge is what Bacon has said :

"Knowledge is not a couch whereon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a sort of commanding ground for strife and contention; or a shop for profit and sale; but a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of man's estate".

I feel that I am so fortunate to know her and her service to the mankind. It is very appropriate that the Committee has decided to honour her on her 80th birthday i.e., her Sathabishegam as we call it. I pray the Almighty to bless her with many more years of good health, happiness and will to live long to serve the mankind in general and the Avinashilingam Educational Trust Institutions in particular.

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## **AMMA - MOTHER OF ALL**

**R. INDIRA**

**A** University name - a four letter word that casts its magic spell on everyone who utters it - irrespective of age, religion or race. It is not merely a Tamil word. The syllable 'A' is incorporated in every language - human as well as the sound from animals. In Tamil we say 'Amma' in English we say 'Mother', in Hindi we say 'Mathajee'. The cow mews with the sound of 'Mahh' and so too the other animals. As Saint Thiruvalluvar said "Agara Muthala Ezhuthellam Aathi Bhagawan Muthatre Ulagu".

Yes, our Amma - Dr. (Mrs.) Rajammal P. Devadas, is the true living symbol of this hallowed word. To the innumerable students who passed through portals of Avinashilingam University, to the faculty, to her innumerable friends, colleagues and members of the fraternity, she is the 'Amma' - mother of all.

SAHSC has been nursed by her as a mother nurtures her baby and if today it is a Deemed University every brick in that edifice has her name engraved in it.

Her achievements are innumerable. The titles and encomiums she has received are innumerable. Her contributions to various projects, deliberations in committees where she was involved are innumerable. My effort here is therefore on the other side of that personality - the mother. There are only two people before her who deserved and carved that title, Mother of Aurobindo Ashram and Mother Theresa. The mother in each of them symbolised a human facet, kindness and Godliness in the Mother at Aurobindo Ashramam and the mother for the needy, sick and downtrodden in Mother Theresa.

Our Mother is the personification of Goddess Saraswathi providing education to millions of girls and made nutrition a home subject.

All I want to say of Amma is brought out forcefully in one Tamil song by Kaviarasu Vairamuthu which I reproduce below with some alterations.

*Every sentence in this beautiful song is our  
Mother and what more is there to say.  
Long live Amma.  
May God bless her eternal life.*

அம்மாவே நீயன்றி வேறாரம்மா  
அன்பாலே எமைக்காத்த நிழல் நீயம்மா  
உம்மாவே உயர்வான எம் வாழ்வம்மா  
ஓங்கு புகழ் அம்மா நீ நீடுவாழ்கவே.

பெண்கல்வி உயர்வுக்கு உழைத்தாயம்மா  
பிற நாட்டார் புகழ்ந்துரைக்கச் செய்தாயம்மா  
பெண்ணினத்தின் கல்விக்கண் திறந்தாயம்மா  
பேதைகளை மேதைகளாய்ச் செய்தாயம்மா.

பாசத்தின் பாசமான நெஞ்சம் வாழ்கவே  
பாரத ரத்னா விருது தேடி வருகவே  
வீசுகின்ற தென்றலினும் இனிய நெஞ்சமே  
வேண்டுகின்றோம் பல்லாண்டு நீவிர் வாழ்கவே.

புன்னகையைத் தவழவிட்டுப் பணிகள் செய்குவார்  
புதுப்புதிதாய் மனையியலில் சாதனை செய்வார்  
கண்ணிமையாய்க் கல்லூரி நலனையுங் காப்பார்  
காலமெல்லாம் தொண்டாற்றிக் கடமையாற்றுவார்.

அம்மாவின் பெயர், புகழ் இன்னும் இன்னும் ஓங்கவே!  
மாசில்லா அன்புடன்!!

ஓம்  
நமச்சீவாய வாழ்க  
நூறாண்டும் கடந்து வாழ்க

சௌந்தரா கைலாசம்

பெண்குலத்தின் முன்னேற்றம் தன்னை வாழ்வின்  
பெரியதொரு குறிக்கோளாய்க் கருதி நாளுந்  
உண்மையிலே ஓய்வின்றி உழைக்கும் தூயர்  
ஒப்பரிய ராசம்மாள் தேவதாஸே!  
கண்களெல்லாம் குளமாக இல்லத் துக்குள்  
கட்டுண்டு கிடந்திட்ட காலம் மாறித்  
திங்களிலும் கொடிநாட்ட முந்திக் கொண்டு  
செய்கின்ற மங்கையரைக் காணுகின்றோம்!

வீடதனை எவ்வாறு விளங்க வைக்க  
வேண்டுமெனும் கலையதனைப் பாட மாக்கி  
நாடிதனில் வாழ்கின்ற நங்கை யர்க்கு  
நன்முறையில் அறிவூட்ட வழிவ குத்தார்!  
பீடுடைய கதரினையே எந்தப் போதும்  
பெருமையுடன் அணிந்தபடி காட்சி நல்கும்  
ஈடறியா வேந்தரம்மா! இது தெரிந்தே  
இவர்பெயரும் ராசம்மாள் என்றா யிற்றே!

சத்துணவு பற்றிமிகத் தெளிந்தா ராய்ந்து  
தாரணியில் வாழ்ந்திருக்கும் மாந்தர்க் கெல்லாம்  
மெத்த நலம் தரும்வகையில் எடுத்து ரைத்து  
மேன்மைகளைக் குவித்தொளிரும் அந்த மேலோர்  
பத்துநூறு பிறைகளினைப் பார்க்கும் நல்ல  
பாக்கியத்தைப் பெற்றுவிட்டார்! பரமன் காக்க,  
உத்தமராம் அவினாசிலிங்கம் வாழ்த்த  
உயர்வோடு நூறாண்டும் கடந்து வாழ்க!

நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க!

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## **Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - AN EMBODIMENT OF HARD AND SELFLESS WORK**

A.C. KAMARAJ

**A**ttempting to write about Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is like trying to write about a great country as ours after seeing just a small village in a remote corner. She is an embodiment of very hard and selfless work. She is there ready to give guidance and advise to any one in need. You can go a step further and say that she goes out offering help whenever she feels that some one needs it.

To quote a small incident in her life: my friend Mrs. Dolly David, who is now in States, appeared for an interview for Technical Assistant's job. This was in the year 1959 and the incidence was at New Delhi. My friend did fairly well in the interview. The selectors were satisfied with her. But as the interview was coming to a close, one selector asked her age. She has overrun the age limit of 25. The selector wanted to drop her. But Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas wouldn't allow and didn't miss the opportunity. She argued with them that you all interviewed her thinking that she was below 25. You know her age only when she told. She is a Burma repatriate. She has no birth certificate. Had she lied to you that she was only 25 you would have believed. But she is telling the truth. And you have not judged her age more than 25 and that is why you interviewed her. Hence you must offer her the job. Thus went her argument and won over the selectors and my friend got the job!

My friend Mrs. Dolly David's sister's daughter was also a Burma repatriate. She was to have her studies at Coimbatore. She lost her parents during the war and

my friend was helping her for studies. One day my friend accidentally met Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas at a railway station and requested her to take care of the child. She assured and helped her in many ways. She acted more than a guardian. Many times my friend could not send money to her sister's daughter in time. During those periods, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has helped this child. Thanks to her generosity and helping nature, the child, now a grown up lady, is a Post Graduate and is leading a comfortable life at Tuticorin.

My own experience is no less exciting. I recommended a girl for B.Ed., admission. I could only send a letter to Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas as I was busy. To the surprise of every one of us, the girl got admitted. When many institutions are demanding huge sum for such admissions under some pretext here is a lady who cares only for the human touch.

Long long live her selfless service. ●

## டாக்டர் ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் - என் உடன்பிறவா சகோதரி

அ. வை. குப்புசாமி

**60**—62 ஆண்டுகட்கு முன் நிகழ்ந்த நிகழ்ச்சிகள் நான் விருத்தாசலத்தில் Board High School - ல் Ist form or II form படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்த சமயம் அம்மாவிடம் அதாவது என் அக்காளுடன் என் பரிச்சயம், தொடர்பு பற்றி சிலவற்றை நான் எழுதுகிறேன்.

என் தந்தையார் அவ்வூரில் காவல்துறை ஏட்டாக பணியாற்றினார் - பெயர் அ. வைத்திலிங்கம் பிள்ளை H. C. 910/ அது சமயம் அக்காவின் கணவர் திரு. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் காவல்துறை சப் இன்ஸ்பெக்டராக பணியாற்றினார்கள்.

அப்பொழுது எனக்கு வயது 12 அல்லது 13 இருக்கும். அக்காளுக்கு 18 வயது. சப் இன்ஸ்பெக்டர் ஐயா அவர்கள் நல்ல உயரம், வாட்ட சாட்டமான உடல் கட்டு, சாய்ந்த நடை அழகும் உடையவர். அக்கா குள்ளமாதலால் அவர் பக்கத்தில் அக்கா நிற்பது ஒரு சிறு குழந்தை நிற்பது போல் எனக்குத் தோன்றும்.

நான் அம்மாவுடன் எப்படிப் பழக நேர்ந்தது என்பதைக் கூறுகிறேன். எனக்கு கணக்குப் பாடம் சரியாக வராது. அம்மா அவர்கள் அந்தக் காலத்திலேயே தமிழகத்தில் அதிக மதிப்பெண் பெற்று முதல் பரிசு பெற்றவர்கள். அதற்கான தங்க மெடலும் பெற்றிருந்தார்கள். அந்த மெடலின் தோற்றம் இப்போது அரசு வெளியிட்ட காந்திஜி 10 ரூபாய் அளவு (வெள்ளி நாணயம்) பருமன் வட்ட வடிவில் இருந்தது.

இதனை உணர்ந்தே என் தாய் தந்தையர்கள் என்னை அம்மாவிடம் அழைத்துச் சென்று எனக்கு கணக்குப் பாடம் கற்றுக் கொடுக்கச் சொல்லிக் கேட்டுக் கொண்டார்கள். அந்த நாள் முதல் நான் அம்மாவின் டியூஷன் மாணவனானேன். டியூஷன் கட்டணம் ஒன்றும் கிடையாது. நான் அக்கா என்றே அவர்களை அழைக்க ஆரம்பித்தேன்.

காலை மாலை இரண்டு வேளையும் கணக்கும் ஆங்கிலப் பாடமுமே சொல்லிக் கொடுத்து என்னைப் பள்ளிப் படிப்பில் முன்னுக்குக் கொண்டு வந்தார்கள்.

என்னை அவர்கள் தம்பி என்றும் சில சமயங்களில் 'குப்புசாமி' என்றும் கொஞ்சம் மொழியில் அழைப்பார்கள். அவர்களின் குடும்பம் மிகவும் பெரிது. அவர்கள் தந்தையார் Forest Ranger அன்னையார் அவர்களும் கம்பீரமாகவும், களையாகவும், அமைதியாகவும் இருப்பார்கள். அவர் தனது பிள்ளைகளிடம் காட்டும் அன்பைப்போன்றே என்னை அன்புடன் நடத்துவார்கள். அக்காவுடன் பிறந்த சகோதரிகள் - லீலா - கமலா - விமலா என நினைக்கிறேன். அதே போன்று தம்பிகள் ராஜதுரை மைக்கேல் மற்றும் இரு தம்பியர்கள் என்று ஞாபகம்.

திரு. ராஜதுரை மைக்கேல் B.A.O. ஆக இருந்த பொழுது அவருடன் இணைந்து சமூகப்பணி செய்துள்ளேன். தங்கை லீலா அவர்களின் இடதுகையில் ஓர் அங்குல அளவு கருப்பு மச்சம் இருந்தது என் நினைவில் இருக்கிறது. விருத்தாசலத்தில் பழகியது போக இன்றுவரை இவர்களைத்தவிர யாரையும் நான் சந்தித்ததில்லை சந்திக்க அவாதான்.

நான் என் தந்தைக்கு ஒரே மகனாகையால் எனக்கு Apllo என்ற ஒரு சிறு சைக்கிளை (18") வாங்கித்தந்தார்கள். அந்த சைக்கிளில் லீலாவும் மற்ற சகோதரர்களும் சைக்கிள் விடக் கற்றுக் கொண்டார்கள். நானும் அவர்கட்கு உதவியாக இருந்தேன்.

ஒரு முறை என் தாயாரிடம் அக்காவின் அம்மா அவர்கள் என்மீது இருந்த மிகுந்த பாசத்தால் “உங்கள் பிள்ளையை என்னிடம் விட்டு விடுங்கள். நான் படிக்க வைத்து திருமணம் செய்து வேலை பெற்றுத் தந்து என்னுடன் வைத்துக் கொள்கிறேன் என்றார்கள்”. என் தாயார் எனக்கு பிள்ளை ஒருவன் தான். உங்கட்கு பிள்ளைகள் இருவர் இருக்கிறார்கள் என்றார்கள். அந்த அளவு நான் அவர்களுடன் ஒன்றி இருந்தமையை நினைவு படுத்தவே நான் இதை எழுதுகிறேன்.

போலீஸ் காலனி குடியிருப்பு நகரைவிட்டு சரியாக ஒரு மைல் தள்ளியே இருக்கிறது. போலீஸ் காலனியிலிருந்து சப்தின்ஸ்பெக்டர் வீடு 200 – 300 அடி தொலைவில் தனித்து இருக்கிறது. சப்தின்ஸ்பெக்டர் வீட்டுக்குக் கிழக்கே – கடலூர் – விருத்தாசலம் சாலை அந்த வீட்டிலிருந்து ஒரு பர்லாங்குள்ளாகவே சாலை இருபுறமும் அடர்ந்த காடுகள் இருக்கும். காட்டில் சிறுத்தை, புலிகள், ஓணான், குள்ளநரி, நரிகள் இருக்கிறது. அவைகளின் – ஊளை சத்தம் – கர்ஜனை சில சமயம் எங்கள் காதில் கேட்கும். அம்மா வசித்த அந்த இடம் நாற்புறமும் மனித சஞ்சாரமில்லாத ஒரு தனி வீடு.

இந்த நிலையில் திருமணமான இளம் மங்கை அதிலும் சின்னவயது தனியாக எப்படி பயமின்றி இருக்க முடியும். வேறு வழியின்றி தனியாக இருந்தாக வேண்டிய நிர்ப்பந்தம். இரவில் இது பெரும் வேதனை.

காவல் துறை வேலையாதலால் இரவு நேரங்களில் காலம் கடந்து வருவதும் சில இரவுகள் வராமலும் இருக்கநேரும். திருமணமான புதிதில் காட்டுக்கு சமீபத்தில் தனியே வசிப்பது பெரும் பயத்துடன் கூடிய தொல்லை தான்.

இந்த தனிமை நிலைமையையும் இரவு நேரம் கணவன் வராமலும் அதனால் பயத்தையும் சந்தேகத்தையும் என் தாயாரிடம் கூறி கண் கலங்குவார்கள். என் அன்னை மிகவும் அனுபவசாலி. அவர்கள் அக்காவிடம் காவல்துறை

வேலை கடினமானது. இரவு பகல் இல்லாமல் பணியாற்ற நேரிடும். கணவர் நல்லவர் – தாமதமாக வருவதாலும் – சில சமயம் வராமையாலும் நீங்கள் சந்தேகப்படக் கூடாது என்று தேற்றுவார்கள். அடிக்கடி என் தாயார் வந்து பேசி ஆறுதல் கூறி குடும்பப்பாங்கினை எடுத்துரைப்பார்கள். அக்காவும் அமைதியாக கேட்டுக் கொண்டு நடை போடுவார்கள். அக்காவுக்கு துணையாக என்னை இரவு 9 மணி வரை டியூஷனை முடித்துக் கொண்டு இருக்கச் செய்தார்கள். தாயாரும் அக்காவும் வற்புறுத்துவார்கள். பல சமயங்களில் அக்கா வீட்டில் சிற்றுண்டிகள் – காபி – சாப்பாடு சாப்பிட்டு விடுவேன்.

என் தாயார் இரவு 9 மணிக்கு ஹரிக்கேன் விளக்குடன் வந்து என் வீட்டிற்கு என்னை அழைத்துச் செல்வார்கள். பாவம் அக்கா பயத்துடன் கதவைத் தாளிட்டுக் கொள்வார்கள். என்னை என் தாயார் இரவு பயத்தால் பிரிந்திருக்க முடியாமல் அழைத்துச் செல்வார்கள். சிறுவயதிலேயே என் மனம் ஊசலாடும். அம்மாவுடன் போகவும் ஆசை, அக்காவை தனியாக விட்டுச் செல்லவும் மனம்வராமை.

அப்பொழுதெல்லாம் சினிமா ஊமைப்படம் தான். அம்மா என்னை குதிரை வண்டியில் கூட்டிச் செல்வார்கள். சினிமா, சர்க்கஸ் காண வரும்போது நானும் அம்மாவும் அக்காவும் குதிரை வண்டியில் வந்து சேர்வோம். எங்களை இருட்டில் தனித்தனுப்பாமல் ஐயா அவர்கள் என் இல்லம் வரை வந்து விட்டுச் செல்வார்கள்.

அப்பொழுது நடந்த சர்க்கஸில் மோட்டார்பைக் தாண்டுவது *Jump* செய்வது மிகப் பெரிய விஷயம். அதைக் கண்டு மகிழ்ந்து அம்மா அவர்கள் அந்த மோட்டார் பைக் சாம்பியனையும் அவரது துணைவியாரையும் விருந்துக்கு அழைத்து உபசரித்து அனுப்பினார்கள். அது அவர்கட்குப் பெரும் மகிழ்ச்சியை தந்தது.

நான் என்னுடைய பள்ளி வேளைகள் – வேலைகள் போக அக்காவுக்கு துணையாகவே இருப்பேன். வீட்டில் இருக்கும் சமயம் அவர்களே தின்பண்டம்

செய்தும் காபி போட்டும் கொடுப்பார்கள். மைதாவில் பிஸ்கட் செய்து சர்க்கரைப்பாகில் தோய்த்து வறுத்த பிஸ்கட் மிக நன்றாக இருக்கும். எனக்கு பிடித்தமானதும் கூட. பல சமயங்களில் காலை டிபன் மதிய உணவு போன்று அவர்களே அன்பாக வற்புறுத்தித் தருவார்கள்.

அலமாரியில் சாவி தொங்கிக் கொண்டிருக்கும். அவர்களிடம் சொல்லிவிட்டு எனக்குத் தேவையான கால் - அரை - ஒரு ரூபாய் நாணயங்களை எடுத்துச் செல்வேன்.

ஒருமுறை அக்காவிடம் பட்டுவேட்டி வேண்டுமென்று கேட்டேன். நீ சின்னவன் அரைக்கால் சட்டைதான் போட வேண்டும். வேட்டி கூடாது என சற்று கண்டிப்பாக சொன்னார்கள். நான் அடம்பிடித்து கலங்கினேன். என் மனத்தளர்ச்சியைக் கண்டு என்னைத் தேற்றும் வகையில் அவர்களிடம் இருந்த மிக மெல்லிய கரை போட்ட Silk புடவையைக் கிழித்து இரு வேட்டிகளாக்கி என்னிடம் கொடுத்து இப்போ சந்தோஷமா? சரி போ அடிக்கடி இந்த வயதில் வேட்டி கட்டாதே! என்று சொன்னார்கள். இன்று அதனை எண்ணி நெஞ்சு நெகிழ்கிறது.

ஐயா அவர்கள் திரு தேவதாஸ் கடலூர் O.T. யில் காவல் துறை இன்ஸ்பெக்டராக பணி செய்தார்கள். அது சமயம் அக்கா அவர்கள் தொடர்ந்து ஐயாவுடன் வந்து போவார்கள். அப்பொழுது என் தாயாருடன் நான் O.T. சென்று அக்காவை சந்தித்தேன். எங்கட்கு அங்கும் காபி பலகாரம் வழங்கி மகிழ்ந்தார்கள். என் மனைவியையும் இல்லத்தையும் காண அக்கா எங்களுடன் திருப்பாதிரிப்புலியூர் வந்து என் மனைவியை அணைத்து மகிழ்ந்து வாழ்த்திச் சென்றார்கள்.

எனக்கு கிறிஸ்துவப் பண்பாட்டையும் அன்பையும் போதித்தவர்கள் அக்கா ராசம்மாள் தான். கிறிஸ்துமஸ் கொண்டாடும் சமயம் வீட்டின் எதிரில் கிறிஸ்துமஸ் Tree தயார் செய்து மின் விளக்குகளால் அலங்கரித்து Battery

பரிசுகளை அதில் தொங்கவிட்டு பரிசினை வழங்குவார்கள். என்னையும் அன்புடன் சர்ச்சுக்குக் கூட்டிச் செல்வார்கள். ஓர் அழகான குருவி பொம்மை கண்ணாடியினாலானதை தந்தார்கள். அந்த கால இரமன்ஸ்பின் பட்டன் பெருமை மிக்கதை நிறைய தந்தார்கள். Leela சென்ற சைக்கிள் பம்பை லீலா அன்பளிப்பாக தந்தார்கள்.

அந்த காலத்தில் அயல்நாட்டு உயர்ந்த வாசனைப் பொருளாகக் கருதப்பட்ட குட்டிகூரா - சோப் - ஆயின்மென்ட் - பவுடர் சென்டையே உபயோகிப்பார்கள். அதன் வழியே இன்று வரை நான் குட்டிகூரா பவுடரையே உபயோகிக்கிறேன். சிரித்து சிரித்துப் பேசுவார்கள். கன்னங்களில் குழி விழும். அது அனைவரையும் மகிழ்விக்கும். பொதுவாகவே கோபப்பட மாட்டார்கள்.

அவர்கட்கு ஒரு முறை 'மின்மினுங்கி மாரியாத்தா' என்று கூறும் தொண்டை மாரியாத்தா கண்டு மிகவும் சிரமப்பட்டார்கள். பொன்னுக்கு வீங்கி என்றும் கூறுவர். அதைவிட வெகுநாட்கள் ஏன் சில வருடங்கள் எனக் கூறலாம். இளம் வயது முகப்பரு நிறையவே வந்து அவர்களின் அழகையும் மறைத்து மிக்க தொல்லையையும் வலியையும் கொடுத்தது எனக்கு நன்கு நினைவிருக்கிறது.

அவர்கள் அமெரிக்காவில் இருந்த சமயம் கூட நான் கடிதம் எழுதினேன். அன்பான பதில் கூட எழுதி என்னை மகிழ்வித்தார்கள். சின்ன பையனாக இருந்த சமயம் இருந்த அன்புமாறாத அவர்கள் செயல் பண்பையே காட்டுகிறது.

சில சமயங்களில் சப் இன்ஸ்பெக்டர் ஐயா அவர்களைக் கடலூரில் காணும் சமயம் அக்கா எப்படி இருக்கிறார்கள் எனக் கேட்பேன். அவர் மகிழ்வோடு சொல்லும் பதில் 'அவள் இப்பெல்லாம் முன் போல் இல்லை. அவளுக்கு என்ன குப்புசாமி, ராணி போல் மிகவும் உயர்வாக இருக்கிறாள்' என்று கூறுவார்கள்.

15 ஆண்டுகட்கு முன் அக்காவைக் காண வந்தேன். கல்லூரியில் அவர்களது P.A. விடம் கூறி என்னை விருந்து உபசரித்து மகிழ வைத்தார்கள்.

அப்பொழுது என்னிடம் உனக்கு எத்தனை குழந்தைகள் என்று கேட்டார்கள். நான் 8 என்றேன். உனக்கு மட்டும் குடும்பக் கட்டுப்பாடில்லையா? என சிரித்து என்னை கிண்டல் செய்தார்கள். என் இரு பேத்தியர்கள் திருமணங்கட்கு அன்பளிப்பு Draft அனுப்பி கௌரவித்தார்கள்.

16.2.98 அன்று எனது 75ம் பிறந்தநாள் விழாவிற்கு வருகை தர ஒப்புதல் தந்தார்கள். குடும்பமே மகிழ்ந்தது. என் உடல் நலமின்மையால் ரத்து செய்யப்பட்டது.

பின்னர் என் பவளவிழாவும் – 65 ஆம் திருமண நாள் விழாவும் 12.9.98 நிகழ்ந்தது. இவ்விழாவில் பங்கேற்பார்களென மகிழ்வோடிருந்தேன். என் பிள்ளை பாலு – பச்சையப்பனிடம் தொலைபேசியில் அந்த தேதியில் நான் ஆஸ்திரேலியாவில் இருப்பேன். “Out of India” என்றார்களாம். இது கேட்டு மனமுடைந்தேன். ஆனால் கடிதமும் எழுதியுள்ளார்கள். – வாழ்த்தாக!

அம்மா அவர்களின் உழைப்பு, விடாமுயற்சி, அன்பு, பண்பு, அடக்கம், சிறு வயது முதல் கல்வியில் ஆர்வம், பண்பான உபசரிப்பு, நன்றி மறவாமை, பழமையை மதித்தல் ஆகியவையே அவர்களை உலகளாவிய அம்மாவாக திகழ வைக்கிறது.

80வது பிறந்த நாள் காணும் என் அக்காள் 90-100 வயது வரை நல்ல உடல் நலத்துடன், திட சிந்தனையுடன், பொலிவுடன் வாழ உளமார இறைவனை வேண்டி நலமே வாழ்க! வாழ்க!! என வாழ்த்தும் ஓர் உடன்பிறப்பு, தம்பி, நல் மன மனிதன். ●

## **Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS - A WOMAN WITH INDOMITABLE WILL**

R. KOUSALYA DEVI AND G. PANKAJAM

**H**ow happy we are that Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, Chancellor of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed University) celebrates her eightieth birthday along with thousands of her well wishers all over the world not only Indians, the people, especially in developing countries where her tenacious contributions to the field of nutrition and health brought life to the starving and dying children and adults.

It has been a good fortune to have known Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas - a friend of Dr. T.S. Soundram, founder of Gandhigram, for five decades. She is associated with 'Amma' since 1946 and with Gandhigram when we started the Mukhya Sevika and Grama Sevika Training at Gandhigram in 1952. As the Chief Home Economist of the Government of India she was responsible for framing the Home Science curriculum for them throughout India and continued to be with us to guide us to build Home Science Programme in Gandhigram Rural Institute and the Nutrition Programme in the Institute of Rural Health and Family Welfare Trust. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas' association with different institutions of Gandhigram continues.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is traditional but has a modern outlook; she is spiritual as well as practical, business like and radiates charm all round her in Saradalaya - Sri

Avinashilingam Institutions at Coimbatore. The charming smile starts early morning when she visits the shrine and continues till she retires to her bed. This is how she has attracted young women to be her admirers.

Dr. Devadas has inspired many young women through her sincere and hard work. Her magic and affectionate look and touch are responsible for making the young women develop a taste for Home Science, women and child welfare programmes. There are many faculty members who are the products of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas working in different departments at Gandhigram not only teaching Home Science but also spreading the message of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas and Sri Avinashilingam Institute. Anyone who visits and stays for few days in her institute could see this small and dynamic lady even at this age of eighty working like a bee from dawn to dusk. Light in her room is never put off in the nights. She finds time for reading, writing and guiding the scholars for their researches after 10<sup>o</sup> clock in the night. Her speeches and writings both in Tamil and English on Home Science especially on Nutrition have created awareness among the elite as well as the down-trodden in India and in developing countries. As a member of the committee on Noon Meal Scheme in Tamil Nadu she was instrumental for improving the nutrition of meals provided to children in schools, expectant women and lactating mothers.

