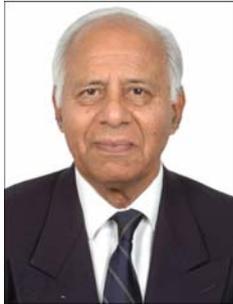


## Defying Sanjay Gandhi: A Civil Servant Remembers the Emergency



Anand Sarup

Born in Lahore on 5th January, 1930, to Savitri Devi and Shanti Sarup and brought up in an open environment, without any mental conditioning by a denominational commitment. He imbibed a deep commitment to democracy and freedom because his family participated actively in the freedom struggle. In 1947, together with his family, he went through the trauma of losing all, and then participating in rebuilding a new status and identity. He Joined the IAS in 1954 and retired in 1988 as Education Secretary, Government of India. Later, he became Chairman, National Book Trust. Also co-authored, with Sulabha Brahme, *Planning for the Millions*.

When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared an Internal Emergency – which came to be known as just ‘the Emergency’ – on June 26, 1975, I was a senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer in Uttar Pradesh (UP). I was Secretary of the Transport, Public Works, Tourism and Estate Departments. Many people, including me, did not believe that there were legitimate grounds to declare an Emergency. Instead, I believed then – as I do now – that the real reason was that the Emergency declaration gave Mrs. Indira Gandhi a way to avoid being forced to step down after her 1975 election to Parliament had been declared invalid by Justice Jag Mohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court on the ground that she had used corrupt practices during her election campaign.

As soon as the Emergency was declared, my father rang me up and told me that a situation had arisen in which I would perhaps find it difficult to function in government service. My father had been a freedom fighter, who was independent enough to reject the *Tamra Patra* (Indian government award/certificate for being a freedom fighter) because he did not approve of the acceptance of India’s partition by the Congress party. He knew that since I too had participated in the freedom struggle as a teenager, I may not be too pliable and might find it difficult to continue to work as a government officer, when the Indian government itself was acting against the basic principles underlying the letter and spirit of the Constitution. He was concerned that should I want to resign, I should have the assurance of survival. He told me that if I chose to quit, he would lend me his full support until I found another source of livelihood. My response was that I would carry on as before, carrying out only legal orders and refusing to obey illegal orders. We would see how things shape up.

I soon heard from a well-respected journalist, who had been my college friend, that censorship had been imposed on all the media, and an Information & Broadcasting (I&B) Minister who had absolutely no faith in democracy had been brought in to enforce censorship. Initially, many senior editors did not believe that Mrs. Gandhi herself had approved the imposition of the draconian censorship, and tried to get her to tone down the vehemence of the censors.

Others tried to register their protest by leaving their editorial section blank – an indication that the editorial had been or was likely to be censored. Others tried to be more ingenious: they printed well-known quotations from Rabindra Nath Tagore or Mahatma Gandhi emphasising freedom of expression. But, this did not work. The I&B Minister sent for them and told them not to be under any illusions. If it became necessary, he would proscribe the writings of even Gandhi and Tagore to ensure that nothing critical of the government was published in any newspaper or journal. At that

time, the other media were also under the control of the government, so there was a complete blackout about what was happening in the country.

In Lucknow, we had heard that the authorities in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana were harassing anybody who was suspected of being critical of government's actions. For me, these were distant tales until the day Ram Piara, who lived in Karnal, Haryana, turned up at our doorstep in Lucknow. He had been my father's good friend from 1942 to 1944 when, as freedom fighters, they were imprisoned in Multan. I knew his penchant for getting into trouble with the authorities. When he arrived, neither he nor I said anything about why he had come visiting all of a sudden. I pretended that he had come to fulfil his promise to visit my home, and therefore I was happy to see him.

However, I was sure that he was evading arrest. He told me of the arbitrary manner in which the administration was functioning and how some magistrates in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi had handed over blank warrants of arrest to the police to arrest anyone they wanted, without any legal hassles. He also talked of wholesale arrests of anti-Emergency activists and the attachment of their properties.

After he left, I went to Delhi because common friends had told me that Pran Nath Lekhi, a lawyer and an old friend from Lahore, was in hiding. There were rumours that he was being traced by the police. I traced him to the house of a common friend who told me that when the police went to arrest Lekhi, and did not find him, they sealed his house, and his movables were loaded and taken away. When Lekhi was eventually arrested, I withdrew nearly all the money I had in the bank, and offered it to his wife Kamala, whom I had known for more than twenty years. She declined to accept the gift because she had a lot of support from her father.

Later when the Emergency was relaxed in January 1977, Lekhi was released. In the elections that followed the relaxing of the Emergency, the Congress was defeated and the opposition Janata party formed the Government at the Centre. This Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1977 stating that:

There is a widespread demand from different sections of the public for an inquiry into several aspects of allegation of abuse of authority and excesses and malpractices committed and action taken or purported to be taken in the wake of the Emergency proclaimed on the 25th June, 1975 under Section 352 of the Constitution.

Justice J. C. Shah, a retired Supreme Court of India judge, was appointed as the Chairman of the Inquiry Commission, with Lekhi as the Chief Prosecutor. The Inquiry Commission submitted some Interim Reports (two of which I have obtained from Pran Lekhi) and presumably also submitted a voluminous report of its final findings to the Government. It is a mystery why nothing was done either to make the reports public or to bring to book those who had acted illegally or with *mala fide* intent at the behest of Indira Gandhi or Sanjay Gandhi, her son, who had hijacked her authority.

I believe that during the functioning of the Inquiry Commission, Justice Shah and Pran Lekhi threw all canons of legal reserve to the winds. Their manner of functioning led many people to dismiss the whole exercise as pure and simple witch hunting. For example, the Commission went out of its way to publicise what was happening. During the examination of evidence under its auspices, on the specious plea that this had to be an open inquiry, a Public Address System was pressed into service to enable the public outside the court to hear what was going on.

In Chapter I of the Commission's Interim Report, it was emphasised that during the Emergency the laws were changed to the effect that the election of the Prime Minister and Speaker of the House was placed above the Law Courts. In Chapter II of this Report, in Para 2.9, it was stated that "as a result of declaration of Emergency and the consequent suspension of fundamental rights, ... the rights to equality under section 14, the right of fundamental guarantee against deprivation of life and personal liberty also stood suspended." It is surprising that neither historians nor researchers in either law or public administration have thought it necessary to go through these documents or the Final Report.

Through the Right to Information Act, I have recently ascertained that all this material and, presumably, also the depositions made by witnesses before the Commission are available for public perusal in the Home Ministry located in Khan Market, New Delhi.

At my personal level, I experienced the illegalities of the Emergency only when my boss, Transport Minister Shiv Prasad Singh, tried to force me to commandeered trucks and buses for bringing crowds to Lucknow, with a view to impressing Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's son, on his first visit to Lucknow after the declaration of Emergency. The Minister was doing this for his boss, N .D. Tewari, UP's Chief Minister.

It was well known that Sanjay Gandhi was politically very powerful. It was widely believed in Lucknow that Sanjay had been responsible for the sacking of UP's previous Chief Minister, H.N. Bahugana, because he would not kowtow to Indira or Sanjay Gandhi. But, while he lasted, even Mr. Bahugana used the first few months of the Emergency to post some young favourites in prestigious jobs well beyond what was warranted by their seniority or record. The Chief Executive of Lucknow Corporation and District Magistrate of Lucknow were people who were brought in essentially to do his bidding. Mr. Bahugana was the one who coined the slogan that the U.P Government was a corporation in which he, the CEO, had an absolute right to lay down the law.

At first, my Minister gave me only verbal orders for arranging the trucks and buses. On my insistence, he recorded the order on the file. In turn, I wrote on the file that since the Minister had issued an illegal order, I would not carry it out. I promptly applied for three months leave, which was immediately approved. My successor carried out the Minister's orders without any fuss.

When I came back from leave, the charge of the Transport Department was taken away from me but I remained in charge of PWD and Tourism. Minister Shiv Prasad Singh, too, had been moved from Transport to PWD. I was apprehensive, but at least initially, he did not bother me.

However, circumstances conspired against me this time too. Sanjay Gandhi rang me up one day, asking me to buy at least twenty road rollers from Maruti, the car company that he had sponsored. At that time, Maruti was assembling road rollers while getting ready to produce cars. I expressed my inability to do this since PWD already had many more road rollers than it needed. Once again, Shiv Prasad Singh tried to pressurise me. But this time, he did not pass written orders because, from experience, he knew that I would not carry them out. Besides, he was the one who had suspended the PWD Superintending Engineer for having purchased road rollers in excess of the department's needs. This time, in sheer desperation, he resorted to much cruder tactics.