A great admirer of Gandhiji and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri T.S. Avinashilingam, founder of Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College had a vision and aspiration to improve the status of women and children by providing education and brought Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas to Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College in 1960. He says in his autobiography - "It was rare to find a person with such academic distinction, wide experience in the national level and dedication. The

Saradalaya Institutions were fortunate in getting her leadership". It was a right choice as it made that infant institution to grow into an autonomous college. She evolved innovative courses including Engineering, of international reputation which attracted the women students from all over the world and helped the aspirations and ambitions of many young girls come true. The realisation of her long cherished dream of having Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College, a Deemed University for Home Science and Higher Education for women, could become a reality in 1988. She has combined teaching, research and extension in her institution.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas could radiate the message of the importance of Home Science education, women's development, and welfare of women and children through her brain child, the Deemed University. She built Sri Avinashilingam Institute from Pre-primary to University with devotion which has now grown beyond leap and bound. All the departments started by her step by step are now in bloom. The proud and magnanimous mother Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas has her children - her students in nook and corner of the world spreading the message of Home Science education and the ideals of Sri Avinashilingam Institute. This creative genius has lighted many lamps that glitter having a stamp of their own keeping Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas as their guiding spirit.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a rare and splendid symphony of education, development and emancipation of women and children. As the chairperson and member of several committees on Home Science, Nutrition, Women's Education, Noon Meal Scheme, Non Formal Education, Adult Education, Pre-School education etc at National and International levels; her contributions could be felt in all these fields. She has many laurels to her credit both from national and international arena for her outstanding contributions.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas also faced travails and difficulties in building Sri Avinashilingam Educational Institutions. But she had the conviction, courage, strength, idealism, faith in god and determination to build the institution along with a band of devoted faculty members. Avinashilingam Deemed University will stand as an eternal symbol of Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas's devotion and love for women's education. She evinces active interest even at this age to launch more programmes in the University. She leaves indelible impressions on many who could sit at her feet and learn the lessons of life.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas stands in the pinacle of a glorious life. 'Amma' still keeps the passion to the cause of women's education. The saga of her great endeavour will continue many more years and will inspire many more young women.

We pray to the Almighty to bless Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, a great friend of Gandhigram and the architect of Home Science education with health and long life to enable her to continue her services to the cause of women's education and the fruition of glory of many more of her admirers. ●

## AMMA - A PROFILE

A. ASHOK LUNIA

Amma came out first in B.Sc. exam conducted by the University of Madras in 1944. She was then sent to Ohio State University in U.S.A. She qualified for M.Sc and Ph.D in Food and Nutrition and Home Science and M.A. and received some of the highest academic awards offered by the Ohio State University, namely, Sigma XI (Scientific Research), Sigma Delta Epsilon (Graduate Science Women), Omicron NU (Home Economics Research) and PhiUPsilon Omicron (Home Economics Professional Interest and Scholarship).

On her return from the USA in 1950 she was offered a place in the Government of India College of Nursing in Delhi. Later she has been given the Deanship of Home Science in M.S. University, Baroda. After a few years of Service as the Dean she was appointed as the **Chief Home Economist** of the Government of India. In that position Amma has developed the Home Science wings for training **Grama Sevikas** (Village level Women Extension Workers) in all states in India. She later became the Technical Advisor and later took charge as the Principal of the Avinashilingam Home Science College and Directorship of the Trust institution at Coimbatore.

Here we would like to mention that it was rare to find a person with such academic distinction, wide experience in the national level with total dedication to her chosen field. The Saradalaya Institutions were fortunate in getting her leadership.

Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya started in 1930. Avinashilingam Education Trust started in the year 1955. The Home Science College was started in the year 1957.

Amma was one of the trustees of the Institution. She took charge as Principal of the Institution during the year 1960. The object of establishing the Institution was to make this Centre of Higher Education for Women, where there will be opportunities for all round development - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual which will be useful for welfare of their families, society, nation and world at large. It is because of Amma's dynamic and active service the above objectives could be achieved.

Amma has contributed much for the preparation and publication of **Tamil Encyclopedia** in the year 1954 and 1968 and **Kulandaigal Kalanchiyam** another Encyclopedia for children which was published in the year 1968 and 1975 respectively. These two Encyclopedias are the first in an Indian language and their success mainly goes to Amma.

Amma has also written among others the first volume of the **Topics on Satyagraha in South Africa, on Ahimsa Dharma, Gandhiji's experiments with truth, Healthy living, Khadi and village industries economic relations, Eradication of untouchability, Satyagraha, Communal unity, God and Religion, Bhagaved Gita, Grama Swaraj, the Chronological account of Gandhiji's life.** This first volume was published on 15.09.1957. Due to Amma's wholehearted Co-operation and hardwork the **Complete works of Gandhiji in Tamil** in 17 Volumes were published one by one. The last volume of the work was published in December 1969. The book 'Meaning of Home Science' was written by Amma when she was Chief of Home Economist of India. This book was published in 1958.

Under the able guidance and advise of Amma the Home Science College has grown to the biggest and most outstanding Institution in Home Science in India attracting students from all over India and also from countries abroad.

Under Amma's dedicated and continuous effort the following objectives of Education were achieved.

1. To maintain the noblest tradition of Indian Womanhood.
2. To uphold the high standards of academic excellence.
3. Education should not be merely bookish but involve practical application.
4. Our Educational Institutions should not be islands in Society but as Gandhiji said should be Centres of Education for the people in the surrounding area providing a variety of non-formal education courses needed by them.

The **Silver Jubilee Celebration** of the College was held on 17.07.1981 inaugurated by Dr. Giani Zail Singh, then President of India.

The Vidyalaya Golden Jubilee Celebration was held on 09.10.1979. Amma represented to the function on behalf of the University of Madras.

Under her leadership, hardwork and dedicated service, the **Home Science College has grown to become the biggest and most outstanding institution of Home Science in India**, attracting the students from all over the country and abroad. Students from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Fuji Islands, Brunai, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, U.K., Canada, Brazil, Italy and the U.S.A. have undergone different courses from time to time without discrimination of caste, creed, colour or religion. More than 80% of the postgraduates from the Home Science College have found prestigious positions as Administrators, Deans, Principals, Heads of Departments, Research Workers, Extension Workers, Nutritionists, Dietitians, Business Managers, Professors, Bank Officers, Project Executives etc. in India and abroad.

A distinguishing feature of the Avinashilingam Home Science College is that it functions with a strength of over two thousand students which offers 9 Majors for Master, M. Phil and Ph.D. and 18 Majors for undergraduate level in its extension work. Apart from introducing Community and Social Service as part of the

undergraduate curricula the college has organised a variety of short term courses for training of thousands of personnel of the Central and State Government involved in development work related to women and children. This was possible only by the hard work and dedication made by Amma. She has also taken active steps for publication of a considerable number of papers based on research, village development projects, Research Journal on Nutrition and Dietetics, Vignana Chuder for disseminating scientific knowledge. Amma has also published a good book in Tamil containing the life and message of Swami Vivekananda.

Under Amma, the Home Science College was conducting **Mukhya Sevikas** Training Centre for women for many years till the centre was wound up by the Government of India.

During the year 1962 Amma took initiative to take 19 students of the Avinashilingam Home Science College for study tour to Japan, Burma, Thailand, Hongkong, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaya and Singapore. During the tour Amma has arranged for the students to study the Home Economic activities and they were entertained by the Japan's Women's University, University of Thailand, Philippines, Malaya and several other Educational Institutions and Home Economic Associations. Amma used to make arrangements for such educational tours for the students with broad intentions.

In these many years Dr. Devadas has participated in many international conferences in Home Science and Nutrition. She has been a regular participant of the World Nutrition Congresses held from time to time in various parts of the world. She was a member of many delegations sponsored by the Government of India. She had the honour of being elected as a Vice President in the World Food Congress at The Hague and in the World Home Science Congress in Paris. During recent years she has taken several faculty members for Conferences abroad : to Japan in 1975, to

Brazil 1978, to Scandinavia in 1980, to Bangkok in 1983. Consequently the College became the venue for National and International Conferences and workshops in Home Science and Nutrition like the Biennial Conference of Home Science Association of India which she was President and the International Biological Programme - Technical Group meeting on leaf protein. Prof. N.W. Pirie, F.R.S., Chairman, Bio-Chemistry Division, Rothemsted Experiment station, U.K. was the Director of this workshop. Thirty five scientists from eight countries namely, Ceylon, Hungary, Nigeria, New Zealand, Sweden, U.S.A., U.K. India and the FAO participated. Prof. N.W. Pirie gave the Keynote address. In all 40 papers were circulated and discussed. The various experiences and knowledge gained through the conferences and meetings were utilised by Amma towards academic excellence and services to the people.

Amma had held many a respectable posts like Dietitian, College of Nursing, New Delhi, Dean, Faculty of Home Science, M.S. University, Baroda, Chief Home Economist, Govt. of India, later Principal, Vice-chancellor and currently Chancellor of the University and also had been President of the Home Science Association of India and the Nutrition Society of India.

Apart from the above she was holding very important and prominent position in national and international organisations like FAO, UNICEF, WHO, ICAR, NCERT, State and Central Social Welfare Boards, State Planning Commission, UGC, NIPCCD, DWCRA and the like.

Amma has been honoured with innumerable national and international awards including the Padma Shri, Mahaveer Jain Award and the recent G.D.Birla award to mention a few.

In commemoration of completion of the 80th year of the Chancellor Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, we the members of Rajasthani Sangh and our whole community

people join together to congratulate Amma for building such a unique institution for women for which Amma has made significant contribution to Women's Education and National Development. Amma has dedicated all her energies to the building of these institutions. She has dreamed, planned and striven for the advancement of these institutions, their children, and staff and is called by them affectionately as 'Amma'. Through this Institution she has served the Country. On this occasion we owe a deep debt of gratitude to her.

Amma's simplicity, purity, integrity, dedication, devotion and love are all outstanding characters appreciated by great men in India and abroad.

Institutions are not built by bricks, but by dedicated men and women like our Amma. Hard and sustained work with faith in God and courage in the cause always succeeds. The result is the building of an educational edifice, a centre for advanced learning in Home Science, Nutrition, Child Development and related fields which is the pride of Country, a fit tribute to Amma, Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas.

The poor, downtrodden and weaker sections have had a special place in her heart for whose upliftment she has striven all her life.

There is no end to the growth of the institutions in a country like India. We pray that the Almighty will give good health, long life, all prosperity and happiness to Amma to continue her sacred task of building the educational institutions and for their development and progress in the days ahead.

In conclusion I would like to quote Swami Vivekananda who said "Give me a few dedicated people and I shall change the world". The great Swami perhaps had people like Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas in his mind when he said these words.

## **A SYMBOL OF IDEAL INDIAN WOMAN OF BHARATHIAR'S DREAM**

INAYATHUNNISA MUNAVER

**I**t gives me immense pleasure to pen a few lines, expressing some of my impressions about my friend Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas on this very memorable occasion of her 80th Birthday Celebrations. I had the privilege of knowing her since her student days. My acquaintance with her starts more than half a century ago, when she was a student of B.Sc., Home Science in Queen Mary's College, Madras and I was staying in the Q.M.C. Hostel and doing my Physics (Hons) in the Presidency College from 1940-43. Not only Dr. Rajammal but her sister Leila, wife of Dr. Diraviam, who was my Education Secretary later, who was doing her B.Sc., Physics in Q.M.C. is also a good friend of mine.

Dr. Rajammal rose from humble beginnings to the highest position one can aspire for the Chancellor of one of the reputed Universities of India - Avinashilingam Deemed University, Coimbatore by dint of her own merit, hard work and selfless service to the community, thereby becoming not only a national but an international figure of high reputation. One can write volumes about her services and achievements but for want of time and space I shall highlight only a few very important ones here as many are familiar with her ability and performances. The few important points, I am mentioning here are more than enough to throw sufficient light on her brilliant academic background and her services to humanity in her field of Home Science and Nutrition.

After completing her degree courses with all Ist classes and Ist ranks, she took her Ph.D. from Ohio State University, U.S.A. with many honours in 1950, Post-

doctoral D.Sc., from the University of Madras in 1978. Apart from these, in recognition of her merit and distinctions, she was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humane letters, by Oregon State University, U.S.A. in 1993 and by The Ohio State University, USA in 1994. An honorary degree of D.Sc. was awarded by Chandrasekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur, in 1994 and by University of Ulster, Northern Ireland in 1996.

After her brilliant academic career, she worked in many fields, in various capacities as Dietitian and Principal of College of Nursing, Government of India, New Delhi (51-53). Dean and Prof. of H.Sc., Faculty of H.Sc., M.S. University, Baroda (53-55), Chief Home Economists and Joint Director (H.Sc) in Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Food & Agriculture, Govt. of India (55-61). After this, she joined as the Principal of Sri Avinashilingam College, Coimbatore and worked from 1960-80 During this period, she also acted as Assistant Director General (Nutrition) in Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi (75 - 76), as President of the H.Sc. Association of India for ten years from 61 - 71 and President of the Nutrition Society of India (86 - 90). She became the Vice - Chancellor of the Deemed University in 1988 from where she was elevated to the highest rank of the Chancellor in 1994.

As a result of the rich experience gained by her in varied fields, she shines today as an expert in H.Sc. and Nutrition, a leading Nutrition Scientists of both national and international fame. In recognition of her meritorious services, she is deputed as a member of many professional bodies and holds important advisory positions as consultant in many significant Advisory councils and organisations both within the country and abroad like NCERT, State and Central Social Welfare Boards, State Planning Commission, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, ICAR, UGC, NIPCCD, DWCRA etc.,

Besides these, there are many more important fields in which she has taken keen interest. At the State level, she has assisted the Government of Tamil Nadu in several schemes. She is the pioneer in starting the popular, massive Statewide Nutritious Meal Programme of the T.N. Govt. in 1983; where she formulated and standardised the recipes, trained the teachers and the organisers and did the followup work of studying its nutritious and developmental impact on the children. She has also assisted the State Government in several World Bank Aided, Nutritional Schemes and Projects in 10 districts, training in all over 10,000 teachers both in the rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu. At the National level, she has also directed a five States project in Nutrition / Health Education and Environmental Sanitations (NHEES) in selected primary schools in Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Another important field in which she showed keen interest is the integration of the N.S.S. in the curriculum of the undergraduates in her university, thereby giving it an academic status and credit. For this, she was given the Honorary Rank of 'Colonial Commandant of the NCC in 1993 by the Deputy Director General of NCC, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry'.

Apart from all these achievements, she is a good orator and writer. She has over 40 books on various subjects mainly H.Sc. and Nutrition to her credit and has published over 350 research papers. She is the Chief Editor of the Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Science monthly in Tamil 'Vignana Chudar'. She has also travelled widely, representing India in over 50 International, Nutrition and H.Sc. Conferences in about 40 countries.

In recognition of her distinctions and meritorious services both in our Country and abroad, she is the recipient of several awards and honours both at the National as well as the International levels, like the Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Award, Jammalal Bajaj Award, Mahaveer Jain Award and recently the G.D. Birla Award.

All that has been said so far goes to prove the most successful career of my friend, who stands out today as one of the most distinguished National and International figure of India in general and as a star among the women of our country in particular. How true, in her case, are the sayings like “Greatness lies in humility”, “Appearances are deceptive”, Thirukkural and “Pudumai Penn” of Bharathiar's Dream etc., For, inspite of all these honours and distinctions, in nature, she is very pious, modest and simple, a conscientious, devoted and dedicated worker, kind hearted woman of high calibre, ever active even at this age - a personification of simplicity and humility. In short, she is a true follower of Ghandiji not only in appearance but also in upholding his principles. She is a fitting living model today to be emulated by one and all. May her example serve as an inspiration to the whole World and to enthuse her staff and hundreds of students and youth of our Country; to learn the lesson that nothing is impossible to achieve if only they have the mind and the will power to do it and strive their best to attain it by strong determination, devotion to duty with sincerity, honesty and perseverance etc., “Where there is a will, there is a way” “Lives of great men, all remind us. How, we can make our lives sublime”.

In this connection, I wish to offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to her and the Committee for the celebration, for having given me this opportunity to express some of my views about her. I sincerely, hope and pray to the Almighty God to give her a long and healthy life to serve the nation for many more years to come.

*“May God's Choicest Blessings be on her and her family for ever”.*

(Ameen)



## அம்மா அவர்கள் - இணையற்ற சகாப்தம்

கே. பழனிச்சாமி

**அ**ம்மா அவர்கள் ஓர் இணையற்ற சகாப்தம் எனக் கூறலாம். மக்கட் செல்வங்களை ஈன்றெடுத்தது மட்டுமல்லாது, அவர்களைச் சிறிதும் சோடை போகாமல், அவரவர் (துறைகளில்) மிக உயர்ந்து சமூகத்தின், நாட்டின் பணிகளில் சிறந்து நிற்கின்றார்களென்றால், அனைத்தும் அந்தத் “தாயின்” மாண்புகளே யாவன, நமது வேதங்கள் அப்படித்தான் கூறுகின்றன.

10 உபாத்தியாயர்	=	1 ஞானாசிரியனுக்குச் சமம்
100 ஞானாசிரியர்	=	1 சான்றாண்மைமிக்க தந்தைக்குச் சமம்
1000 சான்றாண்மைமிக்க தந்தை	=	1 தாயாருக்கு (சமம் எனச் சொல்ல வில்லை) ஈடில்லை யென்றே கூறுகின்றது.

அப்படியொரு மிகமிக மாண்புமிக்கவராக, ஈடுஇணையற்றவராக வாழ்ந்து வரும் தாயாகத் திகழும் நம் அம்மா

தங்கத்தைப் போன்ற தூய்மை  
சோர்வு காணாத உழைப்பு  
அமைதியான கம்பீரம் -

இவை அனைத்தும் தெளிவாகப் பிரதிபலித்த உன்னதமான தோற்றத்தை யல்லவா நாம் அவர்களிடம் காண்கிறோம்.

நிறுத்தி நிதானமாக பேசும் பாங்கும்  
ஆசிக்கும் பாங்கும்

போற்றுதல்களுக்குரிய ரசனையோடு கூடிய அவர்களின் மேலான ஆசீர்வாதங்களை நானும் என் குடும்பத்தினரும் பெற்றதை எண்ணி யெண்ணி பெருமிதம் அடைகின்றோம். அவற்றை நாங்கள் பெற்ற பேறு என, பொக்கிஷமென நினைவு கூர்கிறோம். ●

## நானறிந்த அக்கா ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ்

பொன். தசரதன்

**கோ**வை அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான மாணவிகளும், பேராசிரியர்களும், மரியாதையாகவும், அன்புடனும் சான்சலர் அம்மா என்றழைக்கும் டாக்டர் ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாசுக்கும், எனக்கும் ஏற்பட்ட பழக்கமே ஒரு வித்தியாசமான சூழ்நிலையில் தான். நாங்கள் இருவரும் நேரில் சந்திக்காமலேயே அன்பு செலுத்திக் கொள்ள ஆரம்பித்தோம். அவருடன் பழக்கமான அன்றிலிருந்து அவருடன் பிறந்த நான்கு சகோதரர்களுடன், என்னை உடன் பிறவா சகோதரராக ஏற்று அவருடைய சகோதரர்கள் ஐவரானோம். அன்றிலிருந்து, அவருடைய சகோதரர்களிடம் காட்டும் அதே அன்பை என்னிடமும் காட்டி வருகிறார் என்பதை பெருமையுடன் சொல்லிக் கொள்கிறேன். அன்றிலிருந்து அவர் எனக்கு அக்காதான்.

1947 ஆம் ஆண்டு நமக்கு ஒரு முக்கியமான ஆண்டு. நாட்டிற்கு சுதந்திரம் கிடைத்ததால், அந்த ஆண்டு பிப்ரவரி மாதம், நான், அப்போது இருந்த இந்திய ராணுவ அஞ்சல் பிரிவிலிருந்து (Indian Army Postal Services) திருப்பத்தூர் அஞ்சலகத்திற்கு எழுத்தராக மாற்றலாகிவந்தேன். அப்போது திருப்பத்தூர் போஸ்ட் ஆபிசில் ஒரு போஸ்ட் மாஸ்டர், 3 கிளார்க்குகள், 3 போஸ்ட் மேன்கள், 2 பியூன்கள் தான்.

நான் பணியில் சேர்ந்த சிலதினங்களில் தினமும் காலையில் தபால்களைப் பட்டுவாடாவுக்குப் பிரிக்கும் நேரத்தில் 7.00 அல்லது 7.30 மணியளவில் ஒரு சிறுமியும், அவளைவிட வயதில் குறைந்த ஒரு சிறுவனும், போஸ்ட் ஆபீசின் ஜன்னலில் நின்று கொண்டு பியூன்களிடம் கெஞ்சி ஏதோ கேட்டுக் கொண்டிருப்பதைப் பார்த்தேன். பியூன்கள் சில நாட்கள் பதில்

சொல்வார்கள். பல நாட்கள் விரட்டியடிப்பார்கள். பிள்ளைகளின் முகம் மிகவும் பரிதாபமாயிருக்கும். ஒரு நாள் பியூனிடம் சிறுமியும், சிறுவனும் என்ன கேட்கிறார்கள் என்று கேட்டதற்கு “அவர்களுக்கென்ன வேலை – பெரிய காசிநாய்க்கண்பட்டியிலிருக்கும் அவர்களுடைய தோட்ட விலாசம் “பிருந்தாவனத்திற்கு” வரும் தபால்களை இங்கேயே எடுத்து கொடுக்கச் சொல்லிக் கேட்கிறார்கள் என்றார். வெளியூருக்கு வரும் தபால்களை நடுவில் எடுத்துக் கொடுப்பது சட்டத்திற்குப் புறம்பானதால் கொடுக்க மறுத்து விரட்டிக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள் என்பது புரிந்தது. பிறகு நான் அந்த சிறுமி (டாக்டர் அக்காவின் தங்கை விமலா) யிடம் என்ன குழந்தை யாரிடமிருந்து கடிதம் எதிர்பார்க்கின்றார்கள் என்று விசாரித்தேன். அச்சிறுமி “அண்ணா, என் அக்கா, இந்த சிறுவனின் அம்மா. (டாக்டர் மோகன்) அமெரிக்காவில் மேல்படிப்பு படிக்கிறார்கள். அவர்களிடமிருந்து அடிக்கடி கடிதம் வருகின்றது. அக்கடிதங்கள் இந்த தபாலாபீசில் வந்தாலும் எங்கள் “பிருந்தாவனம்” வீடு இருக்கும் ஊர் பெரிய காசிநாய்க்கண்பட்டிக்கு நாளைதான் வந்து எங்களுக்கு பட்டுவாடா ஆகின்றது. ஒரு நாள் தாமதமாக, கடிதம் வரும். அன்றே படித்தால் எங்களுக்கு எவ்வளவு சந்தோஷமாயிருக்கும் அண்ணா, என்றார்கள் அவர்கள். கோரிக்கை நியாயமானதுதான். பிரிந்திருப்பவர்களிடமிருந்து வரும் கடிதங்களைப் படிப்பதில் எவ்வளவு சந்தோஷமாயிருக்கிறது என்பது எனக்கும் தெரிந்ததே. ஏனெனில் நானும் என் பெற்றோரை விட்டு 3 ஆண்டுகள் பிரிந்து ராணுவத்தில் பணியிலிருந்த போது அவர்களிடமிருந்து கடிதம் வந்தால் மிகவும் சந்தோஷப்பட்டிருக்கிறேன்.

அதனால் அக்குழந்தைகளின் மகிழ்ச்சியில் பங்குகொள்ள விரும்பி, இன்று ஏதாவது கடிதம் வந்திருக்கிறதா என்று பார்க்கிறேன் என்று சொல்லிவிட்டு அந்த ஊருக்கான தபால்களைப் பார்த்தபோது அதில் ஒரு கடிதம் திருமதி சொர்ணம்மாள் என்ற பெயருக்கும் மற்றொரு கடிதம் மோகனுக்கும் வந்திருப்பதைப் பார்த்து இரண்டையுமே கொண்டு வந்து சிறுவர்களிடம் கையில்

கொடுக்காமல் காண்பித்தேன். உடனே சிறுமி “அண்ணா” சொர்ணம்மாள் எங்கள் அம்மா என்றார். சிறுவனோ “அண்ணா” மோகன் நான்தான். கடிதங்களை கொடுங்களண்ணா, உடனே படிக்க வேண்டும் என்று அழாத குறையாகக் கேட்டார்கள். சற்று தாமதித்தால் இருவருமே அழுதுவிடுவார்கள் போலிருந்தது. ஒரு கடிதத்தை சிறுமி விமலாவிடமும், மற்றொரு கடிதத்தை மோகனிடமும் கொடுத்தேன். மோகன் முதலில் கடிதத்திற்கு முத்தம் கொடுத்துவிட்டு பிறகுதான் பிரித்து கடிதத்தைப் படிக்க ஆரம்பித்தான். படிக்க, படிக்க அவன் கண்களில் தோன்றிய உணர்ச்சிகள் எத்தனையோ கதைகள் சொல்லின. முதலில் சந்தோஷத்தில் கைகொட்டி சிரித்தான். பிறகு கடிதத்தைப் படித்து முடித்தவுடன் அழ ஆரம்பித்தான். நான் பதறிப்போய் என்ன மோகன் என்னவாயிற்று. ஏன் அழுகிறாய்? என்றதற்கு அவன் சொன்ன பதில் என் மனதிற்கு மிகவும் வேதனை அளித்தது. அண்ணா, அம்மாவைப் பார்த்து பல மாதங்களாகி விட்டன. அம்மாவைப் பார்க்க முடியவில்லையே என்றுதான் அழுதுவிட்டேன் என்றான். உண்மைதானே பாசமிரு அன்னையைப் பிரிந்திருப்பது என்பது அதுவும் அப்போது மோகனுக்கு எட்டு (அ) பத்து வயதுதானிருக்கும். சிறுமி விமலாவும் அவருடைய அம்மாவுக்கு வந்த கடிதத்தைப் படித்துவிட்டு ஆனந்தக் கண்ணீர் விட்டு அழுது அண்ணா, இனிமேல் தினமும் நாங்கள் வருவோம். எங்களுக்கு வரும் கடிதங்களைக் கட்டாயம் கொடுக்க வேண்டுமென்று கட்டளையே இட்டது. இந்த இருவரின் அன்புக் கட்டளையை மீறமுடியாமல் சட்டத்தை மீற முடிவுசெய்து விட்டேன். போஸ்ட் மாஸ்டரிடம் விசயத்தை சொன்னதில் அவரும் பெருந்தன்மையுடன் இனிமேல் கடிதங்களைக் கொடுத்து விடுங்கள் என்று பச்சைக்கொடி காட்டிவிட்டார். பிறகென்ன, தினமும் அவர்களிருவரும் வருவார்கள். நானும் கடிதங்களைக் கொடுத்து விடுவேன். இப்படித்தான் எங்கள் நட்பு மலர்ந்தது. அந்த சிறுமியின் அக்கா, சிறுவனின் அம்மாதான் அன்று அமெரிக்காவில் மேல்படிப்பு படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்த ராசம்மாள் என்பதை சொல்லாமலே தெரிந்திருக்கும்.

என்னைப்பற்றி, நான் செய்யும் சிறு, சிறு உதவிகளைப் பற்றி பெரியம்மா அக்காவுக்கு எழுதியிருக்கிறார்கள். அதன்பிறகு, அக்காவிடமிருந்து அவர் குடும்பத்திற்கு எழுதிய கடிதங்களில் என்னைப்பற்றி “போஸ்ட் ஆபீஸ் தம்பி” எப்படியிருக்கிறார், நான் அவனை விசாரித்ததாகச் சொல்லவும். என்று எழுதிவந்தார்கள். காலப் போக்கில் நேரிடையாகவே (கடிதத்தில்தான்) “தசரதன் தம்பி சுகம்தானே – வாழ்த்துக்கள்” என்று, என்னையும் அவர்கள் குடும்பத்தில் ஒருவராக கருதி எழுதி வந்தார்கள். இம்மாதிரி விசாரிப்புகள் எனக்கு மிகவும் பெருமை சேர்ப்பதாக இருந்தது.

1947 டிசம்பரிலோ 1948 ஜனவரியிலோ, (சரியாக நினைவில்லை) அந்நாளில் அமெரிக்காவில் கொடிகட்டிப் பறந்து வந்த “பார்க்கர்” பேனா ஒன்றை எனக்குப் பரிசாக அனுப்பி வைத்தார். நான் சற்றும் எதிர்பார்க்காமலேயே இந்த அரிய பரிசு கிடைத்தபோது நான் மிகவும் நெகிழ்ந்து போய் அவருடைய பெருந்தன்மையை வியக்காமலிருக்க முடியவில்லை. இந்த பரிசை என் சக ஊழியர்களிடமும், நண்பர்களிடமும் காண்பித்து என் சந்தோசத்தைப் பகிர்ந்து கொண்டேன். அமெரிக்காவில் மேல்படிப்பு படிக்கும் ஒருவர், நேரில் சந்திக்காத ஒரு நண்பருக்கு இந்த அரிய பரிசை அனுப்பினார் என்றால் அவருடைய பெருந்தன்மையை விளக்க வார்த்தைகளே இல்லை.