One day, after summoning me to his home, ostensibly for some consultation, he asked me what I would do if some boys from a nearby village came and roughed me up. I did not react to this immediately and went back to my office wondering what I should do after this obvious attempt to intimidate me. Anyway, when I got home in the evening, I found that my friend Ranbir Singh, the third brother of the legendary martyr Bhagat Singh, was visiting us as a house guest. I told him of the incident in detail and he assured me that he would sort out the matter the next day.

Next morning, Ranbir went to Shiv Prasad Singh's home, and had himself announced as the *real* (i.e., not cousin or some distant relative) brother of Bhagat Singh. Naturally, given Bhagat Singh's aura, Ranbir was shown in very courteous. The Minister, who had no idea why Ranbir had come to visit, asked what he could do for him. The reply must have surprised the Minister. Ranbir started a spiel about my habitual pugnacity, and how he too was sick of my ways. He gratuitously told the Minister that if I was troubling him, he had better tell him because he would get some ruffians from his farm in Bazpur to crack a few of my ribs. On an inquiry, Ranbir told the Minister that he was staying as my houseguest!

The Minister was no fool. He understood the message Ranbir Singh was conveying. Next day, the minister told me that since he had no choice but to comply with Sanjay Gandhi's wishes, I had better

send in my leave application so that he could get someone else to do the job. I had no difficulty in carrying out these instructions and happily proceeded on leave.

It seemed that whenever a demand was made by Sanjay Gandhi, somehow I could not carry it out. For instance, when Sanjay Gandhi attended a meeting that discussed plans to develop Agra as a tourist spot, in the meeting's minutes I recorded his presence merely as someone who was there. I think he would have liked to have his suggestions recorded as decisions, but I did not do this. After all, Sanjay did not hold any official position at that time, and was often referred to as an 'extra-constitutional authority'.

I got into real trouble with him over the target-driven vasectomy programme, which was widely known as Sanjay Gandhi's pet project. Government officials were made responsible for 'recruiting' large numbers of 'volunteers' who would undergo vasectomy in return for some monetary payment. Besides the District Medical Officers, District Magistrates, Superintendents of Police, Excise Officers and almost all the officers who had some powers to put pressure on field level functionaries were told that if they expected the government to show them any consideration, they must ensure that the vasectomy target for their district was met.

As a result, anyone who went to see a government officer for any official work was likely to be asked to bring some people for vasectomy. What mattered to the government was the magic number they had to achieve. How this was achieved was immaterial. I am sorry that I have to say that during the Emergency officials indulged in the worst kind of torture to achieve their targets. While all communities suffered, the brunt of this approach to population control was borne by the Muslims. Perhaps the officials were carried away by the propaganda that the unwillingness of the Muslims to limit the number of their children was adding too many people to our already burgeoning population.

Many people believe that these excesses under the Family Planning Programme were the main reason for rousing the people against the Emergency. The backlash was so strong that its impact is being felt even now – more than 30 years later. Even today, the Family Welfare Programme under the Ministry of Health does not dare set targets. And, vasectomy, which like tubectomy, is indeed a very effective and inexpensive programme for preventing unwanted pregnancies, is spoken of in very guarded tones instead of being used broadly.

When I did not listen to the 'sane advice' of some my fellow officers to avoid making a public fuss about the Family Planning Programme, I was advised by a very senior police officer, a junior of mine in college, holding a key position in the Prime Minister's establishment, to go out of sight for a while. In effect, he told me to go 'underground' as soon as possible. He said that Sanjay Gandhi was very angry about my defying him and also allegedly encouraging other UP officers also to defy his orders, both by example as well as precept.

It was just before the rainy season in 1976 (I cannot, as usual, recall either the month or the date) when following this advice, I took earned leave without any immediate provocation. I knew that to try to keep me out of harm's way, the UP government had decided to appoint me as UP's Planning Secretary. But I was unwilling to take any chances with Sanjay Gandhi breathing down my neck. I promptly went underground, as I had done on an earlier occasion, travelling incognito by buses or third class train compartments.

I had suffered a myocardial infarction in 1975. My family and friends were keeping close watch on me to curb my habitual irresponsibility. Now, on going underground, I felt liberated by the fact that I had managed to get away carrying a small bag containing only a counterpane, two bed sheets, a big tube of Odomos, the mosquito repellent, and the most essential toiletries. I travelled in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, going to Khajuraho, Panna, Jabalpur, and Wardha.