இதற்கிடையில் நானும் அவருடைய அண்ணா, தம்பிகள், தங்கைகளுடன் நெருக்கமாகி, நண்பர்களாகி விட்டோம். தங்கைகள் சென்னையில் படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். அண்ணாவும் ஒரு தம்பியும் வேலையிலிருந்தார்கள். தம்பி எங்கள் இலாகாவில் போஸ்டல் ஆபீஸ்டில் எழுத்தராக இருந்தார். பின்னாளில் அகௌண்டன்ட் ஆபீசராக ஓய்வு பெற்றார். தங்கைகள் அனைவரும் சென்னையில் படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். விடுமுறைக்கு வந்தால், நானும் ஞாயிற்றுக் கிழமைகளில் தோட்டத்திற்கு (பிருந்தாவனம், போய் விடுவேன்) ஒரே அரட்டைதான். சீட்டுக்கச்சேரியும் உண்டு. பெரியம்மா பெயருக்கு “சொர்ணம்மாள்” ஏற்றாற்போல் தங்கம் தான். அவருடைய பிள்ளைகளைப்

போல என்னையும் சமமாகப் பாவித்து உபசரிப்பார்கள். அதை மறக்கவே முடியாது.

கடைசியில், அக்காவும் அமெரிக்காவில் படிப்பை முடித்து டாக்டர் பட்டம் பெற்று இந்தியாவுக்குத் திரும்பினார்கள். திருப்பத்தூர் வந்தவுடன் அவருக்கு பிருந்தாவனம் தோப்பில் (வீட்டில்) உறவினர், நண்பர்கள் அனைவரும் உற்சாக வரவேற்பு கொடுக்க ஏற்பாடாகியிருந்தது. அதில் நானும் கலந்து கொண்டேன். அக்கா எல்லோரையும் விசாரித்துவிட்டு, நான் கடைசியில் தனியாக நின்று கொண்டிருந்தேன். என்னை கவனித்து விட்டு அருகில் வந்து “ஓ நீ தான் அந்த போஸ்ட் ஆபீஸ் தம்பி தசரதனா” என்று விசாரித்து விட்டு, நான் கற்பனை செய்தது போலவே இருக்கிறாய். ஆனால் மிகவும் ஒல்லியாக இருக்கிறாயே, ஏன் சரியாக சாப்பிடுவதில்லையா என்று தமாஷ் செய்து தட்டிக் கொடுத்தார்கள். அதில் நான் மிகவும் பெருமை அடைந்தேன்.

பின்னாளில் அவர் பல வேலைகள் பார்த்தார். எங்கிருந்தாலும் வீட்டிற்கு, அம்மாவுக்கு கடிதம் எழுதும்போது என்னைப் பற்றி விசாரிக்க தவறியதில்லை. எனக்கு அப்போது திருமணமாகவில்லை. அதனால் தம்பிக்கு எப்போது திருமணம் என்று அடிக்கடி கேட்டு எழுதுவார்கள்.

என் அப்பா ரேஷனில் ஆபீசராக வேலையிலிருந்தார். என் அம்மா முனிசிபல் வைஸ்சேர்மனாக இருந்தார். என் குடும்பம் சற்று வசதியான குடும்பமே. என் மூலம் இரு குடும்பமும் பழகி குடும்ப நண்பர்களாகி விட்டார்கள்.

பின்னாளில் அக்கா, அவினாசிலிங்கம் கல்லூரி முதல்வரான பிறகு, நான் அடிக்கடி கல்லூரியில் சீட்டுக்காக தொல்லை கொடுத்து வந்தேன். ஆனால் அவர் என் தொல்லையைச் சகித்துக் கொண்டு அவராலான உதவி செய்து வந்தார். இவ்வாண்டு கூட என் உறவினர் பெண்ணுக்கு பி.காமில் சீட்டு கேட்டு

கடிதம் எழுதினேன். பிறகு அப்பெண்ணுக்கு சத்யசாயி கல்லூரியில் இடம் கிடைத்து சேர்ந்து விட்டார்.

பல ஆண்டுகளுக்குப் பின் அக்காவை 1978 ஆகஸ்ட் மாதம் என் முதல் மகள் திருமண அழைப்பிதழ் கொடுப்பதற்காகச் சந்தித்தேன். என் மைத்துனர் கோவையில் அன்றைய நகராட்சியில் கல்வி அதிகாரியாக இருந்தார். அவருடன் அக்காவின் இல்லத்திற்கு காலை 7.00 மணி அளவில் போனேன். உடனே, சந்தித்து நலம் விசாரித்தார். அழைப்பிதழ் கொடுத்தவுடன் தம்பியின் மகளுக்குத் திருமணமா என்று ஆச்சரியப்பட்டார். திருமணத்திற்கு வர முயல்வதாகச் சொன்னார். அவரால் வரமுடியாமல் போனாலும் அவருடைய அன்பான வாழ்த்து வந்து என்னை மகிழ்வித்தது. நினைவில் வைத்து பெருந்தன்மையுடன் வாழ்த்து அனுப்பியதற்காக மிகவும் நெகிழ்ந்து போனேன்.

1978ம் வருடம் மெட்ராஸ் யுனிவர்சிட்யின் வைஸ் சான்சலர் பதவிக்கு, பெயர்கள் பரிசீலனை செய்து கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். அக்காவின் பேரும் பரிசீலனை செய்ததாகவும், அநேகமாக அக்காவுக்கு அப்பதவி கிடைப்பதற்கான வாய்ப்புகள் அதிகமாகயிருப்பதாகவும் கேள்விப்பட்டேன். ஆகவே அவரைச் சந்தித்தபோது, அக்கா இந்த தடவை நிச்சயமாக நீங்கள் தான் மெட்ராஸ் யுனிவர்சிட்யின் வைஸ் சான்சலர் – அட்வான்ஸ் வாழ்த்துக்கள் என்றேன். அவர் சிரித்துக் கொண்டே, தம்பி உன் ஆசையை மதிக்கிறேன். ஆனால் உண்மை நிலைமையையும் யோசிக்க வேண்டும். நானோ ஒரு தீவிர தேசியவாதி. தேர்வில் நிச்சயம் அரசியல் விளையாடும். இந்நிலையில் என்னைத் தேர்ந்தெடுப்பார்கள் என்ற நம்பிக்கையில்லை. இருந்த போதிலும் உன் வாழ்த்துக்களுக்கு நன்றி என்றார். அவர் சொன்னபடிதான் நடந்தது.

நான் கூட என்னடா, அக்காவுக்கு அரசியல் செய்யத் தெரியவில்லையே என்று வருத்தப்பட்டேன். அவரைத் தேர்ந்தெடுக்காததினால் அவருக்கு நஷ்டமில்லை. மெட்ராஸ் யுனிவர்சிட்யி ஒரு நல்ல கல்வியாளரை வைஸ் சான்சிலராகப் பெறத் தவறிவிட்டது.

1952-ல் என் திருமணத்தில் ஒரு சிக்கல் ஏற்பட்டது. அதை அவருக்கே உரிய தோரணையில் யாருக்கும் எந்த கெடுதலோ மனக்கசப்போ இல்லாமல் தீர்த்து வைத்தார்.

நான் அப்போது வேற்று மதத்தை சேர்ந்த (கிறிஸ்துவ) ஆசிரியையைக் காதலித்து வந்தேன். இது என் பெற்றோருக்கும் தெரியும். என் தகப்பனார் ஒரு பரந்த மனம் படைத்தவர். அவர் என் காதலை மனப் பூர்வமாக ஆதரித்தாரா என்பது தெரியாது. ஆனால் சிவப்புக் கொடி காட்டவில்லை. அதனால் சமயம் வரும்போது அவரை சரிக்கட்டிவிடலாம் என்று நினைத்திருந்தேன். நினைப்பதெல்லாம் நடந்து விடுவதில்லையே. இயற்கையில் நீதியே அதுதானே. 1997ம் ஆண்டு ஜூலை மாதம் டெல்லியிலுள்ள ராணுவ அஞ்சல் பிரிவுக்கு (Army postal services) நான் டெபுடேஷனில் அனுப்பப்பட்டேன். நான் புறப்பட்டுப் போன மறுநாள் காலை 6.30 மணிக்கு என் அருமை அப்பா மாரடைப்பால் இறந்து விட்டார். எனவே பாதி வழியிலேயே திரும்ப நேரிட்டு விட்டது.

என் குடும்பத்தில் நான்தான் மூத்தவன். எனக்கு அடுத்த 3 தம்பிகளும், 3 தங்கைகளும் சிறியவர்கள் என் கடைசி தங்கைக்கு வயது 5, என் அப்பாவுக்கே 47 வயதுதான். வீட்டிற்கு பெரியவன் என்பதால் வீட்டு நிர்வாகத்தை ஏற்க வேண்டிய கட்டாயத்துக்கு தள்ளப்பட்டேன். முதல் தங்கைக்கு திருமணம் செய்ய வேண்டியிருந்தது. இந்நிலையில் என் காதல் கல்யாணத்தில் முடியுமா என்பது கேள்விக் குறியாகி விட்டது. என் அம்மா பிடிவாதமாக, தான் பார்க்கும் பெண்ணைத்தான் திருமணம் செய்து கொள்ள வேண்டுமென்று சொல்லிவிட்டார். என்னால் காதலை மறக்க மனம் வரவில்லை. இந்நிலையில் பிரச்சினையை என் அம்மா அக்காவிற்குச் சொல்லி, என்னை எப்படியாவது சொந்தத்தில் திருமணம் செய்ய ஒப்புக் கொள்ள வைக்கவேண்டுமென்று கேட்டுக் கொண்டார். அக்கா, பெண்ணையும் அவர் பெற்றோரையும் அழைத்துப் பேசியிருக்கிறார். இப்போதுள்ள மாறுபட்ட சூழ்நிலையில் உங்கள் நிலை என்ன

என்று கேட்டிருக்கிறார். அந்த பெண்ணும் பெற்றோரும் இப்போது அவருடைய (என்னுடைய) கடமை குடும்பத்திற்குத் தான். எனவே திருமணத்தை பற்றி பேச்சேயில்லை என்று பெருந்தன்மையுடன் சொல்லியிருக்கிறார்கள். பெண்ணிடம் நீங்கள் வரம்பு மீறியிருக்கிறீர்களா என்று கேட்டிருக்கிறார். அந்தப் பெண் பதறிப் போய் நாங்கள் இருவரும் ஒரு கட்டுப் பாட்டுக்குள்தான் பழகினோம். வரம்பு மீறியதில்லை என்று பைபிளின் மேல் சத்தியம் செய்திருக்கிறார். அதுதான் உண்மையும் கூட. அப்படியானால், நீங்கள் நல்ல நண்பர்களாகப் பிரிந்து விடுவதுதான் நல்லது என்று அறிவுரைத்துவிட்டு என்னை அழைத்து விசயத்தைச் சொல்லி வீணாக மனதைக் குழப்பிக் கொள்ளாதே, உன் சின்னஞ்சிறு தம்பி, தங்கைகளின் வருங்காலத்தைக் கருத்தில் கொண்டு நல்ல நண்பர்களாகப் பிரிந்து விடுங்கள் என்று அறிவுரை சொன்னார். நானும் வேறு வழிதோன்றாததால் காதலைத் துறந்து அவர் சொன்னபடியே சொந்தத்திலேயே திருமணம் செய்து கொண்டேன். எங்கள் இல்லறம் நல்லபடியே அமைந்தது. சென்ற ஆகஸ்ட் 27ம் தேதியோடு 46 ஆண்டுகள் முடிந்து 28.8.98 47ம் ஆண்டில் அடியெடுத்து வைத்திருக்கிறோம் என்பதை மகிழ்ச்சியுடன் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். அத்துடன் அவர்களின் ஆசியுடன் நடந்த திருமணத்தினால் எங்களுக்கு 3 பெண்கள், ஒரே மகனும் இருக்கிறார்கள். அனைவருக்கும் நல்ல இடத்தில் திருமணம் முடித்து பெருவாழ்வு வாழ்கிறார்கள். ஒரே மகனும் எம்.எஸ்.சி., எம்.சி.ஏ., முடித்து இப்போது அக்கா மேற்படிப்பு படித்தார்களே அதே அமெரிக்காவில் சீனியர் கன்சல்ட்டன்டாகப் பணியில் இருக்கிறான் என்பதை நினைக்கும்போது அக்காவின் நல்லாசியை மறக்க முடியவில்லை.

இறுதியாக எந்த போஸ்ட் ஆபீசில் 1947ல் கிளார்க்காக நுழைந்தேனோ அதே போஸ்ட் ஆபீஸ் பின்னாளில் தலைமை போஸ்ட் ஆபீசாக உயர்ந்து, ஒரு போஸ்ட் மாஸ்டர் 5 உதவி மாஸ்டர்கள், 35 கிளார்க்குகள் என்று பரந்து விரிந்த

பிறகு நானும் பல பதவிகளை வகித்து விட்டு அதே போஸ்ட் ஆபீசின் போஸ்ட் மாஸ்டராகப் பணிபுரிந்து ஓய்வு பெற்றேன். எல்லாமே அக்காவின் ஆசியினால்தான் என்பது என்னுடைய தீர்க்கமான முடிவு.

“ஆயுளின் பெருமை ஆண்டுகளில் இல்லை  
அவன் வாழும் முறையில் தான் இருக்கிறது” (தாகூர்)

இதற்கு இலக்கணமாக அக்கா தன் வாழ்நாள் முழுவதும் கல்விக்காக குறிப்பாக பெண்கள் கல்விக்காகச் செய்து வரும் பணி மகத்தானது.

என் அருமை அக்காவின் 80 வது பிறந்தநாளைச் சிறப்பாக நடத்த இருப்பதை அறிய மிக்க மகிழ்ச்சியும் பூரிப்பும் அடைகிறேன்.

இந்நநாளில் என் அக்காவை  
புகழ வார்த்தைகள் இல்லை  
வாழ்த்த வயதும் இல்லை  
ஆனால் உள்ளத்தின் அடித்தளத்திலிருந்து  
அவர்களின் நல் வாழ்வுக்கு  
ஆண்டவனை வேண்ட தடையேதுமில்லையே

“இறைவா, இவர் பணி மேலும், மேலும்  
சிறக்க, பலப்பல விருதுகளைப் பெற  
நீண்ட ஆயுளைக் கொடு”.

## ஆயிரம் பிறை காணும் அன்னை

‘வேளாண்சீலர்’ எஸ். இராமசுவாமி

|| சம், சாம்பார் வைப்பதற்கெல்லாம் ஒரு பட்டப் படிப்பா? இவற்றைச் சொல்லித் தர ஒரு கல்லூரியா?

– இப்படி ‘எழுபது’ களில் முணுமுணுத்தவர்கள், கேலி பேசியவர்கள் பலர். கோவையிலிருந்த கல்வித்துறை உயரதிகாரி ஒருவரும் இப்படி என்னிடம் கேட்டதுண்டு.

இவர்கள் இன்று வாயடைத்துப் போயிருக்கிறார்கள். வியந்து பாராட்டுகிறார்கள். ஏன்? தங்கள் பெண்களையே இந்தப் படிப்புக்காக ‘அந்தக்’ கல்லூரிக்கு அனுப்புகிறார்கள்.

இப்படிப்பட்ட மனமாற்றத்தை ஏற்படுத்தியது கோவையிலுள்ள அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரி – இன்று – நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகம்!

கடந்த கால் நூற்றாண்டு காலத்தில் மெல்ல மெல்ல – ஆனால் – உறுதியாக வளர்ந்து விரிந்து பரந்துள்ள – பல்கலைக் கழகமாக உயர்ந்துள்ள – இந்தக் கல்விக் கழகத்தைப் பாராட்டாத நாடுகள் இல்லை. இந்தக் கழகத்தை அறியாத கல்வி உலகம் இன்று இல்லை.

உணவு நலம் – உடல் நலம் – மனை நலம் மூலம் குடும்ப நலம், என்ற உலகளாவிய குறிக்கோளை உள்ளடக்கி வளர்ந்திருக்கிறது இந்தப் பல்கலைக் கழகம்.

இப்படித் திட்டமிட்டு வளர்த்த பெருமை திருமதி. இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களுக்கே உரியது. இதற்காக அம்மையார் பெருமை கொள்ளலாம்.

மனை மாண்பு என்பதைத் தனித்துறையாக்கி அதற்கெனவே தனிப் பல்கலைக் கழகம் கண்ட இந்த அம்மையாரை நினைத்துத் தமிழகம் பெருமைப் படலாம். இரண்டுமே தகுதியுள்ள பெருமைகள்.

ஒரு நாற்பத்தைந்தாண்டுகளுக்கு முன் தமிழகத்தில் மகளிர் கல்விச் சூழல் பற்றி எண்ணிப் பார்க்க வேண்டும்.

பெண்கள், உயர்நிலைப் பள்ளிவரை படிக்க வருவது அருமை. கல்லூரிக்குப் படிக்கச் செல்வது மிக அருமை. வழக்கமான பி.ஏ. படிப்பை நாடாமல் மனையியல் படிப்பை நாடியது அதனினும் அருமை. அதில் முனைவர் (டாக்டர்) பட்டம் பெற்றது எல்லாவற்றிலும் அருமை.

இப்படி 'அருமை'களைத் தன் இளவயதிலேயே பெற்ற அம்மையார், 'அய்யா' அவர்களின் உதவியோடு மனையியலுக்கு எனத் தனிப் பல்கலைக் கழகம் கண்டது மிகப் பெருமை. மிக மிக அருமை.

இந்தியாவிலேயே இத்துறைக்கு என முதல் தனிப் பல்கலைக் கழகம் இது எனக் கருதுகிறேன்.

தேசிய வாழ்விலும், தியாக உணர்விலும் தலைசிறந்து நின்ற 'அய்யா' அவர்கள், இன்று மிகச் சிறந்த கல்விப் பணியாளர் இல்லையெனில், 'அய்யா' ஒரு விடுதலைப் போராட்ட வீரர் – தியாகசீலர் என்று மட்டுமே பெருமை பெற்றிருப்பார்.

'அய்யா' அவர்கள், எதற்கெடுத்தாலும் ஆண்டவன் அருள் என்பார்கள்.

‘என் செயலாவது யாதொன்றுமில்லை’ என்ற திருமறை வரியே அவரது அசைக்க முடியாத நம்பிக்கை. அந்த நம்பிக்கையே அவரது உயர் வாழ்வுக்கு உந்துதல் சக்தி.

அம்மையார் அவர்கள் அய்யா அவர்களைச் சந்தித்ததும், அய்யா, அவர்களின் உள்ளத்தின் அடியில் உறங்கிக் கிடந்த ‘கல்விப் பணி ஆர்வம்’ என்ற சிறு பொறியை ஊதிப் பெரிதாக்கி உலகம் முழுதும் பயன் கொள்ளச் செய்ததும் ஆகிய இவையும் ஆண்டவன் அருள் என்றே நான் கருதுகிறேன்.

அறிவாலும், உழைப்பாலும், உயர் கொள்கையாலும், குறிக்கோளாலும் சிறந்து நிற்கும் அம்மையார், மத பேதங்களைக் கடந்து வாழ்வது, உண்மையில் வியப்பில்லை.

‘அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை’ என்கிற வள்ளுவமே குறித்தது தான் இயேசு பெருமானின் வாழ்வின் அடித்தளம்.

வள்ளுவரும் கிறிஸ்துவும் வாழ்ந்த இடத்தால் வேறுபட்டவர்கள், ஆனால் அன்புக் கோட்பாட்டினால், ஒன்று பட்டவர்கள்.

இதுபோல, ‘அய்யா’ அவர்களும் அம்மையாரும், பற்றிய மதங்களால், வேறுபட்டிருப்பது போலத் தோன்றலாம். என்றாலும், கல்விப் பணி இருவரையும் ஒரே வழியில் இணைய வைத்தது.

அய்யா அவர்களின் கல்வி ஆர்வமும், அம்மையார் அவர்களின் ஆர்வமும் ஒரு சேரப் பரிணமித்ததால், இன்று இந்தப் பல்கலைக் கழகம் உருவாகியிருக்கிறது என்பதில் இரண்டு கருத்துக்களுக்கு இடமில்லை.

திருமணத்தை ஆயிரம் காலத்துப் பயிர் என வருணிப்பதுண்டு! ஆனால்

ஒருமைக் கண் தான்கற்ற கல்வி ஒருவற்கு

எழுமையும் ஏமாப்பு உடைத்து.

என்கிறது வள்ளுவம்.

இதனை எண்ணும்போது, பயனுள்ள ஆயிரம் காலத்துப் பயிர் என்பது கல்விதான்.

உயிர் தழைக்க அன்பும் பண்பும் வேணும்  
பயிர் தழைக்க நீரும் உரமும் வேணும்  
வாழ்வு செழிக்கக் கல்வி நலம் வேணும்

அதிலும் மனைநலம் சிறக்கப் பெண்கல்வி – அவளுக்கே உரிய சிறப்புக் கல்வி வேணும்.

இதனால் உண்மையான – பெரும்பயன் தரும் பயிர் என்பது, பெண் கல்வியே! இந்தக் கல்விக்குத் தமிழகத்தில் ஒரு கலைக் கோயில் கட்டத் துணைநின்ற – அதனை வளர்த்து ஆளாக்கிய – பலரும் பயன் கொள்ளச் செய்த நமது இராசம்மாள் அம்மையார் அவர்கள், ஆயிரங்காலத்துப் பயிரை வளர்க்கிறவர் என்பது மிகையிலலை.

இவ்வண்ணம், ஆயிரங்காலத்துப் பயிரை வளர்க்கிற அம்மையார், ஆயிரம்பிறை காணுகிறார். தமிழக மகளிர் செய்த தவம் இது.

ஆயிரம் ஆண்டு வாழ்க என வாழ்த்துவது ஒரு மரபு. ஆனால் இது ஒரு பேராசை என்று எனக்குத் தோன்றுகிறது.

ஆசைப்படலாம், தவறில்லை, அது மனித இயல்பு. ஆனால் பேராசைப்படலாமா?

ஆகவே, நான் பேராசைப் படாமல் ஆசை மட்டும் படவே விரும்புகிறேன். எனவே,

திருமதி இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள்

இன்னும் நூறாண்டு வாழ எங்கள் 'அய்யா' வின் நம்பிக்கை வழி நின்று ஆண்டவன் அருள் செய்ய வேண்டுகிறேன். ●

## ஒரு பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் நட்பு

ராணி ப. சிவன்

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'மாமா' என்று எல்லோராலும் அழைக்கப்பட்டு வந்த அம்மா அவர்களின் கணவர் திரு. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் என்னிடம், 'நீ காட்பாடி போய் வேலையில் சேரும் முன்பு ஒருமுறை அம்மாவைப் பார்த்துவிட்டு வரலாம் வா' என்று கூற உடனே என் உயிரணை தந்தையுடன் கோயம்புத்தூர் வந்தேன்.

மறுநாளே அம்மா அவர்களின் முன்னால் நான் உட்கார்ந்திருந்தேன். இண்டர்வியூ நடக்கிறது. அம்மா அவர்களின் மேசையில் உள்ள 'பேப்பர் வெயிட்டை' நான் கையில் வைத்து சுற்றிக் கொண்டே பேசுகிறேன். அம்மா அவர்கள் என்னையும், பேப்பர் வெயிட்டையும் மாறி மாறிப் பார்க்கிறார்கள். நான் 'பேப்பர் வெயிட்டைச்' சுற்றுவதை நிறுத்தி விட்டேன்.

அவர்களுடைய இடத்தில் நான் இருந்திருந்தால் 'பேப்பர் வெயிட்டைச்' சுற்றாமல் பதில் சொல்' என்று சொல்லியிருப்பேன். ஆனால் அம்மா அவர்கள் சொல்லாமலே பார்வையில் உணர்த்தியதை இன்றும் அடிக்கடி நினைத்துக் கொள்கிறேன். அம்மா அவர்களிடம் பேசிய பிறகு நான் காட்பாடி சென்று வேலையில் சேராமல் இங்கே சேர்ந்தது அவரது பேச்சுத் திறமையால் தான்.

ஒருவர் ஒரு துறையில் சிறந்தவராக இருக்கலாம். அல்லது இரண்டு, மூன்று துறைகளில் சிறந்தவராக இருக்கலாம். ஏன் சில சமயங்களில் சில துறைகளில் சிறந்தவராக இருக்கலாம். ஆனால் பல துறைகளில் பலமுறை

சிறந்தவராக ஒருவர் எப்படி இருக்க முடியும்? இருக்க முடிகிறதே. அதனால் தான் இவரைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் என்கிறேன். அம்மாவிற்கு இது எப்படி சாத்தியமானது. இதற்கு காரணம்— சுயமுயற்சி, சுயமுயற்சி, சுயமுயற்சி!.

## அம்மா ஒரு சுயம்புலிங்கம்

சுயம்புலிங்கம் என்றால் என்ன? தானாகவே பூமியில் தோன்றுகின்ற லிங்கத்தை (மனிதனால் உருவாக்கப்படாதது) சுயம்புலிங்கம் என்று சொல்வார்கள். இப்படிப்பட்டவர்கள் யாரையும் முன் உதாரணமாகக் கொண்டு தங்கள் வாழ்க்கையை அமைத்துக் கொள்வதில்லை. மாறாக இவர்களைப் பின்பற்றி வாழ்பவர்கள் என்று நிறைய பேர் இருப்பார்கள்.

தனியொரு பெண்மணியாக எதிர்ப்புகளையும், தடங்கல்களையும் தாண்டி இவ்வளவு பெரிய பல்கலைக்கழகத்தை உருவாக்கி அதன் சான்சிலராக உள்ள 'ஒரு பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் நட்பு' எங்கள் குடும்பத்திற்குக் கிடைத்தது பெரியதொரு வாய்ப்பு என்றால் அந்தப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தைப் பற்றி நான் எழுத எனக்கு அளிக்கப்பட்ட சந்தர்ப்பத்தை அரியதொரு வாய்ப்பு என்றே கருதுகிறேன்.

சத்தியமாக ..... எதை எழுதுவது .... எதை விடுவது என்று எனக்குப் புரியவில்லை ... தெரியவில்லை.

## அம்மா ஒரு தாய்வீடு

எல்லோரையும் 'அம்மா' என்று அழைத்துவிட முடியாது. ஒரு தாய் கருவுற்றிருக்கும்போது நிலத்தில் கையை ஊன்றி எழுகின்றாளே அதற்கு எதுவுமே ஈடாகாது என்று இராமாயணம் கூறும். அதாவது பெற்ற பிள்ளைகள் என்ன தான் விழுந்து விழுந்து நன்றிக் கடனைச் செய்தாலும் ஈடாகாது என்று பொருள். அப்படிப்பட்ட உயர்ந்த தாயைத் தான் 'அம்மா' என்று அழைக்கிறோம். ஒரு தாய் எப்படித் தன் குழந்தைகளை அன்புடன், ஆதரவுடன் அதே சமயம்

கண்டிப்புடன் வளர்ப்பாளோ அதுபோல் கல்லூரியில் உள்ளவர்களை அம்மா அவர்கள் கவனித்து வந்ததை, வருவதை மறுக்க முடியாது.

இவரிடம் கோபித்துக் கொண்டு சென்றவர்கள் கூட திரும்பி வரும்போது இவரால் வரவேற்கப்படுகிறார்கள். காரணம்? தனிப்பட்ட ஒருவரின் நடத்தையையும், அவர்களது அறிவையும் தனித்தனியாகப் பார்க்கக் கூடியவர் இவர். இந்தியாவில் ஒருவரை நமக்குப் பிடித்து விட்டது என்றால் அவரிடம் எல்லாமே பிடித்ததாக வைத்துக் கொள்வோம். பிடிக்கவில்லை என்றால் அவரை மட்டும் பிடிக்காமல் போவதுடன் அவரது உண்மையான அறிவும் பிடிக்காமல் போய்விடும். இந்த மனப்பான்மை தவறு. ஒருவரை நமக்குப் பிடிக்காமல் போவது வேறு. அவரது அறிவு வேறு என்று அவற்றைத் தனித்தனி ட்ராக்கில் பார்க்க வேண்டும் என்பதை இவரிடம் தான் நான் கற்றுக் கொண்டேன்.