Travelling by bus between Khajuraho and Panna, at a bus stop in between, right on top of a hillock, there was this man making hot *pakor*s. I just cannot resist *pakor*s, specially when they are fresh

from the *karahi* (deep frying pan). Naturally, I got down to have a feast. While I was at it, the bus went on its way leaving me behind. I wasn't worried. I did not have to keep any appointments, and I could easily take the next bus. When I asked a stallholder about the timing of the next bus, he laughed and told me that there would be no bus that evening!

As if this was not enough, he told me that there was no place to stay but if I could persuade the priest of the nearby temple, I could stay there overnight. I walked over to the temple and found the priest cooking a pot of potatoes. I asked him to put a few more potatoes in the pot so that he could feed me too. He did not mind. Later, I slept very soundly on the thick mat spread out on the floor of the temple.

When I reached Panna next day, I was surprised at the mean and lowbrow architecture of the town, which was once the capital of a small princely state. I decided that I would not stay there and left the place to arrive at the office of the public sector diamond mine, which produced some high quality white diamonds from an area pretty much exhausted by intensive mining of its very small reserves.

It was an uphill task to persuade the local mine manager to let me stay in their guesthouse. Even though I did not have any obvious means to prove my claim to respectability, I reaped an unexpected benefit because of my facility with the English language. The manager accepted that given the way I spoke English, I must be a respectable person! Ah, not only did I eat the first English breakfast three weeks after leaving home, but next morning I was able to get a glimpse of some of the best diamonds they had in their heavy steel safes. On that day, I was convinced that I had missed my vocation – I should have been either an insurance salesman or a confidence trickster.

While I was in Wardha, I visited Vinoba Bhave, who had – foolishly according to me – made a statement in support of the Emergency, calling it a much needed *Anushasan Parva* (era of discipline). Annasaheb Sahasrabudhe, one of Maharashtra's highly revered personalities, was with me. Vinobaji agreed to meet me even though it was his day of *Maun vrata* (the day of silence). We managed pretty well because I was not on *Maun vrata*, and he was quite comfortable about expressing his views by writing them on slips of paper.

At one point, Vinobaji conveyed to me that he did not approve of some aspect of the Government's policies – today, I don't quite remember exactly which aspect he had mentioned. I do remember my retorting that he should find it easy to get over the problem because he had endorsed both the Emergency and Sanjay Gandhi. One of the reasons why Vinobaji did not take offence at what I had said was because Annasaheb Sahasrabudhe told him, that in his footsteps, my uncle too had been nominated by Mahatma Gandhi to offer individual Satyagraha in 1939.

My effort at hiding underground was very effective. The person who was unwilling to take up the job of Planning Secretary but had accepted it on a stopgap basis was unable to learn of my whereabouts from my family. He kept ringing up my friends in Delhi, only to be told that if the UP Government or my family didn't know where I was, how could they tell me where I was.

When I returned, I was appointed as the Planning Secretary. As it turned out, my distaste for the Emergency made it possible for me to join hands with Mr. P.N. Haksar, the Deputy Chairman of the Indian Government's powerful Planning Commission. Together, we persuaded UP's Chief Minister to bring about much-needed changes in the character of the planning and implementation machinery of the UP government.

Haksar was very bitter about the Emergency. He had been Mrs. Gandhi's trusted Secretary, from where he was pushed out by Sanjay Gandhi. B. N. Tandon, a senior officer in Mrs. Gandhi's office for a number of years, maintained a daily diary, which he has published as a book *PMO 2- The Emergency*. The following extracts illustrate Mr. Haksar's stature and fall:

20 December 1974

The success that PM achieved in 1971 was due to Haksar. India's policy towards Bangla Desh, its subsequent liberation and the ensuing agreement with Pakistan in 1972 were all due to Haksar. Sometime the PM and her senior colleagues would hesitate to take his advice but purely on the strength of his ability and deep understanding he would carry the day.

...

But in spite of all this, his influence began to wane since the middle of 1972. The main reason for this was that he did not want to witness the decline and eclipse of the institution that he had built. He did not approve of the sort of people who had begun to acquire a hold over the PM. Some members of the PM's family were also engaged in activities that were harming her reputation. As far as I know he tried to explain this to her on several occasions but to no avail.

Soon after the Emergency was declared, the famous firm of Pandit Brothers owned by Haksar's uncle and brother-in-law, was visited by some government functionaries, fined very heavily, and told that nobody was immune from danger. B. N. Tandon's book says:

15 July 1975

I forgot to mention that before going for the cabinet meeting Professor Dhar came to my room and told me in confidence that Haksar's uncle had been arrested. He asked me what should be done. He is the owner of the well known firm Pandit Brothers in Delhi. His office was raided at the instance of the palace lieutenants and the affair was widely propagated.

8 August 1975

He (Professor Dhar) also informed that income tax officials were to search Haksar's house. I asked if the PM knew of this or was it routine. He didn't answer but merely smiled meaningfully. He then volunteered that Haksar had opposed whatever amendments had been made to the RP Act and the Constitution.

The message was clear: everyone must do what Sanjay wanted and follow his policies. Those who failed to heed this advice risked going to jail.

When I went to see Mr. Haksar after becoming UP's Planning Secretary, I could not initially understand why he was so upset about the government's policies of the day. He knew that some years earlier I had been a well-respected functionary of the Planning Commission, and he felt comfortable in talking to me about his views. When I remonstrated him that he was being double faced – accepting to be Planning Commission Deputy Chairman and yet speaking so vehemently against the government – he told me the circumstances in which he had been 'kicked upstairs' out of the Prime Minister's office and placed in the Planning Commission.

After this type of open exchange of views, we quickly developed an easy rapport. We agreed that one reason for UP's poor performance was feudalism and flattery leading to gross maladministration. Additional funds could not solve this problem. Instead, there was a need to create systems that would ensure fearlessness in the functioning of the personnel handling pre-approval scrutiny of investment projects and also prevent UP from failing to utilise the resources it had for various programmes and projects. Together, Mr. Haksar and I came with a simple and effective strategy, which was approved by the Chief Minister, and then implemented. Even after thirty years of my leaving that job, it is widely admitted that my experiment with creating an independent and high profile mechanism for Planning consisting of eminent people from outside the state, who would stand up to the Chief Minister, had paid dividends.

Later, one Sunday, while I was at home, some odd-looking youngsters came calling. They told me that they needed a donation for carrying out some programme to be organised for inviting and feting

their leader, Sanjay Gandhi. At this time, many school and college dropouts, and a ragtag of roughnecks had declared themselves as Sanjay's followers. Apart from those who somehow got anointed by Sanjay Gandhi personally, many enterprising young men, unknown to Sanjay, wore Sanjay-style clothes, and started browbeating ordinary citizens. They would extract money from government functionaries, small time traders and street vendors for "furthering Sanjay Gandhi's programmes." While these young men were talking to me, they were also ogling my daughters, to the great annoyance of my wife. They left only when I told them to give me the details of the function they were organising so that I could ring up Sanjay Gandhi, and ask him whether he would attend their programme!

Through friends and acquaintances, I learnt that in Lucknow, when the Station House Officers – the senior police officers of the area – of Hazratganj, Chowk or Aminabad walked their beats, people cringed at their approach. Most shopkeepers suspected that they might, knowingly or otherwise, have encroached on to the street by a few feet or a few inches. They could all be booked and sent to the lock-up for this violation, unless they were willing to buy peace at an appropriate price.

I also heard that in Agra, under the instructions of the District Magistrate, the police set up monitoring stations at important road crossings, equipped with measuring tapes and scissors to cut down the long tresses and the pant bottoms of young men who did not conform to the norms of propriety set by the Magistracy and the police. It was funny how many people changed their ways so radically in a situation in which they had no fear of the local politicians and legislators.

When Mrs. Gandhi finally relax the Emergency and call for fresh Parliamentary elections, she must have believed that she and her Congress party would sweep the polls. She did not know the ground realities because few people had the courage to tell her or Sanjay the truth about the people's revulsion about the Emergency.

On the day after she announced the elections, UP's Chief Minister, Finance Secretary and I were travelling together in Delhi, on our way to the Planning Commission. On a query from the Chief Minister, the Finance Secretary, ever the gallant courtier, told him that the Congress would sweep the polls. The opposition would not be able to find the candidates to file the nomination papers! Since I had never stopped going to coffee houses or meeting my old political friends, I laughed silently at this naiveté. Sure enough, the Congress got a drubbing at the hustings, and even Mrs. Gandhi lost the election in her much-pampered Rae Bareilly constituency!