அம்மா அவர்களுக்குத் தெரியுமோ தெரியாதோ. நான் இவர்களது 'சைலண்ட் அட்மீரர்' சென்னைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் சிண்டிகேட் மெம்பராக அம்மா அவர்கள் இருந்த காலத்தில் கல்வி தொடர்பான சில முடிவுகள் எடுக்கும் முன்பு 'விரிவுரையாளர்களின் கூட்டத்திற்கு' ஏற்பாடு செய்து எல்லோரது கருத்துக்களையும் கேட்டார். ஏறக்குறைய அப்போது இருநூறு ஸ்டாப்கள் இருப்போம். ஆளுக்கொரு யோசனையைச் சொல்லிக் கொண்டிருப்போம். எல்லோரது கருத்துக்களையும் கேட்ட பின்பு அம்மா அவர்கள் ஒரு கருத்தைச் சொல்வார். எல்லோரும் வாய் பிளந்து நிற்போம். ஏன்? அவர் சொல்லிய கருத்து அதுவரை யாரும் சொல்லாத கருத்தாக இருக்கும். அதுதான் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

ஒருமுறை இம்மாதிரி கூட்டம் முடிந்தவுடன் என் தோழி திருமதி டாக்டர். சொரூபராணி (கணக்கியல் துறை) கூறியது இன்றும் என் நினைவில் உள்ளது. 'பார் ராணி யாருக்கும் தோணாத ஒன்றை அம்மா மட்டும் எப்படிச் சொல்றாங்க! அதான் அவங்க பிரின்ஸ்பாலாக இருக்காங்க. நாம இப்படி இருக்கிறோம்.

## நட்புக்கு ஒர் உதாரணம்

வட ஆற்காடு மாவட்டம் திருப்பத்தூருக்கு அருகில் கதிர்நாயக்கன் பட்டியில் அம்மா அவர்களது தந்தையாரின் தோட்டத்திற்குப் 'பிருந்தாவனம்' என்று பெயர். அம்மா அவர்களின் தாய் 'பாட்டி அவர்கள்' அந்தக் காலத்தில் வீடு, மாடு இவைகளுக்கு வேண்டிய பொருட்களை வாங்கத் திருப்பத்தூருக்கு வரும்போது சில சமயங்களில் என் தந்தையாரைப் பார்த்துச் செல்வதுண்டு. அப்போது என் தந்தையார் பாட்டி அவர்களுக்கு சரக்குகள் வாங்கத் துணைக்கு யாரையாவது கூட அனுப்பி வைப்பாராம். இப்படித்தான் முதலில் நட்பு ஏற்பட்டது. பிறகு சில வருடங்கள் தொடர்பே இல்லை. திரும்பவும் நான் கல்லூரியில் விரிவுரையாளராக சேர்ந்ததும் தொடர்பு தொடர்ந்தது.

அம்மா அவர்களின் தாயார் பாட்டி அவர்களைச் சொல்லும்போது என் நெஞ்சில் இனம் புரியாத நெகிழ்வு. என் மனதில் இந்தக் கணம் இதோ தோன்றுகிறதே இது சத்தியம்.

நட்பிற்கும், பாசத்திற்கும், உண்மையான அன்பிற்கும் பாட்டி அவர்களுக்கு இணை யார் என்றால் பாட்டி தான். பாட்டியின் நட்பு எப்படிப்பட்டது? கைம்மாறு கருதாத நட்பு. பலனை எதிர்பார்த்து உதவி செய்யாத நட்பு. ஒரு நட்பு எப்படி இருக்க வேண்டும்?

நெற்பயிரைப் போன்ற நட்பைத் தவிர்த்து விடவேண்டும். ஏன்? நெற்பயிருக்குத் தினமும் தண்ணீர் ஊற்றினால் தான் பலன் கிடைக்கும். அதுபோன்று நட்பினருக்கும் நீங்கள் தினம் ஏதாவது பரிசுப் பொருள் கொடுத்துக் கொண்டே இருக்க வேண்டும். அப்போதுதான் அவர்களது நட்பு நிலைக்கும், இப்படிப்பட்ட நட்பு தேவையா?

வாழைமரத்தைப் போன்ற நட்பையும் தவிர்ப்பது நல்லது. ஏன்? வாழை மரத்திற்கு தினம், தினம், இல்லையென்றாலும் அவ்வப்போது தண்ணீர் ஊற்ற

வேண்டும். அப்போது தான் பலன் கொடுக்கும். அதுபோன்ற நட்பினருக்கும் நீங்கள் அப்போதைக்கப்போது ஏதாவது விட்டு விட்டுப் பரிசுப் பொருள் கொடுத்துக் கொண்டே இருக்க வேண்டும். 'இப்படிப்பட்ட நட்பும் தேவையற்றது'.

தென்னை மரத்தைப் போன்ற நட்புதான் சிறந்தது. ஏன்? தென்னை வைத்துக் கொஞ்சகாலம் தண்ணீர் ஊற்றி பாதுகாத்து வளர்த்து விட்டோம் என்றால் காலத்துக்கும் அது பயனைத் கொடுத்துக் கொண்டேயிருக்கும். எனவே இப்படிப்பட்ட நட்பு தான் சிறந்தது. இந்தத் தென்னை மரத்தின் நட்பைப் போன்றது தான் பாட்டி அவர்களின் நட்பும்.

பலனை எதிர்பாராமல் திருப்பத்தூர் வரும்போதெல்லாம் ஏழைகளுக்கு நிறைய உதவிகள் செய்வார்.

கோயம்புத்தூர் வரும்போதெல்லாம் கல்லூரியில் என்னைத்தேடித் தேடிப் பார்த்துப் பேசியதை நம் கல்லூரிக் கட்டடங்கள் கதையாகச் சொல்லும். நான் இரண்டாவது முறை வேலையில் சேர்ந்து, திரும்பவும் வேலையை விட்டு விட்டு சென்னை வரும்போது, 'நீ ஏன் வேலையை விடுகிறாய் விடாதே எனக்காகவாவது உன் ராஜினாமாக் கடிதத்தைத் திரும்பவும் எடுத்துக்கொள்' என்று சொல்லியவர் கண்கலங்கி அழுதபோது எனக்கு ஒரு கணம் ஒன்றும் புரியவில்லை. என் நலனில் இவருக்கு இவ்வளவு அக்கறையா? என்று நினைத்து நினைத்து இன்னும் நினைவு கூர்கிறேன்.

நான் திருமணமாகி என் மாமியார் வீட்டில் இருந்தபோது அந்தத் தள்ளாத வயதிலும் சென்னை வந்தபோது மறக்காமல் என்னைத் தேடி வந்து பார்த்ததை மறக்க முடியுமா?

ஒருநாள் பகல் இரண்டு மணி இருக்கும். என் இரண்டாவது அண்ணன் சுந்தர் போன் செய்து பாட்டி அவர்கள் இறந்து விட்டார்கள். நீ போய்ப் பார்த்து விடு' என்று சொன்ன போது அச்சமயம் திருப்பத்தூரிலிருந்து வந்திருந்த என்

பெரிய அண்ணி லீலாவதி 'நானும் வருகிறேன் பாட்டியைப் பார்க்க' என்றார்கள். அப்போது அவர்களுக்கு உடல்நலமில்லை என்று அப்பல்லோவில் வைத்தியம் பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருந்ததால் 'அண்ணி நீ வேண்டாம்' என்று சொல்லிவிட்டு பாண்டி பஜார் சென்று சரிகை மாலையொன்றை வாங்கிக் கொண்டு என் டி.வி.எஸ்.-பிட்டியை எடுத்துக் கொண்டு அடையாறு சென்றேன். பாட்டியின் கால்களைத் தொட்டு மனதார என் மனதில் உள்ளதைச் சொல்லி வணங்கினேன். அது நிறைவேறியது. அதைவிட அன்று சொல்லி வைத்ததுபோல் மாலை சாத்தியவர்கள் எல்லாம் மலர் மாலைகளாகத்தான் வாங்கி வந்து போட்டார்கள். அட்டா நாமும் வாசமான மலர்மாலையாக வாங்காமல், போய்விட்டோமே என்று வருந்தினேன். ஆனால் பாட்டியின் சடலத்தை வாகனத்தில் ஏற்றிக் கொண்டு திருப்பத்தூர் சென்றபோது என் சரிகை மாலை மட்டுமே அவரது உடலில் இருந்தது. யாருமறியாமல் அது என் பாக்கியம் என்று நான் பூரித்தேன் என்பது உண்மை.

### திரு. தேவதாஸ் மாமா அவர்கள்

இவர் ஒரு குழந்தை போன்றவர். தவறு செய்தால் தயங்காமல் ஒப்புக் கொள்பவர். அம்மா அவர்களுக்குத் தெரியுமோ தெரியாதோ அம்மா அவர்களைப் பற்றி வாயாரப் புகழ்ந்து பேசுவார். யார் என்ன உதவி கேட்டாலும் செய்வார். அதனால்தான் கடைசிக்காலத்தில் சவரட்சணையுடன் அம்மா அவர்களின் பாதுகாப்பில் இருந்தார். எத்தனைப் பேருக்கு இந்தமாதிரி படுக்கையில் விழுந்தபின் பணிவிடை பெறும் பாக்கியம் கிடைக்கும்? மரியாதையோடு இறப்பதற்கும் கொடுத்து வைத்திருக்க வேண்டும்.

### மீண்டும் அம்மா அவர்கள்

தேசிய ஒருமைப்பாட்டுக்கு சிறந்ததோர் உதாரணமாக அம்மா அவர்களைச் சொன்னால் யாரும் மறுக்கமுடியாது. ஏறக்குறைய முப்பது வருடங்களுக்கு

முன்னாலேயே சாதி, மதம், மாநிலம், நாடு கடந்து திறமையுள்ளவர்களுக்கு வேலை வாய்ப்புகள் அளித்தவர். இந்தியாவின் பல பாகங்களிலிருந்தும் ஏன் வெளிநாடுகளிலிருந்தும் இங்கே படித்தவர்களும், படிக்கின்றவர்களும், வேலை செய்தவர்களும், செய்கின்றவர்களும் இருந்தார்கள், இருக்கின்றார்கள் என்பதையார் மறுக்க முடியும்? குறுகிய மனப்பான்மை போய் பரந்த மனப்பான்மை எனக்கு வருவதற்கு இது உதவியது என்பதை நானும் மறுக்க முடியாது.

இப்போது ஏற்பட்டுள்ள மதப்பூசல்களைப் பார்க்கும்போது மதவாதிகள் எல்லாம் ஒருதரம் நமது பல்கலைக் கழகத்தை வந்து பார்த்து அதையே ஏன் முன்னுதாரணமாக, அம்மா அவர்களையே ஏன் முன்னுதாரணக்காரராக ஏற்றுக்கொண்டு நடக்கக்கூடாது என்று தோன்றுகிறது.

அம்மா அவர்களின் திறமை, அறிவுக்கூர்மை, சுறுசுறுப்பு, பக்தி, அயராத உழைப்பு, பாசம், அன்பு, கனிவு, கண்டிப்பு, உலகளவில் சத்துணவுத் துறையில் ஒரு விஞ்ஞானியாக இருந்தும் எளிமையான தோற்றம், ஆடம்பரமின்மை, அலட்டிக் கொள்ளாத மனப்பக்குவம் இவற்றை எல்லாம் கண்டு பிரமித்திருக்கிறேன். இப்போதும் பிரமிக்கிறேன்.

தன்னை நேசிப்பதுபோல் பிறரை நேசிப்பவர் தன் மண்ணை நேசிப்பவர், மண்ணின் மைந்தர்களை நேசிப்பவர். பிற மண்ணையும் மதிப்பவர். இப்படிப்பட்ட இந்த அறிவுக் களஞ்சியத்துக்கு—எளிமையானவருக்கு வயது எண்பது.

சதா வேலை என்று சாதகம் பல புரிந்து சதாபிஷேகம் காணும் இவருக்கு இன்னும் பல பரிசுகள் எதிர்காலத்தில் காத்திருக்கின்றன. இவரை முழுமையாக நாம் பின்பற்றாவிட்டாலும் கூட ஒரு பத்து சதவிகிதம் எடுத்துக்கொண்டால் கூட எங்கோ உச்சத்துக்குப் போய்விடுவோம் என்பது உண்மை.

‘சுமங்கலி’ பத்திரிகை சார்பில் கோயம்புத்தூரில் உள்ள சில கல்லூரிகளில் ‘பட்டிமன்றங்கள்’ நடத்த நான் வந்தேன். அப்போது பிரபல கல்லூரியின்

தொடர்பாளர் (கரெஸ்பாண்டென்ட்) என்னிடம், 'நீங்கள் எங்கள் கல்லூரியில் தங்குங்கள். உங்களுக்கு வேண்டிய எல்லா வசதிகளையும் செய்து தருகிறோம்' என்றார். நான் அதற்கு 'திரு. அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியற் கல்லூரி எனக்குத் தாய் வீடு போன்றது. அங்கே வேலை செய்த நான் அங்கே தங்குவது தான் முறை. அதுதான் எனக்குப் பெருமை. எங்கள் கல்லூரிக்குப் பெருமை' என்றேன்.

பத்திரிக்கையாளர்களுக்கு எங்கே சென்றாலும் மதிப்பும், மரியாதைகளும் உண்டு என்பது எல்லோருக்கும் தெரிந்த உண்மை. பத்திரிகை சார்பாக நான் வந்தபோது அம்மா அவர்கள் ஊரில் இல்லை. தற்போது பதிவாளராக இருக்கும், ஒரு காலத்தில் நான் நெருங்கிப் பழகிய திருமதி. சரோஜாபிரபாகரன் எனக்குத் தனியாக நல்லதோர் அறையைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்து அளித்திருந்தார். அந்த அறையே மிக நன்றாகத் தானிருந்தது என்றாலும் கூட அம்மா அவர்கள் வந்தவுடன் 'ஹோம் மேனேஜ்மென்ட் மாடல் ஹவுசில்' என்னைத் தங்க வைக்கும்படி கூறியதுடன் எல்லா கவனிப்பும் அங்கேயே நடக்கும்படி பார்த்துக் கொண்டார்.

அம்மா அவர்கள் இவள் நேற்று வரை இங்கே வேலை செய்தவள் தானே என்று நினைக்காமல் ஒரு பத்திரிக்கையாளரை எப்படி நடத்த வேண்டுமோ அப்படி நடத்தியதைக் கண்டு நான் பூரித்துப் போனேன். பதவிக்குரிய மரியாதையை எனக்குத் தந்து அவர் ஓர் உயர்ந்த பண்பாளர் என்பதை எனக்கு உணர்த்தி என்னை அதிசயிக்க வைத்தவர்.

'சுமங்கலி' – பத்திரிக்கையில் நான் ஆசிரியராகப் பணிபுரிந்து கொண்டிருந்த காலத்தில் 'சாரா கேள்வி – பதில்' பகுதி பிரபலமான ஒன்றாகும். அதில் ஒரு வாசகர், 'நீங்கள் மறக்க முடியாதவர்கள் யார் யார்' என்று கேட்டிருந்த போது சில பிரபலங்களைச் சொன்ன போது 'அம்மா அவர்களையும்' நான் குறிப்பிட்டது மறக்க முடியாத ஒன்று.

அடையாறு கேட் ஹோட்டலில் வேளாண்மை விஞ்ஞானி திரு. எம்.எஸ். சுவாமிநாதன் அவர்கள் கலந்து கொண்ட கூட்டத்தில் குழந்தைகளைப் பற்றிய பேச்சு வந்தபோது, பல புகழ்பெற்ற பத்திரிக்கையாளர்கள், எழுத்தாளர்கள், நடனக் கலைஞர்கள், சினிமாத்துறை வல்லுநர்கள் மத்தியில் அம்மா அவர்களைப் போன்ற சிந்தனையாளர்களை அழைத்து யோசனை கேட்கலாம் என்று நான் கூறிய போது திரு. எம்.எஸ். சுவாமிநாதன் அவர்கள் ஆமோதித்ததை மறக்க முடியாது.

அதே போன்று சுமங்கலி பேட்டியில் அம்மா அவர்களைப் பற்றி நான் எழுதியதை இங்கே நினைவு கூர்கிறேன்.

‘ஞாயிற்றுக்கிழமை எப்போது வரும் என்று பார்த்துக் கொண்டிருப்பவர்களிடையே (என்னைப் போன்றவர்கள்) ஞாயிற்றுக் கிழமை எப்போது போனது என்று தெரியாமல் வேலை செய்து கொண்டிருப்பவர் அம்மா’ – இது உண்மை.

அம்மா அவர்களிடம் கோபித்துக் கொள்ளலாம், விவாதம் செய்யலாம், நீங்கள் வேண்டாம் என்று போய் விடலாம், ஆனால் வேண்டும் என்று வந்தீர்கள் என்றால் நிச்சயம் அங்கே கதவுகள் திறந்திருக்கும், வரவேற்க, ஆதரவு தர, இரண்டு கரங்கள் நீளும். அவை ‘அம்மாவின் கரங்கள்’ தோழியரே அந்தக் கரங்கள் அன்புக் கரங்கள் கெட்டியாகப் பிடித்துக் கொள்ளுங்கள் உயர்வீர்கள், உயர்ந்து கொண்டே போவீர்கள்.

எனக்கு வாழ்த்த வயது போதாது என்றாலும் வணங்க முடியும். இறையே நிறையே குறைவற்ற ஆயுளைக் கொடுத்து அம்மா அவர்களை எப்போதும்போல் அரும்பணிகள் ஆற்ற விடு. ஏனெனில் அவர் இருப்பதால் ஆயிரம்பேர் தழைப்பர். இந்த ஆலமரத்தின் நிழலில் சில காலம் ஒதுங்கியவள் அருமை புரிந்து பேசுகிறேன். புரியாதவர்கள் இனியாவது புரிந்து கொண்டால் சரி. தெரியாதவர்கள் இனியாவது தெரிந்து கொண்டால் சரி.

## பின் குறிப்பு

நல்ல காலம் நான் இதை எழுதும்போது இங்கே பணியாற்றிக் கொண்டிருக்கவில்லை. அப்படியிருந்தால் சுயநலத்துக்காக நான் எழுதுவதாக நினைக்கலாம். ஒரு விதத்தில் நான் வேலையில் இல்லாமல் போனதும் நல்லதுக்குத்தான். இல்லையென்றால் இப்படியொரு வாய்ப்பு எனக்குக் கிட்டியிருக்குமா?

மனம் தான் நமக்கெல்லாம் சாட்சி. கொஞ்ச நேரம் கண்களை மூடி சிந்தனை செய்தோம் என்றால் குறையுள்ள நம் மனதில் நிறைகள் உள்ள அம்மா அவர்கள் தான் நிறைந்து இருப்பார். இதை எந்த சபையிலும் அடித்துச் சொல்ல நான் தயார்.



## **WOMEN'S EDUCATION AS HER LIFE MISSION - Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS**

**R. SOMASUNDARAM**

**Y**ou are born to serve, to do great deeds, achieve higher goals, God is with you in all your actions and success. High thinking and team work will help to achieve the goals. These are some important sayings always expressed by the founder of Sri Avinashilingam Education Trust Institutions and Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore, Sri T.S. Avinashilingam avargal- our Ayya.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, is an eminent scientist of international reputation and my acquaintance with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas, is for a period of more than 50 years that is since my school days in Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore and my association with Sri T.S. Avinashilingam. This was further strengthened when I became the Member of the Committee of the Board of Management and later the Vice President of Sri Avinashilingam Shramik Vidyapeeth. She is a very keen follower of the Founder and stands as a living exemplary example for her followers. Sri T.S. Avinashilingam was a person who practised what he preached and was capable of establishing and building many educational institutions. Many have come under his watchful eyes to help him in his long service oriented life, but few excelled to become leaders in their fields. Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is one among the few, who shone under his guidance and is now standing before one and all as an expert of international reputation in Home Science. Late Sri T.S. Avinashilingam saw in Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas all the qualities to fulfill his dreams to educate women in the society. He conquered over her to take service for the society as her motto, at her young and ambitious age. He made her accept the service she was dedicated to. After that her

life was full of dedicated service. She had a clear vision of the projects and her daily life was so arranged to achieve the goal without deviation and with a single minded approach. Under her leadership, many institutions were moulded to reach higher levels. Individuals were also motivated by Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas who is affectionately known as Amma Avargal. She looked after them and engaged them to be nationally and internationally known in their fields. Ayya Avargal was able to spot such personalities and guide them in their responsibilities as head of the Institutions to achieve the goals set by him and grow beyond by benefiting the individuals and society.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas was a person who fought for changes in the system and wanted to bring about innovative and creative programs in the institutions rather than the conventional ones. Even under many difficult conditions, she made every individual understand the usefulness and necessity of the changes and fought for its implementation. This quality of Amma Avargal has helped her teachers and students to look beyond and create new awareness in the content of courses. Her voice has been heard and will be heard in future also in many fields, especially in nutrition, home science and women's education. Her exposure, influence and contacts to international changes and directions helped in taking the Institution to International levels.

Sri Avinashilingam Shramik Vidyapeeth is one of the few Institutions sponsored by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, Government of India for imparting skill training for unemployed youths. The Shramik Vidyapeeth has been organizing a number of need based and skill oriented training programs for both men and women who are semiskilled or unskilled. This Institution was founded by Late Shri T.S. Avinashilingam Avargal and Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas. As the Vice

President of Sri Avinashilingam Shramik Vidyapeeth, I have got an opportunity to work in close contact with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas towards this noble cause.

Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is a person who wanted to achieve results in all projects and she would not spare anyone who has not come up to her expectations. All those in close contact with her are fortunate to have such a leader who visualized her service to the nation and more particularly the women folk at large. By extending a small help to Amma Avargal a great work is eventually achieved. Thousands of families owe their gratitude to Ayya and Amma Avargal for helping their children to get educated with character and service mind.

Amma Avargal is an example for many generations to come. The nations and institutions need her service in the years to come. It is very difficult, in my opinion, to think and act at the speed with which she executes her activities at this age. God never failed anyone who had complete faith in Him and Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is one such living example for having received such blessings of the Almighty. Her pleasant manners and love towards people has always helped her to have more well wishers to the Institution.

Let us all pray for her best health, long years, strength and Almighty's support in all her endeavors. Her achievements are beyond the reach of any individual.



## அம்மா டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ்

கே. பி. சுப்பையன்

தென்னகத்தில் மிகவும் பெரிய கல்வி நிறுவனங்களில் ஒன்றாகத் திகழும் அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தின் வேந்தர் அம்மா டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்களின் 80-வது பிறந்த நாள் விழா கொண்டாடுவது கண்டு ஈடில்லா பேரின்பம் அடைந்தேன். அம்மா அவர்கள் மிகச் சிறந்த கல்வியாளர், பண்பாளர், சமூக சிந்தனையாளர், நிர்வாகத் திறமையாளர், சிரித்த முகத்துடன் பேசும் புன்னகையாளர். அறிவியல் படைப்பாளர். ஆன்றோர் பலர் போற்றும் அன்பாளர், இன்னும் அத்தனை அருங்குணங்களையும் தன்னகத்தே கொண்டுள்ள அம்மாவின் நிர்வாகத் திறமையால் உயர்ந்திட்ட இப்பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் பயின்ற பல மாணவிகள் சமூக அந்தஸ்தில் உயர்ந்து டாக்டர்களாகவும், இஞ்சினீயர்களாகவும், பேராசிரியர்களாகவும், வக்கீல்களாகவும், நல்ல குடும்பப் பெண்களாகவும் திகழ்ந்து வருகின்றார்கள். அத்தகைய சிறப்பினைப் பெற்ற அம்மாவால் உயர்ந்திட்ட இக்கல்வி நிறுவனத்தில் எனது குழந்தைகளையும் படிக்க வைக்கும் வாய்ப்பினைப் பெற்றதோடு முப்பதாண்டு காலம் இந்நிறுவனத்தோடு தொடர்பு கொள்ளும் வாய்ப்பினைப் பெற்றவன் என்பது கண்டு பெருமிதம் கொள்கிறேன். அன்னை தெரேசா போன்று அகில உலகம் போற்றும் அன்புத் தாயாக, அம்மாவும் திகழ வாழ்த்துகிறேன். நீண்ட ஆயுளோடும் நல்ல ஆரோக்கியத்துடனும் நீடுழி வாழ எல்லாம் வல்ல ஆண்டவனை வேண்டுகிறேன்.

## தோன்றிற் புகழோடு தோன்றுக!

டி.எஸ்.கே. சுந்தரம்மாள்

இறைவனால் படைக்கப்பட்ட அத்தனை உயிர்ப் பிறப்பிலும் மிகவும் மேலானதும், சக்தி வாய்ந்ததுமானது மனிதப் பிறப்புக்கு எல்லா உயிர்களிலும் உள்ளதைவிட, பல்வேறு “அறிவு மையங்களை” மனிதனின் மூளையிலே படைத்து, அவற்றை தொலைநோக்குப் பார்வையோடு, உணர்வுப்பூர்வமாக – உள்ளப்பூர்வமாக – உடல் பூர்வமாக உபயோகப்படுத்த வேண்டிய பணியும் அவனுக்கு ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டுள்ளது. மனிதனின் ஆரம்பகாலம் முதல் இன்றுள்ள சமூக, பொருளாதார, அரசியல், பரிணாம வளர்ச்சியை பார்த்தோமேயானால் போட்டியும், பொறாமை உணர்வுகளும், காழ்ப்புணர்ச்சிகளும் நிறைந்துதான் வந்திருக்கின்றன. அதில்கூட சேவை மனப்பான்மை, சுயநலமற்ற – பெருந்தன்மையான – ஆனால் கண்டிப்போடு கூடிய அறிஞர்களும், பெருமைக்குரிய தலைவர்களும் தங்கள் பணியினைச் செய்துகொண்டே வந்திருக்கிறார்கள். பரிணாம வளர்ச்சியிலே இத்தகையோர் இருந்ததால்தான் மனிதன் இன்னும் “மனிதநேயத்தைப்” பற்றி பேச முடிகிறது.

“நமக்கு என்று சில பணிகள் உள்ளன

இவற்றைச் செம்மையாக செயல்படுத்த வேண்டும்

இது கண்டிப்பானதாக இருக்க வேண்டும்

இந்த செயல்திட்டத்தில் நமக்கு என்று சொந்த இழப்புகள் இருக்கலாம்”

ஆனால்,

இறைவனின் கட்டளையிலே, இப்பணியினை உணர்ந்து, சொந்த வாழ்க்கையைத் தியாகம் செய்து, தன் பணி கல்விப் பணி என்ற குறிக்கோளோடு, உழைப்பை மூலதனமாக்கி, அய்யா அவர்களுடன் அயராது –

சலிக்காது பாடுபட்டு மகளிர்க்கான பெரிய பல்கலைக்கழகத்தை உருவாக்கியவர்கள் நமது அன்புக்கும், பாசத்துக்கும், மிகுந்த மரியாதைக்கும் உரிய அம்மா அவர்கள்,

“தோன்றிற் புகழோடு தோன்றுக அஃதிலார்  
தோன்றலின் தோன்றாமை நன்று”

என்ற குறளின் ஒவ்வொரு வார்த்தையிலும் அம்மா அவர்களது செயல்திறன் நளினமடைகிறது. கடுமையான உழைப்பும், மகளிர் மேம்பாட்டுக்காக ஓயாது எண்ணமிடும் சிந்தனையும், அய்யா அவர்களின் ஆசியோடு அம்மா அவர்களை இன்று எத்தனையோ பெரிய வெற்றிகளுக்கும், விருதுகளுக்கும் உருவாக்கி இருக்கிறது என்பதுதான் உண்மை. அவர்களது வாழ்க்கைச் சிறப்புகள் நம் இளம் சமுதாயத்துக்கு எடுத்துக் காட்டு. அம்மாவைப் பார்த்து வயதான நாங்கள் எல்லோருமே கற்றுக் கொள்ள வேண்டி இருக்கிறது என்றால் இளைய தலைமுறையினர்க்கு சொல்லவா வேண்டும்.

மிகப் பெரிய படித்த ஒருவர் ஒரு பள்ளியின் முன் வந்து நின்று கொண்டிருந்தார். பள்ளி முடிந்து வந்து கொண்டிருந்த குழந்தைகளில் சிலரை அழைத்து, “கடவுள் எங்கே இருக்கிறார்” என்ற கேள்விக்குப் பதில் சொன்னால் ஆப்பிள் பழம் பரிசாகக் கொடுப்பதாக அறிவித்தார்.

ஒரு குழந்தை, கடவுள் கோவிலில் இருக்கிறார் என்றது. இன்னொரு குழந்தை, கடவுள் சர்ச்சில் இருக்கிறார் என்றது. இன்னுமொரு குழந்தை, கடவுள் மதுதியில் இருக்கிறார் என்றது. மற்றொரு குழந்தை கடவுள் பொற்கோவிலில் இருக்கிறார் என்றது. இப்படி அந்தந்த மதத்தைச் சார்ந்த குழந்தைகள் தங்கள் பெற்றோர்கள் அவர்களை வளர்த்த சூழ்நிலைக்கேற்ப அவரவர் கோவில்களில்தான் கடவுள் இருப்பதாக அறிந்து இருந்தார்கள்.

ஆனால் இயற்கையிலேயே புத்தி கூர்மையோடு இருந்த குழந்தை ஒன்று – அன்றாட நாளிதழ்களைப் படிக்கும் வழக்கத்தில் இருந்ததினாலும், “ஐயா

கடவுள் எங்கிருக்கிறார் என்று கேட்டார்கள். ஆனால் கடவுள் எங்கு இல்லை என்று உங்களால் சொல்ல முடியுமா?" என்றது. கடவுள் எங்கும் நிறைந்தவர். அவர் இல்லாத இடமே இல்லை என்ற தனது அறிவிலே பட்ட உள்ளார்ந்த உண்மையை மிகக் கூர்மையாகக் கூறியது.

இம்மாதிரியான புத்திசாலித்தனத்தோடு, தைரியத்தையும், மற்றவர்கள் ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளக் கூடிய முறையிலே, நல்ல விளக்கத்தையும் கொடுத்து தன் பணிகளைத் தொடர்ந்து ஆற்றிவருபவர் நமது அம்மா அவர்கள்.

இந்த பல்கலைக் கழக வளர்ச்சியிலே, அவ்வப்போது அவருக்கு ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்ட கனல்கள், இன்னல்கள், இடர்ப்பாடுகள் எல்லாம் அவரது சுய முயற்சியாலும், நம்பிக்கையாலும், தன்னலமற்ற தொலைநோக்குப் பார்வையாலும் – அவரது புத்திசாலித்தனத்தாலும் ஓடிவிட்டன என்பது நாங்கள் உணர்ந்த உண்மை. அத்தகைய காவியத் தலைவி அம்மா அவர்களைப் பற்றி இன்று நான் எழுதக் கிடைத்த வாய்ப்பே பெரிய வாய்ப்பு. பல்வேறு தேசிய, உலக விருதுகளை எல்லாம் பெற்றிட்ட அம்மா அவர்களுக்கு என் புகழரைகள் இணையாகாது. இருந்தாலும் எங்கள் குடும்ப உணர்ச்சிகளைப் பிரதிபலிப்பவை.

*"He who dreams good things is good*

*Still more are better, when they start implementing their dreams".*

என்ற பழமொழி ஒன்று உண்டு.

*Here is a Lady who always dreams good,*

*Plans for Actions and implements for*

*The goodness of mankind.*

*And that is our BELOVED AMMA.*



## அம்மா - பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான குடும்பங்களின் குடும்ப வீளக்கு

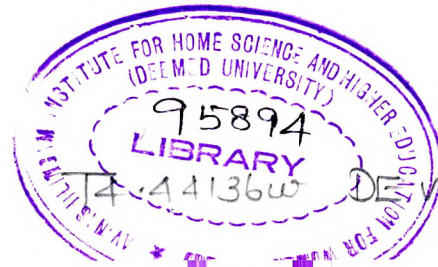
ஆ. ஊ. சண்முகம்

புல்க்டர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள் எங்கள் குடும்பத்தின் மீது மிகவும் பரிஷம் பாசமும் கொண்டவர்கள் என்பதைக் கூறிக்கொள்வதில் பெருமிதம் அடைகிறேன். அம்மா அவர்களின் சகோதரர்களில் ஒருவரான திரு. மைக்கேல் அவர்களுடன் 1956ம் ஆண்டு முதல் 1961ம் ஆண்டு வரை ஊரகவளர்ச்சித் துறையில் விரிவாக்க பணியாளர்களாக கலசபாக்கம் ஒன்றியத்தில் பணி புரிந்தோம். அம்மா அவர்களின் மற்றொரு சகோதரர் உயர்திரு. ராஜதுரை மைக்கேல் அவர்கள் பவானிசாகரில் கிராம வளர்ச்சித்துறையில் மாநில அளவில் இயங்கிய பயிற்சி நிலையத்தில் முதல்வராக இருந்தபோது பணியாற்றினேன். சுருங்கக்கூறின் அம்மாவின் சகோதரர்கள், சகோதரிகள் அனைவருமே தொண்டுள்ளம் படைத்தவர்கள். அம்மா அவர்கள் தொண்டு புரிவதில் இமயம்.

1962ம் ஆண்டு முதல் 1964ம் ஆண்டு வரை நான் பவானிசாகரில் வட்டார வளர்ச்சி ஆணையாளராகப் பணிபுரிந்தேன். அம்மா அவர்கள் 1962ம் ஆண்டு பவானிசாகரில் உள்ள கிராம சேவிகைகள் பயிற்சி நிலையத்திற்கு நேரம் கிடைத்தபோதெல்லாம் வந்து கிராம சேவிகைகளுக்கு வகுப்பு எடுத்து கலந்துரையாடுவார்கள். பயிற்சி நிறைவை ஒட்டி பட்டமளிப்பு விழாவில் கலந்து கொண்டு நற்சான்றிதழ்களை வழங்கினார்கள். வட்டார வளர்ச்சி அலுவலகங்களில் கிராம சேவிகைகள் பணி இடத்தை உருவாக்கி, பதவி உயர்வு பெற்று முக்கிய சேவிகைகளாக பணிபுரிய மூலகாரணமாக இருந்தார்கள்.

1962ம் ஆண்டு பவானிசாகரில் ஊராட்சி ஒன்றியத்தில் அப்போது ஊட்ட உணவுத்திட்டம் என்ற திட்டம் நடை முறையில் இருந்தது. அம்மா அவர்கள் உலகில் உள்ள ஊட்ட சத்து நிபுணர்களில் ஒருவர் என்பதை நான் அறிவேன். ஊராட்சிகளில் சத்துணவுக்குத் தேவையான காய்கறிகள், கீரைகள், பப்பாளி போன்ற பழங்கள் உற்பத்தி செய்ய தோட்டங்களை உருவாக்கினோம், அத்துடன் ஊராட்சிகளில் கோழிப்பண்ணைகளும் அமைத்தோம். இதன் மூலம் கிடைத்த காய்கறிகள், பப்பாளி போன்ற பழங்கள், முட்டைகள் ஆகியவற்றை முறையே கர்ப்பிணிப் பெண்கள், பாலூட்டும் தாய்மார்கள் 5 வயதுக்குட்பட்ட குழந்தைகள் ஆகியவர்களுக்கு விநியோகம் செய்தோம். இத்திட்டத்தைக் கூர்ந்து கவனித்துவந்த அம்மா அவர்கள் M.Sc. வகுப்பில் பயின்ற மாணவிகளை Thesis செய்ய அனுப்பி வைத்தார்கள். அவர்கள் சென்னைப் பல்கலைக் கழகத்திலேயே நல்ல மதிப்பெண்கள் பெற்று இன்று மிகவும் நல்ல நிலையில் உள்ளார்கள் (இவர்கள் விஜய் லட்சுமி, பிரேமா ஆவார்கள்).

இம்மாணவிகள் திரு. அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரிக்கு (தற்சமயம் நிகர்நிலைப் பல்கலைக் கழகம்) நல்ல பெயர் வாங்கிக் கொடுத்தார்கள். இந்த நல்ல பணிக்கு சிறு உதவியாக இருந்த எனக்கு தியாகச் சூடர் முன்னாள் கல்வி அமைச்சர் அய்யா அவர்கள் தலைமையில் எனக்கு நினைவுப்பரிசு (கார்த்திகை சரவிளக்கு) வழங்கியதை நன்றியுடன் கூற கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளேன். இம் மாணவிகள் ராஜன் நகர் என்ற கிராமத்தில் தங்கி ஆராய்ச்சிகளை நடத்தினார்கள். இதற்கு திரு சிவப்பன் ஊராட்சித் தலைவர் அவர்கள் பெரிதும் உதவினார்கள். 1962ம் ஆண்டு சோதனை அடிப்படையில் சிறிய அளவில் துவங்கிய சத்துணவுத் திட்டம் அம்மா அவர்களின் ஆலோசனையின் பேரில் அனைத்து பள்ளி மாணவர்களுக்கும் புரட்சித் தலைவர் அவர்கள் முதலமைச்சராக இருந்தபோது மாநிலம் முழுவதும் இன்றும் தொடர்ந்து நடைபெற்று வரும் சத்துணவுத் திட்டம் துவங்கப்பட்டது.



இத்திட்டத்திற்கு அப்போதைய தலைமைச் செயலர் உயர்திரு. திரவியம். இ.ஆ. ப. அவர்கள் பெரிதும் உதவி 1964 ம் ஆண்டு ஆடுதுறை ஊரக விரிவாக்கப் பயிற்சி நிலையத்திலிருந்து வருகை தந்து கிராம சேவகர்களுக்கு அறிவுரை வழங்கி கலந்துரையாடினார்கள். அவ்வமயம் எனது மனைவி கருவுற்று இருந்தார்கள். ஏற்கனவே எனக்கு 3 பெண் குழந்தைகள் இருப்பதை அறிந்த அம்மா அவர்கள் குடும்பக் கட்டுப்பாட்டுத் திட்டத்தைக் கடைப்பிடிக்க வேண்டிய நானே தவறு செய்வது என்பதை கடுமையாக சுட்டிக் காட்டினார்கள்.

நான் எனக்கு ஆண் வாரிசு வேண்டும் என்ற நிலையை விளக்கிய பிறகே சற்று கோபம் தணிந்து உணவு அருந்தினார்கள். அன்று மாலை ஒரு பட்டுப்புடவையுடன் மீண்டும் வந்து உங்களுக்கு ஆண் வாரிசு கிடைக்க ஆண்டவனைப் பிரார்த்தனை செய்கிறோம் என்று கூறி ஆசீர்வதித்தார்கள். 65ம் ஆண்டு அம்மா அவர்கள் ஆசீர்வாதப்படி ஆண் குழந்தை பிறந்தது. அவனுக்கு முருகன் என்று பெயர் வைத்தார்கள் எங்கள் புதல்வன் திரு. முருகன் பி.ஈ. படிக்க விரும்பியதை அம்மாவிற்குத் தெரிவித்தேன். ஒரு குறிப்பிட்ட தினத்தில் சென்னை வரச்சொல்லி அண்ணாமலைப் பல்கலைக் கழக இணை வேந்தர் அவர்களிடம் பரிந்துரை செய்து பொறியியல் பட்டப்படிப்பில் சேர அனுமதி பெற்றுத் தந்தார்கள். நன்றி தெரிவிக்க சென்ற போது அம்மா அவர்கள் நான் ஆசீர்வாதம் செய்து இறைவன் அருளால் பிறந்த முருகனுக்கு உதவி செய்ததில் மகிழ்ச்சி என்று கூறியதை நினைவு கூர்கிறேன். இதில் இருந்து அம்மாவின் ஞாபகசக்தியும் என்னைப் போன்ற சாமானியர்களுக்கு உதவி செய்யும் ஆற்றலும் என்னை வியக்க வைத்தது. மேலும் இன்று திரு. முருகன் NTPC – யில் பொறியாளராக அம்மா ஆசீர்வாதத்துடன் பணிபுரிந்து பதவி உயர்வு பெற்று நல்ல நிலையில் இருக்கிறார்.

ஒரு சமயம் திருவண்ணாமலை கலைக் கல்லூரிக்கு அப்போது துணை வேந்தராக இருந்த சுந்தர வடிவேலு அவர்கள் தலைமையில் அம்மா வந்தார்கள். என்னை ஒரு சிறந்த வட்டார வளர்ச்சி அலுவலர் என்று அவர்களுக்கு

அறிமுகப்படுத்தினார்கள். ஐயா சுந்தர வடிவேலு அவர்களும் தான் ஒரு பஞ்சாயத்து அலுவலராக முதலில் வாழ்க்கையை துவங்கியதாகக் கூறினார்கள்.

வருடந்தோறும் பிப்ரவரி மாதத்தில் திருவண்ணாமலை மாவட்டத்தில் உள்ள செங்கம் என்ற இடத்தில் தகப்பனார் சமாதிக் கு வந்து அஞ்சலி செலுத்துவார்கள். சமீபத்தில் அம்மா அவர்கள் தாயார் இயற்கை எய்தினார்கள். பல்வேறு வேலைகளுக்கிடையே தாய் தந்தையருக்கு பக்தியையும் நன்றியையும் குடும்பத்துடன் செலுத்துவது அவர்களுடைய தலையாய பண்பு ஆகும்.

அம்மா அவர்களின் சேவையை உலகத்தில் உள்ள சில நாடுகளும் நமது மத்திய மாநில அரசுகளும் பாராட்டியுள்ளது. அதைவிட என்னைப் போன்ற பல்லாயிரம்பேர்கள் அம்மா அவர்களின் சேவையையும் உதவியையும் என்றென்றும் மறவாமல் நன்றியுடன் இருப்பது மேலும் அவர்களுக்கு உற்சாகத்தைத் தரும்.

அம்மா அவர்கள் பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான குடும்பங்களின் குடும்ப விளக்கு, தியாகச் சுடர் அம்மா அவர்கள் இறைவன் அருளால் பல்லாண்டு, பல்லாண்டு பல்லாயிரத்தாண்டு வாழ்க, வணக்கம்.

●

## அம்மா ஒரு அட்சய பாத்திரம்

எம். ராஜா ஷெரீப்

அம்மாவின் நட்பு

அனைவராலும் அம்மா என்றழைக்கப்படும் அம்மா

அவர்களுக்கு எண்பதாவது பிறந்த நாள் விழா

வாழப் பிறந்தவர்களெல்லாம்

ஆளப் பிறந்தவர்கள் அல்ல – ஆனால்

ஆளப் பிறந்தவர்கள் எல்லாம்

வாழப் பிறந்தவர்கள் ஆவார்கள்

வாழவும் ஆளவும் பிறந்த அம்மாவை – நான் அரசு கலைக் கல்லூரியில் மாணவப் பேரவைச் செயலாளராகத் தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப்பட்டதும் ஆசி பெறுவதற்காக பேராசிரியை திருமதி வாசுகி ராஜா அவர்கள் அழைத்துச் சென்றார். அம்மாவை நான் கண்டதும் அகில உலகத்தையே சுற்றி வருகின்ற மகிழ்ச்சி. முதல் சந்திப்பாக இருப்பினும் ஒரு தாய் தன்னுடைய சொந்த மகனிடம் நலம் விசாரிப்பது போன்று ஆழ்ந்த நட்புடன் பழகினார். அந்த அன்பும் அரவணைப்பும் இன்றும் தொடர்ந்து கொண்டு வருகிறது.

எனக்கு அகிலத்தைக் காண வேண்டும் என்ற ஆவல் எழுந்த போது அகிலத்தைச் சுற்றி வந்த அம்மாவின் நட்பு இறைவன் எனக்களித்த வரப்பிரசாதமாகும்.

‘குணம் எனும் குன்றேறி நின்றார்’ என்ற பொதுமறைக்கு முன்னோடி அம்மா அவர்கள். இந்த வயதிலும் வாழ்க்கையுடன் போராடி அது தந்த காயங்களையும் தழும்புகளையும் சுமந்து கொண்டே முள்ளில் நடந்து

முன்னேறியவர் அம்மா என்பது ஓர் உண்மை. அவருடைய முதுகுக்குப் பின்னால் பள்ளமும் முகத்துக்குப் பின்னால் இருட்டும் சூழ்ந்திருந்த காலத்திலும் எஃகுப் பறவையாய் உலகமெங்கும் பறந்து கல்விக்கும் அறிவுக்கும் நங்கூரம் பாய்ச்சிய பொறுமையின் சின்னம் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

கல்வியில்லாப் பெண்டிர் களர் நிலம் – அந்நிலத்தில்

புல் விளைந்திடலாம்! நல்ல புதல்வர்கள் விளைதல் இல்லை

என்ற பாரதிதாசனின் பாப்படித்த காலம் முதல் அம்மா அவர்கள் பெண் கல்வியைச் சிந்திக்காத நாளில்லை. அஞ்சுவதும் கொஞ்சுவதும் ஆமையைப் போல் கூட்டுக்குள் ஒடுங்கியிருந்ததுமான பெண் கூட்டத்தை தன்னம்பிக்கை கூடர்வீச சரி நிகர் சமானம் ஆக்கப் பாடுபட்டார்கள். இந்த நிகழ்காலப் பெண்களின் சிந்திக்கும் சாம்ராஜ்யத்தை சீர்தூக்கி விட்ட சிலருள் அம்மா அவர்களும் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க ஒருவர். பாறையில் மோதிய பந்தாய் இருந்த பெண் குலத்தைக் கல்விக் கண் தந்து, கவினார்ந்த தொழில் வழி காட்டி கற்பகத்தருவாய் கவினுலகில் வலம் வரச் செய்தவர் அம்மா. அவரது இளம் வயது முதல் அவர் பெற்ற கல்வியும் பட்டமும் பெண்களின் வாழ்க்கைத் திசை காட்ட வழிகாட்டி ஆனதோ!

எங்கள் வயதில் முப்பதின் அனுபவம் முதுமையைத் தந்தது. ஆனால் எப்படி ஆயிரம் பிறை கண்ட எண்பதாவது வயதிலும் “அம்மா” எனும் அழகிய அன்பு சுரக்கும் அட்சயப் பாத்திரமாய் எதுவந்தாலும் சரியே; இது வாழ்வின் நெறியே என்று வாழும் பாங்கை எங்கே கற்றார் என்பது என்றும் புதிரே.

பெண்களின் நிலை உயராமல் ஒரு நாட்டின் முன்னேற்றம் உயராது என்பதனை தினமும் திருக்குறளாக உச்சரித்துக் கொண்டிருப்பதே பெண்கல்விக்கு அவர் கொடுக்கும் மரியாதை. அவரது இதயத்திலிருந்து கசியும் இரத்தத்தையும், மேனியிலிருந்து வடியும் வேர்வையையும் துடைத்துக் கொள்வதற்குக் கூட நேரமின்றி இந்தியப் பெண்களின் எதிர்காலச்

சிந்தனைகளை எந்நேரமும் பேசிக் கொண்டிருக்கும் அவரது கண்களில் அறிவுச்சுடர் பறக்கிறது. அவரது எண்பதாவது வயதிலும் இனிய தோள்களின் தினவும் கண்களின் கனவும் ஒரு மாபெரும் கிரகத்தை உருவாக்கும் வலிமை படைத்தவை அல்லவா? இதயம் உருக இமைகள் கருக ஏறத்தாழ எண்பதாண்டுகள் காற்றுக் குதிரையாய் இந்தியக் களத்தை வென்று வருகிறார். நாங்கள் எறிகின்ற எந்த கல்லும் வானத்திற்கு வெளியே போகாது. எனினும் அவரது உழைப்பின் உயர்வு குவலயம் தாண்டி குதிபோடுகிறதே எப்படி?

உழைப்பின் அசதியில் எங்களுக்கு வீடே

உலகமாக மாறுகிறது

அம்மாவுக்கு உழைப்பின் மகிழ்ச்சி

உலகமே வீடாக மாறிவிட்டது

தீயை வெளிச்சம் என்று கருதி சிறகு கருகும் விட்டிலாய் வாழ்ந்த மானுடத்தை மாற்றி – சிருங்காரச் சிந்தனையை சீச்சீ என்று விரட்டி – அழுக்குக் கிடங்கில் விழாத ஆயிரம் ஆயிரம் தலைமுறையை உருவாக்கி உறவுப்பாலம் கட்டி நடமாடும் நம்பிக்கையாக – நல்லதோர் வழிகாட்டியாக நாடு போற்ற வாழ்ந்து வருகிறார் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

பெற்றவர்களே அந்நியமாகும் இந்த இயந்திரகாலத்தில் “அம்மா” என்ற தமிழ்ச்சொல்லுக்கு ஆழமும் அழகும் சேர்த்து வருகிறார், அன்பான வழிகாட்டியாக! இந்தப் பெண்கள் குலத்திற்கு வாய்க்காலும் வரப்புமாய் அம்மா திகழ்கிறார்கள். அம்மாவிடம் அமைந்த உள்நோக்குத் திறனும், உள்ள உறுதியும் ஊரே வியக்கும் உத்தம குணம் ஆகும்.

அம்மா அவர்கள் நிலவைப் போல இரவல் வெளிச்சத்தை விரும்புவவர் அல்லர். சூரியனைப் போலச் சுயமாய்ச் சுடர்தரும் ஆதர்ஷண ஜோதி ஆவார்.

வருகின்றவர்களை இன்முகத்துடன் வரவேற்று – விருந்து உபசரிக்கும் அவரது பண்பும், பெரியவர், சிறியவர் என்றில்லாமல் அனைவரிடத்திலும்

முகமலர்ச்சியுடன் பழகும் தன்மையும், மற்றவர்களைப் பேசவிட்டு அதிலுள்ள கருத்துக்களை எடுக்கும் அவரது குணமும் கண்டு நான் பிரமித்துள்ளேன்.

மன உறுதி கொண்டவர்! உழைப்பதற்காகவே பிறந்தவர்!  
சாதிப்பதற்கும் வயதிற்கும் சம்பந்தமில்லை

என்ற வைரமுத்துவின் வரிதான் அவர்களைப் பார்க்கும் போது என்னுள் எழுகிறது. அவருடைய இனிய அனுபவங்களால் மானுடத்திற்கே மகத்துவம் சேர்த்தவர்.

“எழுதியபடிதான் எல்லாம் நடக்கும்” என்ற மனித மதிப்பீட்டை மாற்றி வந்து போகிற வாழ்வில் மானுடச் சிந்தனைக்கு மருந்து போட வந்தவர். அவருக்கு ஓய்வு என்பது தெரியுமா? ஓய்வு என்பது அவருடைய புலன்களைப் புதுப்பிக்கும் புதிய அத்தியாயம் ஆகும். விரும்பியது அமையாவிட்டால் கிடைத்ததை விரும்பிப் போற்றி வளர்ந்து விடு என்ற உபநிடதக் கருத்தை உயிர்ப்பிக்க வந்தவர் அம்மா அவர்கள்.

“அடக்கம் அமரருள் உய்க்கும்” என்பது பொதுமறை. அவரது அடக்கம் என்பது எதிராளியைக் கூட மதிப்பது என்ற உணர்வுக்கு உருவம் கொடுப்பதாகும். அடக்கம் என்பது அவரது ஆபரணமோ? என சந்தேகிக்க வேண்டியிருக்கிறது. கடுகு சிறுத்தாலும் காரம் குறையாத தன்மைபோல் அவருடைய மூர்த்தி சிறிதெனினும் கீர்த்தி பெரிதென்று நானிலமும் பாராட்ட, பூ மட்டுமல்ல பூ வைத்த இடமும் மணப்பது போல அவருடைய அறிவாற்றல் ஜிவாவையால் அகிலமும் அறிவில் ஜொலிக்கிறதே.

அம்மாவின் நற்குணங்கள் ஏராளம்! ஏராளம்! பிறரிடம் பழகுவதும், மற்றவர்களை மதிப்பதும், விருந்து உபசரித்தலும், பிறர்பால் அன்பு செலுத்துவதும் இது போன்ற பலவற்றை சொல்லிக் கொண்டே போகலாம். அவருடைய நற்குணமே சோம்பல் சிறைவிட்டு சோர்வின்றி வாழ்வது! அதுவே அவர்களின் வெற்றியின் வேர்.

எந்த நிகழ்ச்சிக்குச் சென்றாலும் தன்னுடன் வந்தவர்கள் எப்படி இருக்கிறார்கள், அவர்கள் சாப்பிட்டார்களா? என்று தெரிந்து கொள்வதும் அவரது நற்குணத்தின் ஒரு சான்று. தன்னுடைய காரை ஓட்டி வரும் டிரைவர் சாப்பிட்டாரா? என்று தெரியாமல் காரைப் புறப்படச் சொல்லமாட்டார் என்பது அவருடன் நெருங்கிப் பழகுவர்களுக்குத் தெரியும். எவ்வளவு பெரிய ஆடம்பர நிகழ்ச்சிக்குச் சென்றாலும் அம்மாவால் உணவுப் பொருட்கள் ஒரு போதும் வீணானதில்லை. மற்றவர்கள் வீணாக்குவதையும் தடுப்பார்கள். இந்தச் சாப்பாட்டுக்குத் தானே மனிதன் இவ்வளவு சிரமப்படுகின்றான். இதை வீணாக்கினால் இறைவனின் கோபத்துக்கு ஆளாவோம் என்று கூறி ஒரே நேரத்தில் இறைவனின் அருளையும் ஏழையின் அன்பையும் பெறுகிறார். இவருடைய இந்த நற்குணத்தைப் பாராட்டாத சான்றோர்கள் இல்லை.

ஆள் பாதி ... ஆடை பாதி

இதுதான் ஆளுமை என்று அடித்துச் சொல்லும் கம்ப்யூட்டர் உலகத்தில் உண்மை, உழைப்பு, உறுதி இதுதான் மனித வர்க்கத்துக்கே ஆளுமை என்று வாழ்ந்து காட்டுபவர். அறிவாற்றலும், செயல்திறனுமே அவரது ஆளுமையின் இரு கண்களாகும். அவருடைய வாழ்நாட்களில் அவரைப் பதுக்க பலர் முயற்சித்த போதும், ஒதுக்க ஒரு சிலர் முன்வந்த போதும், அதை தன்னைச் செதுக்கியதாகவே ஏற்றுக் கொண்டு – ஒரு சுதந்திர தேவியின் சிலையாக மாறி இன்றும் அகிலம் முழுவதும் வலம் வருகிறார் என்றால் இறைவனின் அருள் எப்போதும் அவருக்கு இருந்து கொண்டேயிருக்கிறது என்பதுதான் உண்மை.

அவரைச் சுற்றி .....

மிகச் சிறந்த பாடத் திட்டங்கள்

புலமை மிக்க பேராசிரியர்கள்

கடுமையான தேர்வு முறைகள்

நாளை உலகை ஆளும் நல்ல மாணவிகள்

அம்மாவைச் சுற்றி பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் எப்போதும் இவர்கள் தான் இருக்கிறார்கள். அவரது பேச்சும் – அவர் விடும் மூச்சும் எப்போதும் வருங்கால இந்தியா வளமான இந்தியாவாக இருக்க வேண்டும். வலிமையான இந்தியாவாக மாறவேண்டும் என்பதே.

உலகில்

வாழ்ந்த பின்பு வரலாறு ஆனவர்கள் பல பேருண்டு.

ஆனால் அம்மா அவர்கள்

வாழும் போதே வரலாறு ஆனவர்

அம்மா அவர்கள் அறிவில் தெளிவும், செயலில் துணியும், நெஞ்சிலே கனிவும் கொண்டவர். எந்த நேரத்திலும் தன் இலட்சியங்களை இழக்காதவர்.

அவருடைய வாழ்க்கையில் வரலாறு படித்தது மட்டுமல்லாமல்

வரலாறு படைக்கவும் செய்தார்.

காத்திருக்கும் வரை காற்றாய் இருந்தவர்

புறப்பட்டபோது புயலாய் மாறியவர்

உதவி பெறுவதற்காகவே பழகும் கூட்டங்களின் நடுவில் உதவுவதற்காகவே பழகுவவர். உண்மையோடு அவரிடம் பழகினால் என்றென்றும்

அம்மா ஒரு அட்சயப் பாத்திரம்

என்பது புலனாகும்.

எண்பதாவது ஆண்டு

அம்மா.....

உலகம் சுற்றிய கல்வியாளர்

சிறந்த சிந்தனையாளர்

திறமை வாய்ந்த திறனாய்வாளர்

எல்லாவற்றையும் விட ஒரு நல்ல மனிதர். இது அனைவரும் அறிந்த ஒன்று.

அவருக்கு எண்பதாவது பிறந்த நாள் விழா  
எண்பது என்பது அவரது வயது அல்ல  
எண்பது என்பது அவரது பயணத்தின் மைல் கற்கள்  
விழா என்பது – இவரது மீதிப் பயணத்திற்கு  
வாழ்த்துக் கூறும் வைபவம்.