## ***Epilogue***

Looking back, I see that the Emergency was a period of totally irresponsible and undemocratic government, at least in north India. While Mrs. Gandhi was the Prime Minister, Sanjay Gandhi was able to get her to do whatever he wanted. As in many other dictatorships, at first the Emergency brought about some discipline, so that trains ran on time, office work started punctually, and crime too was brought under control. However, these benefits did not last because, as time passed, the institutional edifice set up for popular representation and the instruments of accountability become dysfunctional. Under Sanjay Gandhi's thumb, Parliament as well as many State assemblies stopped debating issues of public importance. Even the courts became utterly supine: even the right to *Habeas Corpus* was suspended!

I believe that Sanjay Gandhi negated everything Jawaharlal Nehru had wrought for the running of a democratic India, and destroyed the old culture of the Congress party. Until the Emergency, social service or participation in the freedom movement and standing as a parliamentarian or legislator imbued one with stature in the Congress party. During the Emergency, all of a sudden, senior politicians became nobodies. Their place was taken by younger politicians and a mob of young men and women who flocked to Sanjay Gandhi, offering to do whatever he wanted. The ultimate test for political recognition was the loyalty and unquestioning commitment to the masters of the day.

The Emergency and Sanjay Gandhi also brought about a sea change in the bureaucracy, which was then in the process of unlearning the ways of the Raj and trying to come to terms with democracy and the rule of law. During the Emergency, the Gandhis and their lieutenants demanded absolute loyalty, and this demand soon became widespread. Now, the Chief Ministers and Ministers wanted only the subordinates who professed absolute loyalty to them. Civil servants came to be seen as underlings accountable not to the Indian constitution and official policies, but personally to the politicians in power at that point of time.

Some of the bureaucrats who were tired of waiting for attaining the seniority to get into positions of power reaped immediate benefits from the Emergency. Till then, entitlement to jobs was determined essentially by seniority, which meant that you could aspire only to jobs available to people with preset years of work experience and age.

The seniority criterion preserved *esprit de corps* by reducing the number of competitors seeking equivalent jobs. As long as the system recognised that seniority and experience conferred a certain stature upon people concerned, junior officers took their seniors' advice seriously, and the seniors also felt that they had the right and the *duty* to intervene whenever required. Moreover, people did not have to compromise too much with their principles when they reached the penultimate stages of promotion. They knew that under normal circumstances they would get their promotion when it became due.

The Emergency threw out the seniority criterion for civil servants. What mattered most was your unconditional commitment to the regime. If you demonstrated your loyalty by doing things others squeamishly avoided, you could have almost anything: many new jobs were created, some with five-star perks, outside the regular hierarchy. This led to a rat race among the ambitious and self-serving officers, who were too impatient to wait for their turn.

The chaotic culture created by such a scramble still persists, and there is no sign that our bureaucracy will ever recover from it. Many of the Emergency era go-getter civil servants have gone from success to success, riding on the shoulders of all hues of politicians who welcome opportunistic civil servants willing to jettison their professional ethics for the rewards of pelf and patronage. Now, no politician or senior civil servant likes a subordinate who talks about what can or cannot be done within the constraints of laws and regulations; people in power are looking for those who would get 'any job' done irrespective of proprieties. Even today, unconditional personal loyalty is viewed as the ultimate criterion for judging suitability for jobs.

And, civil servants have also adopted these ways, so that junior officers feel that they are under the thumb of their senior officers. Promotion is no longer chiefly by seniority subject to the rejection of the unfit. For promotions, officers are required to have an 'excellent or outstanding' character rating *continuously*, from whoever may be their superior officers, for eight to ten years. I fail to understand how this feat can be accomplished by any officer interested in doing the right thing, and not merely in pleasing his superiors. Even an outstanding courtesan cannot get such a compliment uniformly, from her clients for so many years!

It is surprising that even now India is lucky enough to have a significant number of bureaucrats who are willing to plod along without being pulled ahead by powerful seniors and politicians. But, this should not obscure the need for intellectuals, political scientists, and parliamentarians to think seriously about the implications of the systemic decline of bureaucratic independence and integrity for a pluralist culture and parliamentary democracy.❖