அவருடைய பேனா என்றும் வற்றாது.  
அவருடைய நடை என்றும் தளராது.  
அவருடைய பேச்சு என்றும் எதிரொலிக்கும்  
அவருடைய பயணம் என்றும் குறையாது.

தலைவர்கள் உருவாவது எளிது  
ஆனால்  
வழிகாட்டிகள் உருவாவது அபூர்வம்  
அம்மா அவர்கள் பெண்கள் சமுதாயத்திற்கு மட்டுமல்லாமல்;  
மனித சமுதாயத்துக்கே ஒரு வழிகாட்டி  
அம்மா அவர்கள் வாழ்கின்ற காலத்தில் நான் வாழ்கின்றேன்  
என்பதில் எனக்குப் பெருமை  
வாழ்த்த வயதில்லை  
இறைவனிடம் இறைஞ்சுகின்றேன்.

அம்மா ஒரு கலங்கரை விளக்கு  
அம்மா ஒரு பல்கலைக் கழகம்  
அம்மா ஒரு சிந்தனைச் சிற்பி  
அம்மா ஒரு சீர்திருத்தச் செம்மல்  
அம்மா ஒரு அபூர்வ மனிதர்  
அம்மா ஒரு அட்சயப் பாத்திரம்;

அம்மா வாழ்க

நீடுழி ... நீடுழி ... வாழ்க

## மனைநலம் பாடும் பறவைகளின் வேடந்தாங்கல்

வி. பி. தண்டாயுதம்

உழைப்பில் வாரா உறுதிகள் உளவோ?  
ஆழ்ந்த அறிவினால் அப்புறப் படுத்தலாம்.  
அழுந்திய குறிக்கோள் விழுந்தது மனம் எனில்  
எழுந்திடும் வெற்றிகள் விழுந்திடும் பகைமை  
ஏழ்மையும் பசியும் இடைவிடாப் பிணியும்  
வாழ்வினை வீழ்த்திடும் எதிரிகள் அல்ல  
பணிவும் இன்சொலும், பரிவும் தூய்மையும்  
துணிவும் இருப்பின் துணைசெய்யும் தெய்வம்  
சரித்திரம் படைக்க ஒருவரே போதும்  
விரிந்த ஒரு கூட்டம் வேண்டியதில்லை  
அறிவினில் தெளிவும், அகத்திலே அன்பும்  
நிறைவாய் வாழ்வார் அற்புதம் நிகழ்த்துவார்!  
பொய் இதில் இல்லை, புனைகதை இல்லை  
மெய்யெனச் சொல்வேன், சத்தியம் செய்வேன்  
இதற்கெலாம் சான்றாய் எவரைநீர் அறிவீர்?  
இதுதான் உங்கள் வினா எனில் என்பதில்  
அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியற் பல்கலை  
தவத்திரு வேந்தர் தனிப்பெருந்தலைவி!

பத்மஸ்ரீ டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ்  
மூதறிவாளரை முன்னால் காட்டுவேன்  
ஏதுநீர் சொல்வீர் ஆம். ஆம் என்பீர்  
மாதர் மணிமுடி, முழுமை மாமனிதர்  
மங்கையர் தங்கம், மனையியற் சிங்கம்!  
எங்கும் எவரும் அறிந்ததுதானே!

● அம்மா அவர்கள்

எடுத்த காரியம் யாவினும் வெற்றியும்  
கொடுத்த பணிகளை முடித்திடும் ஆற்றலும்  
எதனால் கிடைத்தது? எப்படி நிகழ்ந்தது?  
அதுதான் ரகசியம், அவர் ஓர் அதிசயம்!  
காட்சிக்கு எளியவர் காந்திஜி பக்தர்  
மாட்சிகள் தங்கிய மனவலி மிக்கோர்  
இன்பம் வரும்போது எழுந்து குதித்தலும்  
துன்பம் நிகழ்ந்திடின் துவண்டு துவள்தலும்  
புகழ்எனில் மயங்கிப் போற்றிப் பேசலும்  
இகழ் எனின் விம்மி தூற்றி ஏசலும்  
இல்லாச் சமநிலை இதயம் படைத்தவர்  
எல்லாப் பகுத்துணர் அறிவைப் பெற்றவர்  
நிறைவாய் ஆய்ந்து சரியெனப் பட்டதை  
விரைவாய் முடிக்கும் வித்தையைக் கற்றவர்

போற்றுவர் போற்றினும் தூற்றுவர் தூற்றினும்  
ஏற்றதை இரக்கா இரும்பு மனத்தினர்!

கதர் நூல் நூற்பவர் கதரே அணிபவர்  
கதர் சீருடைகளால் கல்லூரி ஒளிரும்

பனிமலை போலும் பளிங்குத் தூய்மை  
இனியன எமக்கு இல்லை இளைத்தவர்க்கு என்று

தியாகத் தீயில் திளைத்த பசும்பொன்  
தாயினும் இனியராய்த் தவம் பல தாங்கினார்

எழுதிடும் ஆற்றல் இவர்க்குப் பெருவரம்  
பழுதற்ற பொருளைப் பற்றியே எழுதுவார்

பெண்ணினம் எழுந்து மண்ணினில் நடக்க  
கண் எனத் திகழ்ந்த காவியத் தலைவி

ஒப்பிலா நடையில் ஆங்கில மொழியில்  
முப்பத்தெட்டு முரணிலா நூற்கள்

தமிழ்மொழி நூற்கள் ஒரு பத்தொன்பது  
தமிழ்நடை எளியது “தரும் பொருள் வலியது

ஆய்வுத் துறையில் ஐநூற்று முப்பது  
தேய்வறு கருப்பொருள் ஏந்திய கட்டுரை

பொதுமைக் கட்டுரை முன்னூற்று ஐம்பது  
இதுவும் வளரும் இன்னமும் தொடரும்

அம்மா வாழ்வும் வாக்கும் வரம்பெறும்  
இம்மையில் செம்மை ஏற்படப் பலன் தரும்

புதியதோர் பாணியில் புதிய சரித்திரம்  
மதிநலம் கல்வி மறத்தல் கூடுமோ?

- அம்மா டாக்டர் இராசம்மாள் அவர்கள்  
7.4.1919 ல்

நெல்லை மாவட்டம் கள்ளிக்குளம் கிராமத்தில்  
பிள்ளையாய்ப் பிறந்தார் யாதவ குலத்தில்

அம்மா மூத்தவர் உடன் பிறப்பு எண்மர்  
தம்பியர் நால்வர், தங்கையர் நால்வர்

திருச்சியில் ஆல்செயிண்ட்ஸ் திருச்சபைப் பள்ளியில்  
நிறைவு பெற்றது இடைநிலைக் கல்வி

குடும்பச் சமையைக் குறைத்திட வேண்டி  
கடிமணம் நடந்தது பதினைந்து வயதில்

இல்லற வாழ்வில் இயல்பான விருப்பம்  
கல்வி விருப்பமே மலையென எழுந்தது

அன்புக் கணவரின் அனுமதி பெற்று  
இண்டர்மீடியட் இராணிமேரி கல்லூரியில்

அப்போது ஒரு வயது அன்புக் குழந்தைக்கு  
ஒப்பிலா தாய் அவர், இப்போது மகன் மோகன்  
(ஆஸ்திரேலியாவில் டாக்டராய் உள்ளார்)

இண்டர்மீடியட் இனிதே முடிந்தது  
எனினும் படிப்பில் இச்சைமேல் இச்சை

இராணிமேரி கல்லூரியில் பிளஸ்சி (கணக்கு)

பிரிவில் சேர்ந்தார் வாகையும் துடினார்.

முதலாம் மதிப்பெண் முதலாம் மாணவி

இது தவிர்த்து ஆங்கே எத்தனை பணிகள்

செந்தமிழ் மன்றம் நிறுவிட முனைந்தார்

அந்தநாள் நன்கொடை அளிப்பவர் சொற்பம்

நாடகம் தன்னை நடத்துதல் எங்கே?

நாடக ஒப்பனை யார் செய்து உதவுவார்

கல்லூரி தன்னில் நாடகம் நடத்தினர்

சிலரே வருவர் செலவதே மிஞ்சும்

வெளியில் நடத்தலாம் எனும் முதல்வரின் கருத்தினை

எளிதாய் ஏற்றுச் செய்திடல் எங்ஙனம்

அந்நாள் பிரபல இயக்குனர் கோ சுப்பிரமணியம்

முன்னால் நின்றார் தோழிகள் துழ

ரசிக ரஞ்சனி சபாவின் உதவியால்

நாடகம் நடந்தது – இலாபம் ஐந்தாயிரம்

(இப்போது அஃது ஈரைம்பதாயிரம் மதிப்பு)

செந்தமிழ் மன்றம் இராணிமேரி கல்லூரியில்

அந்த நாள் நிறுவிய பெருமையும் இவர்க்கே.

படிப்பு முடிந்ததைப் பார்த்தோம் பின்னர்

படித்த கல்லூரியில் ராணிமேரியில்

விரிவுரையாளராய் வேலையில் சேர்ந்தார்  
மனையியல் துறையில் முதல் விரிவுரையாளர்  
அமெரிக்க நாட்டில் மனையியல் மேற்படிப்பு  
சுமைஏதும் இல்லை அரசின் உதவியால்  
அம்மா இதற்கு விண்ணப்பித் திருந்தார்  
அனுமதி ஒப்புதல் அனைத்தும் கிடைத்தது  
வேலையில் நிரந்தரம் பெற்றிடா நிலையில்  
வேலையை விட்டிடும் வேளையும் வந்தது  
வேலையை விடுவதா மேற்படிப்பு ஏற்பதா?  
மேல் மேல் குழப்பம் மிஞ்சியே நின்றது.

“விட்டிடு வேலையை மீண்டும் தாய்மண்  
தொட்டிடும் பாதம் எனில் பின் பார்க்கலாம்  
இஃது

அய்யா அவினாசிலிங்கம் அறிவுரை  
பயணம் நடந்தது” அம்மா அமெரிக்காவில்

சுதந்திரம் பெற்றபின் இந்திய அரசின்  
உதவியுடன் கற்றிடக் கடலைத் தாண்டிய

முதலாம் பெண்மணி எனும்புகழ் இவர்க்கே  
முதலாம் தமிழ்மகள் எனும்பெருமை நமக்கே!

ஓகியோ மாநில ஓங்கு பல்கலைக் (கு)  
ஏகிய அம்மாவின் இடைவிடா முயற்சியால்

ஆண்டுகள் மூன்றில் அடைந்திடும் பயிற்சியை  
இரண்டே முக்கால் ஆண்டினில் முடித்து

எம்.ஏ., எம்.எஸ்ஸி, பிஎச்.டி., ஆகிய  
முப்பெரும் பட்டம் பெற்றுக் களித்தார்

எல்லா நிலையிலும் இவரே முதன்மை  
எல்லா விருதும் இவருக்கே கிடைத்தது

மனையியல் சார்புடைக் கழகம் யாவும்  
நனிமிகு அம்மாவை உறுப்பின ராக்கினர்

“தென்னிந்திய உணவிலுள்ள குறைபாடுகள்”  
இதுதான் ஆய்வின் கருப்பொருளாகும்.

ஆங்கில மொழியில் முதுகலைப் பட்டம்  
வாங்கிய அமரர் மு. அறம் அவர்கள்

ஓகியோ வந்தார் அம்மா அவருக்கும் உதவினார்  
ஏகமாய் அறிஞர்கள் சான்றோர்கள் தொடர்பு

அம்மாவுக்கு கிடைத்த அற்புதச் சொத்துக்கள்  
இம்மையில் விளைந்த எழில் ஞான வித்துக்கள்

பட்டம் பெற்ற நாள் ஒரு மூன்றில்  
ஓகியோ மாநிலச்

சட்டப் பேரவை கௌரவம் செய்தது  
சொற்பொழி வாற்றிட இவரை அழைத்தது

சட்டப் பேரவைக் குறிப்பில்  
இவர் ஆற்றிய சொற்பொழிவு  
இன்றும் நிலைத்தது – இன்னும் நிலைக்கும்

முப்பெரும் அரிய பட்டங்கள் பெற்று  
முப்பத்து நான்கு மாதங்கள் கழித்து

இந்திய மண்ணில் எடுத்து அடி வைத்தார்  
இந்திய அரசின் ஒப்பந்தப்படி

ஐந்து ஆண்டுகள் அரசினர் வேலை  
எந்த இடமோ? எப்படி இருக்குமோ?

மனதிடை அமைதியை மலர்த்திட வேண்டி  
மூன்றுநாள் அய்யா அமைத்த இராமகிருஷ்ண

வித்தி யாலயத்தில் விரும்பித் தங்கினார்  
அந்நாள் மூன்றும் அவர்க்குப் பொன்னாள்

அதற்கு முன்

தாயகம் திரும்பிய அன்றே அம்மாவை  
அய்யா அவர்கள் ஆசி கூறிச் சந்தித்தார்.

தங்கையின் வீட்டில் தங்கியிருந்தார்  
அங்குதான் மீண்டும் மனையியல் கல்லூரி

பேச்சு எழுந்தது பேச்சின் முடிவில்  
இச்சை உன் இச்சை இனிதே நிறைவுறும்

காத்திரு எனச் சொல்லி அய்யா விடைபெற்றார்  
பூத்தது மனையியல் கல்லூரி பூவது புதியதாய்

ஆயிரத்து தொள்ளாயிரத்து ஐம்பத்து ஏழில்  
அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரி ஆரம்பமானது

1951ல் தொடங்கி 1961 வரை

புதுதில்லியில் அரசினர் வேலை செவிலியர் கல்லூரியில்

பரோடா கல்லூரி வேலை

மீண்டும் டில்லியில் ஐந்தாண்டுகள்

இப்படிக்க கழிந்தது அம்மாவின் வாழ்க்கை

இரவாய் பகலாய் எடுத்த முயற்சியால்

நிறைவாய் நிற்பது கோவையில் சேவையே

நாள் ஒரு மேனியும் பொழுதொரு வண்ணமுமாய்

ஆல் போல் தழைத்தது அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் கல்லூரி

பாரத நாட்டிடை ஆசியா எங்கணும்

பெரியதோர் மனையியல் கல்லூரி இதுபோல்

இல்லவே இல்லை யாவரும் அறிவோம்

நல்லதோர் நிலையில் 1988ல் அம்மா முயற்சியில்

பல்கலைக் கழகமாய் மாறித் திகழ்ந்தது

சொல் பழுதில்லை, மிகை ஏதுமில்லை

உலகிடை இந்நாள் நிலவிடும் ஒரேஒரு

மனையியல் பல்கலைக் கழகம் இதுவே!

அம்மாவின் அறிவுத் திறத்தை கூர்மையை

இம்மண், வெளிமண், ஈந்தபல் பட்டங்கள்

பெருமையைப் பேசும் எப்படிப் புகழ் நான்

பிர்லா விருதால் புகழ்ந்தது போதும்

பத்மஸ்ரீ விருது சான்றினைப் பகரும்  
விருதுகளினால் இவருக்குப் பெருமையில்லை  
விருதுகளுக்கே இவரால் பெருமை

எங்கே நீ இருந்தாலும்  
நீ இல்லையேல் ஒரு வேலையும் இயங்காது

என்னும் நிலையை ஏற்படுத்திக் கொள்  
ஓகியோ பல்கலைப் பேராசிரியர் அறிவுரை

இவ்வறிவு வுரைக்கு ஏற்றபடி  
இன்று அம்மா திகழ்கிறார்  
அம்மா அவர்கள்

கண்ணாரக் காணக் கிடைத்த பல்கலைக் கழகம்  
மனைநலம் பாடும் பறவைகளின் வேடந்தாங்கல்

மகளிர் கல்வி மாளிகைக்கு வாய்த்த திறவுகோல்  
மனையியல் கல்விக்கு அமைந்த கைவிளக்கு

காந்தியக் கொள்கையை கண்டுணர்ந்த நங்கூரம்  
சமயச் சிந்தனைக் கருவூலம்  
தமிழ்த்தாயின் பட்டொளி வீசும் மணிக்கொடி

அம்மா வாழ்க அம்மா வாழ்க  
அனைத்து வளமுடன் அம்மா வாழ்க!

## தேசியம் அம்மாவின் தெய்வீகம்

வி. பி. தண்டாயுதம்

61 ல்லோருடைய அன்பிற்கும் பாசத்திற்கும் உரியவராக அம்மா விளங்கி வருகிறார். இந்த நூற்றாண்டின் முன்பகுதியில் பிறந்து வளர்ந்து வாழ்க்கையில் சரித்திரம் படைக்கும் சாதனைகளைப் புரிந்தவர்களில் ஒருவராகவே அம்மா அவர்கள் விளங்கி வருகிறார்கள்.

அவர்களுடைய வாழ்க்கை ஓர் உன்னதமான இலட்சிய வாழ்க்கை. தான் பெற்ற இன்பம் பெறுக இவ்வையகம் என்ற பொன்மொழிக்கு ஏற்ற வகையில் வாழும் கருணை நெஞ்சம் அவருடையது.

ஓர் எளிய, பின் தங்கிய குடும்பத்தில் பிறந்து தன்னுடைய கடுமையான உழைப்பால் படிப்படியாக வாழ்வில் உயர்ந்தவர். தன் வாழ்க்கை முழுவதையும் பெண்கள் முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு அர்ப்பணம் செய்து அதனால் கிடைக்கும் பயன்களால் மட்டுமே மகிழ்ச்சி அடைந்து வருபவர்.

அண்ணல் மகாத்மா காந்தியடிகளின் அடிச்சுவட்டைத் தொடர்ந்து வாழ்க்கைப் பயணத்தை மேற்கொண்டு வருபவர். 'கதர்' தன்னுடைய வாழ்க்கையின் ஒரு பகுதியாக இருப்பதாகச் சொல்லிப் பெருமைப்பட்டுக் கொள்பவர். (Khadi is part of my life) அம்மா அவர்கள் தான் கதர் அணியத் தொடங்கிய நாளைப் பற்றி அமைதியாகவும் பெருமிதத்துடனும் சொல்லிக் கொள்வதைப் பலமுறை கேட்டிருக்கிறேன்.

நாற்பதுகளின் தொடக்கத்தில் அம்மா அவர்கள் படித்துக் கொண்டிருந்த இராணி மேரி கல்லூரிக்கு உரையாற்ற வந்திருக்கிறார். அண்ணல் மகாத்மா காந்தி மாணவிகளைப் பார்த்து, "உங்களில் எத்தனைபேர் கதராடை அணியப்

போகிறீர்கள்? என்று கேட்டிருக்கிறார். சுமார் பதினைந்து மாணவிகள் கை உயர்த்தியிருக்கிறார்கள். அவர்களில் 'அம்மா' அவர்களும் ஒருவர்.

அன்று முதல் இன்று வரை கதராடையே அம்மா அவர்கள் உடுத்தி வருகிறார்கள். உலகின் எந்தப் பகுதிக்குச் சென்றாலும் கதர் ஆடைகள்தான். இதையும் தன்னுடைய வாழ்க்கையின் இலட்சியமாகவே கருதி வருகிறார்.

வெளிநாடுகளுக்குச் செல்லும் பொழுதெல்லாம் எங்களுடைய கதர்பவனுக்கு வருவார். வெளிநாட்டினருக்கு அன்பளிப்பு வழங்க கதர், கைத்தொழில் பொருள்களையே வாங்கிச் செல்லுவார். அதைப் போலவே வெளிநாட்டவர் இங்கு வந்தாலும் அவர்களையெல்லாம் கதர்பவனுக்கு அழைத்து வந்து காட்டுவார். இந்தியக் கலாச்சாரப் பண்பாடுகள் அடங்கியுள்ள நமது கைத்தொழிலின் அழகையும் மேன்மையையும் அவர்களுக்கு விளக்கிச் சொல்லிப் பெருமைப்படுவார்.

கோவை, ஈரோடு போன்ற மாவட்டங்களில் எங்கெங்கு காதிபவன்கள் தொடங்கினாலும் தவறாமல் கலந்து கொண்டு வாழ்த்துவார். அவரே பல பலன்களையும், கடைகளையும் திறந்து வைத்திருக்கிறார். இரண்டு முறை கவர்னர் முன்னிலையிலும், பல முறை அமைச்சர்கள் முன்னிலையிலும் தொடங்கி வைத்து வாழ்த்தியதை நான் அறிவேன். அம்மா அவர்கள் திறந்து வைத்த காதிபவன்கள் விற்பனையில் பெரும் சாதனைகளை நிகழ்த்தி வளர்ந்து வருவதைக் கண்ணாரக் காண்கிறேன்.

அவினாசிலிங்கம் மனையியல் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் கதர் மற்றும் கிராமத் தொழில் பொருள்களை விற்பனை செய்வதற்காக தனி ஒரு இடத்தை ஒதுக்கிக் கொடுத்திருக்கிறார். இன்றுவரை, "தேசப்பக்தியே தெய்வபக்தி" என்று முழுமையாக நம்பி அதன்படியே வாழ்ந்து வருகிறார் 'அம்மா' அவர்கள்.

முதல் சுதந்திர தினத்தன்று நான்கு ரூபாய்க்கு வாங்கிக் கட்டிக் கொண்ட கதர்ப் புடவையை இன்னும் பாதுகாப்பாக வைத்திருக்கிறார். ஒவ்வொரு சுதந்திர தினத்தன்றும் அந்தப் புடவையையே இதுவரை உடுத்தி வருவதாகப் பெருமிதத்-  
துடன் சொல்லுவதைக் கேட்கும்போது நெஞ்சம் நெகிழ்ந்து விடுகிறது.

பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில் குடியரசு தினம், சுதந்திர தினம் காந்தியடிகள் பிறந்தநாள் விழா போன்ற நாட்களை மிகப் பெரிய விழாவாகக் கொண்டாடுகிறார்கள். அண்ணல் மகாத்மா அவர்கள் மறைந்த ஜனவரி 30ம் தேதியை 'சர்வோதய'த்தின் தொடக்க நாளாகவே கருதி வருகிறார்.

“இந்தியப் பொருளாதாரத்தில் கதர்” என்று ஒவ்வொரு கல்லூரியிலும் இந்திய அரசின் கதர் கிராமத் தொழில் கமிஷன் கருத்தரங்குகளையும் கண்காட்சிகளையும் நடத்தியது. அந்தக் கருத்தரங்குகளுக்கு 'அம்மா' அவர்களே தலைமை தாங்கினார்கள். மாணவர்களுக்கு கதர் கிராமத் தொழில்களின் அவசியத்தை விளக்கியதுடன் காந்தியக் கொள்கைகளையும் எடுத்துக் கூறினார். சுதந்திர தினம், குடியரசு தினம், கல்லூரி ஆண்டு விழா காந்தி ஜெயந்தி போன்ற நாட்களில் எல்லா மாணவிகளும் கதராடை அணிவதைக் கட்டாயமாக்கி யிருக்கிறார்.

காந்தியச் சிந்தனைகளிலும், நடைமுறைகளிலும் ஆழ்ந்த ஈடுபாடு கொண்டவர் அம்மா. பொறுப்புணர்ச்சியும் நேரம் தவறாமையும் அவருடைய இயல்பு. இந்தப் பண்புகளைப் பொறுப்புகளை ஏற்றுக் கொண்டுள்ள ஒவ்வொருவரிடமும் எதிர்பார்ப்பவர்.

ஒருமுறை கல்லூரியில் கல்லூரி தின விழா ஒன்றை ஏற்பாடு செய்திருந்தார். அந்த விழாவில் அன்றைய ஆளுநர் மாண்புமிகு திரு. பட்வாரி கலந்து கொண்டு சிறப்புரையாற்றியிருந்தார். ஆளுநரை வரவேற்பது, பாதுகாப்பு போன்றவற்றை பேசி முடிவு செய்ய மாவட்ட ஆட்சியர் அம்மா அவர்களையும், மற்றும் பலரையும் நேரம் குறித்து அழைத்திருந்தார்.

அழைக்கப்பட்ட அனைவரும் வந்து சேர்ந்து விட்டனர். ஆனால் மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் மட்டும் வரவில்லை. நேரமாகிக் கொண்டிருந்தது. கூட்டத்திற்கு வந்திருந்தவர்கள் அவரை எதிர்பார்த்தபடி நீண்டநேரம் சோர்வுடன் காத்திருந்தார்கள்.

மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் தாமதமாக வந்து சேர்ந்தார். அம்மா அவர்களுக்குக் கடுமையான கோபம். மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளரின் பொறுப்பில்லாத போக்கை வன்மையாகக் கண்டித்தார். எதிர்பாராத விதமாக அமைச்சர் அழைத்ததால் சென்று விட்டதாக மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் சொன்னார். அம்மா அவர்கள் அதை ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளவில்லை. மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் தனது காலதாமதம் குறித்து முன்கூட்டியே தெரிவித்திருக்க வேண்டும் என்றார். எல்லாவித வசதிகளும் இருக்கும் போது மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் மற்றவர்களை உதாசீனம் செய்ததாகவே கூறிக் கண்டித்தார். மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் மட்டுமல்ல. பொறுப்பில்லாமல் நடந்து கொள்ளும் எவரையும் அவர் துணிச்சலோடு கண்டிப்பது வழக்கம். கடமை உணர்வு காப்பாற்றப்பட வேண்டும் என்பது தான் அவருடைய நோக்கம்.

கல்வித்துறை வணிகமயமாகிவிட்ட இன்றைய நமது சூழலில் கல்விப் பணியை கடவுள் பணியாக நினைத்துக் கல்விச் செல்வத்தைப் பெண்-குலத்திற்கு வழங்கி வருகிறார். கல்வி வளர்ச்சிக்கென்று ஓயாமல் உழைத்துக் கொண்டிருக்கும் அம்மா அவர்கள் தமக்கு ஓய்வு கிடைக்கும் போதெல்லாம் இராட்டையில் நூலை நூற்கிறார். காந்தியத்தின் அடையாளமான கதர் கைத்தொழிலை வணங்குகிறார். ●

# UNFORGETTABLE PERSONALITY IN MY LIFE

SAROJINI THOMAS

**I**n life we come across many thousands of people. Only some, whom we remember and cherish the memory and follow the footsteps. A unique person whom I have met is beloved Mrs. Rajammal P. Devadas whose life is an exemplary one.

For the last 4 decades I have known her. In 1959, I came to Coimbatore to work in the Government Service. From then on I had known her as a popular figure and a most efficient person in the field of education and a strong minded lady, modest and very committed to the community at large.

After my marriage in 1964 I left for England for my higher studies. After returning from England having completed post graduate studies in our respective specialities, my husband Dr. George Thomas and I were recognised by Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College for women and she invited my husband to speak on mental health at the college campus. Our late Sri Avinashilingam Chettiar presided over the function and honoured us. Mrs. Rajammal P. Devadas congratulated and encouraged us to take part in delivering our speeches. Subsequently I had the opportunity of speaking to the teachers and parents about common diseases in children, later again on eye care. Whenever there was an important and interesting function going on in the school and college we were invited to attend. Our friendship grew closer and closer and dear Amma always instructed the colleagues to remind me over the phone to participate in various functions. I did participate and enjoyed my association.

2. Education of illiterates under the guidance of Mrs. Rajammal P. Devadas- they conduct adult literacy programme, vocational training for women, health care programmes, awareness of legal rights of women, reservation of seats for women in the parliament, empowerment of elected local bodies who are ladies, fight for the rights of women, development of engineering and computer science, etc.

She has always represented the universities and our India at large in many countries and won various awards for her meritorious service which she deserves.

Once when I and my husband visited her she was having her lunch at home at the same time she was giving advice and instructions to her staff. We wondered how she could manage her time to do her personal affairs and also the official responsibilities. She goes to bed very late in the night and gets up early in the morning with few hours of sleep.

Once when she was away on tour my husband fell seriously ill. When she knew that, she sent her loving greetings for his speedy recovery through some staff on her behalf. So concerned she was with every member of my family.

Another incident I remember is that I was called to rush to the college for interviewing her for CVC. When she was greeting the people for happy Diwali then I learnt how much love she had for the people of our nation.

Most of the time she is on tour around the world giving valuable suggestions regarding nutrition, education and policies of our country. She would make a very good politician if given a chance of holding additional ministerial post in Government. Since the time of Independence most of the leaders of our country including Mr.

Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Rajendra prasad, Dr. Radhakrishnan and all the Presidents of our country have visited the university and recognised her service. She is ready to help any body in need with a genuine cause. She respects honest people, so does God help her. You will always find her with a smile on her face. I have never seen her with an angry face. Many westeners have come to study and gain knowledge and experience through her. She has many number of friends including me who have great love and respect for her. She is like a mother, sister and a friend to me and my family. I wish her a long life.

With great pleasure, I and my family wish her happy Birthday and many happy returns. ●

## அள்ள அள்ளக் குறையாத அன்புதான் அத்தை அவர்கள்

அ. வேதரத்னம்

இந்தப்புக்கைப்படத்தில் உள்ள விமானத்தில் ஏர்சிலோன் என்று பெயர் போட்டிருக்கிறதே இது எந்த நாட்டு விமானம்” என்று வீட்டில் சிறுவர்கள் கேட்டார்கள்.

“ஓ அதுவா? இது இப்போது ஸ்ரீலங்கா எனப்படும் நாட்டு விமானம். முன்னர் சிலோன் என வழங்கப்பட்டது. இப்போது அந்த நாட்டு விமானத்தின் பெயர் ஏர்லங்கா என வழங்குகிறது” என்றேன் அவர்களிடம்.

அந்தப் புகைப்படத்தில் ஏர்சிலோன் விமானம் பின்னணியில நிற்க, அதற்கு முன்னால் சில பெரியோர்கள் நிற்கிறார்கள். எனது பாட்டனார் சர்தார், அ. வேதரத்னம், நமது வித்யாலயம் ஐயா அவர்கள், நமது அத்தை திருமதி. ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள், சிலம்புச் செல்வர் ம.பொ.சி. மற்றும் ஒரு ராஜப் பிரதிநிதி ஆகியோர் நிற்கிறார்கள். அந்த இடம் கொழும்பு சர்வதேச விமான நிலையம். அது ஒரு விசேஷ விமானம். கொழும்பில் நடந்த தமிழ் மாநாட்டிற்கு தமிழறிஞர்களான இவர்களை இலங்கை அரசு அழைத்து வந்திருந்தது.

மேலே குறிப்பிட்ட அனைவரும் நிறை தமிழ்ச் சிசுமல்கள். தமிழும் தேசியமும் வளர்த்தவர்கள். அந்தத் தடவை மட்டுமல்ல, - நூற்றுக்கணக்கான விமானப் பயணங்களை மேற்கொண்டு, கல்விக்காக மனையியல் விஞ்ஞானத்திற்காக பறந்து வந்திருப்பவர்கள், பறந்து கொண்டிருப்பவர்கள், நமது அத்தை ராசம்மாள் பா. தேவதாஸ் அவர்கள். கல்வியும் சாரதாலயமும் தான்

அவர்கள் மூச்சு. உலக அளவில் சத்துணவும், மனையியலும் தொடர்பாய்  
~~உடையவர்களுக்கு~~ அத்தை அவர்களின் பெயர் பிரசித்தம். இன்றைக்கு ஓராயிரம்  
 பிறைகண்ட அன்னையாய்த் திகழும் அத்தை அவர்களைப் பற்றி எழுதுவதற்கு  
 அவர்களின் அன்பும் அரவணைப்பும் பெற்றவர்கள் பல்லாயிரவர்  
 காத்திருக்கிறார்கள். அன்பும் அரவணைப்பும் பெற்ற இந்தச் சிறுவனையும்  
 அத்தை அவர்களைப் பற்றி எழுதக் கேட்டிருக்கிறார்களே! எனக்குத்தான்  
 எத்தனை பேறு?

எத்தனை பேறு? இந்த நிகழ்ச்சியைக் கேளுங்கள். கடந்த வருடம் நமது  
 சாரதாலயத்தில் (ஸ்ரீ அவினாசிலிங்கம் பல்கலைக் கழகத்தில்) பஞ்சாயத்துராஜ்  
 விழிப்புணர்ச்சிக் கருத்தரங்கு ஒன்று நடைபெற்றது. (அது சரி. நமது  
 சாரதாலயத்தில் கருத்தரங்கம் நடைபெறாத நாள் ஏதும் உண்டா சொல்லுங்கள்  
 பார்ப்போம்). வழக்கம்போல் முறையாக முன்னதாகவே அறிவிப்பும் அழைப்பும்  
 வந்து சேர்ந்தது. பயணப்படி தரவும் தங்குவதற்கு வசதியும் செய்திருப்பதாய்  
 அதில் செய்தி இருந்தது.

நானும் புறப்பட்டேன். வரும் விபரம் கோவைக்கு உலகப்புக்ழ் பெற்ற  
 ஊட்டச்சத்து விஞ்ஞானியான எனதன்புள்ள அத்தை அவர்களுக்கும், அங்கேயே  
 இருக்கின்ற உலகப்புக்ழ் பெற்ற பறவையியல் விஞ்ஞானியான எனது மூத்த  
 சகோதரன் ஒருவருக்கும் தெரிவித்திருந்தேன். பறவையியல் விஞ்ஞானி  
 சகோதரன் வீட்டில் தங்கிவிட்டு காலையில் கருத்தரங்கிற்கு சாரதாலயம்  
 சென்றேன். அன்புடன் வரவேற்ற அத்தை அவர்கள், சற்றே கடிந்தும்  
 கொண்டார்கள். ரவி எங்கேயப்பா போனாய்? இரவெல்லாம் காத்திருந்தோம்.  
 வணக்கத்திற்குரிய நமது வித்யாலம் அமரர் ஐயா மட்டும் தங்கக் கூடிய நமது  
 கமிட்டி ருமை உனக்காக வைத்திருக்கச் சொல்லியிருந்தேன். அங்கு வந்து  
 தங்கியிருக்கக் கூடாதா என்று கேட்டார்கள். மிகவும் வருந்துகிறேன் அத்தை  
 அந்தப் பேறு எனக்குக் கிடைக்காமல் போயிற்றே என்று பதில் கூறிவிட்டு, ஆமாம்

அத்தை அந்த ரூமில் நமது வணக்கத்திற்குரிய ஐயா அவர்கள் மட்டும் தான் தங்குவார்களா? எனக்காக அந்த இடத்தையா, ஒதுக்கியிருந்தீர்கள்? வேறு எவரும் அங்கே தங்கியதில்லையா? என்று கேட்டேன். அவர்கள் சொன்னார்கள். நமது ஐயா தவிர உனது அப்பா அவர்கள் – அதான் தம்பி அப்பாருட்டி வந்தால் தங்குவார் என்றார்கள். எத்தனைபேறு எங்களுக்கு! சின்னச்சின்ன விஷயங்களிலும் கூர்ந்த கவனிப்பு என்பதில் – உடனடி நடவடிக்கை என்பதில் – கூடுதல் ஈடுபாடு என்பதில் – அத்தை அவர்கள் கவனமாக இருப்பார்கள்.

உடனடி நடவடிக்கையா? எப்படி என்கிறீர்களா?

கோவை சிவானந்தா காலனியில் சாலை நடுவில் பெரிய பெரிய மரங்களும் இருவழியில் போக்குவரத்தும் இருந்தது பலருக்குத் தெரியும். அருமையான நிழற்சாலை அது. அங்கிருந்த அனைத்து மரங்களையும் வெட்டிச் சாய்த்துக் கூறுபோட்டு விறகாக்கினார்கள். மரங்கள் இருந்த இடத்தில் நீளமாக சிமெண்டினால் மேடை அமைத்தார்கள். அந்த இடங்கள் முழுவதும் வெய்யிலடித்துக் காய்ந்து வெறிச்சோடிக் கிடக்கிறது.

தடாகம் ரோடு பகுதியில் இருந்த புளியமரங்களும் பணால். உலகப்புழம்பெற்ற பறவையியல் விஞ்ஞானி எனது சகோதரன் டாக்டர் வி.எஸ். விஜயன் நகராட்சியாளரின் கதவைத் தட்டினார், ஆட்சித்தலைவர் அலுவலகத்தின் கதவையும் தட்டினார். இந்த விருகூப்படுகொலையை நிறுத்த அவர் போகாத இடமில்லை. 100 ஆண்டு கால் மரங்கள் விறகாய் வதைபடுவதைத் தடுக்கும் முயற்சி கைகூட வில்லை. மனம் சலித்து, நொந்து போய் கடைசியாக அத்தை அவர்களைத் தொடர்பு கொண்டு இந்தக் கொடுமையைப் பற்றி இந்த அடாத செயலைப் பற்றி எடுத்துரைத்து இதைத் தடுக்க ஒத்துழைப்புக் கேட்டார். இவ்வாறு ஒருநாள் மாலையில் தான் அவர் அத்தையை கேட்டுக் கொண்டார். அன்றிரவே அனைத்து மாதர் சங்கங்களுடனும் அத்தை அவர்கள் தொலைபேசியில் தொடர்பு கொண்டார்கள். தொலைபேசியிலேயே பிறந்தது “பசுமைப் பாதுகாப்பு இயக்கம்”.

காலையில் பல்லாயிர மாதர்கள் திரண்டார்கள். மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் அலுவலகம் நோக்கி “மரங்களைக் காப்போம் வாரீர்” என முழக்கமிட்டுக் கொண்டு சென்றார்கள். மாதரின் எழுச்சியைக் கண்ட மாவட்ட ஆட்சியாளர் உடனே மரங்களைக் கூறுபோட, வெட்ட தடையுத்தரவு பிறப்பித்தார். மரங்களின் நேசர் அதை அவர்கள், இயற்கையின் நேசர் அதை அவர்கள்.

இந்தியத் துணைக் கண்டத்தில் ஆதிவாசிகளுக்கு என்றோ வனத்துறைக்கு என்றோ ஒதுக்கிய நிலப்பரப்பில் ஒரு குண்டுசி முனைகூட மற்ற தேவைகளுக்காக நிலம் எடுக்கக் கூடாது, முடியாது.

பிரதம மந்திரியின் பார்வையில், நேரடிப் பாதுகாப்பில் இந்த நிலங்கள் இருக்கின்றன, வருகின்றன. இந்த நிலங்களை வேறு காரியத்திற்குப் பயன்படுத்த பிரதம மந்திரியே கையெழுத்துப் போட்டாக வேண்டும். நமது சாரதாலயம் விரிவுபடுத்த வேண்டியிருந்தது. நகரின் மையப் பகுதியில் இருப்பதால் இடம் போதாத நிலை. பக்கத்தில் வனத்துறையினர் நிலம்தான் இருந்தது. அதைப்பெற முடிவது என்பது அவ்வளவு சுலபமில்லை. ஆனால், ஆனால், நமது அதை அவர்களின் விடாமுயற்சியால் அந்த அற்புதம் நிகழ்ந்தது. வனத்துறை நமது சாரதாலயத்திற்காக சுமார் 5 ஏக்கர் நிலம் விட்டுக் கொடுத்தது. வனவளர்ச்சியில் ஈடுபாடு கொண்ட வனத்துறை மகளிர் மனவளர்ச்சிக்காக, கல்வி வளர்ச்சிக்காக நிலம் கொடுத்த பெருமைமிகு சரித்திரம் அது.

உலைவின்றி தாழாது உளுற்றும் அதை அவர்கள் ஊழையும் உப்பக்கம் கண்டு கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். அவர்கள் டைனிங் டேபிளும், வேலை செய்யும் டேபிளும் ஒன்றுதான். ஊரிலிருந்தால் அறிஞர்களை அழைத்து கருத்தரங்கு நடத்துவார்கள். அல்லது சாரதாலயத்திற்காக உள்நாட்டிலும் வெளிநாட்டிலும் பயணம் மேற்கொண்டிருப்பார்கள். ஒரு சமயம், அது அப்போது விமானம் மற்றும் ரயில்கள் வேலை நிறுத்த சமயம். தார்வாருக்கு காரிலேயே சென்று திரும்பினார்கள். சுமார் 4000 கி.மீட்டர் காரிலேயே பயணம். ஏன் அதை

இப்படி பயணம் செய்கிறீர்கள் என்றால் ஆமாம்ப்பா அப்படித்தான் நமது தொடர்புகளைப் பார்த்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டியதிருக்கிறது. சாரதாலயத்தின் வளாச்சிக்காகச் சென்றேன் என்று பதிலளித்தார்.

தொடர்புகளை விடாது கவனமாக இருக்கும் பண்பாளர் அத்தை அவர்கள். உதவி ஜனாதிபதியாக பொறுப்பேற்றிருந்த ஸ்ரீ ரா. வெங்கட்ராமன் ஐயா அவர்களைப் பாராட்ட டெல்லி கிருஷ்ணமேனன் மார்க் இல்லத்திற்கு நான் சென்றால் ஐயா அவர்களைப் பாராட்டி விட்டு அத்தை அவர்கள் திரும்புவார்கள். மராட்டிய மாநில ஆளுநராக இருந்த பாரத ரத்னா சி. சு. ஐயா வைச்சந்திக்க பம்பாய் ராஜ்பவனுக்கு சென்றபோது அத்தை அவர்களைச் சந்திக்க நேரும்.

நான் வித்யாலயத்தில் படிக்கும்போது Homesick என்றால் அத்தை அவர்களிடம் தான் வருவேன். உடனே திரும்ப மனம் வராது. என் முகக் குறிப்பறிந்து சாரதாலய அலுவலக அண்ணாவிடம் Please help this gentleman to ringup Vidhyalaya என்று சொல்வார்கள். போனில் சுவாமி ஸ்ரீமத் சோமானந்தாஜி மகராஜிடம் பேசி, மாலைவரை அனுமதி பெற்றுவிடுவேன். தங்கித்தான் செல்வேன்.

102 வயது வரை வாழ்ந்திருந்த பாட்டி அவர்களும் அப்படித்தான். சென்னையில் அத்தையின் வீட்டில் பாட்டி இருந்தார்கள். உடல் நலம் குறைவாக, சிலசமயம் நினைவு தப்பி இருந்தார்கள். அப்பா பத்மஸ்ரீ அப்பாருட்டி அவர்களும் இதய அறுவைச் சிகிச்சைக்குப் பிறகு சென்னை மருத்துவமனையில் இருந்த சமயம் பாட்டியையும் அத்தையையும் பார்க்க அத்தை வீட்டிற்குச் சென்றேன். பாட்டியை பேசச் சொல்லி அவர்கள் உடல் நலம் எவ்வாறு இருக்கிறது என்று சோதித்துப் பார்க்க அத்தை அவர்கள் பாட்டியிடம் சொன்ன வாசகம் இது. பாட்டியும் திக்கித் திணறி திருப்பிச் சொன்ன வாசகம் இது. “அப்பாருட்டிக்கு உடம்பு நல்லாப் போகணும்”. அப்படியொரு பாசம் அத்தை அவர்களுக்கு அப்பா அவர்களின் மேல். தம் அம்மா அவர்களின்மேல்.

அப்பா அவர்கள் உடல்நலம் சரியில்லாதபோது சென்னை, தஞ்சை மருத்துவமனைக்கு மூன்று நாட்கு முறைக்கு மேல் வந்து வந்து பார்த்துக் கொண்டார்கள். உடல் ஆரோக்கியமாக இருக்க, மேலே தடவ, E Oil Cream என்ன, Dr. வினோதகனிடம் உணவு என்னென்ன தரலாம் என விவாதித்து லிஸ்ட் தந்தது என்ன என ஓராயிரம் உதவிகள்.

“அமெரிக்காவில் படித்து டாக்டர் பட்டம் பெற்று வந்து சிலநாட்கள் டெல்லியில் பணியாற்றினேன். பின்னர் சென்னையில் பணிசெய்ய விரும்பியபோது, அண்ணாச்சி – அதுதான் உன் தாத்தா மிக மிக உதவியாக இருந்தார்கள். எம்.எல்.ஏ. வாக இருந்த அவர்கள் தம் செலவிலேயே டாக்ஸியில் அப்போது முதல்வராக இருந்த குமாரசாமி ராஜா அவர்களிடமும், கல்வி அமைச்சராக இருந்த பக்தவத்சலம் அவர்களிடமும் கூட்டிச் சென்று எனக்கு சென்னையில் வேலை வாங்கித் தந்தார்கள்” என கண்களில் நீர் துளிக்க நன்றிப் பெருக்கோடு சொன்னார்கள். அதை அவர்கள் மேலும் கூறினார்கள். “அப்படிப்பட்ட அரசியல், தேசத்தலைவர்களை இப்போதெல்லாம் எங்கேயப்பா பார்க்க முடிகிறது”. நான் பதில் சொன்னேன். “சரி அதை வாழ்க்கையில் உன்னத புகழை அடைந்த தாங்கள் ஆரம்பகால உதவிகளை எவ்வளவு பிரியமாக, நன்றிப் பெருக்கெடுக்கும் நினைவோடு சொல்கிறீர்களே அதுதான் உயர்ந்தோர் குணம். இப்போது அப்படியா இருக்கிறீர்கள். இப்போதிருப்பவர் பலர் ஆரம்ப நாட்களில் கிடைத்த உதவிகளை எவ்வளவு வசதியாக மறந்து விடுகிறீர்கள். அந்த நாள் பெரியோர்கள் எல்லாருமே அப்படித்தானே” என்று.

அத்தை அவர்கள் மட்டுமல்ல. குடும்பத்தில் உள்ளவர்கள் அனைவரும் அன்பு செலுத்துவதில் நிகரற்றவர்கள். டைப் செய்து கடிதம் வரும். அதை அவர்கள் தம் கையினாலும் ஒரு வரி எழுதாமலிருக்க மாட்டார்கள். கண்டிப்பாக கையெழுத்துக்கு முன்னால் ‘நிறைந்த அன்பு’ என்ற வார்த்தை கையினால் எழுதப்பட்டிருக்கும். அள்ள அள்ளக் குறையாத அன்புதான் அதை. யாருக்கு

என்ன பிடிக்கும் என்று தெரியும் அவர்களுக்கு. கண்டிப்பாக அதைத்தருவார்கள் ஒவ்வொருமுறையும். எனக்கு ஒருமுறை ஆட்டோகிராப் புத்தகம் தந்தார்கள். பெரிய பெரிய தலைவர்கள் கையெழுத்தையெல்லாம் அதில் சேகரித்து அதைப் பொக்கிஷமாக, இளவயது நினைவாக வைத்திருந்தேன்.

கோவை ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண வித்யாலயத்தில் படித்தவன் நான். அப்பாவும் தம்பியும், தம்பி மகனும் அங்கேதான் படித்தோம். எனது தங்கையும், எனது மகனும் சாரதாலயத்தின் மாணாக்கியர். அதை அவர்களின் ஒரே திருமகன் Dr. மோகன் அண்ணாவும் வித்யாலய மாணாக்கர். Dr. மோகன் அண்ணாவும் அவ்வளவு அன்பினை என்மீது சொரிவார்கள். மனையியல் மற்றும் உணவு விஞ்ஞானி உலகப் புகழ்பெற்ற விஞ்ஞானி நமது அதை அவர்கள். சீனாவின் மக்களுக்கு மனவளம் உடல் வளத்திற்கு முக்கிய காரணம் அவர்கள் உணவில் பெரும்பங்கு வகிக்கும் மொச்சை, சோயா மொச்சை என்பதனைக் கண்டறிந்தார்கள். விலை குறைவான புரதம் மிகுந்த இந்த தான்யம் இந்திய மக்களின் வாழ்க்கையில் இணைந்தால் – உணவில் சேர்ந்தால் எவ்வளவு நல்லது என்று கருதினார்கள். அவ்வாறே சோயா மொச்சையின் பயன்களை எடுத்துக்கூறி இந்தியர் வாழ்வில் வளம் சேர்க்கிறார்கள்.

காந்தியடிகள் போல அந்தந்தப் பருவத்தில் விளையும் காய்கனிகள் அந்தந்தப் பகுதி மக்களுக்கு மிகவும் பயனுள்ளது என்ற கொள்கையுடையவர் நமது அதை. உணவில் பழங்கள் சேரவேண்டும் என்பதில் எத்தனை அக்கறை அவர்களுக்கு. அமரர் ஐயா அவர்களின் அருமையான நினைவிடத்தில் விளைந்து கனிந்த அருமையான நாவல் பழங்களை அவ்வளவு ஆர்வமாக சாப்பிட்டார்கள். கொணர்ந்து தந்த மாணாக்கியர்க்கும் பாராட்டு கிடைத்தது.

குருகுலத்தில் உணவுக்கு இலுப்பை எண்ணெய் உபயோகிக்கும் போது தோல் சம்பந்தப்பட்ட கோளாறுகள் நீங்குகின்றன என்று தந்தையார் பத்மஸ்ரீ

வே. அப்பாருட்டி அவர்கள் சொல்லியபோதும், கிராமத்தில் மற்ற எண்ணெய்கள் உபயோகிக்கும்போது கை இடுக்குகளில் வரும் கொப்பளங்களுக்கு இலுப்பை எண்ணெய்க் கடுகு போடுவதையும் அதில் குணம் தெரிவதையும் கேட்டறிந்து சாரதாலயத்தில் அதன் விஞ்ஞானப்பூர்வ உண்மையை உலகுக்கு வெளிப்படுத்தினார்கள். சிக்கனமான சத்துள்ள உணவுக்குறிப்பு நமது குருகுலத்திற்குத் தந்தார்கள்.

மிக அருமையான பேச்சாளர். தானே நூற்ற நூலைச் சேலையாக்கி அணிந்து மகிழ்பவர்கள். எனது மகள் சாரதாலயத்தில் படிக்கிறவளுக்கு தலைவலி. குளிப்பிரதேசம், நூற்பாலைகளின் தூசு தும்பு, வடிப்பாலைகளின் புகை இவற்றால் மூக்கடைப்பும் தலைவலியும் கோவைக்கு புதியவர்களுக்கு வரலாம். மருத்துவர்கள் ஏகப்பட்ட பரிசோதனைகளைச் செய்யச் சொல்லி தெரிவித்த போது இவ்வாறு கூறினார்கள். “மருத்துவம் வியாபார நோக்கில் திரும்பி விட்டது. இது சாதாரணமாக வரக்கூடிய குறைபாடு. இவ்வளவு சோதனைகள் தேவையில்லை. மருத்துவர்கள் இவை அத்தனையையும் ஸ்டதாஸ்கோப் மூலமே கண்டறியலாம். ஸ்டதாஸ்கோப்பை முழுமையாகப் பயன்படுத்த வேண்டும் மருத்துவர்கள்” என்றார்கள்.

அர்கள் சொன்னது மாதிரியே இந்தப் பிரச்சனை சாதாரணமானது தான் என்று கண்டறிந்தோம். அனைத்துப் பரிசோதனைகளுக்கும் செலவழித்த பின்னர்.

அகில இந்திய ரோட்டரி சங்கத்தின் விருது பெண் குழந்தைகளுக்கான கல்விக்கு நமது குருகுலத்திற்கு கிடைத்திட அதை அவர்கள் பெரிதும் உதவினார்கள். ஒரு நான்கு பக்க விண்ணப்பத்திற்கு, இணைப்பாக சான்றுகள் மட்டுமே ஒரு கணத்த பேரேடு அளவிற்கு தயாரித்து, சரிபார்த்து, தாமே பரிந்துரை செய்து அனுப்பி விருதும் கிடைக்கச் செய்தார்கள்.

இப்போதும் வேதாரண்யத்தில் கம்யூனிடி காலேஜ் வருவதற்கு பெரிதும் உதவி வருகிறார்கள். அதற்காக பல நாட்கள் நடத்தப்பட்ட கருத்தரங்கில் கலந்துகொண்டு பயன் பெற்றோம்.

ஜப்பான் செல்லும் போதெல்லாம் ஒரு நாளைக்கு 12 மணி நேரம் உழைக்கிறீர்களே என்று அவர்களைப் பாராட்டுவேன். ஜப்பானிய மக்கள் உடனே இதென்ன பெரிய விஷயம். எங்களைவிட ஜெர்மானியர்கள் ஒரு நாளைக்கு 18 மணி நேரம் உழைக்கிறார்களே அதுவல்லவா உழைப்பு, என்று பதில் சொல்வார்கள்.

எங்கள் அத்தை அவர்கள் ஒரு நாளில் சுமார் 20 மணி நேரம் உழைக்கிறார்கள்.

எண்பதாண்டு நிறைந்து ஆயிரம் பிறை கண்ட அத்தை அவர்களுக்கு இறைவன் நல்லாரோக்யம், நீண்ட ஆயுள், நிறைசெல்வம் அருளப் பிரார்த்திப்போம். “ஆமென்”.

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# VOLUME I

## I. BENEDICTION

### **Swami RANGANADANANDA**

Swami Ranganadananda, a great spiritual leader of the present era joined Sri Ramakrishna order in 1926 at Mysore. From then, he served the Ramakrishna Mission in various capacities and is currently the President of Ramakrishna Mutt and Ramakrishna Mission, Howrah. As the Director of Ramakrishna School of Humanistic and Cultural studies he has travelled widely to spread the message of Hinduism and has authored many spiritual books.

### **Moderator Rev. WILLIAM MOSES**

Currently the Bishop of Coimbatore Diocesan Council and Moderator of Church of South India, Rev. William Moses has a rich background of spreading the message of Jesus Christ and serving the public. Under his leadership educational institutions and schemes to help tribals especially of the Nilgiris are doing yeomen service.

### **Kalaimamunivar SANTHALINGA RAMASAMY ADIGAL**

Santhalinga Ramasamy Adigal, the founder of Santhalinga Ramasamy Adigal Mutt at Perur, Coimbatore, is the Managing Trustee of the Tamil college run by the Mutt at Perur, which promulgates Tamil Literature and culture. He is currently the president of Tamil Nadu Hindu Saints Association and a member of Tamil Nadu Temple Advisory Committee.

### **Dr. D.G.S. DHINAKARAN**



Dr. Dhinakaran is one of the Founders of a charitable and Religious Trust called “Jesus Calls” and of Karunya Institute of Engineering, Coimbatore. He has travelled widely in India and all over the world undertaking religious work and has been the “Healer” to many.

**Rev. Job. GNANAPRAKASAM**



He is the Founder President and Executive Director of Indian Pentecostal Assemblies, Coimbatore. He is involved in Missionary work in India and spreading the message of Christianity.

**Bro. J. SAM JEBADURAI**

Bro. Jebadurai is a full time evangelist and the Managing Trustee of Antantulla Appam Trust, a non - profitable religious and charitable trust. He has travelled widely in God's Ministry.

**Dr. A. JAWAHAR SAMUEL**



Dr. Samuel is associated with the Ministry of Jesus Christ through his non profitable religious organisation of “Love of Jesus Ministry”. He hails from Coimbatore.

**Swami ATMARAMANANDA**



Swami Atmaramananda is currently the Secretary of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Periyanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore and is a senior monk of Sri Ramakrishna order. He is carrying out the rich spiritual and cultural traditions set by Rev. Dr. T.S. Avinashilingam in the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya.

**Annai Om BHAVATHARINI**



Annai Om Bhavatharini is the Founder of Arulmigu Karumari Amman Sakthi Peetam, Chennai and Sri Aurobindo Relic Centre, Chennai.

## **II. APPRECIATIONS FROM LEADERS**

**Her Excellency Mrs. USHA NARAYANAN**



Mrs. Narayanan is the dynamic wife of President of India Shri. K.R. Narayanan. She is highly educated, has widely travelled and is involved in social work for the upliftment of women and children.

**Ms. Justice FATHIMA BEEVI**



Justice Fathima Beevi is the Governor of Tamil Nadu. She was the first Lady Judge to be appointed to the Supreme Court of India. She is a role model for many women in India.

**Thiru C. SUBRAMANIAM AVARGAL**



Thiru C. Subramaniam is the Chancellor Emeritus of Avinashilingam Deemed University, Coimbatore. He had been actively involved with the freedom movement and later served the people as a political leader. He has held various offices in the various ministerial bodies. He has been awarded several prestigious awards, of which Bharat Ratna is one among them. He has travelled widely and is now settled in Chennai.

**Thiru R. NEDUNCHEZHIAN**

Thiru R. Nedunchezhan is an important leader of AIADMK party. He involves himself in the upliftment of poor and the needy.

**Thiru K. ANBZHLAGAN**

Thiru K. Anbzhlagan is presently the Education Minister in the cabinet of DMK Government.

**Dr. N. MAHALINGAM**



Dr. N. Mahalingam is a well known industrialist. He is the driving force behind the Sakthi Group of Companies. He is the founder of Nachimuthu Polytechnic and President of the Managing Committee of N.G.M. Arts College, Pollachi. He was awarded the honorary doctorate degree in law by Bharathiar University. He is the recipient of many awards and honors and has authored many books.

**Thiru N. PONGALUR PALANISWAMY**

Thiru N. Pongalur Palaniswamy is the Minister in Forest Department in the present cabinet of DMK Government.

**Dr. M. TAMILKUDIMAGAN**

Dr. M. Tamilkudimagan is the Minister for Cultural Affairs in the DMK Government.

**Thiru C. PONNAIYAN**

Thiru C. Ponnaiyan was actively involved in politics from his student days. He held various offices in ministerial capacity in the Government headed by Dr. M.G.R. He is now an advocate in the Chennai High Court.

**Mr. G. SANTHANAM, I.A.S.,**

Mr. Santhanam is at present the Collector of Coimbatore City.

**Thiru M. VELUSWAMI**



Thiru M. Veluswami is the Deputy Mayor of Coimbatore City.

### **III. SCIENTISTS AND PROFESSIONALS**

**Dr. C. GOPALAN**

Dr. C. Gopalan, a highly acclaimed nutritionist all over the world is presently the President of Nutrition Foundation of India, New Delhi. Among other distinctions, he is the Fellow of the Royal Society of Physicians, Fellow of Indian Academy of Science and National Academy of Medical Sciences. He held various positions and is the recipient of many covered awards.

**Dr. M.S. SWAMINATHAN**



Dr. Swaminathan is a well known Agricultural Scientist, the Chairman of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai which is doing immense research in the field of agricultural and allied sciences. He held various positions in many institutions and is the recipient of many awards including Ramon Magasaysay award (1971), Padma Vibhushan (1989) and B.P. Pal Memorial Award of India, Science Congress Association (1998). He has received the honorary D.Sc. degree from various Universities.

**Dr. V. RAMALINGASWAMY**

Dr. V. Ramalingaswamy is a well known Professor of Pathology from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. He has done extensive research in the field of

medicine. He is a distinguished member of many medical organisations and held various positions in them. He is also the recipient of many awards. He was also the Director General of ICMR.

#### **Dr. KALYAN BAGCHI**

Dr. Kalyan Bagchi is a Public Health Nutritionist who has worked for more than 50 years on national and international science. He worked in World Health Organisation in various positions for more than two decades. Presently he is the Director of Nutrition Syndicate, New Delhi and President of Gerantological Research, New Delhi. He is associated with many organisations engaged in activities in the field of Nutrition, Women and Child Welfare and Care of elderly.

#### **Dr. H.A.B. PARPIA and CAROLYN WILKES PARPIA**



Dr. Parpia is presently the President of Centre for Consumer Education and Environment Protection and People's Education Trust. He held various positions in UN and visited more than 80 countries on its work.

Ms. Carolyn Parpia is an Educator, Administrator and an excellent Homemaker.

#### **Dr. SHANTHI GHOSH**

Dr. Ghosh is an eminent pediatrician and MCH consultant. She has many articles published in many prominent journals and is the author of important books on mother and child. She is the recipient of many awards and is a distinguished member of many medical organisations.

#### **Dr. BHAVANI BELAVADY**

Dr. Bhavani Belavady an eminent scientist was associated with the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad for over four decades and was responsible for many a work done on the maternal problems. She held various positions in various Academic organisations and has many publications to her credit. She is at present the Secretary

of Society for Development of Women and Children, Bangalore, a non-governmental organisation.

**Dr. B.S. NARASINGA RAO**



Dr. B.S. Narasinga Rao is an eminent Biochemist and has been associated with NIN, Hyderabad from 1956 as a research staff since its days as Nutrition Research Laboratory at Coonoor. He is the Director Emeritus, NIN. He is a prolific writer and has many publications to his credit.

**Dr. MAHTAB S. BAMJI**



Dr. Bamji a renowned Biochemist has served the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad in various capacities. Her innumerable contribution in the field of vitamin B research and her initial appraisal of research are qualities worth emulating. She is currently the Emeritus Medical Scientist (ICMR) and has published many papers in journals and is a recipient of many awards.

**Dr. KAMALA KRISHNASWAMY**



Dr. Kamala Krishnaswamy has held various positions in National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad and currently is its Director. She is a member of many organisations and was awarded many prestigious awards. She has done extensive research on Cancer and B-Complex deficiencies.

**Dr. M.V. RAO**



Dr. M.V. Rao is known for his research done on wheat for 30 years and was one of the key contributors in ushering in and the successful spreading of Green Revolution in India, particularly in wheat. He was the Deputy Director General of ICAR. He was the recipient of many prestigious awards and has published numerous articles.

**Dr. G. VENKATASWAMY**



Dr. G. Venkataswamy is an eminent Ophthalmologist. He is presently the Director of Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai. He was awarded many honours and is a member of many professional bodies.

**Dr. D. PAUL CHOWDHRY**



Dr. Paul Chowdhry is an eminent Educationist. He was the Director of many organisations like ICCW, Ministry of Rural Development. He is the consultant for UNICEF, Ministry of Home Affairs and many Universities. He is the author of many books.

**Dr. JYOTHI H. TRIVEDI**



Dr. Trivedi was a consultant of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. She was the Vice-Chancellor of SNDT University, Mumbai. She was associated with many Government Committees including UGC, IGNOU, NCERT, NCC. She has articles published in many medical journals.

**Dr. T.C. RAGHU RAM**

Dr. T.C. Raghu Ram is presently the Deputy Director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad and Joint Secretary, Nutrition Society of India. He has contributed extensively for the field of Nutrition through his research.

**Dr. S. RAJAGOPALAN**

Dr. Rajagopalan is a distinguished fellow of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. He has done tremendous amount of work relating to the fields of Agriculture and Nutrition. He received many awards and frequently published articles in many renowned journals.

## **IV. TEACHER AND CLASSMATES**

### **EVA D. WILSON**

Retired Professor of Home Science, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A.

### **MARY ELOISE GREEN**

Ms. Mary Eloise Green is the Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Human Nutrition and Food Management, College of Human Ecology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A.

### **REBECCA LUCILE CORNETET**



Ms. Rebecca graduated from The Ohio State University and has been a Teacher in Latin and English at Larue, Ohio and Winchester, Ohio and Columbus public schools. She is an experienced world traveller and is currently living at the Friendship village of Columbus Retirement Center.

### **HELEN STROW**

Ms. Helen obtained BS and MS from The Ohio State University and travelled to many countries to share her expertise; honoured in Bangkok on July 22, 1996, for her work in Home Economics.

### **Dr. STELLA SOUNDARARAJ**



Dr. Stella Soundararaj was with the Tamil Nadu Government Service and served as a Lecturer, Professor and Principal in various Government Colleges in Tamil Nadu. She retired at the Directorate of Collegiate Education and is a very close friend and classmate of Amma Avargal.

**Dr. MOIRA BREEN**

Classmate and friend of Amma Avargal since her College days at Queen Mary's College, Madras. She was also in teaching profession and has travelled widely.

**Ms. C.S. RATNAM**

Ms. C.S. Ratnam, a classmate and friend of Amma was in Tamil Nadu Governmental Service and served as Lecturer, Professor and Principal in various Government Colleges.

**JESSIE FISCHER MOINUDDIN**

Ms. Jessie Fischer Moinuddin is Professor Emeritus, Basic Medical Science, Biochemistry and Nutrition, Mercer University.

**Mrs. BERTHA MAE HARTLE ROSE**

B.Sc. in Home Economics from The Ohio State University and involved in church activities and is a home maker.

## **V. FRIENDS FROM ABROAD**

**Dr. GEORGE H. AXINN**



Dr. George H. Axinn is currently Professor Emeritus in the Dept. of Resource Development at Michigan State University, USA; served as FAO Representative in India, Bhutan and Nepal; earlier was Asst. Dean of International Programme and studies at Michigan State University; served as President and Executive Director of the Midwest Universities Consortium for International activities; was Head of MSU Team for a decade and served in Rampur, Nepal and at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka.

**Dr. GUY B. BAIRD**



Dr. Guy Baird had his education at the Cornell University. He was Director of the Rockefeller Cooperative Agricultural Research program with the Govt. of India, closely involved in International Agricultural Research and Green Revolution.

**Mr. PETER DE BEUZEVILLE**



Mr. Peter began his career as a Science Teacher. In 1984, he was the senior curriculum officer in the Directorate of studies, of the New South Wales Dept. of Education; has lectured in Education and coordinated a Diploma program for Aboriginal teacher aides at the University of Sydney and is now Teacher Librarian at Cubramatta High School, Sydney, Australia.

**Mrs. BEVERLY L. BLUM**



Currently is the Executive Director of Solar Cookers International.

**Rt. Rev. Dr. SUNDAR CLARKE**

Rev. Sundar Clarke started his career as a Pastor and reached the stage of Deputy Moderator of Church of South India; served in various National and International committees and has travelled widely.

**Ms. EVA DABASY**



Ms. Eva Dabasy has been a member of various associations and industrial consultancies; published many articles and has professional affiliations with Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology, Nutrition Society of Australia, Australian Nutrition Foundation, Australian and New Zealand Association for Medical Education and New York

Academy of Sciences. Currently she is the Coordinator - Vocational Education and Training - Degree studies - Hospitality, William Angliss Institute of TAFE.

**Dr. FRANCILLE H. FIREBAUGH**



Dr. Firebaugh is the Dean of the College of Human Ecology, Cornell University; has 26 years of service at The Ohio State University; authored many articles; received a Distinguished Service Award in 1990 from The Ohio State University, is member of various communities like Cayuga Medical Centre and Kendal at Ithaca.

**Ms. ALICE MCKINNEY FISCHER**



Ms. Alice Mckinney Fischer finished her education from Iowa State College and New York University. She has teaching experiences in Iowa, Indiana and Illinois. She was also associated with extension activities in many Universities.

**Ms. ALICE M. FORMAN**



Ms. Alice Forman has to her credit 25 years of International work with the Govt. of India, Ministry of Health; John Hopkins University; Dept. of International Health and in rural community service with West Alabama Health services, Alabama, USA. Now retired and lives in Bethesda, Maryland, USA.

**Mr. DOUGHLAS NEWTON FORMAN**



Mr. Forman is an active volunteer in the United Nations Association and the global mission programme of the Presbyterian Church; served the American Foreign service for 34 years and has travelled world wide inspecting US Development Assistance Programs and the peace crops.

**Ms. RUTH NUSRBAUM FORMAN**

Mrs. Forman has been an active volunteer in Foreign service wives outreach programs and is currently engaged in church related transnational and service organizations in Washington.

**Ms. HELEN N. GUTMAN**



Ms. Helen Gutman is the President of HNG Associates; her careers included academic research, administration and teaching in graduate and medical schools : in various aspects of extramural and intramural science in US Federal Government Science Agencies. At USDA, positions included Associate Director of the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Centre and First National Coordinator for Animal care for the Agricultural Research Service. She is the recipient of several awards, is a fellow of various Associations and is a certified Transpersonal counsellor and mentor in an International Transpersonal training program.

**Ms. SHIRLEY HODGES**

Ms. Shirley Hodges retired as a Nursing Superintendent from Lithgow hospital, Sydney, Australia and is a good friend of Amma's family in Australia.

**Mr. GUNNAR JACKS**



Gunnar Jacks is Professor of Hydrology at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm and a humble disciple of the Indian culture.

**Mrs. BRIGITTA JACKS**

Mrs. Brigitta Jacks is an International worker in Nutrition; her recent assignment under UNICEF was in Somalia; an ardent admirer of the Indian way of family living and sharing.

**Prof. COEN. G.A. de JONG**

Prof. Coen de Jong is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bartimeus, a Dutch Organization; President of ICEVI and Vice President of IASSID. His professional

backgrounds are 'Education' and Clinical Psychology'. Has longlasting (professional) relationship with Avinashilingam Deemed University.

**Prof. K.J. JOSEPH**



Prof. K.J. Joseph is currently the Guest speaker, Kansas University, USA; Has a rich service of 22 years as General Manager, Personnel and Training, Indian Airlines; conducted Management Development programmes for International and Domestic Airlines U.K., U.S.A. and India; was Professor and Head of the Department of Management Studies, University of Madras; Head of Consultancy and Applied Research Division, Plateau State Polytechnic, Nigeria and Research Faculty, Administrative staff college of India; authored many papers and research publications on Management topics. Mrs. Annie Joseph is a housewife.

**Dr. F. JAMES LEVINSON**



Dr. James Levinson is the Director of The International Food and Nutrition Center at Tufts University in the United States; actively involved with international nutrition activities of international agencies in Asia and Africa; earlier served as Director of the office of Nutrition for U.S. Agency and Director of the International Nutrition planning program at the MIT.

Apart from this, he has been actively involved in efforts to reduce the production and testing of nuclear weapons internationally.

**Mrs. KUNJAMMA MATHAI**



Mrs. Mathai is working at Canterbury District Nursing Home as the sister-in charge at Night; Great friend of Mrs. Mary Devadas; knows Amma for the past 22 years.

**Rev. LEWIS H. MORRISON**



Rev. Lewis Morrison is the Retired Deaconess of the United Methodist Church, USA; has a rich experience of working as a Music teacher at a settlement house in Philadelphia; Assistant to the Superintendent of a Children's Home in Georgia, Secretary to the Bishop of the Ohio Area of United Methodist Church and staff member of the Board of Global Ministries.

**Dr. CATHERINE R. MUMAW**



Ms. Catherine is the Education Adviser, University School of Education, Nepal; Has served in various capacities like Associate Professor, Oregon State University; Instructor Professor and Chair, Home Economics, Department of Goshan College; visiting Professor at Warsaw Agricultural University, Poland and Avinashilingam Deemed University, Coimbatore under USIA faculty exchange programme; consultant to Solar Box Cookers International, California and has many publications to her credit and recipient of IHEA Leader Award in 1985.

**Dr. SHYAM S. NANDWANI**



Dr. Shyam is incharge of Solar Laboratory in the Department of Physics, University National, Heredia, Costa Rica; member of ISES, Germany; President Association Costarricense de energia solar; senior associate member of ICTP, Italy and Costa Rican Representative for RICSA, Argentina; has published 50 research papers on different applications of Solar Energy in National / International journals and Conference proceedings.

**Ms. GERALDINE I OLSON**



Ms. Geraldine Olson is the Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences and Director, Family Resource Management Graduate program at Oregon State University; published many articles and received many awards and honors like the "Advisor Award of Excellence" in 1997.

**Mr. LEONARD, S. REID,E.**



Mr.Reid formed the society “For those who have less” in 1962 and was deeply involved in all aspects of its work. During the II World War he served both the RAF and RAAF as a fighter pilot; was member of Parliament for Dandenong in the Victorian State and as the Federal member for Holt. In 1984, he formed the current organisation “Human Rights - First the child” continuing his livestock and child welfare work throughout the Indian subcontinent.

**Mr. ALLAN PORTER AND Mrs. MARGARET PORTER**



Both got married in 1942 when Allan was serving with the Forces during the II World War in the ambulance corps. Ms. Margaret worked for 42 years in a bank and got retired in 1981.

**Mr. WILLIS HOWARD SKRDLA**

Mr. Willis H. Skrdla is the retired Professor of Agronomy, Iowa State University and U.S. Dept. of Agricultural Crops Research Division, Iowa. Agronomist by training and research, worked on tropical agriculture in India; held various positions like Plant Genetics Resource Leader in ICRISAT at Hyderabad; consultant for USAID; has several scientific and research publications to his credit; made TV films and participated in radio interviews.

**Mrs. BETTY JEANE SKRDLA**

Mrs. Betty is a retired Home Economist of Iowa State University, has served as a consultant to several agencies including the National Bureau of Standards; member of the American Home Economics Association and the International Home Economics Association.

**Dr. SHIELA TURNER**



Dr. Shiela is Reader in Education at Institute of Education, University of London, where she is the Head of Science and Technology Group and Assistant Dean for Continuing Professional Development. She is the Vice President of Institute of Biology and is known for her research in Nutrition Education.

**Dr. RICHARD G. WARNER**

Dr. Warner is currently the Professor Emeritus of Animal Nutrition, Department of Animal Science, Cornell University, New York, USA. His association with Amma avargal was from her days at The Ohio State University, Columbus.

**Ms. DOROTHY WISE**



Ms. Dorothy Wise has authored many books on Family Affairs and on Social History; gives speeches and talks on the Aspects of English, Social History to Historical Societies and Women's Institution and probus. At present she is a tour guide at Kelmseolt Manor.

**Dr. MARGY WOODBURN**



Dr. Woodburn is Professor and Head Emeritus of the Department of Nutrition and Food Management at Oregon State University, USA; served as Associate Director of the Oregon Agricultural Experiment station; Associate Dean for Research in the College of Home Economics; served in several international teams; was Director of the USIA grant for the University Affiliation program with Avinashilingam Deemed University, 1990-93.

## **VI. PROFESSIONALS FROM DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE**

### **Prof. J.B. BHATTACHARJEE**

Prof. Bhattacharjee is an eminent Educationist of India. He has held various positions in different universities and is now the First Vice Chancellor of Assam University, which is a Central University.

### **Mr. L.P.K. RAMANATHAN CHETTIAR**



Mr. Ramanathan Chettiar is a well known Tamil scholar, has held various positions in Annamalai University, Chidambaram and finally retired as its Vice-Chancellor. He has authored many books; is a member of many distinguished organisations like Sahitya Academy, and was honoured with many well-known awards. He is presently at Chennai.

### **Prof. Dr. S.V. CHITTIBABU**



Dr. S.V. Chittibabu, an eminent Educationist is a former Vice-Chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai and Annamalai University, Chidambaram. He has held many positions in various Universities. He has taken active interest in finding solutions to the problems and dilemma in the functioning of Centre of Learning and also provided innovative ideas for shaping the appropriate type of education for youth of India. He is presently at Chennai.

### **Dr. SARALA GOPALAN**

Dr. Sarala Gopalan is a retired IAS Officer in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. She has done extensive work for upliftment of women and children in India. She is presently residing in New Delhi.

**Ms. K. JEGATHAMBAL**

Ms. Jegathambal's association with Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas is from her College days at Queen Mary's College, Chennai. She later joined the same college and then retired as its Principal and is now residing at Tiruchirapalli.

**Dr. A. ABDUL KAREEM**



Dr. A. Abdul Kareem is currently the Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, Coimbatore. Over the past 36 years he has served the University in various capacities. He has also done pioneering work on Neem as pesticide to combat crop pests and served as a research supervisor for releasing 49 varieties and hybrids in crops. He served as an active steering committee member in various research planning consortium at International and National levels.

**Dr. SAROJINI MAHISHI**

Dr. Sarojini Mahishi is a member of the Central Social Education Board and Central Advisory Board of Education. She held various tenures between 1962-76 as a minister. She has published as many as 15 books in Kannada and Hindi and has settled in New Delhi.

**Mr. K. MUNIANDI**



Mr. K. Muniandi held various positions in Gandhi Nikethan, T. Kallupatti, Madurai Dt. and is its Chairman from 1987. He is a follower of Gandhian principles specially aiming for the upliftment of poor through community development. He has authored the Adult Education books and is now the Principal of College of Gandhian Thought, Kallupatti.

**Lion Prof. RATNA NATARAJAN**



Prof. Ratna Natarajan was a Professor of History in Presidency College, Chennai. He was a former NSS Coordinator and is now a resource person for NSS activities to various institutions. He is now the District Governor of Lion's Club International, Tirupattur, N.A.A. District.

**Mr. K.S. NATESHAN**



Mr. K.S. Nateshan has worked in various positions in the Government of India. He was the section Superintendent, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Assistant Director of Postal Service, Chennai and has settled there.

**Dr. D. PADMANABAN**



Dr. D. Padmanaban is an eminent Educationalist from Coimbatore, is a member of various educational organisations and has held distinguished positions in many Governing bodies. He has many papers published to his name.

**Mrs. KUNTI PAUL**



Mrs. Kunti Paul is the President of All India Women's Welfare Council, Punjab Unit. She has been actively associated with the women's causes for over four decades and is associated with many bodies involved in the upliftment of women and children. She is presently at Saharanpur, Punjab.

**Miss. A. PONNAMMAL**



Miss. A. Ponnammal has been associated with Education Department of Tamil Nadu for over five decades and is currently the Educational Advisor for six schools. She is retired and stays in Coimbatore.

**Dr. V. PRAKASH**



Dr. V. Prakash is currently the Director of Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore. He has done exceptional work on several aspects of Enzymes and Proteins. He is also the Co-ordinator of United Nations University at CFTRI, Mysore.

**Dr. C. PRASAD**

Dr. C. Prasad is the President of Vardan - Voluntary Action for Research Development and Networking, a Non - governmental organisation, New Delhi. He has held various positions in the ICAR.

**Dr. B.P. RAJAN**

Dr. Rajan is a well known Dental Surgeon from Chennai. He has done immense work in the field of Dental Science and was the former Vice - Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University. He also held various positions in many organisations and won many awards.

**Mr. RAVINDER NATH TALWAR**



Mr. R.N. Talwar was associated with Indian Airlines for three decades as an Aviation Engineer. After his retirement from Indian Airlines for the past one decade, he has been associated with the eradication of illiteracy among women especially in New Delhi where he has settled.

**Smt. SAROJINI VARADAPPAN**



Smt. Sarojini Varadappan was associated with the Tamil Nadu Public Service since the 1940's and has held numerous distinguished positions. Among the many awards bestowed on her the Padmasri award is commendable. She is associated with many educational, religious and women's welfare organisations. She has settled in Chennai.

**Dr. V.S. VIJAYAN**

Dr. V.S. Vijayan is the Director of Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore Branch, an autonomous centre aided by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. He has done extensive work in the preservation of the environment in and around Coimbatore.

**Dr. SHEILA VIR**

Dr. Sheila Vir is the Project Officer (Nutrition) of United Nations Children's Fund, India. Currently stationed at Lucknow, India.

**Mrs. C. VISALAKSHI**

Mrs. Visalakshi started her career as a School Assistant and reached the stage of District Educational Officer of Coimbatore. She has had long association with Avinashilingam Institutions and is one of its well wishers.

**Mr. K. VISWANATHAN**

Mr. K. Viswanathan is the Director of Mitraniketan an NGO at Thiruvananthapuram for action studies, research, innovation, training and extension in Community Development, Environment, Science Education and Appropriate Technology. He has done extensive work for the upliftment of people in need of help.

## **VII. FRIENDS AND WELL WISHERS**

**Mr. ABUBAKAR BAGAVI C.V.**



Mr. Bagavi is the Principal of Ansari Arabic College, Coimbatore. He is also the Head of the Coimbatore Muslim Association. He is a distinguished Muslim personnel from Coimbatore.

**Mr. K. DAMODARSWAMY NAIDU**



Mr. Naidu is the Chairman of Sree Annapoorna Sree Gowrishankar Group of Hotels, Coimbatore. Among the other positions, he is also the President of the Coimbatore District Hotels Association and Vice President of Tamil Nadu Hotels Association. He is also very much involved in social work to serve the mankind for their upliftment in life; his innovative ideas helped to develop the Annapoorna chain of Hotels to its present stature.

**Smt. T.S.B. DHANALAKSHMI AMMAL**

Smt. T.S.B. Dhanalakshmi Ammal, hailing from the illustrious family of Ayya avargal has actively involved herself in the service of poor people through her social work by organising free medical services, eye camps. She is interested in the growth and development of Sri Avinashilingam Educational Trust Institutions.

**Shri. S. AMARJIT SINGH CHANDOKE**



Shri. Chandoke is the President of Federation of All India Automobile Spare Parts Dealer Association and also of Gurudwara Singh Sabha. He has widely travelled and is a member of many distinguished organisations. He is a very keen sportsman.

**Dr. CHRISTY GANAPATHY**



Dr. Christy Ganapathy is a Gynaecologist from Coimbatore who after retirement from Government service started the “Sheela Hospital (P) Ltd”, as its Founder Director and is presently its Honorary Chairman.

**Mr. R. GANDHI**

Mr. R. Gandhi is a Senior Advocate residing in Chennai. He is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. He is involved in social work for the upliftment of poor and needy. He is a member of many prestigious organisation.

**Mrs. R. INDIRA**



Mrs. Indira is the Manager of Sree Annapoorna Lodging. She is actively involved in various social organisations and is member of a few voluntary organisations.

**Mrs. SOUNDRA KAILASAM**



Mrs. Kailasam has been housewife who was associated with various organisations. She has worked for the betterment of children and also strived to reduce the rate of illiteracy among women in and around Chennai.

**Mr. A.C. KAMARAJ**



Mr. Kamaraj has held various positions as an Engineer with P.W.D. of Tamil Nadu State Government. He has published worth mentioning articles in various journals. He is now settled in Madurai.

**Mr. A.U. KUPPUSWAMY**

Mr. Kuppuswamy is a freedom fighter and a follower of Gandhian ways.

**Dr. G. PANKAJAM AND Dr. R. KOWSALYA DEVI**

Dr. G. Pankajam is at present the Treasurer cum Associate Secretary of Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram.

Dr. R. Kowsalya Devi is the Managing Trustee of Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram.

**Mr. A. ASHOK LUNIA**



Mr. Lunia is the President of Rajasthani Sangh and he has held distinguished positions in various other organisations. He involves himself in the upliftment of the downtrodden through welfare activities.

**Mrs. INAYATHUNISA MUNAVER**



Mrs. Munaver's association with Dr. Devadas dates back to her days at Queen Mary's College, Chennai. She joined the same college and later retired as its principal. She is settled in Chennai and had involved herself in religious and social activities.

**Mr. K. PALANISWAMY**



Mr. Palaniswamy started as a clerk with the Coimbatore Municipality and later worked in Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College Office for a decade. Then he had worked in various setups and participated in many seminars.

**Mr. PON DHASARADHAN**



Mr. Pon Dhasaradhan retired as Head Post Master and had acquaintance with Amma avargal's family when he held various positions in the postal Department. He is now residing in Vellore.

**Mr. VELANSELU S. RAMASWAMY**

Mr. Ramaswamy is the President of Sri Narayana Guru Deva Sangam. He also held various honorary positions in different organisations. He actively involves himself in social service.

**Mrs. RANI P. SHIVAN**



Mrs. Shivan was associated with "Sumangali" magazine for a decade and is presently its Editor. She is the recipient of many honours and is a member of many social organisations. She is actively involved in the upliftment of women and children in the state of Tamil Nadu.

**Mr. R. SOMASUNDARAM**



Mr. Somasundaram is the Founder President of M/s. Velumani Engineering Industry, Coimbatore. He has held prestigious positions with many organisations. He is at present the Chairman of Texvel Group of Companies, Coimbatore.

**Mr. K.P. SUBBAYAN**



Mr.K.P. Subbayan is the famous business man from Coimbatore. His business interests are vast and varied. He is involved in social work and is associated with various organisations.

**Mrs. T.S.K. SUNDARAMMAL**



Mrs. Sundarammal is the wife of Late Mr. Kandaswamy Chettiar, our Ayya Avargal's brother and she is a housewife. She is also one of the Directors in Meenakshi Sundareswar Finance Ltd., Tirupur and member, Lakshmi Vilas Finance Ltd, Tirupur.

**Mr. A.U. SHANMUGAM**



Mr. Shanmugam was associated with the Department of Rural Development Government of Tamil Nadu for 35 years in various capacities. He has experience of executing various development schemes like flood relief, poverty alleviation schemes rural housing, etc.

**Mr. M. RAJA SHERIFF**



Mr. Raja Sheriff is the Secretary of Tamil Nadu Student Congress (I). He is associated with many organisations and has held positions which are highly acclaimed.

**Mr. V.B. DHANDAYUTHAM**



Mr. Dhandayutham is the Secretary of Coimbatore North Sarvodaya Sangh, Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan, Coimbatore. He is a staunch Gandhian and has done tremendous work for the welfare of downtrodden.

**Dr. SAROJINI THOMAS**



Dr. Thomas an Ophthalmologist from Coimbatore is the Founder-President of Siloam Thomas Eye Hospital, Coimbatore which is doing tremendous service to the people from different sections of the society. Under her leadership, they have organised many free eye camps.

**Mr. A. VEDARATNAM**



Mr. Vedaratnam is the Managing Trustee of Kasthurba Gandhi Kanya Gurukulam, Vedaraniyam. He hails from the family of Great Tamil Saint Thayumanava. He is associated with many organisations and also helped people who were in need during turbulent times.

